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**At Least 50 Partners Come Together to Make
Double Up Food Bucks Colorado a Reality
*Program Benefiting Low-Income Families is a Partnership Success***

ALAMOSA — June 14th 2016 — A statewide partnership led by LiveWell Colorado, Colorado Department of Human Services, the Colorado Farmers Market Association, Cooking Matters-Colorado, and Boulder County Public Health has just been awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant to launch Double Up Food Bucks Colorado.

“We believe that by coming together, we can make a bigger difference helping Coloradans overcome barriers to accessing healthy, affordable food,” stated San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition lead local partner Liza Marron. Other important partners include First Southwest Bank, the Alamosa Farmers Market, the Valley Food Coop, the South Fork Farmers Market, Saguache’s Fourth Street Food store and the San Luis Valley Cooking Matters Program.

The Double Up Food Bucks Colorado program expands the amount of fruits and vegetables recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) can purchase. Coloradans who receive food stamps are provided \$1.41 per meal or \$4.23 per day on averageⁱ, which can make it challenging to purchase fruits and vegetables. With Double Up Food Bucks Colorado, SNAP recipients will receive up to \$20 in Colorado-grown fruits and vegetables when they use their SNAP benefits at participating farmers markets or select retailers. SNAP benefits will be matched dollar for dollar to be put toward Colorado-grown, fresh fruits and vegetables, up to \$20 per visit.

First Southwest Bank provided match funds that will enable four San Luis Valley food distribution centers to participate in the launch of the Colorado Double Up program, the first of its kind in rural Colorado. “As a certified Community Development Financial Institution, we work to address critical public needs and develop vital community resources,” said CEO Kent Curtis. “First Southwest Bank has a long history of serving communities in need. We believe that Double Up Food Bucks will increase access to healthy, affordable food for the underserved in our communities as well as create additional economic opportunities for our local farmers.”

Close to 50 partners have come together to make Double Up Food Bucks Colorado a reality according to Wendy Peters Moschetti, LiveWell Colorado Director of Food Systems. “By working closely with our community and state agency partners, we hope to reach the 150,000 households who depend on SNAP in these 19 urban and rural counties,” added Moschetti.

While Colorado adults have the nation’s lowest obesity rate at 21.3 percent,ⁱⁱ adults with annual incomes below \$10,000 have an obesity rate of 29.2 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2013, 86 percent of adult Coloradans did not meet recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption.^{iv}

The first year of Double Up Food Bucks Colorado will include reaching 30 farmers markets and at least five additional retailers in 19 counties across Colorado. The Double Up Food Bucks Colorado program also goes beyond farmers markets in Colorado through community-based urban agriculture projects with on-site marketplaces (including Community Supported Agriculture, food co-operatives, corner stores and urban agriculture marketplaces) located in low-income neighborhoods.

Mandy Pittman Alamosa Farmers' Market manager is excited about how Double Up will add to an amazing market this season. "On Saturdays from July 9 to October 8 between the hours of 8 am and 1 pm, customers can patronize our wonderful local produce vendors and get more bang for their buck. This season the Market will not only offer great activities, performances, amazing local foods, and crafted items but now we can also offer our SNAP recipients a great opportunity to stretch their dollars."

Valley Food Co-op co-managers, Laura Cranson and Sherri Pascoe, see this as a great opportunity for San Luis Valley residents to double their SNAP benefits and also provide healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables for their families. "It will also help us support the local farmers with increased sales in the retail store." The Valley Food Coop is a member owned Natural Food Coop located in the Villa Mall in Alamosa open seven days a week.

Up North in Saguache Marge Hoglin has been working hard for many years to provide healthy food at affordable prices to low-income residents of Saguache County. "Our mission is to support local food producers, and to promote healthy eating," she says. "This program will greatly enhance our ability to do both." The Fourth Street Food Store opens every day at 10am.

And out West the South Fork Farmers Market operates on Saturdays and Sundays from 10-2 this Saturday through September 4th. Manager Karen Miller hopes that Double Up SNAP marketing will bring SNAP users out to take advantage of the new opportunity at 170 Wharton Street at the Little Britches Rodeo Grounds this summer.

Valerie Hagedorn, Marlayna Martinez and Beatriz Waddell of Cooking Matters housed at the San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition are excited to work in conjunction with SLV farmers markets to help participants increase their intake of fruits and vegetables. They will be providing on-site guided tours to educate consumers about healthy choices on a budget while creating connections for consumers with local farmers and the local food economy.

The FINI funding is available through the 2014 Farm Bill and is administered by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The USDA FINI Grant brings a half million dollars of federal funding into Colorado, including more than \$100,000 in cash incentives alone in 2016, with an increase in incentives in years two and three of the program. The grant was matched by more than \$899,000 from 26 partners committing financial and in-kind support to make this program possible in Colorado.

A list of partners participating in Double Up Food Bucks Colorado can be found here www.DoubleUpColorado.org.

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LiveWell Colorado (www.livewellcolorado.org) is a statewide nonprofit organization committed to preventing and reducing obesity in Colorado by promoting healthy eating and active living. With the goal of eliminating health disparities and advancing health equity, LiveWell Colorado focuses its efforts on policy, environmental and lifestyle changes that remove barriers and increase access to healthy behaviors. Working in partnership with obesity prevention initiatives across the state, LiveWell Colorado aims to provide every Coloradan with access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity to make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation. For more information, please visit: LiveWellColorado.org.

The San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition (www.slvlocalfoods.org) fosters an equitable local food system that restores the health of the people, community, economy and ecosystem. Several big projects contribute to the mission including the Mosca Valley Roots Food Hub aggregating and distributing local farm products to families, retail outlets and institutions; the Rio Grande Farm Park in Alamosa educating the community about organic agriculture and incubating new farmers while providing access to the river and running trails; Cooking Matters and Healthy Habits teaching people to cook healthy on a budget. 719-937-2319

First Southwest Bank has been serving the San Luis Valley and Southern Colorado for more than 100 years. With seven branches in the area, the bank offers personal and business banking with an emphasis on businesses supporting rural communities. First Southwest Bank is active in the communities it serves aiding more than 40 local organizations. More information about the bank is available at www.fswb.com.

Double Up Food Bucks was created by Fair Food Network (www.fairfoodnetwork.org) in 2009. It began at five farmers markets in Detroit, spread statewide to more than 150 sites across Michigan including grocery stores in one of the first pilots in the country, and

has since become a model for healthy food incentives implemented by communities nationwide. Today, Double Up programs are active in 13 states with six more states launching efforts in 2016.

ⁱ USDA Food and Nutrition Service SNAP Program Data

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2015. Accessed April 2016 at <http://wwwdev.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Colorado Health Institute analysis of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004-2013).

^{iv} Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014). *Facts for Action: Chronic Diseases and Related Risk Factors in Colorado, Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Colorado*. Accessed at: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DC_fact-sheet_Fruit-vegetables_Nov-2014_without-Appendix.pdf