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The Ohio State University Extension's Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Program Selected to Receive Sustainable Agriculture Grant from NCR-SARE

(September 27, 2019) — Christie Welch, Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Program Manager at The Ohio State University South Centers in Piketon, Ohio, has been selected to receive a \$81,316 grant from the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) for the project, "Professional Development for Ohio Farmers Market Managers and OSU Extension Educators on Creating a Culture of Data Collection for Sustainability Planning for Markets and Farmers."

"This project will provide training for farmers market stakeholders on meaningful data collection and use for markets and vendors to use in developing sustainability plans," said Welch. The Farmers Market Coalition and the Ohio Farmers Market Network will collaborate on the project. "We are pleased that NCR-SARE recognizes the need to continue to support a thriving farmers market sector. Markets are great incubators for farmers and a critical part of sustaining them. They also allow access by consumers to locally produced foods, and help create community."

The Farmers Market Coalition is the national voice and support system for farmers market operators and market network leaders, and has created detailed resource and training programs on the role of data collection and utilization at farmers markets over the last decade. The collaboration on this project will bring a wealth of experience to Ohio's farmers market stakeholders. The Ohio Farmers Market Network will also collaborate on the project and assist in getting its member markets the training and resources needed for meaningful data collection and use.

For information or questions about the Ohio project, contact Christie Welch, Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Program Manager at welch.183@osu.edu.

This grant was awarded as part of NCR-SARE's Professional Development Program, which emphasizes training agricultural educators in Extension, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, private, and not-for-profit sectors, using farmers as educators and addressing emerging issues in the farm community. NCR-SARE administers each of its grant programs, each with specific priorities, audiences, and timelines. The focus for each of the NCR-SARE grant programs is on research and education.

Funding considerations are made based on how well the applicant articulates the nature of the research and education components of their sustainable agriculture grant proposals.

NCR-SARE's Administrative Council (AC) members decide which projects will receive SARE funds. A collection of farm and non-farm citizens, the AC includes a diverse mix of agricultural stakeholders in the region. Council members hail from regional farms and ranches, the Cooperative Extension Service, universities, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations.