

Annual Training for Authorized Farm Direct Farmer – Trainer Copy

Review the completed and signed Farm Direct Annual Training document to be sure updated information has been provided. Training must be done on an annual basis and may be done in a group or on a one-to-one basis. To prepare for the training, read the Farm Direct Handbook and become familiar with the program policies. Provide the Farmer with an updated copy of the Handbook. Use the following agenda to guide the training. Ensure the farmers have their questions answered and that they have a thorough understanding of the Farm Direct Program redemption process. Send the signed Annual Training Documentation forms to the State Office for review and processing. All authorized farmers must receive annual training before the beginning of the market season on June 15 or they will be removed from the Farm Direct Program.

_____ **Farm Direct Program overview** – The Farm Direct Program directly authorizes Farmers to redeem WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Benefits at farmer's markets, farm locations, and/or roadside stands in exchange for locally grown produce. Participating in the Farm Direct Program provides Farmers with additional sales opportunities and promotes the production of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. A Farm Direct Agreement is not transferrable to another farmer.

_____ **Selection criteria for a farmer** – A number of criteria need to be continually met in order for a Farmer to become authorized and maintain that status. Annual training is required every year of the three-year agreement. The Farmer must grow Farm Direct approved fruits and vegetables him or herself and may sell only locally grown, eligible produce in exchange for FMNP benefits. At least sixty (60) percent of the produce offered for sale in exchange for FMNP benefits must be self-grown which means authorized Farmers may not be wholesalers. Authorized Farmers must comply with civil rights requirements and they must maintain a positive compliance history with any and all USDA Food and Nutrition Services programs.

_____ **Post the Montana Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs laminated sign received upon authorization** - WIC customers look for this sign when redeeming benefits and farmers are required to display it at their point of sale. Please ensure that this sign is placed in a highly visible location (table, awning, truck, etc.). Posting this sign is a program requirement (per the farmer agreement) and not displaying it is a program violation.

_____ **Locally grown produce** - Fresh fruits & vegetables that have been grown in Montana or in the counties adjacent to Montana borders where the farmer is selling the produce may be exchanged for FMNP benefits. Produce not locally grown, may not be sold in exchange for FMNP benefits.

_____ **Eligible produce food list** – (Hand out and review the Food List) WIC participants may purchase locally grown, fresh, unprepared fruits and vegetables as listed on the Food List. No processed produce, such as: sauerkraut, jam, jelly, pie, or non-produce items such as: honey, bread or eggs. Keep a copy of the Food List at your stand/stall/booth for quick reference.

_____ **Produce purchased with WIC benefits must be of the same quality and cost as available to other customers** - Prices must be clearly marked or posted. If the Farmer sells items not locally grown or not eligible for purchase with FMNP benefits, they must be identified & separated from WIC eligible produce.

_____ **Non-discrimination of WIC participants (may not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability)** - WIC customers must be treated the same as non-WIC customers.

Montana WIC Program 2024 Farm Direct Annual Training Agenda

_____ **Transaction Policies & Procedures** - Please refer to page 11-12 of the Farm Direct Handbook and let's take a look at the transaction procedures. Remember: No cash may be exchanged, and no change may be given for FMNP benefits. The total amount of the sale may not exceed maximum value printed on the benefit. However, WIC customers may purchase more than the value of the benefit and pay the difference. If the cost of the items purchased exceeds the maximum value of the benefit you will need to enter the maximum value of the benefit and the participant may pay the difference in a separate transaction. Never write the amount of the overage on the benefit. If the WIC customer does not wish to pay the overage, they may put something back to be at or below the benefit amount. Non-locally grown produce must be displayed separately. Farmers & their employees need to be physically present to operate their own booth/table/stall.

_____ **How to redeem FMNP benefits – For 2024 the value of the WIC FMNP benefit is \$5.00.**

Redemption procedures are illustrated in the Handbook on page 11-13. Please pay careful attention to the steps in a WIC transaction. If these steps are not strictly followed, the Farmer may not be reimbursed for the redeemed benefit. A WIC customer needs to confirm that the date of cashing is within the valid dates printed on the FMNP benefit. Total the purchase and enter actual amount of sale without exceeding the maximum value of the benefit. The WIC customer does not need to sign the benefit. Be sure to stamp the benefit with the Farm Direct ID stamp before deposit.

_____ **Safe storage of the FMNP benefits** - keep the redeemed FMNP benefits in a safe place, lost or stolen FMNP benefits will not be replaced

_____ **Depositing FMNP benefits** – FMNP benefits must be deposited with your bank by Oct. 31, 2024.

_____ **Sending in rejected FMNP benefits for Review** – FMNP benefits that are rejected by the bank (missing stamp, ineligible stamp, etc.) may be sent into the State office for review, as long as they are received no later than Oct. 31, 2024.

_____ **Violations & Sanctions are listed in the Farm Direct Handbook – Be sure to review these together** (pages 14, 15, and 16 in the Handbook).

_____ **Review the fair hearing rights and process together** – (page 17 in the handbook).

_____ **Your local WIC Farm Direct contact is** _____. Please give them your contact info.

_____ **State WIC Office phone number is 1-800-433-4298 – use option 2 for WIC FMNP benefit redemption & rejection questions.**

Please provide Farmers with updated copies of the Food List, Redemption Guide, Training Guides, and Farm Direct Handbook. The stamp number will remain the same. Farmers' Market laminated signs were supplied at authorization and should be reused. If more copies are needed, please contact the State office.