

Farm-to-Store: Bringing Local Produce to Convenience Stores in Merced County



Background

Obesity is a modifiable risk factor that is associated with increased risk for multiple negative health outcomes including cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Eating a proper diet consisting of fresh fruits and vegetables is one way to curtail the risk of obesity. However, in multiple areas of Merced County, access to fresh produce is limited. As of 2016, 39.8% of Merced County residents were classified as obese. The purpose of the Farm-to-Store program was to increase healthy options available by providing locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables to customers of convenience stores in three locations in South Merced and one in Winton.

Utilizing a community supported agriculture (CSA) type model, locally grown produce was collected from a local Southeast Asian farmer who put together a box of in season produce for each store location each week. Boxes were delivered to the stores for 8 weeks at a cost of \$22 to the store owner, to then price accordingly. The program was evaluated to determine if individuals would purchase produce from a convenience store location.

Summary of Key Findings

Customer Response

- 43.9% reported purchasing produce from one of the four convenience stores
- 86.8% reported that they liked having fresh produce available to them in a convenience store
- 71.3% were satisfied with the variety of the produce available
- 68.1% reported they were satisfied with the price of the produce

Profitability for Stores

- According to pricing provided by owners, and if all items were sold each week, each box had an average profit of \$24.62. Overall, each store had an average profit of \$166.03 for the eight week intervention.

Demographics

- n = 133 customers
- Average Age: 42.4
- Female: 46.9%; Male: 53.1%
- White: 13%; Black 9.2%; Hispanic/Latino: 67.9%; Asian: 6.1%; American Indian: 2.3%; Biracial: 0.8%; Other: 0.8%

Methodology

- Trained data collectors from Merced County Department of Public Health and community partners, asked customers on their way out of stores to answer a brief questionnaire
- Profitability data were collected by interview with store owners
- Surveys were available in both English and Spanish
- Data collected between 7/31/17—8/11/17

Community Partners



California
Health Collaborative

