



**CA Market Match Nutrition Incentive Fund
A Concept for Legislator Consideration**

Submitted by Roots of Change in collaboration with the California Market Match Consortium, Ecology Center, Oakland Food Policy Council, San Diego Food Policy Council, San Francisco Food Security Task Force, and the Social Justice Learning Institute

The Bill Proposed

We propose a bill to create the Market Match Nutrition Incentive Fund of \$2.75 million dollars per year for five years to be taken from the General Fund.

Funds would be distributed by the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork to eligible applicants.

\$1 million per year would be available for use as Market Match incentives that will increase consumption of fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables by nutrition benefit customers (CalFresh EBT, WIC Farmers Market, Senior Farmers Market Program vouchers).

\$1 million per year would be available for implementation of farmers market nutrition incentive programs, to include promotion of the Market Match program, administration and staffing costs.

\$750,000 per year would be used by the Office of Farm to Fork for administration of the grant program and evaluation of nutrition incentives impacts on nutrition benefit recipients, farmers, and farmers market associations. Evaluation of the program may include grants and contracts for data collection, analysis and report development.

Individual farmers markets or associations of farmers markets or CBOs serving farmers market would be eligible to apply for grants of \$5,000 to \$100,000 per year.

At the end of the 4th year of the program, CDFA will provide a report to the legislature on the impacts of the program. But the Legislature may call on CDFA to provide annual updates on program implementation.

Rationale for the Bill

California has 837 farmers markets¹

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/03/number-of-us-farmers-mark_n_1738449.html

Total sales of those markets is not officially measured, but estimates from experts in the state range from \$416 to \$500 million in 2013.²

Small farm growth is a bright spot in the economy for state and local communities, creating jobs, improved nutrition and community resilience in a time of climate chaos, diet related disease and federal nutrition benefit cuts.

A new [federal Farm Bill program](#) will provide \$20 million per year for five years to pilot nutrition incentives programs. To receive this funding, applicants will need to have nonfederal matching dollars.

California has been one of four regions in the nation that has pioneered nutrition incentive programs at farms markets.³ There are approximately 140 markets in the state providing Market Match nutrition incentives to CalFresh, WIC, SFMNP and in some cases SSI and SSDI recipients.

Nutrition Incentives work:

- In 2013, with only 139 markets in 17 counties, the Market Match incentive program boosted farmers market sales by \$1.5 million dollars using only \$258,358 in incentive match dollars (of which only \$238,441 were redeemed).
- 80% of the 144 vendors surveyed in farmers markets reported the Market Match program had increased their sale of fresh fruits nuts and vegetables.
- 78% of the nutrition benefit customers surveyed in the farmers markets using Market Match, reported increased consumption of fruits, nuts and vegetables.
- The program served 38,590 low-income families in 2013.

New Farm Bill SNAP regulations will disproportionately harm CalFresh recipients in Californian by disallowing them from eligibility based on insufficient Low Income Home & Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) payments⁴.

Recent cuts to SNAP and Unemployment Insurance by Congress will drive hundreds

² Estimate is based on an extrapolation of the average annual farmers market sales in \$245,000 per market in 2005 with an estimated sales increase of 10% per year multiplied times the 871 markets operating in California today. There are markets with annual sales increases well above 10% per year. Some of the sale increases are attributable to Market Match nutrition incentives programs.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.printData.do?template=printPage&navID=&page=printPage&dDocId=STELPRD3638681&dID=51885&wf=false&docTitle=USDA+Releases+New+Farmers+Market+Statistics+>

³ On February 26th, at the Capitol, ROC will release with Ecology Center a report on the California Market Match Consortium's 4-year pilot program involving 12 CBO partners in 17 counties of the state. Participating farmers markets provide from 50% to 100% match for low-income families who come to a market and spend up to \$20 of their CalFresh, WIC, SFMNP or SSI benefits on fresh fruits, nuts or vegetables.

⁴ The new Farm Bill language says \$20 per month in LIHEA payments must be received to qualify for SNAP. California has provided eligibility at \$1 per month. So all those currently eligible for CalFresh with of less than \$20 in monthly LIHEAP may become ineligible.

of thousand of Californians further into poverty.

Diabetes and other diet related disease drain the California economy due to both treatment costs carried by taxpayers and loss of productivity.

The new Farm Bill, despite many cuts related to SNAP and environmental protection, does lift investments in specialty crops, local food systems and farmers markets because there is broad bipartisan support for development of healthy and resilient local food systems.

California needs a program to ensure maximum attraction of the new federal incentive funding that will become available, which will have synergistic positive impacts on the health and the economy of local communities.

Please contact Michael Dimock, President, Roots of Change for more information or to discuss: 707.953.2721 (cell) or via email: Michael@rootsofchange.org

[Roots of Change](#) (ROC) provides staffing and funding to the 20 regions of the state participating as ratified (voting) members of the [California Food Policy Council](#) (CAFPC). On January 8th, 2014, the CAFPC released its first annual [Report on California Legislation Related to Food and Farming](#). ROC is a project of the Public Health Institute.

Articles related to the CAFPC Legislative Report

San Francisco Chronicle, Front Page, January 8, 2014: [Food Reform on California's Front Burner](#)

San Diego Voice, January 13, 2014: [A Guide to the First-of-its-Kind Report on California Food](#)

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