1. What is the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)?
The FMNP is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, generally known as WIC. The WIC Program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk.

The FMNP was established by Congress in July 1992, to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables through farmers’ markets and roadside stands to WIC participants, and to expand awareness and use of, and sales at, farmers’ markets and roadside stands.

2. Where does the FMNP operate?
For fiscal year (FY) 2013, 46 State agencies, U.S. Territories and federally recognized Indian Tribal Organizations (ITO) received grants to operate the FMNP: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, the Chickasaw Nation (Oklahoma), California, the Choctaw Nation (Oklahoma), Connecticut, District of Columbia, Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos (New Mexico), Florida, Georgia, Guam, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Mississippi Choctaw, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Osage Nation (Oklahoma), Pennsylvania, Pueblo of San Felipe (New Mexico), Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Not all State agencies operate the FMNP on a statewide basis.

3. Who can participate?
Women, infants over 4 months old, and children who are certified to receive WIC Program benefits or who are on a waiting list for WIC certification are eligible to participate in the FMNP. State agencies may serve some or all of these categories.

4. How many recipients are served?
During FY 2013, 1.5 million WIC participants received FMNP benefits.

5. What foods are available through the FMNP?
A variety of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs can be purchased with FMNP checks or coupons. State agencies may limit sales to specific foods grown within the State borders to encourage FMNP recipients to support farmers in their own States.

6. How does the Program operate?
The FMNP is administered through a Federal/State partnership in which the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides cash grants to State agencies. The FMNP is administered by State agencies such as State Agriculture Departments, State Health Departments, or ITOs. As a prerequisite to receiving Federal funds for the FMNP, each applying or participating State agency must submit an annual State Plan describing how the State agency intends to implement, operate and administer all aspects of the FMNP within its jurisdiction. Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP checks or coupons in addition to their regular WIC benefits. These checks or coupons are
used to buy eligible foods from farmers at farmers’
markets and/or roadside stands that have been
approved by the State agency to accept FMNP
coupons. The farmers or farmers’ market managers
then submit the redeemed FMNP checks or coupons
to the bank or State agency for reimbursement.

The Federal FMNP benefit level must be at least
$10 and cannot be more than $30 per year, per
recipient. However, State agencies may supplement
the Federal benefit level with State, local or private
funds.

Nutrition education is provided to FMNP recipients
by the State agency, often through an arrangement
with the local WIC agency. Other program partners
may provide nutrition education and/or educational
information to FMNP recipients. For example,
Cooperative Extension Programs, local chefs,
farmers or farmers’ markets associations, and
various other non-profit or for-profit organizations
may provide nutrition education to FMNP
recipients. These educational arrangements help to
encourage FMNP recipients to improve and expand
their diets by adding fresh fruits and vegetables, as
well as educate them on how to select, store and
prepare the fresh fruits and vegetables they buy with
their FMNP coupons.

7. How does a farmer or farmers’ market
become authorized to accept FMNP
coupons?
Each State agency is responsible for authorizing
individual farmers, farmers’ markets, roadside
stands or all of the above to participate in the
FMNP. Only farmers, farmers’ markets and/or
roadside stands authorized by the State agency may
accept and redeem FMNP coupons. Individuals
who exclusively sell produce grown by someone
else, such as wholesale distributors, cannot be
authorized to participate in the FMNP.

8. How many farmers and farmers’
markets participate in the FMNP?
During FY 2013, 17,713 farmers, 3,322 farmers'
markets and 2,758 roadside stands were authorized
to accept FMNP checks or coupons. Checks and
coupons redeemed through the FMNP resulted in
over $13.2 million in revenue to farmers during FY
2013.

9. How is the FMNP funded?
Congress provides funds for the FMNP each year.
Federal funds support 100 percent of the program’s
food costs, and 70 percent of the administrative
costs necessary to operate the Program. State
agencies operating the FMNP must match the
Federal administrative funds allocated to them by
contributing at least 30 percent of the Program’s
total administrative cost. Indian State agencies may
receive a lower match, but not less than 10 percent
of the administrative cost of the program. The
matching funds can come from a variety of sources,
such as State and local funds, private funds, similar
programs, and program income.

10. What is the current funding level?
For FY 2014, $16.548 million was appropriated for
the FMNP.

11. How can I obtain further
information?
The FMNP contact person for each State agency
can be found at:
www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/farm.HTM
For further information, please visit our website
at: www.fns.usda.gov/wic

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