

FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM GUIDELINES SUMMER 2010

GOALS

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) has dual goals. One goal is to improve the nutritional status of WIC participants by issuing coupons to them for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. A second goal is to stimulate business for the local farmers and create a greater awareness of the farmers' market. The program operates in thirty-seven (37) counties across North Carolina.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for issuance of FMNP coupons, a participant must be:

- Currently active in the WIC program HSIS system and eligible to receive WIC on that day;
- A child who is at least three years old at the time of issuance and who has not reached his/her fifth birthday; or
- A woman who is
 - ✓ Pregnant,
 - ✓ Postpartum, or
 - ✓ breastfeeding **and** receiving food instruments/cash value vouchers for herself.

DESCRIPTION OF ELIGIBLE FOODS

Coupons may be used at authorized Farmers' Markets for any fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

FMNP coupons **cannot** be redeemed for peanuts, honey, jelly, jam, eggs, baked goods, plants, flowers, or other non-food items, or items not grown by local farmers.

INFORMATION TO GIVE TO COUPON RECIPIENTS

Each household should be given the FMNP flyer that describes how to use the coupons and the locations of nearby farmers' markets.

Also use the flyer to explain the program to participants, including the following information:

- Purpose of program
- Description of eligible foods
- How to use coupons at authorized markets
- Restriction on coupons
- Expiration dates for coupons
- Descriptions of farmers' markets and operating hours

- Location of nearest market(s) and transportation information

Applicable nutrition education material should also be distributed to coupon recipients.

USING COUPONS AT FARMERS' MARKETS

Participants may use coupons with certified farmers at any participating farmers' market. Certified farmers will have a poster indicating they are certified. Each coupon is worth \$4.00, and no change is given for coupon purchases. Multiple coupons can be used together for a single purchase.

Participants must use the coupons within 30 days of the issue date. They cannot be used at grocery stores or roadside farm stands.

ISSUANCE OF COUPONS

- 1) Coupon issuance at the start of the season should begin upon notification from the State Office.
- 2) Coupons are issued in sets of six. Each participant receives a total of \$24 worth of coupons on a one-time basis.
- 3) There is a receipt for each set of six coupons. The participant/parent/proxy must sign and date the receipt.
- 4) If the participant/parent/proxy should receive the coupons but not sign the stub, write "RCVD BY (Name of Recipient)" where the signature should be and initial and date it. (Note: to minimize such occurrences, don't issue coupons until stub is filled in).
- 5) Instruct the participant/parent/proxy to sign the coupons at the local markets. Only a single signature is required, at the point of purchase.
- 6) A designated WIC proxy may pick up coupons.
- 7) Coupons cannot be mailed to participants.

[PLEASE refer to *FMNP Screen 52 and Printer Setup Instructions*.]

CHECK STOCK/COUPON SECURITY

Check stock and unclaimed coupons must be kept in a locked storage area.

COUPON REPLACEMENT

Do not replace issued coupons which participants report as lost or stolen.

PROGRAM MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

A farmers' market coordinator from the State Office will monitor at least 50% of the participating agencies during the course of the summer to review program procedures and discuss program issues with local staff.

Failure to comply with FMNP regulations, such as failing to following procedures for issuing coupons, selling coupons for cash, theft, or other actions intended to produce

illegal financial gain, may be violations of Federal or State law, and violators may be prosecuted.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

During or following the coupon issuance period, your agency may be monitored regarding program operations and impact. Surveys are completed by local staff and a sample of coupon recipients at the end of the season.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Local agencies are required to document participant complaints as well as farmer/market manager complaints that are directed to the local agency. These should be recorded on the FMNP complaint form and kept on file. A copy must be sent to the State WIC office to assure resolution of the complaint. The complaint file will be reviewed as part of the monitoring visits.

QUESTIONS???

System-related questions regarding issuance should be directed to the NSB Help Desk (919/707-5795).

Programmatic questions should be directed to Tysha Grays (919/707-5765).