

# Executive Summary



• DOUBLE VALUE •  
PRODUCE PERKS

In 2014, the Produce Perks program was piloted at six farmers' markets within Greater Cincinnati. All six markets experienced increases in new customers, EBT sales, and total market sales. The Produce Perks program is an incentive program for Ohio Direction Card customers, providing a dollar-for-dollar match (up to \$10) for every dollar spent at the market on EBT eligible items. Produce Perks can be redeemed to purchase fruits, vegetables, seeds and edible plants only. The program operated from May-October, and remains operational for those that host winter markets. The program was modeled after the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Program.

The Produce Perks (PP) program serves the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky region, working to increase accessibility, affordability, and consumption of healthful foods for low-income populations—while supporting local farmers and sustaining local economies.

Based upon 2014 financial data submitted by participating farmers markets:

- Total EBT sales: \$10,030.00
- Total PP incentives redeemed: \$5,528.00
- Total PP incentives distributed: \$6,469.00

Based upon 2014 survey data collected from 335 participants at participating farmers markets:

- **Question 1: How did you hear about the Produce Perks program?**  
At farmers market: 44%; OH JFS: 10%; newspaper/magazine: 8%; word of mouth: 8%; bus/metro: 6%; clinics/healthcare setting: 6%; brochures/flyers/billboards: 6%; community organization/church: 5%
- **Question 2: How important are Produce Perks incentives in bringing you to the market?**  
Very important: 90%; somewhat important: 4%; not important: 4%; I didn't know about the program: 1%
- **Question 3: How did you get to the market?**  
Car/carpool: 71%; walk: 26%; public transportation/bicycle: 3%

## Organizational Structure

The PP program includes representation from local, regional, and state organizations. Key staff and organizations include: Ohio State University Extension, Hamilton Co., Cincinnati Health Department (Tevis Foreman), Nutrition Advantage LLC. (Debbie Serenius, RD), and Matt Stephens (Spectrum Laboratories).

## Participating Farmers Markets Include

Findlay Market, Northside Farmers Market, College Hill Farmers Market, Wyoming Farmers Market, Robert's Farm Stand (operated by Findlay Market), and Lettuce Eat Well Farmers Market

Additional partnerships and collaborators include, but not limited to, the Ohio Department of Health, the Creating Healthy Communities Coalition, Ohio State Extension, Cleveland-Cuyahoga Co. Produce Perks Program, the Wholesome Wave Network, C.A.I.N. (Churches Active in Northside), the City of Cincinnati Recreation Department, and the Northern Kentucky Health Department.

# ANNOUNCING PRODUCE PERKS

A grant based program improving Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) value, supporting local farms and economies.



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## How it Works

The Produce Perks program allows Ohio Direction Card customers to increase the value of their EBT (Food Assistance) purchases at participating Farmer's Markets in the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky region. The program provides a dollar-for-dollar match (up to \$10) for every dollar spent at the market on EBT eligible items. Produce Perks can be redeemed to purchase fruits, vegetables, seeds and edible plants only. In 2014 the program operated from May-October, and remained operational for those that host winter markets. The program was modeled after the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Program and works to increase accessibility, affordability, and consumption of healthful foods for low-income populations – while supporting local farmers and sustaining local economies.

## Benefits

The Produce Perks program provides benefits to consumers using EBT by allowing them access to better quality locally grown quality fruits and vegetables. By doubling the EBT value, customers can afford to participate in local Farm Markets that may otherwise not fit their budgets. In 2014 90% of Produce Perks participants said the Perks program enabled them to shop at Farm Markets. This, in turn, benefits local farmers by increasing their sales and builds more traffic to Farm Markets helping to sustain local economies. The 6 participating markets saw 2014 EBT/PP sales of nearly \$16,000.

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## Participating Farm Markets

Findlay Market, Northside Farmers Market, College Hill Farmers Market, Wyoming Farmers Market, Findlay Market Farm Stands: (Evanston, Walnut Hills, Price Hill), Lettuce Eat Well Farmers Market, Saylor Park, and Loveland Farmers Market.

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