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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ASAP and Asheville City Market Launch “\$5 Free” EBT Promotion This August as Food Assistance Requests Rise

ASHEVILLE, NC (August 2, 2010)—Last year was a record-setting year for EBT/SNAP sales at the Asheville City Market, a farmers tailgate market run by the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), and 2010 is shaping up to break records as well. By June, the market had already exceeded their 2009 record EBT (state electronic food stamp) sales day. To keep up the momentum, ASAP is launching their “\$5 Free” EBT promotion.

Every Saturday throughout August, the first 50 Asheville City Market (ACM) shoppers to use their EBT/SNAP card for purchases will receive a free \$5 market token. At the ACM, customers can swipe their EBT, credit, or debit card for tokens and then exchange those tokens with dozens of market vendors for goods, including produce, cheeses, eggs, and meats.

Along with the reception of EBT at the market, the August promotion “will afford individuals in our community who want to provide their family with quality food the opportunity to purchase food that is locally and organically grown—helping them meet their nutritional needs and stay within their budgetary needs as well,” comments Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy.

As of mid-July, 15,813 Buncombe County households were receiving food assistance, according to a state food and nutrition report generated for the county. In June, the number of households receiving benefits increased by 255. That same month, Buncombe County administered over four million dollars in benefits; each household receives, on average, \$273.98 per month.

“With the Asheville City Market’s ability to accept EBT cards, the community has a tremendous resource in which to obtain local produce and support local farmers,” says Marty Phillips with the Buncombe County Department of Social Services.

“When purchases are made at farmers markets, dollars go directly to area farmers,” echoes Emily Jackson, program director at ASAP. “What’s more, markets are gathering places where all in our community can find fresh, healthy food.”

In addition to the \$5 Free EBT promotion, the ACM will also offer free children's activities during the month of August at the Kids Corner Market. Activities include a market scavenger hunt and fruit and vegetable tattoos. The Kids Corner Market runs every Saturday from 9 a.m. until noon; details can be found at asapconnections.org. Those interested in the EBT promotion should stop by the information table at the Asheville City Market to learn more or call ASAP at 828-236-1282.

While not offering the \$5 Free EBT promotion, The Madison County Farmers and Artisans Market and the Yancey County Farmers Market also accept EBT, credit, and debit cards.

[Asheville City Market photos available upon request.]

ABOUT APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food.

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