



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) strives to reach out to small, mid-size, and underserved farmers and ranchers and has a number of programs available. While this brochure provides information on a number of programs and services that might be useful to you, it is not a complete list of what we offer. For more information on USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, visit our Web site at www.ams.usda.gov.

AMS Programs and Services

Farmers Markets and Local Food Marketing - Direct marketing through farmers markets has become an important sales outlet for many small farmers and ranchers. Direct access to consumers at farmers markets can provide an important source

www.ams.usda.gov/WholesaleandFarmersMarkets or contact the Marketing Services Division at (202) 720-8317.

Research on Direct Farm Marketing and Local Food - AMS helps small farmers by conducting research that identifies emerging trends in the direct marketing and local food sector. AMS also examines how these trends affect market access for smaller scale food suppliers. These studies look at a variety of marketing channels and are designed to help you better meet the demands of the marketplace and recognize your areas of competitive advantage. To learn more, visit: www.ams.usda.gov/MarketingServicesPublications or contact the Marketing Services Division at (202) 720-8317.

Food Hubs and Distribution Infrastructure - AMS conducts case study and survey research on emerging distribution systems for producers of locally and regionally grown food. Sometimes called food hubs, these systems offer critical support services for small and mid-sized producers who may be interested in supplying food to larger volume customers, but often have difficulty meeting the requirements of these market channels on their own. To find out more about our food hub resources, visit www.ams.usda.gov/foodhubs or contact the Marketing Services Division at (202) 720-8317.

Market News Reports and Information - USDA Market News ensures market transparency by providing timely, accurate, and comprehensive information about prices for agricultural commodities and products. Regardless of the size or financial resources of their operations, all farmers and ranchers benefit from improved decisionmaking made possible by Market News information. To learn more, go to: www.ams.usda.gov/MarketNews or contact the commodity office that best fits your needs.

- Fruits, Vegetables and Specialty Crops: (202) 720-2745
- Milk and Dairy Products: (608) 250-3206
- Livestock, Meats, Grain, and Hay: (202) 720-6231



Finding Opportunities for Small and Mid-Sized Farmers and Ranchers



of income in diversifying your operation. To learn how you can become involved with a local farmers market or about other direct marketing services available, go to: www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets or contact the Marketing Services Branch at (202) 720-8317.

Farmers Market Design and Assessment - AMS provides architectural designs and technical site assessments to support the planning, development, and renovation of permanent food market facilities. Staff architects, engineers, and demographers work with local stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility of project plans and determine practical, cost-effective options for construction, equipment, and other physical plant upgrades. To learn more, visit:



- Poultry and Eggs: (202) 720-6911
- Cotton and Tobacco: (901) 384-3016

Selling Agricultural Products - USDA purchases and distributes food for Federal food and nutrition assistance programs, including the National School Lunch Program. AMS has a small business set-aside program which allows small businesses to participate in the Federal purchase program. Learn more about selling your products to USDA at: www.ams.usda.gov/CommodityPurchasing or contact the Commodity Procurement Division at (202) 720-4517.

Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) - The law requires that everyone must have a PACA license to operate a produce business. A PACA license protects those businesses by establishing and enforcing a code of fair business practices and by helping companies resolve business disputes. A PACA license is proof to your customers and suppliers that you are a serious business person who can be trusted to honor the terms of your contracts. To learn more, visit: www.ams.usda.gov/PACA or call the toll-free number at (800) 495-7222.

AMS Grants and Cost-Share Programs

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) - FMPP grants are available to help small producers improve their opportunities through farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Competition for these grants occurs annually, and awards range from \$5,000 to \$100,000, with no requirement for matching funds. To find out more about this program and to take advantage of the tools available to create an application, go to: www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP or contact the Farmers Market Promotion Program at (202) 720-0933.

Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) - FSMIP provides matching funds on a competitive basis to State departments of agriculture, State agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate State agencies, to assist them in exploring new market opportunities for food and agricultural products in domestic and overseas markets. These grants are also used to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the U.S. marketing system. Proposals may involve small, medium, or large-scale agricultural entities, but should potentially benefit multiple producers or agribusinesses. To learn more about this program, visit: www.ams.usda.gov/FSMIP or contact the FSMIP office at (202) 720-5024.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) - SCBGP funds can be requested for projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Many projects involve grant money to market locally grown foods. Applications for individual projects should be submitted through your own State department of agriculture. State departments of agriculture are encouraged to partner with specialty crop stakeholders, including socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers, in order to fulfill State specialty crop priorities. To learn more about how to apply and to find your State department of agriculture Project Coordinator, go to: www.ams.usda.gov/SCBGP or contact the SCBGP office at (202) 690-4942.

Cost-Share for Organic Certification - Have you thought about getting organic certification for your farm? This cost-share program is not competitive, and funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until exhausted. The program provides up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification with the goal of strengthening market support for U.S. agriculture. To learn more, visit: www.ams.usda.gov/NOPCostSharing or contact the National Organic Program at (202) 720-3252.

For more information about any AMS program, we are ready to assist you. Call AMS Outreach at (202) 690-0487 or email your inquiries to AMSO outreach@ams.usda.gov.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.