



Successes and Challenges of the *SNAP Healthy Bucks* Program A PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

The *South Carolina SNAP Healthy Bucks program* was created in 2014, through budget proviso 38.26 of the South Carolina 2013-2014 Appropriations Act. Modeled after a program at the Right Choice, Fresh Start Farmers' Market in Orangeburg, SC, the aim of this SNAP (the program formerly known as food stamps) healthy incentives program is ***to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income families in the state***. At the same time, this type of programming is also shown to ***increase the income of small-scale farmers***, therefore, keeping ***more money in the local economy***.

From June to October 2014, 6 farmers' markets participated in the pilot implementation of the SNAP Healthy Bucks Program, administered by the South Carolina Department of Social Services. ***We wanted to learn about the successes and challenges of participating in the program from people who shop with SNAP.***

To gain these insights, we used *Photovoice*. ***We asked some people who receive SNAP*** in 4 of the pilot "Healthy Bucks" counties ***to answer a few questions about shopping at farmers' markets and using "Healthy Bucks" through photographs.***

The following pages contain the photos taken with supporting captions written by the photographers.

Recommendations

- ✓ **Ensure SNAP recipients are part of the power and decision making structures** at farmers' markets (e.g., advisory councils, committees) to foster inclusivity.
- ✓ Ensure farmers' markets are located in **accessible locations** and open during **convenient hours** for low-income working families.
- ✓ **Create a network of "SNAP Champions"** in communities offering the SNAP Healthy Bucks, who can employ community organizing strategies to increase shopping with SNAP at the markets (e.g., door knocking in residential communities and at agencies).
- ✓ **Expand SNAP Healthy Bucks program** to other farmers' markets and other SNAP retail outlets (e.g., roadside produce stands, produce buying clubs, military commissaries).
- ✓ Significantly **increase marketing and outreach** of the program to SNAP recipients and other potential SNAP retailers.
- ✓ **Ensure SNAP recipients are informed of the process** of how to participate in the program once they arrive at a participating location (e.g., first go to the farmers' market information tent, get EBT card swiped, etc.).
- ✓ Develop and implement a campaign to **recruit other farmers' markets and farmers to participate** in SNAP and the SNAP Healthy Bucks program by highlighting the business and profit making opportunity offered through both. Within this campaign, also work to dispel common stereotypes of the SNAP program and people who receive SNAP.
- ✓ **Ensure all eligible families are receiving SNAP.**

Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?

Why I Shop at the Farmers' Market: For my Family and my Kids

"It's important the kids see it all in action- It gives them a chance to meet the farmer and to see where their food comes from. I want them to grow up and support their community. I think it makes them better people, helps them appreciate things and see a bigger picture. It's the reason I shop at the market. Everything is connected. I take them to the grocery store, too, but there all they see is a store and food, but here they see their community."



Foods You Can Buy with SNAP Healthy Bucks

"This is an example of what I usually buy at the farmers' market with SNAP and Healthy Bucks. I usually buy a big bag of apples with the Healthy Bucks because it costs \$5, and give them to my kids for their snacks. I put apples in the kids' lunches for their sugar rather than [brand of cookies]. I'm really focused on the kids' health, so I'd rather give them natural sugars over processed. So the SNAP program is a great incentive to double it, so why would I not use it? It's easy to use and you're supporting local farmers. Why would you not do it? I'm always pushing it with my friends that have SNAP, so I am always trying to push the program. And they come."



Nutritional Yum

"For me packing in a salad is a really good way to get a whole lot of nutrients efficiently. I have a 2 ½ year old and a 1 year old. I'm still breastfeeding them, so this is a quick way to pack in a lot of nutrients. I think there's a perception that a lot of people who are on SNAP are eating a lot of junk or trying to cheat the system, and there are a lot of us who are using it to eat healthier... That's all Healthy Bucks right there. The cabbage, green onions... all of it."



The Tokens

"If I was not able to use my SNAP [at the farmers' market] I am not sure I could shop here, or at least as much. It helps me shop here."

Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?

From Market to Table

"This is what I'm able to make with the food at the farmers' market. I based the meal around what I bought at the farmers' market. I have a bunch of kale. What can I do with it? I can sauté it and put it with pasta. Add cheese on top. Essentially kind of taking what I got at the farmers' market and then using what I had around my apartment to spice it up to create a meal. The opportunity to make this food. To have this produce. The Healthy Bucks Program allows farmers' market produce to be really affordable. Being able to take something that is local and fresh and making a meal that is surrounding that. Showing the beauty of the Healthy Bucks Program. I was able to get this kale and it was accessible to me. What you can do with the fresh produce that I then have the ability to buy. I think the Healthy Bucks Program is a great program, especially for incentivizing people to go. It can be expensive. Healthy Bucks is a great way to add produce into the diet, and be able to integrate fresh and local into every day cooking. I've always been a huge fan of farmers' markets and fresh produce. You're supporting the local economy and meeting farmers – building a relationship with the people you're buying food from. It puts it into perspective of this is where it comes from versus going to the grocery store and the produce aisle you kind of forget about the whole process. Having that connection is another way to connect to the community. I think that's really valuable."



The Local Stir Fry

"Usually for me, when it comes to something new, I try to get tips from somebody or find a recipe. With the cabbage I bought I didn't have a recipe. So, I talked to the farmer and he talked about putting it into stir fry. I personally don't have a recipe with stir fry. With items I'm not familiar with I like to have a recipe to know how to use spices and learn how to make it taste good."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?

Apples

"A lot of people get SNAP and have kids. I have 4. My kids are just as happy to have this. The apples I got [at the farmers' market]. The Healthy Bucks Program helps me get healthy snacks. My two year old is crazy when he gets sugar. So this is a sanity saver and the Healthy Bucks Program is something that helps us get that."



Colorful

"[My husband] and I are both college educated and starting a business – a cloth diaper service. If it was not for the Healthy Bucks Program, I probably would not be able to shop at the market. But it's what I want to eat. It's having the nutrients fresh out of the ground. It's good for the kids... no chemicals. It's an education thing and schools are not doing it. The Healthy Bucks Program saves so much... veggies half the amount. People think it's an elitist thing. The word just has not gotten out [about the program]."

Fresh is Best

"Without the Healthy Bucks Program, I wouldn't be able to go and get organic, locally grown produce to make sure my kids are eating healthy food. The Healthy Bucks Program helps me be able to get that for my family. I just love fresh collard greens, and when they're cooking they start as a large amount and then they shrink down. My family doesn't like it too well because they don't like the smell when they're cooking, but it's good after they're cooked."



Mixed Greens from the Market

"With the salad, it's important to get a good quality. My daughter doesn't eat any dressing or anything with her salad so she likes fresh lettuce and vegetables in there. And then with a bag mix... I don't like the salad bag mix – the cheapest possible option tastes weird. So I think this is a healthier option for her. It's coming out of somebody's farm, somebody's garden, and you know it's fresh."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?



Have Fun with Your Food

"This is my farmers' market food. I don't eat that much eggplant, but I saw the eggplant there and thought I'd try something new. It lasted me 3 meals! I get \$94 in food stamps a month, which is really a small amount to live off of, but from going to the farmers' market, it really does help. I got a big bag of spinach for \$2. I ate spinach salad with chopped strawberries for a whole week. It was great. It was nice and healthy. When I go to the [name of grocery store] it costs about double, and it's a smaller bag of spinach. That's like the cheapest bag you can find at the grocery stores. That's not even organic – it's just a very basic bag... It makes cooking fun, instead of just going to the grocery store and getting your ramen... Cooking can be a blast. I just started researching different ways to make eggplant. Should I bake it? Should I make a pizza? It allows you to be creative in the kitchen. You can really get a lot for the amount you pay. This was all \$6. It's very cost effective. By having that extra\$5 [in Healthy Bucks] it gave me more money, so I walked around longer and I bought more than I would have bought. It gave me more options. I talked to the vendors more. Explored."

The Market

"I heard about the market from the ladies that work with the farmers' market and they also work inside the family health center as dietitians, so I heard about this market through them and also through the WIC program because my son gets WIC. Fruits and vegetables are great for growing kids, especially if you're trying to prevent obesity. My kids get candy, but it's from school, and it's not like they get candy and things every day. I give my kids apples, pineapples, tangerines, grapes, and other fresh fruits and vegetables – how can you go wrong with that? If Healthy Bucks was going to be at other markets, having it at a family health center is great because the location is so very important. The health center is right next to [public housing]. Lots of people who work at the Family Health Center use the market and they buy lots of stuff like peanuts, fruits, and collard greens. It's the thing to do on Fridays at work. People look forward to the fresh fruits and vegetables. We enjoyed ourselves at the market the day of this picture and I'm thankful to be able to take part in the Healthy Bucks program."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?

Preparing Onions from the Market

"I love onions with everything. My family eats onions with a lot of things so it's one vegetable I buy a lot of. By being able to use the Healthy Bucks I was able to purchase \$5 worth of extra groceries which included these onions."



Onions in the Burger as well as in Some Gravy

"After packing the burgers with onions, I had some onions leftover still so I used it for a gravy. This meal is really easy, and my kids love it. I submerged the burger patties with the onions I had prepared into the gravy with the onions, and it was delicious. We always do family meals at home, and I try to use different vegetables such as green peppers to get different flavors. By using vegetables you can enhance a meal and also stretch a meal for your whole family, and with Healthy Bucks I can get extra vegetables as well as what I've already purchased with my SNAP benefits. The Healthy Bucks' extra vegetables always helps. My kids ate vegetables before Healthy Bucks but it was mostly out of a can."

Receiving the Same Amount of Money Back

"It's cheaper because you receive the \$5 token which was the value of the fruits and vegetables. I'm shopping at the farmers' market to get fresh rutabagas. I'm gonna take them home, and cut 'em up and cook them for Sunday dinner."



At Work, Also at Farmers' Market

"This is me buying produce on my break from work. I'm a satisfied customer and I'm smiling and well-pleased with what I viewed as far as the items available at the market and with what I purchased. Many other people are pleased and grateful to have this market in their community. The \$5 coupon with Healthy Bucks helps me get more for my money with my SNAP benefits, as well, so it's a plus on top of a plus."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?

Shopping at the Farmers' Market

"I was spending my SNAP card to get the tokens to spend at the farmers' market. The farmers' market is cheaper than the grocery store and they have a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. You're spending \$5 and getting \$5, so it's helping you out more."



Tomatoes, Grapes

"Fresh fruits and vegetables are good for us. You should eat them everyday, but people eat canned fruits because they are cheaper, especially on a fixed income. I'm on a fixed income, but I still eat fresh as many days as I can. [The Healthy Bucks Program] is a good program."



Car

"It's a good car, but it's old. My sister called the car 'Betsy'. On a fixed income it's all I can afford. Every savings goes toward fixing the car. 'Betsy' gets me to church and the farmers' market, and I've taken 2 or 3 neighbors who want to go. To use the bus, you have to walk a bit, and with arthritis it doesn't work very well."



Fresh Peas

"My cousins called me from Baltimore and wanted to make sure I bought peas so we could feast on fresh peas when they come to visit."



Nice Setup

"The farmers are nice and have beautiful displays of food. They give you a good choice and let you sample."



Convenience

"The market is convenient. It's close enough to walk but I drive because I couldn't carry everything home."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?



Home Cooked Southern Food from the Market

"I got the meat from [the farmers' market], as well. I made gravy and did the carrots. I know it wasn't healthy, healthy, but it was pretty healthy, because it was better quality of meat. The Healthy Bucks program helps be able to get more vegetables that we wouldn't be able to get... the quality. Usually we would get canned corn or green beans. Stuff that isn't fresh. I don't want to be feeding so many preservatives to my kids. I think fresh is better so they can get more nutrients from the vegetables. It's important for me to be able to get them to eat as healthy as possible. They are the most important people to me and I want to be able to serve them good food."

What Helps Me Shop

"It's really convenient. The location is a central location – only about ½ a mile from downtown. They advertise it. I work for a nonprofit here, so I've actually been advertising it. We let people know about it. My roommates and I all go together to the farmers' market on Saturday mornings."



Going to the Market

"I'm able to shop because it's the weekend. Of course I have transportation. I think a real barrier for some people on SNAP is maybe they don't have the transportation or it might be far away. I live about 15 or 20 minutes from the market. Most definitely the double snap and the fresh foods are the deciding factors. Plus you can go to the market and get locally grown produce that won't be filled with pesticides. If I go to the grocery store I won't be able to afford the organic options."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?

Saturday Morning Haul

"I shopped at the Farmers Market before I had SNAP. But with double snap I now buy more produce. This is my first year living on my own and not on a college dining plan. I have had fun learning the right amount of produce to purchase at the market each week."



Having Transportation

"This is a photo that represents the value of transportation. I have a car and am able to visit the grocery store and farmers' market. One of the benefits of using SNAP at the farmers' market is increasing the amount of benefits I can use. Therefore, I save SNAP to spend on other things, like fish."

Knowing how to Cook

"I have always loved to cook. I visit the farmers' market almost every Saturday. I already had a produce heavy diet but the farmers' market has enabled me to be more adventurous. With double snap I now find myself purchasing more produce I am more unfamiliar with because I have more money in my budget. Many of the farmers are kind and offer tips when I ask how they like to best prepare the produce. This picture is of the acorn squash I purchased from my favorite farmers. I have cooked it once before but this batch I used to make Curried Acorn Squash Soup."



Why do you shop at the farmers' market?

What helps you be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What do you want people to know about the Healthy Bucks program?



Farmers' Market Purchases

"This is what the program helps me afford. [The pineapple, yellow squash, and cucumbers on the table] is what \$5 in "Healthy Bucks" buys. The good Lord leads and guides me to eat healthy... 'Bless the Lord... who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.' (Psalm 103)"

Cancer Survivor

"I am a cancer survivor with a disability living on a low, fixed income and it is important for my health to eat fresh fruits and vegetables."



Tempting

"Look how tempting – all the fresh vegetables, peaches, greens, plums, okra with butter beans – how tempting they look. There is a large variety of very fresh food available at a reasonable price. And you meet all sorts of people."



Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

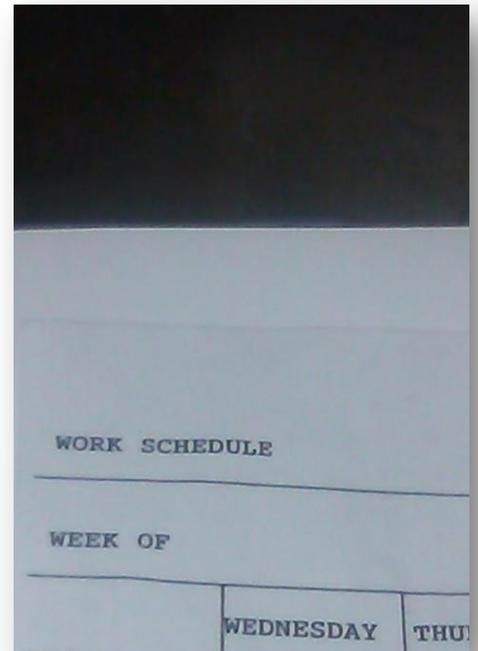
What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?



Empty Driveway

"It is hard to get around without a car and no type of public transportation. I don't have a car and if I wanted to get there I'd have to walk a long way. The community buses could take people to the farmers' market for free. If you don't have the money, how are you supposed to get down there?"

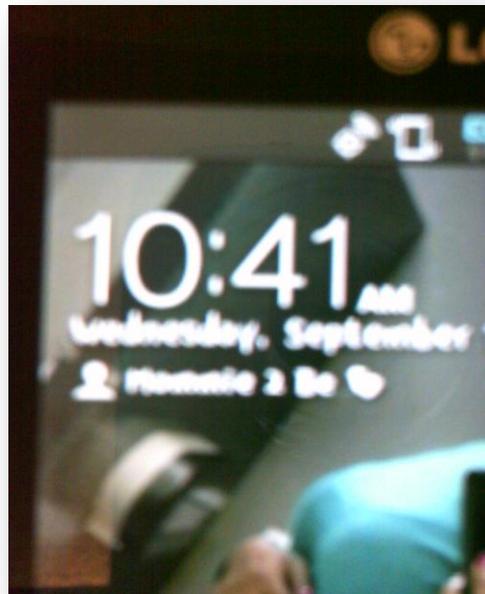


Longer Hours Needed

"The hours of operation for the farmers' market is not flexible with my work schedule. The farmers' market should be open more than two days a week and open longer hours."

Time is Not on our Side

"They only have certain hours and days you can go. Time is based on my mom because she has a car and I don't and she babysits. It's easier to go to the grocery store because they are open all day long. It's more efficient."



Variety

"There are different varieties of produce at the store. More farmers should come out to the farmers' market so that there is more to choose from there."



Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?



Billboards

"This billboard stays the same, so when someone passes by, they know it's going to be there. I actually know the phone number by heart because every day I pass by and read it. Customers need a constant reminder that the farmers' market does offer extra tokens if [SNAP recipients] spend their SNAP benefits there."



A Sign of Advertisement

"This sign is located at a very busy location, and the restaurant is actually two more minutes away. Advertisement is very important. A billboard is on every corner in our community and advertising the farmers' market would be a good idea."



No Swipe Machine

"This is a swipe machine. Not all vendors at the farmers' market take SNAP. For those who do accept SNAP the swipe machine is not visible to the customers. Some people may not know that they take SNAP. Vendors should put the swipe machine visible for the customers. There should be a sign with the steps on using your SNAP card at the farmers' market."



High Gas Prices

"Gas prices is too high. Some people may not have enough money for gas to attend the farmers' market. The farmers' market should switch locations so that it can be easier for people that have a hard time getting there."

Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?



Spacious 1

"This is the farmers' market parking lot, and the parking is not big compared to the stores' parking lots. People need to know that we have a farmers' market, and that our farmers' market gives incentives for shopping there."

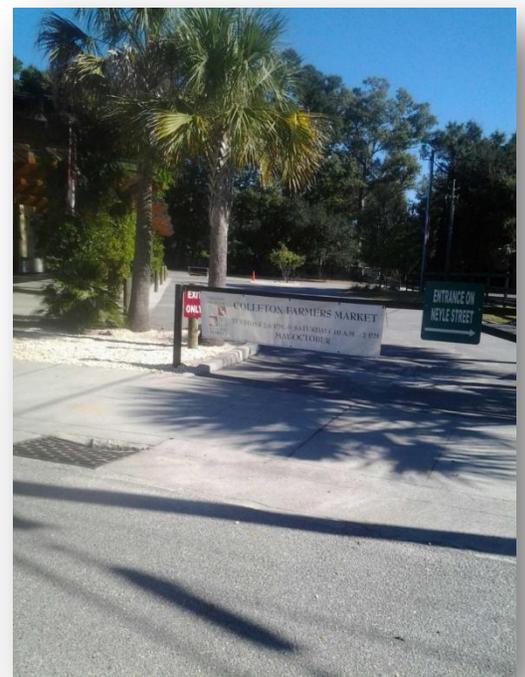


Spacious 2

"This parking lot has a lot of space, located in a good location. The farmers' market space is small with limited walking space. Here the parking lot is bigger, and the vendors could spread out a little."

Limited Options

"There are limited options at the farmers' market. There was only 1 farmer. They were lacking fruits and vegetables. We want more variety of fruits and vegetables. There needs to be more farmers with more options."



Farmers' Market

"The sign does not have a sign that they accept SNAP benefits. The farmers' market needs more signs up about the extra SNAP tokens that the customers will receive."

Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?



Open Wallet

"Having a low income makes it harder to shop at the farmers' market. Raise SNAP money because it would make it a lot easier to shop at the farmers' market instead of buying the cheap stuff."



Busy with a Kid

"I have to babysit a lot because my sister has a lot of doctor's appointments and my dad has to take her. I can't just take my niece with me. My mom is working and my grandmother is too old to take care of a child in a wheelchair. If the days the farmers' market is open is more flexible I could find a day I'm available to go."

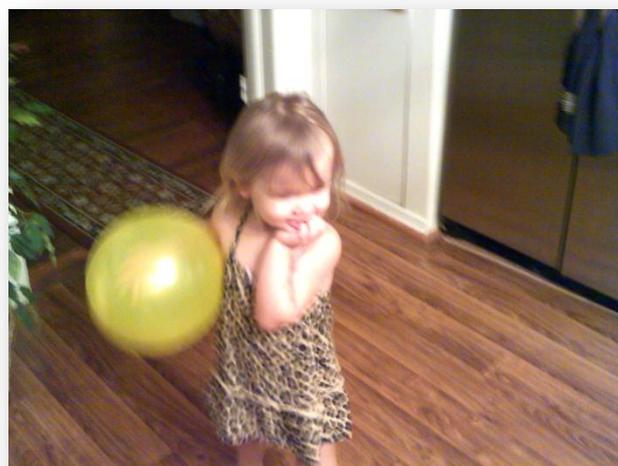
False Advertisement

"This is what they say is offered, but they don't have all of it. I would like the farmers to have what they say they're going to have instead of false advertisement."



Timing

"I go to school because education is important, so I only have 1 day I could go to the farmers' market because I get out at 2:50. If they could change the time to be open at 5 or 6 then I could go after school. Fruits and vegetables compared to education – what would you choose?"



Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?



Where to go?

"Not much is spent on letting people know where to go. Such a small sign could easily be overlooked. Invest in bigger signs or more appealing signs as an attention grabber."



Availability and Time

"This is a typical time people are out shopping. Availability and flexibility are things that the farmers' market should consider when managing hours. Do possibly make better market hours."

Look Good Oranges!

"It looks fresh, and after tasting one it is confirmed – juicy, sweet, and fresh. Shopping at the grocery store, you are guaranteed happy results. If not you can return."



How to Shop with your Kids

"I put her in a stroller so that I can look and search or run around. I go to the store because it's open 24/7 and it's more convenient than going to the farmers' market. If the farmers' market was open later in the day then I could go."

Lack of Transportation

"Not only is it hard for a person without transportation to travel, there may be no one around to get them to the market during the hours. WIC or DSS should consider chartering a bus at least once a week."



Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?

Quality Guarantee

"Stores have a money back guarantee. Local businesses will give you the money back if you as a customer are unsatisfied. They guarantee that customers will love their product."



Advertising

"Local businesses welcome and put it out that they welcome WIC and SNAP benefits. Expand advertising of the farmers' market by adding newspaper ads and possibly billboards."

Need More Opportunities to get from Place to Place

"I do not have a vehicle in order to get from place to place. Cheaper and more reliable transportation should be offered."



Fresh

"They keep their stuff fresh and clean by rinsing it off. If it's fresh and clean I'll buy it, but if I look at it and it's not fresh and clean I won't buy it."



Need Money

"I'm trying my hardest to make money. I'm willing to work. Offer me work."

Why don't you shop at the farmers' market?

What makes it hard to be able to shop at the farmers' market?

What would need to change for you to start using "Healthy Bucks"?



Tainted Lemons!

"The grocery store to me is cheaper. The market price should either drop or compare."



More Important Items

"I have been focusing on the most important things such as buying baby items. I could purchase other items by offering me a job or some way to make money so I can support my child better when he gets here."

Transportation

"When you don't have your own transportation you have to wait until someone else is free so they can take you. They might come later on in the day and now it's getting cold and the later it gets the colder it gets to take the kids out. If the bus was a little cheaper... because you have to pay \$2.50 there and \$2.50 back."



There's No Way

"I don't have a car. Transportation is important for being able to get to the farmers' market. I think they should provide ways for people to get to the farmers' market."



A FARMER PERSPECTIVE on the SNAP Healthy Bucks Program

We also asked some farmers who sell their produce at a farmers' market that offers the SNAP Healthy Bucks program to take photos to answer the following questions:

- 1. How does the SNAP Healthy Bucks program impact you and your family?*
- 2. What do you want people to know about the SNAP Healthy Bucks program?*

A FARMER PERSPECTIVE on the SNAP Healthy Bucks Program



Front Yard Farm

"You can have farming be productive on a small scale due to drip irrigation systems. People in our community still grow local vegetables and I hope that that will give some others in the community the encouragement to start their own, small plot. A lot of people at the market ask me to come and grow a garden for them, but I don't really have the time to help them do that. The future of the SNAP program will be great when more people are aware of it and in time we'll see the benefits of it. The SNAP benefit users have to get a feel for the program and the young people who use SNAP don't necessarily want to get up for an early market. To have a late or day market, if you don't have a permanent site where you can set up a cooler or sprinkler system to keep it fresh-looking, you won't be productive at the market if it looks dead or brown or wimpy. We have some small obstacles we have to work with and around the SNAP program to see all of the benefits. A lot of the young people don't go to bed until 3am so they won't get up for an early market. I don't think we can find a solution to that one."

A Beautiful Shot of Cabbage



"I want people to see how beautiful and green cabbage really is. Some people don't like that green in the cabbage and prefer the light-colored cabbage, but the dark green is really more eye-catching laying on a plate or a platter. A lot of people consume their food with their eyes and shop with their eyes too. I can promise SNAP recipients if they consume the healthy food that's in the picture, they will be healthy. If we could get more SNAP customers, we'd see sales go up, but it's going to take word of mouth as opposed to any advertisement in letting people know about Healthy Bucks. I probably planted a little bit more this year because my on-farm sales are doing well. Normally if the market goes well on-farm sales are higher too. They go together. "

A FARMER PERSPECTIVE on the SNAP Healthy Bucks Program



Field Peas

“Normally in the late Fall, these are the kind of peas that people around here are looking for because people put them away in the freezer and eat them especially for New Years. I’ve traded some of them at the [farmers’ market] and as the weather gets cooler, people will start to ask for them more. I’ll see if I can put them in a cooler and have them to sell in November to catch some of the latecomer customers. People using the vouchers and Healthy Bucks buy these and make Hoppin’ Johns out of them. These are the kind of peas people use for that. Farming is a way for me to get relaxation and to meet people. The market has become a meeting place. Some customers come and sit and stay for 3 or more hours and then leave smiling and happy saying ‘I’ll see you next week!’ People have used the market for a meeting place because the people you see at the market you’ve gotten to know from seeing them over and over again at the market. Some people are saying they don’t know what they’ll do when the market is over. People use the market time for a relaxation and a break – a chance to do something different.”

Snap Beans



“We can grow two crops of snap beans a year: a spring crop and a fall crop. This is the fall crop. Normally the fall crop is tastier than the spring crop because the Fall crop doesn’t go through the heat stage or the drought stage, and they do real well. They’re really easy to grow. A lot of market shoppers aren’t aware of all of the other vegetables that you can add to these beans when you cook them. You can add small potatoes and some people use fat back to prepare them. Some people use smoke neck bone. Some people cook it with pig tail. With your choice of what you like, you can put together a real, real tasty dish. If customers got a good and tender one and tasted a little piece of it uncooked, they’d probably fall in love with it. I’ve let some customers sample the beans uncooked and they say they’ve never had any before that taste like this. Customers who try them, buy them.”

A FARMER PERSPECTIVE on the SNAP Healthy Bucks Program



Me Holding Up WIC and Senior Voucher Posters

"With the Senior, WIC Program, SNAP program, we're helping people get fresh vegetables from the market and help senior citizens buy vegetables from the market. A lot of them buy vegetables to put up for the winter. People around here know how to put up food because a lady from Clemson came out and taught some of our customers how to can. The market doesn't go on in the winter so them buying stuff from us during market season and putting it up lets them still have healthy food through the winter. The bananas and pineapple and oranges are from the State Farmers Market. Because of SNAP and the other programs we accept at the market I can buy more from vendors at the State Farmers Market than I would if we couldn't accept SNAP and WIC because I am selling more."



Good Fresh Greens

"More fresh greens put iron into your body. Me and family members are growing the greens because I got to have my family to help work the harvest. My family grows greens, collards, and mustard greens for the farmers' market. The market means a lot to us because it allows us to get rid of the fresh vegetables we grow and earn a living for our family."



Good Fresh Vegetables Straight from the Farm

"The Healthy Bucks program has helped our farm. We sell more vegetables than we would if we couldn't accept yellow tokens. Also if people didn't have the yellow tokens, they couldn't afford the greens."

A FARMER PERSPECTIVE on the SNAP Healthy Bucks Program

Beautiful Winter Collard Greens

"I planted these because they're healthy for you. These are going so pretty and as soon as the next big frost comes I'll get the little leaves off of the bottom and let the big leaves keep growing. Collards are one of the healthiest vegetables that you can eat. They're good for your blood, your immune system, and they're high iron and vitamins. We are here to serve the public fresh vegetables that would very good for their health and growth. We want to influence the younger generation to plant fruits and vegetables rather than going to the store and buying them where they may be imported from other countries. It also helps the local economy. It doesn't take a large space to plant. Sometimes at the market people ask us if we grow it or where it was grown. People are curious. Growing vegetables isn't emphasized enough to young folks. They don't understand why you just don't go to the store and buy it. We have to encourage and emphasize to the young people what it's like to grow your own vegetables. Myself I love to see plants grow. I think it's very good for people at the farmers' market to be exposed to fresh fruits and vegetables and that I grew it. Sometimes their interest and my telling them about how I grew it has gotten them to buy the vegetables from me and try it. The SNAP Healthy Bucks has started to catch on because more and more people are coming to the market. Last week was supposed to be our last market week, but they extended the market for two more weeks because people shopping demanded it. I don't get a whole lot of [Healthy Bucks] tokens, so it doesn't make a huge impact so far on what I plant and sell but every little bit helps. I think it'll catch on. It's already catching on. When people buy stuff at the market, they'll always come back because people say our stuff's so good that they remember and come back. That makes you feel good, too, knowing that you sell good stuff that people come back for."



Fresh Fruit at Market

"Come join us at the market as a customer or a vendor! SNAP Healthy Bucks are always welcome at this market and people shouldn't be afraid to use them or to spend them. Some people aren't aware of the Healthy Bucks tokens and what you can do with them. A lady last week didn't know what they were. She was at the market already and qualified for "Healthy Bucks" but didn't know about "Healthy Bucks". We explained to her how to use it, and she bought a thing of \$5 scuppernongs with it. Being exposed to more Healthy Bucks customers or having that program advertised more would help me because then more people would know about it and come to the market."

Thank you for taking the time to review these photos and captions!

We would like to be able to track the impact and dissemination of these results. Please take a few minutes to complete a very brief survey, found at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WMBKN7C>

Acknowledgements

Most of all, thank you to all of those who gave their time to share their experiences with us through their photos and stories!

Community partners:

Colleton County 1st Steps
Chester County 1st Steps
Hub City Farmers' Market
Right Choice, Fresh Start Farmers' Market

Our team:

Hallie Carde	Casey Childers
Jason Craig	Carrie Draper
LeTanya Hall	Sonya Jones
Amy Mattison-Faye	Lauren Neely
Holly Pope	Katie Welborn
Mary Wilson	

Funder:

COPASCIes study: [National Research Initiative or Agriculture and Food Research Initiative] Grant no. 2012-69001-19615 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agricultural Childhood Obesity A2101.code

If you have questions or comments about this project, or would like to host an exhibit, please contact:

Carrie Draper, MSW
Director of Policy & Partnership Development
draper@mailbox.sc.edu or 803.777.2413

The Center for Research in Nutrition & Health Disparities works to create a local, state-wide, national, and global presence that establishes the University as a national leader in nutrition and health disparities by engaging with community partners, other research institutions, public agencies, and professional organizations locally and statewide and nationally.

<http://www.sc.edu/nutrition/>