

## SHFM

The Sara Hardy Farm Market has been operated by the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) since 1984 and is run through onsite management by SEEDS, a local nonprofit organization that implements local solutions to global issues at the intersection of ecology, education, and design and also manages a growing youth corps. The market's mission is to create a sales venue for local farmers, to provide an opportunity for consumers to purchase quality farm-grown goods, to provide a community gathering place, and to promote and stimulate economic development and create traffic in the downtown area.

This market is one of the largest markets in the state and is committed to being a growers-only market. There are over 100 vendors and over 70% of them grow the whole foods that they sell on their farms, which must be located within the local seven-county region. The remaining vendors sell value-added products and often use primarily homegrown ingredients or ingredients from neighbors and other local businesses.

The market operates two mornings a week: Saturdays and Wednesdays, beginning with Saturdays in May and adding Wednesdays in June, both running through the end of October. There is an active advisory board consisting of vendors, customers, DDA representatives, and city commissioners.

Currently the market is planning for a major overhaul of the space in which it operates. This redesign has the main goals of widening aisles, providing more space for vendors, and building a structure that will accommodate vendors' and customers' needs regardless of the weather. Changes could possibly include Wednesday evening markets with food trucks and entertainment and a coffee/food prep building. For more information on this project, please contact [nick@downtowntc.com](mailto:nick@downtowntc.com).

The market supports food accessibility in the region and SEEDS staff is available on site to help customers make use of five different food programs: EBT, DUFB, PF, SPF, and Hoophouses for Health.

- The Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program is the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)/food stamp program. Individuals have a card that is loaded monthly with their allowed benefit. When they bring the card to the farm market's on-site office, a transaction is completed using an iPad to deduct the amount they'd like to spend from their card's balance and the equivalent amount of wooden tokens worth \$1 each are provided to them to spend on any food product at vendors' booths.
- Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) piggybacks on the EBT program and doubles the amount the customer takes off of their EBT card (up to \$20) at no additional cost to the customer. The silver tokens that they are given are

worth \$2 each and can be used only to purchase fresh produce, which encourages these individuals and families to eat healthy foods.

- Project Fresh (PF) is a program that piggybacks on the state's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. WIC enrollees are sent PF coupons worth \$5 each to spend on fresh produce from farmers markets.
- Senior Project Fresh (SPF) is a program in which eligible senior citizens are sent \$2 coupons to spend at farmers markets on fresh produce. This program is funded through the Department of Agriculture's Farm Bill.

All four of these programs are run through the DDA, which issues checks to vendors after they turn in tokens and coupons and also submits the requests for reimbursement to the appropriate entities. The final food assistance program is not managed through the DDA, but is welcomed as part of the market.

- Hoophouses for Health is a program that is funded through the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) and provides loans to farmers to build hoophouses, which extend Michigan's relatively short growing season. Vulnerable families that are identified are provided with coupons to spend at those vendors' booths that have received a loan through the program. The farmers can submit the coupons as repayment for their loan. This program also increases the "Good Food" infrastructure for food that is healthy, green, fair, and affordable.