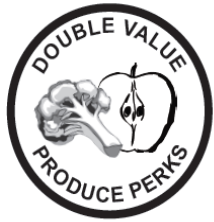


Produce Perks

2012 Executive Summary

Sixteen farmers' markets throughout Cuyahoga County are participating in a program that offers incentive dollars to customers utilizing the Ohio Direction Card.



“Double Value Produce Perks” is an initiative developed by [The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition](#) (a coalition initiated by Ohio State University Extension-Cuyahoga County and Case Western Reserve University’s Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods) in partnership with several local foundations and a new national partner, Wholesome Wave, a nonprofit focusing on access and affordability of healthy, local foods in underserved communities.

Produce Perks are incentive tokens given to customers using an Ohio Direction Card to purchase food at participating farmers’ markets. A customer wishing to use their Food Assistance benefits, also known as EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer), can swipe their card at one central terminal located at market information booths, and ask to withdraw a desired amount. The market will then provide tokens for the transaction in addition to Produce Perks that can be spent on fruits and vegetables. The incentive is a dollar-for-dollar match to every dollar spent (up to \$10) using an Ohio Direction Card at the market. There is no minimum purchase amount to qualify for the incentives and as the name suggests, Produce Perks are only good for purchasing fruits and vegetables. All other tokens purchased with the Ohio Direction Card are good to use on eligible items at the market. Figure 1 demonstrates the impact the program has had on boosting EBT sales and bringing new customers to the markets, and improving access to healthy foods for vulnerable populations.

Addressing healthy food gaps in neighborhoods throughout the county is the motivation for the incentives. With the recent proliferation of farmers’ markets, community partners have made it a mission to see that more of these venues accept all forms of public benefits, including Senior and Women, Infants, and Children Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program coupons. Figure 2. shows the increase in farmers’ markets that accept the Ohio Direction Card and the increase in the number of markets that are participating in the Produce Perks Program.

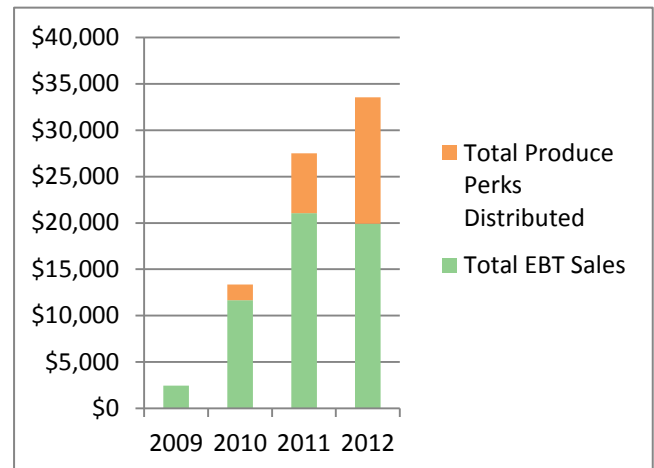


Figure 1. Total EBT sales and Produce Perks

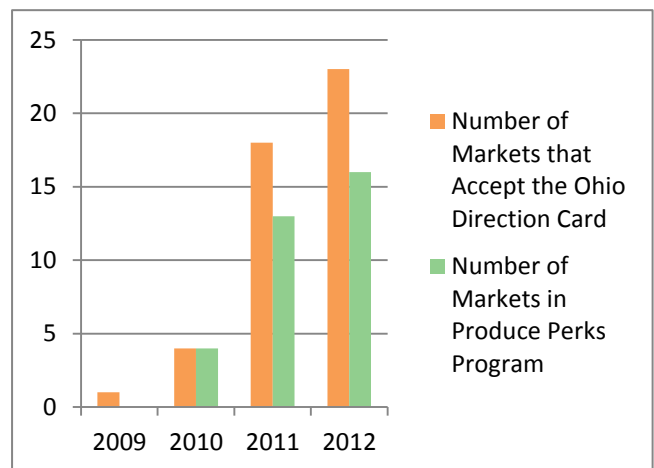


Figure 2. Number of farmers’ markets in Cuyahoga County that accept the Ohio Direction



When asked how important Produce Perks incentives were in getting them to spend their Food Assistance benefits at farmers' markets, 64% of shoppers said that Produce Perks were very important and that they would not have come without them.



Figure 3. Promotional posters that appeared on 40 RTA bus lines.



Figure 4. Promotional Posters posted at neighborhood corner stores.

FARMERS' MARKET PARTNERS

Broadway Farmers' Market, Coit Road Farmers' Market, Downtown Farmers' Market at Public Square, Gateway 105 Farmers' Market, Gordon Square Farmers' Markets, Kamm's Corners Farmers' Market, LEAF Farmers' Market, Lakewood Farmers' Market, North Union Farmers' Market at Chagrin Falls, Cleveland Clinic, Beachwood, Cleveland State University, Crocker Park, and Shaker Square, Ohio City Farm Stand, and Tremont Farmers Market.

PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

Case Western Reserve University, Charter One Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, Columbus Foundation, Doll Family Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, Saint Luke's Foundation, Sisters of Charity Foundation, Thatcher Family Fund, and Wholesome Wave

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland Foodbank, Cuyahoga County Employment and Family Services, MetroHealth's Women, Infants, and Children Program, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and Ohio State University Extension.

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition's vision is to establish Cleveland and Cuyahoga County as a model for food security through regional food system development, ensuring that every resident has access to fresh, healthy, affordable food.