

Farmers Market Promotion Program Guidelines

*Catalog of Federal Domestic
Assistance Number 10.168*

FY-2008



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I. PROGRAM SCOPE AND SUMMARY

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has announced the availability of approximately \$1 million in competitive grant funds in fiscal year (FY) 2008 to be awarded through the Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP). This highly competitive program is designed to promote the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding direct producer-to-consumer marketing opportunities and is administered by the Marketing Services Branch (MSB) of AMS. The authorizing legislation for the FMPP includes the Agricultural Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627), the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 (7 U.S.C. 3001-3006) and the recent amendment to the 1976 Act, the FMPP (7 U.S.C. 3005). Direct producer-to-consumer marketing proposals that may be funded include projects addressing issues related to farmers markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer marketing channels. AMS hereby requests proposals from the following eligible entities: 1) agricultural cooperatives, 2) local governments, 3) non-profit corporations, 4) public benefit corporations, 5) economic development corporations, 6) regional farmers' market authorities, and 7) Tribal Governments.

The maximum award per grant is \$75,000. An applicant is limited to no more than one grant in a grant-funding year. Funding will be available for use beginning in October 2008, and project work should begin in October 2008 and end in March 2010. Matching funds are not required.

These guidelines will help applicants and their cooperators develop proposals and carry out the administrative and procedural requirements for FMPP grant applications and projects.

II. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

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All applicants shall be domestic entities, i.e., those owned, operated, and located within one or more of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia only. Entities located within U. S. territories are not eligible.

Under this program, eligible entities must apply for FMPP funds on behalf of direct marketing operations that include two or more farmers/farm vendors who produce and sell their own products through a common distribution channel directly to consumers, and where the sales of these farm products represent the core business of the entity. AMS will award grants to and oversee the implementation of projects that encourage the development, promotion, and expansion of direct marketing of agricultural commodities from farmers to consumers.

Proposals should support agricultural marketing enterprises where farmers or vendors sell their own products directly to customers, and where the sales of these farm products represent the core business of the entity.

Eligible entities are:

- A. Agricultural Cooperative** – A group- or member-owned entity or business that provides, offers, or sells agricultural products or services for the mutual benefit of the members thereof.
- B. Local Government** - Local government means any unit of local government within a State, including a county, borough, municipality, city, town, township, parish, local public authority, special district, school district, intrastate district, council of governments, and any other instrumentality of local government.
- C. Nonprofit Corporation** – Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS status and accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
- D. Public Benefit Corporation** – A corporation organized to construct or operate a public improvement, the profits from which inure to the benefit of a State(s) or to the people thereof.
- E. Economic Development Corporation** – An organization whose mission is the improvement, maintenance, development and/or marketing or promotion of a specific geographic area.
- F. Regional Farmers' Market Authority** - An entity that establishes and enforces region, State, or county policies and jurisdiction over regional, State, or county farmers markets.
- G. Tribal Government** - A governing body or a governmental agency of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602)) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

III. ELIGIBLE GRANT USES

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A. Grant Uses

Projects appropriate for FMPP grants include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Improving Access to Relevant Marketing and Financial Information

– Projects that provide opportunities and promote training, education, networking, technical assistance, and information sharing for farmers, vendors, market management, and market sponsors. These projects are designed to enhance sales volumes, self-sufficiency, and product security/safety. Project focuses include:

- Business planning, market growth management, and recordkeeping.
- Food safety and handling.
- Consumer trends and/or changing ethnic demographics, and their relationship to customer purchasing patterns.
- Alternative purchasing methods, such as Women, Infants, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (WIC-FMNP); Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons, and debit/credit technologies.
- Association and other organizational development.

2. Consumer-Based Education and Market Access - Projects that address ways to improve consumers' access to and utilization of direct farm markets/marketing outlets. Project focuses include:

- Consumer education that addresses new food and agricultural products, and product applications with a required emphasis on the assessment, evaluation, and impact of such education on consumer patronage at eligible markets/entities.
- Assessment, evaluation, and impact of the vendors and/or markets in providing access to fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income households, children, and seniors.

3. Innovative Approaches to Market Operations and Management -

Projects that address operational or market management issues, with the aim of enhancing product value and sales, increasing revenue and efficiency, or reducing expenses. Project focuses include:

- Facility planning and/or design.
 - Green/renewable technology.
 - Waste management/recycling.
 - Strategies for addressing liability coverage and insurance.
 - Transportation and delivery systems.
 - Infrastructure for electronic purchasing, value-added processing and packaging, and refrigerated storage.
 - The use and effect of market promotion and the measurement of its impact.
4. **FMPP Priorities** – In addition to the above mentioned grant uses, AMS has identified priorities for FY-2008. Although proposals in the following categories are particularly encouraged, all proposals that incorporate activities listed in section III.A. will receive full consideration.
- **“Growing Farmers”** - Projects that develop training and educational programs for new direct farm marketers on the benefits, challenges, and logistics of agricultural direct marketing in a given region. Such projects could develop new programs focused on small business development, marketing techniques, identifying market opportunities, or mentoring programs for women, minorities, immigrant, transitioning, and young farmers in that State or region. Such projects should focus on the recruitment and retention of new farmers to participate at farmers markets and other direct-to-consumer farm marketing outlets.
 - **Innovative Partnerships and Networking** - Projects that develop non-traditional partnerships incorporating new stakeholders to address critical farmers market issues, including but not limited to: market research, farmer recruitment and retention, financing, promotion, and market access for low-income/diverse communities. Such efforts could link together diverse partners to share ideas and resources, develop networks with complementary partners to advance specific farmers market goals, and/or develop broader community support for farmers markets.
 - **Professional Development** - Projects that develop professional expertise for farmers market managers, farmers/vendors, boards, and organizations to effectively manage and/or operate farmers markets and other direct marketing enterprises. This could include

a range of educational programs and activities such as the development of distance learning curricula for farmers market managers/vendors, certification programs for farmers market managers, and training on strategic planning. Such projects should address and enhance the long-term economic viability of farmers markets and other direct-to-consumer farm marketing outlets.

B. Project Identification

Applicants are to identify activities as “primary” or “secondary” in their proposal as requested in section VII.D.(12. and 13.).

C. Project Beneficiaries and Dissemination of Result(s)

Proprietary projects and projects that benefit one agricultural producer or an individual will not be considered. Moreover, any information or data derived from an FMPP-funded project, along with any report developed from these information or data sources, must be made available to AMS, which reserves the right to share these results with the general public.

IV. INELIGIBLE GRANT USES

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FMPP funds cannot be used to pay for:

A. Land/Buildings

The acquisition of land or the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, or repair of a building or facility.

B. Political Activities

The development of and/or participation in political or lobbying activities.

C. Other

Any activities prohibited by 7 CFR parts 3015 and 3019.

V. APPLICATION DEADLINE

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Paper applications must be postmarked March 24, 2008. Submit an original and one copy of the proposal, along with all required forms, in one application package, preferably by express mail or courier.

Grants.gov applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on March 24, 2008. Since a password is required from Grants.gov and delays may occur, do not wait until the last minute to register and submit your application.

No extensions past the deadline will be considered.

VI. APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

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Funding decisions are made on the basis of one round of competition. Applicants must submit the following information as part of their application packages. Packages without this information will not be considered.

A. Required Forms

All necessary may be downloaded from the FMPP website at www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP or requested from FMPP.

1. **Form SF-424**, "Application for Federal Assistance." This form must have an original signature.

Follow these instructions when completing Form SF-424:

Block 1: TYPE OF SUBMISSION – check "Non-Construction."

Block 5: APPLICANT INFORMATION – insert the organization's legal name and the organizational DUNS number (see section VI.B.).

Block 8: TYPE OF APPLICATION – check "New."

Block 9: NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY – enter AMS, USDA.

Block 10: CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER – enter 10.168; Title – Farmers Market Promotion Program

Block 11: DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT – enter only the project title (should match the proposal narrative's title); do not provide a detailed description.

Block 16: IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? To determine if your proposal is subject to review under State Executive Order 12372, please review guidelines by visiting:
www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html.

Block 18: Complete this entire section; the form must have an original signature.

2. **Form SF-424A**, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs.”
3. **Form SF-424B**, “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs.” The form must have an original signature.

B. DUNS Number

All Federal grants (68 FR 38402) require a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. If your organization does not have a DUNS number, you may acquire one online at no cost at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> , or by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS line at 1-866-705-5711.

C. Project Length

Projects should not exceed 18 months in length, beginning in October 2008 and ending in March 2010.

D. Proposal Narrative

The narrative portion of the project proposal, including the supplemental budget summary, must be single-sided and not exceed 10 pages (Times New Roman font, 12 pt. pitch, single-spaced, 8.5x11 inch-paper). Optional letters of support and biographies of key personnel are encouraged, and do not count against the 10-page limit.

AMS provides guidance to organize the narrative in its proper order with the creation of the [“FMPP Project Proposal Narrative Form.”](#) In order to expedite the application review process, the narrative must be organized under the following headings:

1. **Project Title.** Must capture the primary focus of the project.
2. **Applicant/Organization Information.** Provide the applicant/organization name, contact name, mailing address, telephone

and fax number, and email address for the person responsible for the application, financial information, and the proposed budget request.

3. **Primary Project Manager Information.** Provide the name, mailing address, telephone and fax number, and email address for the person(s) responsible for managing and/or overseeing the project.
4. **Entity Type/Eligibility Statement.** Indicate the entity type of the applicant/organization, i.e., an agricultural cooperative, local government, nonprofit corporation, public benefit corporation, economic benefit corporation, regional farmers' market authority, tribal government, or other entity type. Provide an explanation of how the applicant/organization qualifies as an eligible entity. Applications that do not contain sufficient information to determine the eligibility of the applicant will not be considered.
5. **Executive Summary.** The proposal summary, not to exceed 200 words, must include the following: a project description, goals to be accomplished, stages of work and resources required, expected timeframe for completing all tasks and results, and the primary project manager responsible for the project.
6. **Goals of the Project.** Provide a clear statement (one or two sentences) that includes the ultimate goal(s) and objective(s) of the project.
7. **Background Statement.** Provide information regarding past, current, and/or future events, conditions, or actions taken that justify the need for the project.
8. **Workplan and Resource Requirements.** Provide a statement that includes the planned scope of work, anticipated stages and timelines, and the resources required to complete the project. Identify who will do the work, whether collaborative arrangements or subcontractors will be used, the resource commitments of the collaborators, and the role(s) and responsibilities of each collaborator or project partner.
9. **Expected Outcomes and Project Evaluation.** Describe what is to be accomplished, the expected results, and how success will be measured at the completion of the project (quantitative and evaluation measurement of project's impact).
10. **Beneficiaries.** Describe which persons, organizations, and/or entities will benefit from the project work or research outlined in the proposal and how they will benefit.

11. Supplemental Budget Summary (Counted toward the 10-page limit). Provide sufficient detail about the budget categories listed on Form SF-424A. All requested budget items/activities should:

- Correlate to the purpose/goals of the project and demonstrate that they are reasonable and adequate for the proposed work.
- Not include routine operational expenses such as staff salaries associated with normal operations of direct marketing outlets, utility bills, or insurance premiums, except for new start-up markets.
- **Not include** matching funds or in-kind work and items.
- Provide additional detail and justification for any item/purchase that is expected to exceed \$5,000.

AMS has developed the voluntary “FMPP Supplemental Budget Summary Form,” available at www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP, to assist applicants in preparing supplemental budgets. The use of this form is not required. However, details regarding requested funds, justification, and fund usage within the FMPP Supplemental Budget Summary are required.

The Supplemental Budget Summary information may include:

- Personnel/Contractual. To the extent possible, show hourly rates and estimated number of hours to be spent on the project by each project participant.
 - For contractors, indicate if the expense represents a flat fee for services or an hourly rate. List the general categories of services the contract covers (e.g., professional services, travel, lodging, administrative expenses, etc.).
 - Hourly rates for personnel/ contractors must not exceed \$55 per hour.
- Travel. Indicate anticipated travel expenses (e.g., mode of travel, how many people, how many days, destination, lodging, meals, etc., as applicable).
- Equipment. Indicate anticipated purchases of equipment. List separately each item of equipment and its cost.
- Supplies. Provide an estimate of projected supply expenditures.

- **Indirect Costs.** Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with FMPP, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the implementation of FMPP-related activities. These costs benefit more than one cost objective and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.
 - Budget requests for indirect costs may not exceed 10 percent of any expense defined and itemized as an indirect cost. In the supplemental budget summary, explain how such itemized indirect cost meets the definition above.
 - Please note that a cost may not be allocated as an indirect cost if it is incurred for the same purpose under FMPP as a direct cost (personnel/contractual, travel, equipment, supplies above).

12. **Primary Proposal Activity.** Identify the main activity (only one specific activity from the “Eligible Grant Uses” section, i.e., waste management) that the-meets the proposal’s goals and objectives.

13. **Secondary Proposal Activity.** Identify all other activities (as many as are applicable) that meet the goals and objectives.

E. Supporting Documents

Letters and/or other evidence of commitment from cooperators, contractors, or resource providers are strongly encouraged.

Enclose brief description(s) of experience or qualifications of principal project investigators.

F. Application Checklist

Provide an original and one copy of the proposal by express mail or courier in the following order:

1. Form SF-424
2. Form SF-424A
3. Form SF-424B
4. Proposal Narrative
5. Supplemental Budget Summary
6. Supporting Documents

G. Paper Submissions

Because packages sent to the Agency through the United States Postal Service may be damaged or delayed due to security procedures at USDA Washington DC headquarters, the use of express mail or courier services is strongly recommended. Express mail or courier submissions should be sent to:

Mr. Errol Bragg, Associate Deputy Administrator
Marketing Services Branch
Transportation and Marketing Programs, AMS, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 2646-South
Washington, D.C., 20250-0269
202/720-8317

If an e-mail address is provided by the applicant, FMPP will e-mail a confirmation of the receipt of their application package.

H. Electronic Submissions via Grants.gov

AMS will not accept proposals via electronic mail. Applicants may apply electronically through www.grants.gov and are strongly encouraged to initiate the electronic submission process at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. Grants.gov applicants are not required to submit any paper documents to AMS.

For information on how to apply electronically, please consult www.grants.gov/GetStarted. Applicants experiencing problems in electronic preparation or submission of documentation should contact www.grants.gov, or the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. The hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Eastern Time; and they are closed on Federal Holidays.

It takes time to set up a password and submit documents through the Grants.gov electronic interface. Applicants who delay starting the process may not meet the deadline, and may forfeit the opportunity to compete for FMPP funds this fiscal year.

VII. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

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A. Methods of Evaluating Proposals

The FMPP is a highly competitive grant program and applicants must therefore ensure that the evaluation criteria listed below are addressed within the

proposal narrative. General guidance is provided with each criterion. It is recommended that applicants provide additional information as appropriate.

Each criterion has a specific score value. The total maximum score will equal 100. Proposals/project work will be rated on each criterion as follows:

1. **Direct Benefit to Farmers/Vendors** (maximum score = 20). – Explain the direct benefit to farmers and/or vendors of the market/ entity. Any resulting benefits should be provided for all participants. Include:
 - a) How and how many farmers/vendors will benefit.
 - b) What will be the overall potential impact on the local/regional farm economy.
2. **The Need for the Project** (maximum score = 20). – Provide a clearly identified issue/problem and the actions or project work to address it. Provide sufficient justification for the project approach and/or strategies in the proposal. Include:
 - a) Why and how the actions recommended in the proposal will address and/or “solve” the issue/problem(s) identified.
 - b) How the proposal demonstrates the project’s merit.
 - c) Why these activities are appropriate for achieving the project’s stated objectives.
3. **Reasonableness of Budget** (maximum score = 15). – Provide justification for the budget and funds usage. Include:
 - a) How the budget is appropriate for the scope of work.
 - b) How the planned expenditures correlate with each item in the proposed work plan.
4. **Addresses FY-2008 FMPP Priorities** (maximum score = 10). – Outline the proposal’s activities and the identified FMPP priority(ies). Include:
 - a) Why and how the proposal’s activities address the identified priority(ies).
5. **Quantitative Evaluation and Measurement of Project’s Impact** (maximum score = 10). – Define how successes will be measured. Include:
 - a) How the project’s results will be measured and tracked.
6. **Sustainability and Long Term Impact** (maximum score = 10). – Describe the project’s long term impact and sustainability. Include:

- a) How self-sustaining the project will be after FMPP grant funds are exhausted.
 - b) The project’s anticipated long-term impact.
- 7. Transferability of Project Outcomes** (maximum score = 10). – Explain how and why the proposed activities could be used elsewhere. Include:
- a) How the outcome and lessons learned from this project will be applicable to other locations.
- 8. Degree of Collaboration/Partnerships (include partner qualifications) and Participation** (maximum score = 5). – Outline the collaboration/partnerships formed and farmer/vendor participation for this project. Include:
- a) The degree of involvement by the necessary stakeholders.
 - b) What resource commitments stakeholders will provide.
 - c) How collaborators/partners and farmers/vendors will assist in implementing the project.

B. Application Score Summary

1. Direct Benefit to Farmers/Vendors	-	20
2. Need for Project	-	20
3. Reasonableness of Budget	-	15
4. Addresses FY-2008 FMPP Priorities	-	10
5. Sustainability/Long Term Impact	-	10
6. Quantitative Evaluation/Measurement	-	10
7. Transferability	-	10
8. Degree of Collaboration/Partnership	-	<u>5</u>
	Total Score	100

VIII. POST-AWARD MANAGEMENT OF FMPP GRANTS

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Grant recipients are responsible for:

- Completing the following forms prior to receipt of federal funds:
 - (a) Form AD-1047, “Certification Regarding Disbarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions.” This form must have the awardee’s original signature.

- (b) Form AD-1048, “Certification Regarding Disbarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions.” This form must have the awardee’s original signature.
- (c) Form AD-1049, “Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative I – For Grantees Other Than Individuals.” The awardee keeps this document for their records.
- Monitoring the performance of all project activities, and ensuring that the work is completed within the established time frame.
 - Contacting the FMPP office 60 days before the grant’s expiration date to request a no-cost time extension if, for any reason, the project cannot be completed within the established time frame. A letter from the grantee briefly explaining the need for the extension and specifying a new ending date is required.
 - Ensuring that FMPP funds are used only for activities covered by the approved project and workplan.
 - Ensuring that proper accounting procedures are followed.
 - Sending FMPP a copy of any contract or secondary agreement relating to the project.
 - Submitting a progress report every 6 months. The awardee must also submit a final report, summarizing findings and accomplishments, no later than 90 days after the grant expiration date. (For further details, see Section IX, “Reporting Requirements for Awarded Projects.”)
 - Submitting quarterly financial reports (Form SF-270). The awardee must also submit a final financial status report (Form SF-269A, or in cases where program income is involved, Form SF-269) no later than 90 days after the grant expiration date.

IX. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDED PROJECTS

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Original reports and the financial status report form should be signed by the appropriate organizational representative and submitted to FMPP by express mail or courier service.

A. Progress Reports

Progress reports are required at the midpoint of projects approved for one year and at six-month intervals for projects of longer duration. The progress report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings:

Activities and Milestones

- Briefly summarize activities performed and milestones achieved for each objective of the narrative, and include favorable or unusual developments.

Problems and Delays

- Note unexpected delays or impediments.

Future Project Plans

- Outline work to be performed during the succeeding period.

Funding To Date

- Comment on the level of grant funds expended to date on the project.

B. Final and Financial Status Reports

1. Final Report. Required to fulfill the terms of the grant agreement, but this report also represents an important vehicle for sharing research findings with Federal and State agencies and the public. Please contact AMS before submission in order to discuss a format suitable for wide distribution and posting on the FMPP website.

The final report of results and accomplishments is due within 90 days following the grant ending date and should include:

- A summary of the issue(s) being examined.
- Descriptions of how the issue(s) was addressed.
- Results, accomplishments, conclusions, and lessons learned.
- Description of the people, organizations, marketing entities and/or communities that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and a quantitative measure of the current or future benefits to be derived from the project.
- Additional information available (publications, websites, and photographs).
- Specific contributions of project partners.

- A contact person for the project with telephone number and e-mail address.
2. **Financial Status Report.** A final submission of Form SF-269A, “Financial Status Report” (Form SF-269, if the project involved program income) is required no later than 90 days following the project’s ending date and can be downloaded from the FMPP website at www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP, or may be requested from FMPP.

X. REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT

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FMPP funds will become available beginning in October 2008, and payments will be made electronically.

Payments of grant funds must be requested by the same designated organization representative. This individual must request the amount of funds already expended to carry out the project by submitting a complete “Request for Advance or Reimbursement” form (SF-270). Copies of invoice(s) or receipt(s) must show the specific expenditures incurred during the requested payment period.

Payment advances will be considered under exceptional circumstances and will be limited to the minimum amount required to meet short-term disbursement needs. Copies of invoice(s) or receipt(s) must be submitted to FMPP following the expenditures and must show the specific purchase(s) allotted under the advance.

Original SF-270 form(s) should be signed by the appropriate organizational representative and be submitted to FMPP by express mail or courier service.

XI. RECORD RETENTION

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In accordance with Federal regulations, grant recipients should retain all records relating to the grant for a period of 3 years after the final financial status report has been submitted to FMPP.

XII. FMPP CONTACTS

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Applications should be forwarded to:

Mr. Errol Bragg, Associate Deputy Administrator
Marketing Services Branch
Transportation and Marketing Programs, AMS, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Room 2646-South
Washington, D.C., 20250-0269
202/720-8317

Questions about the program should be directed to:

Carmen Humphrey, Team Leader
Marketing Services Branch
Transportation and Marketing Programs, AMS, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Room 2646-South
Washington, D.C., 20250-0269
202/720-8317
USDAFMPP@usda.gov