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WINTER BLUES FARMERS' MARKET AND DINE-AROUND A HUGE SUCCESS

Charleston, W.Va. – The 2017 Winter Blues Farmers' Market and Dine Around was a huge success. More than 4,000 shoppers filled their bags with WV-grown produce, meat and other farm products Sunday, February 12 at the Charleston Civic Center.

"I was expecting a big crowd, but the turnout exceeded anything I could have imagined," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "It is truly amazing to see so many people come out and support their local farmers and producers. I couldn't be happier with the results"

Fifty-seven vendors and nine restaurants took part in the Winter Blues Market. The vendors raked in more than \$40,000. The restaurants made nearly \$6,000 for a total of \$46,055 in four hours. The vendors kept all the profits from the market.

Cathy Hervey, with Family Roots Farm, a maple syrup producer, said it was a very busy afternoon. "We increased our profits this year by at least 25 percent. The crowd was terrific."

The Winter Blues Farmers' Market started out in Morgantown in 2010 with a handful of vendors. In 2015, the event moved to Charleston and it blossomed.

"This year's market was a dream come true," said WVU Extension Small Farms Center Director Tom McConnell. "When we started out that first year, we had some wheat, a few berries and some gnarled up potatoes. Compare that to this year's market. We had hundreds of fruits, vegetables, meats and farm products for sale. I couldn't have asked for more, and this event is only going to continue to get bigger and bigger.

The Winter Blues Farmers' Market and Dine-Around is part of the 2017 Small Farms Conference. The WVU Extension Small Farms Center and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture co-sponsor the event.

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