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## **FIVE BOROUGH FARM STUDY DEMONSTRATES NEW YORK CITY'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN URBAN AGRICULTURE**

**July 24, 2012 (New York, NY)** – Today the Design Trust for Public Space, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving New York's public spaces, released *Five Borough Farm: Seeding the Future of Urban Agriculture in New York*, the most detailed survey to date of New York City's urban agriculture movement. The comprehensive publication provides a roadmap for public- and private-sector partners to leverage existing programs and expand urban agriculture citywide.

The study was created in partnership with Brooklyn-based nonprofit Added Value and funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and David Rockefeller Fund. It found that New York City, a densely populated metropolis with some of the nation's highest real estate values, is also a **national leader in urban agriculture**. The city is currently home to **more than 700 food-producing farms and gardens** across approximately 50 acres of reclaimed vacant lots, rooftops, schoolyards, and public housing grounds – nearly ten times the number of urban farms and gardens as San Francisco and Seattle.

"In all five boroughs, urban agriculture transforms under-utilized land into vibrant, productive public space," said Design Trust executive director Susan Chin. "Thousands of farmers and gardeners contribute to the social, economic, and ecological health of our city, particularly in neighborhoods hit hardest by the recession. These efforts dovetail with our mission to improve public space in New York City."

Through maps, photographs, and interviews with more than 100 stakeholders, *Five Borough Farm* illustrates how New York City's community-based farming creates jobs, educates youth, captures stormwater, decreases the city's waste stream, and creates safe public spaces.

Some of the study's key findings include:

- **Urban agriculture has health, social, economic, and ecological benefits.** Studies show that urban agriculture encourages healthier eating and physical activity, strengthens community cohesion, improves job-readiness skills, and reduces the urban heat island effect.
- **The city's farmers and gardeners face challenges obtaining critical resources.** These include land, funding, soil, and compost.
- **Scaling up urban agriculture requires municipal leadership.** Citywide coordination, dedicated funding, and commitment from elected officials are needed to promote and sustain farms and gardens.

Building on Mayor Michael Bloomberg's and Council Speaker Christine Quinn's support for urban agriculture in *PlaNYC* and *FoodWorks*, the Design Trust calls for **creating a citywide plan** to guide land use and resource allocation for farms and gardens, **establishing an interagency urban agriculture task force** to coordinate policy and procedures, and **incentivizing temporary projects** at more than 600 stalled development sites across the city.

The release of the publication and companion website (<http://fiveboroughfarm.org>) mark the start of the Design Trust's implementation of key recommendations from the report to support agriculture. In the second phase of the project, the Design Trust will identify 100 publicly-owned sites citywide potentially suitable for food production, collect data on urban agricultural activity, and give New York City's farmers and gardeners a voice in the policymaking process.

"People are starting to realize that our broken food system has serious consequences for our individual health, and for the health of our environment and our economy," said *Five Borough Farm* project partner and Added Value executive director Ian Marvy. "It is increasingly important for all of us to be able to understand and articulate how urban agriculture can contribute to our society and economy, and to the planet on which we all live."