
Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

Case Study Series



SNAP Incentive Program founded in the community and sustained through Extension

Produce Perks *Cleveland, Ohio*

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots featured in the Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being chapter of ***Extension Education and the Social Sciences*** Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cambridge University Press (2024)

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Program Overview – Produce Perks

The Produce Perks (Perks), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) incentive, program was created by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition (FPC) in 2007 to increase food access at the neighborhood level while supporting local farmers. At that time, the FPC was led by Ohio State University Extension in Cuyahoga County. The FPC recognized the need to support the provision of healthy food in walking distance of most Cleveland residents after identifying a theme in annual community reports conducted by local health departments, think tanks, and research centers. Regular monitoring of these reports along with conversations with food insecure residents motivated the creation of this issue-specific collaboration among public and private entities and stakeholders.

Participating neighborhood-based farmers' markets, farm stands, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) are the core of the Produce Perks model, offering a dollar-for-dollar match on the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables to all SNAP participants. Other key original partners included the City of Cleveland Department of Public Health, Cuyahoga County Health and Human Services, Case Western Reserve University, in addition to three local foundations: George Gund, Mt. Sinai Health Care, and St. Luke's. These three foundations provided funding for staff and Produce Perks currency, which are tokens.

The original program, implemented in 2010, focused on existing farmers' markets and farm stands in the city of Cleveland. By 2013, the opportunity to participate in Produce Perks (Perks) was offered to all for markets and stands in the county and Produce Prescription was piloted as an expansion project. In 2018, the program was adopted in other areas of the state with high rates of food insecurity, the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network was formed, and Produce Perks Midwest was identified as the networks intermediary. This gradual expansion positioned the program to consistently serve 1,000 families per year. This translates to over \$2 million dollars being funneled into farm businesses, and the state economy, each year (Figure 1). Produce Perks has been recognized by the USDA, the programs current primary funder, as a model SNAP incentive program.

Urban Context

Scale

Cuyahoga County, Ohio has a population of 1.24 million and Cleveland, the largest city in the county, has a population of 380,000. The healthcare, social services, and education sectors have the greatest presence amongst all other industries in the area (US Census Bureau, 2020). Positioning Extension as a community resource, three hours away from Ohio State's main campus, in a county with over 30 colleges and universities is an ongoing challenge. Consistency in messaging that focuses on long-term partnerships, niche program topics, and quality customer experiences has been key to the success of Perks.

Diversity

Residents often associate themselves as an "east sider" or "west sider." This social divide is based on the flow of the Cuyahoga River that runs from Lake Erie, down the center of the county. Cleveland has been described as "a city of ethnic enclaves divided into East and West by the Cuyahoga River" (Hallal, 2016). The western portion of the city has historically been populated by poor and working-class White and Latino families. The eastern portion the city has

historically been populated by affluent White and poor to working class Black families. In some neighborhoods, the historic demographics are shifting with gentrification. The inner and outer ring suburbs also have distinct east and west cultures where the eastern suburbs are known for being affluent and conservative and the western suburbs are known for being economically mixed and liberal.

Complexity

Cuyahoga County served as the first American home for many Eastern European immigrants. There is a strong presence of Irish, Italian, and Slovenian cultures embedded in the architecture of churches and retail spaces in older communities. Within the city of Cleveland, the spirit and legacy of ethnic cultures is highly evidenced by the singular demographic makeup of neighborhoods including Asia Town and Little Italy. While some communities are integrated, evidence of redlining prevails in suburbs. The general sentiment in suburban communities reflects the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) opposition that surfaces when cities, schools, and workplaces begin to diversify racially and economically.

In 2006, as the issue of access to fresh fruits and vegetables, crept into suburban communities, professionals and researchers took note. Northeast Ohio has a demonstrated passion for responding to emerging community needs. The FPC lead the effort to respond to this need by assessing the locations and inventory of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and food pantries. This data was compared to the zip codes with the highest prevalence of poverty, SNAP participants, and chronic disease. This assessment and subsequent conversations revealed two things – a) the number of SNAP participants was greater in the suburbs than previously thought and b) the community was presented with an opportunity to work directly with local farmers, the source of fruits and vegetables, versus grocery stores whose primary goal is profit making. The number of high-yielding farmers in any urban county is low. To reach producers who supply grocers and farmers markets the definition of local was defined, in partnership with Cleveland State University's Institutional Purchasing Group, as 250 miles outside of the county.

The recognition of this poverty-related issue was met with some not wanting to acknowledge this made perfect sense considering the median household income in the county is \$50,300, 28% less than the U.S. median household income (US Census Bureau, 2019, 2020). Additionally, the average Ohio household receiving SNAP benefits lives at 61% of the poverty line, which amounts to \$12,456 for a family of three (Greater Cleveland Food Bank, 2021). This revelation was the beginning of the urban agriculture and equitable food access movements in northeast Ohio that birthed Produce Perks.

Unique

Momentum for this emerging need was spurred by similar conversations across the country and instrumental support from local foundations that solely funded the Produce Perks program for the first eight years. The Cuyahoga Extension office co-lead the development and implementation of the program with input and guidance from local researchers, along with food and public health stakeholders. The 2014 Farm Bill solidified the program within the county and eventually in the state of Ohio with the support of Wholesome Wave. Wholesome Wave facilitated the design a model that leverages local funding for USDA funds. This facilitation was met with the storming and norming expected when working with a handful of groups. In an urban context with over 10 influential public and private organizations, aligning proprietorship and funding was a huge feat.

Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement

The FPC implemented the collective impact model to intentionally establish broad community ownership at all levels, from SNAP participants to elected officials. This inclusive approach is also applied to the Produce Perks Farmers' Market Collective, providing a formal platform for training, feedback, and the sharing of ideas among farmers' market managers with Extension at its core. This group meets twice a year. Once before the beginning of the market season for training and updates on FM Tracks, token exchange, and to receive their tokens and marketing materials. The gathering after the end of market season highlights program total sales, individual market total sales, zip codes where Perks shoppers reside, average spending amounts per shopping day, number of new shoppers, number of recurring shoppers, marketing strategies, and lessons learned. The group then gains consensus on the data highlighted in the annual report submitted to the community and funders.

Data collection for Perks has advanced from collecting data on paper forms and entering that data into a complex Excel workbook to now using FM Tracks, an onsite point-of-sale system (Case Western Reserve, Prevention Research Center, 2018). Data collected with tablets at the markets is used to conduct process, outcome, summative, and impact analyses. These evaluations are instrumental in program improvement and maintaining local supplemental funding that is leveraged by PPM to secure USDA and state government funding. FM Tracks is managed by the Sears Swetland Center at Case Western Reserve University, who was a founding partner of the FPC and Produce Perks. State- and county-level data shared at National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP), OSU Extension, and National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) annual conferences has informed SNAP incentive programs in other states.

Direct access to leading research on food systems within Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and the Cooperative Extension System did not automatically position the Cuyahoga County office as the natural local leader in food systems. Innovative, agriculturally based, approaches to food access were also heavily pursued by those in the local health care and social services arenas between 2008-2015. Reasons for this pursuit were founded in wanting to help those in need and layered with goals of public recognition for work in this trending topic area. Consistent and clear messaging on Extension's responsibility to fill gaps and form partnerships in a transparent way helped gain the support of local funders and the FPC to solely lead and implement the Produce Perks program. This approach was instrumental in maintaining the Perks program and Extension's local reputation in 2015 when the Cuyahoga Extension office experienced a transition in County Extension Directors (CED) and the FPC lost its core funding.

The cycle of coalitions proves that membership focus on trending issues ebbs and flows over time (Wageningen University and Research, 2012). Successful, long-standing coalitions revisit their purpose, current impact, and potential future impact every three to five years. The FPC was in the process of these strategic conversations when funding was lost. Prior to this event the group began to rely heavily on the 2.75 FPC staff, who were also Extension employees, to research and implement many of the group's ideas. The evaluation of the purpose and impact of the FPC resulted in adjusting the structure. The Coalition decided to no longer employ a backbone organization, and to implement a co-chair leadership model. The two co-chairs serve two-year staggered terms.

Successfully navigating these shifts and transitions was key in maintaining the positive reputation and positioning of the Cuyahoga Extension office. Communication with local-, regional-, and state-level elected officials, funders, and Extension leadership was significantly increased to maintain transparency, demonstrate office stability, and to serve as a reminder that Extension does not act as a competitor. From 2016-2018, positioning was a high priority to circumvent the potential long-term negative effects of the FPC losing its funding on Extension funding and support for other office programs and operations. The Coalition's structural change caught the attention of the Extension state director. This enhanced the need for the local team to follow the simple positioning plan of consistently saying and demonstrating they are not competitors, they offer guidance and education in areas of specialization, and that locally, they will not collaborate with organizations that see and interact with them as if their community efforts are competitive. This was a tipping point for the office and Perks (Figure 2).

Perks staff and the county Extension director prioritized sharing the Perks story by conducting workshops, presenting posters, contributing to peer-reviewed publications, and participating in panel discussions while things played out locally. Extension, continued to demonstrate its collaborative spirit by acknowledging the FPC and other key partners in all presentations and at times, offering to co-present with various members. In 2017, when the FPC decided to solely focus on advocacy, removing programming from their repertoire, this allowed Extension to separate the work of Perks from being an active member of the FPC.

With that very important structural determination, Extension could now focus on Perks and its promotion as an Extension program created by the FPC. The marketing strategy for Perks targets SNAP participants, farmers, farmers' market managers, funders, and local food stakeholders. SNAP participants are reminded that Perks increases their purchasing ability and empowers them to make their own healthy food shopping decisions. The economic benefit of participating in Perks is highlighted for farmers and market managers. Marketing, promotion, and annual reports highlight how funder and community support improves healthy eating behaviors, choices made while shopping, and stimulates the economy. Materials created to encourage participation among SNAP recipients include the distribution of 15,000 English (Figure 3) and Spanish (Figure 4) postcards each year. Partners including the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, YMCA, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are instrumental to this distribution effort. Local and online radio spots, Facebook ads, and Cuyahoga Extension social media are or have been used to promote the program locally. Produce Perks Midwest, the intermediary for the statewide program, promotes the program via their social media accounts and website that includes an interactive statewide map of participating sites. Champions of Extension and Perks are key and help build informal marketing capacity.

The funding Extension received on behalf of the FPC included support for 2.75 FTE (full-time equivalents). Without that funding, Extension was only able to maintain one FTE for Perks, a community development educator, using a combination of county-appropriated funds and cost share support from OSU Extension's federal land-grant funding. As Perks expanded to include women, infants, and children (WIC) and temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), a portion of the family and consumer sciences educator FTE added capacity. Both educators are responsible for counting and distributing tokens, guiding market managers on obtaining electronic benefits transfer (EBT) machines, monitoring FM Tracks, partner relations, marketing materials, training market managers, grants management, logistics, data analysis, and supervising the AmeriCorps VISTA. Their work has been awarded by NACDEP and NAEFCS. In 2019, an intern from the Cleveland Foundation was awarded to Extension for one year to

assist with high-level administrative tasks. These tasks include FM Track data cleaning, communicating with market managers, and creating annual reports. In 2020, an AmeriCorps VISTA was secured to continue these tasks. The CED provides guidance and support on funding, logistics, partnerships, and general community relations. The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Government Affairs office is a key internal partner that shares the instrumental role of Extension in the creation of Perks and its replication across the state.

Perks would not have been possible without the numerous public and private partnerships of the FPC and OSU Extension. OSU Extension's current management of Perks partnerships is streamlined to focus on implementation and funding partners. The heroes of this program are the farmers, farmers' market managers, and CSA staff. They serve as food distributors, Perks coordinators, promoters, advocates, and champions. Other current and long-term key partners include the local WIC team who actively collaborated on the creation and sustainability of WIC Perks, local hospitals that supported the innovative addition of Produce Prescription, Case Western Reserve University whose researchers and faculty continue to support funding and evaluation, Food Access Raises Everyone who collaborates on planning efforts, local foundations that continue to support incentive match funding, and ODJFS and food resource centers for program promotion and ongoing feedback.

Impact

The impact of Perks on the local economy and healthy shopping habits increases each year. Since 2010, the Produce Perks program in Cuyahoga County has generated more than \$725,000 in revenues for small to mid-sized farms, and \$450,000 in fruit and vegetable purchases at Cleveland grocery stores.

2020 was a record year for Perks, providing over \$295,000 in matching dollars for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetable. During this time of unprecedented need and demand from the community Produce Perks served over 7,300 families. Revenue from the Produce Perks program for farmers and producers increased by 99% in 2020 when compared to 2019.

Helping to improve the economic well-being of families and farmers is one outcome of the Perks program. For Extension, the most important outcomes of Perks are related to increased community and physical well-being. Perks offers participating families power in choice over which fresh fruits and vegetables they purchase. Families also have control over the quantity purchased and at what frequency. This differs from boxes of food distributed at emergency food access points in that shoppers learn how to select produce based on ripeness and seasonality. Shoppers learn how to gauge how much of a particular item they will consume before its expiration and the true cost of fresh produce, dispelling the myth that healthy food is expensive. This empowerment translates into a greater understanding of how nutritious eating impacts one's health, especially those with chronic diseases.

The ability to have choice while participating in a program that is funded in part by federal funding is unique. Perks shoppers are most proud after their first shopping trip and when they discover new produce at the markets. Conversations between farmers and shoppers often include recipe swapping, cooking suggestions, and taste testing, along with the farmer sharing the location of their farm and growing practices. These interactions not only foster a sense of community, but shoppers are also motivated to return to the market, and their desire to learn more about the food they consume is increased.

The farmers' market managers and OSU Extension staff are also positively impacted by implementing Perks. Gatherings of the market managers are full-spirited and provide one of the few opportunities for them to network as a group. Interestingly, because their market locations are spread across the county, they do not see themselves as competitors and openly share lessons learned and best practices. The community development and family and consumer sciences educators experience high levels of motivation, satisfaction, and fulfillment from the implementation of Perks and its expansion projects. Their work on this project supports their greater sense of purpose and connection to the community. Achieving a true sense of purpose is often left up to individual urban Extension employees. Meaning, in a system that is designed to serve communities utilizing packaged programs, urban Extension staff are often most successful and have high levels of satisfaction when they work on projects that meet the unique needs of their urban surroundings. Awards from NACDEP for creativity and innovation, another for an educational tool, and a resolution from the City of Lakewood provided a welcomed validation for the educators from their peers.

Closing Comments and Looking to the Future

Unique Aspects and Challenges

As the program grew and garnered the attention of elected officials and local food and public health professionals, proprietorship became a significant concern for the FPC and OSU Extension. The inception of Produce Perks is credited to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition. The implementation and continuation of the program after 2016 is credited to OSU Extension. When an intermediary was identified that wanted to adopt the logo, leverage multi-year data, adopt the model, and leverage local funding for federal funds OSU Extension quickly needed to establish expectations. Establishing partner agreements earlier in the statewide adoption process would have made these conversations less awkward for OSU Extension staff, who are trained to openly share their work with the community and often at no cost.

Recommendations

Well-thought-out program development is vital. Teams exploring a SNAP incentive program should be encouraged to meet with potential program participants, implementation partners, evaluators, and those with successful programs in other states. These conversations can be designed as focus groups where needs and logistics are discussed then considered afterward with their model in mind. The Cuyahoga County Perks program design was fine-tuned over many years to include farmers' market manager training, ongoing technical assistance for managers and farmers, food demonstrations, marketing and communications plans, annual impact evaluations, and a formal annual report. Many of these program components were initiated by suggestions from stakeholders and advocates.

Multimedia Documentation/References

Resources

- Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Economic Impact 2017-2020 (Figure 1)
- Produce Perks Timeline (Figure 2)
- Produce Perks English Post Card (Figure 3)
- Produce Perks Spanish Post Card (Figure 4)
- Lessons Learned (Figure 5)
- Produce Perks Regional Impact Report 2020 (Figure 6)
- Produce Perks Program Report 2020 (Figure 7)
- WIC Perks Program Report 2020 (Figure 8)

References

Case Western Reserve, Prevention Research Center. (2018). *Farmers Market (FM) Tracks | Tools Factsheets | PRC | CDC*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
<https://www.cdc.gov/prc/resources/tools/fm-tracks.htm>

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[https://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/about/hunger-facts#:~:text=\(Supplemental%20Nutrition%20Assistance%20Program%2C%20or%20SNAP\)&text=In%202016%20304%2C579%20residents%20in,recipients%20came%20from%20Cuyahoga%20County](https://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/about/hunger-facts#:~:text=(Supplemental%20Nutrition%20Assistance%20Program%2C%20or%20SNAP)&text=In%202016%20304%2C579%20residents%20in,recipients%20came%20from%20Cuyahoga%20County)

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Wageningen University and Research. (2012). *Tuckman (forming, norming, storming, performing) | Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*. Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation.
<http://www.mspguide.org/tool/tuckman-forming-norming-storming-performing>

Figure 1. Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Economic Impact 2017-2020



	2017	2018	2019	2020 To Date	Percent Change 2019 - 2020
SNAP Sales	\$35,985	\$38,846.25	\$35,113	\$71,217	+ 100.3%
Produce Perks Distribution	\$25,878	\$34,668.25	\$32,046	\$67,575	+ 110.9%
Produce Perks Redemption	\$25,587	\$32,124.25	\$32,292.00	\$62,224	+ 92.7%
Redemption Rate	99%	93%	101%	92%	-9%
SNAP Transactions	2,917	2,539	2,313	3,266	+ 41.2%
Unique Customers	1,071	1,051	881	1,528	+ 73.4%
Repeat Customers	385	364	319	610	+

Figure 2. Produce Perks Timeline

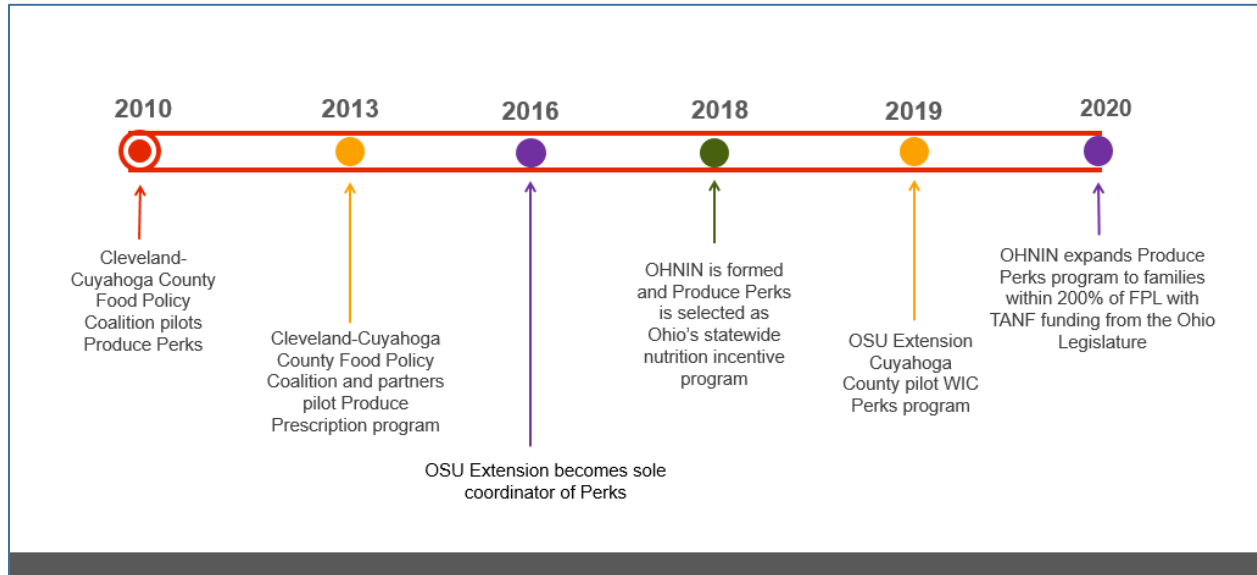


Figure 3. 2021 Produce Perks Postcard in English

YOU SNAP. WE MATCH.





It's the healthy way to stretch your SNAP.

How it works:

- 1 Find a participating farmers' market near you (see inside).
- 3 You will receive \$1 in Produce Perks for every \$1 you spend using an Ohio Direction Card or P-EBT.
- 2 After arriving at the farmers' market, find the customer service booth and swipe your Ohio Direction Card or P-EBT.
- 4 Use your Produce Perks to buy fresh, local produce from vendors at the farmers' market!



Buy a little



Get a lot

2021 PARTICIPATING PRODUCE PERKS GROCERY STORES

How it works at grocery stores:

- 1 Find a participating grocery store near you (listed below).
- 3 A Produce Perks coupon* will print at the bottom of your receipt. Use your coupon on your next visit to get free fruits and vegetables.
- 2 Shop using your SNAP/EBT Ohio Direction Card or P-EBT. For every \$5 you spend, get a \$5 Produce Perks coupon (up to \$10 per day) to spend on fruits and vegetables.

Grocery stores match up to \$10 per day!

<p>DAVE'S MARKET—MIDTOWN Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm (Year Round) 1929 East 61st St • Cleveland P: 216.361.5130</p>	<p>DAVE'S MARKET—EUCLID BEACH Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm (Year Round) 15900 Lakeshore Blvd • Cleveland P: 216.486.6458</p>	<p>DAVE'S MERCADO Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm (Year Round) 3565 Ridge Rd • Cleveland P: 216-961-2000</p>	<p>DAVE'S MARKET—SLAVIC VILLAGE Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm (Year Round) 7422 Harvard Ave • Cleveland P: 216.441.0034</p>
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*Grocery store coupons are not redeemable at farmers' markets.
Farmers' market tokens are not redeemable at grocery stores.

If you do not currently receive food assistance through an Ohio Direction Card and would like to apply, please call Ohio Benefits at 1-844-640-OHIO (6446) or the Greater Cleveland Food Bank Help Center at 1-855-738-2067.



ProducePERKS

VISIT WWW.PRODUCEPERKS.ORG TO LEARN MORE!

PRODUCE PERKS

2021 PARTICIPATING MARKET LOCATIONS

Check for Market Days & Times Near You! For help finding your nearest market call: 216.429.8200

Markets match up to \$25 per day!

CITY FRESH CSA (Jun 14–Oct 29)

Weekly CSA share with 15+ locations throughout Cuyahoga and Lorain counties
Mon, 4–6pm | Tue, 4–7pm | Wed, 2:30–7pm
Thur, 4:30–7pm | Fri, 4–5:30pm
 To order, visit cityfresh.org
 P: 440.707.6606

COIT ROAD FARMERS' MARKET

Wed, 8am–1pm (Jun 2–Oct 27)
Sat, 8am–1pm (Year Round)
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland
 P: 216.249.5455
 RTA: E 152nd & Noble Rd (37)

GOOD EARTH FARM STAND

Thurs, 3–7pm (May–Oct) | **3–5pm** (Nov–Apr)
Mon, 3–7pm (May–Oct)
Sat, 12–4pm (May–Oct)
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland
 P: 216.288.0170
 RTA: W 98th and Madison (81)

KAMM'S CORNERS

FARMERS MARKET

Sun, 10am–1pm
 (Jun 13–Oct 17, closed Jul 4)
 16906 Albers Ave • Cleveland
 P: 216.252.6559
 RTA: Rocky River Dr & Lorain Ave (22, 86),
 Lorain Ave & W 168th St (22, 49, 75)

LAKEWOOD EARTH AND FOOD COMMUNITY FARMERS' MARKET

Thurs, 5:30–7:30pm (Jun 10–Oct 28)
 15425 Detroit Ave (front porch of Library)
 Lakewood
 P: 216.367.2834
 RTA: Detroit Ave & Arthur Ave (26)

LEAGUE PARK MARKET PLACE

Thurs, 2:30–6pm (May 6–Oct 7)
 7721 Superior Ave (Corner of E 79th
 & Superior) • Cleveland
 P: 216.375.3757
 RTA: Superior Ave & E 79th St (2, 3)

- Accepts WIC FMNP
- Accepts Senior FMNP

NORTH UNION FARMERS' MARKETS:

P: 216.751.7656

At Chagrin Falls

Sun, 9am–12pm (Jun 6–Oct 24)
 21 N Franklin St • Chagrin Falls

At Cleveland Clinic

Wed, 10:30am–1:30pm (Jun 2–Oct 20)
 2049 E 100th St • Cleveland
 RTA: Cleveland Clinic (7, 32, 48-48A, 58, X61)

At Crocker Park

Sat, 9am–1pm (Apr 3–Dec 18)
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 & 55 A-B-C
 (Union Ave & Main Ave)

At Legacy Village

Sun, 10am–1pm (Jun 13–Sep 26)
 25385 Cedar Rd • Lyndhurst
 RTA: Legacy Village (32)

At Shaker Square

Sat, 8am–12pm (Apr 3–Dec 18)
 13111 Shaker Square • Cleveland
 RTA: Shaker Square Rapid Station
 (11, Blue Line, Green Line)

At University Hospitals

Thurs, 10:30am–1:30pm (Jun 3–Sep 30)
 2074 Adelbert Rd • Cleveland
 RTA: Adelbert Rd (48-48A and 58)

At Van Aken

Thurs, 4–7pm (Jun 10–Oct 14)
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensburg Rapid Station
 (Blue Line, Green Line, Waterfront Line)

OLD BROOKLYN FARMERS MARKET

Sat, 9am–1pm (Jun 19–Sep 25)
 4200 Pearl Rd • Cleveland
 P: 216.459.1000
 RTA: Pearl Rd & Broadview Rd (51 A-B-C)

TREMONT FARMERS MARKET

Tues, 4–7pm (May 11–Oct 12)
 1200 Starkweather Ave • Cleveland
 P: 216.570.8201
 RTA: W 14th St & Starkweather

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THE OHIO STATE
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WINTER FARMERS' MARKETS:

COIT ROAD FARMERS'

MARKET
Sat, 8am–1pm (Year Round)
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland
 P: 216.249.5455
 RTA: E 152nd & Noble Rd (37)

GOOD EARTH FARM STAND

Thurs, 3–5pm (Year Round)
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland
 P: 216.288.0170
 RTA: W 98th and Madison (81)

NORTH UNION INDOOR MARKET at CROCKER PARK

Sat, 9am–12pm (Jan 2–Mar 27)
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake
 P: 216.751.7656
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 & 55 A-B-C
 (Union Ave & Main Ave)

NORTH UNION INDOOR MARKET at VAN AKEN

Sat, 9am–12pm (Jan 2–Mar 27)
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights
 P: 216.751.7656
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensburg
 Rapid Station (Blue Line, Green Line,
 Waterfront Line)

Figure 4. 2021 Produce Perks Postcard in Spanish



PRESENTE SU SNAP. NOSOTROS LA IGUALAMOS.




Compre poco

Es la forma sana de estirar sus CUPONES.

Cómo funciona:

- 1** Encuentre un mercado participante de agricultores cerca de usted (vea el interior).
- 2** Después de llegar al mercado de agricultores, busque la caseta de atención al cliente y pase su tarjeta Direction de Ohio o P-EBT.
- 3** Recibirá \$1 en Produce Perks por cada \$1 que gaste usando una tarjeta Direction de Ohio o P-EBT.
- 4** ¡Use sus incentivos de Produce Perks para comprar productos frescos y locales de vendedores del mercado de agricultores!



Llévese mucho

TIENDAS DE COMESTIBLES PARTICIPANTES EN EL PROGRAMA DE INCENTIVOS PRODUCE PERKS EN 2021

Cómo funciona en las tiendas de comestibles:

- 1** Encuentre una tienda participante de comestibles cerca de usted (consulte la lista abajo).
- 2** Compre con su tarjeta Direction de Ohio o P-EBT. Por cada \$5 que gaste, obtenga un cupón de \$5 Produce Perks (hasta \$10 por día) para gastar en frutas y verduras.
- 3** Se imprimirá un cupón de Produce Perks* en la parte inferior de su recibo. Use su cupón en su próxima visita para obtener frutas y verduras gratis.

¡Las tiendas de comestibles conceden hasta \$10 por día!

<p>MERCADO DAVE'S— MIDTOWN domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 1929 East 61st St • Cleveland Tel: 216.361.5130</p>	<p>MERCADO DAVE'S— EUCLID BEACH domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 15900 Lakeshore Blvd • Cleveland Tel: 216.486.6458</p>	<p>MERCADO DAVE'S domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 3565 Ridge Rd • Cleveland Tel: 216-961-2000</p>	<p>MERCADO DAVE'S— SLAVIC VILLAGE domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 7422 Harvard Ave • Cleveland Tel: 216.441.0034</p>
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*Los cupones de las tiendas de comestibles no se pueden canjear en los mercados de agricultores. Las fichas del mercado de agricultores no se pueden canjear en las tiendas de comestibles.

Si actualmente no recibe asistencia alimentaria a través de una tarjeta de Ohio Direction y desea solicitarla, llame a Beneficios de Ohio, al 1-844-640-OHIO (6446) o al Centro de Ayuda del Banco de Alimentos de Greater Cleveland, al 1-855-738-2067.



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CITY FRESH CSA (junio 14–octubre 29)

Todas las semanas, CSA comparte con más de 15 ubicaciones de los condados de Cuyahoga y Lorain
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miércoles, 2:30 pm–7 pm | jueves, 4:30 pm–7 pm
viernes, 4 pm–5:30 pm
 Para hacer su pedido, visite cityfresh.org
 Tel: 440.707.6606

MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES DE LA CARRETERA DE COIT

miércoles, 8 am–1 pm (junio 2–octubre 78)
sábado, 8 am–1 pm (todo el año)
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland
 Tel: 216.249.5455
 RTA: E 152nd y Noble Rd (37)

GOOD EARTH FARM STAND

jueves, 3 pm–7 pm (mayo–octubre) |
3 pm–5 pm (noviembre–abril)
lunes, 3 pm–7 pm (mayo–octubre)
sábado, 12 pm–7 pm (mayo–octubre)
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland
 Tel: 216.288.0170
 RTA: W 98th y Madison (81)

MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES KAMM'S CORNERS

domingo, 10 am–1 pm
 (junio 13–octubre 17, cerrado el 4 de julio)
 16906 Albers Ave • Cleveland
 Tel: 216.252.6559
 RTA: Rocky River Dr y Lorain Ave (22, 86),
 Lorain Ave y W 168th St (22, 49, 75)

MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES LAKEWOOD EARTH AND FOOD COMMUNITY

jueves, 5:30 pm–7:30 pm (junio 10–octubre 28)
 15425 Detroit Ave (frente a la biblioteca)
 Lakewood
 Tel: 216.367.2834
 RTA: Detroit Ave y Arthur Ave (26)

MERCADO LEAGUE PARK

jueves, 2:30 pm–6 pm (mayo 6–octubre 7)
 7721 Superior Ave (Esquina de E 79th y Superior) • Cleveland
 Tel: 216.375.3757
 RTA: Superior Ave y E 79th St (2, 3)

- Acepta el Programa Especial de Nutrición Suplementaria para Mujeres, Infantes y Niños (Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, WIC) y el Programa de Nutrición del Mercado de Granjeros (Farmers Market Nutrition Program, FMNP)
- Acepta el FMNP para adultos mayores

MERCADOS DE AGRICULTORES

NORTH UNION:

Tel: 216.751.7656

En Chagrin Falls

domingo, 9 am–12 pm (junio 6–octubre 24)
 21 N Franklin St • Chagrin Falls

En Cleveland Clinic

miércoles, 10:30 am–1:30 pm
 (junio 2–octubre 20)
 2049 E 100th St • Cleveland
 RTA: Cleveland Clinic (7, 32, 48-48A, 58, X61)

En Crocker Park

sábado, 9 am–1 pm (abril 3–diciembre 18)
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 y 55 A-B-C
 (Union Ave y Main Ave)

En Legacy Village

domingo, 10 am–1 pm (junio 13–septiembre 26)
 25385 Cedar Rd • Lyndhurst
 RTA: Legacy Village (32)

En Shaker Square

sábado, 8 am–12 pm (abril 3–diciembre 18)
 13111 Shaker Square • Cleveland

RTA: Shaker Square Rapid Station
 (11, Blue Line, Green Line)

En University Hospitals

jueves, 10:30 am–1:30 pm (junio 3–septiembre 30)
 2074 Adelbert Rd • Cleveland
 RTA: Adelbert Rd (48-48A and 58)

En Van Aken

jueves, 4:30 pm–7:30 pm (junio 10–octubre 14)
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensburg Rapid Station
 (Blue Line, Green Line, Waterfront Line)

MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES

OLD BROOKLYN

sábado, 9 am–1 pm (junio 19–septiembre 25)
 4200 Pearl Rd • Cleveland
 Tel: 216.459.1000
 RTA: Pearl Rd y Broadview Rd (51 A-B-C)

MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES TREMONT

martes, 4 pm–7 pm (mayo 11–octubre 12)
 1200 Starkweather Ave • Cleveland
 Tel: 216.570.8201
 RTA: W 14th St y Starkweather

Llevado a usted por:



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MERCADOS DE AGRICULTORES WINTER:

MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES DE LA CARRETERA DE COIT

sábado, 8 am–1 pm (todo el año)
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland
 Tel: 216.249.5455
 RTA: E 152nd y Noble Rd (37)

GOOD EARTH FARM STAND

jueves, 3 pm–5 pm (todo el año)
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland
 Tel: 216.288.0170
 RTA: W 98th and Madison (81)

MERCADO INTERIOR NORTH UNION en CROCKER PARK

sábado, 9 am–12 pm (enero 2–marzo 27)
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake
 Tel: 216.751.7656
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 y 55 A-B-C
 (Union Ave y Main Ave)

MERCADO INTERIOR NORTH UNION en VAN AKEN

sábado, 9 am–12 pm (enero 2–marzo 27)
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights
 Tel: 216.751.7656
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensburg Rapid Station (Blue Line, Green Line, Waterfront Line)

Figure 5. Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Lessons Learned

CFAES

Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Lessons Learned

Challenge	Lesson Learned
Outreach materials in primary languages	Identify University staff, local translation services or volunteer
Reaching target audiences	Word of mouth, radio ads, and mailers sent to target zip codes
Program adjustment midseason	Not recommended. Convening managers for training/updates is challenging once markets open.
Prepare for midseason manager turnover	Invite two market staff to annual pre-season training
Secure long-term funding	Implement a public-private funding model to help ensure funding when community or government priorities shift.
Extension/University proprietorship of program model, logo, data	Partner with College branding office. If program is adopted statewide or if an intermediary is identified this ensures Extension recognition.
Extension/University proprietorship of data	Establish multi-year data sharing MOU
Survive shifts in emerging trends	Stand by office niche, consistent messaging, establish clear partner roles and MOU
Platform for ongoing feedback and community ownership	Meet at least twice per year with key stakeholder group, membership includes participants and program implementers. Increase frequency early in program development and initial years of implementation.
Follow best practices of long-standing programs	Fair Food Network, Wholesome Wave, D.C. Greens, Double Up Food Bucks
Share best practices with long-standing programs	Peer learning opportunity

Figure 6. Produce Perks Regional Impact Report 2020

Produce Perks 2020

COVID-19 Impact Report for Cuyahoga County



Produce Perks and the Pandemic

The Produce Perks program has continued to serve families, farmers, and Ohio retailers during the pandemic. The program has provided critical resources for food insecure families and revenue for farmers suffering from the loss of restaurant and retail sales. Farmers' markets have been able to continue to operate under Governor DeWine's Stay-at-Home Order and the Responsible Restart Ohio Plan. Produce Perks provided PPE supplies and other resources for farmers' markets to remain operational and serve their communities during the pandemic. Families receiving Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) were also able to receive matching dollars through the Produce Perks program. Food insecurity increased from 15% to 21% during the pandemic - almost a quarter of the County's residents now struggle to put food on the table. Produce Perks is needed now more than ever.

Impact of the Unlimited Match

In response to the pandemic, Produce Perks Midwest and The Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network offered an **Unlimited Match** for Produce Perks SNAP and P-EBT shoppers at farmers' markets in Ohio from mid-March 2020 through June 2020. The community's response to the unlimited match was strong, resulting in exponential increase in program utilization. The pandemic made traditional program promotion efforts difficult as many partner organizations were no longer seeing clients in person. The unlimited match was largely promoted only through word of mouth and on-site at market customer service booths.

	March - June 2019	March - June 2020	Percent Increase
SNAP Sales	\$8,088	\$20,531	+ 154%
Produce Perks Distributed	\$7,110	\$20,451	+ 188%
Produce Perks Redeemed	\$6,089	\$13,102	+ 115%

Produce Perks at Dave's Supermarket

Between mid-March and June 30, Dave's Supermarket doubled the dollar amount of incentives redeemed per month, serving twice as many SNAP consumers. The higher customer reach and Produce Perks sales continued through the rest of the year.

Fruit & Vegetable SNAP Sales	Produce Perks Redeemed	Total	Increase Over 2019
\$370,904	+ \$207,265	= \$578,169	+ 86%

Total Impact of Produce Perks in 2020

In 2020, the Produce Perks program had record sales due to unprecedented need and demand from the community. **The Produce Perks program was able to serve over 7,300 families in Cuyahoga County, providing critical access to fresh fruits and vegetables during the pandemic. Over \$485,000 worth of SNAP was used for healthy purchases and over \$295,000 worth of free matching dollars were spent on fresh fruits and vegetables.** Since 2010, the Produce Perks program offered at farmers' markets in Cuyahoga County has generated more than \$725,000 in revenues for small to mid-sized farms, and \$450,000 in fruit and vegetable purchases at Cleveland grocery stores.

	SNAP Sales	Produce Perks Redeemed	Families Served
Farmers' Markets	\$69,665	\$60,971	1,545
Dave's Supermarket	\$416,055	\$234,335	5,849
Total	\$485,720	\$295,306	7,394

Figure 7. Produce Perks Program Report 2020

Produce Perks

2020 Farmers' Market Program Report



What is Produce Perks?

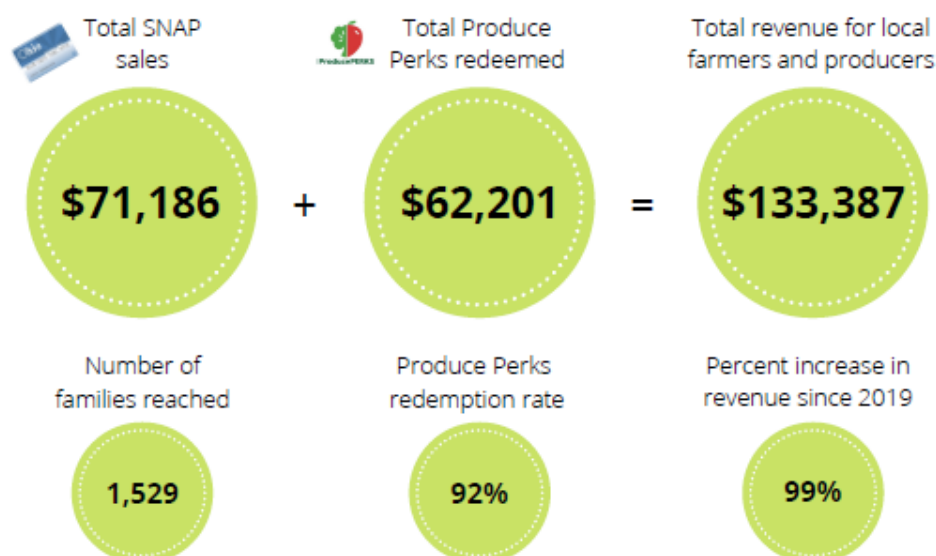
Produce Perks is a nutrition incentive program that was developed by partners of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) in 2010. The program is administered locally by Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga County. Produce Perks is now Ohio's statewide nutrition incentive program guided by the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network (OH-NIN). Nutrition incentive programs are evidence-based models supported by the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills.

How does it work?

Produce Perks offers SNAP customers a dollar-for-dollar match, doubling their purchasing power at participating farmers' markets, farm stands, CSA's, and mobile markets. For every dollar a SNAP customer spends at participating sites using an Ohio Direction Card, they receive a free additional dollar referred to as a "Produce Perk." Produce Perks can be used to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables only.

2020 Program Impacts

In 2020, over \$71,100 worth of SNAP was spent at local farmers' markets in Cuyahoga County. Approximately 1,529 families participated in the Produce Perks program, purchasing over \$62,200 worth of local fruits and vegetables. The Produce Perks program increased sales for farmers and producers participating at local farmers' markets by over \$133,300. Revenue from the Produce Perks program for farmers and producers increased by 99% in 2020 when compared to 2019.



Total dollars funneled into the local economy since 2010:

\$725,987

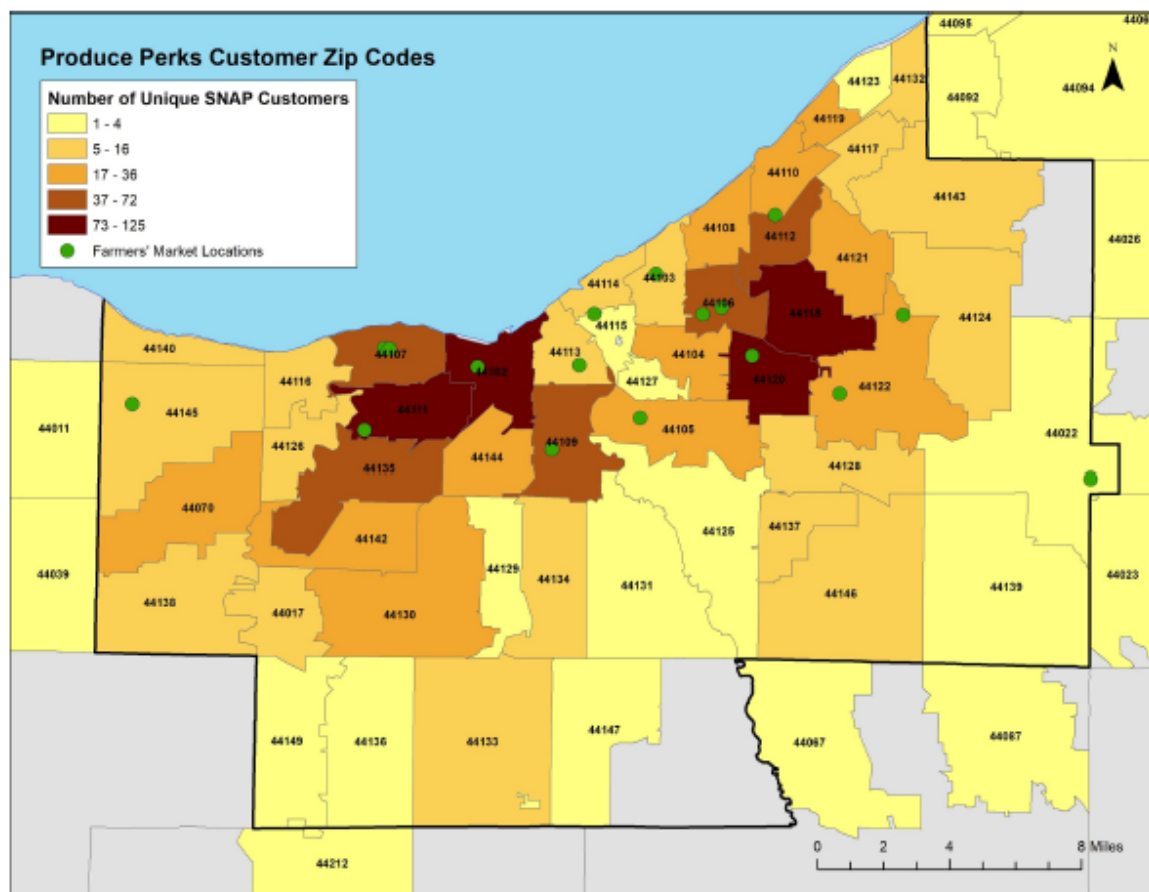
Produce Perks and the Pandemic in 2020

In response to the pandemic, the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network offered an **Unlimited Match**. This removed the daily matching cap of \$20 for Produce Perks SNAP and Pandemic-EBT shoppers at farmers' markets in Ohio from mid-March through June. The community's response to the unlimited match was strong, resulting in exponential increase in program utilization. The pandemic made traditional program promotion efforts difficult as many partner organizations were no longer seeing clients in person. The unlimited match was largely promoted only through word of mouth and on-site at market customer service booths. Program utilization increases in Cuyahoga County during the time the unlimited match was offered can be seen in the chart to the right.

	March - June 2019	March - June 2020	Percent Increase
SNAP Sales	\$8,088	\$20,531	+ 154%
Produce Perks Distributed	\$7,110	\$20,451	+ 188%
Produce Perks Redeemed	\$6,089	\$13,102	+ 115%

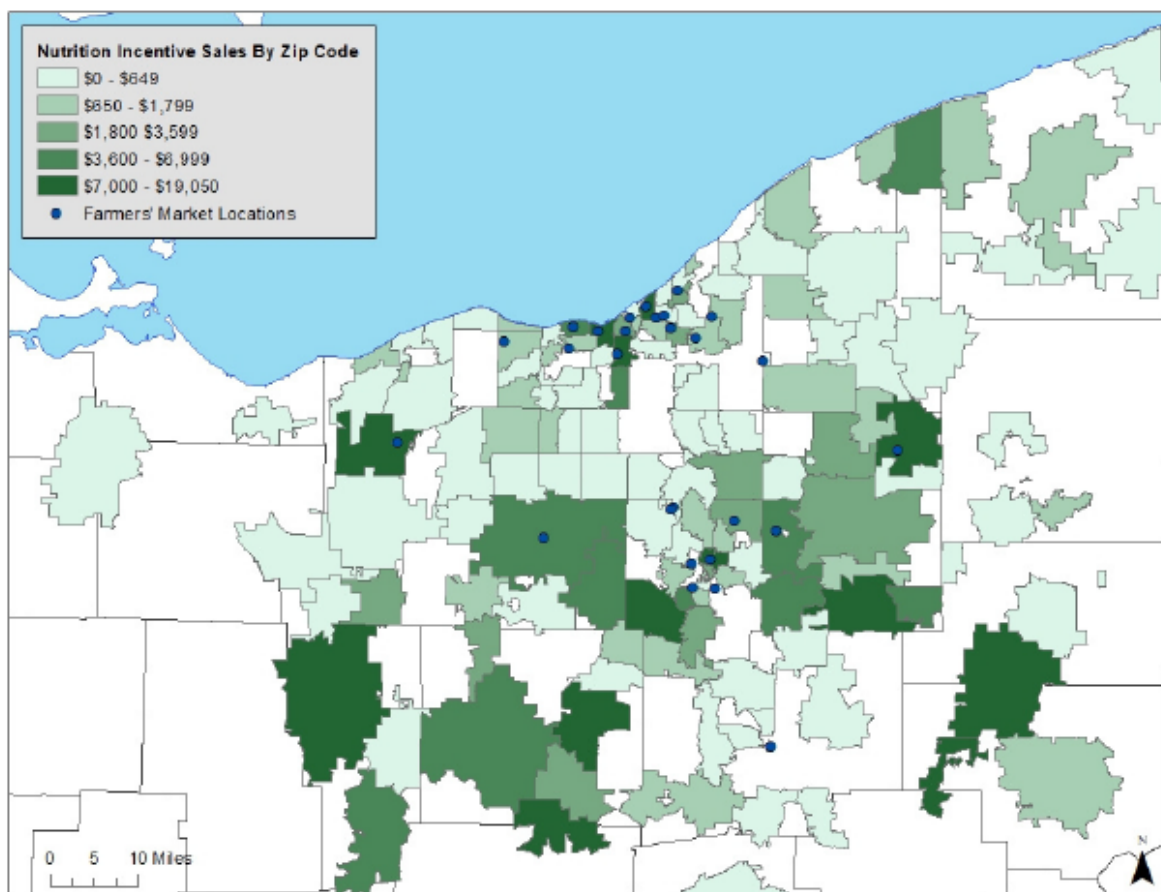
Produce Perks in Cuyahoga County

In 2020, the Produce Perks program was offered at 15 locations across the County with 3 market locations operating year round. Over 1,500 families were served by the program in 2020. When SNAP customers visit a market and swipe their Ohio Direction Card market staff ask them for the zip code of their residence. The map below displays the zip codes reported by Produce Perks customers in 2020. The highest participation occurred among customers living in the zip codes 44102, 44120, and 44118.



Regional Impact on Local Farmers and Producers

The Produce Perks program is also offered at farmers' markets in other counties across Northeast Ohio by Countryside, a non-profit in Summit County. Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County and Countryside combined their 2020 market sales data to examine the regional economic impact of nutrition incentive programs. Sales from Produce Perks and other nutrition incentive programs including WIC Perks, Carrot Cash, TANF Perks, and Summit County WIC FMNP were included in the analysis. Total sales from nutrition incentive programs reached \$305,000 in 2020, increasing sales for over 331 farmers and producers.



Thank You to Our Funders

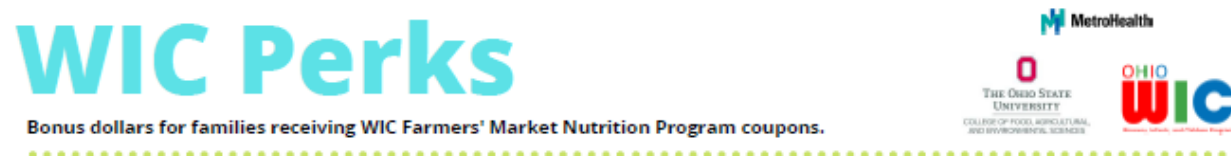
Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County extends our deepest gratitude to our funders. Without their generous financial support this work would not be possible.

Thank You to Our Partners

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would like to thank the following program and promotional partners: local farmers' markets; Produce Perks Midwest; the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network; Countryside; Food Access Raises Everyone (FARE); Cuyahoga County Jobs and Family Services; Cuyahoga Women, Infants, and Children; the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

For questions about Produce Perks in Cuyahoga County contact Amanda Osborne with Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga at osborne.414@osu.edu or 216-429-8200.

Figure 8. WIC Perks Program Report 2020



What is WIC Perks?

The WIC Perks program is an expansion of the Produce Perks nutrition incentive program in Cuyahoga County piloted in 2019. Produce Perks offers Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients a dollar-for-dollar match when shopping with an Ohio Direction Card at local farmers' markets across the state. The WIC Perks pilot expanded the Produce Perks program to serve families receiving Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons. The WIC Perks program is a partnership between Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program*, and local farmers' markets to collaboratively leverage resources to offer additional services to WIC clients at select WIC FMNP distribution dates.

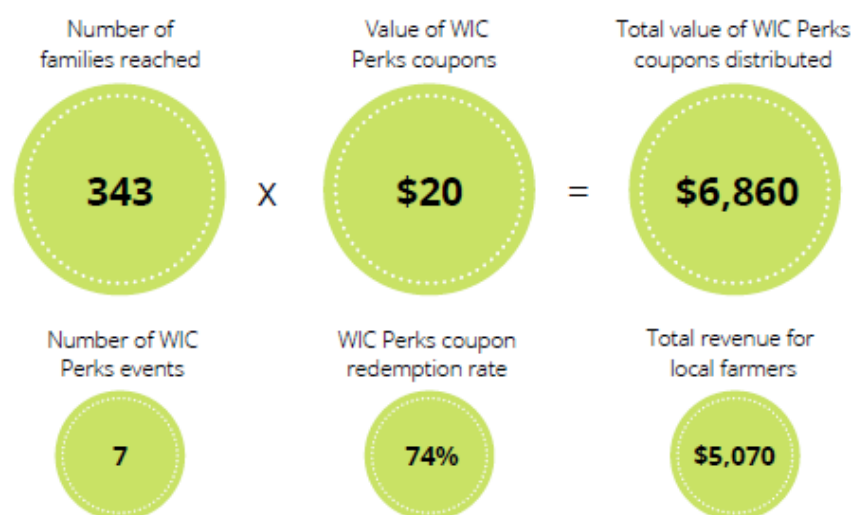
How does it work?

After families receive WIC/FMNP coupons on select distribution dates, they have the option to engage in a short cooking demonstration, taste testing, or educational activity. In exchange for their participation, families received an additional set of coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables valued at \$20 and relevant culinary tools. The 2019 pilot served 683 families, providing them with \$13,660 worth of coupons to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs at local farmers' markets in addition to the WIC FMNP coupons they received. The full 2019 WIC Perks pilot report can be viewed [here](#).

2020 WIC Perks Program

The WIC Perks program continued to serve the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing critical resources for food-insecure families and revenue for farmers. Farmers' markets were able to continue to operate under Governor DeWine's Stay-at-Home Order and the Responsible Restart Ohio Plan.

In 2020, the WIC Perks program was modified to comply with the health and safety mandates outlined in the Responsible Restart Ohio Plan. One modification was the WIC Perks Program was unable to offer cooking demonstrations or taste testing for program participants.



*70 families opted to complete a follow-up survey with an additional \$1,400 in WIC Perks being distributed for a total of \$8,260. Redemption for coupons received from follow-up survey is not reflected in the redemption values listed above.

While WIC Perks coupon distribution was lower in 2020 than the pilot year, the coupon redemption rate increased by 24%. Many factors could have influenced distribution in 2020, but the program partners believe that distribution was lower due to challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. While the program was unable to offer cooking demonstrations and taste testing, many families were still excited to participate in the program for a second year. Families shared how they have been using the two kitchen tools they received previously and how they were looking forward to being able to select from the other tool options offered through the program. Educational resources provided to participants focused on seasonality, proper produce storage, and tips for using fruits and vegetables to make kid-friendly snacks.

Exposure to Produce Perks

During the WIC Perks program families were provided with an overview of the Produce Perks program and how they could use their SNAP benefits at the farmers' market to receive free matching dollars. Many families were excited to learn about Produce Perks for the first time at WIC Perks events. The program also highlighted the opportunity to use Pandemic EBT to receive Produce Perks.

Follow-up survey results showed a statistically significant relationship between attending a joint WIC FMNP/WIC Perks distribution event in 2019 and being aware of the Produce Perks program before visiting a farmers' market in 2020.



54%

Percent of families who reported receiving SNAP benefits.

36%

Percent of families receiving SNAP who reported knowing about Produce Perks prior to WIC Perks event.

94%

Percent of families receiving SNAP who reported they planned to use Produce Perks in the future.

Impact on WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Distribution

During 2020, WIC FMNP recipients could also receive bonus coupons funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) through a program known as TANF Perks. The TANF Perks program used the WIC Perks model to partner with WIC FMNP to provide bonus coupons at the farmers' market.

The table to the right highlights the 2020 WIC FMNP distribution numbers for Kamm's Corners Farmers' Market. The Kamm's Corners Farmers' Market hosted one WIC Perks event (8/30) and two TANF Perks events (9/20 and 9/27). Significant increases in WIC FMNP distribution occurred on dates where families could receive bonus coupons through both programs. The opportunity to receive bonus coupons on select WIC FMNP distribution dates appears to have influenced which distribution events families chose to attend, a trend also observed in 2019.

Market Date	WIC FMNP Distribution
7/19	\$1,480
7/26	\$920
8/16	\$1,280
8/30	\$2,660
9/20	\$2,100
9/27	\$2,220
10/4	\$1,020
10/11	\$1,260

Thank You to Our Partners

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would like to thank the Cuyahoga County WIC program and staff for partnering with us on WIC Perks. Cuyahoga County WIC staff were immensely supportive of the pilot since the initial concept was developed in 2018. Cuyahoga County WIC did an incredible job informing participants about WIC Perks, which undoubtedly contributed to the pilot's success. Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would also like to thank the staff and volunteers of the Kamm's Corner Farmers' Market, the Old Brooklyn Farmers' Market, Coit Road Farmers' Market, and North Union Farmers' Market for their data collection and tracking efforts as well as their flexibility during the pandemic. All program partners provided support to the pilot in-kind, receiving no financial compensation for their time.

Thank You to Our Funders

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County extends our deepest gratitude to our funders. Without their generous financial support this work would not be possible.

For questions about WIC Perks contact Amanda Osborne with Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County at osborne.414@osu.edu or 216-429-8200.

*An Ohio Department of Health grant funded program of The MetroHealth System.

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Nicole is one of 24 area leaders within the Ohio State University Extension system. The Cuyahoga County office, in Cleveland, joins the Columbus and Cincinnati offices in serving the three major urban areas in the state. In addition to serving the local community, Nicole serves as National Urban Extension Leaders North Central Regional Network Chair, participates with the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research Advisory Board, and on a Kettering Urban Communities Reimagined project.

Joining Extension in 2015, Nicole shares her experience in partner relations, project management, urban planning, healthcare informatics, proposal writing, youth development, comprehensive well-being, and cultural competence with local, state, and national teams.

Special acknowledgement to Amanda Osborne, Community Development Educator/Produce Perks Project Manager and Tameka Coleman, AmeriCorps VISTA for their contributions.