



FARMERS MARKET FOOD NAVIGATORS: A MICHIGAN HARVEST OF THE MONTH™ PARTNERSHIP

MICHIGAN
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FOUNDATION

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Relevance: A social ecological approach to healthy eating theorizes that both nutrition education to improve individuals' knowledge and skills and environmental supports to increase access to affordable produce are essential components of programming. Farmers markets in low-income areas can increase access to affordable, local produce and offer food assistance benefits; however, low-income consumers still face economic, social, and personal barriers to using farmers markets.

Priority: Previous programs reported success influencing low-income farmers market consumers' attitudes, purchases, and consumption of fruits and vegetables through nutrition education and coupons/vouchers.

Originality: Through a partnership between the Michigan Fitness Foundation and the Michigan Farmers Market Association, the Food Navigator Pilot combines unique elements addressing recognized barriers without directly subsidizing purchases. Over the past two years, food navigators in eight communities conducted outreach to increase awareness of local farmers markets and relevant assistance programs. Navigators provided individualized support at farmers markets, including experiential nutrition education utilizing Michigan Harvest of the Month™ materials, food tastings, cooking demonstrations, and tours to help shoppers maximize their food dollars.

Synthesis: Over two market seasons, navigators had 9,852 contacts with consumers. Vendor and market managers at the eight markets reported that the presence of navigators increased produce sales. Consumers at markets described that because of the Navigator, they were more likely to shop at the market (65%) and eat more fruits/vegetables (70%). The third and final year of the pilot will test an implementation guide, collected resources, and refined evaluation tools in order to support broader adoption of best practices.

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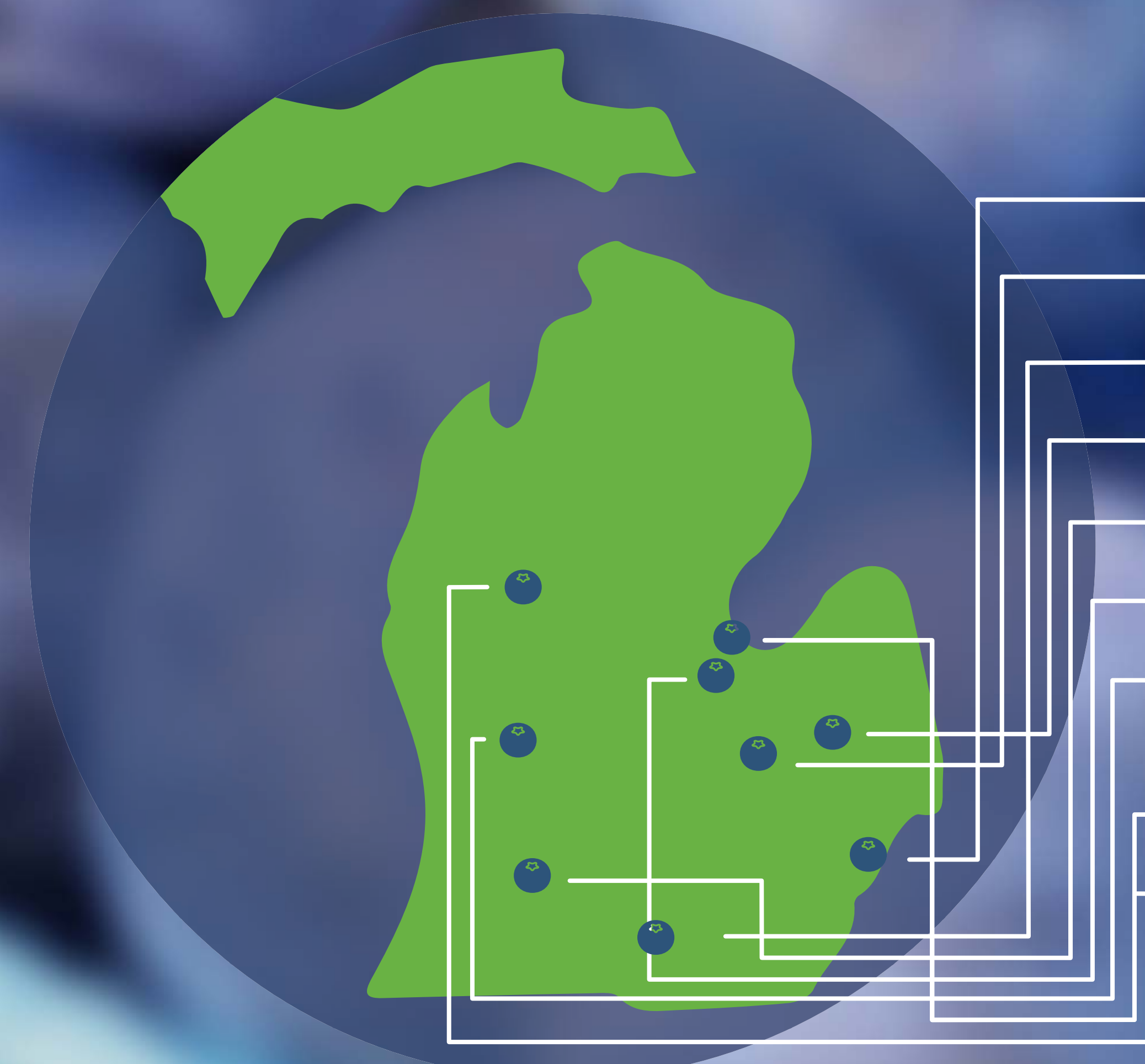
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MARKET MAP:



1. Detroit Eastern
2. Flint
3. Adrian
4. Lapeer
5. Kalamazoo
6. Downtown Saginaw
7. Fulton Street (Grand Rapids)
8. Downtown Bay City
9. City Market (Bay City)
10. Big Rapids

WRAPAROUND APPROACH



FORMATIVE, PROCESS, & OUTCOME EVALUATION FINDINGS

2016

Food Navigator



Navigators operated in seven markets for an average of 40 days.

Logs indicated navigators interacted with an average of 25 consumers each day.

Vendors (n=69)



42% indicated they interacted with food navigators

Of those who interacted with food navigators:
44% perceived having the navigator increased overall sales
41% thought sales of fruits and vegetables specifically increased

Consumers (n=34)



Consumers completed intercept surveys on I-Pads in October 2016

Survey eligibility criteria included participation in a food assistance program
59% recalled interacting with a food navigator

2017

Food Navigator



Navigators operated in five markets for an average of 22 days.

Navigators interacted with an average of 57 consumers each day.

Vendors (n=77)



72% indicated they interacted with food navigators

Of those who interacted with food navigators:
60% perceived having the navigator increased overall sales
54% thought sales of fruits and vegetables specifically increased

Consumers (n=82)



60% recalled interacting with a food navigator

Consumers who interacted with food navigators reported intentions to:

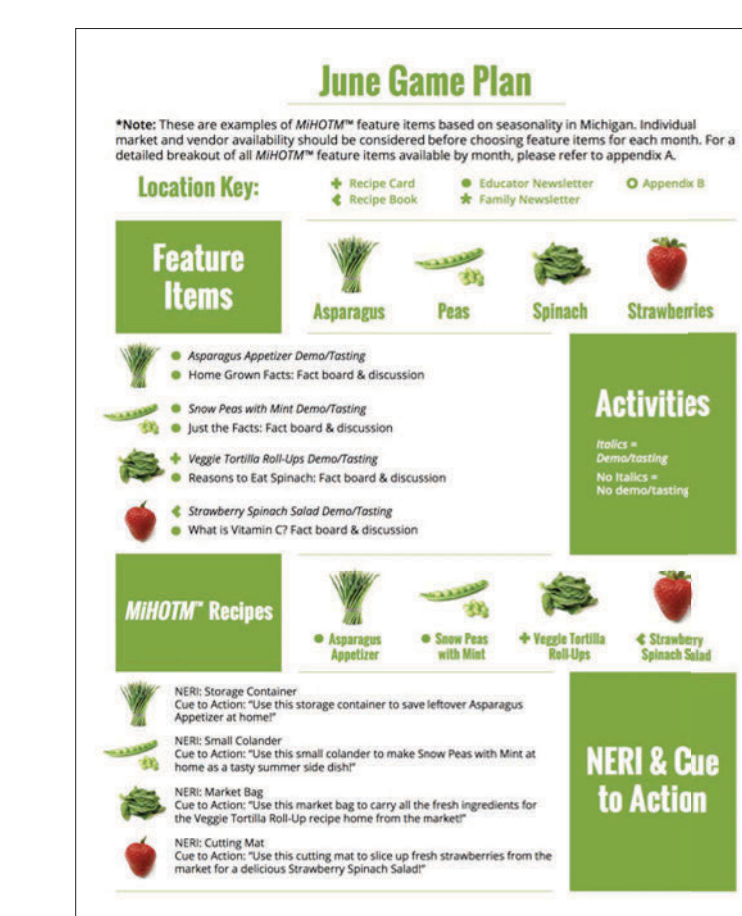
- Shop more often at farmers markets (71%)
- Purchase more fruits and/or vegetables (80%)
- Eat more fruits and/or vegetables (78%)

RESOURCES:

2018



Food Navigator Playbook



June Game Plan



Recipe Card: Spinach

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT TERESA ZWEMER AT TZWEMER@MICHIGANFITNESS.ORG

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