
For Immediate Release:

FMNP ASSISTS SENIORS, WOMEN & CHILDREN BUY FRESH PRODUCE FROM LOCAL FARMERS

Montgomery, May 2, 2003 - Don Wambles, Administrator of the State of Alabama Farmers Market Authority, announces that Alabama will distribute almost \$1,000,000.00 to approximately 48,000 low-income seniors to buy fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs from Alabama farmers. Funds for the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) will be distributed in 50 counties this year. Through the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WFMNP), over \$250,000 will be distributed to more than 12,500 low-income nutritionally at risk women and children in 7 counties.

"These programs have been funded at least in part with Federal funds awarded to the Alabama Farmers Market Authority from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the WIC & Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program grants. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government."

The goals of the FMNPs include improving the diets of low-income seniors and nutritionally at risk women and children increasing sales of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs at farmers markets and roadside stands and assist in developing new or expanding existing farmers' markets and roadside stands.

This initiative will provide recipients with cash benefits for use during the 2003 harvest season to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs from farmers at farmers' markets and roadside stands approved by the Farmers Market Authority.

In 2002, Alabama's Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (WIC FMNP & Senior FMNP) assisted approximately 61,000 low-income seniors, women and children in 46 counties. They were able to purchase locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables to improve their diet and health. FMNP coupon purchases generated over \$1.2 million in income for almost 1,000 small farmers selling at 49 farmers' markets and 83 roadside stands in our state.

"These programs have increased farmers' client base and incomes; provided low-income seniors, young women and children with nutritious Alabama grown fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs and we all stand to benefit from a healthier population and the economic stimulus that will be felt by many local economies throughout Alabama. These programs are an example of direct marketing in which everyone benefits," Wambles said.

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