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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Building Systems for Sustainable Farmers Markets
Professional Farmers Market Training Workshop
March 5 - 7, 2009**

Jim Farr, President of the Farmers Market Federation of NY, announced the upcoming Professional Farmers Market Managers Training Workshops, set for March 5-7, 2009. They will be held at the Stockade Inn in Schenectady, NY, with hotel accommodations at the Holiday Inn Schenectady. This training is sponsored by the USDA SARE Professional Development Program and represents the third in a three-year series of market-manager workshops. Building on the foundation of our previous conferences, the mission of the program is to increase the professionalism of market managers, promote the growth of local markets, and facilitate each market's current and long-term sustainability. Having high-quality, professional market managers in place makes all this possible.

Our keynote speaker will be Janel Leatherman, Market Administrator of the Dallas Farmers Market. Janel will discuss how she has been restructuring their market, its policies and programs, to make it stronger for its customers, its participating farmers, and the community in general. The objectives of this ambitious project are being achieved by improving standards, systems operations, and marketing plans in order to increase profitability to family farms, work more effectively with local organizations and agencies to raise consumer awareness and participation, and consistently provide high-quality, fresh local food to the market's customers.

Our featured guest speaker at Thursday evening's Banquet will be Patrick Hooker, NYS Commissioner of Agriculture. Commissioner Hooker also serves as Chairman of the State's Food Policy Council. Of his many responsibilities, ensuring that agriculture continues as a mainstay of New York's economy and working toward greater agricultural economic development head the list. His topic this evening will focus on the value of our state's farmers markets to the local food economy.

On Saturday, our attendees will have the option of participating in one of two special field events:

- 1) Walking Tour of the Troy Waterfront Farmers Market, a highly successful, year round farmers market, featuring a wide variety of produce, meats and cheeses and specialty products. The Promotions manager will lead the group through the market's history, its programs, special events and outreach efforts to its community of consumers and farmers.
- 2) Mock Farm Inspection – Led by Michael Hurwitz, Greenmarket Director, with June Russell, Greenmarket's Inspector. (Greenmarket is a program of the Council on the Environment of NYC.) The participants will experience a farm inspection to learn how to make the correlation between what is growing on the farm and what is being sold in the market. Managers will leave feeling confident that they can conduct fair and open inspections of their own farmers to ensure market integrity for their customers.

The third phase of the professional training program focuses on creating market systems for building long term sustainability for markets. Additional conference sessions further the theme, including: Strategic Planning for Farmers Markets, Crisis Management (on-site and with the media), Developing & Implementing a Marketing Plan, Markets as Conduit to Local Food Economy, and Market Evaluation.

A popular event at the conference is "Spotlight on our Markets". This is an opportunity for market managers to share any new or interesting program, event, market system or experience. Conference attendees find this "show and tell" a valuable learning tool, giving them ideas to take back home to adapt to their own farmers market.

For further information on the Professional Farmers' Market Manager's Training Workshop, call the Farmers' Market Federation of NY at 315-637-4690 or log on to www.nyfarmersmarket.com/workshops.htm to view the workshop program and download the registration form.

Scholarships are available on a limited basis. Download the application at www.nyfarmersmarket.com/workshops.htm. Applications are due by January 15, 2009.