Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is making a historic $78 million investment in local and regional food systems, including food hubs, farmers markets, aggregation and processing facilities, distribution services, and other local food business enterprises.

As a result of the 2014 Farm Bill, the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program was created to help market and promote support for local food enterprises. As a result, $30 million will be available to farmers markets, other direct producer-to-consumer venues, and other businesses in the local food supply chain. For marketing and promoting local food businesses, $15 million is available and an additional $15 million will go towards marketing farmers markets and to other direct-to-consumer outlets.

See the full news release here. (Source: United States Department of Agriculture)
Event to Feature New Organic Farming Research

WOOSTER, Ohio -- The new Farm Bill has given new life to organic farming research, said the head of an Ohio State University program devoted to that work, and farmers can see some fruits of that growth at an upcoming free event.

Ohio State’s Organic Food and Farming Education and Research (OFFER) program will hold a public field day featuring new findings and projects from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. June 17 at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center’s (OARDC) Badger farms in northeast Ohio.

OFFER and OARDC are both part of Ohio State’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES). OARDC is the college’s research arm.

“With the passage of the new Farm Bill, several key federal programs supporting organic farming and associated research and outreach efforts will once again be funded,” said OFFER Director Brian McSpadden Gardener. “At this year’s field day, we’ll be highlighting several projects that were funded by different state and federal programs.”

Ohio has 506 farms certified under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Organic Program, according to the agency’s 2012 Census of Agriculture. The number ranks ninth in the nation. In all, the census reported U.S. organic farm sales of $3.12 billion in 2012, up from $1.7 billion in 2007.

Topics at the field day, McSpadden Gardener said, will include pastured poultry, growing a unique kind of oat as feed for that poultry, biofertilizers for organic corn and soybeans, and field trials on weed control, organic fertility inputs, and organic oat and corn varieties.

Also slated are talks on cover crops, biological control of foodborne diseases, controlling downy mildew and bacterial wilt in cucumbers, and controlling cucumber beetles and bacterial wilt in muskmelons.

“By receiving competitive funding for such projects, OARDC researchers continue to display leadership in providing the latest science-based information to certified organic growers throughout the state and beyond,” he said.

The field day also will feature details on the East and West Badger farms themselves, which together represent more than 50 acres of certified organic research land.

The event will start at West Badger Farm on the west side of Apple Creek Road/County Road 44 between Wooster and Apple Creek in Wayne County. From U.S. 250, go north 1.8 miles on Apple Creek Road. From U.S. 30, go south 1.1 miles on Apple Creek Road.

For more information, contact OFFER’s Kathy Bielek at 330-202-3528 or bielek.4@osu.edu.

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Open Positions

ANR – Fairfield County (posting ends 6/15)
https://www.jobsatosu.com/postings/54438
Ohio 4-H Foundation Grant Webinar . . .

Please join Dale Arnold, 4-H Foundation Grants Committee Chair in a CarmenConnect Meeting. This is your opportunity to learn what the committee looks for in a grant application, review successful tips on grant writing and preparing budgets, the importance of your Impact Report, and when to submit an Off-Cycle grant. There will be four sessions to choose from. Please share this link with other Extension employees or local volunteers who are interested in collaborating with you on your next program!

• Thursday, August 14, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.
• Thursday, September 11, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

To join the meeting:
http://carmenconnect.osu.edu/r6mk3y6pvcm/
Room Passcode: grant