



May 6, 2013

Are you eligible to get a free EBT machine from your state?



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Increasing SNAP Access at Markets



May, 2012: USDA announced a \$4 million appropriation to states for purchasing EBT machines.

Background



- \$4M for wireless point-of-sale (POS) equipment in farmers' markets "not currently participating in SNAP"
 - Defined as markets not SNAP-authorized before 11/18/11
 - State funds based on percentage of such markets in each State
- Two-year funds; available through 09/30/13
- Funds **could** only be used to:
 - Purchase or lease POS equipment for eligible farmers' markets
 - Pay for SNAP wireless access for that equipment

FMC SNAP Survey to Members



- 167 responses
- 77% (n=128) currently SNAP authorized, and among those organizations, 80% (n=102) received some kind of assistance when applying to USDA for authorization— either from a state department of agriculture, state SNAP agency, the Farmers Market Coalition, a regional FNS office, or other peers/market managers.



FMC SNAP Survey to Members



- Only 23% (n=38) of all respondents said that they attempted to acquire a free wireless POS device from their respective state agency in 2012 or 2013.
- Why? Insufficient staff or time to initiate the process, and ineligibility.
- Those who DID attempt and were unsuccessful cited issues such as difficulty communicating with the state agencies, confusing paperwork, and confusion regarding eligibility. Additionally, some states opted not to accept the funding.

FMC SNAP Survey to Members



- The 28 respondents that were successful in receiving free POS devices were located in the following states:
 - Virginia (3)
 - Pennsylvania
 - Washington (3)
 - Tennessee
 - Michigan (5)
 - Nebraska
 - Hawaii
 - Colorado (2)
 - West Virginia
 - Massachusetts (3)
 - New York (4)
 - Missouri
 - Georgia
 - Ohio

Making More Effective Use Of SNAP Farmers' Market Equipment Funds



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Challenge



- *How can the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) encourage effective use of fiscal year (FY) 2012 and 2013 funds intended to increase the number of farmers' markets participating in SNAP?*

Current Status



- As of 02/28/13, only \$263,895 (6.60%) used; another \$565,354 (14.13%) declined
- States provided two general reasons :
 - Difficulty identifying and recruiting eligible markets
 - Procedural obstacles

New Developments



- USDA revisited limitations re: use of funds
- Funds can be used to acquire POS equipment for certain direct-marketing farmers
- Conditions:
 - Farmer must participate at market not currently SNAP-authorized
 - Farmer must not currently be SNAP-authorized
 - No other vendor at market can be SNAP-authorized
- Increase SNAP visibility & (we hope) encourage markets to join

Request for Assistance



- We know EBT equipment is needed
- Yet State usage rate has not been good
- There is a gap, & we need ***your*** help to close it
- Help us find markets & farmers not in the Program, & encourage & assist them to join
- Recommend focus on areas with high densities of SNAP clients, though all eligible markets & farmers are welcome

Win-Win-Win



- SNAP recipients get access to healthier, fresher foods
- Farmers & markets get more direct access to consumers
- Support locally-grown food/small-business

FNS Doing Its Part



- **Conducting Outreach**
 - Market advocacy groups (YOU!)
 - State agencies and Departments of Agriculture;
 - Letters to all 7,800 farmers' markets
 - Broader advocacy groups (Mayors' council, etc.), etc.
- **Inviting EBT vendors to participate in series of webinars**
 - FNS has posted vendor information online
- **FNS Regions continue to engage StrikeForce States**
 - AL, AK, AR, AZ, CO, GA, MI, NC, ND, NM, NV, SC, SD, TX, UT, VA
- FNS creating "*Mythbuster*" Fact-Sheet

FNS Doing Its Part



- ***Just Posted On Web!!!***
 - Details regarding our new flexibilities with individual farmers
 - Worksheet showing funds remaining in each State
 - Contact sheets for SNAP State agencies
- Our plan is constantly evolving!
- **We are open to new ideas on getting the word out and working together!**

Questions?



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