

August 3-9 National Farmers Market Week

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has declared August 3 through 9, 2014, "National Farmers Market Week". Throughout the week, USDA will celebrate our nation's thousands of farmers markets, farmers who make them possible and the communities that host them.

The declaration was made via an [official proclamation](#) signed by Secretary Vilsack. This year marks the 15th Annual National Farmers Market Week recognizing the important role that farmers markets play in the agricultural and food economy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture began declaring National Farmers Market Week in 2000.

"National Farmers Market Week is a great opportunity for farmers markets across the country to host special events to showcase all the tremendous services they provide," said Secretary Vilsack. "Farmers markets play a key role in developing local and regional food systems that support family farms, and help grow rural economies. They bring communities together, connecting cities with the farms that support them and provide Americans across the country with fresh, healthy food."

In honor of National Farmers Market Week, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Administrator Anne Alonzo will be at the Dane County Farmers Market located on the grounds of the State Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin on Saturday, August 2. The Madison farmers market is the largest producer-only farmers market in the U.S. On August 8, the USDA Farmers Market, located at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC, will host a Healthy Back-To-School Challenge to show kids and their families how to cook simple, healthy, and delicious snacks with seasonal ingredients. Other USDA officials will be at other farmers market locations across the country throughout the week.

Thousands of farmers markets across the country offer consumers fresh, affordable, convenient, and healthful products sold directly from the farm. They also offer additional market opportunities for local producers, especially smaller or newer operations. Farmers markets increasingly offer electronic benefits transfer technology that can be used by recipients of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - as well as low-income women, infants, and children and seniors participating in the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs - to get fresh, seasonal ingredients.

Farmers market development is a cornerstone of the [USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative](#), which coordinates the Department's policy, resources, and outreach efforts related to local and regional food systems. Secretary Vilsack has identified strengthening local food systems as one of the four pillars of USDA's commitment to rural economic development, along with production agriculture (including expanding export markets and improving research), promoting conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities, and growing the biobased economy.