

**April 7, 2005 - Welcome to the second newsletter of the California Farmers' Market Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Implementation and Promotion Project.**

**This project, funded by the California Nutrition Network of the California Department of Health Services, is about keeping California's farmers' markets accessible to all Californians, including those who receive food stamp benefits, through the use of a central Point of Sale (POS) device and scrip at the markets.**

I will try to send these out every month or so to everyone who is involved or interested in EBT at California Farmers' Markets. If you would like to be taken off this list, please just send an email to [penny@ecologycenter.org](mailto:penny@ecologycenter.org) and say so. If you were forwarded this newsletter, and would like to be added to the list, please email to [penny@ecologycenter.org](mailto:penny@ecologycenter.org) and say hello. I welcome short items, updates, articles and pictures that you would like to share in the next issue. . . I am attaching to this email a revised list of California farmers' markets accepting EBT using a scrip system. The list may still need some changes. Corrections, additions, subtractions to this list would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for this help. Potential customers, food stamp outreach people, county social service offices, and others want to know this information

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**Website Now Up**

Thanks to Ecology Center webmaster David Ricardo, a lot of useful information, guides for market managers, templates, contacts, links, newsletters, promotional ideas and samples are now on line for anyone to use. Please check out the website:

[www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt)

Suggestions, corrections and contributions are very welcome.

**Technology Update**

New Verifone wireless POS devices, on the eFunds network, have been successfully tested by market managers Christine Adams at Heart of the City Farmers' Market in San Francisco and Kate Murphy at Hollywood Farmers' Market. All of the CSI network Linkpoint POS devices in use at farmers' markets, produce stands and by individual farmers are currently being recalled by the state. Most farmers' markets operating scrip EBT systems currently using Linkpoint POS devices will be provided with free Verifone devices by the State EBT Project by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. The state will also continue to pay the monthly service charges and transaction fees for the operation of the wireless devices. There should be no gap in service. Individual farmers will not be issued free Verifone wireless POS devices. There is always the option for an individual farmer or a market association that has a USDA FNS number to purchase their own wireless POS device.



*State EBT Project staff Azuka Okoye, Marlys Derania, Rachel Kite, Rob Lautz pose with Heart of the City market managers John & Christine Adams and JP Morgan representative Chrystal Stovall on the first day of testing the new Verifone wireless POS device*

Because the Verifone devices and service charges are more expensive than the Linkpoint devices, the California EBT Project has set a thresh-hold EBT redemption volume of \$300 per month for a farmers' market to be considered to receive this equipment. New markets may have to wait longer for new equipment to be issued. Most new markets with no or minimal food stamp history will be asked to start with manual vouchers, requiring a cell phone call for each authorization and will usually be issued a standard linline POS to sell scrip from their office or transmit the manual voucher information later.

Several markets that have been using Linkpoint wireless devices have not been transacting this \$300 per month volume of EBT business, and will not be issued Verifone POS devices when the Linkpoint devices are recalled. These markets will be asked to use manual vouchers and will usually be issued a standard linline POS to transmit the manual voucher information later in their office. Some of these markets may decide they can no longer accept EBT due to the time and hassle of manual vouchers.

Several other market associations have been transacting well over \$300 per month in EBT for the past year, using manual vouchers because the Linkpoint devices did not connect to the CSI network at their market locations. Because the eFunds network has a wider network area, these associations will now be able to go wireless and will probably receive Verifone POS devices from the state.

**For questions about wireless equipment availability and transition, contact:**

Rob Lautz, Retail/Benefit Access Specialist, CA EBT Project  
916-263-4905, [robert.lautz@sid.hhsdc.ca.gov](mailto:robert.lautz@sid.hhsdc.ca.gov)

**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)

### **Spring Promotion Ideas**

As strawberries and spring sunshine bring fair-weather customers back to the year-round markets and as seasonal markets prepare to open for the year, it's time for a Springtime EBT Promotion effort. To keep the EBT customers coming, it's important to remind all the EBT cardholders in your area that they can use their cards for the tastiest healthiest freshest affordable food in California at their local farmers' market. Here is a quick list of some ways to help get out the word:

#### **On-site Signs**

- “We Gladly Accept EBT/Quest” Signs, English & Spanish, at market entrances & at scrip point of sale site. The State EBT Project provides these signs.
- “Get \_\_\_ Market dollars/scrip/tokens Here, Use Your EBT Card” signs at scrip point of sale site. (Your market provides these signs. Samples on the website.)
- “We accept \_\_\_ Market dollars/scrip Here, Use Your EBT Card” signs at vendors' stalls. (You create your own design for these signs)
- **Buttons** worn by staff (and vendors if possible) More buttons will be available to you at no charge soon. Email [penny@ecologycenter.org](mailto:penny@ecologycenter.org), or phone 510-601-1770

#### **Off-site Posters and Flyers**

- Posters listing EBT participating farmers' markets in the region/county/neighborhood with locations, times, contact information. Post at social service offices, food stamp offices, WIC offices, senior centers, libraries, food pantries, community centers, child-care centers, etc.
- Flyers (with or without coupons) distributed at the same locations, and handed out at nutritional education events, food stamp outreach occasions, health fairs, etc., especially to FMNP coupon recipients by WIC & senior program staff.
- “We Accept EBT” on all other farmers' market posters, brochures, recipe handouts, flyers, event announcements, etc.

**Post-cards or inserts mailed** with quarterly mailings to all food-stamp households in targeted areas, or county-wide, by the food stamp office, listing EBT farmers' markets.

#### **Get Farmers' Market EBT Access on the RADIO, on local TV**

- Special Public Service Announcements and included in farmers' market ads
- Interviews and reported stories about implementing system, changes or successes.

#### **Get in the NEWSPAPER**

- Make EBT Access part of the opening announcement for new or seasonal markets,
- Always mention EBT in print ads and include it in free listings
- Make it a feature story, with a picture, on page one.

#### **Get on the Internet**

- Brag about “We Accept EBT Cards” on your farmers' market Web Site

- Always make sure to include EBT Access information on web-based farmers' market listings and links

### **Word of Mouth**

Always mention EBT Access when speaking in public about the farmers' market

- **Share the List of farmers' markets with EBT Access • Promote each other**
- **Check the California Farmers' Market EBT Project Website for news, ideas & graphics:** [www.ecologycenter.org/ebt](http://www.ecologycenter.org/ebt)

### **Changes in State Staff and contact people**

Carolyn Nordstrom, who connected California farmers' markets to the EBT system through the Wireless Demonstration Project as a small part of her work as Benefit Access Manager for the California EBT Project, will be moving on the next few months. Thank you, Carolyn, for your work keeping farmers' markets a part of the complicated transition of food stamps to twenty-first century EBT technology.

Taking over as the contact person for farmers' market EBT technology systems and equipment is Rob Lautz. **For questions about technology and equipment**, contact:

Rob Lautz, Retail/Benefit Access Specialist, CA EBT Project  
916-263-4905, [robert.lautz@sid.hhsdc.ca.gov](mailto:robert.lautz@sid.hhsdc.ca.gov)

### **More Contact Information (Who to Call about What)**

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

**For an Application, 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)

**Regional Coordinators** of the California Farmers' Market EBT Project can answer questions and assist markets in their regions with the EBT system.

**Los Angeles County:** Kate Murphy or Pompea Smith, Hollywood Farmers' Market, Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA)  
323-463-3171  
[pompea@see-la.org](mailto:pompea@see-la.org), [kate@see-la.org](mailto:kate@see-la.org)

**Fresno, Merced, Madera & Tulare Counties:** Jeremy Hofer  
Fresno Metro Ministry  
559-485-9109  
[Jeremy@fresnetmin.org](mailto:Jeremy@fresnetmin.org)

**Orange County:** Kae Thomas,  
Fullerton Farmers' Market  
714-871-5304

**General Information & All other regions:** Penny Leff  
FM EBT Project Coordinator, Ecology Center  
510-601-1770  
[penny@ecologycenter.org](mailto:penny@ecologycenter.org)

### **News From the Markets**

**Los Angeles County** – The 9 language brochure produced by SEE-LA, listing the 22 Los Angeles County farmers' markets that accept EBT cards using scrip, is now available in a black and white version to download from this website:

<http://www.farmernet.com/download>

**Fresno County** – A USDA food stamp outreach program will soon be taking pictures at the Selma Farmers' Market, located at the Selma Flea Market, for a photo novella to be distributed in the Spanish-speaking community. For more information, contact Jeremy Hofer, 559-485-9109, [Jeremy@fresnetmin.org](mailto:Jeremy@fresnetmin.org)

**Contra Costa County** – Richmond Farmers' Market has been approved to operate a scrip system and will start accepting EBT cards as soon as market manager Al Del Simone receives a wireless POS device. University of California Cooperative Extension staff and Contra Costa County Health Department staff are assisting with promotion of the program. They will also help introduce the EBT scrip system to market vendors and customers, beginning in April, in combination with nutritional education activities at the Friday market. The County food stamp office will mail a post card to all Richmond EBT cardholders to inform them of the opportunity to use EBT cards at the market.

**San Joaquin County** – Stockton Farmers’ Markets manager Carlos Dutra will be accepting EBT cards using a scrip system at all 6 Stockton and Tracy markets, as soon as final approval and wireless equipment is received from the state EBT Project. Staff from the Greater Stockton Emergency Food Bank will be assisting with EBT redemptions at the Saturday morning market, in combination with nutrition education activities. The San Joaquin County Human Services Agency has agreed to include brochures (which will provide farmers’ market EBT information in 8 languages) in their regular mailings to EBT cardholders over the next several months.

That’s it for now. Let’s all hope for sunshine soon, smooth technology transitions, and happy cherry trees and strawberry fields everywhere.

Thanks for being part of the project. More updates and news soon. Please stay in touch and send in your news and market listing updates and suggestions for this newsletter.  
Penny