

**Increasing Food Recovery From Farmers' Markets: A Preliminary Analysis.** By Charlene C. Price and J. Michael Harris. Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No. 4.

## **Abstract**

Collecting unsold food discarded at farmers' markets has the potential to allow nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations to distribute significant quantities of wholesome, unsold fruits and vegetables to needy families. Donations of this unsold produce by the participants at these markets can generate tangible benefits: increased private food assistance and better nutrition for lower income families. The Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis presented in this study indicates that there is potential to strengthen the links between farmers' markets and nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations in many areas of the United States.

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## Summary

More than one-quarter of the food produced in the United States may be thrown away or not used. While some of this food is nonrecoverable, other food is recoverable. Collecting food discarded at farmers' markets allows nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations to distribute donations of wholesome, unsold fruits and vegetables to needy families. Strengthening ties between farmers' markets and nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations (that is, food banks, food pantries, food rescue programs, etc.) could generate tangible benefits: increased food assistance and better nutrition for lower income families.

Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis identifies locations across the country where farmers' markets and food organizations are in close enough proximity for food to be donated easily. If farmers' markets are not currently donating food, this type of information could improve or strengthen ties between local farmers' markets and food organizations.

Many farmers' markets already donate unsold fruits and vegetables to nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations, and many organizations know where farmers' markets are located in their local areas. One obstacle, however, to further expanding cooperation is lack of information and coordination. In other words, nonprofit food organizations need to know about the farmers' markets in their local areas and donors at farmers' markets need to know about the food organizations in their local areas.

This study uses GIS analysis to identify areas in the United States with large numbers of farmers' markets near local nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations. These areas include the 28 local nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations located within 30 miles of the largest numbers of farmers' markets. The report provides detailed information on farmers' markets, such as name, address, telephone number, and contact person. Similar detailed information is also presented for each food organization.

Improved information sharing, identifying locations of farmers' markets and food organizations, and reducing transportation and other logistical constraints should facilitate a better working relationship between potential donors from farmers' markets and nonprofit food recovery and gleaning organizations in local areas.