



Consumer Choice and Farmers Markets

What is the issue?

The increasing popularity of local food consumption can be attributed to the heightened awareness of food safety concerns, carbon emissions produced from food transportation, and an understanding of how large corporations' obtain their food supplies. Although there is increasing discussion on both the local and organic food movement independently, there is not a wide availability of literature examining the motivations and perceptions of consumers with regard to farmers' markets.

What did the researcher do?

The researchers compared two farmers markets in Toronto surveying 300 participants during the fall of 2011. The purpose of this study was to determine consumer motivations, benefits, and perceptions of farmers' markets.

Why is this research Useful?

Consumers to Toronto farmers' markets have placed a great emphasis on preferring local foods and supporting the local community, thus making it important for the farmers' markets to maintain or even increase this sense of localness for consumers. This research is useful in understanding the consumer profile in order to provide quality and healthy products and maintain the important sense of community at markets by maintaining local vendors with local and organic products,

What were the outcomes?

Findings indicate that the profile of the farmer's market visitor is female, well educated with a higher than average income. Quality of products offered (82%) and the ability to support the local community were the greatest, and most important motivators to frequent farmers' markets. Healthier diet (53%) and environmental concerns (51%) were also high motivations to frequent farmers' markets.

The two most common benefits stated by consumers were the quality of products (82%), followed by supporting their local communities (79%).

About the Researcher

Rachel Dodds is an Associate Professor at the Ted Rogers School of Management and her work focuses on sustainable tourism, CSR, islands and tourism policy

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