

Good Food Sold Here Pilot Project in Dalton, MN



Good Food Sold Here signage provides solid marketing and promotion for healthy foods at JC's General Store in Dalton, MN.



JC's new produce cooler displays fresh produce attractively, while reducing loss of spoiled produce.

Expanded Options, Increased Nutrition

What fruits and vegetables are on your shopping list this week? Many of us take for granted the accessibility and availability of healthy foods at our grocery stores. However, there are several urban neighborhoods and small towns in Minnesota where it is challenging to find fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grain bakery items, and other healthy foods. When people are limited by their options, their diets are therefore limited in nutrition.

Healthy food access has been a hot topic in public health, and more research points out that lack of access is often a barrier for consumers to achieve a healthy diet. The Good Food Sold Here Pilot Project is coordinated by Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H) is one of the grantees piloting the project. JC's General Store, a small family-owned grocery store in rural Dalton, Minn., was recruited by Katrina Mouser, dietitian for PS4H, to join the Good Food Sold Here partnership in spring 2018.

The pilot project targeted several areas of the store including fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen fruits and vegetables, low-sodium canned vegetables, canned fruits with no-added sugars, whole grains, healthy beverages, and a healthy snack checkout. Within each of these areas, the store was challenged to increase the number of offerings within each category. In conjunction with adding new items to the store, the project looked at creative marketing strategies around promotion, pricing, and placement.

Happy, Healthy Customers

As part of one of the promotion strategies, healthy recipes with nutrition tips were placed near the corresponding foods that are on sale. PartnerSHIP 4 Health also provided funding to purchase a new produce cooler, several display baskets, and additional signage with the Good Food Sold Here logos. These new additions will help draw customers to the healthy products, while also increasing the shelf life of the fresh produce and decreasing shrink for the store's bottom line.

After just a couple of months, customers have already noticed the difference in quantity and quality of produce at JC's General Store, which has contributed to more sales for the small town store. Trever Schlosser, owner of JC's, says "In small towns, customers are always excited to see improvements in their stores – and knowing they can still buy produce and healthy foods in our little town." Schlosser hopes to keep up their supply of produce and provide a wider variety of fruits and vegetables to keep their customers happy and healthy. Schlosser comments "From start to finish, the Good Food Sold Here project created good ideas, research, and partnership. I believe programs like this help us build relationships with our communities in making healthier food choices."

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