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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Asheville City Market Leads State EBT Sales, USDA Under Secretary to Meet Vendors Saturday and Announce New EBT Publication

ASHEVILLE, NC (June 24, 2010) – Edward Avalos, United States Department of Agriculture under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs, will visit Asheville City Market’s downtown location this Saturday, June 26, to meet vendors and learn more about the market’s successful EBT/ SNAP program. (EBT references the state’s electronic food stamps option; to broaden their customer base, more and more farmers markets now offer an EBT/SNAP payment option.) Avalos will also officially announce the release of *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at Farmers Markets: A How-To Handbook*, a joint effort of USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and Project for Public Spaces, Inc. that will provide technical guidance for market managers on how and where to introduce EBT technology.

Avalos selected the Asheville City Market (ACM), which is run by the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), because of its recent record-setting EBT/SNAP token sales. At the ACM, customers can use EBT to buy tokens and then exchange those tokens with dozens of market vendors for goods, including produce, cheeses, eggs, and meats. On Saturday, June 12, ASAP exceeded their 2009 record EBT sales day by 300 tokens. The record-setting Saturday came on the heels of reporting by the nonprofit organization Leaflight that ACM had the highest amount of EBT/SNAP sales in 2009 of any participating farmers market in the Southeast. Leaflight is contracted by North Carolina’s Department of Social Services to manage EBT operations at markets in the state. According to Leaflight, ACM currently leads North Carolina farmers markets in credit, debit, and EBT sales for 2010.

“The EBT token program at Asheville City Market has been a tremendous success,” says Mike McCreary, ACM’s market manager. “The program continues to grow in 2010 as more people learn about convenient access to local food from local farmers.”

Under Secretary Avalos is expected to introduce the publication in a short speech at the ACM beginning at 9 a.m. He will be introduced by ASAP’s Executive Director Charlie Jackson. “It is a great honor for us to have Under Secretary Avalos visit Asheville and announce this important publication,” Jackson says. “Western North Carolina is a national leader in developing local food

economies and making sure that healthy local food is accessible to everyone. His visit recognizes that achievement.” Following the speech, Avalos will meet informally with market vendors.

Asheville City Market is located at 161 S. Charlotte Street and is open from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. every Saturday through December 19. For more information about the ACM, visit www.asapconnections.org.

[Market photos and speaker bios 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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