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# Evaluating the effectiveness of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP): An exploratory analysis for west Tennessee

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## Abstract

Federal nutrition assistance programs at farmers' markets are considered effective strategies to support direct marketing of local produce, and to increase consumer access to healthy food in low-income communities. Review of existing literature suggests lack of significant research regarding FMNP programs in west Tennessee. The primary goal of this study is to evaluate the existing Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) from both producers' and recipients' perspectives. This will be achieved through an exploratory survey analysis for the participating west Tennessee farmers'. The results from this study will be instrumental in expanding the visibility of fresh farm produce from farmers as a means to promote health benefits among recipients, as well as a platform for farmers to improve their distribution and marketing network.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Federal nutrition assistance FM programs support direct marketing of local produce, and increase consumer access to healthy food with a focus on food deserts and low-income communities (Kim (2011), Byker et al. (2013)).

Two major programs:

1. Women Infant and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP)

2. Senior Farmers Market Program (SFMNP)

SFMNP funds for Tennessee (USDA, 2015)

\$513,136 (2014)

14,849 recipients

\$527,964 (2013)

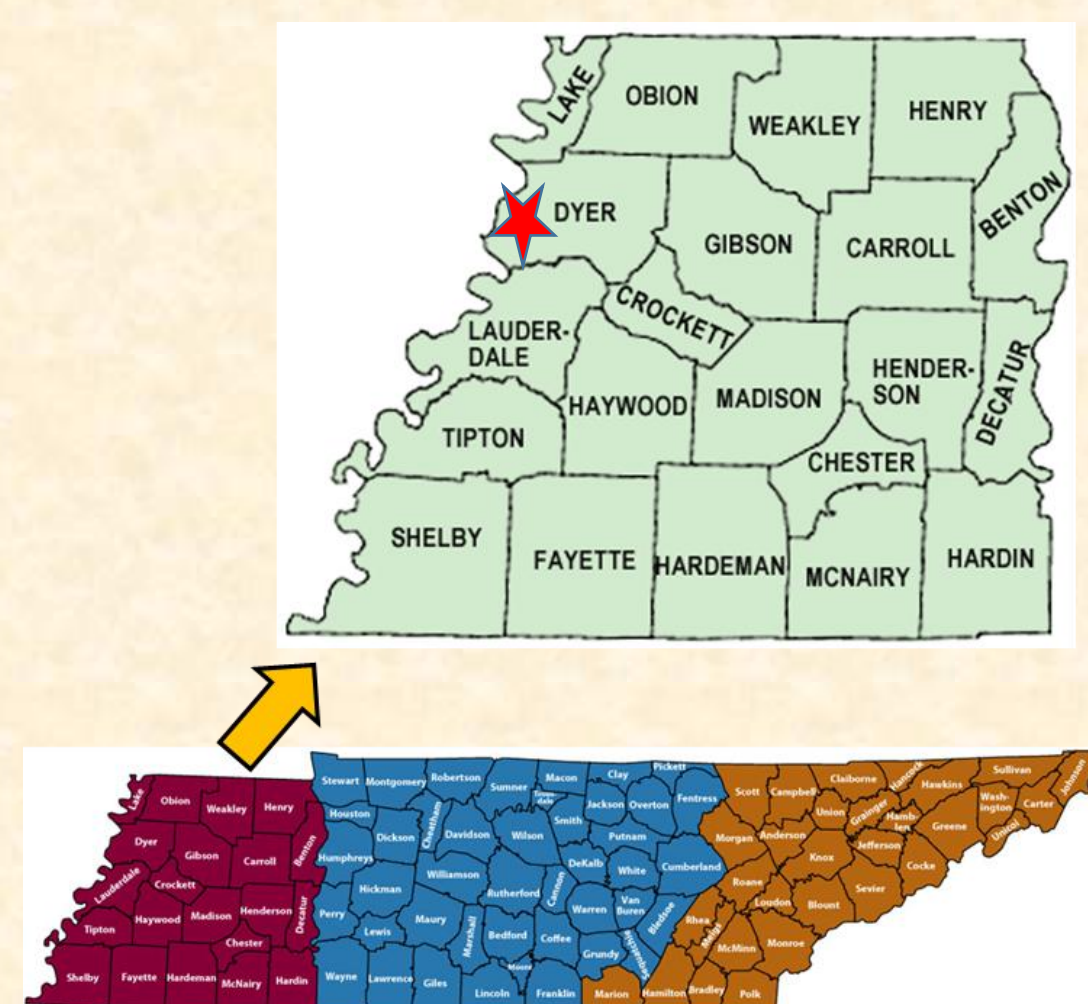
15,026 recipients

\$554,597 (2012)

14,352 recipients

## Objective and location of study

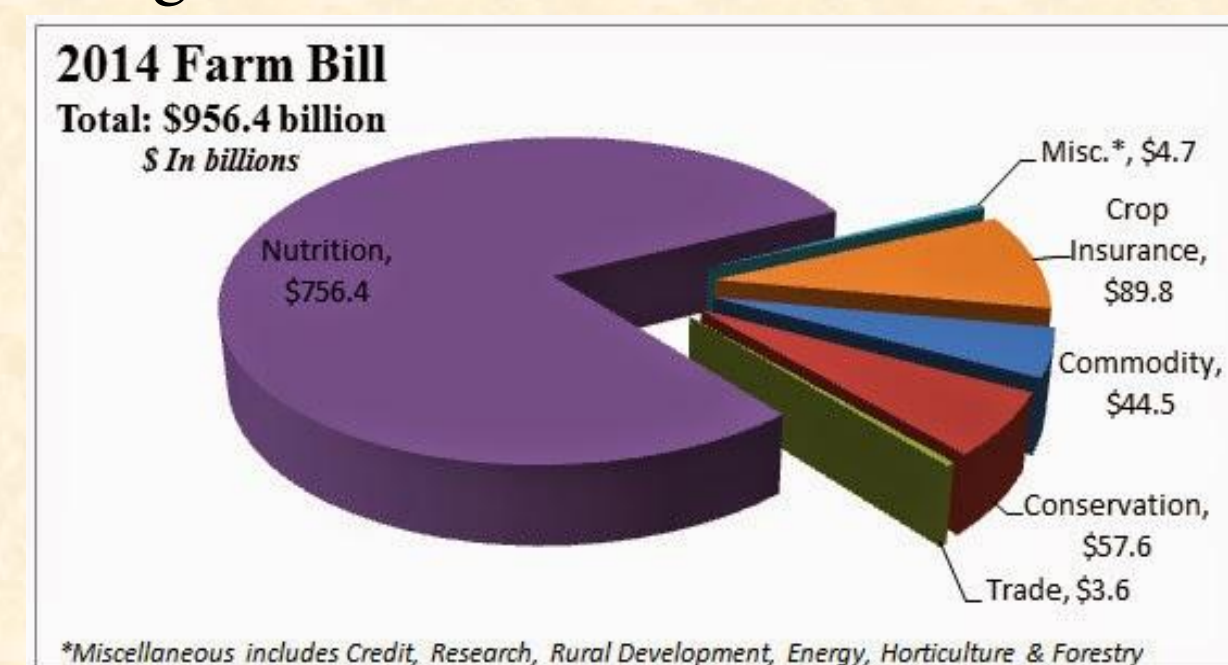
To evaluate vendor and recipient perspectives about the effectiveness of the existing SFMNP program in west TN



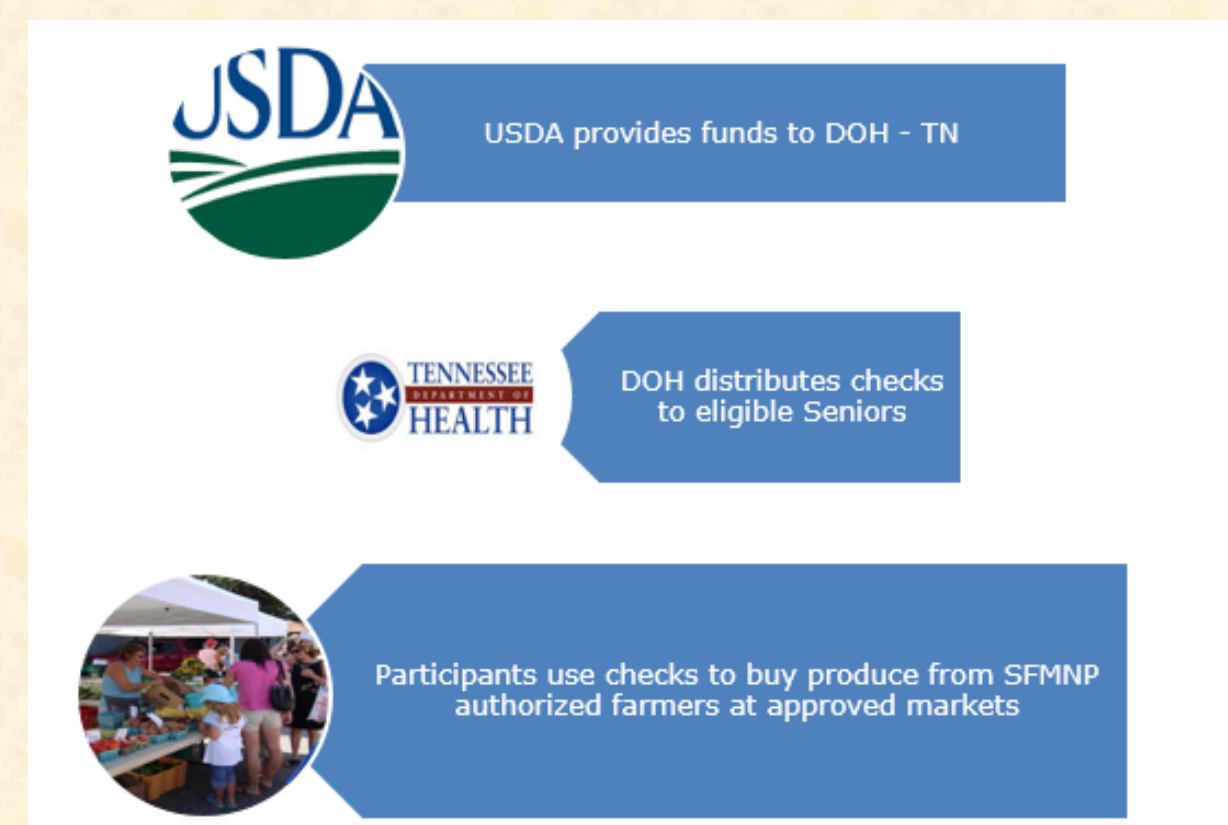
\*Figure 3: Location of our research (Dyer county, West Tennessee)



\*Figure 2: How Funding for SFMNP Works

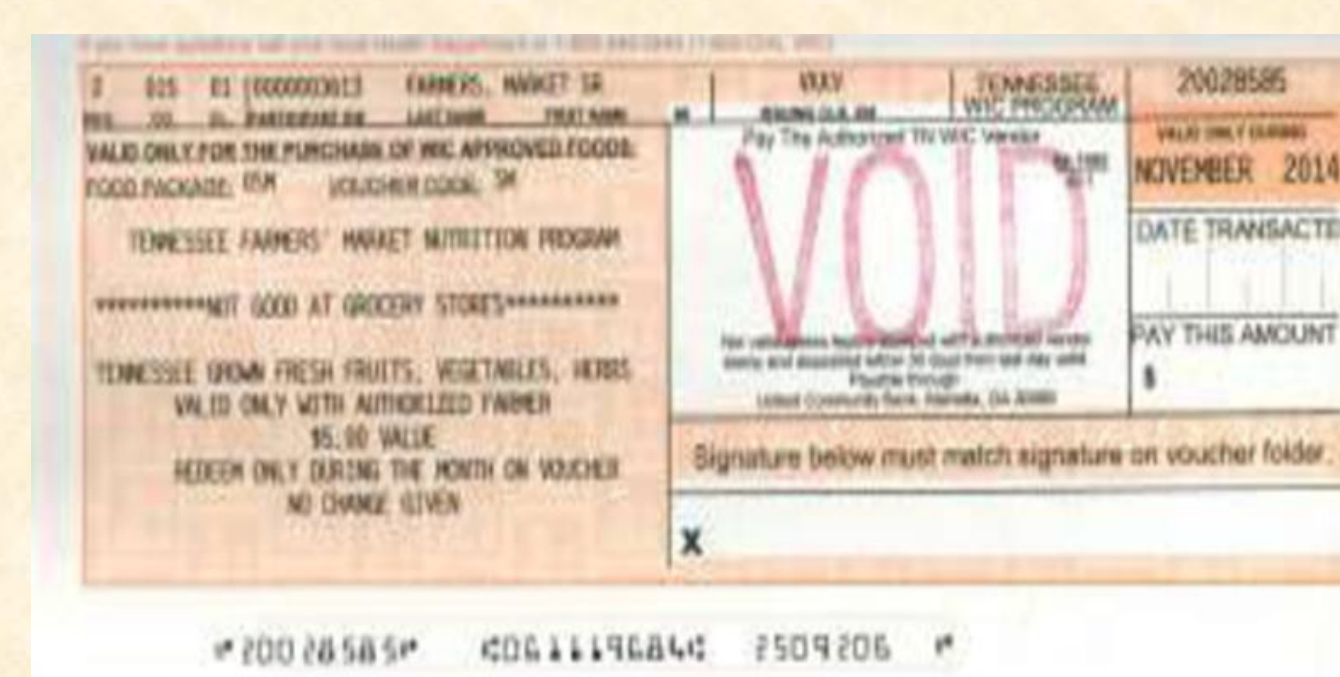


\*Figure 1: 2014 Farm bill breakdown



## B. DATA AND METHODS

Preliminary exploratory survey was administered to participating FMNP vendors (farmers) and recipients at the farmers' markets in west Tennessee. IRB approval from TN Dept of health, and approval from Dyer County Chamber of Commerce was obtained before the surveys were administered.



\*Figure 4: Example of an SFMNP Voucher in Tennessee (TN Dept. of Health)



(Pictured from Left; Scott Vann and Bo Riggs)

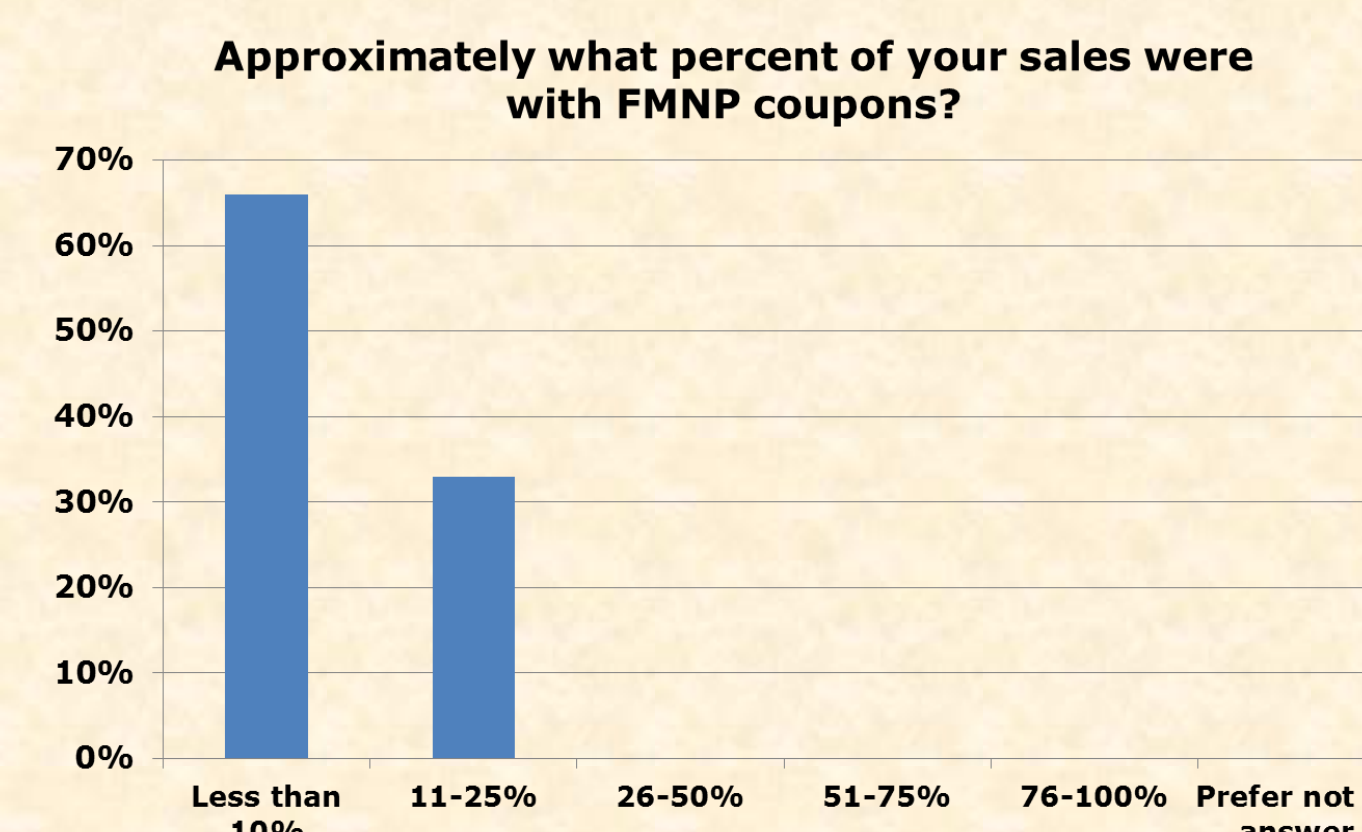
## C. RESULTS



\*Figure 5: Recipient Survey Result Graph



\*Figure 7: Recipient Survey Graph 2



\*Figure 6: Vendor Survey Result Graph



\*Figure 8: Vendor Survey Result Graph 2



(Pictured from Left; Farmers Market regular customer and a vendor)

## C. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- A second round of survey will be completed in 2016 to reach more recipients
- Initial foundation for continued in-depth analysis of the FMNP programs using structured surveys
- Surveys will provide policy recommendations at the regional and state level for expanding the program in west TN



(Pictured from Left; Scott Vann, Steve Guttrey, Dr. Rachna Tewari.)

## D. CONCLUSIONS

- Majority of recipients /vendors deem program effective
- Vendors suggest additional eligible items such as honey, cheese, eggs
- Recipients look for more produce availability, extended hours
- Increases fresh F&V consumption among recipients and encourages visits to farmers markets
- % of vendor sales attributed to vouchers in the 0-25% range
- Administrative costs high, lack of personnel a constraint

## References

- Byker, C., Shanks, J., Misyak, S., & Serrano, E. (2012). Characterizing farmers' market shoppers: A literature review. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 7, 38-52.
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