Methods & Implementation

The Food Trust implemented POS systems in 5 corner stores to determine the feasibility and reliability of this data collection method. A product database was built by scanning barcodes of items available in all 5 stores.

Components of POS implementation:
- Select stores for participation (high volume, high commitment)
- Ensure technical and in-store infrastructure requirements (internet connectivity, central server to receive/house POS data)
- Set up POS system software, equipment (scanner, touch screens), and customization for each store
- Train store owners and staff and provide ongoing technical assistance
- Develop criteria to enter, categorize and code products in database
- Scan individual products available in stores to build the database of items, UPCs, prices, and basic nutrition criteria
- Conduct ongoing data cleaning, analysis and reporting of inventory and sales
- Conduct regular system maintenance and resolve technical issues

Results

Table 1 shows 14 product categories, category descriptions, and relevant nutrition criteria. Figure 1 compares items in the POS product database vs. quantity sold (# items sold, not $) for 7 food/beverage and tobacco categories.

- 12,296 items were scanned and coded into one of 14 product categories.
- 67% of items were in one of 7 food/beverage or tobacco categories, which accounted for 92% of items sold from February to August, 2013.
- Within those 7 product categories, snacks and beverages were top sellers representing 38% and 26% of items sold.
- Grocery items were the most commonly available items (41% of items in inventory), but accounted for only 15% of quantity sold.
- Tobacco products made up 5% of inventory and 11% of quantity sold.
- Produce made up 1.6% of inventory and 1.1% of items sold.

Conclusion

HCSI is the largest corner store initiative in the country and is among the first to implement POS systems in corner stores. POS systems provide real-time objective reporting of corner store sales trends and are viable measurement tools for quantifying changes in customer purchases. Beverages and snacks dominate sales at corner stores (64% total). Programmatic efforts should continue to emphasize healthier choices in those categories, and expand produce sales. Ongoing POS analyses will allow researchers to explore the impact of marketing and store environment interventions on sales of healthier products.

1.1% 15.2% 11.4% 24.2% 2.8% 1.7% 1.3% 3.7%
Beverages Dairy Deli Grocery Produce Snacks Tobacco
25.8% 4.6% 4.2% 16.2%
% of Sales

1.6% 4.7% 80.7% 14.7% 5.9%
Beverages Dairy Deli Grocery Produce Snacks Tobacco
11/1/2013

Figure 1. Products in POS Database vs. Sales by Category (5 stores, Feb to Aug 2013)*

* Excludes apparel, auto, electronics, HABA, home goods, lottery and services, which comprise just 8% of items sold.