

**Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
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www.asapconnections.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Money Available for Farmers:
Matching Funds Provide Thousands of Dollars for Marketing Local Food**

ASHEVILLE, NC (June 30, 2009) Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is making matching funds available to farmers through a program funded by the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. Farmers can apply for matching funds that will enable them to conduct promotions and develop materials that identify their products as local. ASAP will offer approximately \$50,000 total to Southern Appalachian farmers to help them market and promote local foods.

Individual farmers can apply to receive up to \$1500 of assistance. Farmers tailgate markets are eligible for up to \$2000. As much as \$5000 is available for groups of farmers.

Matching funds mean that ASAP will pay for up to half of accepted applicants' costs for promotions and marketing materials. Current and former tobacco farmers can receive up to 75% of these marketing costs.

Funds can go towards advertisements in print, on the radio, or in other media; product labeling; graphic design; materials such as posters and business cards; signs; and more.

“Southern Appalachian farmers produce a wealth of high quality foods, and there’s a growing demand for locally grown food. Shoppers and farmers just need help connecting,” says Charlie Jackson, Executive Director of ASAP. “Matching funds will allow farmers to form those connections through marketing, and strengthen our local food system.” Good marketing helps authentically local food stand out and compete with other products. Furthermore, providing matching funds encourages local farmers make marketing plans, which are much needed to succeed in the current economic climate.

To apply for funds, farmers must be Appalachian Grown certified. If possible, approved applicants should incorporate the Appalachian Grown logo in the materials for which they received funding. Appalachian Grown is a branding program that identifies products from family farms in the Southern Appalachians. ASAP developed the program to preserve the values associated with truly local food. Getting Appalachian Grown certified is a simple process and it’s free.

For information about Appalachian Grown certification and the matching funds application, visit www.asapconnections.org or contact Megan Ray at megan@asapconnections.com.

This project received funding from the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.

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ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

ASAP is helping to rebuild the local economy, preserve rural land and heritage, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and increase access to fresher, healthier foods. We work to keep farmers farming; to reconnect people with their food. We involve businesses, shoppers, chefs, children, seniors, healthcare providers, teachers, and all community members in the local food movement.

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