

— WEST VIRGINIA —

FARMERS

MARKET

— ASSOCIATION —



Toolkit

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Introduction

The West Virginia Farmers Market Association (WVFMA) is committed to creating and providing resources and support for the farmers markets of West Virginia. This toolkit was created to enhance economic growth by encouraging more families to attend farmers markets often. Our goal in this project is to encourage healthy eating and attendance at farmers markets in West Virginia. We hope that this toolkit helps create an outline for farmers markets to create their own sustainable Power of Produce (PoP) Club.

A recent study by St. Louis University concluded that PoP Clubs create a more engaging environment for children and families. The results show that 80% of parents reported their children enjoyed going to the farmers market more. They also concluded that 75% of children ate more fruits and vegetables, while 51% of children wanted to try new fruits and vegetables. 43.6% of families were reported to attend as a family. Overall showing that the PoP Club was beneficial to not only the farmers market, but to the local families and community. ¹

What is a Power of Produce (PoP) Club?

A Power of Produce (PoP) Club is a program for children 5-12 who attend your local farmers market. The program is designed so that the farmers markets are able to set the rules more strict or lenient to create a program that is unique and catered to their respective market customers. This program is great to compliment existing children's programs at your market and as a stand alone project for any market who doesn't have a children's program yet.

The goal of the PoP Club is to introduce children to new fruits and vegetables that they may have overlooked prior to their joining of the club. By meeting the needs of parents by keeping kids occupied momentarily, this program allows parents to shop for local produce while their child is busy learning about it. This program inherently creates a framework where kids want to try healthier produce while facilitating an environment of better habits. The program also helps teach children the importance of knowing where your food comes from.

The WVFMA wants to help build current farmers market programs and encourage farmers markets to expand their reach to children by adding this club to their markets. Our goal in creating this toolkit is to enhance the experience of community members at the farmers markets. We also want to help farmers markets create programs that reach many different demographics of people. These programs have helped many markets across the country create an atmosphere of learning and passion for agriculture.

How does it work?

Before the PoP Club opens you will need to make sure that you've prepared a budget, obtained sponsorship and endorsements, someone to manage income and funding, staff (a PoP Club Coordinator and volunteers/interns), promotional and marketing materials, and any equipment or supplies you might need.

¹ The Impact of the Power of Produce (PoP Club) Program on Attitude and Fruit and Vegetable Consumption of Children Attending a Farmers Market
Norman, J. et al.

On the day that the PoP Club is set to operate there will be a booth at the farmers market. This booth should have some indication of purpose such as branding (i.e. PoP Club logos, or your farmers market colors/styles/logos), or other types of signs and signals that indicate to kids and parents where to start. Make sure your signs include what days and times to come so that your communities and customers know when your market's PoP Club is active.

Each child starts out with a passport and two tokens valuing \$1 each. They can then sample food, do the daily activity, and shop at the market with their tokens. Sampling food is a great way to get kids to try new foods that they may not have tried before. The daily activity should reflect some kind of agricultural pursuit. The activities should also be age appropriate. If you include older children, they may not be as enthusiastic about coloring as some of your younger clubbers, you will want to have a more sophisticated activity for them. Finally they will be able to shop at the market using the tokens they received when they checked in. The children should be limited to specific produce from authorized vendors. No pre-cooked, value added, or non-produce item should be allowed to be purchased with tokens. Specialty crops should be given preference to the list of items sold to the club members.

The US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) defines specialty crops as "...fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture." This definition, although more exact than previous legal definitions, leaves a certain amount of latitude in interpretation. Fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, nursery crops and floricultural crops are all considered to be horticultural crops. Regardless, the specific mention of these crop groups means that plants so classified automatically qualify as specialty crops. Where interpretation is needed is in which plants, not specifically mentioned in legislation, can be classified as horticulture (sic) crops."² A broad list of specialty crops can be found on the USDA's website, and on the West Virginia Dept. of Agriculture's (WVDA) website below.

Specialty crops are valuable to the state and local economy, and can be difficult to cultivate or grow in our region. The WVFMA would like to emphasize the use of these items in your PoP Club because of their diversity. These crops are not as common as many other locally grown products and may take extra time and care to prepare. For this reason many children haven't been exposed to these types of fruits and vegetables. If implemented at your market with some emphasis on specialty crops, you will be able to open up opportunities for your vendors while you are teaching the PoP Club children about the various crops.

You can find a detailed list of specialty crops on the US Department of Agriculture's website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>. If you have any questions about what can be considered a specialty crop in West Virginia, please contact your West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

² Agriculture US Dept. of Ag. USDA Definition of Specialty Crop. *USDA Forms*. 2014. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/USDASpecialtyCropDefinition.pdf>. Accessed July 6, 2017.

What will you need to get started?

Inside this toolkit there are several templates that will allow you to plan, implement, and evaluate your PoP Club. During the planning stages you will need to come up with a schedule, staff, and budget that fits the needs of your farmers market.

Some of the things you will want to ask yourself to start planning will be:

- When is the best time to have a PoP Club?
- Should it be weekly, monthly or only a few times a season?
- Who will organize and take charge of the club?
- Will you need volunteers or interns?
- How many kids do you normally see at your market?
- How many kids do you expect to come because of this program?
- Will you set age restrictions? What ages will be allowed?
- What types of activities will you want to do?
- What are your county, city, and state guidelines on sampling?
- Has everyone involved in food handling had the proper training and certifications?
- What does your annual budget look like?
- What kinds of equipment will you need to get started or continue?
- Will you need sponsorship from local people and businesses?
- Are there any fundraisers you could do to increase revenue for this project?

All of these questions should be addressed before you have your pilot run of this program. During the planning stages of this project you will want to discuss with your market when the best time would be for families to attend your market.

Appointing someone to plan the program, speak to donors, and organize events, activities, and staff is essential in the success of this project. The person that you choose cannot be afraid to take the lead, or collect donations from sponsors. The success of this program depends on how assertive the manager of this project is. They will also need to be a creative problem solver with an ability to organize and control the direction of the program. Volunteers or interns are important to help with the number of kids you expect to have each week. Typically you will want 1 volunteer for every 5-7 children. This is not including the program manager. Several farmers markets have done activities that include speakers or workshops exclusively for the PoP Club participants. You could also create a schedule for vendors to lead activities to create a more interactive environment with the farmers market.

Your market will want to discuss this project together in order to maintain communication, and allow for vendors to opt in or out of the program. You will also want to consider how you will reimburse the vendors for participating in this program, and what kinds of incentives they will get for participation. It's always encouraged to give some form of recognition to your vendors for helping with this project as well.

Vendors may be required to record all sales data regarding which items they sold to the kids of the PoP Club. This can be done at the end of each market day when the vendors have finished collecting the pop club tokens. The best way to ensure that the vendors get reimbursed in a timely manor is to reimburse the tokens after each PoP Club day. If this is not possible, they should at least have all their due reimbursements recorded in two places. Preferably one paper document, and one electronic document are kept to ensure accuracy. *You can see an example of this in the resources section of this toolkit.*

Sampling

Sampling is important to help encourage children to eat healthier more diverse meals. Some unique recipes for farmers market items can be found in the West Virginia Foods and Flavors Recipes from Farmers Markets Cookbook created by the WVFMA and the American Heart Association. Although this is a great way to introduce children to new foods, there are some things you will need to consider. You will need to consult your county and local health department to make sure that you are compliant with any rules or regulations for your area and the state of West Virginia. You will also need to consult with parents to make sure that you're not accidentally feeding the children something they might be allergic to. Finally all staff or vendors who want to prepare and serve samples must have all food handling certifications and trainings required by both your state and local government.

Equipment, Supplies and Budgeting

After considering everything you will need for this project including equipment and supplies, you will need to come up with a total budget including need and funding options. Your initial start up budget will include some one time cost items. These items won't necessarily be needed for every PoP Club meeting, but they will be helpful in providing the best experience for the kids at the club. Annually, your budget will need to include several reoccurring items that will vary depending on activities, sampling and holidays/special promotions.

CHECK LIST OF ONE TIME PURCHASE ITEMS:

- Booth: table, chairs, table cloth, trade show tent, signs, record keeping materials
- Materials: tokens, passports (Passport included in Toolkit folder), reusable custom stamp
- Art Supplies: crayons, color sheets, paint brushes, markers, glue, construction paper, etc.
- Sampling: table top propane grill, propane, a hand washing station

CHECK LIST OF REOCCURRING ITEMS:

- Booth: weekly/daily promotional materials
- Materials: items for daily activities, ink pads
- Sampling: food, cups, plates, utensils, napkins, soap

Sponsorship and Support

Once you've created a budget that includes the initial need, you will want to work with local sponsors and businesses to launch the project. Each partnership you make it's recommended that you have some kind of documentation. No donation or promised donation should be expected each year. The farmers market should maintain a relationship with the donors to continue the project annually. Every donor should also be recognized in some way for being a part of the program. One idea is to collect the sponsor's email addresses and send them photos of the kids during the program. Inviting them to be involved is also a great way to recognize sponsors and show them the good they're doing at your market.

An annual fundraiser is another great way to supplement your income for the PoP Club. Most community members are willing to attend a fundraiser involving youth in the community. Markets may want to partner with local schools or organizations (i.e. FFA, local banks) for a larger fundraising event.

Activities

COLOR SCAVENGER HUNT

Kids get a color palette that they take around to the vendors and try to find the matching items to the colors on the sheet. This activity requires adult supervision of participants with special needs or younger than 10 years old. Materials needed include: paper, glue/tape, and crayons/markers/colored pencils.

ICE CREAM IN A BAG

Everyone loves ice cream on a hot summer day. This activity is a great way for kids to learn about making their own yummy treat with items they can find at the farmers market. Kids love making ice cream in a bag and you will love how easy it is.

Ingredients for the Ice Cream Bag:

- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream or half and half
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 1/2 tsp sugar

Other items you will need:

- ice
- small sandwich bags
- large sandwich bags
- coarse kosher salt

Place these ingredients into a sealed small sandwich bag, make sure the seal is air tight. You will then put the small sealed bag into the larger bag. First fill the large bag half-way full of ice cubes, and mix with 6 tablespoons of coarse kosher salt. Then put the sealed sandwich-size bag into the middle of the ice, and seal the larger bag. Have the kids shake and throw the bag around for about 5-10 minutes. Once the ice cream forms the kids can add fresh fruits and nuts that you can find at the market.

VEGGIE ART

You are surrounded with various types of fruits and vegetables at your farmers market. One of the most effective ways for kids to learn about the different fruits and vegetables is to make art with them. Some examples include cutting a bell pepper in half and using the flat side as a stamp (Materials needed: a knife, paint, and paper), vegetable sculptures (Materials needed: toothpicks, and hand sanitizer) which can be eaten after built, and corn cob painting (Materials needed: corn on the cob shucked, paper and paint) where you use the cob like a paint roller.

GARDEN IN A BAG

Another great activity for kids to learn about seedlings and the growing process is to teach them to grow a seed. Materials you need: plastic sealable sandwich bags, lima bean seeds, paper towels, and sunlight. Have the kids wet the paper towel and place the damp paper towel in the plastic bag. Add the seed to the bag and allow the bag to sit near sunlight. When the seeds start sprouting, have the kids transplant them into a larger garden. Seeds should begin sprouting in 2-5 days.

Evaluation

The final thing that you will need to consider for your PoP Club is evaluating the success and effect that the program has on your market. The record keeping aspect of this toolkit is an excel sheet included in the online folder. This document is to help you and the WVFMA keep track of how your PoP Club program is doing at your market annually. This is one way to evaluate the performance of the program. Another way to evaluate the performance of the PoP Club is to have the parents/guardians of the children to take a short survey. An example of a parental evaluation is included. *You can find a parental questionnaire in the resources section.*

Do you have anymore questions?

If you have any questions about starting this club at your market, please contact the WVFMA project coordinator, Erica Gallimore, at erica@wvfarmers.org.

The WVFMA encourages the reporting of annual data for anyone who uses this PoP Club Toolkit back to us. We would like to know how helpful our toolkit is for the farmers markets of West Virginia. Any feedback or comments regarding the content of this toolkit can be forwarded to our project coordinator as well.

Our Sponsors

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

<http://www.benedum.org/>

The US Department of Agriculture

<https://www.usda.gov/>

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (The Specialty Crops Block Grant)

<http://www.agriculture.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

The One Foundation

Located in Beckley, WV

The WV Community Development HUB

<http://wvhub.org/>

Putnam County Fair

<http://putnamcountyfairwv.com/>

Putnam Farmers Market

<http://putnamfarmersmarket.weebly.com/>

PoP Club Questionnaire for Parents

1. How many kids do you have? _____
2. How many of your kids participate in Power of Produce (PoP) Club? _____
3. How old are your kids? (Add a number beside each age group)
<5 ____ 5-7 ____ 8-9 ____ 10-12 ____ 13+ ____
4. How often have they attended PoP Club this season? (Check the one that applies)
1-3 times ____ 4-6 times ____ 7-10 times ____
5. Have you noticed a difference in their eating habits since participating in PoP Club?
___ yes ___ no ___not sure
6. If you answered yes to #5, what is different? (If you answered “no” or “not sure” to #5 skip this question.) _____

7. How frequently did your kids ask you to visit the farmers market before PoP Club?
___never ___sometimes ___often ___always
8. How frequently do they ask to visit the farmers market now?
___never ___sometimes ___often ___always
9. Would you say that PoP Club has helped your kids learn more about various fruits and vegetables?
___ yes ___ no ___not sure
10. What kinds of activities did your kids enjoy the most?

11. What kinds of things should be improved about the PoP Club at this market?

