



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

January 2012 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
2010 Total: 37,440	6,474 (17.3%)	\$869,401
2011 Totals:		
January 362	46 (12.7%)	\$ 17,346
February 493	57 (11.6%)	\$ 25,173
March 604	67 (11.1%)	\$ 20,259
April 830	73 (8.8%)	\$ 29,252
May 4,553	581 (12.7%)	\$158,440
June 4,214	787 (18.7%)	\$ 92,677
July 5,535	1321 (23.9%)	\$ 87,807
August 6,877	1742 (25.3%)	\$118,892
September 6,014	1366 (23.1%)	\$112,079
October 9,003	939 (10.4%)	\$220,357
November 2,136	156 (7.3%)	\$ 64,883
December 2,127	151 (7.1%)	\$ 55,383
YTD		
2011 Total 42,748	7,286 (17.0%)	\$1,002,548

All I can say is Wow! The sales on the wireless machines were over a million dollars in 2011. As farmers you faced a lot of challenges again this year including a lot of rain in the beginning of the growing season, flooding in the western part of the state, and then lack of rain for the remainder of the season and of course the economy. I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your continued dedication to the Wireless EBT Project. I am truly honored to get to work with you as you continue to bring your fresh, locally grown food to the families in Iowa.

Year End Facts:

Total year to date sales for 2011 were \$1,002,548 compared to 869,401 in 2010. This is an increase of 15.3%. Total EBT sales for 2011 were \$85,282 compared to \$71,782 in 2010. This is an increase of 18.8%. The number of EBT transactions for 2011 were 7,286 compared to 6,474 in 2010. This is an increase of 12.5%.

In December 2011, there were 187,775 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,391,713 in benefits were issued in December to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding December sales:

There were 56 farmers who were active in December and 29 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Kiefer Produce (24) Waterloo
- ❖ Fitkin Popcorn Co. (20) Cedar Falls
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (19) Ames
- ❖ The Harvest Barn (10) Osceola
- ❖ Iowa Food Cooperative (7) Des Moines

- ❖ Nostalgia Farms (7) Walcott
- ❖ Oak Hill Acres (7) Atalissa
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (7) Bloomfield

Congratulations to Kiefer Produce for having the highest number of EBT transactions and to Iowa Food Cooperative for having the highest amount in EBT sales.

Help Us Recruit New Farmers!

Do you know of a farmer in your farmers market that would benefit by being a part of the Wireless EBT Project? If so, please let Tracy or Kim know so that we can get in touch with them. Now is the time we need to start the enrollment process for May, 2012.

Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers Annual Conference

The annual conference for the Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association will be held on January 27-28 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. Tracy will be hosting a booth at this conference to promote the Wireless EBT Project and hopefully will gain some new farmers for the project.

Please be sure to stop by and say hi if you are planning on attending this very worthwhile conference!

Supplies

Just a reminder - if you are running low on paper for your wireless machine to please give Kim or Tracy a call. DHS supplies the paper rolls for your wireless machines. It is very important that you do not use any other kind of paper as it could do damage to your machine. You always want to make sure to have plenty of paper on hand before you head to the market.

Upcoming Events

IA Farmers Market Association Conference - Saturday, February 11th in Des Moines. The speaker will be Mercedes Taylor-Puckett.

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 Nurit machine quits working, you need to call TMS Tech Support at 1-888-848-6825. This is the phone number on the side of your machine. If you can't get the problem solved, please give Tracy a call.**
6. **If your VeriFone machine quits working, you will need to call Jason Butts at 402-602-4086 or Chris Shanahan at 402-602-4275. If you can't get the problem solved, please give Tracy a call.**
7. **Call Kim if you need any supplies such as paper rolls, power cords, or battery.**
8. **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.**

9. **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**