Evaluating the effectiveness of the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP): An exploratory analysis for west Tennessee

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Abstract

Federal nutrition assistance programs at farmers’ markets are considered effective strategies to support direct marketing of local produce, and increase consumer access to healthy food with a focus on food deserts and low-income communities. Review of existing literature suggests lack of significant research regarding FMNP programs in west Tennessee. The primary goal of this study is to evaluate the existing Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) from both producers’ and recipients’ perspectives. This will be achieved through an exploratory survey analysis for the participating west Tennessee farmers. The results from this study will be instrumental in expanding the visibility of fresh farm produce from farmers as a means to promote health benefits among recipients, as well as a platform for farmers to improve their distribution and marketing network.

A. INTRODUCTION

Federal nutrition assistance FM programs support direct marketing of local produce, and increase consumer access to healthy food with a focus on food deserts and low-income communities (Kim (2011), Byker et al. (2013)).

Two major programs:

1. Women, Infant, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP)

2. Senior Farmers Market Program (SFMNP)

SFMNP funds for Tennessee (USDA, 2015)

$513,136 (2014)  
14,849 recipients  
$527,964 (2013)  
15,026 recipients  
$554,597 (2012)  
14,352 recipients

Objective and location of study

To evaluate vendor and recipient perspectives about the effectiveness of the existing SFMNP program in west TN

B. DATA AND METHODS

Preliminary exploratory survey was administered to participating FMNP vendors (farmers) and recipients at the farmers’ markets in west Tennessee. IRB approval from TN Dept. of health, and approval from Dyer County Chamber of Commerce was obtained before the surveys were administered.

C. RESULTS

Did you spend money in addition to Farmers’ Market coupons?

Would you recommend this coupon program to other farmers in your area?

Approximately what percent of your sales were with FMNP coupons?

How did the quality of fruits and vegetables at the farmers’ market compare to their quality at your grocery store?

D. CONCLUSIONS

• A second round of survey will be completed in 2016 to reach more recipients  
• Initial foundation for continued in-depth analysis of the FMNP programs using structured surveys  
• Surveys will provide policy recommendations at the regional and state level for expanding the program in west TN

References


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