

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Year One: Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB)**

Iowa ranks last among the 50 states in per person consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Starting in July 2016, the DUFB program was released to Dubuque Farmers' Market. As one of six markets participating in Iowa, Dubuque provided SNAP recipients with the opportunity for a \$1: \$1 match at market for purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables.

With 400 NEW market goers due to the DUFB program, vendors participating in the program report an increase of income for the 2016 market. Outside of monetary gains, vendors are working to expand utilizing fresh produce through this program.

The joint project of Dubuque Main Street, Dubuque County ISU Extension & Outreach and the Community Foundation of Dubuque was launched with a seed grant of \$1,500. Iowa's Healthiest State program provided further funding to support the program.

In 2015, SNAP beneficiaries spent \$4,600 at the market. In 2016, SNAP beneficiaries spent around \$7,000.

Since July's DUFB release, nearly \$4,000 has been provided as the \$1 match for SNAP users. That makes \$6,400 extra flowing through the market to local farmers through the SNAP program.

"Dubuque is one of six communities that have stepped up to the plate," according to Aryn McLaren of Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative, a privately-led public initiative helping communities to improve the health status of their residents. Other pilot sites include Iowa City, Decorah, Des Moines, Perry and Spencer.

"We are building capacity among Iowa markets in preparation for an application to the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives grant program later in the year. If we succeed, that could bring up to \$500,000 federal dollars to Iowa to ramp up Double Up Food Bucks statewide in 2017," McLaren said.

The Initiative has received \$25,000 from the World Food Prize Foundation that will be used to match dollars raised locally for the project.

“As part of our 30th anniversary observance, the World Food Prize is pleased to provide financial support to the Double Up Food Bucks program,” said Kenneth Quinn, World Food Prize president and Loras College graduate. “Our founder Dr. Norman E. Borlaug was a passionate advocate for enhanced nutrition, which is what this marvelous program is all about.”

Also in Dubuque for the program launch was Angela Tagtow, appointed by President Obama to be executive director of the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Speaking for Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Tagtow stated:

“USDA has made historic improvements in the Federal nutrition assistance programs, including updated nutrition standards for school meals; updated WIC food packages that include whole grains, low-fat dairy, and fruits and vegetables; expanding the scope of the SNAP nutrition education program; and supporting unprecedented growth in the number of farmers markets and direct marketing farmers that accept SNAP benefits, from 753 in 2008 to more than 6,400 today.”

ISU Extension has been charged with coordinating Iowa’s local farm and food program statewide. Carolyn Scherf, local food coordinator for Dubuque County Extension, is promoting healthy local foods initiatives with both producers and consumers.

“This project fits perfectly with our mission,” Scherf said. “Poor nutrition is the number one contributor to high rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet-related illnesses. This is especially true in food deserts like those in Dubuque, where low-income families have poor access to healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables. With this program, we can also reach kids during the summer months when they are out of school and off the school lunch program.”

“I sit on the Agriculture and Natural Resources appropriations subcommittee, but we had no room for it in this year’s budget,” Isenhart said. “So Senator Bill Dotzler of Waterloo and I brokered a deal with the World Food Prize Foundation. Ambassador Quinn found the project to be aligned with their focus on hunger in Iowa, so we appreciate his willingness to step in.

“More than 5,100 SNAP users in Dubuque County annually receive some \$14.5 million on their electronic benefit cards. That helps feed 10,839 people,” Isenhart observed. “It’s a winning deal for everyone to keep as many of those dollars in the local economy as possible. With the experience of the pilot projects and the demonstration of broad-based community support, we will take another run at state funding next year.”

Detailed information on the Double Up Food Bucks program in Dubuque can be found online at [www.dubuquefarmersmarket.org](http://www.dubuquefarmersmarket.org),

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