



STATE OF ALABAMA
FARMERS MARKET AUTHORITY



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Director

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ALABAMA FARMERS MARKET AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE \$1.7 MILLION NOW RANKED THIRD IN NATION FOR SFMNP FUNDING

Montgomery, Ala. — The State of Alabama Farmers Market Authority (FMA) has been notified that they will receive \$1.7 million from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the 2008 Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). With this award, Alabama moves into third place behind Pennsylvania and New York in dollars received for the SFMNP. Eligible seniors receive funds in the form of food vouchers that can only be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at authorized farmers markets, u-pick operations and roadside stands directly from the farmer that grew them.

The SFMNP is a federal program that is authorized and funded through the Farm Bill. While the 2002 Farm Bill provided mandatory funding for the SFMNP, it was very limited, only \$15 million nationwide. Consequently, Alabama as well as other states could not expand their existing programs. With the expiration of the 2002 Farm Bill on September 30, 2007, Congress had to pass new legislation. FMA Director Don Wambles anticipated additional funding for the SFMNP would be included in the new Farm Bill. The new Farm Bill provides \$20.6 million for the SFMNP nationwide. Wambles had requested more than \$1 million in additional funds. Alabama received \$750,000 of additional funds which was the largest increase awarded in the country. "With Alabama receiving \$1.7 million of the available \$20.6 million it speaks well of our program," said Wambles.

"The additional funds will enable us to assist more than 61,000 seniors this year and increase income for our farmers," said Wambles. "The SFMNP assists seniors with access to fresh, nutritious and good tasting fruits and vegetables and assists farmers by increasing sales. A winning combination for Alabama communities," continues Wambles.

The SFMNP is available in all 67 counties. The FMA contracts with the Area Agencies on Aging to issue the vouchers to eligible seniors. For information on the distribution of vouchers, you may call 1-800-243-5463 or 1-877-774-9519. For eligibility requirements to receive the food vouchers and for a listing of authorized farmers markets, u-pick operations or roadside stands, please visit www.BuyLocalAlabama.com, and click on "Nutrition Programs" icon.

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