

APPENDIX F4: FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE FOR FARMERS MARKET SHOPPERS

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Farmers Market Focus Group Moderator Guide FM-Shoppers

Introduction

Thank you for joining us today for a discussion about food shopping at farmers' markets. Please help yourself to food and drink. My name is _____. I will be leading the session today. This is _____ and s/he will be taking notes. We work for Westat, a research firm hired by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to talk with you about food shopping.

Ground Rules:

Before we get started, I would like to mention a few things.

- This is a research project, and your participation is voluntary.
- There are no wrong answers to any of the questions that we will be discussing today. Your opinions and experiences are important and we want to hear them.
- Participating in this study will not affect any of your SNAP benefits now or in the future.
- We will be recording this discussion, so I can listen to what you are saying. We will destroy the recording and any other form you completed when our project is finished.
- We will not use your name or personal information in any reports. Your comments will be combined with comments from other focus group participants and presented in the aggregate. The aggregated information/results from this study may be presented in meetings or in internal

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reports to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Aggregated results from this study and portions of audio recordings (with no identification of individuals by name) may be presented in meetings or oral presentation to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Your name, and any information that can be traced back to you, will not be included in any reports or meetings.

- When reviewing the transcripts from today's session, it is helpful for me to know when we change speakers. So, please identify yourself when you speak. You may just use your first name or your initials, or make up a name for today's session, as long as you use the same name throughout the session. There are name tags; please write the name you plan to use for this session, so we can refer to you by this name.
- Before you leave today, I will give you all your stipend of \$60.00, to thank you for coming and sharing your opinions and insights with us.
- Does any one have any questions thus far?

If any of my questions are unclear, please let me know. Lots of times, participants get very enthusiastic about the topic and everyone has something to say – which is great! Except when I get back to listen to the audio recording, I won't be able to clearly hear anyone's comment. So please wait until someone is finished speaking before you speak. If you need to use the restroom during this time, please feel free – the men's room is located [DIRECTIONS] and the women's room is located [DIRECTIONS]. . If you haven't helped yourself to refreshments, please feel free to do so now OR anytime during our discussion.

I am going to turn the tape recorder on now.

Participant introductions

I would like to start by having everyone introduce themselves. Please just use your first name. Tell us a little bit about yourself, how long you've lived in <NAME OF CITY/TOWN/ NEIGHBORHOOD> and where you usually go for grocery shopping.

I. GENERAL AWARENESS AND USAGE OF FARMERS MARKETS

- 1. As we just heard people buy their groceries from several different types of stores, including farmers' markets. I'd like to talk today about shopping at [NAME] farmers' market. How did you first find out about [NAME] FM?**

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PROBE:

- Saw it during travel to some place else
- Heard about it from a friend
- Heard about it at WIC/SNAP office
- Other sources – sign at grocery store, church, community center, etc.

2. [GENERAL QUESTIONS ON ACCESS, USE]

- How far is that from you live? (e.g., 2 blocks, 1 mile, etc.)
- How do you get there?
- How often do you go shopping there?
- How long / since when have you been shopping at FM?

3. What types of food do you typically purchase at the Farmers Market? [NOTE TO MODERATOR: This is a “grounding” question intended to get participants thinking about their shopping experiences. However, the focus of the subsequent probes should be on the attractiveness of those items at the market itself, not household choices. Keep the discussion at the higher level.]

- Why do you purchase [ITEMS] at the FM instead of a grocery store or corner market?
 - Better quality?
 - Lower cost?
 - Can buy more?
 - Organic / healthier?

II. PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND BARRIERS

1. In this area, certainly not everyone shops at FMs. What are some of the reasons you all have shopped at [NAME] FM?

PROBE [IF NOT ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 3, ABOVE]:

- Quality of fruits and vegetables (or other foods)
- Organic produce/local produce/ healthier foods available
- Bonus program (allows to buy more)
- Accepts WIC, SNAP
- Location (proximity to home or work)
- Helps local economy
- Helps farmers (by buying directly from them?)

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- Social experience; opportunity to meet other residents in the community

2. What might be some reasons that keep people from shopping at FM? Or maybe keep you from shopping at FM as often as you would like?

PROBE:

- Operation of FM – location, day of operation, timing
- Transportation issues/hard to get to/limited parking/wheelchair accessibility
- Prices-expensive compared to grocery stores
- People that shop there (not like me)

3. When you shop at the FM, do you also typically go to other stores nearby to make other purchases? Explain.

III. EBT USAGE

1. How do you pay for the produce you buy at the FM?

PROBE:

- Cash, EBT card, Combination of EBT and Cash?
- Other program vouchers such as WIC, Seniors Nutrition Program?
- If EBT is not mentioned, ASK: Do you know that EBT is accepted at your local FM? Then proceed.
- IF EBT is mentioned, ASK: Do you know what other program vouchers are accepted at the FM (WIC, Senior Farmers Market).

2. How did you find out that you can use your EBT card at the FM?

PROBE:

- Signs at the FM, SNAP office, SNAP letter or other communication materials from SNAP
- From SNAP office staff
- Have you seen signs other places in the community?
- Neighbor/friend?

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3. What is the procedure to use your EBT card at your FM?

PROBE:

- Purchase tokens or scripts?
- Is there a minimum amount?
- Do all farmers accept the EBT card/token/scripts? If not:
- How do you know which vendors accept EBT cards? (is there a sign that helps you identify which vendors accept the EBT card?)

4. How often do you use your EBT card at the FM?

PROBE:

- Do you use it each time you shop at FM?
- How do you decide when to use the EBT card?
- More at the beginning of the month than the end of the month? Or the same?
- Do you use it for certain types of foods at the FM?

5. Overall, how easy is it to use your EBT card at the FM? [IF APPROPRIATE] What suggestions do you have for making it easier?

IV. BONUS AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

1. Your market offers [X] incentive - tell me what you know about how it works. [MODERATOR - If there are misperceptions about how the particular incentive works, explain so that everyone is on the same page.]

2. How did you find out about this incentive?

PROBE:

- Vendor at FM
- Someone working at the FM
- SNAP office
- Neighbor/friend
- Signs

3. Does the incentive affect how often you shop there?

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PROBE:

- Do you shop at the FM more often because of the incentive than you would have if there were no incentive offered?
- Were you there before the incentive program?
- Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables somewhere else if the market did not offer an incentive?

V. CLOSE

Those are all the questions I had for you. Is there anything else about your experiences shopping at FM that I didn't ask about, but you think is important for me to consider when I write my report?

We truly appreciate your joining us, thank you.