

Title of Project: Okaloosa County Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

Agency Name: Okaloosa County Health Department

State: Florida

Key Word Descriptors: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Marketing, Fruits and Vegetables, Recipes

Description of Project:

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in Okaloosa County, Florida is a showcase of how staff enthusiasm, creativity, and partnerships between WIC staff and local farmers helped revitalize nutrition services for WIC clients.

This past year, Okaloosa County WIC & Nutrition Services implemented the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This program was immensely popular with both staff and clients. Cecilia Wagner, Public Health Nutrition Program Director, and her staff got off to a great start in enthusiastically promoting fruit and vegetable consumption and the Farmers' Market. Both the farmers and clients benefitted by the WIC Program's creative activities and excitement about the FMNP, as well as by the fresh produce bought and sold at the Farmers' Market.

At the beginning of the season, WIC staff attended the farmers' meeting and presented the farmers with a "Farmers' Market Cheer." For a WIC staff meeting, employees decorated hats with farm themes and had a hat judging contest. Clients were greeted with a "new look" during the months of the FMNP. The WIC offices, classroom, and waiting room at the Okaloosa County Health Department were decorated with fruit and vegetable related themes. Farmers' Market Nutrition Program aprons decorated with fruits and vegetables were made for all the staff to wear during the months of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Clients were given information about the Farmers' Market and received a new nutrition pamphlet containing recipes using fresh fruit and vegetables.

For a fitting ending of the season and evidence of the positive partnership formed between farmers and WIC staff in implementing the FMNP, the WIC staff, families, and farmers all got together at the Farmers' Market for a covered dish picnic with music.

Results of Project:

WIC participants and their families enjoyed the fruit and vegetable emphasis and responded positively to the encouragement to shop at the Farmers' Market. Okaloosa County WIC Program had over 50% redemption of their FMNP coupons for this first year. What a great start!

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