



Improving Alabama's Senior Citizens' Diets

Impact Statement

The Problem/Issue:

Many of Alabama's senior citizens are on fixed incomes and often eat diets that are not as nutritious as they could be. The State Farmers Market Authority administers the federally funded Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program to provide a direct tie between production agriculture and nutrition by providing seniors the opportunity to buy fresh local produce directly from farmers.

Fifty-one Alabama counties are part of the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The State Farmers Market Authority needed assistance in getting the information to farmers on how to participate and to seniors on how they could receive their vouchers.

What's Been Done:

In a number of the participating counties, Extension has been instrumental in the formation of local farmers markets where producers could sell their fruits and vegetables, in the certification of producers so they could accept the SFMNP vouchers and in the promotion of the program with media coverage and distribution of vouchers.

More than 100 farmers were certified through Extension efforts. Statewide, more than 1,200 farmers participated in the program and more than 47,000 seniors received vouchers.

Why We Care:

The program is enhancing seniors' diets by providing them with fresh, nutritious food. Redemption rates in the counties vary but it is estimated that the majority of the vouchers were used.

Producers benefit in a number of ways, including the development of new physical market areas, the development of new customer bases and the enhancement of their incomes. Many producers saw cash sales increase after becoming certified to accept the vouchers.

