United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Consumer Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

20 MAY 1996

Reply to Attn. of: SF-116

Subject: FMNP Final Policy Memorandum: #96-2
WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
Recipient/Farmers Survey and FMNP Recipient Report

To: Regional Directors
Supplemental Food Programs
All Regions

This is to provide you with clarification regarding the recipient/farmer surveys and the FNS-203, FMNP Recipient Report.

Section 17(m)(8) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, as amended, specifies that certain information on the effects of the FMNP on the change in consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by recipients and effects of the FMNP on the use of farmers' markets must be reported annually only if available. Attached are two surveys developed by the National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP) that can be used to collect this information. If the information is available, State agencies have the option to submit the farmer data every 2 years instead of yearly. Since we just collected farmer information for fiscal year 1996, State agencies can skip collection of farmer data for fiscal year 1997. We hope all State agencies continue to choose to use the forms developed by the NAFMNP so that we will have a consistent database.

Also, to ease the administrative burden on State agencies in completing the FNS-203, State agencies do not have to report recipient data by month. State agencies may simply report the total number under each category. We are considering revising the FNS-203 to address concerns brought to our attention about the form. However, due to current timeframes we will not be able to do so before the fiscal year 1996 reporting period.

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division

Attachments

cc: Debbie Whitford, PPDB
Debra Utting, PPDB

The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

CORE QUESTIONS FOR SURVEYS OF FMNP RECIPIENTS *(4/96 update)*

Important: FMNP agencies should design their surveys to include these questions verbatim, with options noted below. Also, these data should be compiled on recipients who said they had used at least some of their FMNP benefits, to avoid blending FMNP impact data with opinions that may have no relation to participation in the FMNP.

1. Is this the first year you received [FMNP coupons]? Yes No

2. Please check the best answer to each of the following:

Yes	No	Not Sure	Because of the farmers market coupon program, I or my family...
____	____	_____	went to a farmers market for the first time
____	____	_____	ate more fresh fruits and vegetables this summer than usual
____	____	_____	plan to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables all year round
____	____	_____	learned a new way to prepare or cook fresh fruits or vegetables
____	____	_____	will continue to shop at farmers markets, even without coupons to spend there
____	____	_____	learned a new way to store fresh fruits or vegetables to keep them from spoiling
____	____	_____	bought a fresh fruit or vegetable that I had never tried before

3. While you were at the farmers market, did you spend money or food stamps in addition to your [FMNP coupons]? Yes No
   If yes, please check one: ___ Money ___ Food Stamps ___ Both money and stamps

4. How did the quality of fruits and vegetables at the farmers market compare to their quality at your regular grocery store? ___better ___about the same ___worse ___not sure

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NOTES TO PARTICIPATING STATES REGARDING THE ABOVE CORE QUESTIONS:

- Where it says [FMNP coupons], substitute whatever your program calls its food instruments.

- Question 2: The best way to assure data is collected uniformly is for all states to present #2 as shown above. If you believe this format may confuse recipients, or if you want to spin off any lines into separate questions accompanied by followup questions, okay. *However*, in doing so, please be sure that you: (1) word the question as it is worded above, using the same verb tenses; (2) **include the "not sure" response option**; and (3) tie the question to FMNP participation by framing your question to include something like "because of the coupons, did you....." or "...as a result of the coupon program...", or by preceding the set of questions by an introductory line reading "Please answer the following questions to help us know how the [FMNP] affected you or your family:"

- Question 3: If your farmers markets do not accept food stamps, omit "or food stamps" and skip the followup question. If you use the followup, include the "both..." response option to generate unduplicated counts, or at least tabulate them that way. Whoever tabulates survey results must also be sure a "yes" response is counted for each recipient responding to the followup.

- The year-end data to be compiled nationally is: (1) a count of responses (not percentages) for each of the response options listed above; and (2) the total number of completed recipient surveys from which those responses were gleaned, that is, you would disregard any surveys distributed but not completed or any surveys done by recipients saying they had not used any of their FMNP benefits.

CORE QUESTIONS FOR SURVEYS OF PARTICIPATING FARMERS *(4/96 update)*

1. Does participating in the [Farmers Market Coupon Program] increase your farmers' market sales? ___Yes ___No ___ Not sure

2. How has participating in the [Farmers Market Coupon Program] changed your farming or marketing practices? *(Please check all that apply)*

___ I decided to sell at farmers market for the first time

___ I sell at more farmers markets than before

___ I helped organize a new farmers market.

___ I became more active in the organization or operation of farmers market(s)

___ I increased my fruit and/or vegetable production levels

___ I grew a wider variety of foods to sell at farmers markets

___ I plan to increase my fruit and/or vegetable production next year

___ I plan to grow wider variety of fruits and/or vegetables next year

___ I increased the number of days or weeks that I sell at farmers market(s)

___ I increased the number of hours I stay at the farmers market

___ I changed display signs to make it easier for shoppers to identify food types or prices

___ I offer more product samples for tasting

___ I now package produce in even-dollar amounts to simplify coupon shopping

___ I offer more recipes or other information on food preparation

___ I offer shoppers more advice on produce storage or appropriate quantities to buy

___ None of these

NOTES TO PARTICIPATING STATES REGARDING ABOVE CORE QUESTIONS:

- Year-end survey data to be compiled nationally will be: the total number of farmer surveys completed, and the number (not percentages) who checked each of these response options.
- Where it says [Farmers Market Coupon Program], substitute whatever your state calls the program.
- Do not omit the "not sure" response option to Question 1.
- #2 should be presented as shown above, verbatim and including the opening question. If you want to add an option to the list of potential impacts, fine, but **do not omit or reword** any of the ones listed above. If you want to ask followup questions regarding one or more of these points, you may segregate that option into a separate question but be sure it is framed in a way that: (1) uses the same opening question, or adds "as a result of participating in ....." to assure that the data reflects behavior attributable to FMNP; and (2) uses the same wording and verb tenses as in the above set of options.
- The two "I plan to...next year." are aimed at vendors new to the program and therefore unable to respond to past-tense questions about the program's impact on production.