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Posted July 08, 2010 12:00 AM



A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION: At Everyone's Harvest farmers markets, shoppers can swipe their EBT cards for wooden dollars with which they can buy fresh produce.

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Crunchy Credit

Farmers markets grow with electronic food stamps.

By Nic Coury (/search?q=%22Nic Coury%22)

Everyone's Harvest takes its name seriously: Since the Marina-based nonprofit began running local farmers markets, it has allowed low-income people to use electronic benefit transfer cards (EBTs) – the modern version of federal food stamps – at its markets in Pacific Grove, Marina and Greenfield.

They're not the only ones. Of 17 markets in Monterey County, six accept EBT or are working to provide it soon. The rest of the markets, except the Old Monterey marketplace on Alvarado Street, accept food coupons provided by the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Any market interested in using EBT must register with federal – and state-level agencies, which takes six weeks to complete.

The Salinas-based Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), which provides education and business opportunities for farm workers, acts as a liaison for local markets looking to implement EBT.

OF 17 MARKETS IN MONTEREY COUNTY, SIX OFFER EBT.

"We recognized the great opportunity to work with markets in an area that has a lot of low-income people," says Gary

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