

Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Pilot (FMNCP) Project



Summary of Project and Evaluation Results 2007



Full evaluation available at http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/web/pdf/fmncp_finalreport.pdf

Project Vision

British Columbians eat local nutritious food produced by economically viable BC farmers.

Project Purpose

- Increase access to fresh BC-produced farm products for low-income pregnant women and low income families with children.
- Complement existing cooking and skill building programs.
- Expand the awareness, use of and sales at farmers' markets.

Project Overview 2007

The Farmer's Market Nutrition and Coupon Pilot (FMNCP) was a pilot project funded by the provincial government for 2007. There was one FMNCP Project site in each of the 5 health regions in British Columbia: Kelowna Farmers' Market; Prince George Farmers' Market; Comox Valley Farmers' Market; Coquitlam Farmers' Market; and Your Local Farmers' Market Society sites in Vancouver – East Vancouver Farmers' Market, Riley Park Farmers' Market, West End Farmers' Market and Kitsilano Farmers' Market.

The FMNCP provided a coupon booklet worth \$15 per cooking and skill building program participant from July 7 through October 14. The coupons were redeemed at farmers' markets for fresh vegetables, fruit, dairy, meat, fish, eggs, nuts and fresh cut herbs. Cooking and skill building programs provided cooking skills and nutrition education related to the purchase, storage, and preparation of vegetables, fruits, and other farm fresh products.

This project has operated in five communities across the province and has served a range of populations, including Aboriginal and families new to Canada. In this time we have seen families living on limited incomes access BC grown fruits

and vegetables and other nutritious BC farm products while receiving nutrition and cooking skills education.

Families accessed coupons successfully and used them in their local markets, achieving a high redemption rate of 88%. A wide range of food was purchased, with many families accessing foods they had never tried or perceived unable to afford. On average every week, the program served at least 253 children.

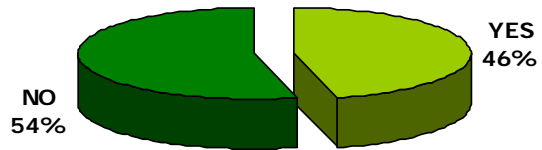
The evaluation found that the project was extremely successful in increasing access to local nutritious farm products for low income British Columbians participating in the program and, in many cases, their extended networks. In particular this project increased access to fresh local farm products and had a positive impact on the nutritional knowledge and cooking skills of coupon recipients.

All participating farmers' market managers agreed that this project increased awareness of BC farmers' markets in their community. The majority of participating vendors experienced an increase in sales as a result of the project. One hundred percent of farmers' market and cooking and skill building program managers agreed that the project was important in their community. And all would recommend having this project in other communities in the future.

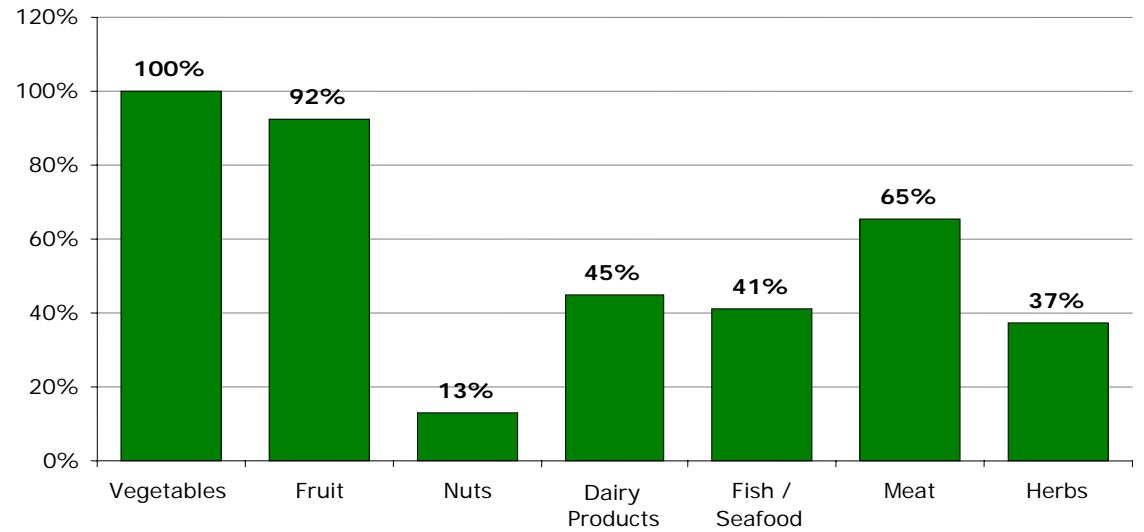
All pilot project sites have waiting lists for people on a limited income wishing to participate in this project in the future. We also have a long list of community agencies, farmers' markets and individuals who would like to participate in an expanded version of this project.

In closing, this pilot project has proved to be an overwhelming success, and has shown tangible benefits for low-income families, BC farmers, and the communities at large. Visits to farmers' markets in our pilot communities have come to be seen by project participants as part of a healthy lifestyle and a place where community members come together, regardless of income.

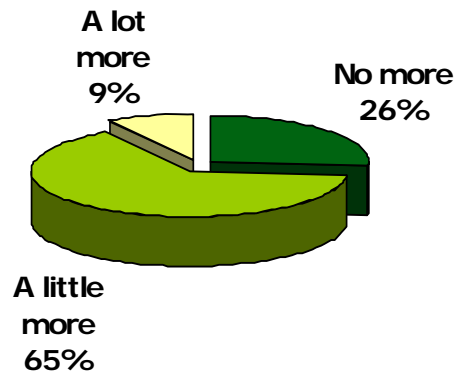
Percentage of recipients who had not been to a farmers' market before



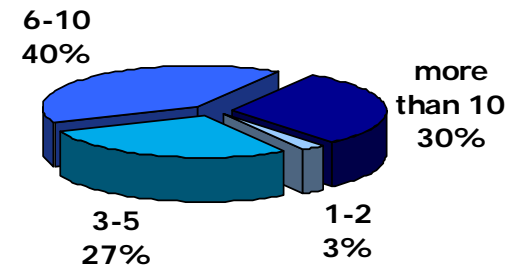
Food groups purchased by coupon recipients



Coupon recipients reporting own money spent



Number of times recipients shopped at the farmer's market this year



Key Evaluation Findings

- When asked if eating fresh food was important to them, 91% of respondent coupon recipients agreed or strongly agreed. 80 % agreed or strongly agreed that eating food grown or produced locally was important to them.
- 84 % of recipients reported changes in the way they eat and 68 % said they were trying new foods.
- Coupon recipients articulated a strong sense of awareness about the value of fresh local food, as it impacts on their health and the health of their community.

It was actually a really good feeling to support people in your own community, to know directly where your food is coming from and to be able to ask questions about your food...

There is a new awareness of community coming together to be healthy and supporting local.

- Vendors were active in their support of the project and extremely positive about the positive impacts of their participation, for themselves and their communities.
- Vendors responding to the evaluation survey recommended that the project be expanded both within their own locations and to other markets across the province.

Expand the program. It is a great way to improve eating habits, get people out for a social experience and fight obesity, all at once!

I think a lot more low income people have an awareness that the market is not something that's completely out of reach for them

Examples of food purchased by coupon recipients

Category	Item
Fruit	Apples, cherries, plums, peaches, apricots, berries, mini smooth-skinned kiwi
Vegetables	Tomatoes, kale, eggplant, beans, beets, cucumber/squash, zucchini, festive squash, tomatillas (red/green), summer squash, leek, different types of lettuce, mushrooms, spaghetti squash, carrots, beets, potatoes
Meat	Beef jerky, buffalo/bison, venison, pepperoni, game hens, sausages, lamb, eggs (including ostrich eggs), frozen tuna, beef, pork, chicken
Herbs	Green mustard, garlic, basil (including lemon basil), wasabi leaves, mint, oregano, sage

For more information please contact

Paula Luther, Project Manager
 BCAFM Coupon Project
 bcafmcoupon@gmail.com
 (604) 254-4512