

Americans increase produce consumption

By Tim Carman, Washington Post

As Congress debates whether to trim the food stamps budget as part of the massive Farm Bill reauthorization, lawmakers might want to consider this striking statistic from a new W.K. Kellogg Foundation survey: Three-quarters of Americans say they support a national program that would double Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or food stamp) benefits at farmers markets.

“It’s a wonderful sign of the increasing level of empathy,” says Gail Christopher, vice president for program strategy for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. It’s an acknowledgment, she adds, that “the health of others could have an impact on their lives as well.”



Seasonal
farmers
markets help
Tahoe-ites eat
more fresh
veggies-fruit.
Photo/LTN file

The Kellogg survey of 800 American adults unearthed some other, arguably, surprising statistics about the country’s attitudes about fresh fruits and vegetables – and the people

who harvest them. Approximately 88 percent of respondents would strongly or partly agree to pay \$1.50 more per month if it guaranteed that farm workers would be paid a fair wage.

What's more, 70 percent of respondents said they have purchased fresh produce from a farmers market or stand in the past year (although only 14 percent use this source as their regular outlet for fruits and vegetables). And more than 68 percent of those surveyed say they eat more whole grains, fruits and vegetables than they did five years ago.

These findings would appear to underscore the success of various organizations, progressive school districts, environmentalists, activist chefs, good food advocates and writers, and first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign in spreading the gospel about local produce, fresh fruits and vegetables and more healthful diets. The message is clearly sinking in with the American public.

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