



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

April 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
YTD		
2012 Total 2,410	257 (10.7%)	\$ 55,844

March 2012 Facts:

Total sales for March this year were higher than March 2011 (\$26,134 compared to \$20,259). The number of EBT transactions were also higher in 2012 than in 2011 (94 compared to 67). For March 2012, there were a total of 1,300 wireless transactions compared to 604 in 2011.

In March 2012, there were 191,043 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,517,446 in benefits were issued in March to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding March sales:

There were 26 farmers who were active in March and 15 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Kiefer Produce (20) Waterloo
- ❖ De Moss Pumpkin Farm (16) Ames
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (11) Bloomfield
- ❖ Iowa Food Cooperative (9) Des Moines

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

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 May 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 don't have 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.

Seeds & Vegetable Plants can be purchased with EBT

Many greenhouses and markets will be opening soon, so we wanted to remind everyone about allowable food items for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) EBT. Seeds that grow eligible food

items can be purchased with an EBT card. This includes herbs, tomato, cucumber seeds, etc. EBT cards can also be used to purchase plants that produce food, such as pepper plants, herbs and tomato plants. If you have any questions about what is an eligible food item, you can call Rich Coker at the USDA. Rich's phone number is 515-284-4035.

Note: EBT cannot be used for hot coffee, tea, cocoa or any hot prepared foods such as a burger or brat off the grill.

SNAP Gardens has sent me a computer copy of their poster 'Grow Your Food Stamps' that promotes purchasing seeds and plants with EBT benefits and growing their own food. If you sell seeds and plants and would like a copy of this poster to print and laminate, please let me know and I will send it to you via e-mail. They have provided the poster in both English and Spanish.

Customer Survey postcards

With the market season right around the corner please check and see if you have a supply of our Customer Survey postcards. The number of survey cards that we received back last year was down so we want to make sure that each of you has an ample supply. Please place the survey cards in the sack of any customer, especially those who use a plastic card for payment.

Farmer Market Brochure

The Farmers Market brochure is in the process of being printed. We hope to have the brochures mailed out to the county DHS offices early in May.

It is still extremely important that you notify DHS if you are changing the markets that you had previously told us that you would be attending. Although, we won't be able to make any changes to the printed brochure we do plan to keep the brochure on the DHS website up to date.

Stickers for the side of your wireless machine

If your machine was not shut down over the winter months and you would like some new stickers for the side of your machine, please let Kim Jones know and she will mail you some. The stickers are the contact information for either TMS or TSYS and your merchant ID number.

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