2007 Farm Bill – A California Perspective
Testimony submitted by California Coalition for Food and Farming
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The California Coalition for Food and Farming *(Food and Farming – www.calfoodandfarming.org)* is comprised of 48 organizations and many more individuals who value sustainable agriculture and food systems. The coalition's diverse membership represents conventional, transitional, organic and niche farming; environmental organizations; and food security and nutrition organizations. *Food and Farming'*s mission is to build and mobilize a diverse coalition that will transform California's food system to one that is environmentally sound, socially just and economically viable. Our efforts on the 2007 Farm Bill focuses on policy reforms that support this mission.

Food and Farming's highest priority is to improve the way knowledge about farming and food systems is explored, developed and delivered. Although the cost of the Farm Bill is high, it is America's investment in a vibrant economic sector that provides communities with healthful food, clean air and water, land for habitat and a future for our grandchildren and their children. *Food and Farming* believes that this investment in knowledge exploration, developing and delivery will not only strengthen small and mid-sized farms and rural communities, it will improve the health of our nation.

RESEARCH

The Research Title of the 2002 Farm Bill is funded at almost $2.7 billion and funds programs that were designed to meet the needs of a highly industrialized agriculture system. *Food and Farming* recommends changes to the Research Title of the 2007 Farm Bill that:

- Restore balance and fairness into the USDA research agenda by focusing more resources on the needs of family farms and ranches, new generation cooperatives, small non-farm rural businesses;

- Incorporate stakeholders into planning and implementing outcome-oriented research, and fund programs such as the grant programs for research into new markets, local and regional food system development, new crops, rural community and enterprise development at an appropriate and necessary level;

- Increase funding into organic agriculture research and outreach, so that this single fastest growing sector of agriculture production receives a proportionate share of research revenue;

- Create programs that protect genetic diversity, develop new plant and animal varieties that meet the needs of tomorrow's agriculture, particularly organic and sustainable productions systems, and maintain a diverse, independent farming sector.

To achieve these goals, we make the following recommendations:

- ***USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES), Economic Research Service (ERS), National Research Initiative (NRI), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and other USDA programs.*** Research funding for these programs should be significantly increased and/or reallocated to appropriately and proportionally fund programs that support:

  - ✓ the important role that healthful foods and specialty crops, especially those produced organically, play in the maintenance of human health;

  - ✓ sustainable agriculture systems and farming practices that are good for the environment, good for the farmer and good for the consumer;

  - ✓ small and mid-size farmers and ranchers, natural resource and conservation practitioners, rural development, entrepreneurship, and marketing.

- ***Integrated Organic Program.*** Expand and improve the existing Integrated Organic Program to include the existing mandatory Organic Research and Extension Initiative and the discretionary Organic Transition program, as well as a new economic and marketing research initiative and a producer grant program. Significantly expand the funding, to at least $10 million/year. Create a National Program Leader position to facilitate this effort.

- ***Agricultural Research Service (ARS).)*** USDA currently spends $2.4 billion (3.1%) of its total budget on research, education and economic development programs. Of that amount, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) spent about $3.5 million on organic-specific projects. A "fair share" framework for funding of organic agriculture, based on its share of US retail food sales, calls for a 5-fold increase in this amount, at least, to a level of $20 million in USDA-ARS resources allocated for organic programs. A National Program Leader is also needed to facilitate this effort.

- ***Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities (66.0) Program.*** Increase funding to this NRI program from $5 million biennially to $9 million annually. In making NRI grants to address "farm efficiency and profitability," including "the viability and competitiveness of small and medium-sized dairy, livestock, crop, and other commodity operations," the new farm bill should direct the Secretary of Agriculture to solicit proposals benefiting the full range of small and medium-sized operations, not limiting proposals to a small farm focus only, and to solicit proposals related to self employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for new and beginning farmers and ranchers.

- ***Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program.*** Increase funding to this program from the current level of $12.3 million to $25 million. SARE program provides grants to advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities. Specifically, the program awards grants to farms, universities, nonprofit organizations, and research/education institutions or agencies to improve the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of farming and ranching. SARE also conducts educational and extension programs in an effort to increase knowledge about—and help

farmers and ranchers adopt—practices that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible.

- ***National Research Initiative.*** Allocate 33%, or a minimum of $20 million/year, of the National Research Initiative (NRI) on outcome oriented research to improve future food production, family farm and ranch profitability, environmental performance, and non-farm micro enterprise and other rural economic and community development strategies. Invest in competitive grant programs within NRI for long-term systems research focusing on agricultural and environmental interactions and the study and restoration of such systems.

The goals of US agricultural research and dissemination in public plant and animal breeding should be to protect genetic diversity; develop new plant and animal varieties that meet the needs of tomorrow's agriculture – particularly the underserved needs of those of sustainable and organic production systems; and maintain a diverse, independent farming sector. The decline in public funding of plant and animal breeding coupled with an increase in private funding has left a hole in education of the next generation of breeders as well as a gap in minor crops and breeds, and in longer term, systems research. Increased support is needed within the NRI for public plant and animal breeding for sustainable and organic systems. These programs should emphasize classical plant and animal breeding focused on local and regional adaptations for increased environmental benefits, food quality and pest and pathogen resistance. We recommend that the Farm Bill:

- ***Germplasm collection, preservation and evaluation.*** Increase financial and personnel support for the collection, preservation and evaluation of germplasm collections and encourage increased public use of the rich sources of genetic diversity in the U.S. germplasm collections.

- ***National Genetic Resource Program.*** This program, from the 1990 Farm Bill, should be reestablished and implemented.

- ***Plant and Animal Breeding programs.*** Establish a program area within USDA's Agricultural Research Service for long-term research on classical plant and animal breeding, including the development of finished varieties.

- ***Link programs.*** Link existing competitive research and extension grants and rural development programs to food and agricultural systems that promote environmental stewardship and small and mid-sized farm profitability, genetic resource preservation, and participatory animal and plant breeding initiatives.

- ***Land Grant Colleges and Universities.*** Increase public funding and other incentives for Land Grant Universities including the 1890 and 1994 institutions and for non-governmental organizations to maintain viable training and research programs for undergraduate and graduate students in the basics of classical plant and animal breeding. These programs should be sensitive to the employment potential and needs of both the private and public sector job markets.

- ***Formula funds and competitive grants for Land Grants.*** Increase federal formula funds and competitive grants expressly for the purpose of educating and training public plant and animal breeders. New legislation should include incentives for publicly-funded and trained plant and

animal breeders to remain in the public sector for 5 years through reduction of their school loan debts.

- ***Incentives for stakeholders.*** Establish incentive programs for farmers and farmer associations to participate in testing, selection, seed increase, and evaluation of plant varieties in germplasm repositories.

- ***Partnerships with non profits and farmers.*** Increase funding for public breeding projects that include partnerships with non-profit organizations and farmers and ranchers with a goal of increasing publicly available seeds and animal germplasm for sustainable and organic production systems, based on the models developed by the Farmer Cooperative Genome Project, the Public Seed Initiative funded by USDA's Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems, the Organic Seed Alliance, and the Organic Seed Partnership funded by USDA's Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Disseminating information to the end users – farmers, ranchers, and communities – is not only crucial, it is mandated in existing law. However, the practice falls short of expectations and needs. Some programs, such as the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) and the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) require technology transfer as one criterion for receiving grant funding. This model should be replicated throughout other programs. In addition, the farmer-to-farmer learning model has existed for generations, and is a much more effective way of transferring knowledge or information about implementing a new tool or technology than the traditional top-down approach that existing programs currently use. *Food and Farming* recommends:

- Require applications to contain a technology transfer or dissemination component.
- Change program criteria from one of rigid practice standards for producers to one of rewarding entrepreneurial or innovative practices.
- Work with NRCS, land grants, ARS, and other organizations to determine how to reward technology transfer. Remove the institutional barriers that prevent practitioners from incorporating technology transfer into their practices. Align these processes with states so that producers can benefit both on the national and on the state level.
- Allow for and rank applicants higher for the use of demonstration projects in programs such as EQIP.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

California's abundant agriculture is produced both in its rural areas and in its urban centers. This unique dynamic creates tremendous opportunities for people working in agricultural and rural communities, as well as on the edge of urban areas. In 2005, USDA Rural Development invested $344 million in rural housing and economic development funds in rural California – a major resource resulting from the Farm Bill. *Food and Farming* believes that these and other federal resources offer important opportunities for small- and medium-scale farmers practicing sustainable and organic agriculture.

Ethnic diversity in agriculture is growing quickly. The number of Latino farmers in California increased 44% from 1997 to 2002. Coupled with 50% growth in the same period nationwide, they are the fastest growing agricultural demographic. From 2002 to 2004 in Fresno County, sales of "oriental vegetables," grown by many Southeast Asian immigrant farmers, more than doubled from $7.3 to $15.8 million. The need to support beginning and ethnically diverse farmers is critical: the number of entry-level farmers replacing retiring farmers has decreased 30% in the past 15 years. In making grants to address rural economic and community development, the new farm bill must give clear direction to USDA that grants should include agriculturally-based development, with particular attention to new markets, locally-owned value-adding enterprises, value chains that allow the passage of value from the consumer to the farmer, and self-employment and entrepreneurial opportunities including entrepreneurship education and training.

Rural development resources can, in particular, foster success among new farmers, including the growing numbers of immigrant farmers, while creating more diverse markets for the products of sustainable agriculture. Growing business within the ethnic diversity of both urban and rural areas is an opportunity to foster food-based entrepreneurship and small-farm success throughout California. However, for these new markets to thrive there must also be safeguards to assure fair competition in the marketplace, and new avenues for small-scale farmers to reach local and regional markets in the state.

We recommend increased resources to the following programs, to support new farmers and immigrant farmers**:**

- ***Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.*** This program would offer farm credit financing programs specifically to beginning farmers and ranchers. It was authorized in Section 7405 of the 2002 Farm Bill, but it never received any appropriation of funds. It should be reauthorized with $15 million in mandatory funding for the 2007 Farm Bill to support a new generation of beginning farmers and ranchers.

- ***Section 2501 Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program.*** The 2501 program has provided outreach to more than 100,000 rural constituents and is an invaluable resource for more than 400 counties, including major efforts among Hmong and Latino farmers in California. Though the program is authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill at $25 million, it has never been given more than $6 million a year. Strong demand indicates that at least $10 million is needed.

- ***The Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) Program.*** needs to be funded at $3.0 million. This program has directly served over 160,000 rural constituents. Additional thousands are served through ATTRA's website. ATTRA develops and shares information on sustainable farm management, production, and marketing with minority producers and other farmers directly, and through community-based organizations. ATTRA helps small and minority farmers access USDA's credit, commodity, conservation and other programs.

- ***Individual Development Accounts (IDAs.)*** California leads the nation in using IDAs to support beginning farmers' ability to build assets for starting farm enterprises. With very limited funding, California FarmLink has helped 15 new farmers, including organic farmers at the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), through a matched savings program. They hope to fund 9 additional farmers in the next few months. This California based program should be modeled in

the Farm Bill which should include a new Beginning Farmer and Rancher IDA program to help people with modest means to enter farming.

Growing markets for the products of sustainable agriculture offer vast opportunities for entrepreneurial food processing and marketing. Developing resilient local food systems will depend on community-based enterprises that can be generated or supported by the USDA resources, including:

- ***Value-Added Producer Grant Program.*** By helping farmers to plan new business ventures, this program creates new markets that can leverage the development of local food systems. For example, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) received value-added funding to create regional farm-to-school initiatives by helping small farmers consolidate fresh produce to reach institutional markets. The program has been authorized at $40 million annually, and should receive mandatory funding of $50 million the 2007 Farm Bill.

- ***Rural Business Enterprise / Rural Business Opportunity Grants.*** Both are relatively small programs, delivering a combined $1.9 million to rural California in 2005, but they represent important resources for entrepreneurship. In particular the Rural Business Enterprise Grants program should clearly state that it can be used for agriculturally related business targeting the needs of small- and medium-sized farmers. The next Farm Bill should provide financial support for these programs at levels equal to or greater than those authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill.

Sales of organic meat, poultry and seafood grew by 139% from 2003 to 2004, and consumers' desire to buy local and healthful foods is expected to expand markets for small-scale, grass-fed livestock production. Population growth among immigrant and ethnic groups in California is expanding demand for products such as goat meat, and for specialty processing or cuts known in their countries of origin. There are two Farm Bill initiatives that can support these developments:

- ***Competition Title.*** The next Farm Bill should include a competition title that helps restore fairness and efficiency to market forces, particularly livestock markets, through strengthened and improved enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act and other measures. This can be particularly important for small-scale livestock producers seeking avenues to process and sell their products locally and regionally.

- ***Reduce Regulatory Barriers for Local Meat Processing.*** There is an acute need to reduce regulations that impede the development of local and regional markets for meat products. Farm Bill action on this topic could support the further development of grass-fed meats, organic livestock production and other strategies that support the integration of small- and medium-scale integrated livestock and crop farming systems in California.

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

The Conservation Title may offer the most significant opportunity for California farmers and landowners to benefit from Farm Bill programs. While we face enormous environmental challenges in California, the vast majority of California producers receive no federal assistance because more than three quarters of federal agriculture spending flows to producers of a handful of commodities, and a much smaller amount is dedicated to assisting farmers and ranchers through conservation programs. Implementation provisions such as rules for determining rental rates for CRP lands, or easement values for WRP lands, make conservation programs less effective in California where land is expensive and

subject to significant development pressure. Conservation programs traditionally fund basic conservation practices but are slow to implement new, innovative practices that are more effective tools. California's producers need tools that will help them comply with our strict air and water quality regulations. We recommend that conservation programs support more innovative practices and approaches, encourage cooperative efforts among farmers, ensure necessary technical assistance that makes such efforts successful in achieving real results, and help California farmers comply with stringent environmental regulations.

Conservation Security Program

The many regional sustainable agriculture working groups, and their national parent organizations, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, have a long history of working on the Conservation Title (II). This network was instrumental in bringing the California vote into play when the Conservation Security Program (CSP) was being designed. All these groups worked diligently during the negotiations on the 2002 Farm Bill to educate the public and Congress about how important this new program would be for ensuring that the agriculture industry would incorporate practices that protect habitats and natural resources. The CSP was created to provide financial and technical assistance for the conservation, protection, and improvement of soil, water, air, plant and animal resources on private working lands. By design, CSP provides payments for producers who practice good stewardship on their working agricultural lands and incentives for those who want to do more. CSP assistance was authorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (farm bill) as a mandatory entitlement program but since its inception has experienced significant raids of its budget, and serious problems with implementation. It is currently funded at $259 million. Initially it was authorized at $3.77 billion/year for the life of the farm bill. It should be fully funded at a level of at least $3.77 billion per year, so that the program is implemented in the way Congress intended. In order to better serve all farmers and ranchers, we recommend that the program be redesigned in the following ways:

- We recommend an increase in the number of NRCS biologists and other experts on biodiversity and conservation of wildlife habitat that are available to provide technical assistance to producers desiring help with CSP implementation.

- Organic growers face additional barriers when applying for the CSP program, since many of the practices prioritized in the CSP tiers, such as no-till, do not reflect practices used by organic growers. Organic farmers do not need to test their soil which is one requirement of the CSP program. Requiring soil testing of an organic farm is redundant. We will work to improve the implementation of CSP so that organic farmers can benefit from its use. We recommend allowing organic farm plans to be accepted as conservation plans under the program.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

In California EQIP is one of the most widely used Farm Bill conservation programs. Despite the fact that California producers received $46 million in EQIP grants in 2004 more than 4000 producers in California went unserved. The FY 2005 allocation for Environmental Quality Incentives Program

(EQIP) fell more than $33 million short of the value of backlog applications. EQIP funding is currently $1,017 billion and is slated for cuts in 2006. In addition to increasing the funding to $ 5 billion year, the EQIP program would benefit from other reforms, including:

- As is done in Nebraska, Minnesota and Montana, allow farmers to use EQIP funds to pay for the cost of transitioning from conventional to organic.
- Allow EQIP grants to incorporate a demonstration model for transferring knowledge from one farmer to another.
- Enact legislation tasking NRCS to implement "Integrated Pest Management Initiatives" in key regions around the country where pesticide use poses the greatest threat to human health and the environment, or where pesticide use is prioritized by regulatory programs (see sample language attached). In the regions identified by NRCS the agency would be required to fully integrate pest management into its existing programs, increase its capacity to promote IPM through partnerships with other agencies and organizations, and provide specific tools and resources for promoting IPM.
- Revise EQIP to ensure greater environmental performance from funded projects. In addition to boosting over-all environmental performance of this program, ensuring that EQIP funds the best practices for the most serious environmental issues will enhance the quantity and quality of funded pest management projects.
- Set the payment limitation at no more than $100,000 for a 5-year contract or $60,000 for a 3-year contract.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Current technical assistance programs that are crucial for ensuring that farmers and communities can fully utilize conservation programs do not work optimally. The Technical Service Provider program within NRCS is not up to necessary standards in many states. NRCS is hampered by inadequate staffing, lack of funding, pressure from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the administration. NRCS needs to design technical assistance programs that more adequately utilize private industry and nonprofit organizations to interface with end users. And farmers need to be able to access NRCS as a "one-stop-shop" with application processes being streamlined and technical assistance being much more accessible.

Food and Farming will work with member and partner organizations on policies that:

- Increase funding both for existing NRCS staffing levels and for outsourcing technical assistance, so that the outsourced jobs are more competitive.
- Ensure that key components of a conservation program design include diverse participation; up-front investment from private sector; training opportunities and regionally-adjusted training materials; market based conservation model; use of existing structures; built in incentives for cooperative efforts; one stop plan that can be used for other NRCS/government programs.
- Design the technical assistance component of a program by asking the question, "What will it take to get the conservation that we want?"

- Design the technical assistance components so that they cut across all existing programs.
- Change NRCS culture to one of working one-on-one to one of working with groups.
- Ensure that the technical assistance component emphasizes whole-farm planning. Components should include marketing, risk management, agronomy, and conservation plans.
- Streamline conservation programs by creating a common conservation plan that is applicable to all programs. This whole farm plan should include an inventory of assets and should be modeled after existing successful plans such as those contained in the Landowner Environment Assessment Portfolio (LEAP)
- Reward participants by giving extra points for conservation plan in EQIP or other program applications.
- Align technical assistance plans so that end users can achieve CSP goals, as well as state or regional environmental goals.
- Uses successful existing programs as models.

FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION AND HEALTH

The highly industrialized agriculture practiced in America results in ever-increasing yields per acre and in food by products that lack nutrition and contain a high level of complex carbohydrates. This fact, combined with the increasing gap in America between the "haves" and the "have-nots" means that we must develop policies that help people obtain food that is healthful, nutritious and locally sourced, and we must help people learn about the nutritious quality of healthful food and how to use those foods for their own well-being. More and more, health considerations and needs are being linked to agricultural practices and policies as Americans continue to focus on health concerns, including the alarming obesity epidemic in America. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy recently reported that that "low prices for corn and soybeans over the last several decades has spurred investment in high fructose corn syrup…and hydrogenated vegetable oils (trans fats)" contributing to alarming rates of obesity in the US. While prices for these and similar ingredients have decreased, contributing to low priced calorie dense processed foods, the prices for fresh fruits and vegetables, which receive very little if any government support, have steadily increased. And US consumers are increasingly reliant on imports of high value crops, a lost opportunity for US farmers. [i]

Food and Farming recommends policies that **:**

- Emphasize the connection between public health, food and farm policies.
- Support local and regional food systems that benefit the farmer and the consumer.
- Create market incentives that increase healthy food consumption.
- Work on institutional procurement policies that favor healthy food.

There are many compelling reasons to link the sustainable agriculture and health sectors. In addition to the obesity crisis, other health effects of a highly industrialized agriculture industry include cancer, asthma, antibiotic resistance and nutrition-related chronic disease such as diabetes. These problems, which affect everyone, occur at much higher rates among people with low incomes and people of color. Good eating habits are one key to preventing chronic disease and reducing demands on the

costly health care system in America. Increasing access to health food is an important strategy to prevent obesity and chronic disease.

The Food Stamp Program provides low-income households with coupons or electronic benefits they can use like cash at most grocery stores to ensure that they have access to a healthy diet. It is the cornerstone of the Federal food assistance programs, and provides crucial support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work. It provided an average of $2.1 billion a month and helped put food on the table for some 10.3 million households and 23.9 million individuals each day in Fiscal Year 2004.

Food and Farming recommends a change in Food Stamp Education policy:

- ***Food Stamp Nutrition Education*** Define the mission and scope of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education program to focus appropriately on the most effective interventions to drive behavior and environmental changes to better assist food stamp recipients and eligible population in eating a healthful diet rich in a variety of fruit and vegetables consistent with the Dietary Guidelines.

- Increase the food stamp programs to provide an adequate safety net. Benefit levels need to reflect the cost of healthy foods. Pass federal enabling legislation so that states can spend up to 50% of their federal Food Stamp money on nutrition education targeted at low-income households that consist of food stamp program participants as well as potentially eligible low-income households (those that have incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level). Application procedures need to be simplified so that people in need do not lose benefits because of unnecessary red tape.

- Coordinate federal nutrition education programs with existing state nutrition education programs, with a goal of increasing participation in nutrition education programs.

- Create programs that maximize outreach and efficiency in Food Stamp delivery, and in nutrition education services; support efforts to prevent obesity; promote increased consumption of US agricultural products, especially California specialty crops including fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Create federal incentives for state nutrition education programs to use innovative marketing and educational approaches that empower low-income individuals to make healthy choices and promote improved access to healthy food in grocery stores, worksites and other settings.

- Align these programs with the USDA Dietary Guidelines.

- Amend existing federal law so that if a federally-reimbursed state nutrition education program incidentally reaches low-income individuals other than food stamp recipients, the state program will not be disqualified from receiving federal reimbursement.

- Increase access to healthy foods in schools, in other institutions such as prisons and hospitals, and in the workplace.

- ***Farmers Market Nutrition Programs.*** Continue to fight for funding and implementation for Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNPs) which provide a direct tie between nutrition and production agriculture by providing seniors (Senior FMNP) and nutritionally at-risk women and children (WIC FMNP) the opportunity to buy fresh local produce directly from farmers. The programs are intended to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by expanding or aiding in the development of farmers markets, farm stands and CSAs. The FMNPs provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs to low-income women, children and the elderly while providing much needed income to thousands of small family farmers who in turn spend those dollars in their local communities; thus promoting local economic development. These programs are currently funded at $19.8 million. We recommend a funding level of $25 million, as was initially recommended in the 2002 Farm Bill.

- ***Farmers Market Promotion Programs*** Farmers Market Promotion Program makes grants available to establish, expand and promote farmers' markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture enterprises, and other direct producer to consumer opportunities. The Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP) was authorized in Section 10605 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 as a competitive grants program, administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Statutory language authorizes grants to agricultural cooperatives; local governments; non-profit corporations; public benefit corporations; economic development corporations; regional farmers' market authorities; and other eligible entities for the purpose of establishing, expanding and promoting local farmers markets and other forms of direct farmer-to-consumer markets. The program is administered by the Marketing Services Branch of the Agricultural Marketing Service, and is funded a mere $1 million. We recommend significant increases to this program.

See Appendix for website reference list.

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