

# New York City Health Department Farmers' Market Programs – 2012

The New York City (NYC) Health Department's Health Bucks and Stellar Farmers' Markets programs increase access to and make affordable fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables in low-income communities. Fruit and vegetable consumption is recommended as part of a healthy diet, and is associated with decreased risk of many chronic diseases. More than 1 million New Yorkers currently live in households without sufficient food, and lack of access to healthy food is common in low-income communities. The Health Bucks program extends the purchasing power of low-income residents, including food stamp beneficiaries, and the Stellar Farmers' Markets program provides free nutrition education and cooking workshops in farmers' markets located in high-poverty neighborhoods.



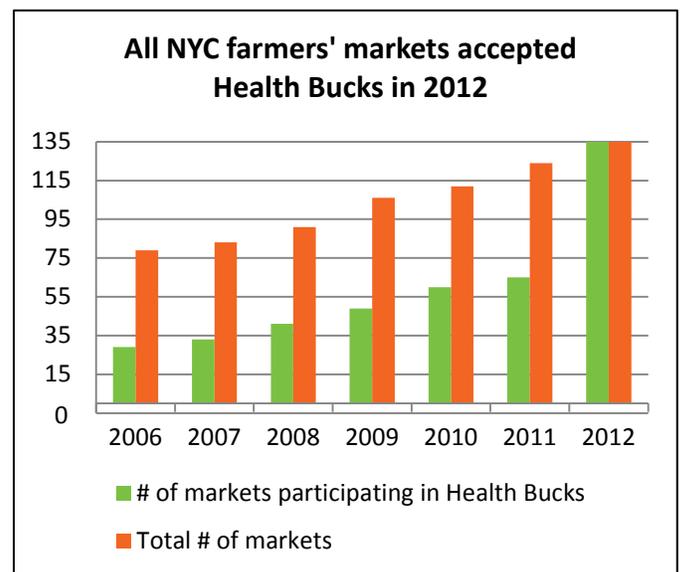
## HEALTH BUCKS

Health Bucks are \$2 coupons good toward the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets in NYC. Health Bucks are distributed in several ways: as a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) incentive at farmers' markets, through community-based organizations in high-need neighborhoods, and at Stellar Farmers' Markets workshops.

### The Largest City-Run Farmers' Market Incentive Program in the Nation

The Health Bucks program has grown from a pilot at 11 markets in the South Bronx in 2005 to a citywide program at all 135 NYC farmers' markets in 2012. More than \$420,000 in coupons were distributed citywide in 2012, an increase of 63% from the previous year.

### More than \$1 Million Worth of Health Bucks Has Been Redeemed by Farmers' Market Shoppers Since 2005



The Health Bucks Program is popular with consumers, and it shows. More than \$1 million worth of coupons has been redeemed by shoppers since the program's start. Additionally, an evaluation funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that distributing Health Bucks to consumers encourages them to purchase fruits and vegetables: Nearly three-quarters (71%) of Health Bucks users reported that the coupons made them more likely to buy fresh produce.\*

\*Abt Associates Inc. Data Analysis Summary: Evaluation of Childhood Obesity Prevention and Control Initiative: NYC Health Bucks. Contract No. 200-2008-27954.Task Order No. 2009-LB-14. May 6, 2011.

# Addressing Health, Hunger, and Economics

## Stretching the food dollars of SNAP recipients

SNAP beneficiaries receive one \$2 Health Buck for every \$5 spent in SNAP at the farmers' market—increasing their purchasing power by 40%. With one in five New Yorkers on SNAP, the Health Bucks program fills a critical need by extending limited food dollars and providing more fresh fruits and vegetables to those who need them most.

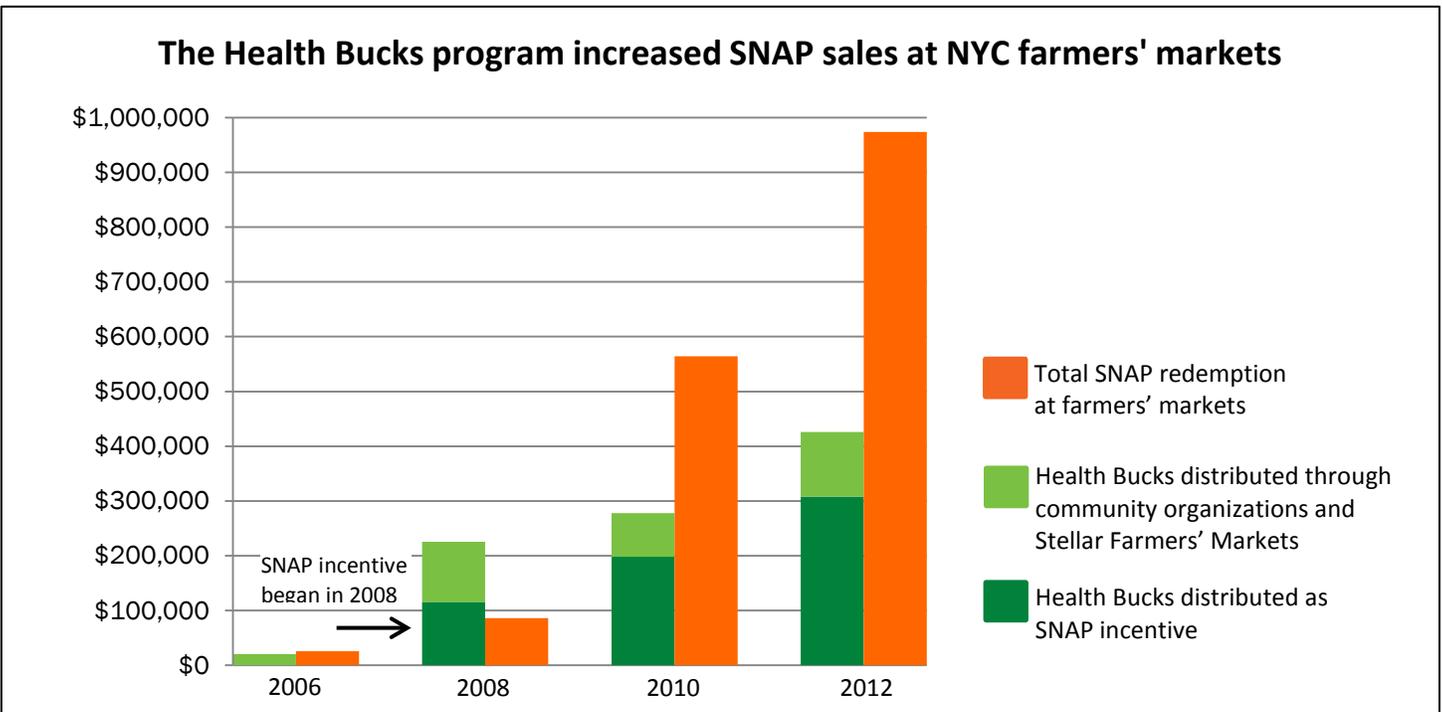
In 2012, NYC farmers' markets distributed more than \$300,000 in Health Bucks as a SNAP incentive—a 76% increase over 2011.



## Leveraging SNAP as an economic driver

Distributing Health Bucks to consumers increases the use of SNAP benefits at markets. Average daily SNAP sales more than doubled after markets began providing Health Bucks as a SNAP incentive, according to a 2010 evaluation using data from GrowNYC, the largest farmers' market operator in the country. Markets participating in the Health Bucks program had significantly greater SNAP sales.†

In 2012, SNAP sales at NYC farmers' markets reached almost \$1 million, a more than 1000% increase since the Health Bucks SNAP incentive began.



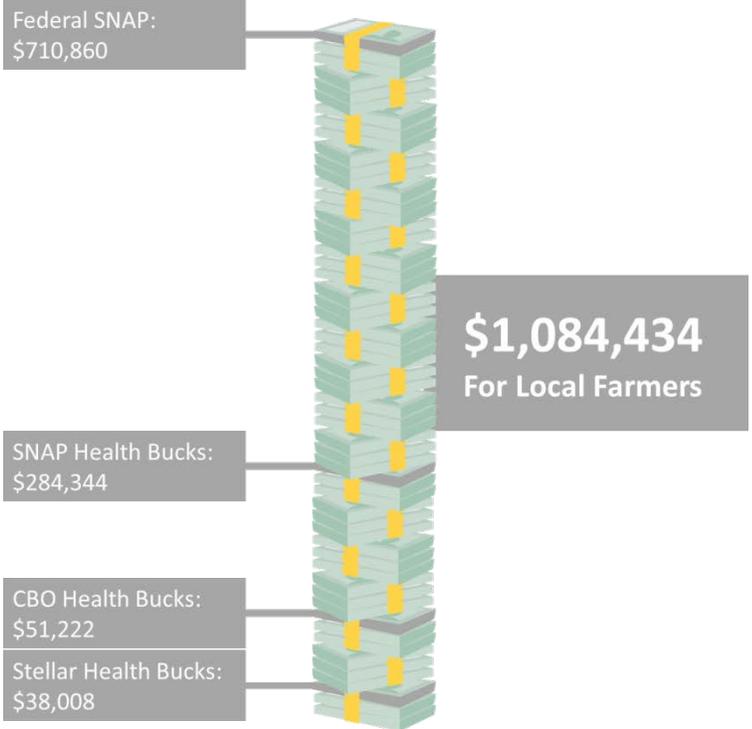
†Baronberg S, et al. The Impact of New York City's Health Bucks Program on Electronic Benefit Transfer Spending at Farmers Markets, 2006–2009. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2013;10:130113. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd10.130113>

## Boosting the regional economy

The Health Bucks program expands the customer base for small and mid-sized farms by driving foot traffic to the markets and guaranteeing demand for fresh produce. The number of farmers benefiting from Health Bucks has increased eightfold—from 15 in 2005 to 120 in 2012—bolstered by the citywide expansion of the program.

During the 2012 market season, the program helped generate more than \$1 million for local farmers.

The Health Bucks program helped generate more than \$1 million for farmers in 2012

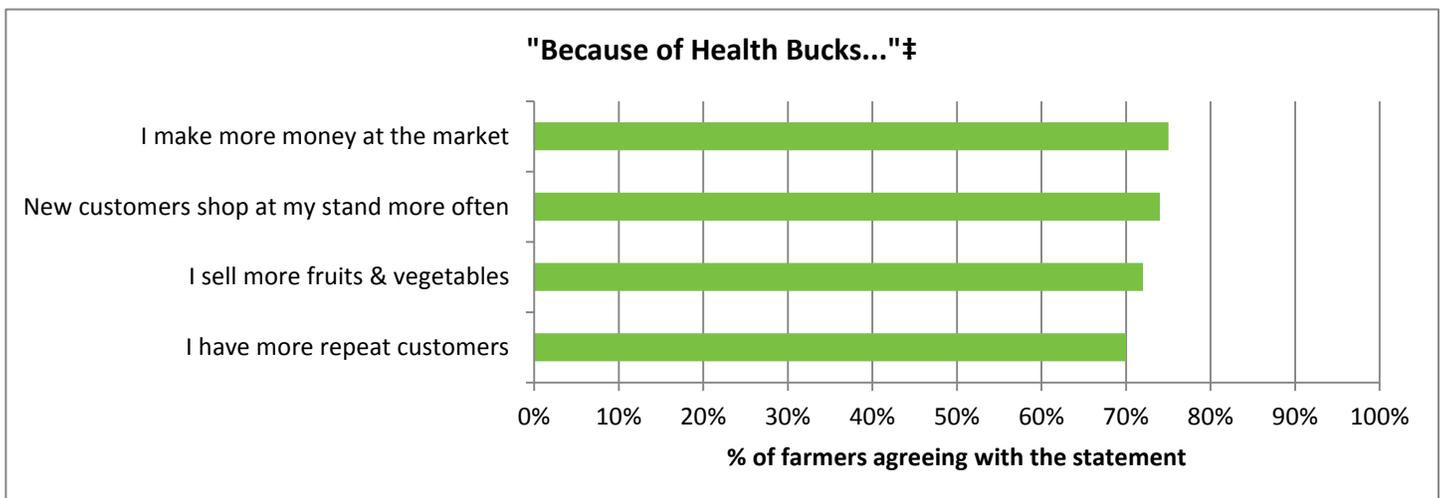


### Health Bucks in the national spotlight

In 2012, the Health Bucks program was deemed a practice-tested intervention by the CDC-funded [Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](http://centertrt.org) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Read more on the Center's website at [centertrt.org](http://centertrt.org) (search *Health Bucks*).

Health Bucks has also been recommended as an evidence-based strategy for environmental change in the USDA's 2013 *SNAP-Ed Strategies and Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States*. Visit [snap.nal.usda.gov](http://snap.nal.usda.gov) and search *SNAP-Ed toolkit* for more information.

## Farmers are vocal about their appreciation and support of Health Bucks



‡Abt Associates Inc. Data Analysis Summary: Evaluation of Childhood Obesity Prevention and Control Initiative: NYC Health Bucks. Contract No. 200-2008-27954. Task Order No. 2009-LB-14. May 6, 2011.

## Fostering Healthy Communities

### Connecting residents to neighborhood markets

The Health Bucks program partners with community-based organizations in low-income neighborhoods to distribute Health Bucks to their constituents. Most community-based organizations pair distribution of Health Bucks with nutrition and health-related programming to increase awareness of the health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption and provide guidance on how to prepare meals that showcase the season's bounty.

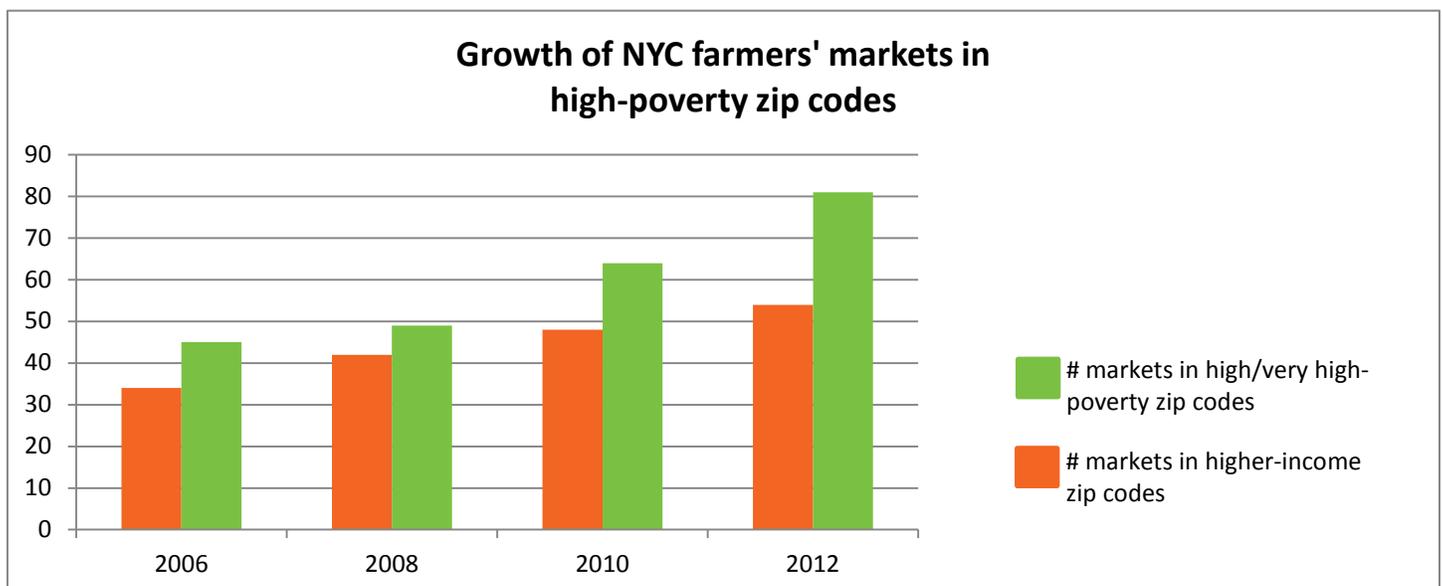


In 2012, 500 community members in high-need neighborhoods participated in Health Department–sponsored walking tours of farmers' markets, providing an opportunity for participants to use their Health Bucks. To download the Department's Walking Tour Toolkit, visit [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) and search *farmers' markets*.

In 2012, the Health Department provided nearly **\$120,000 in Health Bucks** to approximately **200 community sites and Stellar Farmers' Market workshops** in high-need areas, representing a 37% increase in coupons distributed from the previous year.

### Supporting markets in high-need areas

Among the obstacles to success for markets in high-poverty areas are the lack of consumer awareness both about market operating hours and the ability to use SNAP benefits to pay for market purchases. The Health Bucks program increases the viability of these markets by making produce more affordable for shoppers, fostering community connections, and promoting the markets. Promotion efforts include distributing maps, brochures and buttons; hanging banners and posters; and using social media and other online outlets.



# STELLAR FARMERS' MARKETS

## Empowering SNAP-Eligible New Yorkers to Make Healthier Food Choices

The Stellar Farmers' Markets program was launched in 2009 by the NYC Health Department in collaboration with the New York State Health Department's *Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables* program. Stellar Farmers' Markets holds free cooking and nutrition workshops for SNAP-eligible New Yorkers at select farmers' markets located in low-income neighborhoods across the city.

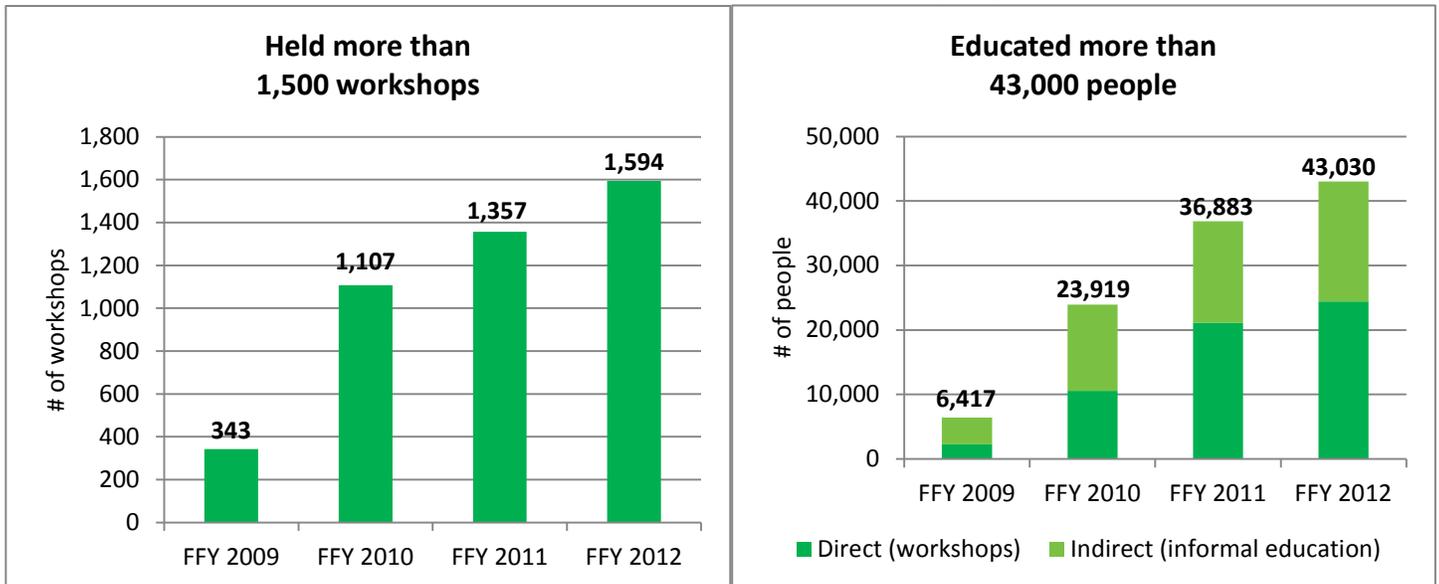
The program aims to increase nutrition knowledge and enhance skills in selecting, storing and preparing fresh seasonal produce. Workshop participants learn about healthy eating, food resource management, food safety and saving money when food shopping. All attendees receive free tastings, nutrition and recipe handouts, and a \$2 Health Bucks coupon.



## Continued Success Driving Growth

Since its start, the Stellar Farmers' Markets program has greatly extended its reach. In 2009 the program conducted 343 workshops at eight farmers' markets, and in 2012 Stellar Farmers' Markets held 1,549 workshops at 19 markets, reaching more than 43,000 people.

### In 2012, the Stellar Farmers' Markets program:



### Recognized for its innovation and serving as a model

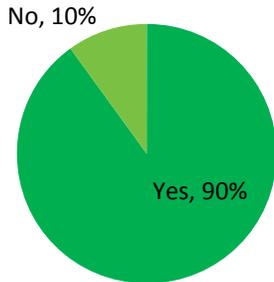
The Stellar Farmers' Markets program was recognized for its innovation and success in its first year of programming by the New York State Health Department's *Eat Smart NY*, operated by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

Stellar Markets staff provides technical assistance and training to other municipalities across the country, and the program is being replicated in Philadelphia, Detroit and Rochester, NY.

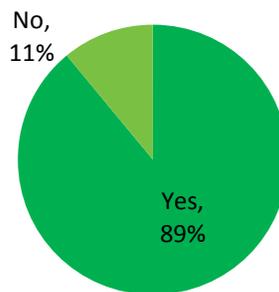
## Changing the Way New Yorkers Eat

The Stellar Farmers' Markets program provides a valuable resource for community residents interested in healthier eating, as evidenced by the results of a 2012 survey of more than 15,000 Stellar Farmers' Markets workshop participants.

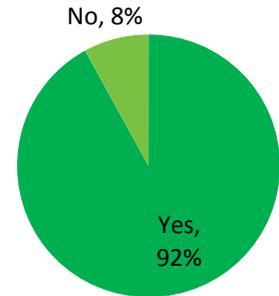
**90% plan to make the recipe featured in the cooking demonstration**



**89% intend to purchase produce featured in the cooking demonstration**



**92% intend to eat more fruits and vegetables**



## Growing the Demand for Fruits and Vegetables

Farmers regularly sell out of produce featured in Stellar Farmers' Markets workshops and have credited these workshops for increased sales.

In 2012, nearly \$44,000 worth of Health Bucks were distributed to Stellar Markets participants—which means more fruits and vegetables for New Yorkers and increased revenue for local farmers.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Health Department's farmers' market work, contact [farmersmarkets@health.nyc.gov](mailto:farmersmarkets@health.nyc.gov). Visit [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) (search *farmers' markets*) for a map of all NYC farmers' markets, Stellar Farmers' Markets recipes and other resources.

If your organization would like to purchase additional Health Bucks coupons, please visit the [Fund for Public Health in New York's website](#).

