



A Food and Farm Bill

A Guide to Farm Bill Programs At Work in Northeast Ohio





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GRANTS AND PROGRAMS

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (SARE) PRODUCER GRANTS– SARE offers a competitive grants program to provide support to farmers, researchers, agricultural educators, ranchers, and students in the United States for research and education related to on-farm renewable energy, pest and weed management, pastured livestock & rotational grazing, no-till and conservation tillage, nutrient management, agroforestry, marketing, sustainable communities, systems research, and crop and livestock diversity



Ohio Sheep Milk and Cheese Initiative (2010) – Lucky Penny Farm in Kent, OH

The project explored the opportunity to develop production of sheep milk and artisan sheep cheese in Ohio. Annually, United States imports over 66 million pounds of sheep milk cheese. Farmer and artisan cheese maker, Abbe Turner from Lucky Penny Farm and Creamery in Kent, OH, received the NC SARE farmer grant along with several other Ohio sheep farmers, Innovative Farmers of Ohio and Small Farm Institute.

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS - The primary objective of the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program is to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the end goals of this program.



Appalachian Staple Food Collaborative (2010) – Shagbark Seed and Mill in Athens, OH

The Value Added Producer Grant was awarded to Brandon Jaeger to develop a business/marketing plan and operations feasibility for spelt and amaranth, the two crops Jaeger grows for the prototype facility at Shagbark Seed & Mill Co.

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANTS – USDA provides grants to the state departments of agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops include the following products: fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops including floriculture.



Farmers Market Access Project in Cleveland, OH– (2008) Ohio Department of Agriculture provided small grants to farmers markets to promote the development of infrastructure and outreach to allow Food Assistance recipients increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables.



Local Roots Cooperative Market in Wooster, OH – (2009) Local Roots used SCBG funds to develop an online ordering system and central distribution location to handle, sort, store, distribute, and market specialty crop products.



Growhio in Cleveland, OH (2010) – Growhio used SCBG to improve Ohio’s specialty crop industry through a broad marketing campaign for local farmers markets including billboards and RTA signs and supported new farmers through the Community Vendor Assistance Package.

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – Beginning Farmers and Rancher Develop Program grants are available to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives that address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers.



BEAN Project (2010-2013) – Ohio State University Extension in Cleveland, OH

The Beginning Entrepreneurs in Agricultural Networks or BEAN Project provides training and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County through the Market Gardener Training Program, fieldtrips to farms in Northeast Ohio, a farmer mentoring program and the urban agriculture incubator at the Kinsman Farm.

Training is also available in multiple languages to immigrants and refugees through the Refugee Immigrant Farmer Training Program in partnership with ASIA Inc. and Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services.

COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS GRANTS

Community Food Project grants are available through the USDA for programs that meet the food needs of low-income people; increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and promote the comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues.



City Fresh (2004-2007) – New Agrarian Center in Oberlin, OH

City Fresh seeks to improve local food access in inner-city “food desert” neighborhoods that have lost grocery stores. Launched as a social enterprise in 2005 following receipt of a Community Food Project grant from the USDA, City Fresh improved food access by operating neighborhood Fresh Stops (volunteer-run food distribution centers) that provide nutrition education and space for community gathering. City Fresh also partnered with Ohio State University Extension to develop an urban market garden training program to convert vacant lots in the city to productive market gardens. The program trained 51 urban farming entrepreneurs and provided start-up funding for 13 market gardens. Today, City Fresh produce distribution is conducted completely by volunteers representing 15 neighborhoods in three counties.

FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM

Farmers Market Promotion Program offers grants to help improve and expand domestic farmers’ markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers’ market authorities and Tribal governments are among those eligible to apply. Approximately \$10 million in FMPP grants are available in fiscal year 2012.



City of Ravenna received an FMPP grant to increase access to healthy local food and the income of local farmers by purchasing equipment and supplies to operate a new farmers market; develop a website, market signage and advertising and promotional program; and conduct consumer educational sessions on proper food handling and preparation for Ravenna residents.



Common Wealth, Inc. in Youngstown, OH received an FMPP grant to establish two year-round farmers markets (one in Youngstown and one in Warren) and to implement a marketing, aggregation, and distribution system for the Lake-to-River Food Cooperative to efficiently expand sales to schools, hospitals, and retail sites such as gas stations and corner stores.

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM - The USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day in selected elementary schools with a high proportion of low-income students and teaches students about the importance of good nutrition and promotes the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.



In Cuyahoga County, 63 schools will offer fresh fruits and vegetable to elementary students during the school day for the 2012-2013 school year. Cleveland Metropolitan School District will offer the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in 50 schools and uses the flexibility of the program to procure a variety of local produce for its students from Ohio businesses.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM - The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.



EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative (Cuyahoga County)

The goal of the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative is to assist producers to extend the growing season for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner. National Resources Conservation Service working in partnership with Congresswoman Marcia Fudge's office have expanded opportunities for local urban farmers to apply for the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative in Cuyahoga County through community outreach and education and flexible eligibility requirements. In 2012, over 35 producers in Cuyahoga County have applied for the program which provides financial assistance to purchase a high tunnel for season extension.

WOMEN INFANTS AND CHILDREN FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM - The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC. The FMNP was established by Congress in 1992, to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants through the WIC FMNP coupon program, and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets.



Ohio Department of Health received \$542,401 in federal funding to administer the WIC FMNP program which provides five \$3.00 coupons to WIC participants to spend at local farmers markets. 34,525 Ohio WIC participants received coupons and were able to purchase fresh produce from over 500 farmers across Ohio.

SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM - The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) awards grants to States, United States Territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.



The Ohio Department of Aging receives \$1.7 million in federal funding to support the administration of the program in Ohio. Seniors ages 60 and older are eligible for ten \$5.00 coupons that can be used at local farmers markets, farm stands, and community supported agriculture programs across the state. The Senior FMNP program is administered locally by the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging.

SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) – Formerly known as Food Stamps, the SNAP Program was renamed in the 2008 Farm Bill to address nutritional gaps and provide a vehicle to align farm and food policy with national public health priorities. SNAP receives the largest amount of funding out of any of the farm bills titles with \$76.5 billion budgeted for the program in FY2011. 46.2 million people are currently enrolled in the program across the country (15% of our US Population). In the years since its establishment in 1964, the program has transitioned from working to make more effective use of agricultural overproduction and strengthen the agricultural economy to a safety net combatting hunger and food insecurity.



In Ohio the SNAP program is administered through Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services with support from nine local offices, including Cuyahoga County Employment and Family Services and its Neighborhood Family Service Centers. Recipients in Ohio receive food assistance dollars through the use of an Ohio Direction Card that can be swiped at many SNAP certified retailers like a credit or debit card. This process of using an Ohio Direction Card is called EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) which is often used synonymously with SNAP/Food Stamps. In Cuyahoga County, 37,206 persons are receiving Food and Nutrition Benefits through public assistance as of May 2012 with an average monthly issuance of \$141.