

Supplemental Food Programs Offered at Connecticut Farmers' Markets

Supplemental food programs first became part of Connecticut farmers' markets in the late 1980's. It was at this time that Connecticut was chosen as one of ten pilot states to offer the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. The first year was a success, and the program has continued to grow in size and in popularity.

Connecticut offers an ideal setting for supplemental food programs. Many large population centers are easily within driving distance for Connecticut farmers. This provides additional markets that might be nonexistent without these programs. These population centers have thousands of Women, Infant, and Children (WIC clients) and low income seniors that receive benefits for use at authorized farmers' markets. The combination of providing nutritionally at risk individuals with fresh fruits and vegetables while supporting local agriculture makes these programs a huge success.

Currently, there are two separate supplemental food programs offered to Connecticut Farmers' Markets.

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

- Originally began in 1989
- This program is administered by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource preservation
- It serves both WIC clients and low income seniors
- More details about this program can be found on 5a-1

Funding for these programs comes from United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Program and the state of Connecticut.

Both of these programs are optional for all Connecticut Farmers' Markets. A market has the choice of participating.

All farmers/vendors bringing eligible products to an authorized market must go through training. Each market must make the decision to offer these programs or not to offer these programs. All eligible farmers/vendors are also required to participate if a market chooses to offer one or both of these programs.