



# FARMER FOODSHARE



OLLI Project Presentation - November 15, 2018





# Background

- ▶ Mission: To make fresh, local food available to everyone in our community and to ensure that the farmers growing it make a healthy living
- ▶ Founded in Carrboro in 2009 by Margaret Gifford
  - ▶ Lack of fresh produce in local hunger relief organizations
  - ▶ Growing threats to livelihood of small farmers
- ▶ Current programs
  - ▶ Donation Stations - first programs, our focus
  - ▶ Food Ambassadors
  - ▶ Wholesale Market
- ▶ In 2017 - SUCCESS!
  - ▶ 38 Donation Stations in North Carolina and a small part of Virginia
  - ▶ Collected 67,785 pounds of fresh produce; given to 55 partner agencies
  - ▶ 21,770 people fed; 600 farmers supported



# Donation Stations

- ▶ Staffed by 1 to 4 volunteers in 2-3 hour shifts
  - ▶ Volunteers sign up using an on line form
- ▶ Often located near the Market Manager table
- ▶ Volunteers collect donations of cash and fresh produce from market goers
  - ▶ They use cash donations from market goers to purchase fresh produce from a variety of farmers at the market





# Donation Stations

- ▶ Volunteers record information about cash spent, pounds purchased/donated, and farmers supported
  - ▶ Information is submitted to FF staff through Google docs
- ▶ Donations from each market period go to specific recipients
  - ▶ Recipients pick up donated food at the end of market hours
  - ▶ Food donations at a market may go to different recipients (e.g. based on mid-week vs. week-end or alternating weeks)



Starting Cash (\$): 6.05 Ending Cash (\$): 3.00

Name of Grower	Cash Spent (\$)	Type of foods purchased (e.g. tomatoes, kale, etc.)	Weight (lbs.)
T-S	2	Sweet Potatoes	1.0
Play Girl	2.90	Savoy Cabbage	1.5
T-S	4.75	Peppers	1.4
Play Girl	3	Sweet Potatoes	4.0
T-S	6	Sweet Potatoes	2.7
Play Girl	5	Sweet Potatoes	2.7
Leaf	Dustin	Broccoli	2.0
T-S	Dustin	Peppers	2.7
<b>Total Cash (\$):</b> 28.65		<b>Total Weight:</b> 17	

The weather today was (circle all that apply):  
 Sunny     Cloudy     Rainy     Snowy     Cold     Hot     Windy

Instructions:

# How to Volunteer

<http://www.farmerfoodshare.org/volunteer/>

## DONATION STATIONS

Weekly volunteer opportunities are available at Donation Stations at farmers markets across the state! Shifts are available every Saturday and some midweek afternoons. If you love fresh food and want to get involved in sharing the bounty from your local farmers market with those in need, now is the chance!

All ages welcome. Please read the **description** to decide if this position is right for you. **If you're interested, follow the link below to apply.**

DESCRIPTION

APPLICATION

If you've already been trained and would like to shadow an experienced volunteer, sign up for a Shadow shift!




SHIFT SIGNUP

ACTIVITY FORM



# How to Sign Up for a Donation Station




## Donation Station Sign Up

Thu Apr 2, 2015 – Sat Mar 30, 2019

Thank you for volunteering with Farmer Foodshare! You are helping to support local farmers and to get fresh food to those in our community who need it. Please sign up for days you know you are available in the coming months. We ask that volunteers commit to at least one two-hour shift per month - but you're welcome to volunteer more often! Send us an email at [volunteer@farmerfoodshare.org](mailto:volunteer@farmerfoodshare.org) at least 48 hours in advance if you are not able to fulfill a shift you have signed up for or if you have any questions. Thank you for connecting





[Share this Invite](#)

Find Spots By Date

Nov 17, 2018 

Hide Past Spots  Hide Full Spots

▼ Tue Nov 13, 2018 3 of 10 Filled

SPOT	TIME	FILLED	PARTICIPANTS	
<a href="#">Chapel Hill Farmers Market</a> 201 South Estes Drive, Chape...	3:00pm – 5:00pm	2 of 2	 (0)  	<a href="#">FULL</a>
<a href="#">West Asheville Tailgate Market</a> 718 Haywood Road, Asheville...	3:30pm – 6:30pm	0 of 4	 (0)	<a href="#">SIGN UP</a>

# Problems to Address

- ▶ Expansion to 38 farmers markets state wide in past year is challenging to manage, especially for remote markets
- ▶ Particularly difficult to ensure consistent volunteer staffing and retention at Donation Stations
- ▶ Lack of tools to evaluate operations of existing Donation Stations in addition to cash spent and pounds of food data



# What Were We Asked to Do?

- ▶ Define an evaluation process and tools to help identify best practices at Donation Stations to maintain or grow results
- ▶ Focus on just 4 Donation Stations of 13 in the Triangle
  - ▶ Two large markets: Carrboro and Downtown Durham
  - ▶ Two small markets: Eno River and Hillsborough
- ▶ Assess volunteer staffing levels and process
  - ▶ What might be a realistic and effective staffing goal?
  - ▶ Out of scope: goal to move to community engagement (ownership) model  
Note: Data gathered by the Meals on Wheels team could be very useful!
- ▶ Suggest potential improvements to Donation Station operations



# Project Logistics / Engaging with FF

- ▶ Team met with Braedyn from FF three times during our project, including a tour of the Bull City Cool facility
- ▶ Team met several times in person and shared info using Google drive.
- ▶ Members visited the four focus (and two other) markets; several volunteered at Donation Stations
  - Talked with volunteers, farmers, and market managers
- ▶ Reviewed the four focus Farmers Market websites for FF content
- ▶ Team members developed a set of interview questions for four key Donation Station stakeholders
- ▶ Separate from project, two members volunteered at Food Ambassador taste tests at Durham elementary schools

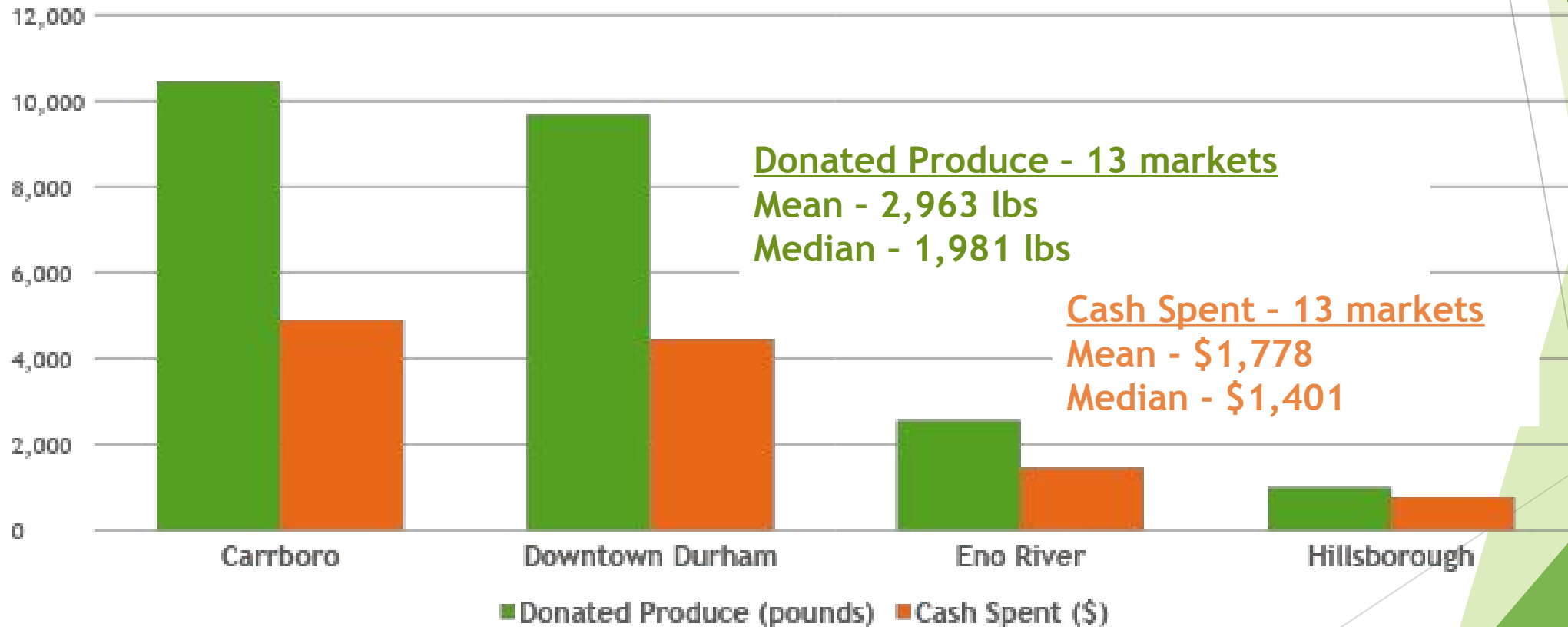
# Our Focus - Selected Triangle Area Farmers Markets with Donation Stations

Focus Markets	Year Established	Radius of Vendor Capture Area (miles)	Number of Vendors
Carrboro	1977	50	71
Downtown Durham	1999	70	65
Eno River	~10 years ago	60	29
Hillsborough	1987	75	26



# 2017 Pounds of Food Donated and Cash Spent

## Selected Triangle Area Farmer Foodshare Donation Stations



# Focus Market Similarities

- ▶ All are open on Saturday mornings year-round, with hours varying by season
  - ▶ Carrboro and Durham also have Wednesday afternoon hours April to November
- ▶ All have vendors who sell fresh produce, as well as vendors who sell artisanal foods (e.g., baked goods, honey, beer) and crafts
- ▶ All have live music and special events to bring in customers
- ▶ There is considerable overlap in the vendor capture areas
  - ▶ The Eno River and Hillsborough Farmers Markets are only 3.2 miles apart (<10 min)
    - ▶ They are geographically close but feature different vendors
    - ▶ They were once located in a single location (Home Depot) but split into two groups over differences in how the market should be run



# Durham Market Donation Station





# Hillsborough Market Donation Station





# Carrboro Market Donation Station



# Eno River Market Donation Station



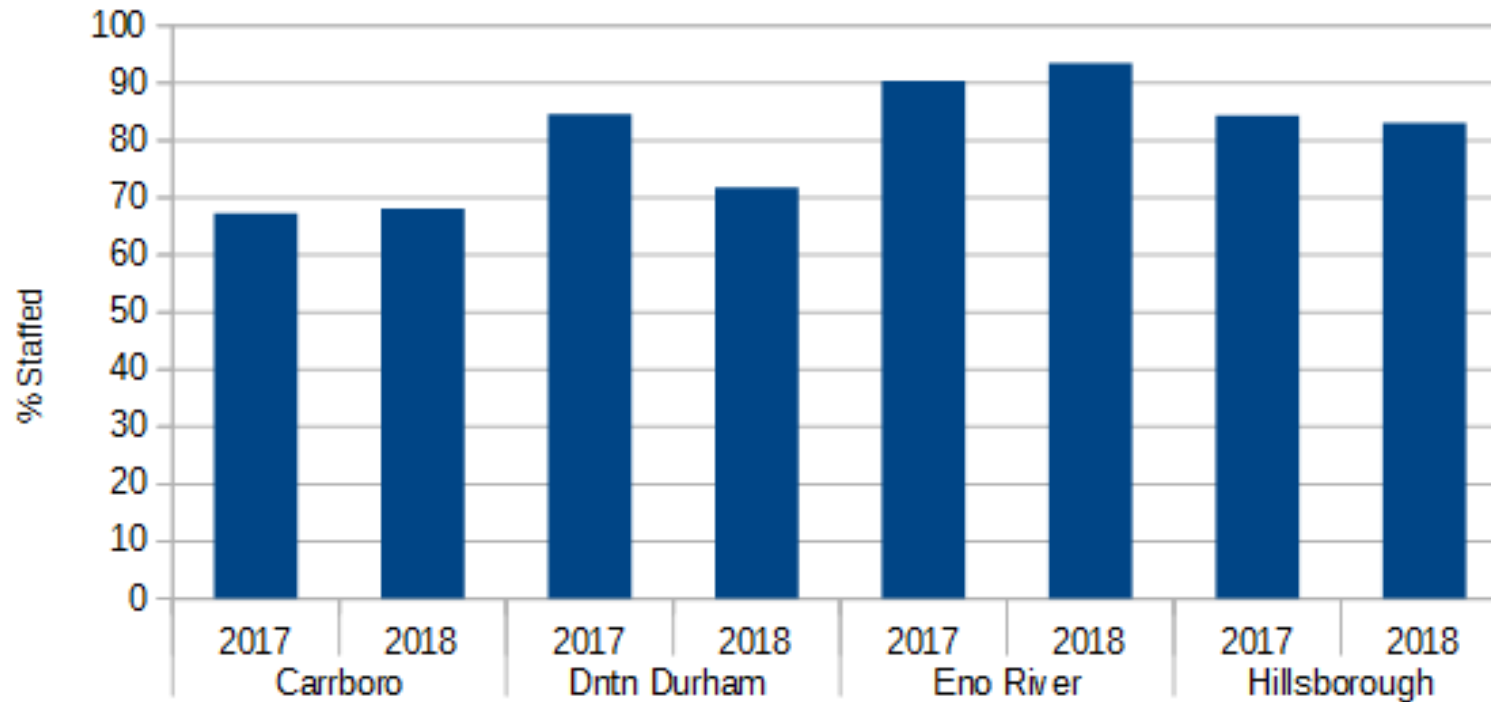


# Focus Market Differences

- ▶ Mention of Farmer Foodshare differs among the websites
  - [Carrboro](#) and [Downtown Durham](#) provide minimal info
  - [Eno River](#) and [Hillsborough](#) provide more info + prominent placement
- ▶ Carrboro and Downtown Durham websites solicit their own market volunteers and donations and have relationships with other community food sharing orgs that may compete with FF for volunteers and donations
- ▶ Eno River market volunteers are mostly high school students; Carrboro and Downtown Durham are often college students (during school year)
- ▶ Market manager is default volunteer at Hillsborough and Eno River Donation Stations, but not at larger markets
- ▶ Eno River food donations are given directly to families via social worker referrals at Central Elementary School; most other markets donate to organizations

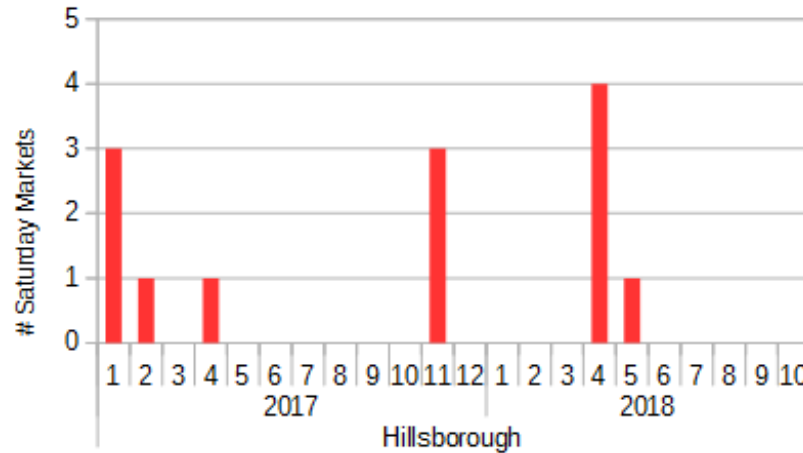
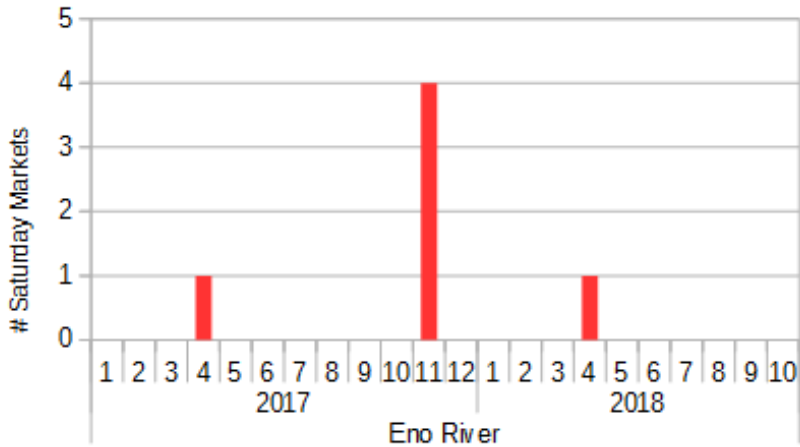
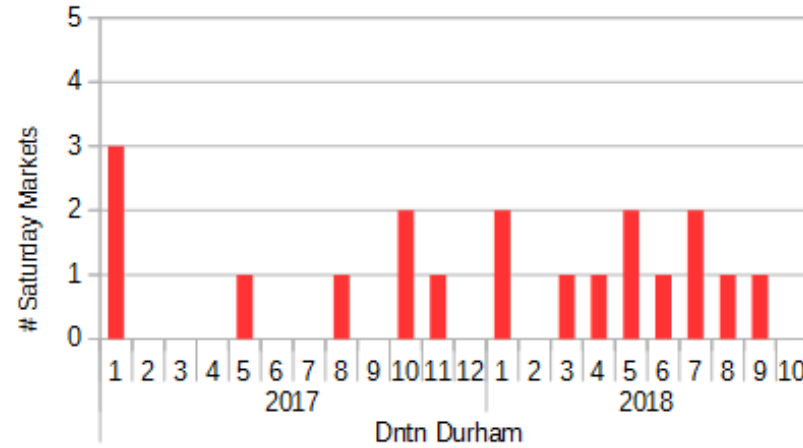
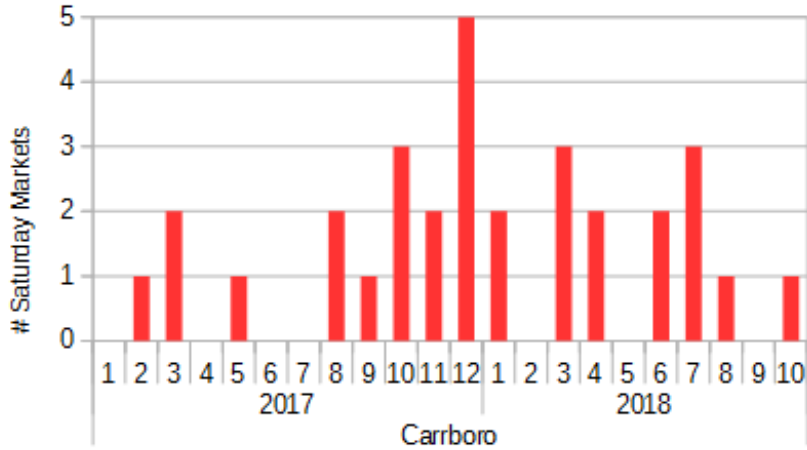
# Volunteer Staffing Summary

- Data source: signup.com (potentially incomplete for some markets)
- Includes only Saturday markets, not mid-week markets
- Shows % of market days that Donation Stations were staffed by at least one volunteer per shift



# Volunteer Staffing Detail

- Shows # of Saturday markets each month with no donation station volunteer staffing





# New Tool - Interview Questions

- ▶ Four areas for research questions

- ▶ Maintaining and growing donations
- ▶ Consistent volunteer staffing
- ▶ Volunteer retention
- ▶ Effectiveness of operation

- ▶ Stakeholders

- ▶ Market managers
- ▶ Volunteers
- ▶ Market goers
- ▶ Farmers

# New Tool - Interview Questions

Objective/ Research question	FF staff and materials	Target Stakeholders			
		Market managers	Volunteers	Market goers	Farmers
<b>Maintain/grow donations</b>					
How visible is FF at the market? Is the presence and visibility consistent from one week to another?	X	X	X	X	X
Do you believe that the stations are located at the optimal spot? If not, where would be a better location?	X	X	X	X	X
What are the market restrictions on the location of the donation station?	X	X			
Are market goers/farmers/recipients aware of FF and its mission? Where did they first hear of FF? Does the presence of FF at a market make the goer/farmer more or less likely to shop at/participate in the market?				X	X
How important is the presence of FF volunteers during the market hours to the success in collecting donations? Should the volunteers be there the entire time that the market is open? Should there be more than one FF volunteer at all times?	X	X	X		
What are the market restrictions on soliciting? Do these restrictions preclude FF volunteers from walking the crowd, handing out brochures, and/or putting up displays to raise awareness of the FF programs?	X	X			
Do volunteers always wear the FF apron identifying them as FF volunteers?			X		
Are there adequate brochures describing FF at the donation station each week?			X		
What kind of training do FF market volunteers receive? Is it adequate? If not, describe what is missing or could be done better?	X		X		
<b>Consistent volunteer staffing</b>					
How consistent is FF volunteer presence at the market? Is there usually one, two, or more volunteers?	X	X	X		
What requirements and training are offered to potential volunteers? Are they asked to commit to a certain schedule?	X				
What barriers do volunteers face in volunteering for more days/hours at the market?			X		

# New Tool - Interview Questions

Objective/ Research question	FF staff and materials	Target Stakeholders			
		Market managers	Volunteers	Market goers	Farmers
<b>Volunteer retention</b>					
What reasons do volunteers give for not continuing their FF volunteer service for more than one season/year?	X		X		
What are the demographic characteristics of the typical volunteer (e.g., students, retired individuals)? What are the characteristics of volunteer who are more likely to volunteer frequently and/or on a steady basis?	X				
Does the FF donation station have a volunteer sign-up sheet displayed? Is it effective in identifying volunteers?	X	X	X		
What other sources are used to recruit volunteers? Do these sources attract individuals with the characteristics most likely to volunteer consistently and for adequate lengths of time to invest in training?	X				
<b>Effectiveness of operation</b>					
How do volunteers decide what and how much to purchase each week? Are there issues surrounding this process?			X		
How do volunteers decide which farmers to purchase from? Are there issues surrounding this process?			X		
How do volunteers decide which farmers to request donations from at end of each market? Are there issues surrounding this process?			X		



# Sample Interview about Donation Station Volunteers

## Potential Questions to ask FF staff or determine from other FF sources

### ***Description of volunteers***

How consistent is presence at this market, i.e., how often at least one volunteer? Two or more?

What are the demographic characteristics of the typical volunteer (e.g., students, retired individuals)? What are the characteristics of volunteer who are more likely to volunteer frequently and/or on a steady basis?

## Potential Questions to ask volunteers

### ***Consistent staffing***

What barriers do you face in volunteering for more days/hours at the market?

Do you typically work at one market or different markets on different market days?

### ***Volunteer retention***

Do you planning to continue volunteering indefinitely or will your FFS volunteer service end at a particular time (e.g., end of class, end of school year)?

### ***Maintain/grow donations***

What kind of training for being a FFS market volunteer did you receive? Do you feel it was adequate? If not, describe what you felt was missing or could have been done better?

What is location of donation station at this market? Is there a “better” location for it?

Do you always wear the FFS apron? Any other FFS “marker”?

Are there adequate brochures describing FFS at the donation station for you to hand out?

What has been your experience and observations about the operation of this station?

How do you decide what and how much to purchase each week?

How do you decide which farmers to purchase from?

How do you decide which farmers to request donations from at end of each market?

If you are on the last shift of the day, do you always wait for someone to come and pick up the donations? Do you ever leave it with the market manager and/or on the curb?

# Observations About Donation Stations

- ▶ Volunteers don't always identify as being with FF (e.g., aprons or hats)
- ▶ Awkward and maybe inaccurate weighing of produce using analog bathroom scales
- ▶ Lack of consistent and detailed operational training for volunteers  
(e.g., guidelines on what produce to purchase at a market)  
*Note: no member of our team attended a volunteer training session*
- ▶ Inconsistent capture of volunteer attendance data (i.e., signup.com not always used)
- ▶ Inconsistent use of printed Activity Form (e.g., farm name not always recorded)
- ▶ Various factors may influence effectiveness of a Donation Station
  - placement within the market (at entrance vs. elsewhere)
  - demographics of volunteers
  - connections that volunteers have made with farmers
  - farmers market incentives (e.g. Eno River frequent market-goer coffee discount)
  - other