

Green City Market Farmer and Community Development, Marketing and Communications Program

Chicago Green City Market Program of Chicago, IL received \$76,300 to increase usage of the existing EBT program; expand existing marketing and promotional campaigns to the general public, and fund a scholarship program to educate and assist farmers to develop sustainable production and marketing practices.

[Final Report FY09](#)



Executive Summary:

The Green City Market (GCM) was the recipient of the FMPP grant for 2010 and 2011 for the specific projects of community development, marketing communications and educational program development, development of an EBT system and farmer development programs. As an industry leader, GCM, is Chicago's only year round sustainable farmers market. In 2009, GCM began the process on to ensure that all farmers participating in the market were certified sustainable by a third party organization. At the close of our outdoor season of 2011, all Green City Market farmers are now certified making Green City Market a leader national leader in this process.

Project Summary: In our grant proposal for the FMPP project, we requested funds for the following programs:

- EBT system and matching funds to help those on assistance have access to fresh local products.
- Farmer scholarships to attend conferences for further training.
- Partially fund a staff position to assist our farmers become certified sustainable by a third party organization ensuring a standard of product and quality to our market customers.
- Marketing materials for our educational programs and the market itself in order to bring more people of all ages to the market and educate them on the importance of supporting sustainable agriculture.
- Computer equipment for the office staff to support all of the programs and activities.

Project Approach:

EBT system:

In July of 2012, a group of students from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business on Link Card programs and the impact of converting to an electronic system from using stamps. This project illustrated that the electronic link card system resulted in a drastic decline in the purchase of farmers market produce as farmers did not have the knowledge or resources to individually purchase machines to process sales. Prior to this program change, food stamps could be used at farmers markets which did not require an investment on the part of the farmer.

The funds from the FMPP project directly impacted healthy eating and providing access to fresh produce to help correct this issue inadvertently created by the advance of technology. In 2010 the EBT link terminal was purchased and implemented into the market. In April of 2010 Green City market began processing link cards for the purchase of fresh produce. During the outdoor season fo 2011, we actively marketed the Link card program to a variety of shelters and community support centers near the market via a grass roots marketing campaign conducted by our Junior Board. We used some funds to design and print a postcard and four board members visited each center and shelter to leave a stack of cards to the residents. This resulted in large sales increase from early June through the fall when the weather turns cooler. Our link card sales increased by 35% from 2010 to 2011 cwhich benefited our farmers in terms of sales and helped make local fresh produce assessible to everyone in our community.

Link Sales

Total Sales for 2010 **\$3991.41**
Total Sales for 2011 **\$5362.68**

June/July 2011	August 2011	Sept 2011	Oct 2011	Nov/Dec 2011
\$371	\$1098	\$1455	\$344	\$598

2732 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 302, CHICAGO, IL 60614
P 773.880.1266 F 773.880.1262
GREENCITYMARKET.ORG





Lessons Learned: GCM employs a coupon system which makes it more challenging to shop quickly and also is more visible to other market customers. In 2012, GCM will implement a token system to allow for quick more efficient shopping for link card users and simpler reimbursement for our farmers.

As illustrated by the table above, marketing is an effective way to increase link card sales and provide more access to fresh produce to people on assistance. Our flyer campaign was implemented in July and resulted to the large sales increases that for two months prior to the marketing efforts. Sales decreased in correlation to cool weather and rain which deters market customers overall. Consistent marketing to communities that serve individuals in need is an effective method for increasing link card sales and the sale of fresh produce to people on assistance.

Green City Market plans to increase outreach and marketing in this area as the those on assistance in American are not just low income ethnic populations but students, Senior citizens and many families whose households have been impacted by the loss of jobs due to the economy. In 2012 we would like to expand to an EBT matching dollar program because local fresh produce tends to be more expensive than grocery stores.

Farmer Scholarships:

Ten GCM farmers were able to attend important Midwest regional farming conferences, MOSE and Family Farmed. These conferences feature education seminars on farming techniques, funding sources for sustainable farmers and marketing for farm businesses. Conferences are expensive and often not within the reach of small farmers and the results helped them become more successful. This was well received and we plan to continue it in future years if funding permits.

Eight Green City Market farms chose to attend the annual conference of FamilyFarmed.org whose goals are to educate farmers on business practices such as marketing and security grants and other sources of funds for farm expansions. A tradeshow being held simultaneously resulted in Green City market farmers making connections with other farmers and wholesale operations to increase sales. Jessie Granor of Granor Farms said, "The Family Farmed Expo is great for networking among farmers and also distributors and others in the farm business. I found it a very valuable experience for my operations." Granor farms also attended the same conference in 2012.

Farmers who attend MOSE learn skills to employ in their growing methods. Since the conference is held in February, it allows farmers who attend to implement techniques learned at the conference. In 2011, two Green City market farmers were able to attend MOSE with assistance from the FMPP grant through Green City Market.

Lessons Learned:

In addition to continuing to provide educational opportunities Green City Market will develop and implement strategies to measure the impact of offering these programs to our farmers. We will also continue to survey our farmers on what important topics and issues around which further education is needed in the community.

New Staff Position:

Green City Market created a position, Vendor and Community Relations Outreach Coordinator, to address the needs of farmers seeking third party certification, a requirement of GCM as of 2012. This position also works with new vendors seeking to enter to Green City Market, in addition to managing the farmer scholarship funds created with a portion of the FMPP grant for farmer education. The Vendor and Community Outreach Coordinator also managed our EBT program in addition to creating marketing materials and distributing them local community centers in order to draw more LINK card sales to the market.

The monies used to add this staff position were instrumental in achieving the organization's goal of having all of our farmers be certified sustainable by the outdoor market of 2012 and that goal was achieved. This staff



position will continue to work with our farmers as a resource in addition to creating outreach programs to further Green City's mission in the community.

In January of 2012, a customer survey was conducted which asked a random sample of market customers a series of questions about Green City Market some of which were targeted to the importance of our certification program. The results were that 63% of market customers felt the third party sustainable certifications were very important and 63.5% expected to pay a higher price for food grown in a sustainable manner. Our farmers made an investment of time and money to become certified and our survey illustrates that customers are concerned about how their food is grown and will pay a fair price.

Marketing Program:

In 2010 and 2011, Green City market began and 18 month branding strategy program in order to create a cohesive look to the public. The new logo and communication materials were launched at the beginning of our outdoor season in 2011 including new signs for each farmer which highlighted their certification, miles traveled to the market and brief facts about the farm bringing our "Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer" tagline to life with one brief visual. The sign program was a huge success with market customers and the farmers themselves and was also a featured article in the Chicago Tribune titled, "More Certification for Farmers".

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-05-11/features/ct-food-0511-sustain-20110511_1_organic-certification-farmers-market-sustainability

The marketing communications firm, Kahler Slater, lead the branding development for Green City Market also created a complete organizational identity program in a "Do it Yourself" style that allows Green City to create our own marketing materials in the future. The complete branding package was delivered digitally and communicates Green City's image beautifully. They greatly discounted their fees in order to work within our budget and give us an identity that will last our organization for many future years. All of our communications outlets were updated including our website, e-newsletter, "Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer" publication and market signs. All of these elements are now a cohesive package which communicates confidence and quality to our farmers, market customers and market partners. Having a consistent look and message in the Chicago Community also helps us raise funds for the organization to continue its mission.

Equipment:

Lastly, the investment in four computer systems for the office staff allowed GCM to produce many of the marketing and communications materials needed to execute all of our educational programs in-house making it possible to offer these items to the public. These materials support our free educational programs which include cooking lessons with market produce held on-site each market day, children's taste education programs called Club Sprouts that encourage children of all ages to try new varieties of fruits and vegetables, Savor the Seasons tasting to highlight the heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables grown by green city market farmers and our Edible Gardens program, which teaches thousands of local public school children how to grow food and the full life cycle of the garden. Also in 2011, we were able to add adult training sessions to our Edible Gardens program and special training days for teachers who were implementing a garden curriculum into their elementary lesson plans.

During the 2011 outdoor season, GCM was visited by over 250,000 people interested in purchasing, tasting, and learning more about the farmers who grow their food. All of our efforts work toward our goal of creating a local sustainable food system that supports local farmers and is accessible to everyone which contributes to the health of our environment, people and community. The results of the investment of the FMPP funds greatly contributed to Green City Market's success locally and nationally in setting the standard for what farmers markets can achieve.



Dana Benigno
Green City Market Executive Director
2732 N Clark #302
Chicago, IL 60614

Attachments:

2012 Market Customer Survey
Booth Student Study of the Link Card System
"More Certifications for Farmers" article by Monica Eng for the Chicago Tribune

Prior Submissions:

Examples of Farmer sign
Example of new logo

2732 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 302, CHICAGO, IL 60614
P 773.880.1266 F 773.880.1262
GREENCITYMARKET.ORG



1. My age is

		Response Percent	Response Count
<19		0.1%	1
20-29		11.5%	84
30-39		25.1%	184
40-49		19.9%	146
50-59		23.9%	175
60+		19.4%	142
answered question			732
skipped question			9

2. My gender is

		Response Percent	Response Count
Male		20.5%	151
Female		79.0%	581
Other		0.4%	3
answered question			735
skipped question			6

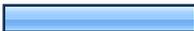
3. My zip code is

		Response Percent	Response Count
60614		52.8%	141
60657		28.5%	76
60610		18.7%	50
	Other (please specify)		475
answered question			267
skipped question			474

4. I visit Green City Market

		Response Percent	Response Count
only when it is outside in Lincoln Park		28.6%	211
only when it is inside at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum		2.3%	17
both locations		65.7%	485
Never (Why?)		3.4%	25
answered question			738
skipped question			3

5. I travel to Green City Market

		Response Percent	Response Count
by car		63.2%	457
on foot		28.8%	208
by bicycle		15.9%	115
on public transportation		27.0%	195
	Other (please specify)		19
		answered question	723
		skipped question	18

6. How often do you shop at Green City Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
every wednesday		3.6%	26
every saturday		17.0%	123
both		7.3%	53
less than twice a month		53.9%	390
once per week, either Wed or Sat		18.2%	132
		answered question	724
		skipped question	17

7. How much do you typically spend at the market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
less than \$10		1.7%	12
\$10-\$15		9.1%	66
\$15-\$30		30.5%	221
\$31-\$50		32.0%	232
more than \$50		26.7%	193
answered question			724
skipped question			17

8. What products do you typically purchase? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
fresh fruits and vegetables		99.2%	723
baked goods		52.3%	381
prepared foods (jams, salsa, pickles, etc)		38.5%	281
ready-to-eat foods (tamales, donuts, burgers, quiche, etc)		34.0%	248
answered question			729
skipped question			12

9. How many vendors do you purchase from?

		Response Percent	Response Count
one		0.3%	2
two		2.8%	20
three		18.4%	133
four		25.6%	185
five		19.9%	144
six		6.5%	47
more than six		26.7%	193
answered question			724
skipped question			17

10. What is the number one reason you shop at Green City Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
freshness and taste		15.6%	111
variety of local agricultural products		13.6%	97
supporting local agriculture		27.8%	198
convenience		0.3%	2
community atmosphere		5.9%	42
high quality food that is organic and sustainable		36.8%	262
Other (please specify)			44
answered question			712
skipped question			29

11. I come to Green City Market to buy _____ (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
ready to eat foods (donuts, crepes, burger etc.)		29.3%	213
prepared foods (jams, cider, salsa, soup)		33.6%	244
fruits and vegetables		98.9%	718
meat, cheese, milk and eggs		62.0%	450
answered question			726
skipped question			15

12. Has your weekly consumption of fruits and vegetables increased due to shopping at Green City Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree		16.2%	118
Agree		32.6%	237
Neither agree or disagree		40.4%	294
Disagree		8.3%	60
Strongly Disagree		2.5%	18
answered question			727
skipped question			14

13. Green City Market farmers are all certified by a third party to ensure a high standard of growing practices, animal husbandry and quality products. Please rate the level of importance of these third party certifications.

		Response Percent	Response Count
very important		63.0%	461
somewhat important		32.0%	234
not important		5.1%	37
answered question			732
skipped question			9

14. Do you expect to pay _____ at Green City Market than at other markets? Why or why not?

		Response Percent	Response Count
more		63.5%	461
the same		34.6%	251
less		3.2%	23
Why or why not?			407
answered question			726
skipped question			15

15. Green City Market prices are _____ as other farmers markets.

		Response Percent	Response Count
lower than		0.7%	5
the same		34.3%	241
slightly higher		50.2%	353
significantly higher		14.8%	104
answered question			703
skipped question			38

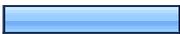
16. How did you learn about the market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
email		18.3%	60
social media (facebook/twitter)		6.7%	22
newspaper/magazine/news		74.9%	245
Other (please specify)			384
answered question			327
skipped question			414

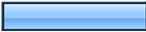
17. Are you aware that Green City Market is a not for profit organization supported by donations and grants?

		Response Percent	Response Count
YES		85.8%	630
NO		14.2%	104
answered question			734
skipped question			7

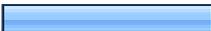
18. Please check the Green City Market programs and events you are aware of or have participated or attended.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Chef demonstrations		94.3%	577
Savor the seasons tastings		26.1%	160
Edible Gardens		35.9%	220
Locavore Challenge		34.3%	210
Heritage and Heirloom Project		16.2%	99
answered question			612
skipped question			129

19. I support Green City Market by _____(check all that apply).

		Response Percent	Response Count
being a market member		21.4%	152
making a personal donation to support the market		10.4%	74
attending market fund raising events		19.4%	138
purchasing food from the farmers		96.9%	688
	Other (please specify)		51
answered question			710
skipped question			31

20. What other farmers markets do you visit? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Logan Square		28.7%	119
Wicker Park		18.8%	78
Lincoln Square		31.3%	130
Daley Plaza		42.4%	176
Art Institute		4.3%	18
Evanston		24.6%	102
Oak Park		7.7%	32
	Other (please specify)		292
answered question			415
skipped question			326

21. What can Green City Market do to improve?

**Response
Count**

378

answered question

378

skipped question

363

Green City Market: LINK Program Recommendations

Chicago Booth FEAD

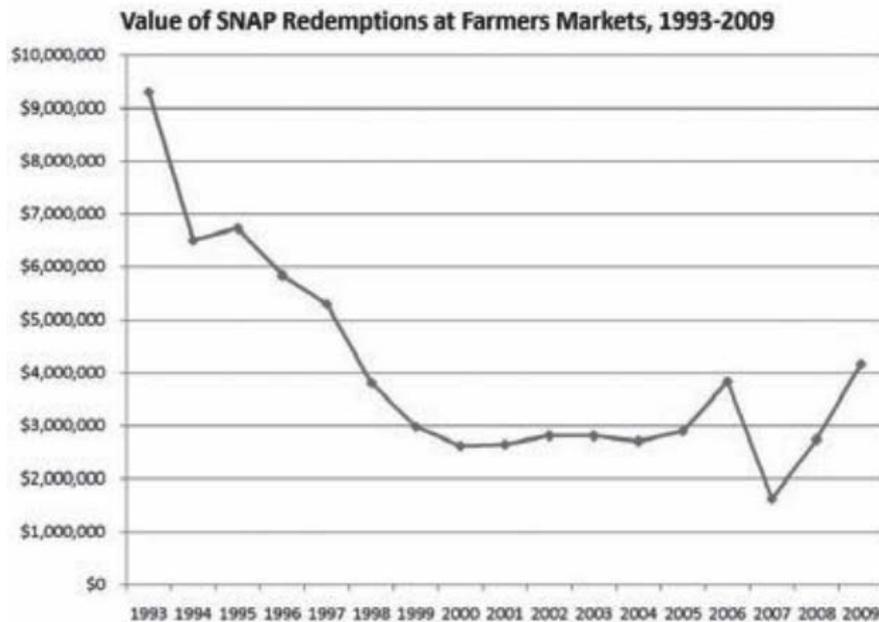
Chris Liang, Heather MacLeish,
Catey Mark, Tyler White

December 9, 2011

Agenda

- Farmer's Market SNAP Acceptance Models
- Benefits Matching Programs & Grants
- LINK User Profile & Outreach
- Recommendations & Next Steps

Farmers Market & SNAP: History



- Historically, SNAP redemption at farmers markets has been much higher than today's levels
- Steady declines started in 1990s as paper acceptance systems were replaced by electronic EBT systems
- Increase in redemption starting in 2007, but still an opportunity to return to historical levels, especially as farmers markets are increasingly prevalent

Source: REAL FOOD, REAL CHOICE, Connecting SNAP Recipients with Farmers Markets June 2010

Green City Market & LINK

Program Overview

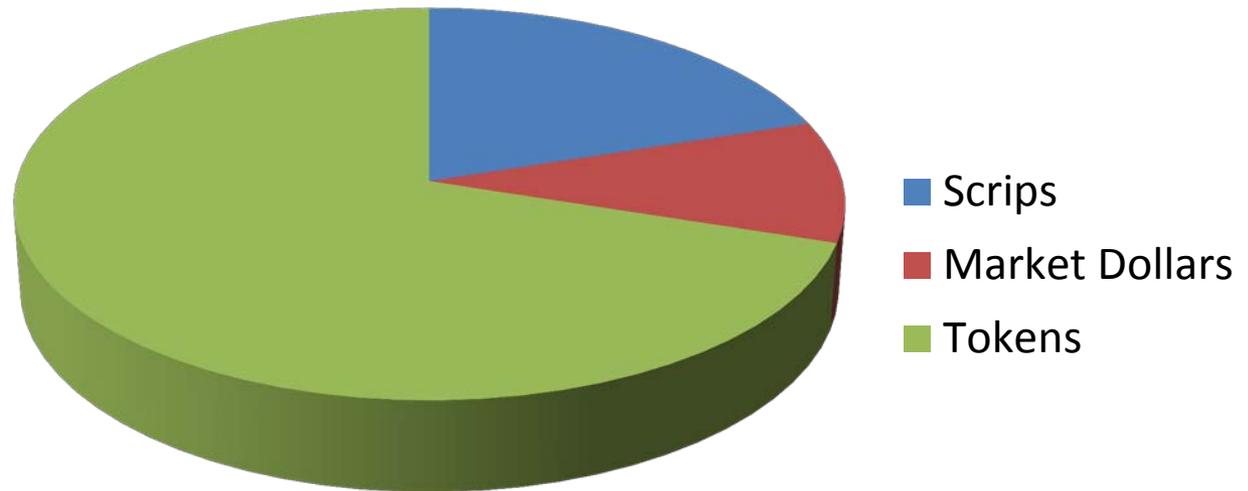
- Green City Market currently accepts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Food stamp holders must visit the information booth to swipe their LINK card for each individual purchase, then return to the farmer to exchange a receipt for their food

Key Challenges

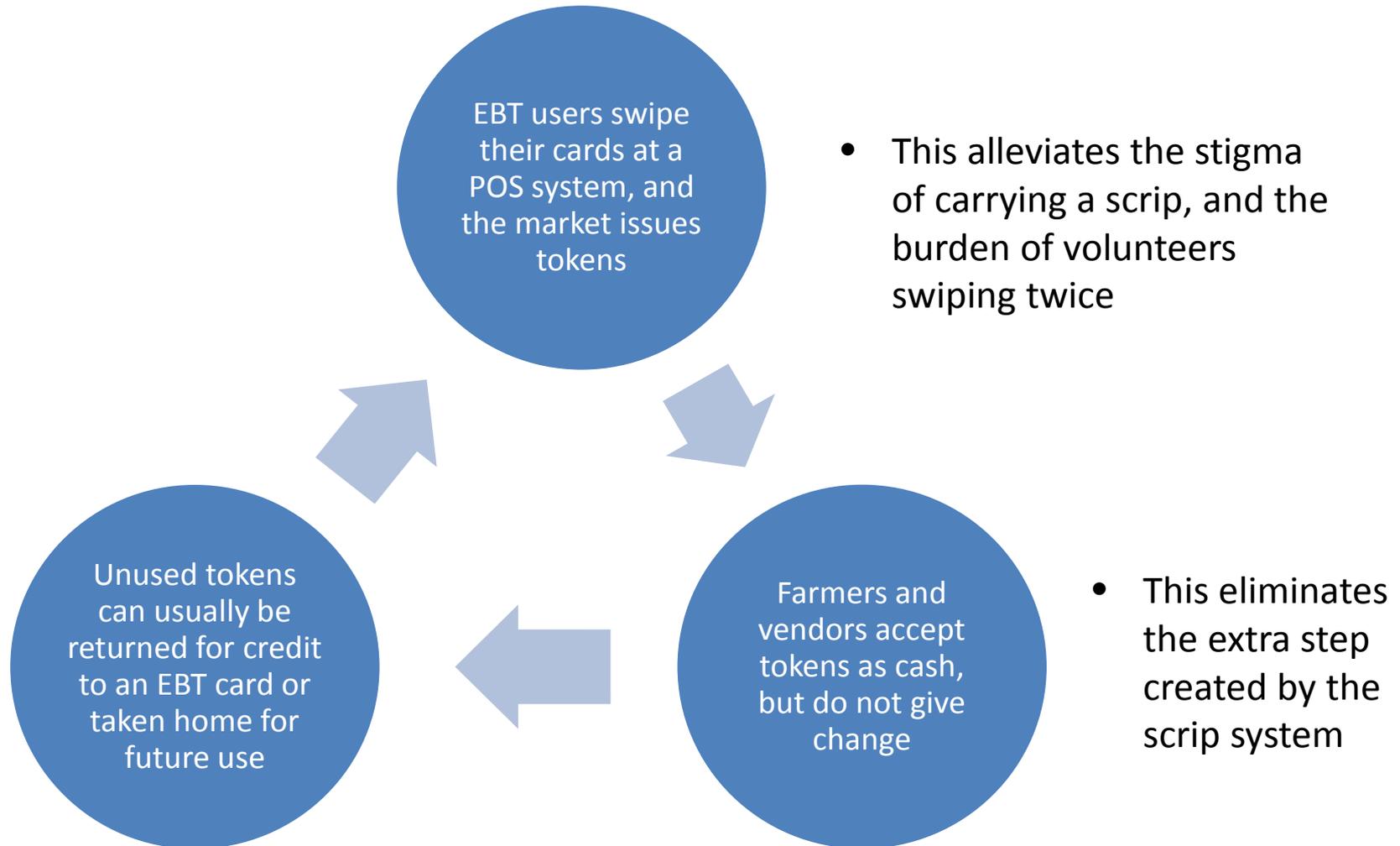
- Stigma issue with bright orange receipts
- Inconvenience of going back and forth to vendor, and separate card swipes for each transaction
- Lack of volunteer knowledge about how to operate Point of Sale machine, be sensitive to customer needs and properly process LINK transactions
- No existing matching program, so many LINK shoppers find products prohibitively expensive

SNAP Acceptance Landscape

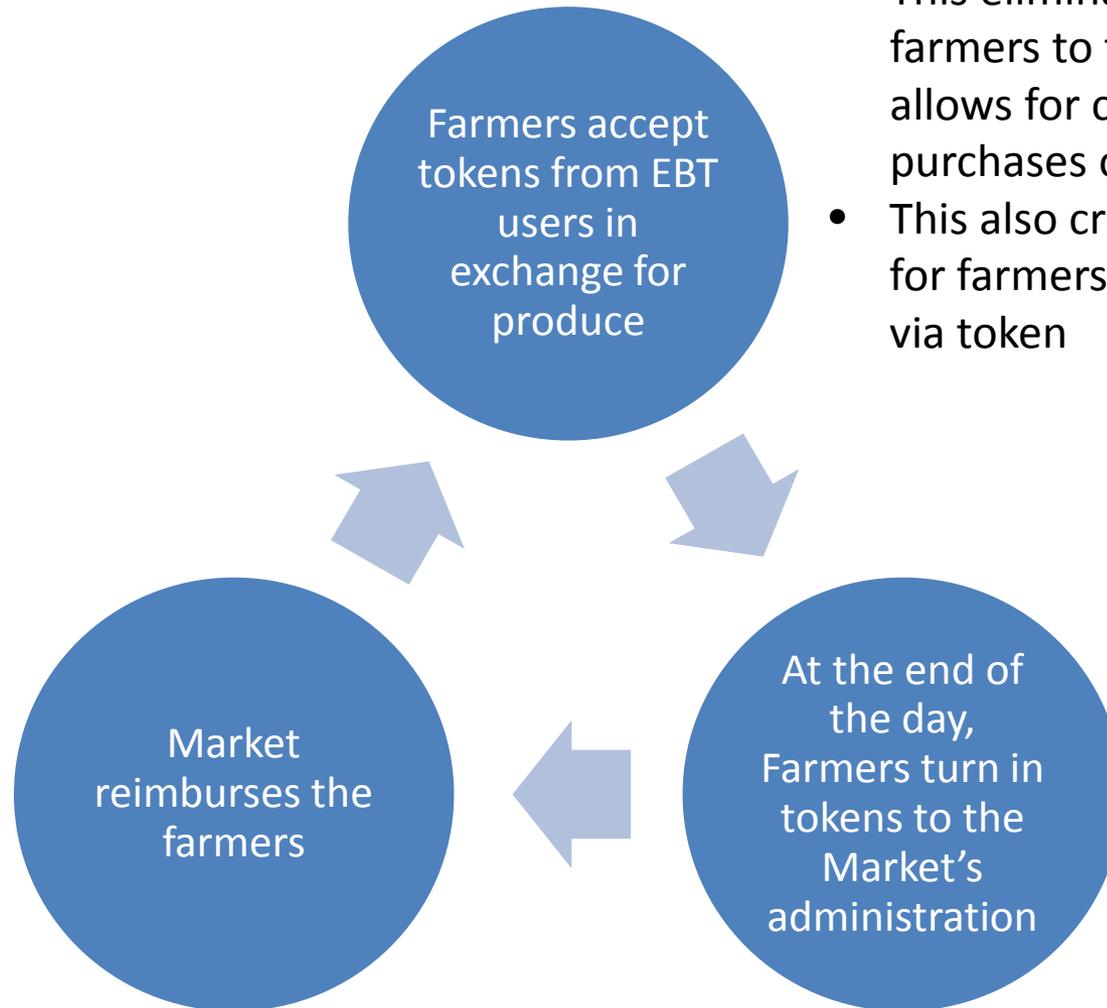
- Of the top farmers markets in the country, 70% use tokens to accept EBT
- Many markets have programs to issue matching funds to EBT users



Token System: Customer Perspective



Token System: Farmer Perspective



- This eliminates the need for farmers to fill out chits, and allows for customers to make purchases on their first visit
- This also creates an opportunity for farmers to take credit cards via token

- This helps expedite the repayment process, as it is less complex

SNAP Acceptance Landscape

- Tokens can be printed with a custom logo, for an additional charge
- Wooden tokens, printed with a single color, are the most inexpensive choice
- Tokens can be all the same denomination, or there can be multiple (\$1, \$5, \$10)
- The number of tokens needed should be enough to cover a single day's EBT sales, and enough to account for some people taking tokens home for future use



Sample token

Sample Token Printing Pricing

100	250	500	750	1,000	1,500	2,500	5,000	10,000
\$48.95	\$69.95	\$85.95	\$106.95	\$116.95	\$159.95	\$241.95	\$455.95	\$878.95

Alternative Solutions

Possible Solutions

- POS terminals at each farmer's stand
 - Explore Square / Apple partnership
 - Support credit and debit acceptance in addition to SNAP benefits
- Mobile farmer's market in high density LINK neighborhoods
 - Farmers fill pods with produce, send to communities to better reach LINK users

Key Questions

- Who are possible partners?
- What best meets needs of farmers?
- What best meets needs of LINK users?
- Is program financially sustainable?

Agenda

- Farmer's Market SNAP Acceptance Models
- Benefits Matching Programs & Grants
- LINK User Profile & Outreach
- Recommendations & Next Steps

Matching Program – Overview

Challenge

- Issue of affordability is a key factor in deterring SNAP recipients from visiting farmers markets

Solution

- Matching incentives programs address this concern by stretching SNAP benefits
 - Majority of programs receive grants through foundations, government funding, or combination of both
 - Matching can be structured differently: unlimited, dollar for dollar up to pre-set weekly limit, etc.

Impact

- Matching programs increase SNAP spend at farmers markets and encourage healthy eating habits among SNAP users
 - Wholesome Wave reports that in markets where they have helped implement incentive programs, SNAP redemption rates increased anywhere from 300% to 600%
 - San Diego County City Heights Farmers Market reported that as a result of incentive program, 88% of SNAP recipients reported eating more fruits and vegetables

Source: <http://www.portlandfarmersmarket.org/programs-and-services/snap-participants/>, REAL FOOD, REAL CHOICE, Connecting SNAP Recipients with Farmers Markets June 2010



Recommended Funding Sources

Grants

- **LINK Up Illinois / Experimental Station, in partnership with Wholesome Wave and the Illinois Farmers Market Network**
 - Currently support matching programs at 20 Illinois farmers markets including Chicago City-Run Markets, Oak Park Market and 61st Street Farmers Market
 - Leverage Wholesome Wave’s national experience as a leader in matching programs
 - As a non-profit, easier to initiate funding and offers more flexibility than with a federal government grant
- **Auer Family Foundation grant**

Other Sources

- **Corporate partners:** seek funding specifically for matching through corporate partners
 - E.g., Friends of Evanston Farmers Market secured donation from Evanston Hospital to support matching program
- **Market shoppers:** give shoppers opportunity to give back to others by collecting “change for change” – change collected from market purchases can be allocated to matching funds – or asking for a dedicated donation with membership

Matching Program – Best Practices

“Having a brand up front turned out to have great value throughout fundraising and outreach stages. Instead of saying “incentive match program” we were able to point to a product name that was separated from the stigma of ‘program’ or ‘food stamps’” – Portland Farmer’s Market



“While running the NY Fresh Check program in 2008, fully 1/3 of food stamp consumers came to the market for the first time because of the incentive, and continued to shop at the market once they found the prices reasonable, the quality and variety exceptional, and the experience was positive for themselves and their families.” - New York Farmer’s Market

Source: Fresh Exchange Toolkit; REAL FOOD, REAL CHOICE, Connecting SNAP Recipients with Farmers Markets June 2010

Agenda

- Farmer's Market SNAP Acceptance Models
- Benefits Matching Programs & Grants
- LINK User Profile & Outreach
- Recommendations & Next Steps

LINK User Profile

- 727,432 LINK cases in Chicago
- West Lawn area, near Midway airport, has the most cases, at 45,693
- Cicero, Archer Heights and Craigin also top the list
- The Department of Health Service Englewood office serves the West Lawn area

LINK User Profile

Englewood Office Demographics

- 34% of the users are in 2-person households
- 46% of the adults on assistance are 30-44 years old
- 40% have been on assistance between 5 and 10 years
- 30% have completed high school
- 57% have children between 3 and 12 years of age



LINK Outreach Plan

- Within Green City Market
- Outside Green City Market
- Engaging your users



Within Green City Market

- POS station
 - Move closer to market (for winter season)
 - Offer visually interesting information in addition
 - “Spotlight a farmer” with samples

- Magnets / Stickers
 - “did you know...”
 - “double your LINK dollars every 1st Monday”



Outside Green City Market

- Create a brand for LINK users
 - Plan your sharable content weeks in advance
 - Recipe of the week, what's in season, double coupon days
 - Communication strategy (social media, email)

- Community ambassadors & partners
 - YMCA
 - [Expectant and New Parent Services](#)
 - [Employment Services](#)



User Engagement

- Contest for user-submitted personal recipes
- Create kid-friendly area (near POS)
 - Educate using games, coloring books
- Create a LINK branded personality
- Bring a (LINK) friend, earn extra



Green City Market LINK Users

- Survey link shoppers
 - To better understand behaviors, motivation, and needs
- Administer survey + interviews at POS
- Outline
 - Technology adoption
 - Locations of interest
 - Behaviors and motivations

Agenda

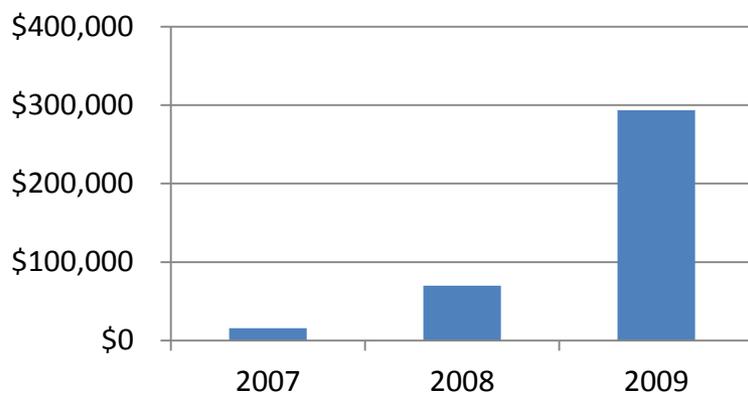
- Farmer's Market SNAP Acceptance Models
- Benefits Matching Programs & Grants
- LINK User Profile & Outreach
- Recommendations & Next Steps



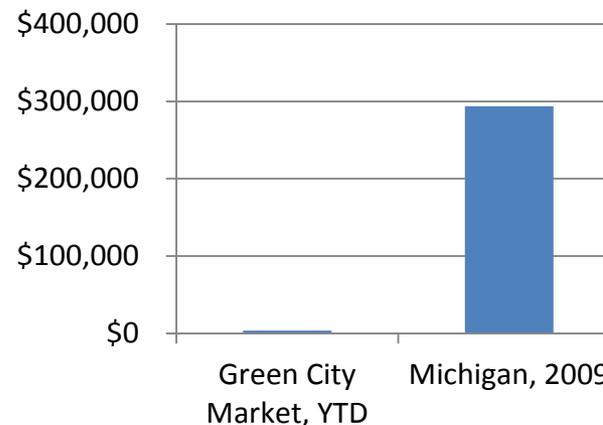
Benchmark Spend

- SNAP spend at farmers markets has grown rapidly, but significant opportunities remain
 - From 2007 to 2010 SNAP redemption at farmers markets has increased by 365%
 - However, in 2009, SNAP transactions at farmers markets accounted for only 0.008% of total SNAP transactions nationwide, 1/25th of American Consumer share of spend at farmers markets

Annual SNAP Spend at Michigan Farmers Markets



Green City Market SNAP Spend - YTD



Source: <http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/the-future-of-farmers-markets-evolving-technology-to-connect-farmers-to-food-assistance-recipients>; REAL FOOD, REAL CHOICE, Connecting SNAP Recipients with Farmers Markets June 2010, Fair Food Network

Next Steps

- Near-term:
 - Adapt token system
 - Seek funding from Wholesome Wave to support matching program
 - Enhance community outreach efforts to attract new LINK customers
- Long-term:
 - Explore more innovative SNAP acceptance solutions
 - Conduct research with farmers and current SNAP customers
 - Engage with possible partners including Apple, Square, or Wholesome Wave

APPENDIX





FOOD, **E**NVIRONMENT, **A**GRIBUSINESS, **D**EVELOPMENT
PREPARING BOOTH STUDENTS FOR CAREERS THAT SUSTAINABLY FEED THE WORLD



The world population reached 7 billion on Monday, October 31st. It is expected that by 2050, the population will reach 9.5 billion, requiring a 50% increase in global food production. Who will lead the way?

The Next Generation of Food and Agribusiness Leaders



CHICAGO BOOTH 
The University of Chicago Booth School of Business