

# Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

## Overview of program and benefits

(source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture)

Enrollment in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is conducted by the Waynesboro Senior Center, 325 Pine Ave., Waynesboro, Virginia, Phone: 540-942-1838

**1. What is the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)?** The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a program in which grants are awarded 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 at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. The grant funds may be used only to support the costs of the foods that are provided under the SFMNP; no administrative funding is available.

**2. What is the purpose of the SFMNP?** The purposes of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program are to:

- Provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors
- increase the consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding, developing, or aiding in the development and expansion of domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.

**3. Who is eligible for SFMNP benefits?** Low-income seniors, generally defined as individuals who are at least 60 years old and who have household incomes of not more than 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines (published each year by the Department of Health and Human Services) are the targeted recipients of SFMNP benefits. Some State agencies accept proof of participation or enrollment in another means-tested program, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program or Food Stamps, for SFMNP eligibility.

**4. When does the SFMNP operate?** SFMNP benefits are provided to eligible recipients for use during the harvest season. In some States, the SFMNP season is relatively short, because the growing season in that area is not very long. In other States with longer growing seasons, recipients have a longer period of time in which to use their SFMNP benefits.

**5. Where does the SFMNP operate?** For Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, grants were awarded to 47 State agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal governments to operate the SFMNP: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Five Sandoval Pueblos (New Mexico), Florida, the Grand Traverse Indians in Michigan, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, the Osage Tribal Council in Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, San Felipe Pueblo (New Mexico), South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

**6. How does the SFMNP operate?** Once the SFMNP benefits have been issued to eligible seniors, they can be used to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs at authorized farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. In 2003, these products were available from almost 14,000 farmers at more than 2,000 farmers' markets as well as close to 1,800 roadside stands and 200 community supported agriculture programs.

**7. What foods are available through the SFMNP?** Fresh, nutritious, unprepared fruits, vegetables, and fresh-cut herbs can be purchased with SFMNP benefits. State agencies may limit SFMNP sales to specific foods that are locally grown in order to encourage SFMNP recipients to support the farmers in their own States. Certain foods are not eligible for purchase with SFMNP benefits; these include dried fruits or vegetables, such as prunes (dried plums), raisins (dried grapes), sun-dried tomatoes or dried chili peppers. Potted fruit or vegetable plants, potted or dried herbs, wild rice, nuts of any kind (even raw), honey, maple syrup, cider, and molasses are also not allowed.

**8. Who has the administrative responsibility for the SFMNP?** USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers the SFMNP grants.