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**THIRD ANNUAL FUTURE OF OUR FOOD AND FARMS SUMMIT TO FEATURE
FOUR OF THE NATION'S MOST INFLUENTIAL AGRICULTURAL LEADERS**

PHILADELPHIA --- Register now for the Third Annual *Future of our Food and Farms*

Summit, to be held November 29 and 30. Four Secretaries of Agriculture from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware will introduce their views about the future of agriculture in the Mid-Atlantic region at the conference. This year's theme, "Spreading the Bounty and Safeguarding the Future" focuses on how to increase good nutrition, reduce hunger and support farming in the Mid-Atlantic region. The conference is hosted by Farmers' Market Trust and RISA (Regional Infrastructure for Sustaining Agriculture).

"This year at the Summit, you will learn how changes in markets and upcoming legislation in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware and the U.S. will affect consumers, farmers, businesses and social service agencies," says Duane Perry, Executive Director of the Farmers' Market Trust. "With all four Secretaries of Agriculture attending, everyone engaged in food marketing, farming and hunger prevention should be at the conference this year."

A pre-conference event -- the Hunger Congress -- will feature state and federal legislators from the region, including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware. "The Hunger Congress will be a forum for people to ask state and federal officials about upcoming changes in governmental policies that will affect hunger," says John Weidman, from Philabundance and the Food Resources Alliance, a co-sponsor of the Hunger Congress.

The *Future of our Food and Farms* Summit will be held November 29 to November 30 at the Renaissance Hotel, Philadelphia International Airport. Each year the Summit convenes hundreds of farming, food business, government, and anti-hunger leaders from the Mid-Atlantic region to find ways to sustain farming, educate people about the food system, improve community food security and build partnerships among businesses, organizations, public agencies, and consumers to make affordable and nutritious food available to everyone.

In addition to the Hunger Congress, the *Future of our Food and Farms* Summit will offer sessions on: the future of the food industry; promoting local agriculture, food, farming and hunger policy; community food security; the new Farm Bill; land stewardship; wholesale produce auctions; ethnic foods; advanced agriculture; small vs. large farms; careers in agriculture; nutrition education for children; and much, much more. Session presenters include experts from Penn State University, Rutgers University, Greater Philadelphia Food Bank, Ohio State University, American University, University of Maryland, and Appalachian Sustainable Development.

Also featured will be the award-winning PBS documentary, *Homecoming ... Sometimes I am haunted by memories of red dirt and clay*. *Homecoming* is the story of African-American land loss and a chronicle of black farmers from the Civil War to the present. Producer/director Charlene Gilbert places her own family farm in Montezuma, Georgia squarely in the historical

context of the black farm movement in America. Gilbert wrote *Homecoming* with the assistance of writer Quinn Eli.

This year's *Future of Our Food and Farms* Summit will give the "Mid-Atlantic Innovation and Leadership Blue Ribbon Award" to an exemplary individual, organization or business whose pioneering work, innovation and leadership have significantly improved the food and farming system in the Mid-Atlantic region. "We need to strengthen the viability of our region's farms, and ensure that nutritious and affordable food is available to everyone. Every day, people, businesses and organizations in this region are working hard to change and improve our food system. We want to recognize these leaders, and honor their work to build a better community for us all," says Perry.

In addition, on Thursday night, the *Autumn Harvest Dinner* will feature some of the area's greatest chefs preparing locally grown foods from the Mid-Atlantic region. Participating chefs include: Lynn Buono of Feast Your Eyes, Jill Horn of Jill's Vorspiese, Jack McDavid of Jack's Firehouse, Kevin von Klause of the White Dog Café, and Delilah Winder of Bluezette.

The Farmers' Market Trust/RISA is a nonprofit organization located in Philadelphia. The Farmers' Market Trusts' mission is to increase the availability of fresh foods in underserved communities and to improve the connection between urban and agricultural communities. RISA is dedicated to supporting and promoting the food and agriculture system in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Sponsors of the Summit include: Land O'Lakes Foundation, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network, and Maryland Department of Agriculture. Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension and College of Agricultural Sciences is a contributor.

For more information on the on the *Future of our Food and Farms* summit, please visit www.foodfarms.org. Registration is \$125 per person; early registration (before Nov. 1) is \$105. A one-day rate of \$75 is available. For registration information contact Meredith Stone at the Farmers' Market Trust, (215) 568-0830 x10, or fmtrust@libertynet.org.