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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chefs Shop Local at Farmers' Tailgate Markets

ASHEVILLE, NC (August 11, 2008) – The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) Western North Carolina is known for its agricultural heritage, so it's no surprise that, in its hub, the city of Asheville, the best restaurant chefs cook up locally-grown farm goods in their cuisine. The *Local Food Guide*, produced each year by Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), includes almost 50 WNC restaurants that are committed to featuring foods from local farms. Throughout the season, many chefs shop at the region's farmer's markets, and now the public is invited to come along.

"I've been standing at the French Broad Food Co-op tailgate market and recognized chefs from three restaurants all shopping at once," marvels Peter Marks, Program Director for ASAP. Some are participating in the *Salsa Celebration*, which features the culinary wizards from Mamacita's restaurant chopping up seasonal ingredients to make creative fresh salsas. Others are part of Get Local, a promotion that brings restaurants together to promote a different locally grown product each month through menu specials – September is apple month, and October features greens.

The new Asheville City Market, located on South Charlotte Street at the Public Works building, holds *Shop with a Chef* on the second Saturday of each month. A professional chef leads a guided shopping tour of market vendors, selecting ingredients, and then demonstrates cooking with the fresh foods. The crowd gets to taste what the chef cooks. The tour starts at 9:00 a.m. and repeats at 10:30 a.m.

While the chef-to-market connection provides entertainment -- and delicious samples -- for shoppers, its purpose is deeper. Families now eat more than half their meals away from home and are losing the knowledge of how to cook with fresh foods, says Marks. "The more people taste locally grown fresh produce and distinctive local meats and cheeses, and see them prepared, the more comfortable they will be taking these ingredients home and making dinner. In the end, this also helps farmers make a good living selling to local customers."

Sidebar:

For more information on farmers' tailgate market times and locations, including the Asheville City Market, see ASAP's Local Food Guide website, Buy Appalachian.org, or call 828-236-1282.

NOTE to editor: if you would like to print a market list you can look at the site and choose the geographic range of listings and reprint that information. You may wish to run it by me for accuracy before you go to print. There are about 8 in the city of Asheville, 10 in Buncombe County, and 30 in WNC as a whole.

ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is a nonprofit organization that supports farmers and rural communities in the mountains of Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians by providing education, mentoring, promotion, web resources, and community and policy development. Our mission is to create and expand regional community-based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable and health-promoting. Our vision is a future food system throughout the mountains of North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians that provides a safe and nutritious food supply for all segments of society; that is produced, marketed and distributed in a manner that enhances human and environmental health; and that adds economic and social value to rural and urban communities.

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