How US farmers' markets reach out

1 Mar 2012 by Jancis Robinson

Sarah Robins, the winner of the 2011 Geoffrey Roberts Award, went to the US to investigate how farmers' markets there are being opened up to low-income households. She has just filed this very detailed report on what she found there.

As she points out, farmers' markets are viewed very differently in the US (as regular promoters of good health) to how they are seen by Australians (as more occasional gourmet events). Systems are also quite different (see this sign advertising, in English and Spanish, the fact that food tokens are accepted at Union Square farmers' market in New York, also pictured left). It will not therefore be possible to transfer directly the mechanisms already in place for encouraging the impoverished to take advantage of farmers' markets from the US to Australia, but those of us involved with the Geoffrey Roberts Trust hope very much that some lessons can be learned from Sarah's hard work.

We also hope that this might encourage others to apply for the £3,000/$5,000 on offer this year to someone who can convince us judges that their proposed travels could make a positive difference to the worlds of food and/or drink.

Applications can be made via www.geoffreyrobertsaward.com, where there are more details of this annual international travel award. The deadline for applications for the 2012 Geoffrey Roberts Award is 31 March 2012.