



Farmers' Markets Numbers are Up

Demand for local food and desire to interact with food producers helped drive the number of farmers markets in the United States up 6.8 percent in 2008.

02/25/2009

By HF Staff

Admit it--you'd love to have a fully decked out booth at the local farmers' markets in your area.

You'll have plenty to choose from: The buy-local movement continues to help nurture growth in the number of farmers' markets.

One report from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) says the total number of farmers' markets increased nearly 7 percent through August 2008.

Across our 50 states and our approximately 975 major metropolitan areas, farmers and consumers can find 4,685 farmers' markets. Those are pretty good numbers. [Click here for more information about farmers markets -- and find a farmers' market near your home.](#) Since 1994, when it began to track farmers' markets, the number of farmers' markets nationwide has grown by nearly 3,000, reports the AMS.

Meeting the People Who Grow Your Food

Besides the chance to purchase fresh, locally grown food, the AMS studies show that farmers' markets remain popular because, "food buyers like the opportunity to interact with the producers." To collect its data, the AMS contacted State Departments of Agriculture, state farmers' market associations and other direct marketing organizations for information on the 2008 market season. The deadline was July 1.

According to the AMS, new information about markets and market contacts should be sent to Velma Lakins, Agricultural Marketing Specialist.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is responsible for developing quality grade standards for agricultural commodities, administering marketing regulatory programs, marketing agreements and orders, and making food purchases for USDA food assistance programs.

Source: AMS and U.S. Census