



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs

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### **National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs Releases Farm Bill Proposal**

*The National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP) maps a path forward for federal nutrition program benefits at the national level through their Farm Bill Proposal.*

Alexandria, VA (March 18, 2018) – The National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP) has released its Farm Bill proposal, outlining how federal nutrition benefits programs can be streamlined and more effective in the future.

NAFMNP is a non-profit organization founded in 1992, with the mission of supporting producers who sell at farmers markets and increasing farmers market sales. This is accomplished through the support of federal nutrition benefits programs, provision of technical assistance, and programs aimed at improving the mechanisms for accepting all federal nutrition benefits, which encompass a variety of tender types. NAFMNP is the nation's only organization that links States, the District of Columbia, Indian Tribal Organizations, Territories, local fruit and vegetable growers, and low-income families and seniors – all those who have a stake in USDA's Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs and share this mission.

NAFMNP represents 45,000 farmers and 8,000 farmers markets across the country, and thus the Farm Bill is vitally important legislation which could ensure the viability of federal nutrition benefits program acceptance at farmers markets and by small farmers nationwide.

This proposal increases flexibility in the programs, provides support for states' administration, and includes both veterans and programs that operate without federal funding to match – such as the Produce Plus program in Washington DC.

See below for the details of the proposal.

### **NAFMNP Farm Bill Proposal**

**Overall objective** - To move the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs into a consistent, uniform authorization and funding position and secure a deliberate funding increase over time and allow programs to expand the scope of the programs to increase the use of all nutrition programs at farmers markets.

**Secondary objective** – To secure mandatory funding for veterans to receive benefits redeemable at Farmers Markets.

- The states need more flexibility in administering the programs to accomplish these goals. There needs to be better coordination within USDA to ensure a successful, sustainable effort for nutrition programs in farmers markets.
- Specifically this language will authorize a Veteran's, WIC FMNP and Senior FMNP programs in the 2018 Farm Bill with similar authorizing language and provide funding at \$50 million annually. It expands scope of FMNP to allow for other nutrition program activities such as cooperation with SNAP incentive programs, etc.
- Secures funding over a period of time.
- Reduces strain on discretionary budget by about \$90 million over the life of the Farm Bill.
- Provides flexibility for the Secretary to move funds where there is more demand. Also provides countercyclical flexibility for economical cycles.
- Allows states more flexibility in administering the programs.
- Reduces duplicate areas across programs and saves administrative costs associated with the program across Federal and State administrations.

- It provides an avenue and funding for migration to an electronic platform for Farmers and Markets which reduces the needs for check and voucher printing.

### **Veterans**

- Over one in four veterans of the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan reported past-year food insecurity with 12% reporting very low food security. With increasing numbers of veterans returning from deployment, the need for food assistance is also increasing.
- Food insecurity is more prevalent among veterans than the general population due in part to higher rates of disability, medical problems, and mental health conditions that may make it more difficult for veterans to maintain an adequate income.
- There are key differences in demographic characteristics of the Veterans population which means that a program should be dedicated to their specific needs – accessible and easy to use.
- We have had two states running a program with measurable successes and there are other states that would like to provide similar benefits so the need for a national commitment is imminent.