New Data Reflects the Continued Demand for Farmers Markets

WASHINGTON, Aug. 4, 2014 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Administrator Anne Alonzo announced over the weekend that USDA's National Farmers Market Directory now lists 8,268 markets, an increase of 76 percent since 2008. The data reflects continued demand and growth of farmers markets in every region of the country. Alonzo also announced that AMS is developing three new local food directories that will expand USDA's support for local and regional foods by providing easy access to the most current information about the local food market.

Alonzo made the announcements at the Dane County Farmers Market in Madison, Wisconsin, the country's largest producer-only market, where she kicked off the 15th annual "National Farmers Market Week", from Aug. 3 through Aug. 9, 2014.

"The National Farmers Market Directory numbers reflect the continued importance of farmers markets to American agriculture. Since its inception, the directory has proven to be a valuable tool for accessing up-to-date information about local farmers markets," Alonzo said. "Farmers markets play an extremely important role for both farmers and consumers. They bring urban and rural communities together while creating economic growth and increasing access to fresh, healthy foods."

The USDA National Farmers Market Directory, available at farmersmarkets.usda.gov, provides information about U.S. farmers market locations, directions, operating times, product offerings, and much more. The data is collected via voluntary self-reporting by operating farmers market managers and is searchable by zip code, product mix, and other criteria. The National Farmers Market Directory receives over two million hits annually.

In addition to USDA's National Farmers Market Directory, AMS is adding:

**USDA's National Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Enterprise Directory** - A CSA is a farm or network/association of multiple farms that offer consumers regular deliveries of locally-grown farm products during one or more harvest season(s) on a subscription or membership basis.

**USDA's National Food Hub Directory** - A Food Hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products to multiple buyers from multiple producers, primarily local and regional producers, to strengthen the ability of these producers to satisfy local and regional wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

*Continue on Page 2*
USDA's National On-Farm Market Directory - An On-Farm Market is a farm market managed by a single farm operator that sells agricultural and/or horticultural products directly to consumers from a location on their farm property or on property adjacent to that farm.

USDA invites local food business owners who fall within these categories to list their operational details in the new directories www.usdalocalfooddirectories.com. These new directories will be available online early in 2015, giving potential customers, business partners, and community planners easy, one-stop access to the most current information about different sources of local foods.

2014 Directory Highlights

According to USDA's 2014 National Farmers Market Directory, the states with the most farmers markets reported are California (764 markets), New York (638 markets), Michigan (339 markets), Ohio (311 markets), Illinois (309 markets), Massachusetts (306 markets), Pennsylvania (297 markets), Wisconsin (295 markets), Virginia (249 markets), and Missouri (245 markets). All geographic regions saw increases in their market listings, with the most growth in the South. The 10 states with the biggest increases in the numbers of farmers markets include Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Arkansas, North Carolina, Montana, Florida and Nebraska. Five of these states – Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and North Carolina – are part of USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity, where USDA has increased investment in rural communities through intensive outreach and stronger partnerships.

Farmers market development is a cornerstone of 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.

Courtesy of USDA Newsroom – Press Release No. 0167.14
Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Provides Six-Month Update on Farm Bill Implementation Progress

Disaster Relief, Risk Management Tools, Innovative Conservation Partnerships, Research Foundation All Moving Forward

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6, 2014 — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced continued progress on implementing the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill), which President Obama signed into law nearly six months ago on Feb. 7, 2014. The 2014 Farm Bill reforms agricultural policy, reduces the deficit, and helps grow America's economy.

"I am pleased to report that we have made tremendous progress in the first six months since the Farm Bill was signed," Vilsack said. "Thousands of farmers and ranchers have received critical disaster assistance, innovative new conservation programs are up and running, new risk management programs for producers are available with more tools to come, the new Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research has been incorporated, and much more. Thanks to the hard work of thousands of USDA employees across the country, we are continuing to get new initiatives off the ground and make important reforms to existing programs that are helping to boost the country's economy." Since the Farm Bill was signed into law, USDA has made progress throughout all 12 titles of the 2014 Farm Bill.

Among the first major Farm Bill initiatives to be implemented were disaster relief programs for livestock producers, many of whom have been waiting years for assistance. After the 2008 Farm Bill passed, it took over one year to set up disaster assistance programs. In 2014, it took under 10 weeks. As of July 31, 2014, approximately 165,000 claims have been processed totaling $1.85 billion disbursed through the Livestock Indemnity Program, Livestock Forage Disaster Program, and Tree Assistance Program.

The 2014 Farm Bill established new risk management programs for producers, some of which USDA is in the process of developing and others that are in operation already. In May, USDA awarded $3 million to the University of Illinois, the University of Missouri and Texas A&M to develop online tools and outreach training that will help farmers and ranchers determine which new risk management options can best protect their businesses. USDA also awarded $3 million to state Cooperative Extension services to provide in-person education to help producers make the most educated decisions regarding new Farm Bill programs.

Innovative new conservation programs have also been established, including the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), an entirely new approach to conservation. RCP brings together businesses, universities, tribes, municipalities and other non-government partners to identify and invest in creative solutions to the conservation issues in their local areas. The program has drawn an overwhelming response from partners across the nation, with more than 600 initial proposals being submitted requesting more than six times the $394 million that is available in funding for the first year. In the coming months, USDA will begin awarding funding for RCP projects designed by local partners specifically for their region. With participating partners investing along with the Department, USDA's $1.2 billion in funding over the life of the five-year program can leverage an additional $1.2 billion from partners, for a total of $2.4 billion for conservation.

Additionally, USDA recently incorporated the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) and announced the appointment of a 15-member board of directors. The new foundation will leverage public and private resources to increase the scientific and technological research, innovation, and partnerships critical to boosting America's agricultural economy.

USDA's Farm Bill implementation team is composed of key sub-cabinet officials and experts from every mission area of the Department. Through outreach and listening sessions we are sharing information and hearing from stakeholders. To stay up-to-date on USDA's Farm Bill implementation progress, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

Courtesy of USDA Newsroom, Press Release No. 0171.14
Congratulations
Dr. Fred Gainous
On your Retirement

Ninth President of Florida A&M University and Tenured Professor in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences

Thank you for over ten years of service
Fusarium Wilt Wreaks Havoc in Hot Pepper Production This Summer

Solanaceous crops can be infected at any age by Fusarium oxysporum, the fungus that cause Fusarium wilt. This soil borne pathogen usually enters the plant through the roots and then grows into the vascular tissues of the plant, cutting off the water supply to the leaves as it does so. Although some plants have been known to recover slightly, peppers tend to collapse and die shortly after being infected. Data collected from one farmer this summer indicated more than a 60 percent reduction in production due to this disease. After evaluating the full extent of the damage, we estimated losses in excess of $40,000.00. This month’s edition of the Hot Pepper monthly includes some a few common disease symptoms and tips for mitigating losses due to this disease.

Symptoms of Fusarium Wilt
- Slight vein clearing on outer leaflets and drooping of leaf petioles.
- If the main stem is cut, vertical dark brown streaks may be seen.
- Lower leaves begin to wilt after the roots and stem have started to decay.
- Wilting of the entire plant soon follows. Dark brown, cankers may be seen at the base of the plant.

Managing Fusarium Wilt
- The fungus can persist in the soil for several years hence a lengthy crop rotation cycle (4 to 6 years) is recommended.
- Avoid using crops in the same family (potato, tomato, eggplant etc.) in the rotation.
- Cereals and grasses are excellent as rotation or fallow crops.
- Avoid over-irrigating especially early in the season.
- Remove and destroy infested plant material.
- Use disease resistant varieties if possible. Use only certified seeds.
- If soil fumigation is allowed in your state, consider it as an option.
Is Olive, “The New Orange?”

Contributor: Trevor Hylton, FAMU-Leon & Wakulla County Extension Agent

There are a number of diseases that threaten our citrus trees. Some have had devastating effects on the industry and new ones are causing concern. According to a recent article by Kevin Bouffard in the Lakeland Ledger, “Florida growers are pondering the existential question: Is there a future in Florida citrus?” “The question”, he says “has taken on more urgency following the past two seasons of unprecedented pre-harvest fruit drop from disease”

If we were unable to grow citrus then olives could be a good alternative for us especially here in North Florida. Olives are a very ancient crop; it was mentioned in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible 30 times. If it can survive that long, it must be a very resilient plant. It is believed that the first olive trees in Florida were grown in Pensacola. It is said that Spanish ships laden with olives, a staple of the Spanish diet, were destroyed in a hurricane some time back in the 16 century. Some of the olives made it to shore, germinated, grew and produced fruit, thus started Florida’s olive production.

Olives thrive best in locations where they get plenty of sun and warmth. The trees also require at least one month of cold weather to go into winter dormancy and produce fruit in spring. Olive trees have weeping branches and misty green-gray foliage which fits well with the other plants in any landscape and north Florida gardeners would have the extra benefit of harvesting their fruits. They do well when planted in large containers as well as in the ground, and their high salt tolerance makes them good plantings for coastal areas. Nuisance wildlife doesn’t seem to bother the fruit. Most cultivars grown in Florida can tolerate temperature as low as 20 degrees F for short periods without cold protection.

Suitable cultivars for this area include 'Arbequina', 'Mission', and 'Manzanilla' which are self-pollinating as well as disease- and pest-resistant. They will grow anywhere that citrus trees thrive. Planting more than one cultivar close together may increase fruit set because even trees that are self-fertile can benefit from cross pollination. Nutrient requirements are pretty much the same as citrus; they like well-drained soil and are easy to care for. Black olives are ripened green olives so they can be harvested at any stage of ripening.

If you are going to plant olive trees in your landscape make sure the space is large enough to accommodate the tree at maturity. Depending on the cultivar planted, trees grow 15 to 30 feet in height and about 20 feet wide. Plant your olive trees in a sunny spot with well-drained soil where they receive at least 6 hours of sunlight each day. Contrary to popular belief olive trees do not require very fertile soil and will do well in soils with broad ranging pH. Once established they'll require minimal care. The next time you think of planting a tree in your landscape, consider an olive tree for its beauty, romance, history and productivity.
The University of Florida’s (UF) Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), Extension and Florida A&M University’s (FAMU), College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) Small Farms Focus Team hosted the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference in Kissimmee, FL. Each year, faculty and staff from these prestigious land-grant universities work diligently alongside small farm stakeholders to provide attendees with an educational, beneficial conference experience while offering something new and exciting. Thanks to all of the exhibitors, vendors and participants!

FAMU Cooperative Extension Program’s Associate Director, Mrs. Vonda Richardson, delivers the welcome address.

Local and state-wide small farm producers provided items that were displayed throughout the conference.
Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program sponsored eight small farmers and students to attend the conference. Pictured above are: **Back row** (from left) Amelia Davis (Coordinator, Management Analysis), Brittany Lemon (CAFS alum), Laila Spinner (middle-school volunteer), Dr. Glen Wright (Director of Animal Health), Rhonda Miller (Extension Office Manager), Therus Brown (CAFS student), Dr. Alejandro Bolques (FAMU–Gadsden County Extension Agent). **Front row** (from left) Vonda Richardson (Associate Director, Cooperative Extension) and Kayla McKethan (CAFS student).
Photos courtesy of Cynthia Lamb
FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

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