

## **NDSU Extension Partnering With USDA on Local Foods Grant Workshops**

The North Dakota State University Extension Service is holding workshops in March to help those applying for a federal grant through the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program.

The program's goals are to increase the consumption of and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and develop new markets for local farm and ranch operations. This includes starting, improving or expanding farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs and agritourism activities. Grants are being offered in every state this spring.

NDSU Extension, in collaboration with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, is partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and National Institute for Food and Agriculture to conduct workshops in North Dakota.

These workshops will be held:

- \* March 4 in Dickinson
- \* March 5 in Minot
- \* March 9 in Wahpeton
- \* March 10 in Grafton

The workshops will run from 1:30 to 5 p.m. For more information, contact Glenn Muske, NDSU Extension's rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist, at [glenn.muske@ndsu.edu](mailto:glenn.muske@ndsu.edu) or (701) 328-9718. Go to [www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness) to register for one of the North Dakota workshops.

Following the grants workshop, the North Dakota Department of Agriculture will be holding listening sessions to determine how they might help expand the opportunities of specialty crops and local food producers. These sessions will be held at the same locations and dates.

"The Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program is a key to USDA's efforts to revitalize rural economies by supporting local and regional food systems," says Anne Alonzo, AMS administrator. "The grant workshops will ensure that more communities and businesses across the country can participate in the competitive grant process with proposals that create real economic opportunities and help meet the growing demand for locally and regionally produced food."

The 2014 farm bill authorized \$30 million annually through fiscal year 2018 for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program to award competitive grants.

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