

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
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WVDA REPORTS INCREASES IN SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) reported an increase in participation for the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) during 2017. Numbers reported from the WVDA Agriculture Business Development Division show a rise in the number of vouchers distributed and redeemed, as well as farmers that participated in the program.

“Farmers markets are about more than just supporting your local farmer. They are viable options to distribute healthy food to citizens,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “The SFMNP provides seniors access to vital, healthy foods.”

The WVDA and its partners distributed a total of 16,655 vouchers to seniors in West Virginia in 2017. A total of 329 farmers participated in the program by accepting the vouchers. Additionally, there was a modest increase in the state redemption rate from 2016. West Virginia has one of the highest redemption rates in the country at 88 percent. The national redemption rate is 82 percent.

“Each year, the West Virginia state budget increases despite recent cuts to state agencies. The budget growth is due to the increased cost of caring for our citizens. Farmers markets help our state on two fronts. They provide healthier foods to citizens while spurring economic growth,” said Leonhardt.

SFMNP vouchers will be distributed in June to eligible seniors over the age of 60. They can be redeemed at farmers markets for fresh fruits and vegetables. Seniors who meet the requirements can sign up at their local senior centers beginning in June.

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