



Farmers' Market

News Beet



In This Issue >>>

- Featured Farmer:**
How WIC Helps Farmers
- Dried Fruits**
- Most Common Errors**
- Marketing Makes a Difference**
- FVC Expansion**

Upcoming Events >>>

- New Markets Accepting WIC FVC**
 - * Spring 2012
 - Online Training Opportunities**
 - * Local WIC Agency
12/13/11
 - * Market Managers
12/13/11
 - * Farmers
1/9/12
2/6/12
3/5/12
- To register visit us online at
www.wicworks.ca.gov

How WIC Helps Farmers



The newer WIC Fruit & Vegetable Checks have been slower to catch on since not all markets accept them yet. The support and encouragement of early adopters such as the [Northern California] Foothills Farmers' Market Association is essential for these checks to succeed. Where they are accepted they provide an additional opportunity for the recipient to consciously make the decision that a Certified Farmers' Market (CFM) does indeed provide the opportunity for superior quality and value.

WIC checks help the farmer not just by making an immediate additional sale, but also by introducing new people to the quality, variety, and superior value of farmer direct produce. It only takes a little time in talking with new customers for them to realize that it's about more than the price: it's about really getting your money's worth, and that the best value is going to be at a CFM.

In this economy, the most significant hurdle that has emerged is the proliferation of unregulated and uncertified markets. A combination of lack of enforcement resources and low priority or disinterest on the part of some jurisdictions has allowed

these risky stands and markets to pop up all over. We have worked to educate consumers, both directly at our markets and in our literature and advertisements as to the importance of knowing the source and quality of your food and talking directly with the producer. It's a slow process but an educated consumer is our best ally. One wouldn't buy a watch or a designer handbag from a truck or crate set up at the side of the road, so why would one trust such a seller to provide safe, quality food?

My best advice to my fellow farmers is to get involved at every opportunity. Participate with your supporting organization. Volunteer to educate and pass out information at fairs and community events. Offer to be a guest speaker at schools and gatherings.

And above all talk to your customers and help them to see just how special a CFM truly is.

-Article Written
 by Tom Rice
 (Arboga, CA)



If You Sell Dried Fruit...Read This

In the last newsletter you received a notice about a change to the WIC Authorized Food List Shopping Guide. One of the key changes to keep in mind as we head into the fall and winter season is that you may sell dried fruits to eligible participants. Be sure to read the "what to buy" section of each check to see if the check allows dried fruits (see the pictures below for an example).

DRIED FRUIT

Any variety of dried fruits without added fats, sugars, or oils are allowed. Freeze-dried and organic dried fruit are also allowed.

Check Examples

Dried Fruits Not Allowed

INDIVIDUAL NO.	PARTICIPANT / PARENT / GUARDIAN	FIRST DAY TO USE	LAST DAY TO USE	SERIAL NO.
953932117PP	PATTY PARTICIPANT	DEC 15 10	JAN 14 11	269534015

California WIC
 WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN
 Pay to the order of: WIC Authorized Vendor
 700-269534015
 90-1342
 1211
 EXACT PURCHASE PRICE:
 *MUST NOT EXCEED MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE DEPARTMENT REIMBURSEMENT RATE
 FOOD ITEM NUMBER:
What to buy:
 \$6 (SIX DOLLARS) FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
 MAY COMBINE FRESH, FROZEN, AND CANNED
CANNOT BUY DRIED FRUITS WITH THIS CHECK*
 PARTICIPANT MAY PAY AMOUNT OVER \$6 (SIX DOLLARS)
 State of California WIC Program
 VOID IF NOT DEPOSITED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF "FIRST DAY TO USE." NOT VALID IF ALTERED.
 VALID ONLY FOR FOOD ITEMS SPECIFIED IN THE CALIFORNIA WIC AUTHORIZED FOOD LIST.
NON-NEGOTIABLE
 AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE (SIGN AT PURCHASE)
 #0700# 1211134230 2695340151 #

Dried Fruits Allowed

INDIVIDUAL NO.	PARTICIPANT / PARENT / GUARDIAN	FIRST DAY TO USE	LAST DAY TO USE	SERIAL NO.
953932117PP	PATTY PARTICIPANT	DEC 15 10	JAN 14 11	269534015

California WIC
 WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN
 Pay to the order of: WIC Authorized Vendor
 700-269534015
 90-1342
 1211
 EXACT PURCHASE PRICE:
 *MUST NOT EXCEED MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE DEPARTMENT REIMBURSEMENT RATE
 FOOD ITEM NUMBER:
What to buy:
 \$10 (TEN DOLLARS) FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
 MAY COMBINE FRESH, DRIED FRUITS, FROZEN, AND CANNED
 PARTICIPANT MAY PAY AMOUNT OVER \$10 (TEN DOLLARS)
 State of California WIC Program
 VOID IF NOT DEPOSITED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF "FIRST DAY TO USE." NOT VALID IF ALTERED.
 VALID ONLY FOR FOOD ITEMS SPECIFIED IN THE CALIFORNIA WIC AUTHORIZED FOOD LIST.
NON-NEGOTIABLE
 AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE (SIGN AT PURCHASE)
 #0700# 1211134230 2695340151 #



FEATURED FARMER

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

If you are interested in being featured in our newsletter or writing an article to help other farmers in the program please contact us at WICFVC@cdph.ca.gov or the address below.

CONTACT US

California WIC Program
 Local Agency Support Branch
 3901 Lennane Drive, MS 8600
 Sacramento, CA 95834
 Phone: 916-928-8513
 Fax: 916-263-3314
www.wicworks.ca.gov

Most Common Errors

Since January 2011, the WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks (FVC) have brought an additional \$30,000 to California farmers. However, an additional \$2,000 in potential revenue was not realized because of farmer check handling errors. These checks were received from WIC participants for the purchase of produce, but were not paid to the farmer because of simple errors.

The most common check handling errors are:

- 1) Accepting/submitting* the check after the last day to use
- 2) Accepting/submitting the check before the first day to use

- 3) Depositing checks prior to submitting the serial numbers to WIC

Understanding how to correctly transact the Fruit and Vegetable Checks is important for all farm owners and employees who sell at the market. For a refresher training on the check handling process, please contact Tawny Cowell at (916) 928-8823 or review the short course on our website at www.WICworks.ca.gov.

**Accepting/submitting is the process of accepting the check from a WIC participant and then submitting the serial number to WIC using the telephone or internet.*

Marketing Makes a Difference

We wanted to hear how the Fruit & Vegetable Checks (FVC) were doing from the perspective of one WIC local agency in Southern California. We spoke with Gauri Rao, MS, RD, from Public Health Foundation Enterprises (PHFE) WIC who said “whenever I visit our local farmers’ markets, the farmers are so overwhelmingly positive! The Watts and Central Avenue Markets have done a lot of marketing and outreach activities , such as food and cooking demonstrations. The participants are now more aware of these markets where they can redeem their monthly FVC in addition to their seasonal FMNP checks.”

WIC participant awareness of where they can use their FVC checks is key to the success of the program. We thank our local WIC agency staff who have gone the extra mile to educate WIC participants as the market expansion continues.



For more information on the WIC Local Agency near you please visit our website at www.wicworks.ca.gov

FVC Expansion

We are happy to announce that we will be expanding FVC to more markets in 2012. The markets will be concentrated in Southern California and announced in the next WIC Farmers’ Market News Beet which will come out in Spring 2012.

If you are interested in participating in the FVC please contact us at (916) 928-8513 to be put on a waiting list.



FVC & FMNP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2011

Most common monitoring violation: no signage posted.



WIC allowed foods list updated (July 2011).





WIC Farmers' Market News Beet



Dear Farmers,

Thank you for your continued service and support as we expand the Fruit and Vegetable Checks (FVC) to additional farmers' markets in California. So far we have received very positive feedback from WIC participants who have visited the market and redeemed their checks with you. They have been excited to support their local community market while receiving fresh, nutritious produce.

We have also heard from many of you on the difficulty of the check redemption process. This check redemption process, which requires using the telephone and/or the Vendor WIC Information System (VWIX), has been in place since 2008 and is used by over 5,000 grocer-vendors to redeem thousands of WIC checks for milk, cheese, cereal, and fruits and vegetables every day. We have trained close to 200 farmers on this process and foresee training hundreds of more farmers in the next 5 years in order for the program to reach its full potential in the state.

Our strategy for authorizing the next group of markets to accept the FVC is to choose markets in a relatively concentrated area in Southern California. These markets receive a good amount of foot traffic from WIC participants and support from the local WIC agency near the market. Having a "critical mass" of authorized markets in an area will help increase the participants' awareness of using their checks at the market and increase the number of checks out at the market.

As our first FVC farmers we would like to thank you for taking the time to help us develop this program to better serve California WIC families and potentially bring millions of dollars to farmers' markets throughout California. We hope to continue working with you for years to come.

Paula Griffin, MPH, RD, CLE
Chief, Local Agency Support Section III
California WIC Program



CALIFORNIA WIC

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