Farmers Markets Support Healthy Food Access

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) works to ensure all Michigan residents have access to the fresh, healthy and locally grown foods available at farmers markets.

Farmers markets increase food access for Michigan residents by:

- Linking consumers with producers
- Increasing the availability of healthy and culturally relevant foods
- Educating consumers on how to incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into their diets

One of the most important ways farmers markets support equitable access to healthy food for all Michigan residents is by accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through the Michigan EBT Bridge Card (formerly the Food Stamp Program).

More than half of Michigan’s 300-plus farmers markets accept SNAP
All Michigan families should be able to access farmers markets

Healthy food access creates economic impact for Michigan farmers

$2.7 billion in SNAP benefits are distributed in Michigan each year.

Approximately $600,000 is spent directly with Michigan farmers at farmers markets.

Nearly all is matched, dollar for dollar, by the Double Up Food Bucks program.

Healthy food access creates a $1.2 million annual impact for Michigan farmers.

Farmers markets must be able to access wireless equipment to accept SNAP

Because SNAP is distributed via a debit-like EBT card, each farmer or market that accepts SNAP must have equipment to process these transactions. Accepting SNAP at a farm stand or a market where access to electricity and a phone line are not always available requires the use of wireless technology. When purchased independently, this equipment and service can be expensive, and the ongoing fees can be burdensome. In order to begin, and continue, accepting SNAP, farmers and markets often need help covering these costs.

Now is the time to act:

Every four to six years, the state of Michigan renews its contract with a SNAP processing service provider. By September 2019, a new contract will begin for these services that will cover 2020 through at least 2024. Changes can be made now to ensure this contract meets the needs of farmers markets and direct-marketing farmers to ensure Michigan’s most vulnerable families have access to fresh, healthy and locally grown foods.

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