



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

October 2012 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
2011 Total: 42,748	7,286 (17.0%)	\$1,002,550
2012 Totals:		
January 471	88 (18.7%)	\$ 14,977
February 639	75 (11.7%)	\$ 14,733
March 1,300	94 (7.2%)	\$ 26,134
April 1,848	74 (4.0%)	\$ 67,561
May 6,226	637 (10.2%)	\$192,253
June 5,227	1032 (19.7%)	\$ 96,219
July 6,175	1504 (24.3%)	\$ 90,708
August 5,547	1379 (24.9%)	\$ 87,350
September 5,306	1210 (22.8%)	\$101,899
YTD		
2012 Total 32,739	6093 (18.6%)	\$691,834

September 2012 Facts:

Total sales for September this year were lower than September 2011 (\$101,899 compared to \$112,079). The number of EBT transactions were also lower in 2012 than in 2011 (1,210 compared to 1,366). For September 2012, there were a total of 5,306 wireless transactions compared to 6,014 in 2011.

In September 2012, there were 196,222 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$50,452,117 in benefits were issued in September to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding September sales:

There were 124 farmers who were active in September and 102 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (132) Sioux City
- ❖ Scavo's Market (83) Des Moines
- ❖ Hoffman Produce Farm (79) Waterloo
- ❖ Barb's Garden & Pantry (40) Long Grove
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (38) Urbandale
- ❖ Stillwater Greenhouse (35) Orchard
- ❖ The Harvest Barn (35) Weldon
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (33) Ames
- ❖ Story Book Orchard (32) Story City
- ❖ Mast Family Farm (30) Leon
- ❖ Rinehart's Family Farm (29) Boone
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (28) Bloomfield
- ❖ Hollow Maple Farm (27) Bennett
- ❖ Allen's Grove Greenhouse (25) Donahue
- ❖ Litteaus Garden Produce (23) Waterloo
- ❖ Shutt's Garden Center (23) St. Charles

Congratulations go out to Country Market for having the highest number of EBT transactions and to Hoffman Produce Farm for having the highest amount in EBT sales. Great job to both!

2012 Nourish Iowa Award

We are pleased to announce that the Wireless EBT Project was nominated for the 2012 Nourish Iowa Award. The Nourish Iowa Award recognize individuals and organizations that are advancing a food system that eliminates hunger, increases access to nutritious food and improves the health of individuals and communities in Iowa. The 2012 Nourish Iowa Award recipients were Emily Kregel, Food Service Director at Cass County Memorial Hospital and the Des Moines Izaak Walton League/North Polk Pheasant Forever. Even though the Wireless EBT Project was not chosen, it is an honor to be recognized for all of the hard work done by the farmers, along with DHS, that provide access to low income families so they can spend their Food Assistance benefits at their local farmers markets to purchase fresh, healthy food. Kim Jones and Tracy attended the FAHWG Fall Gathering on October 12th where the 2012 Nourish Iowa Awards were presented.

Shutting down machines for the winter

Thanks to many of you for your quick response as to what your plans are for your wireless machine during the winter months. If you haven't contacted us, please do so as soon as possible.

If you are attending winter markets or selling from your farm during the winter months we definitely want to keep your machine live. Please contact us and let us know what your intentions are.

It is important to keep in mind that the monthly fees are always a month behind. So if you close down your account in October and ran transactions in October then your bank account will be debited in November for the October fees. It is imperative that you keep enough money in your bank account to cover the monthly fees.

Care of your wireless machine

A reminder that it is extremely important to protect your wireless machine from the elements. A huge rain storm blew through the Downtown Des Moines Farmer Market and a couple of our farmers' machines were ruined because they got wet. The wireless machines are just like a computer and cannot handle getting wet or too cold/hot. The cost to replace a machine depends on what type of machine you have and if it is rental, purchased or free. The cost to replace a machine can run anywhere from \$99 to \$700. It is the farmer's responsibility to make sure that these machines are taken care of and protected from the elements.

Paper for your wireless machine

Just a reminder that DHS supplies the paper rolls for your wireless machines. It is imperative that you use thermal paper or it could ruin your machine. Please do not use any other type of paper in your wireless machine other than the paper that DHS supplies. If you are running low on paper, please give either Tracy or Kim a call.

Upcoming Events

Des Moines Downtown Winter Season Markets – Des Moines is holding their indoor/outdoor markets at Capital Square/Nollen Plaza on November 16 & 17 and December 14 & 15. The Friday lunch market will be from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and on Saturday the hours are 9:00 a.m. to noon.

IA Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference – January 24 & 25 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny.

IA Farmers Market Association Conference – Saturday, February 9th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the First Christian Church in Des Moines.

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 402-574-7086 or Chris Shanahan at 402-574-7016. 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 515-421-3248.
- Food Assistance eligibility? Call Kari Lind at 515-281-7000.
- Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410.