



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

March 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
YTD		
2012 Total 1,110	163 (14.7%)	\$ 29,710

February 2012 Facts:

Total sales for February this year were lower than February 2011 (\$14,733 compared to \$25,173). The number of EBT transactions were higher in 2012 than in 2011 (75 compared to 57). For February 2012, there were a total of 639 wireless transactions compared to 436 in 2011.

In February 2012, there were 189,240 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,269,814 in benefits were issued in February to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding February sales:

There were 26 farmers who were active in February and 14 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Kiefer Produce (25) Waterloo
- ❖ Nostalgia Farms (12) Walcott
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (12) Bloomfield
- ❖ Allen's Grove Greenhouse (5) Donahue

Congratulations to Kiefer Produce for having the highest number of EBT transactions and the highest amount in EBT sales for the second month in a row. Great Job!

Interesting Study

A recent study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and Society Scholars Program focused on The Food Trust markets in Pennsylvania. During a pilot in 2008-2009, The Food Trust made individual point-of-sale (POS) machines available to individual farmers, copying the Iowa model established in 2005. The researchers analyzed SNAP/EBT redemption data prior to the pilot, during, and after the pilot. The outstanding results indicated that SNAP/EBT sales were 38% higher when the farmers had their own wireless POS machine versus when the market used only one wireless POS machine.

This study shows the influence that the Iowa Wireless EBT Project has on other states and farmers markets across the county.

To view the entire article on this study please go to:

<http://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-03-food-customers-farmers-point-of-sale.html>

Reminder – DHS needs your market information for the 2012 season!

DHS is continuing work on completing the brochure 'Iowa's EBT Farmers Market Project'. This brochure lists the markets that you plan to sell at in 2012. The deadline is **April 2nd** and we have only heard from about a third of you. If you haven't submitted your information, please either e-mail or call Kim or Tracy with your 2012 market information. DHS is working very hard to have this brochure printed and out to the county DHS offices by the beginning of May. If we don't hear from you by April 2nd you will not be listed in the printed brochure this year. Changes or updates submitted to DHS after April 2nd will only be added to the DHS website version. Thanks for your help with completing this brochure!

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.

Getting Ready for the 2012 Farmers Market season

It is very hard to believe that the 2012 Farmers Market season is just around the corner. We have been working this week on bringing up the April machines. Below are some things that you will need to do before your first market day (this doesn't apply to you if your machine has been live during the winter months):

- As soon as you receive your machine from Total Merchant Services, please open the box and make sure that the following is included in your box (machine, battery, download (modem) cord, and charger cord. *(If any of these things are missing, please let either Kim or Tracy know immediately).*
- Charge both of your batteries before your first market.
- Run a credit and a debit transaction.
- Call Kim or Tracy to run an EBT transaction.
- Check your paper supply. Farmers with lower volume of sales should have 1-2 rolls of paper. The farmers with large volume of sales should have 3-5 rolls of paper.
- Make sure you know where your charger cord and your download cords are.
- Make sure you have your all of your signs cleaned up and ready to go.

Every year it seems like we have some machines that have don't EBT loaded on them. That is why it is extremely important to run a test EBT transaction before you go to market as this gives us time to troubleshoot your machine.

Important information concerning your Nurit machines

1. If your machine is going to sleep, please follow the below instructions to turn off the Battery Saver:
 - Go to Credit Sale Screen
 - Push the red colored 'Menu Cancel' key
 - Screen will say 'Enter Password'. Remember the password is always the current date mm/dd/yyyy or 04282011, hit the 'Enter' button after entering the date
 - You will now see 'Menu Screen'. Press 3 'Merch. Options'
 - Now push 5 for 'Battery Saver'
 - Now push 1 for 'Off'
 - The machine will ask 'Are you Sure?' Push the green enter button for Yes.

- You are finished! The machine will now stay on until you turn it off. Hit the Menu Cancel button until you see the Credit Sale Screen
2. If your machine is not printing a second receipt for EBT and debit, please follow the below instructions:
- Go to Credit Sale Screen
 - Push the red colored 'Menu Cancel' key
 - Screen will say 'Enter Password'. Remember the password is always the current date mm/dd/yyyy or 04282011, hit the 'Enter' button entering the date
 - You will now see 'Menu Screen'. Press 3 'Merch. Options'
 - Now push 1 for 'Receipt Print'
 - Now push 1 for 'Receipt Copy'
 - Now push 4 for 'EBT'
 - Now push 3 for 'Always Two Copies'

If your machine is not printing a second receipt for Debit, then follow the above instructions but choose option 3 for Debit.

It is very important that you are providing your EBT customers a receipt as that is a federal regulation!

None of the above information affects our farmers that use the VeriFone machines.

Refresher Training

Do you need a refresher training course for your wireless machine? If so, we need to hear from you! If you would be interested in attending a refresher training course, DHS would be more than happy to set one up in April. Please give Tracy a call if you feel like you would benefit from attending one.

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.

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