

**October 12, 2005 - Welcome to the final newsletter of the 2004-2005 California Farmers' Market (FM) Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Implementation and Promotion Project.**

The project, funded by the California Nutrition Network of the California Department of Health Services, has been about keeping California's farmers' markets accessible to Californians who receive food stamp benefits with an EBT card, through the use of a central Point of Sale (POS) device and scrip at the markets. For more information, ideas, past newsletters, signs, posters, brochure templates, links & contacts, check the website, [www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt).

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**Slow, slow, slow implementation process... Can anyone speed it up?**

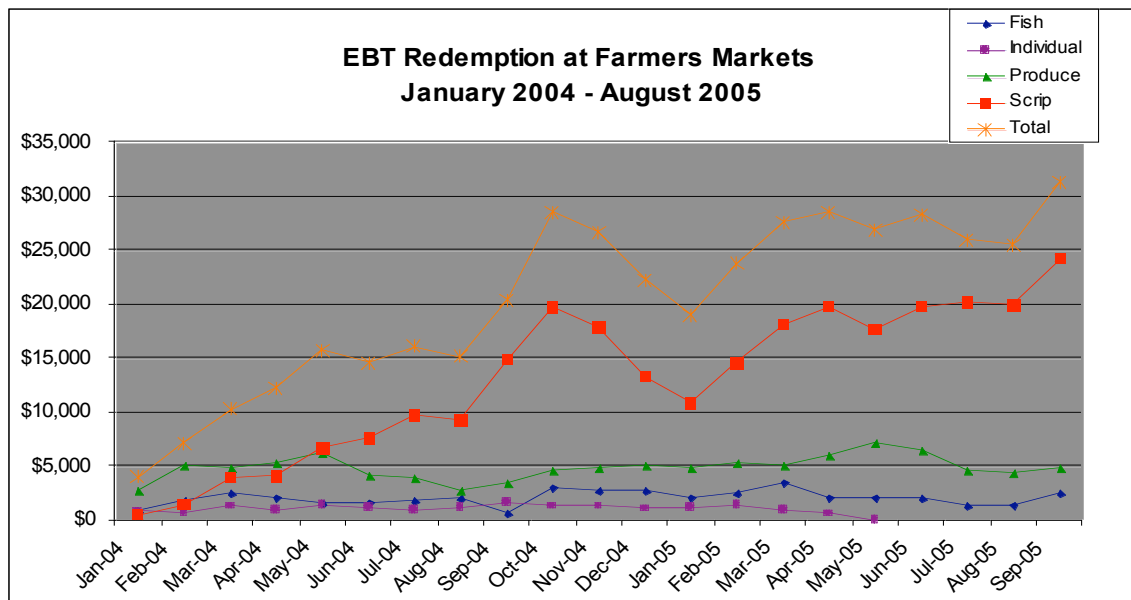
For several months now, farmers' market managers in Orange County have been waiting for equipment to begin accepting EBT cards using scrip. The FNS numbers were finally issued. The scrip has been designed, ordered, printed and shipped. The proposals have been written and submitted to CDSS, along with the required scrip sample, the signed agreements and the customized record-keeping forms. The County Health Department and Food Stamp officials have designed and printed and scheduled the mailing of informational brochures to the county's 35,000 food stamp recipient households. And market managers are still unable to accept EBT as the peak season winds down. After waiting more than a month for approval of their scrip system proposals, managers of new farmers markets in the low-income Santa Ana area have now been asked to complete more paperwork to justify why they should be issued a needed wireless POS terminal, even though the request for a wireless POS was submitted with the application, along with enough information to determine the need from the demographics of the neighborhood of the market sites. As of this writing they have not yet received contract

paperwork for the equipment. After they do receive and return completed contracts to JP Morgan, if all the blanks are correctly filled in, they can usually expect to actually have the equipment in hand and start accepting EBT in 3 or 4 weeks. Meanwhile, the market manager of at least four other Orange County markets is still waiting for her wireless device, more than a month after completing her final contract paperwork with JP Morgan. The sad thing is that this long and frustrating story is familiar to most farmers' markets that have set up EBT systems, and it seems to be getting slower at many steps in the process. Is there anything that anyone out there can do to help farmers' markets get set up to accept EBT within the same growing season as they start the application process? Thank you for listening, and thank you much more to anyone who can help speed up the system.

**Berkeley 2005 EBT sales top 2001 paper food stamp redemption**

And now some good news. Berkeley Farmers' Market manager Linda Graham reports that EBT redemptions over the past several months have, for the first time, been more than \$1000 a month, which is higher than the amount of paper food stamps redeemed at the market in comparable months in 2001 (the last full year that Alameda County issued paper food stamps.) Since Berkeley was the first California farmers' market to set up an EBT scrip system in late 2002, this report can be taken as an indication that many markets with newly implemented EBT scrip systems can reasonably expect EBT use at the markets to take several years to grow into its potential, even with great outreach and promotion. In other words, hang in there...

**Increasing Statewide FM EBT redemption numbers – Courtesy of Rob Lautz of the California EBT Project:**



Currently, more than 65 weekly farmers' markets in California have implemented EBT scrip systems to accept food stamps EBT. For a relatively complete list of these market locations, times and contact information, see [www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt).

### **More Flea Market produce vendors soon to accept EBT scrip**

Produce vendors at several more flea markets in the Fresno area, including the Cherry Auction Flea Market, will soon be able to accept EBT scrip. In order to meet USDA FNS requirements for accepting food stamps, flea market managers have organized farmers' markets within the flea markets (by organizing eligible food vendors already selling in the markets) and have applied for FNS authorization for the farmers' market as the first step to setting up EBT scrip systems. For more information about how flea markets and swap meets can organize as farmers' markets and accept EBT, contact Jeremy Hofer at [Jeremy@fresnometmin.org](mailto:Jeremy@fresnometmin.org), or 559-485-9109.

### **New Promotional brochures for Orange & Alameda Counties & Central Coast**

Newly updated brochures, printed in color with multiple languages and listing farmers' markets with EBT access, are now available to farmers' markets, advocates, community groups and service providers in Orange County, Alameda County, and the Santa Cruz/Monterey area. Contact people for these brochures are:

**Orange County** - Dawn Robinson, O.C. Health Care Agency,  
714-834-7984, [drobinson@ochca.com](mailto:drobenson@ochca.com)

**Alameda County** – Elizabeth Gomez, Alameda County Community Food Bank,  
510- 635-3663 x325, [egomez@accfb.org](mailto:egomez@accfb.org)

**Central Coast** – Lee Mercer, Second Harvest Food Bank  
(831) 722-7110 x220, [lee@thefoodbank.org](mailto:lee@thefoodbank.org)

### **New General EBT Poster for EASY download**

This poster replaces the blue “We Gladly Accept EBT” poster with the picture of the California Advantage Card and the big “Quest” logo. This new poster has our current governor’s name on it. It is on the website [www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt) for easy downloading, in .pdf format, at only 284 KB. Thank you, Rob. The Spanish version will be coming soon.

### **New project reports & presentations on the web site**

Now posted on the website, [www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt), is the powerpoint presentation presented at the CNN Social Marketing Conference in August 2005, which develops the farmers' market EBT Project themes of building community partnerships, introducing and promoting the program to food stamp customers, and including nutrition education activities. Also now on the site is the large poster that we displayed as a poster presentation at the National FNS Nutrition Education Conference in September, the latest version of Rob Lautz’s FM EBT redemption trends graph, an updated list of markets currently operating EBT scrip systems, and an interesting guide developed by farmers' market EBT organizers in Louisiana. Everything is available for downloading in pdf format. If you have problems downloading any of the listed files, please contact Ecology Center web-master David Ricardo, [david@ecologycenter.org](mailto:david@ecologycenter.org). Thank you, David, for putting us out there in the world and connecting us!

## **Report from State FM EBT advisory group meeting, Sept 8 2005**

- **CDSS Website** – The EBT Project staff at the California Department of Social Services plans to add a section their own web site which will include information and guidelines for market managers and other information about farmers’ markets EBT scrip implementation and promotion. They also agreed to investigate whether they could add a link from their official EBT Project website to the Ecology Center’s EBT Project page. As of this writing, neither of these things have actualized. For more information about CDSS FM EBT web connection progress, contact Stan Cagle, [Stan.Cagle@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Stan.Cagle@dss.ca.gov)
- **Poster distribution** – EBT Project staff promised to make sure that new general “We Gladly Accept EBT” posters, in Spanish and English, would be sent to all market managers with newly operational EBT scrip systems at the same time as the POS Devices are delivered. So far, most, but not all new markets have been receiving these signs. If you need more signs, please contact Rob Lautz, [robert.lautz@osi.ca.gov](mailto:robert.lautz@osi.ca.gov), 916/263-4905
- **List of markets to be available from CDSS** - Rachel Kite, CDSS official in charge of approving farmers’ markets plans to operate EBT scrip systems, promised to make available to everyone the current list of locations, times and contact information of all farmers’ markets that have been approved to operate scrip systems. She plans to post this list on the (in development) FM EBT web page and make it available to any interested parties, and to update and verify information on the list on a regular basis, at least once a year. For information about the progress and availability of a list of CDSS authorized farmers’ market EBT scrip locations, contact Rachel Kite, [rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov](mailto:rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov), (916) 651-9121
- **Scrip approval process to be simplified** – EBT Project staff also shared a draft of an application form that they are considering using for farmers’ markets’ scrip approval process. This application form would eliminate the need for market managers to write essay-type proposals when asking CDSS to approve their EBT scrip systems. In addition, the project staff is considering including uniform record-keeping forms in the scrip information and application packet that is sent to market managers, which would eliminate the need for each market to create and submit customized record keeping forms with their application and sample scrip. For more information about the simplified application process for farmers’ market EBT scrip authorization, contact Rachel Kite, [rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov](mailto:rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov), (916) 651-9121
- **Support was expressed at this advisory group meeting for encouraging county level food stamp programs and health departments to promote the use of food stamp EBT at farmers’ markets as a way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by their clients.**
- The group agreed again to meet quarterly, in Sacramento, with the next meeting to be scheduled in January. To be informed of the next meeting of the Farmers’

Market EBT Advisory group, please contact Rachel Kite, [rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov](mailto:rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov) or (916) 651-9121. Participation by telephone can be arranged if needed.

**CNN Funds Nutrition Education at EBT farmers' markets** – The California Nutrition Network is in the process of negotiating a contract with the Ecology Center for nutrition education programs at EBT-accepting farmers' markets during the October 2005 – September 2006 fiscal year. Jeremy Hofer, of Fresno Metro Ministries, and Melody Steeples, former Contra Costa County Health Services' manager of nutrition and food security projects, are project coordinators. For more information about next year's nutrition education projects, contact Melody at [msteeples@yahoo.com](mailto:msteeples@yahoo.com) or Jeremy at [Jeremy@fresnometmin.org](mailto:Jeremy@fresnometmin.org) or Frank Buck at [FBuck@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:FBuck@dhs.ca.gov)

### **Contact Information**

**CA Farmers' Market EBT Project, resources & info:** [www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt)

**To get the farmers' market authorized to accept food stamp benefits:**

**For an Application for an FNS number, Call 1-877-823-4369**

**For questions, or more information, contact:**

**Northern Counties - Teresa L. Toups, Officer in Charge**

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

801 "I" Street, Room 416

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-498-5790, Fax: 916-498-6487

**Southern Counties** (Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura):

**- Lisa Rivas, Program Specialist**

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

360 East 2nd Street, Suite 705

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-894-7834, Fax: 213-894-7838

**For guidelines and approval for operating a scrip system to accept EBT, contact:**

Rachel Kite, EBT & Welfare Technology Analyst

CDSS Welfare to Work Division

(916) 651-9121

[rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov](mailto:rachel.kite@dss.ca.gov)

**For questions about wireless equipment availability and other technical questions**

Rob Lautz, Retail/Benefit Access Specialist, CA EBT Project

[robert.lautz@osi.ca.gov](mailto:robert.lautz@osi.ca.gov)

916/263-4905

**For assistance with dispute resolution** if you feel that your market has been unfairly denied needed equipment, contact:

Stan Cagle, CDSS EBT Project,

916-654-1529, [Stan.Cagle@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Stan.Cagle@dss.ca.gov)

**Some contact information for scrip token production:**

**Wooden tokens:**

You Name It Promotions, Oakland

510-658-9647 x306, [gerry@ynip.com](mailto:gerry@ynip.com)

The Old Time Wooden Nickel Company

(Special farmers' market scrip tokens, with optional serial numbers)

[www.wooden-nickel.com/farmersmarkets](http://www.wooden-nickel.com/farmersmarkets)

**Plastic tokens:** [www.tokenfactory.com/](http://www.tokenfactory.com/)

(Many of these companies are busy and normal turn-around time may be 3 or 4 weeks. You may need to order early in the planning process or pay extra for speedy work.)

**Short goodbye note from Penny**

This particular project has run its course. Together we have built a strong foundation for the use of EBT at farmers' markets. We have begun the work of re-connecting hundreds of thousands of the poorest Californians with affordable fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers, using twenty-first century money-exchange technology and lots of old-fashioned pieces of paper, wood and plastic. However, the work of setting up all California farmers' markets to accept EBT cards and promoting the use of food stamp EBT at farmers' markets has just begun. It is up to all of you now to keep the momentum going. I hope the newsletter and website and other aspects of this project have been helpful. I am grateful for the chance to meet and work with so many of you. My work and life is now taking me in other directions, but I'll definitely make sure that I'm never too far from a farmers' market! Please feel free to stay in touch. I can be reached at [paleff@usdavis.edu](mailto:paleff@usdavis.edu), or 530-756-6531. Thank you for all you do! – Penny

