



# WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

## January 2011 Newsletter



DHS

### From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
<b>2009 Total: 32,508</b>	<b>6009 (18.5%)</b>	<b>\$834,298</b>
<b>2010 Totals:</b>		
January 243	38 (15.6%)	\$ 13,274
February 265	29 (10.9%)	\$ 15,027
March 401	52 (12.9%)	\$ 16,410
April 887	61 (6.88%)	\$ 41,118
May 4534	534 (11.7%)	\$150,934
June 4559	690 (15.1%)	\$104,353
July 5051	1427 (28.3%)	\$ 79,792
August 5718	1437 (25.1%)	\$ 88,076
September 5043	1156 (22.9%)	\$ 96,344
October 7174	843 (11.8%)	\$163,561
November 1914	124 (6.48%)	\$ 53,437
December 1651	83 (5.29%)	\$47,076
YTD		
<b>2010 Total 37,440</b>	<b>6,474 (17.3%)</b>	<b>\$869,401</b>

What an amazing group of farmers you are! With non-stop rain, flooding, the poor economy, and the multiple times you had to replant your crops the 2010 sales numbers for the Wireless EBT Project increased. DHS is very excited that your EBT sales and transactions were higher in 2010. Thanks to all of you for your continued support and dedication to the Wireless EBT Project. Because of your hard work, low income families in Iowa can purchase fresh locally grown food at their local farmers markets. It is truly a pleasure to work with all of you!

#### Year End Facts:

Total year to date sales for 2010 were \$869,401 compared to \$834,298 for 2009. This is an increase of 4.2%. Total EBT sales for 2010 were \$71,782 compared to \$62,078 in 2009. This is an increase of 15.6%. The number of EBT transactions for 2010 were 6,474 compared to 6,009 in 2009. This is an increase of 7.7%.

In December 2010, there were 164,841 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$46,126,676 in benefits were issued in December to these families.

#### Here are other interesting facts regarding December sales:

There were 45 farmers who were active in December. There were 21 who had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Fitkin Popcorn Co. (16) Cedar Falls
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (12) Ames
- ❖ Nostalgia Farms (8) Walcott
- ❖ The Harvest Barn (8) Weldon

Congratulations go out to Fitkin Popcorn Co. for having the highest number of EBT transactions. And congratulations go out to Iowa Food Coop for having the highest EBT sales. Great Job!

## Help Us Recruit New Farmers!

If you know of any farmers at your market or in your community that would benefit by participating in the Wireless EBT Project, please give us a call.

Kim and I had the pleasure to attend the North Grand Mall market meeting in Ames last week to talk to farmers about the Wireless EBT Project. We have several wireless machines available for the upcoming market season and would like to find farmers that are interested. Now is the time we need to start the enrollment process for the upcoming market season.

## Spotlight on farmers

Unfortunately with the budget crisis and the restraint on travel with the State of Iowa, Kim and I were unable to get out of the Des Moines and surrounding areas to travel to many farmers markets this year. So we need your help! We would like to spotlight some farmers from the many counties outside of the Des Moines area. So if you would like to be spotlighted, I need for you to send me a picture and a brief story about your farm, what products you sell and which markets you attend. Depending on how many we receive, we will run as many as space will allow in the next few months. Thanks go out to one of our farmers for coming up with this idea!

Please send pictures and stories to Tracy Penick, DHS/FHWS, Hoover State Office Building, 1305 E. Walnut Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Des Moines, IA 50319. Or e-mail to [tpenick@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:tpenick@dhs.state.ia.us)

## Ordering Supplies – Effective Immediately

DHS has implemented a new process for ordering supplies effective immediately. Our contractor, ACS, will now be mailing all supplies to you. You will still need to contact Kim or myself to request what supplies you need, but the supplies will be mailed to you from the ACS office located in Oklahoma City. Please let either Kim or I know if you have any questions.

## Upcoming Events

**IA Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference** – January 28 – 29 at the Airport Holiday Inn, 6111 Fleur Drive, Des Moines.

**IA Farmers Market Association Conference** – February 12, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., First Christian Church, 2500 University Avenue, Des Moines

DHS is hosting a booth at both of the above conferences. If you plan on attending, please stop by our booth and say hello!

## Reminders:

1. Remember that you cannot ring up a sale for another vendor. You could lose your Food Stamp certification and be terminated from the Wireless Project.
2. Since you are paying for the commercial transaction fees, be sure to keep track of what you are paying so you can use those expenses as a tax deduction.
3. You cannot set a minimum purchase amount. If an EBT household wishes to purchase \$.50 in onions, you do need to process the transaction. Same for any debit or credit transaction.
4. Hot foods and hot drinks (cocoa, coffee, and tea) cannot be purchased with SNAP EBT benefits.
5. If your machine quits working, be sure to call Tracy right away! Or if you need help during the weekend, you can call 1-888-848-6825 phone number on the side of your machine.
6. Call Kim if you need any supplies such as paper rolls, power cords, or battery.
7. The second battery that we provide to you was purchased by DHS. If you ever need to return your wireless machine, be sure to keep one battery, carrying case and signs.
8. **Charge your batteries before market.** You should always have a charged battery, ready to go for market. If a battery is not holding a charge, contact Kim for a replacement.
10. Please make sure to keep the original box that your machine came in as it contains the Sim card, which is needed to identify your machine if you have to call TMS.

## Help Desk

**We are here to help you!**

**When you have questions about:**

- **Participating in the Wireless project or reimbursement questions? Call Tracy Penick at 515-281-4935.**
- **What you can sell to EBT customers, or being authorized to accept EBT? Call USDA/FNS at 515-284-4035.**
- **Food Assistance eligibility? Call Tom Wakefield at 515-281-6820.**
- **Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410**