



CATAWBA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FARMERS MARKET OPENS JUNE 4

HICKORY, NC – The Catawba County Public Health Farmers Market returns for a third season Thursday, June 4 and will be open every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. through September 24, 2015.

Open to the public, the market accepts cash, debit cards, WIC Farmers Market Nutritional Program vouchers, Senior Farmers Market Nutritional Program vouchers, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Electronic Benefits Transfer (SNAP/EBT) cards.

In partnership with Public Health’s Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, the market’s goal is to improve individual and community health by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This has included working to increase utilization of WIC Farmers Market Nutritional Program vouchers, which are provided to WIC clients to supplement their WIC food benefits with fresh, local produce during the summer months.

In addition to the Public Health Farmers Market, WIC farmers market vouchers are accepted at the Conover Farmers Market and the Downtown Hickory Farmers Market. Following the 2014 market season, Catawba County’s redemption rate for these vouchers was the highest in North Carolina at 64.37%.

“We are pleased to see more WIC clients using farmers market vouchers to purchase fresh, local produce for their families,” said Julie Byrd, WIC director, Catawba County Public Health. “This is good for our clients as well as our local farmers, who also benefit from participating in this program.”

In 2014, 93.2% of customers surveyed at the market indicated the market helped them eat more fruits and vegetables, including 94.6% of WIC shoppers. As the only market in the county offering SNAP/EBT access in 2014, the Public Health Farmers Market helped increase consumption of fresh produce among 84.4% of SNAP/EBT shoppers.

Catawba County WIC clients interested in receiving farmers market vouchers may call (828) 695-5884 for more information.



Angie Kistler (left) purchases tomatoes from Calvin Denton at the Public Health Farmers Market, which returns for a third season Thursday, June 4.

“Leading the Way to a Healthier Community”

WIC is a federal supplemental nutrition program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women and children up to age five. The goal of the program is to help prevent nutrition-related problems in pregnancy, infancy and early childhood. WIC food vouchers are redeemable at participating food stores and farmers' markets for nutritional foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, milk, juice, eggs, cheese and cereal. WIC also provides nutrition and breastfeeding counseling. The Catawba County WIC office serves more than 4,000 participants a month.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

Catawba County Public Health, located off Fairgrove Church Road behind Catawba Valley Medical Center in Hickory, N.C., works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all county residents. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

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