



EBT at Farmers Market Promotion - Milwaukee County FoodWise PSE Effort

Summer 2017

While the number of farmers markets in the state of Wisconsin that accept EBT for SNAP dollars is on the rise, the use of SNAP redemption at farmers markets lags behind other Midwestern states. In fact, it is estimated that less than 1% of total dollars available are spent at farmers markets. During the summer of 2015, UW-Extension surveyed a sample of FoodShare users in hopes of understanding and identifying barriers FoodShare participants face in accessing Wisconsin farmers' markets. The report revealed that:



- 71% polled have shopped at farmers markets in the past.
- Almost 60% of Foodshare recipients polled did not know they could use SNAP at farmers markets
- Of those who did know, 28% found out through a form of word-of-mouth

From these findings, the idea of FoodWise educators acting as "Farmers Markets Community Connectors" was born. The goal of this idea was to use word-of-mouth tactics during direct education lessons to increase knowledge of the option to use SNAP at farmers markets, along with a list of farmers markets in the Milwaukee area that accept various federal nutrition benefits.

FoodWise Programming:

FoodWise educators talked about farmers markets and the opportunity to use EBT at Farmers Markets to participants during direct education lessons using a handout created by the Milwaukee Farmers Market Connection Coalition. A pre and post survey was administered to measure changes to the following three things:



- Have you visited a farmers market before?
- Have you purchased fruits or vegetables from a farmers market before?
- Did you know that many farmers markets accept different types of food assistance benefits like SNAP dollars/Foodshare/Quest card; WIC farmers market checks, and Senior farmers market vouchers?

Results:

Pre Test results:

Have you visited a farmers market before? 22% no; 78% yes

Have you purchased fruits or vegetables from a farmers market before? 25% no; 75% Yes

Did you know that many farmers markets accept different types of food assistance benefits?: 63% no; 34%

Post Test Results:

Who has visited a farmers market between our first class and today? 46% No; 54% yes

Did you purchase a fruit or vegetable at the farmers market between our first class and today? 48% No; 52% Yes

Did you use a form of food assistance benefits at a farmers market between our first class and today? 70% no; 30% yes

Comments from learners:

"I did not know some markets accepted the Quest card and have told people who did not know either."

"I went for the first time and loved it." "The tomatoes taste better than store bought and cheaper too!"



Sustainability:

Milwaukee County FoodWise will continue to promote the use of EBT at farmers market during the winter market and 2018 farmers market season. In addition, FoodWise will work with the Milwaukee Farmers Market Coalition to increase these effort in the future by exploring further options and opportunities to promote farmers markets and the use of nutrition benefits.

