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REPRESENTING OHIO'S 9TH DISTRICT



## **Quick Summary of H.R. 3225, the Community Agriculture Development and Jobs Act**

The Community Agriculture Development and Jobs Act will help create the next generation of farmers in our nation's cities, reduce foreign agricultural imports, work to eliminate food deserts, strengthen local food systems and increase marketing opportunities for small farmers while improving seniors' nutrition.

### **Next Generation of Farmers and Reducing Foreign Agricultural Imports**

Economic challenges and land use changes have created vacant land throughout the nation's cities. These areas could be transformed into greenhouses or community gardens by agricultural entrepreneurs but many of these individuals likely never thought an agricultural related small business was possible in a metro area and USDA has not traditionally engaged these communities.

In addition, USDA estimates that the U.S. will import nearly \$95 Billion in agricultural products in 2011. If we were to turn vacant land in our cities into agricultural producing small businesses, we would create the next generation of American farmers to reduce the need for foreign imports.

The Community Agriculture Development and Jobs Act establishes the Community Agriculture Outreach Program to help fund efforts to engage prospective entrepreneurs in metro areas and also establishes the Office of Community Agriculture within USDA to focus on using existing USDA resources to increase agriculture production in nontraditional production areas.

### **Eliminating Food Deserts and Strengthening Local Food Systems**

USDA estimates that 23.5 million people live in food deserts and 14.5 percent of households were food insecure. These problems occur because of our broken food systems.

The Community Agriculture Development and Jobs Act specifically tasks the Office of Community Agriculture with the responsibility of ensuring that existing USDA programs specifically address the root causes of food deserts and food insecurity. In addition, the Office is provided with the authority to coordinate efforts among federal departments to eliminate food deserts and food insecurity.

### **Increasing Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers & Improving Senior Nutrition**

USDA reports that 60 percent of small farms have gross cash farm income of less than \$10,000. About 35 percent of small farms sales come from direct sales such as those at farmers markets.

The Community Agriculture Development and Jobs Act seeks to increase small farmers income by increasing funding for and expanding the Farmers' Market Promotion Program. In addition, the bill would help support consumer demand at farmers' market and improve senior's nutrition by increasing funding for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

Furthermore, the legislation requires the Office of Community Agriculture to develop a strategy to ensure that the \$91 Billion in federal nutrition assistance program funding is used to support economic development and the consumption of locally produced foods.