

Minnesota Fresh Farm: Increasing Access to Healthy, Fresh, & Local Food

Anoka County SHIP Success Story

Bruce and Sharon Johnson, the owners of Minnesota Fresh Farm, have a passion for educating the public about sustainable farming, supporting other local farms, and helping more people access healthy, fresh, and local food in their community. "Our typical customer is a millennial mom with 3 kids, and they learn about growing food from Farmer Bruce," Sharon said. Quite a few of the farm stand's customers are also seniors who really enjoy the taste of homegrown, local food, as well as the opportunity to be social with the farmers and other community members. However, the Johnsons have always wanted to do more to give lower income individuals and families in the community the opportunity to enjoy healthy, local food.

Through support provided by the Anoka County Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), Minnesota Fresh Farm was able to accept EBT/SNAP at their farm stand for the first time during the 2018 season. "The money to purchase equipment [to read debit/credit and EBT cards] helped our whole business because the terminal and service behind it are better and faster than what we had previously," said Sharon. Minnesota Fresh Farm had over 80 EBT and Market Bucks transactions in their first season offering the option, equating to almost \$900 in additional revenue for the farm stand. Sharon noted the benefit of being able to help people using EBT "double their money" to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and local meats as well as having conversations with and learning more about community members who depend on these resources. Sharon is hopeful that continued support from community organizations will encourage more EBT users to visit the farm stand and enjoy the flavors and benefits of "Minnesota Fresh" food for years to come!

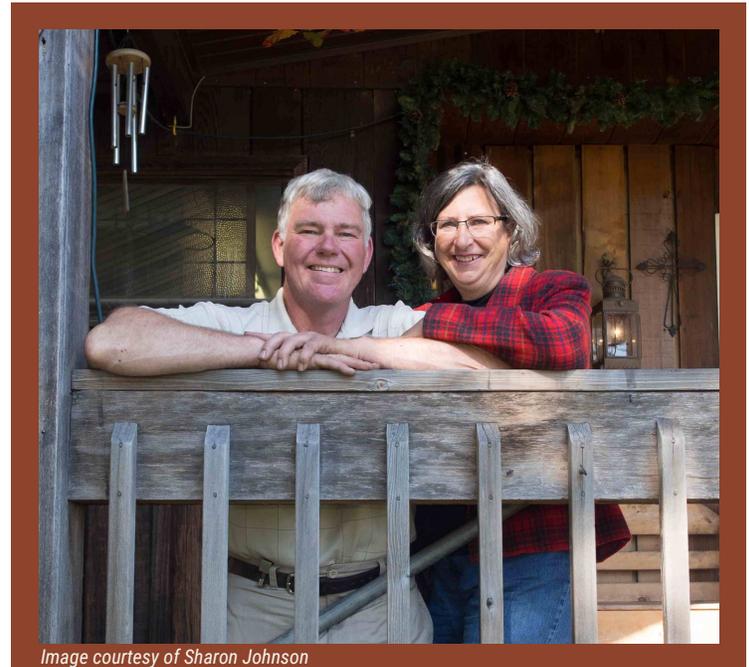


Image courtesy of Sharon Johnson

Accepting EBT/SNAP at Farm Stands and Farmers Markets Benefits Everyone

Low income residents receive EBT/SNAP and are able to use benefits at local farmers markets and stands.



Residents are able to purchase fresh, local produce and proteins, and can double their money if the location participates in Market Bucks.



Farmers are able to sell more of their products (bringing and keeping more money in the local economy) and lower income residents (who experience higher rates of food insecurity and obesity) are provided healthier food options they can afford.



For more information about Minnesota Fresh Farm, visit their website at minnesotafreshfarm.com



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