



..... Fresh Local Produce for All

A Cleveland Success Story

Since 2008, there has been a targeted community effort to address the lack of healthy food and fresh produce within the city of Cleveland, where many neighborhoods are considered “food deserts.” Championed by OSU Extension-Cuyahoga County, government officials, and members of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition, this effort included an expansion of both the local **farmers’ markets** and the **Community Garden Program** established throughout Cleveland’s neighborhoods.

To help reach those most at need, markets were encouraged to accept electronic benefit transfers (EBT) from individuals on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP (formerly known as food stamps). In 2010, **Produce Perks** was introduced, which provides SNAP users with a maximum \$10 match for each \$10 spent at a farmers’ market. **This data brief summarizes the impact of these efforts.**

Table 1. Number of Farmers’ Markets and SNAP Acceptance from 2009 to 2014:
Cleveland and Cuyahoga County compared to Ohio and Nation

Farmers’ Markets	2009				2014 *			
	USA	Ohio	Cuyahoga County	Cleveland	USA	Ohio	Cuyahoga County	Cleveland
... per 100,000 residents	1.7	1.3	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	4.8
... % accept SNAP	7.6%	<1%	15.8%	18.2%	21.0%	21.5%	81.3%	100%

*USA and Ohio Data from 2013

DID IT WORK?

As shown above, Cleveland and Cuyahoga County were already leaders in farmers’ market development in 2009, but the number nearly doubled in Cleveland within five years (2.5 to 4.8 markets per 100,000 people). More impressive is the commitment to ensuring low-income residents have access, with **a five-fold increase in markets accepting SNAP benefits. In fact, in 2014, 100% of markets in Cleveland accepted SNAP**, which is highly notable when fewer than one quarter of markets across the state and nation accepted SNAP in 2014.

Residents’ reporting of **farmers’ market use increased** in two important ways. First, both the number of first-time users and frequency of use increased between 2009 and 2015 (Figure 1). Second, this increase **was most noted among those at the lowest income levels** (Table 2), where 45.2% of individuals making less than \$25,000 reported going to a farmers’ market once a month or more in 2015, compared to 33.1% in 2009. There was little change in reported frequent use among those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more. **The local effort appears to have reduced the disparity in farmers’ market access by income.**



Fig 1. Use of Farmers’ Markets (2009-2015)

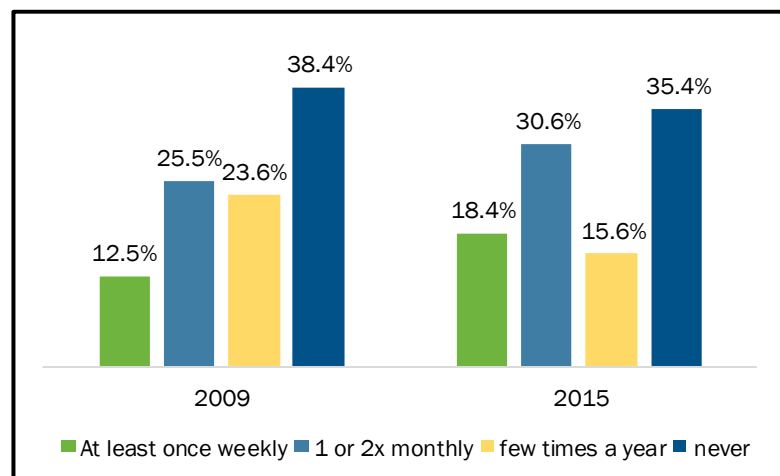


Table 2. Use of Farmers’ Markets (FM) by Household Income between 2009–2015

	2009	2015
Visit FM at least once weekly		
< \$25,000	8.7%	16.5%
\$25-49,000	15.8%	19.2%
≥ \$50,000	20.3%	21.1%
Visit FM 1-2x per month		
< \$25,000	24.4%	28.7%
\$25-49,000	26.2%	30.4%
≥ \$50,000	30.8%	35.9%

Data Sources: Cleveland BRFSS, 2009 & 2015



DID YOU KNOW?

Summer Sprout, Cleveland's community gardening program, is one of the largest in the country, boasting nearly **200 gardens** within the city's borders.

In 2013, OSU Extension and the PRCHN partnered to collect data on the OSU Extension supported gardens across Cuyahoga County. [Here are some interesting facts about the Cleveland community gardens:](#)

- The oldest garden was established in the 1930s; over 50% have been built since 2009.
- 63% are resident-only gardens; 37% are linked with an organization.
- 31% have individual plots only; 53% have shared plots; and 16% have a mix of individual and shared plots.
- In gardens with individual plots, the number of plots ranges from 1 - 212.
- 100% grow vegetables; 53% grow fruit; 72% grow flowers.
- In the majority (86%) of the gardens, more than 50% of the harvest goes to the family and friends of the gardener who grows the food; however, a significant percentage donate the harvest to other residents, a food pantry, school, or church.
- 64% report some problems with vandalism and theft, but the culprit is more likely to be an animal than a human.
- Over 90% of garden leaders report that gardeners like and trust one another and feel safe traveling to and working in the gardens.

COMMUNITY GARDENING

Fig 2. Cleveland Residents' Awareness of Community Garden Programs, 2006-2015 (BRFSS)

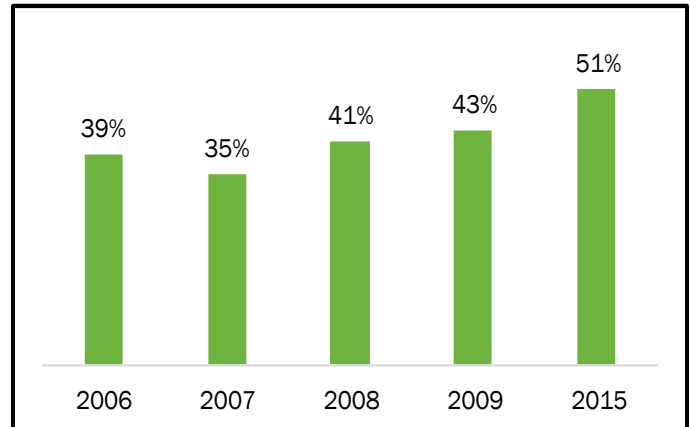
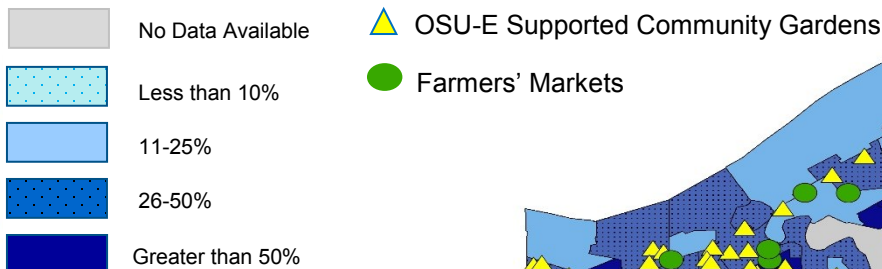


Fig 3. Community Gardens and Farmers' Markets in Cleveland, by Proportion of Residents Receiving SNAP Benefits, 2014

% of Household within the Census Tract Receiving SNAP Benefits



An interactive map of all community gardens and farmers' markets is available at: <http://www.prchn.org/NEAPMaps.aspx>

Prepared by the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods

Methods: The data for this brief were derived from multiple sources. Farmers' market and SNAP acceptance data (Table 1) were obtained from the 2013 CDC State Indicator Report on F&V, from the 2014 Ohio State University-Extension, Cuyahoga County and Food Policy Coalition Community Food Guide. OSU-E/PRCHN Community Garden Survey provided data on Summer Sprout Gardens. The reported use of farmers' markets and awareness of community gardens was provided by the Cleveland Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) collected from 2005-2009 through the Steps to a Healthier Cleveland grant and in 2015 through support from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and St. Luke's Foundation.

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