



Nutrition Incentive Program Receives Continued Support from the State of New Mexico

At the end of February 2016, Governor Susana Martinez signed a \$6.2 billion state budget (House Bill 2), that includes \$390,300 for the Double Up Food Bucks program that provides incentives for SNAP participants to increase their purchase of New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables. (SNAP refers to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as food stamps.)

It was a difficult year at the legislature as a result of persistently low oil and gas prices with total budget reductions of nearly \$53 million, but legislators on both sides of the aisle recognized the power of the Double Up Food Bucks program to help New Mexico's underserved improve their nutrition while also helping local farmers, ranchers and other direct-market food producers increase sales and to stimulate local economies. The program also promises the pending match of more than \$2 million in federal dollars over the next four years

Double Up Food Bucks works by providing SNAP shoppers a dollar-for-dollar match for New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables purchased at participating farmers' markets and other outlets. For example, if a customer spends \$10 of their SNAP benefits on locally grown food, they are given an extra \$10 in market tokens or store credit to spend on more New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables.

Among many legislative supporters, three leaders instrumental in securing state funding this year were State Representative Larry Larrañaga (R, Albuquerque) who carried the bill in 2014, Representative Jimmie Hall (R, Albuquerque), and House Speaker Don Tripp (R, Socorro), both longtime supporters of local food and farming initiatives.

During 2016 the program will expand to nearly 70 retail sites, including 45 farmers' markets, farm stands, grocery stores including La Montanita Coop, plus multiple mobile markets and Community Supported Agriculture outlets. The New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association launched the Double Up Food Bucks program on a limited scale in 2010 at 17 farmers' markets. During 2015, the first year federal dollars were secured for the program, a total of 34 farmers' markets participated.

The program relies on a wide range of stakeholders across the state to assist with program outreach and education. Individuals or organizations that would like to get involved with the program can locate resources on the Double Up website (www.DoubleUpNM.org) or contact the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association at 505-983-4010.