LARIMER COUNTY FARMERS' MARKET: SUPPORTING FOOD ACCESS AND LOCAL AGRICULTURE

LARIMER COUNTY

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LARIMER COUNTY FARMERS' MARKET

The Larimer County Farmers' Market has been a Fort Collins staple for 50 years. Run by Larimer County Extension staff and the Larimer County Master Gardeners, the market has over 100 vendors and is strictly producer-only. The Larimer County Farmers' Market has long held the goals of connecting residents with local food and promoting access to fresh produce.

The Farmers' Market allows customers to shop using their SNAP benefits and implements several additional nutrition programs. These programs include Double Up Food Bucks, which doubles eligible SNAP purchases dollar-for-dollar to give customers additional money to spend on produce, and Colorado SNAP Produce Bonus, which allows customers to use SNAP benefits directly with produce vendors and doubles up to $60 per month directly back to their account.

The market also hosts a self-funded program called Market Days for Older Adults, which provides $40 per month to low-income older adults to be used on produce, in an effort to combat food insecurity in a particularly vulnerable population.



WHAT I LEARNED

During my internship at the Larimer County Farmer's Market, I gained invaluable experience in a wide range of market management tasks. I also familiarized myself with the SNAP program and other food access programming, and gained skills in event planning, social media marketing, and community engagement.

WHAT I DID

Food Access Programming

- Created informational materials to clarify use of SNAP programs and Market Days for customers and vendors (Fig. 1)
- Maintained contact with older adults in the Market Days program

Advertising and Fundraising

- Created social media posts promoting the Farmer's Market and local agriculture (Fig. 2)
- Distributed advertising materials to local Fort Collins businesses
- Designed and sold market merchandise to raise funds for Market Days voucher program

Outreach

- Conducted outreach with local organizations relating to Farmers' Market food access programming
    - Attended the Food Bank for Larimer County's mobile Lunch Lab to promote SNAP programs at the Farmers' Market
    - Worked with the Northern Colorado Foodshed Project's Familiar Foods van and the Oakbrook senior apartments to coordinate use of Market Days vouchers and to promote the Farmers' Market
- Collaborated with other local farmers' marker managers to foster community and promote food access

Event Planning

- Helped to plan and execute the market's annual Soil Health Day
    - Assisted with tasting event comparing three farmers' market produce items with their conventionally grown counterparts (Fig. 3)
    - Designed informational materials about produce items included in taste test (Fig. 4)
    - Collected and analyzed taste test data (Fig. 5)
- Ran "Zucchini Race" event to celebrate National Farmers' Market Week (Fig. 6)

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.



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