

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sell Local: Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference Helps Family Farms Succeed

ASHEVILLE, NC (January 26, 2009)—Farmers: Learn how to profit from the growing popularity of buying local at the Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference. This sixth annual conference, organized by the nonprofit organization Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), will be offered Saturday, February 28th at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC. It provides farmers with training and networking opportunities they need to sustain their farms.

Workshops, ranging from the introductory *Marketing Basics for the New Farmer* to specialized topics such as *Marketing Grass Fed Meats*, *Successful Tailgate Marketing in Rural Areas*, and *Successful Models of Cooperative Marketing*, are about promoting farm products.

Other workshops focus on selling to institutions and wholesale buyers, as well as broadening farmers' direct sales to consumers. The conference covers ideas for increasing income sources including *Extending Your Market Season* and *Opportunities in Value Added Products* (such as jellies and sauces made from produce). *Welcoming Visitors to Your Farm for Fun and Profit* addresses tapping into the growing interest in farm tourism.

Business workshops teach farmers how to use the QuickBooks accounting software and discuss options for financing farm enterprises. *Regulatory Overview - Food and Farm Laws in NC* and *Produce Safety - The GAPS Certification* workshops clarify common concerns of farmers.

Workshops are taught by fellow farmers, agriculture professionals, and marketing specialists.

Farmers and those seriously considering farming as a profession should attend. Potential buyers of locally-grown goods are also invited to attend the full conference, or come to network for no charge. Opportunities for farmer/buyer meetings are planned. Students who are members of FFA are invited too—free of charge, thanks to a scholarship program.

If you register before February 1, the cost for the conference is \$30, or \$40 per two farm partners. Beginning February 1, the cost is \$35, or \$50 per two farm partners. Price includes light breakfast, local foods lunch, and resource notebook. Contact ASAP to receive an FFA scholarship. Other scholarships are available for those with financial need.

For more information or to register, visit <http://www.asapconnections.org/MOFF.html> or call (828) 236-1282.

Funding for this conference is provided by the Risk Management Agency (RMA). A-B Tech Community College is a breakfast sponsor and Carolina Farm Credit is a lunch sponsor.

ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

ASAP is strengthening the economy and preserving mountain heritage by creating and expanding a food system that is locally owned and controlled in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians. The loss of Appalachian family farms threatens rural heritage, weakens the regional economy, and prevents development of a sustainable local food system. ###