

A RESOLUTION urging the United States Department of Agriculture and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to recognize and assist innovative projects that provide affordable, farm-fresh food for low-income families living in food-deprived neighborhoods.

WHEREAS, families living in what are called "food deserts" often struggle to gain access to affordable, nutritious, and local farm-fresh foods; and

WHEREAS, a National Academy of Sciences report characterized food deserts as those neighborhoods and communities that have limited access to affordable and nutritious foods; and

WHEREAS, the report indicated that in the United States, food deserts tend to be located in urban and rural low-income neighborhoods, in which residents are less likely to have access to supermarkets and grocery stores that stock healthy food choices; and

WHEREAS, farm-fresh, nutritious foods can be obtained at the farmers' markets that have sprung up in Kentucky's towns and cities in the last few years; and

WHEREAS, the number of farmers' markets in the state has grown in recent years, with 159 successful farmers' markets operating in the Commonwealth at last count, spanning over 109 counties, and featuring about 2,500 vendors; and

WHEREAS, as the number of farmers' markets keeps expanding, low-income families remain unable to access the free-standing markets because farmers may be unwilling to set up in low-income neighborhoods for a variety of reasons, mostly the high risk of failure to receive the prices necessary to make a retail market work; and

WHEREAS, even though farmers' markets enable consumers to find local farm-grown foodstuffs at particular locations, other alternative approaches exist to address local needs, such as community gardens, farm retail stands, roadside markets, and partnerships with existing markets; and

WHEREAS, one such innovative approach exists in Louisville in the form of the Fresh Stop New Roots project, which aims to overcome barriers to delivering fresh farm-

grown food to low-income parts of the city; and

WHEREAS, Fresh Stop New Roots can be likened to a cross between a farmers' market, food cooperative or buying club, and a Community Supported Agriculture direct delivery model; and

WHEREAS, under the program, families pool their resources, including SNAP food stamps benefits and cash, and buy from local producers on a sliding scale, with each family receiving a share of the foodstuffs; and

WHEREAS, under the Fresh Stop New Roots project, low-income families can obtain nutritious farm-grown foods, and small farmers can benefit economically; and

WHEREAS, the USDA and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture support farmers' market projects through funding and other resources, but seemingly overlook innovative projects such as the New Roots Fresh Stop project;

NOW, THEREFORE,

***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

➔Section 1. This honorable body does hereby request that federal and state agricultural departments expand their scope and definition of farmers' markets to include and assist innovative projects that provide access to affordable, nutritious, farm-fresh food for low-income families living in food-deprived neighborhoods.

➔Section 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to send a copy of this Resolution to the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the members of the Kentucky congressional delegation, and to the chairs of the Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture of the Kentucky General Assembly.