

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Xanna Prentice, 352.377.6345
Email: xanna@foginfo.org



Union Street Farmers Market is now participating in Fresh Access Bucks Program *Offers incentives to SNAP recipients for purchasing fruits and vegetables*

(Gainesville Fla. – June 13, 2018) – Union Street Farmers Market is now participating in Fresh Access Bucks (FAB), a program that increases access to healthy, local, fresh produce for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients.

A program of Florida Organic Growers (FOG), FAB is a statewide incentive program designed to encourage SNAP recipients to redeem their benefits at farmers markets for the purchase of fresh, healthy foods directly from Florida farmers. Union Street will be the 50th Fresh Access Bucks market in the state, which is "a fitting milestone," FOG's Executive Director Marty Mesh says, "for a market where we originated the idea of incentives in 2010."

At participating markets, FOG matches what a SNAP cardholder spends with free Fresh Access Bucks - up to \$40, every market day. Customers can use them right away or later on to buy Florida-grown fruits and vegetables. For example, a SNAP shopper who spends \$10 of their SNAP benefits at a participating market receives a match of \$10 to spend on fresh, local produce. This additional money helps families in the purchase and consumption of healthier food and positively impacts the local economy. Funding from FAB also goes towards nutrition education efforts, such as cooking demonstrations hosted in conjunction with UF/IFAS Extension Family Nutrition Program, as well as other outreach activities focused on increasing SNAP participation at farmers markets. Currently there are 44 farmers markets, three farm stands and three CSAs participating in FAB throughout the state.

Xanna Prentice, who runs the EBT booth at market each week as the coordinator of FOG's Local Food Security Project, believes the addition of Union Street to the FAB network is necessary to

combat food insecurity in the area. “This program can positively impact SNAP recipients that experience transportation barriers to fresh food since the market is so centrally located and right in the middle of a food desert,” she explains. “SNAP customers often have to navigate public transportation and ridesharing just to get to a market, so by implementing the incentive program at this downtown market, we are supporting consistent access to fresh food as well as linking the community with educational resources for cooking and preserving that food.”

The Union Street Farmers Market takes place every Wednesday from 4-7pm and is located in Bo Diddley Plaza in downtown Gainesville at 111 E University Ave. Every week, there are over 50 vendors with a wide range of items, including produce, meats, cheeses, honey, and breads as well as locally produced soaps, baked goods, jellies, hot food, and crafts.

FOG is a nonprofit that supports and promotes organic and sustainable agriculture by educating consumers, farmers, future farmers, businesses, policy makers and the general public.

For more information on FAB and the other participating markets around the state, please visit www.FreshAccessBucks.com.

###

About Florida Organic Growers

Florida Organic Growers (FOG) is a non-profit organization founded in 1987. FOG promotes organic agriculture and healthy and just food systems by informing producers, consumers, media, institutions and governments about the benefits of organic and sustainable agriculture. For more information, please visit www.foginfo.org.