

Governor Ted Strickland
Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher
Director Robert J. Boggs

Office of Communication
8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
Phone: 614-752-9817 • Fax: 614-466-7754
www.ohioagriculture.gov • communications@agri.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farmers' Market Access Project Offers Fresh Food to All

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Dec. 8, 2008) – In an effort to increase availability of fresh food to all Ohioans, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has collaborated with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to provide the newly established Farmers' Market Access Project. This project will offer grants to farmers' markets to process food assistance benefits via the Ohio Direction Card. The grants will assist the farmers' markets in costs associated with installing the infrastructure necessary to accept food assistance and providing outreach efforts.

"I am pleased that we are able to partner with farmers' markets across the state to help more people have greater access to homegrown, nutritious food produced by local farmers," said Department of Agriculture Director Robert Boggs. "This is yet another step in the right direction toward making healthy food available to all Ohioans."

Funds for the grant program were made available by congressional appropriation, with \$20,000 available for 2009. Grants will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis and are subject to available funding. Awarded grants will range from a minimum \$500 to a maximum \$1,000.

The ultimate goals of the Farmers' Market Access Project are to increase healthy food choices for all Ohioans and to promote the sale of Ohio foods, which will benefit Ohio farmers and the state economy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has found that for every \$5 spent in food assistance benefits, \$9.20 is generated in total community spending. There are currently more than 240 farmers' markets in the state that may be eligible to accept food assistance benefits using the Ohio Direction Card.

A farmers' market is a location where several producers congregate to offer fruits, vegetables, flowers, plants, and other agricultural products. These markets are often located in a public parking lot or at a local fairground. During the harvest season, most markets are open once or twice a week. For a listing of Ohio's farmers' markets, visit www.ohioproud.org.

-30-

Media Contact: Kaleigh Frazier, Public Information Officer, 614-728-6211

