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## California Farmers' Market Consortium Receives Grant to Increase Access to Healthy Food



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The newly created California Farmers Market Consortium received a grant at the end of 2009 from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to help the state's economically and nutritionally vulnerable benefit from improved access to healthy fruits and vegetables.

The consortium, organized by Roots of Change and made up of six partner organizations, will serve six metropolitan areas: Fresno, Los Angeles, Monterey, Oakland, San Diego, and San Francisco. California is the largest agricultural producer in the United States, yet many of its residents cannot access or afford to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Over 2.4 million Californians are part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - formerly known as food stamps) and 1.4 million receive WIC benefits (the supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children). These benefits lead to \$4 billion in annual food purchases, the vast majority for processed and packaged food that is high in sugar, salt and fat, and low in nutritional value.

The goals of the Farmers' Market Consortium are to encourage the purchase of specialty crops<sup>1</sup> by SNAP, Seniors and WIC clients at over 40 farmers' markets, and to improve the nutrition of thousands of families that receive federal nutrition assistance. The project will also directly benefit approximately 650 farmers across the state that market healthy, sustainable and locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.



All of the six Consortium partners are working to accomplish these goals, however each is going about the process differently based on their organization's constituents and reach. For example, in San Diego county the [International Rescue Committee](#) will work with WIC partners and state representatives to launch a new fresh fruit and veggie voucher program at City Heights Farmers' Market, and will partner with Hunger Coalition to provide outreach for SNAP participants on-site.

"The project in San Diego County will scale up an initial pilot program at the City Heights Farmers' Market." says Michael Dimock, President of Roots of Change. "By and large the Consortium demonstrates how local, state and federal government can partner with our farmers, nonprofits and philanthropies to improve community health through better nutrition and sustainable foodshed development." See below for the other partner organizations and their projects.

Overall the Consortium aims to improve health and increase farm revenue by enrolling over 1,000 new SNAP clients, and increasing SNAP expenditures on eligible specialty crops at 17 farmers' markets with access to EBT incentive programs (including 9 new markets). It will also support "bonus voucher" incentive programs at 33 markets. Bonus vouchers are given to recipients of nutrition assistance when they come to participating farmers' markets to purchase fresh produce. The vouchers add purchasing power – at some farmers' markets they may double the amount a recipient



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Here are some actions you can take today to help create a sustainable food system for CA in one generation. [Learn more here.](#)



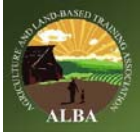
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has to spend and in others they could add 50 percent. A similar approach is being used across the country with success in both [Rhode Island](#) , and the [Washington D.C./Virginia area](#).

Additional Consortium Partners:



[Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association](#)

ALBA will educate new, women, or Spanish-speaking farmers about markets accepting EBT, WIC, or Senior Farmers' Market coupons and conduct outreach to markets to increase benefits in Monterey and San Benito counties.



[Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission](#)

Fresno County EOC will manage the Fresno Market on the Mall and increase the number of new participating certified farmers that will accept EBT, WIC, or Senior farmers' market coupons.



[Hunger Action Los Angeles](#)

HALA will use volunteers to answer 877 Line (877 HUNGER-8) about food stamps, and farmers' markets, and will work with market managers to initiate LA area markets that accept EBT.



[Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association](#)

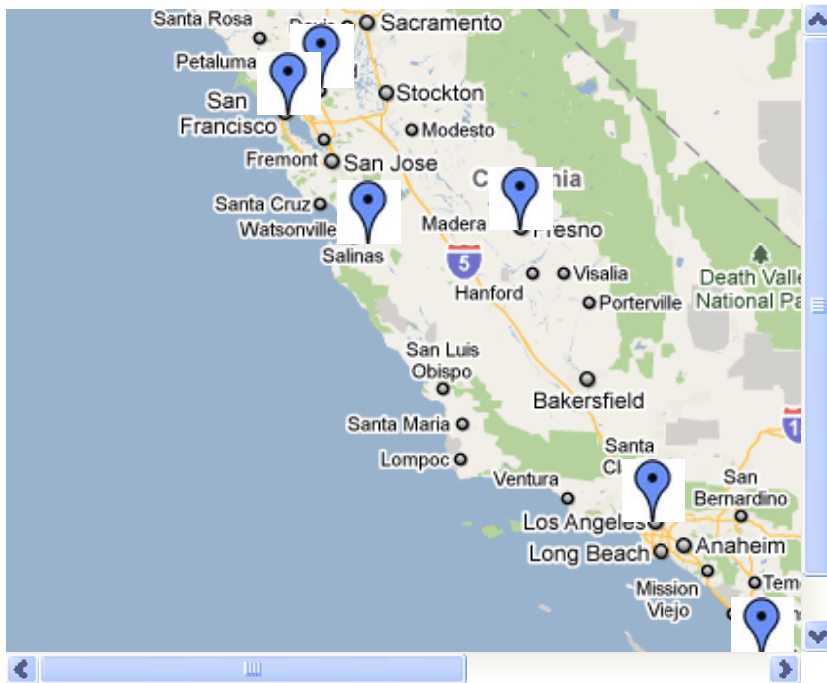
PCFMA will distribute 10,000 multi-lingual posters and flyers at social service agencies, community resource centers, and farmers' markets in Alameda County.



[San Francisco Food Systems](#)

SFFS will work with local food stamp agency partners and NGOs to increase outreach to SNAP, WIC and Senior Farmers' Market coupon recipients to inform them which farmers' markets accept EBT, WIC or SFM coupons as payment; and will develop and distribute multi-lingual outreach materials.

Partner Locations:



View [CDFA Partner Organizations in California](#) in a larger map

[Strengthening the Roots: Food & Justice Convergence](#)

Santa Cruz  
Feb. 12-14, 2010

[California Small Farm Conference](#)

San Diego  
Feb. 28-Mar. 2, 2009

[Kitchen Table Talks: Produce to the People: New Ideas for Local Distribution \(moderated by ROC President Michael Dimock\)](#)

San Francisco  
Mar. 2, 2009

[Click here for more events.](#)

**Climate Change and the Food System**

[Check out](#) our new resource page for more information about the connection between the food system and climate change.

**Sustainable Food Blogs**

- Non-profit orgs. [Change.org](#)
- [Farm Aid](#)
- [Food & Water Watch](#)
- [Mulch](#)
- [Slow Food USA](#)
- [The Daily Table](#)
- [The Green Fork](#)

- Independent [Civil Eats](#)
- [Gristmill](#)
- [La Vida Locavore](#)
- [The Ethicurean](#)
- [Obama Foodorama](#)

Deeper readings

In the News:

[SF pushes food stamp use at Farmers' Markets](#) - SF Examiner, Feb. 2, 2010

For more information about the partner organizations please contact them directly. If you are interested in learning more about Roots of Change role in this project please contact [Tiffany Nurrenbern](#).

Note 1: Specialty crops are defined as: fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture. Major specialty crops include items such as almonds, pears, stone fruit, leafy greens, prunes and processed tomatoes.

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