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

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Relevance: A social ecological approach to healthy eating theories that both nutrition education to improve individual 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 purchasing. 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 because that of the Navigator, they were more likely to shop at the market (65%) and eat more fruits/vegetables (78%). 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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MARKET MAP:

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

PARTNERS:

MIchigan Fitness Foundation

Michigan Farmers Market Association

Public Health Institute

ASSOCIATION

Fitness Foundation

Michigan Farmers Market Association

WRAPAROUND APPROACH

Help consumers effectively use food assistance

Provide consumers nutrition and recipe resources

Work with market managers and environmental

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

Of those who interacted with food navigators:

60% perceived having increased produce sales.

44% thought sales of fruits and vegetables specifically increased.

42% indicated they interacted with food navigators.

46% perceived having the navigator increased overall sales.

41% thought sales of fruits and vegetables specifically increased.

Consumers who interacted with a food navigator

59% recalled interacting with food navigators.

37% indicated they interacted with food navigators.

60% perceived having the navigator increased overall sales.

54% thought sales of fruits and vegetables specifically increased.

FOOD NAVIGATOR

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

Food Navigator

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

Food Navigator

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59% recalled interacting with food navigators.

37% indicated they interacted with food navigators.

60% perceived having the navigator increased overall sales.

54% thought sales of fruits and vegetables specifically increased.

Consumers completed intercept surveys on farms in October 2016.

Survey eligibility criteria included participation in a food assistance program

55% recalled interacting with a food navigator.

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 (77%)

Purchase more fruits and/or vegetables (83%)

Eat more fruits and/or vegetables (78%)

CONSUMERS (n=34)

CONSUMERS (n=82)

CONSUMERS (n=119)

CONSUMERS (n=77)

ASSOCIATION

Food Navigator Playbook

June Game Plan

Recipe Card: Spinach

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES & FINDINGS

FORMATIVE, PROCESS, & OUTCOME EVALUATION FINDINGS

2016

2017

2018

MARKET MAP:

RESOURCES: