



Public Relations Proposal

Prepared for the Alachua County Farmers' Market

By

The Community Relations Committee
Florida Public Relations Association, Gainesville Chapter

Gainesville, Florida
August 2013

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Alachua County Farmers' Market is a canopied, open-air market located on S.R. 441 (N.W. 13th Street) in Gainesville. It is open every Saturday, year around, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. It is a growers-only market under the terms of its contract with Alachua County, which owns the property upon which the market operates. It is a source of pride among the vendors and board of directors that, with a single permitted exception, anyone selling produce, plants, and other products must have grown/produced the items themselves. It is the only growers-only farmers' market operating in the area.

The market was founded in 1972 to give growers a place to sell home-grown produce directly to the public to generate sustainable, farming-based income for producers. The market continues to provide a means for farmers to sell locally-grown produce for a reasonable profit to the citizens of Alachua County.

As part of its plan of work, the Community Relations Committee of the Florida Public Relations Association Gainesville Chapter selected the Alachua County Farmers' Market as its recipient of pro-bono public relations work for the year 2012-13. The committee worked throughout the year to assist and research the operations of the market, which culminated in this document.

The following information is included in this PR proposal: 1) Summaries of all Florida Public Relations Associations' elements of research, including market research from an in-person and online customer survey; Alachua County Farmers' Market board focus group findings; a SWOT analysis; and findings from the PIE Center North Central Florida report; a social media analysis; and a competitor analysis; 2) An assessment of the needs as expressed by the board/management versus findings of customer surveys and consultant observations; 3) Specific recommendations and suggested ways of implementing those recommendations and proposed built-in means of assessing success using data from the customer survey, SWOT analysis, etc., as benchmarks for research to be performed in two years' time.

Our group of public relations professionals recognizes and appreciates the cooperative spirit, involvement and dedication of the market's management team, its board of directors and member-vendors. We find it heartening that, even as this report is being compiled, the market's management is moving ahead with plans to attract a local coffee vendor in response to desires expressed by customers who responded to our survey.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gainesville FPRA Community Relations Committee adopted the Alachua County Farmers' Market as its pro bono client for the 2012-13 membership year. The market's management and board of directors specifically requested our counsel regarding maximizing the customer base and improving its brand and image in the community.

Methodology

A review of existing literature and two University of Florida reports on local food, one of which dealt with the attitudes of residents of north-central Florida. The committee also conducted original research including a focus group and SWOT analysis with the managers, board and selected vendors; a review of other local farmers markets, as well as markets in the Western U.S. and a thorough examination of the ACFM's use of social media. The "Takeaways" from each of these activities were compiled and formed the basis for the recommendations that are provided in this report.

Core Strengths

The ACFM has core strengths, including a covered pavilion, adequate parking, a loyal customer base and enthusiastic vendors. It is the only "producers-only" market in the area and that is a source of pride for the vendors whose wares include fruits and vegetables, plants, eggs, meat and milk products. The vendors and customers seem to understand the market's unique selling proposition: Healthful, locally grown food purchased from the farmer that grew it. Eighty-two percent of the customers we surveyed said that is the primary reason they patronize the market. According to the UF/IFAS PIE Center research, 71 percent of the local population purchases locally produced food at farmers' markets and roadside stands.

Major weakness

The biggest barrier to increasing customer traffic is visibility. The market needs to improve its signage to make it more visible from cars traveling on N.W. 13th Street and 34th Street. We also recommend signage at the major intersection of N.W. 13th Street and 53rd Avenue, just south of the market, and potentially a person, perhaps in agricultural garb, beckoning to passersby and greeting customers as they pull into the parking lot.

Promotion and Outreach

ACFM has a strong social media presence. Social media experts on our committee reviewed that presence and provided specific recommendations for increasing its reach. Unfortunately, there is no budget for paid advertising. Therefore the committee recommends placing a priority on earned media. Story ideas can involve localization of national trends and someone – a vendor, student intern or volunteer, perhaps – should focus on publicity and earned media. We also suggested the market pursue grants to fund improved signage and advertising.

In the past, the market has benefited from guerilla marketing in the form of a "cash mob" that descended on it in December 2012. We recommend continued use of such imaginative promotion. Perhaps a similar strategy could help with the decline in customers on those weekends when the Gator football team plays home games.

The committee offered other, specific recommendations:

Research

- Continue to conduct research through social media, newsletter calls-to-action, Survey Monkey and similar services. Find out what makes customers keep coming back.
- Repeat all or most of the research performed this year again in 2015-16 to assess progress.

Message

- *It's all about fresh produce from local farmers.* This is the only producers-only market in the area. Make this a point of pride in all of your marketing efforts.

Pursue alliances with like-minded groups.

- Adopt the stated goal of aligning itself more closely with groups whose missions complement its own.

Augment staff with interns, volunteers.

Improve communications with the Alachua County Commission and Extension.

Adopt some written, quantifiable goals and a timetable for accomplishing them.

Smaller-scale suggestions that can improve the customers' experience:

- Provide a coffee and/or breakfast vendor in or near the market according to market regulations/policy. Also, provide seating/tables for those drinking coffee/eating breakfast/staying.
- Include a list/poster at the front of market listing which farms/organizations are selling that day (which could utilize a reusable/erasable board) the list for which vendors could be in charge. (Also post on social media as often as makes sense/is possible.)

Alachua County Farmer's Market
Research components conducted by
FPRA Community Relations Committee
August 2012 - July 2013

BACKGROUND

In 2012, the Alachua County Farmers' Market submitted an application to the Florida Public Relations Association Gainesville Chapter in response to the chapter's Request for Proposals from local not-for-profit organizations. For a number of years our chapter has consulted with selected nonprofits that have a public relations challenge or opportunity and the lack of resources to address it. The chapter's goal is to support the community by assisting the selected not-for-profit organization. The farmers' market was selected as our client for 2012-13.

The committee was asked to respond to the following marketing challenges, outlined by market manager Schuyler Sloane in the proposal:

- 1. We seek to maximize our customer base in Gainesville and the surrounding areas. We seek to make all potentially interested customers in the area aware of our market and what products our farmers have to offer. The ACFM has lacked the revenue and participation necessary to maintain an effective brand/image. Promotional material for our organization is limited and outdated for the same reason. The revenue of ACFM inc. is very limited due to the nature of the industry and the expenses necessary to lease and maintain our facilities.*
- 2. Primarily, we would like to bring more business to vendors at our market. Secondary objectives include increasing public awareness of the availability and advantages of farmer's markets as a source of food.*

METHODOLOGY

To develop recommendations for meeting these marketing and communications goals, the Community Relations Committee conducted a review of existing literature and discovered two timely reports by the University of Florida Center for Public Information and Education ("PIE Center"), which provided valuable insights based on focus groups with customers, one of which was held in Gainesville.

The committee also conducted a variety of original research, including:

1. a focus group with the farmers' market board of directors, managers and selected vendors;
2. a "Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats" (SWOT) analysis, also involving the board of directors, managers and selected vendors;
3. review of farmers markets in the Western U.S.;
4. review and analyses of the market's use of social media; and
5. an analysis of local competitors.

We developed "Takeaways" from each of our research elements, and then combined those conclusions and observations to address the concerns the market manager laid out in the Proposal.

GAP ANALYSIS

Since information was drawn from two groups, vendors and market managers and customers, we were able to perform some gap analysis to determine whether concerns expressed by the board and managers are actually shared by customers. This will help the market focus on concerns that are actually shared by customers rather than concerns the vendors believe their customers have.

Following are concerns and desires shared by market managers, board and vendors as well as customers:

- Have a vendor provide coffee on-site
- Have vendors clearly state what their farm/organization is on booth (signage)
- Additional seating for customers (in the shade)
- Increase the variety and number of vendors
- Keep vendors' location consistent from week to week
- Vendors should stay until the market's true closing time
- Bring more cooking demonstrations to the market

One item that concerned the vendor/manager focus group was to make the market more "fun," like the Wednesday market in downtown Gainesville. This is not a major concern expressed by customers.

Conversely, the following concerns expressed by customers were given scant mention in the focus group or SWOT analysis:

- Extend the hours and days in which the market is open
- Clearly inform which farmers are organic/use pesticides
- Provide a full list of all local farms working at the market
- Post what to expect ahead of time (if first week selling XYZ, post info by Friday)
- Post Facebook photos/info of what's available each Saturday as early as possible

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

We have summarized our recommendations and conclusions as responses to the concerns expressed in the ACFM's original application for assistance. We have also provided some observations and recommendations that exceed the scope of the original proposal.

ACFM Concern #1: “We seek to maximize our customer base in Gainesville and the surrounding areas.”

Our Response: While the ACFM should try to respond to customers’ desires as reflected in the customer survey, it is even more important to focus on and build on the market’s core strengths: Fresh produce from local farmers; a nice facility; a good location.

The ACFM should respond (and is responding) to customer-expressed desires for coffee/breakfast availability, increased seating area, etc., but its “producers only” policy, the time it is open (Saturday, 8:30-1:00 p.m.) and its location preclude its replicating the festive atmosphere of the downtown Wednesday market. The strict “producers-only” policy also precludes its duplicating the upscale flashiness of the Saturday market at Haile, which incorporates crafts and secondary market sellers. The ACFM has a loyal and enthusiastic customer base: Thirty-eight percent of customers we surveyed reported visiting the market “a few times a month.” They understand the market’s unique selling proposition – healthful, locally grown food – with 82 percent saying purchasing locally-grown goods is the primary reason they patronize the market.

There is strong potential for expanding the market’s customer base. ACFM’s market manager said in the focus group that customer traffic has quadrupled in last three to four years – an encouraging trend. A UF/IFAS PIE Center survey of north-central Florida residents earlier this year showed 71 percent of respondents purchased locally produced food at farmers’ markets and roadside stands. Foods purchased through local market channels in the area in 2011-12 was estimated at \$599 million, with \$134 million of that purchased from farmers markets, roadside stands, U-pick and special arrangement.

ACFM Concern #2: “We seek to make all potentially interested customers in the area aware of our market and what products our farmers have to offer.”

Our Response: The committee believes one of the biggest barriers to increasing customer traffic is lack of visibility. The market is bordered by two heavily-traveled roads. It is near a Super Walmart and adjoins the county Senior Center. It needs to be more visible from both roads. Management is working to address the need for improved signage.

We suggest the market might also consider some physical promotion gimmicks, perhaps something as simple as having an individual in stereotypical “farmer” garb waving, beckoning and welcoming customers as they drive into the parking lot. (We understand such a person probably could not wield a sign, due to county ordinances.) If possible, the market should also consider signage at the intersection of 13th Street and 53rd Avenue as it is located about ½ mile north of that busy intersection.

Unlike competing area markets, ACFM has a strong social media presence. The committee has provided an extensive analysis of the market’s social media, along with specific recommendations. Those recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Be sure to cross-promote on Facebook.
- Make use of the Facebook “share” feature.
- Continue the heavy use of photos and the use of questions in posts.
- Survey your followers on Facebook to ask questions about what they’d like to see on the page, what they already enjoy seeing, and what they would change about the page, etc.

ACFM Concern #2: “The ACFM has lacked the revenue and participation necessary to maintain an effective brand/image. Promotional material for our organization is limited and outdated for the same reason. The revenue of ACFM inc. is very limited due to the nature of the industry and the expenses necessary to lease and maintain our facilities. Primarily, we would like to bring more business to vendors at our market.”

Our Response: Currently the market relies on its social media presence to attract and retain customers, and its staff does an excellent job in this area. The market’s social media projects a favorable image. Nevertheless, the nature of social media limits its reach to individuals who own and use computers and who choose to participate in social media. On the other hand, customer demographics do seem to support the market’s social media involvement: The customer survey conducted for ACFM found that an average of 50 percent of customers surveyed were between 45 and 64 years old. Thirty-five percent of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 years old, well within the age demographic known to embrace social media.

The market has developed a list of email addresses and periodically sends an electronic newsletter to that list. The market also works to be mentioned in the local publication that concentrates on local food and is aimed at locavores.

There appears to be virtually no budget for paid advertising, so earned media coverage must be accorded high priority. Local media should be kept abreast of special events. Other story ideas might involve localization of national trends. *A student intern or volunteer should, under the supervision of management, be charged with developing and executing a plan to attract and sustain the attention of local media. Example: Contact the UF College of Journalism and Communications for public relations internship opportunities.*

Early in our discussions, market managers expressed hope they would be able to obtain grant money, with the assistance of Florida Organic Growers, to fund an underwriting campaign on local PBS radio stations. We suggest the market continue to harness the grant-writing expertise of FOG and others (perhaps the University of Florida Extension small farms specialists or Alachua County Extension) to fund increased outreach for the market and its vendors.

The committee was intrigued with a concept mentioned during the focus group: a “cash mob” that FOG organized which descended on the ACFM in December 2012. The market should *continue to embrace this kind of imaginative guerilla marketing. Perhaps the market could employ similar strategy* to address the drop-off in customers when the Gator football team plays at home.

ACFM Concern #3: Secondary objectives include increasing public awareness of the availability and advantages of farmer’s markets as a source of food.

Our Response: The committee believes this is a worthy objective that the market will achieve by expanding its customer base and conducting more effective outreach activities. For example, the growing public enthusiasm for local, fresh food can serve as a peg for earned media efforts.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Conduct Research:

- It is imperative that the ACFM continue research into providing the best market environment for these loyal customers. Reach out to them through social media, newsletter calls-to-action, surveys, etc, and find out what makes them keep coming back and use that information to attract others like them.
- *Conduct all or most of the research found within this document again in 2015-16.* Plan for an updated assessment of the farmers' market's success in two year's time, using already built-in means of assessment, including an updated customer survey, SWOT analysis, etc., as benchmarks.

Stay on message

It's all about fresh produce from local farmers. A total of 82 percent of customers surveyed said that their primary reason for visiting the market is to purchase locally-grown produce/goods. The statewide PIE Center survey (included in this report) ranked Gainesville No. 2 in the state in "highest value of local food purchased as a share of total food purchases for at-home use." The market should continue to focus on and build on this core strength: Fresh produce from local farmers. Highlight your growers' only mission. Most customers don't realize the intricacies of what it means to require vendors to grow their own product (as opposed to re-selling). Make this a point of pride in all of your marketing efforts. Strive to highlight the "local" angle in other ways (as seen in the social media analysis section of this document). Use others' research (ex: PIE Center report) to share news and information about the benefits and reasons for shopping local. The PIE Center reports that "consumers identify with these environmental benefits and therefore, will likely attend to and respond to messages including said benefits."

Pursue alliances with like-minded groups

The ACFM should adopt the stated goal of aligning itself more closely with groups whose missions complement its own. Some of the groups mentioned in our discussions included UF/IFAS Small Farms specialists, Alachua County Extension, Alachua County Library System, Alachua County Senior Center, Alachua County Farm Bureau, Florida Farm Bureau, nutritionists, local chefs and restaurants. Perhaps staffing could be augmented by using volunteers (through the Volunteer Center) or interns from UF and/or Santa Fe.

Liaison with Alachua County Commission

The market needs to improve communications with the Alachua County Commission. Perhaps commissioners could be invited to the market, individually, for a special event. At any rate, market representatives should be assigned to liaison with the commission as well as the Alachua County Extension office, follow commission meeting agendas and attend commission meetings when agenda items might affect the market.

Planning, goals and objectives:

The ACFM board and management should adopt a few quantifiable goals and a timetable for accomplishing them. Broad example: Goal: Increase number of vendors by 30 percent and increase customer traffic by 25 percent. Method: Entice people using local media/social media/traditional marketing to come to enjoy musicians, picnic facilities and regular schedule of events. Measurement: (Determine amount of time in which goal will be measured and whether goal was met.)

Smaller-scale suggestions that can improve the customers' experience:

- Provide a coffee and/or breakfast vendor in or near the market according to market regulations/policy. Also, provide seating/tables for those drinking coffee/eating breakfast/staying.
- Include a list/poster at the front of market listing which farms/organizations are selling that day (which could utilize a reusable/erasable board) the list for which vendors could be in charge. (Also post on social media)

FOCUS GROUP TAKEAWAYS

Below are the key points made during a focus group conducted for the Alachua County Farmers' Market board and market managers on June 8, 2013.

While the board and managers have a number of ideas to expand the market and its customer appeal, there are some characteristics that cannot be changed. These include:

- **The “*producers only*” character of market.** Mandated by the agreement Alachua County, this makes it unique in the area. Other markets permit re-sellers, crafts, etc. This market is limited to local producers; one non-producer member is permitted under the lease agreement.
- **The role of the market is to move produce.** Period. Group was unanimous on this.

The group would like to see the following elements improve:

- More consistent stream of customers during market hours
- More customers, generally
- Keep competing events (e.g. home football games) from cutting into customer flow
- This market should be more “fun” like Wed. downtown market
- Customers want coffee, perhaps breakfast (this is confirmed by customer survey)

Strengths to be taken advantage of

- Loyal customer base
- Good social media presence
- Good relationships between customers and vendors
- Perceived trend toward younger customer base
- This is a “working peoples’ market”
- Manager: “Traffic has quadrupled in last 3-4 years
- Nice physical plant with restrooms, canopy, parking, etc.

Things that probably don't matter much

- Competition from other farmers' markets (Haile too far away; Wed. market is on Wednesdays and located downtown.)
- Competition from Publix and Walmart

Expressed vision

- Increase number of vendors 30-40 percent in next 2-3 years
- More vendors will increase customer traffic 25 percent
- Become a destination not only for food, but entertainment, picnicking

Consulting team's comments and observations after examining focus group report:

While the ACFM should try to respond to customers' desires as reflected in the customer survey, it should continue to focus on and build on its core strengths: Fresh produce from local farmers. While the group unanimously agreed the purpose of the market is to "move produce," discussion did move to concerns that the ACFM does not provide certain things other markets do. For example, the festival atmosphere of the downtown market on Wednesday and the upscale flashiness of the Haile market on Saturdays.

The board recognizes the need for more and better signage to signal its presence. *Signage should be a priority on 34th Street, SR 441 and if possible at the intersection of 441 and 53rd Avenue.* The market has a good strategic location near the confluence of two major thoroughfares, S.R. 441 and 53rd Avenue.

The board should focus on building this market and not be too concerned about the other farmer's markets in the area. They are located quite a distance away.

Currently the market relies heavily on social media for promotion. If, as the group believes, the customer base is getting younger, this avenue continues to be a good one. The customer survey conducted for ACFM found that an average of 50 percent of customers surveyed were between 45 and 64 years old. Thirty-five percent were ages 25-44 years old.

There appears to be no budget for paid advertising, so earned media coverage must be accorded some priority. Local media should be kept abreast of special events. Other story ideas might involve localization of national trends. *A student intern or volunteer should, under the supervision of management, be charged with developing and executing a plan to attract and sustain the attention of local media.*

Harness the grant-writing expertise of Florida Organic Growers. This may be a way to find advertising funding or increase funding for staff.

The group mentioned a "cash mob" organized to descend on the ACFM in December. *Continue to embrace this kind of guerilla marketing. Perhaps consider using similar strategy to address the drop-off in customers when the Gator football team plays at home.*

ACFM should broaden its alliances with groups whose missions complement those of the market. The group cited a number of organizations and institutions that could be called on for support. These include Florida Organic Growers, Extension, University of Florida (UF-IFAS has small farm specialists on its faculty), Alachua Farm Bureau, Alachua County Library, Farm Credit, Senior Center, county commissioners and schools.

The ACFM board and management should adopt a few quantifiable goals and a timetable for accomplishing them. Some goals mentioned by the focus group included: increase number of vendors by 30-30 percent; increase customer traffic by 25 percent; entice people to come to enjoy musicians, picnic facilities and regular schedule of events.

SWOT Analysis

Below is a categorized listing of the SWOT analysis [Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats] of the Alachua County Farmers' Market conducted by the FPRA Community Relations Committee with the market's board and managers on June 8, 2013.

STRENGTHS

- ***** Loyal Customers (3)
- **** Active Managers (2)
- *** Local, fresh food (3)
- *** Variety (4)
- ** Growers only! (3)
- ** People with knowledge, recipes
- * Good sized customer base
- * Shelter/Facility (3)
- * Accessibility
- * Volunteer board of directors
- Early morning openings
- Good source of plants (2)
- Good source of information, especially for young people

WEAKNESSES

- ***** Small budget
- ***** Lack of communication with county government and Extension
- *** Board of Directors slow to decide, execute
- ** Growers only! (3)
- ** Separation of personal and professional ethics
- ** Rules, regulations are complicated
- * Open only one day per week
- * Need volunteers during busy season (Sell water, etc. at profit to market)
- * Limited parking
- * Located away from town
- * Open 8:30 AM
- * Dilapidated Facilities
- Some members' authoritative attitudes
- History of inconsistent management, record-keeping
- Bad relations between some vendors
- Consideration of personal space between vendors

OPPORTUNITIES

- ***** Advertising
- **** More signage at market
- **** Expand hours, days market is open
- ***** Breakfast and beverages (Food truck?)
- *** New commodities, vendors
- *** Grants
- *** More strategic alliances (e.g., Florida Organic Growers)
- *** Bands, color, noise, music
- ** Fundraising to support advertising
- ** Modify gate/fence; improve pedestrian traffic
- * Use space to full advantage
- ** More online advertising
- * More advertising around town
- Involvement with schools
- Donate leftover produce and plants

THREATS

- ***** Potential lawsuits (discrimination, food safety, safety of customers)
- ***** Feuds, suspicions among vendors affect professionalism
- ***** State, county regulations (Cottage Food Law cited as example)
- ** Competition from other markets
- ** Growing conditions uncertain (weather, etc.)
- * Internal politics; some members intent on controlling market
- * Flea markets posing as farmers markets
- * Lack of dialogue with county commissioners
- * Need better understanding of Memo of Understanding with county
- County politicians that do not like the market
- Potential for weather damage to facility
- Leased property; some say county might not renew lease

SWOT Analysis (Takeaways)

Below are recommendations based on feedback from the SWOT analysis conducted at the Alachua County Farmers' Market focus group on June 8, 2013.

Strengths:

- Enfranchise loyal customers by instituting a customer reward program among vendors, that also emphasizes other market strengths, such as locally grown, variety, and knowledgeable vendors (ex. Have a raffle of sorts that features rotating questions pertaining to various vendors. Customers could complete their cards over the course of a week or month and could be entered in to win a prize donated by a vendor.

Weaknesses:

- Create a subcommittee (two to three people) on the board of directors to liaise between the county government and extension office. Schedule an introductory meeting and follow-up as needed. Report progress at meetings.
- Institute a regular (bi-monthly) vendor development program (maybe offer incentives for attending) that covers various topics: rule and regulation overview, professional ethics, market promotional opportunities, the importance of vendor relations (within the market), etc.

Opportunities:

- Create a promotional subcommittee (three to five people) on the board of directors to assist with advertising and marketing efforts and report progress at meetings. Initial tasks could include:
 1. Additional signage
 2. Arranging food and beverage truck displays
 3. Researching/approaching new vendors
 4. Researching and forming strategic partnerships

Threats:

- Provide an easy way for vendors to address issues with the board: ex. comment cards that are reviewed at each meeting.

RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS

A survey was conducted in June 2013 with customers of the Alachua County Farmers Market. An electronic version of the survey was distributed via Facebook to the 1,000+ followers of the page, as well as via the Market's electronic newsletter. Additionally, customers were presented with an abbreviated version of the survey to take in-person at the Market. Between the two survey distributions, 84 individuals responded providing feedback on how often they visit the Market, why they shop there, how they heard about it and much more.

Some key takeaways from the survey were:

Of the 84 respondents...

- 38 percent visit the Market a few times each month
- 63 percent heard about the Market from a friend or by word of mouth
- 41 percent live within 5-10 minutes of the Market
- 82 percent of respondents said their primary reason for visiting the market is to purchase locally-grown goods
- 50 percent of customers are between the ages of 45 and 64

Some recommendations on how to improve the market include:

- Extend the hours and days in which the Market is open
- Increase the variety and number of vendors
- Have a vendor provide coffee
- Group vendors by products and keep their location consistent from week to week

*To view full survey responses, see **Appendix C***

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

As of July 2013, the Alachua County Farmers' Market operates a successful Facebook page and website. On the Facebook page, the manager's use of photos is especially noteworthy and makes the site appealing for the exact reasons its users follow it: for local produce. The "fresh this morning" posts on Saturdays are visually attractive and successfully promote the produce/products of the market. The ACFM website is also effectively utilized as events/newsletter/info are promoted and updated. The landing page for the website also includes a social media ticker showing the latest Facebook posts, which is especially prudent for cross-promotion of social media efforts.

Local farmers' markets social media (as of July 2013):

- ACFM has most-followed Facebook page currently with 1,044 likes.
- Union Street has 802 likes.
- Haile has no Facebook, although their website is effective.
- Tioga has no website and no social media presence.
- Newberry's market has no website and no social media presence. Their only online mentions are small and are on community sites.
- High Springs has a Facebook page but has only 61 likes and very little activity and few postings.

Other farmer's markets with large social media presence:

- Include extensive use of Facebook tabs with tabs dedicated to coupons and vendors, as well as health and wellness information and cooking tips, as well as other tips pertinent to items offered at markets; for example, those with flowers/plants for sale offer arranging tips, plant care tips. Examples include Somerville Winter Farmers (vendor tab) and Woodstock Farmers Market (newsletter tab).
- Some Facebook pages deliver up-front messages that all of what is sold at their markets is grown/made locally. They have badges/buttons/seals that say "I Love Local" - often the word "love" is replaced with a heart. In addition to a graphic/symbol they have designed and placed on their sites, they include information near the top of their pages explaining this commitment to locally produced merchandise.
- Some markets have added Twitter and Pinterest to their social media presence, although this is not yet common practice.

Suggestions for the Alachua County Farmers' Market's Facebook page:

- Be sure to cross-promote on Facebook. For example, if mentioning Frog Song Organics in a post, tag them (by using the @ symbol and waiting for the name to pop up) in your post.
- Make use of the "share" feature. If the Gainesville Sun, etc., posts a story about ACFM, hit share to repost on your page (this allows for cross-promotion, inclusion of the link(s), and verifies your claim).

- When events occur at the market, take photos of the goings on and the customers (you can even have them pose together with friends, family) and post all photos as an album on Facebook. Make sure your settings allow followers to tag themselves in photos (and encourage them to do so), as this will lead to more likes as friends of those posted see their loved ones tagged in ACFM photos.
- Continue the heavy use of photos and the use of questions in posts. The manager interacts with followers/customers in a very natural, engaging way.
- Survey your followers on Facebook to ask questions about what they'd like to see on the page, what they already enjoy seeing, and what they would change about the page, etc.
- Facebook logo (or "profile photo"): This needs to be changed to fit the dimensions required for Facebook. Currently, if someone directly visits the ACFM Facebook page, the logo (profile photo) is cropped and unreadable.
- Incorporate information about your vendors with a Facebook tab. Include information, photos and a link to their Facebook pages if possible.
- Add a Facebook tab for your newsletter to add reach for this piece and to increase the length of time readers can take advantage of it. You could link up "subscribe" options here in addition to what is already being done on the website.
- Consider offering coupons (and promoting those via Facebook)
- Take the recipe idea already in play on the ACFM and incorporate into Facebook page. You could offer seasonal recipes for produce that is currently being sold. Example: A local chef/restaurant rep/food blogger (who might benefit from the cross-promotion) could agree to help initiate this element by appearing in a booth/tent to talk live about seasonal recipes and/or you could coordinate their advice/recipes with postings to the Facebook page. Eventually, you could include video of recipes/cooking demos.
- Spend money (or request in-kind donation, student submissions, etc.) for a graphic artist to design the cover photo that incorporates the name of the market on top. This person could also work on redoing the dimensions for your Facebook logo (profile photo).
- Use Facebook to emphasize that ACFM is about "local." Utilize graphics (preferably designed in-house) with an I Love Local, or We are Local, etc., theme.
- Check out what other farmers' markets are doing via Facebook across the nation. Borrow ideas that could work for ACFM, and learn from mistakes that others are making.

Linked-In:

Our recommendation is to deactivate the ACFM Linked-In account for the time being. The format does not fit with your audience/goals at this point in time.

Website:

ACFM might want to consider a different URL (e.g., AlachuaFarmersMarket.com) for the main website. It's our understanding that your customers might not equate "441 market" with the Alachua County Farmers' Market. The brand of the market, even if URL is kept as is, should be consistent.

Options for the future:

Blogging:

We recommend (if time/manpower allows) starting a very simple blog, which can include a variety of relevant items, such as event info, recipes, green living, etc. You could have guest bloggers from the vendors, others in the community who specialize or have vested interest in local food. These posts could be published via website, Facebook, newsletter, and any other future platform.

Twitter:

Twitter might be the next logical step after blogging. This platform could be used as a real-time element to promote the market and share relevant information about local farming, etc.

Pinterest:

Should all other social media requirements be met with time management ease, Pinterest might be a fun way to share information about farming/local food. This would be a purely supplemental site for those in your audience/reach who 1) are interested in ACFM 2) are actively using Pinterest. One bonus, however, is that Pinterest has an “evergreen” element, which means that many posts (healthy living, etc.) will be relevant virtually forever. Market events promotion, for example, would not work well on this platform.

Key Takeaways From PIE Research

Local Food Systems in North-Central Florida: Consumer Characteristics and Economic Impacts

By Alan W. Hodges, Ph.D., Extension Scientist
and Thomas J. Stevens, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Florida, Food and
Resource Economics Department

Report found here: <http://www.fred.ifas.ufl.edu/economic-impact-analysis/pdf/Northcentral-Florida-local-food-survey-2-6-13.pdf>

This research on local food consumption in north-central Florida is timely and pertinent to the Alachua County Farmers' Market and board members. All board members, market managers are encouraged to read the full report if they have not already done so.

Key findings relevant to the Alachua County Farmers' Market:

- There is no widely accepted definition of "local food." The most common definition reported was "within a radius of 100 miles of home," although a substantial number of respondents said local food is food grown in Florida while many chose the more restrictive definition of "within my county."
- Attributes of local food systems that were indicated by respondents as "very important" were "freshness" (92.6 percent) and "food safety" (80.8 percent), followed by "nutrition" (65.4 percent), "price" (63.9 percent), "food security (58.2 percent), "pesticide free" (49.2 percent), "shelf life" (44.5 percent) "reduced transportation" (30.8 percent) "organic certified" (22.6 percent) and "having relationship to producers" (13.1 percent).
- Factors that were regarded as potentially "very limiting" for local food systems by at least 20 percent of respondents were "high price" (35.2 percent), "seasonal availability only certain times of the year" (21 percent), "unavailability or limited selection of local foods in your area" (21.3 percent) and "Farmers' market days or times are inconvenient" (20.9 percent)
- 71 percent of respondents indicated they purchased locally produced food at farmers' markets and roadside stands.
- The total annual value of foods purchased through local market channels in north-central Florida during 2011-12 was estimated at \$599 million, \$134 million of that was purchased from farmers markets, roadside stands , U-pick or special arrangement.
- The total value of local food purchases averaged \$1,353 per household.
- For local food purchased from all sources in north-central Florida, the largest food category was vegetables, valued at \$120 million, representing 21.5 percent of the total.
- The total economic impact for the region in 2011-12 were estimated at 10,927 full-time and part-time jobs, \$267 million in labor income (employee wages, salaries and benefits).

*For the three-page executive summary of PIE Center's "Local Food Systems in North-Central Florida: Consumer Characteristics and Economic Impacts," see **Appendix D**.*

COMPETITOR(S) ANALYSIS

Below is a breakdown of local competitors compared to Alachua County Farmers' Market.

Ward's Market

www.wardsgainesville.com/local-difference/

Ward's Supermarket is the only locally-owned and operated grocery in Gainesville. The Ward's Market family has been committed to providing the best selection, quality and prices for more than 60 years. They offer a bountiful array of fresh local produce, seafood, meat, baked goods, beer and wine. Ward's Market is dedicated to freshness. Ward's Market specializes in original offerings, such as family-secret home-made jellies, sauces, dressings and salsa.

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Saturday: 8am-8pm

Sunday: 9am - 7pm

USP: The only locally-owned and operated grocery in Gainesville ---- "Think Fresh. Eat Local."

Promotions: Ward's Supermarket has weekly specials that can be printed out on their website.

Events: The Ward's Supermarket Facebook page promotes wine tastings.

Online Presence/Branding:

Ward's Supermarket website has a bright, welcoming homepage with a slideshow of rotating images and a supermarket logo at the top. The individual labeled tabs on the left side and top make the website easily accessible. From chocolate to plants and natural body care to BBQ, the website promotes a variety of the markets offerings. The website also has a link to the Ward's Supermarket Facebook page. Ward's Market emphasizes "Think fresh, eat local," but promotes selling beer and wine from around the world. The website seems to be updated regularly, as weekly specials are posted as well as seasonal offerings.



COMPETITOR(S) ANALYSIS

Social Media

Twitter: N/A

Facebook: Ward's Supermarket has a Facebook page that is updated frequently with eye-catching images, healthy tips, fresh local produce, special sales, recipes, holidays and weekly ads. The Facebook page has 2,909 likes and receives many comments, likes and shares on each post. The cover photo is of the supermarket 60 years ago and represents business of more than 60 years. The page looks as though it is regularly managed and updated.



Union Street Farmers Market

<http://unionstreetfarmersmkt.com/>

Located in the center of downtown Gainesville since 1996, the Union Street Farmers Market vendors work hard each week to maintain its status as the preeminent year-round family and community oriented event held in the area. Situated on the Bo Diddley Community Plaza at 111 E. University Ave, each week local farmers, bakers, artisans, musicians, and dancers join with our intensely loyal customers in a timeless celebration of this community's seasonal bounty. Open 52 weeks of the year the market continues its quest to make the world a better place- one vegetable at a time.

Hours of Operation:

Every Wednesday 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

USP: Union Street Farmers Market is located in the heart of downtown Gainesville.

Online Presence/Branding: Featured on VisitGainesville's website: <http://www.visitgainesville.com/attractions/union-street-farmers-market/>

The Union Street Farmers Market website has an inviting homepage for customers with rotating images of local produce, vendors and customers. The homepage also includes "Featured this Week," which describes what's in season and the items that will be at the farmers market that Wednesday. This information is updated weekly. The website also displays the Union Street Farmers Market logo and has tabs/drop down menu items for easy navigation.



Events: Union Street Farmers Market has live music every week starting at 5:15 p.m.

Social Media

Twitter: N/A

Facebook: Union Street Farmers Market has a Facebook page that is updated weekly with descriptions of what is the “feature of the week.” The cover photo is of radishes and past cover photos have correlated with the seasons, such as pumpkins, Halloween costumes and football tailgates. The Facebook page has 833 likes and receives a few likes, comments and shares on each post. The various Facebook posts include things such as announcements, best uses of food (i.e. make a painting with a stalk of celery), features of the week and images of vegetable art. Union Street Farmers Market also promoted the Alachua County’s “I Love Local Food Week” on their Facebook page.



Haile Farmers Market

<http://www.hailefarmersmarket.com/>

Haile Farmers Market is farmer-owned and operated. Their mission is to help local farm families by providing them with a direct farm to family retail market. Also, to keep customers healthy with the freshest variety of fruits and vegetables grown in the Gainesville community.

Hours of Operation: Every Saturday 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

USP: Haile Farmers Market is the largest Farmers Market in the Gainesville area.

Online Presence/Branding: Featured on VisitGainesville’s website: <http://www.visitgainesville.net/attractions/haile-village/>

Haile Farmers Market website is bright and cheerful, but lacks content and information. The website look as if it’s not updated frequently. However, the website does list the farmers market monthly cooking classes and all of the market vendors. There are several images on the website, but they aren’t directly on the homepage and may not have been updated in awhile. Also, the website doesn’t have a Haile Farmers Market logo anywhere. Compared to other farmers market websites, the Haile Farmers Market website is not up to par.



Events: Haile Farmers Market has monthly themed cooking classes in their “Kitchen Corner.” The events include cooking classes such as “Salad Days,” “Jam in an Hour” and “Have you tried that Raw?” Some of the cooking classes have a local vendor that will share a recipe with the class and use their products. Also, Haile Farmers Market allows customers to submit a “special cooking skill” that will be considered a topic for an upcoming “Kitchen Corner” cooking class.

Social Media

Twitter: N/A

Facebook: N/A

Analysis of Farmers’ Markets in Western U.S.

Below is an analysis of three successful areas for farmers’ markets in western United States that are relevant to the Alachua County Farmers’ Market.

California

- Several farmers market in California are open more than one day including Sundays.
- California farmers markets have a large variety of food and are great for trying new food.
- In a 2010 article by CNN on top 10 farmers market in the U.S., three were in California.
- Farmers markets in Santa Monica provide gardening classes and recycling events such as “Free Compost Giveaway” which allow customers to participate in planting plants and gathering compost.
- Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in San Francisco has events such as “Tacolicious Thursday” with a guest chef taco, “Herb Celebration” where customers create bouquets of herbs to take home and cooking demos every Saturday that features a new chef.
- The Original Farmers Market in Los Angeles has a summer music series that starts on Memorial Day and goes until Labor Day. The concerts feature local L.A. musicians and range in music genre. The Original Farmers Market is home to “Summer Family Fun” designed just for kids which includes arts & crafts and babysitters to allow parents to shop around the market. In the Fall, the farmers market puts on a “Fall Festival” which usually takes place near Halloween and features a Halloween costume contest for kids.
- Carmel Farmers Market offers professional sharpening services for knives and gardening tools every week.

Portland, Oregon

- The Portland Farmers Market at PSU sells local delights such as yak meat and olive oil, but they also sell local brewed Portland beer.
- The Pioneer Courthouse Square Market has a “Country Chef Challenge” where three Portland chefs compete in a challenge -- \$50 and 15 minutes to shop the market and 30 minutes to create a dish. This farmers market also has “Kids Cook in the Market” allowing junior chefs to experience farm-fresh cooking.
- All of the farmers market in Portland participate in the initiative, “EverGreen,” which is a program that encourages recycling. All farmers market locations feature composting, recycling and water refill stations. Additionally, market vendors follow new guidelines, including required use of durable, compostable or recyclable food-service ware and restriction of plastic bottled water sales. Vendors have also begun selling reusable, durable shopping bags to reduce the reliance on single use plastic bags.

- People's Farmers' Market has events such as "Music at the Market" and applications to sing are on their website. Also, People's Farmers' Market has a "Seed Swap" that allows customers to drop off seeds and then swap them for other seeds.

Seattle, Washington

- Queen Anne Farmers Market holds summer events such as "Donate Kitchen Items for Refugees" that encourages customers to bring new or used kitchen items to donate to local refugees and charities.
- University District Farmers Market celebrated its 20th anniversary this year with special events and market sales day.
- The Broadway Farmers Market has events including "Mixology at Broadway," the art and science of making mixed drinks using fresh, seasonal farm products.
- Magnolia Farmers Market celebrated its 10th anniversary with a strawberry shortcake tasting event.
- Pike Place Market operates three "Express Farmers Market." These smaller markets are held once a week and located in the heart of Seattle including the downtown area and City Hall. Pike Place Market offers "ABC: Affordable Basic Cooking" cooking classes and covers how to cook dishes from produce found at the farmers market. Also, the Pike Place Market website has a "Meet the Farmer" section in the sidebar that profiles different farmers.

LOCAL MEDIA CONTACT LIST

A media contact list was created for the Alachua County Farmers' Market to help garner attention/customers for ongoing efforts/events. For the market's convenience, both a full media contact list and an email-friendly media contact list is included.

For full list, see **Appendix E**

For email-friendly list, see **Appendix F**

CONCLUSIONS

Below are conclusions and recommendations for the Alachua County Farmers' Market and suggestions for implementing these recommendations.

During the June 2013 focus group, ACFM board reported that the market's loyal customers are the backbone of the organization. Thirty-eight percent of customers surveyed reported visiting the market a few times each month. This validation is crucial. It is imperative that the ACFM continue research into providing the best market environment for these loyal customers. Reach out to them through social media, newsletter calls-to-action, surveys, etc, and find out what makes them keep coming back and use that information to attract others like them.

A total of 82 percent of customers surveyed said that their primary reason for visiting the market is to purchase locally-grown produce/goods. The statewide PIE Center survey (included in this report) ranked Gainesville No. 2 in the state in "highest value of local food purchased as a share of total food purchases for at-home use." The market should continue to focus on and build on this core strength: Fresh produce from local farmers. Highlight your growers' only mission. Most customers don't realize the intricacies of what it means to require vendors to grow their own product (as opposed to re-selling). Make this a point of pride in all of your marketing efforts. Strive to highlight the "local" angle in other ways (as seen in the social media analysis section of this document). Use others' research (ex: PIE Center report) to share news and information about the benefits and reasons for shopping local.

Recommendations

Smaller-scale:

- Emphasize the healthful and environmental benefits of producing, buying and consuming local produce/goods in ACFM communications messages. The PIE Center reports that "consumers identify with these environmental benefits and therefore, will likely attend to and respond to messages including said benefits."
- Provide a coffee and/or breakfast vendor in or near the market according to market regulations/policy. Also, provide seating/tables for those drinking coffee/eating breakfast/staying.
- Include a list/poster at the front of market listing which farms/organizations are selling that day (which could utilize a reusable/erasable board) the list for which vendors could be in charge.

Larger-scale:

- The ACFM board and management should adopt a few quantifiable goals and a timetable for accomplishing them. Broad example: Goal: Increase number of vendors by 30 percent and increase customer traffic by 25 percent. Method: Entice people using local media/social media/traditional marketing to come to enjoy musicians, picnic facilities and regular schedule of events. Measurement: (Determine amount of time in which goal will be measured and whether goal was met.)
- ACFM should broaden its alliances with groups whose missions complement those of the market. Potential alliances include Florida Organic Growers, Extension, University of Florida (UF-IFAS has small farm specialists on its faculty), Alachua Farm Bureau, Alachua County Library, Farm Credit, Senior Center, county commissioners and schools.
- Conduct all or most of the research found within this document again in 2015-16. Plan for an updated assessment of the farmers' market's success in two year's time, using already built-in means of assessment, including an updated customer survey, SWOT analysis, etc., as benchmarks.

APPENDIX

- A. Full focus group report
- B. SWOT Analysis for Alachua County Farmers' Market (full chart)
- C. Research Data Analysis
- D. Executive summary of PIE Center's "Local Food Systems in North-Central Florida: Consumer Characteristics and Economic Impacts."
- E. Full media contact list
- F. Email-friendly media contact list

FPRA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE
Alachua County Farmers Market Consultation Program

Focus Group/SWOT Research, June 9, 2013
Summary of Focus Group Responses

Background: The focus group was held under the canopy at the Alachua Farmers Market facility on SR 441 in north Gainesville. It began at 2:15 p.m. and concluded at 3:45. Despite the hot, humid conditions the members of the group were responsive, appeared to be comfortable with one another and seemed to be candid in their responses. The majority of the participants were members of the board of directors of the market or long-time members and appeared to be comfortable with each other, exhibiting a shared concern for the future success of the market.

Participants: Schuyler Sloane, market manager; Pat Carlisle, board secretary; Art Shiver, a member of the board of directors; Jeff Groves, chairman of the board of directors, Lorraine Sherman, annual market member (vendor); Jared Sweat, vice chair of the board of directors; Andi Houston, assistant market manager (who handles many of the market's outreach activities); Virginia Crews, treasurer; and "Farmer John," a long-time member and farmer-vendor.

Present on behalf of FPRA to conduct the focus group research: Ginny Hoyle Lawrimore, FPRA committee chair; Rod Hemphill, APC, CPRC, FPRA member; Alisha Kinman, who was assigned by Scott Schroeder to assist.

After explaining the purpose of the exercise and the ground rules, the moderator led the group through a series of questions examining ACFM members (vendors); the market and its operations; customers; competition; communications/marketing; trends; and shared vision.

About the Market

The main goal of the market is to move produce. Group was unanimous on that issue.

When asked about the market's strengths, participants expressed pride in the fact that the market is "growers only." That means no middle-men, no resellers and no purveyors of non-agricultural products. ACFM is the only market in the area that adheres to that standard, and the board polices it, keeping out "false sellers" who may have produce from other areas that might be earlier/later than local producers can supply. (The market's charter from the Alachua County Commission does allow one slot for a non-producing vendor; currently occupied by a local bakery.)

The group expressed pride in the physical plant: nice restrooms, adequate parking, adequate space, opportunities for vendors to interact, one-on-one, with customers. The group exhibited pride in the fact that they provide wholesome products at attractive prices: Money's not everything; social satisfaction is important.

Asked what the market needs to move to the next level, participants asked what could be done to even out the usual pattern: sales begin strong (the market opens at 8:30 a.m.), then decline at mid-morning and continue declining, with some vendors leaving early, until closing at 1:00 p.m.

Other, occasional, issues cited by the group include the negative effect of bad weather on market attendance and a decline in attendance on weekends when there are UF football home games.

About Competition:

Participants were aware of the other farmers markets in the area. They characterized the Wednesday market, downtown, as a sharp contrast with ACFM, where people make their purchases and leave. Description of the downtown market included: “Fun. Music, dancing, having a good time and customers come to socialize. Live music every week. Performing artists, street performers, more food sales, people come and snack after work.”

The Haile Plantation market on Saturday mornings was discussed. Some observations: bigger, upscale community where customers pay a higher dollar; but not producer-only. Some participants proposing ACFM try to attract Haile residents to north Gainesville (“convince those customers from the bigger, more upscale community that this market is better”)

Walmart recently opened Jan. 30, 2013, across the street from and within sight of ACFM. Is Walmart competition? The group seemed to agree that it had not affected ACFM, as they had noted no dip in the number of customers or sales. In fact they noted Walmart employees often come to the ACFM to shop during their breaks.

The real competition, the group seemed to agree, is Ward’s Market, which buys from local growers and markets that fact.

About the Customers:

The group claims a solid, loyal base of customers who shop “even in the rain.”

Group believed they see more young people among their customer base.

Working people come to this market.

Social media outreach is accomplishing more: Attracting young families = growth.

Board is working to get a breakfast food truck set up just outside the market (getting around the “vendors only” rule in the chart) and seeking to see if city will provide picnic tables so people will stay at market longer.

One participant observed: We are better off than the downtown market; here we have a fair amount of traffic, get full in the morning.

About current communications/marketing

For the most part, the market depends on electronic, social media for its outreach efforts. Occasionally it gets ink from the Gainesville Sun and from local food print publication Hogtown Homegrown (5k reach/mo.)

One participant said two kinds of communication occur at market: between the market and customers and between customers and individual vendors. Relative to the latter, a participant said, “We would like to see the farmers present their farm a little better and sell their farm, not just their produce.”

Consensus of group seemed to be that interaction between vendors and customers was great and there is a lot of it. BUT . . .

Nobody knows how to advertise the market.

Only paid advertising in recent memory

Ideas presented:

- Buy Facebook and newspaper advertisements
- Get on all free community calendars and Hogtown Homegrown
- Advertise as much as possible, every free way
- Website/Facebook/Newsletters
- Sign up for email on Website (about 150 currently on listserv)
- Work on improved signage and funding for same

The market is currently working on funding to improve signage to direct passers-by from the 441, a main thoroughfare, and 34th Street, the route to Walmart, into to market.

About the media

Do participants think the market gets good treatment by local media?

Sometimes. “We can’t afford to advertise in the Sun.” “Most of the attention they provide is paid for.”

“We need a way to reach people who are in positions of power. How to present facts about us.”

“News teams from GTN come several times a year.”

Strategic Alliances

Florida Organic Growers (FOG) appear to be the primary allied organization for ACFM at this point. They helped make a cash mob descend on the ACFM in December, with EBT program (federal program that doubles money for some recipients), and they are really good at writing grants.

What other organizations should the ACFM for alliances with? Group suggested:

- Extension
- University of Florida
- Farm Bureau (have an agent with Farm Bureau)
- Farm Credit
- Schools

Opportunities

Group asked if there are ways to partner with UF for grant writing/funding?

But group agreed ACFM has not asked other groups mentioned to partner with or support them.

Vision

When asked what the SCFM should look like 2-3 years into the future, the group said:

- Number of vendors increased by 30-40 percent
- More customers attract more vendors.
- We have enough vendors now. We need to increase traffic by 25 percent.
- Regular musicians, picnic facilities.
- People coming not just to shop; to enjoy a regular schedule of events.
- Dogs? No. County bans.

Unique Selling Propositions

- Fresh, locally grown vegetables
- Our products are healthier (organic)
- Our success depends on people getting sick (from commercial produce)
- Get to know your farmers
- Ask vendors how to cook it
- Open year around
- Easy parking
- Nice facilities, rest rooms.

SWOT Analysis for Alachua County Farmers' Market

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ***** Loyal Customers (3) **** Active Managers (2) *** Local, fresh food (3) *** Variety (4) ** Growers only! (3) ** People with knowledge, recipes * Good sized customer base * Shelter/Facility (3) * Accessibility * Volunteer board of directors Early morning openings Good source of plants (2) Good source of information, especially for young people 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ***** Small budget ***** Lack of communication with county government and Extension *** Board of Directors slow to decide, execute ** Growers only! (3) ** Separation of personal and professional ethics ** Rules, regulations are complicated * Open only one day per week * Need volunteers during busy season (Sell water, etc. at profit to market) * Limited parking * Located away from town * Open 8:30 AM * Dilapidated Facilities Some members' authoritative attitudes History of inconsistent management, record-keeping Bad relations between some vendors Consideration of personal space between vendors
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ***** Advertising **** More signage at market **** Expand hours, days market is open ***** Breakfast and beverages (Food truck?) *** New commodities, vendors *** Grants *** More strategic alliances (e.g., Florida Organic Growers) *** Bands, color, noise, music ** Fundraising to support advertising ** Modify gate/fence; improve pedestrian traffic * Use space to full advantage ** More online advertising * More advertising around town Involvement with schools Donate leftover produce and plants 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ***** Potential lawsuits (discrimination, food safety, safety of customers) ***** Feuds, suspicions among vendors affect professionalism **** State, county regulations (Cottage Food Law cited as example) ** Competition from other markets ** Growing conditions uncertain (weather, etc.) * Internal politics; some members intent on controlling market * Flea markets posing as farmers markets * Lack of dialogue with county commissioners * Need better understanding of Memo of Understanding with county County politicians that do not like the market Potential for weather damage to facility Leased property; some say county might not renew lease

Research Data Analysis

A survey was conducted in June 2013 with customers of the Alachua County Farmers Market. An electronic version of the survey was distributed via Facebook to the 1,000+ followers of the page, as well as via the Market's electronic newsletter. Additionally, customers were presented with an abbreviated version of the survey to take in-person at the Market. Between the two survey distributions, 84 individuals responded providing feedback on how often they visit the Market, why they shop there, how they heard about it and much more.

Some key takeaways from the survey were:

Of the 84 respondents...

- 38 percent visit the Market a few times each month
- 63 percent heard about the Market from a friend or by word of mouth
- 41 percent live within 5-10 minutes of the Market
- 82 percent of respondents said their primary reason for visiting the market is to purchase locally-grown goods
- 50 percent of customers are between the ages of 45 and 64





Some recommendations on how to improve the market include:

- Extend the hours and days in which the Market is open
- Increase the variety and number of vendors
- Have a vendor provide coffee
- Group vendors by products and keep their location consistent from week to week





Alachua County Farmers Market: Marketing Survey June 2013






1. How often do you visit the Alachua County Farmers Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Every Weekend		29.6%	16
A few times a month		40.7%	22
Once a month		18.5%	10
Every couple of months		11.1%	6
Other (please specify)			5
answered question			54
skipped question			3

2. How did you hear about the Alachua County Farmers Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Word of mouth/From a friend		77.1%	37
Driving by		22.9%	11
Advertisements		4.2%	2
Facebook		10.4%	5
Other (please specify)			8
answered question			48
skipped question			9


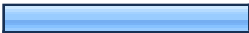



3. Why do you visit the market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
For locally-grown goods		87.3%	48
To support local farmers		70.9%	39
Because it is more affordable		32.7%	18

Other (please specify) 8

answered question	55
skipped question	2





4. How much do you spend at the Alachua County Farmers Market on an average trip?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than \$10		7.0%	4
\$10-\$20		36.8%	21
\$20-\$30		40.4%	23
\$30-\$40		8.8%	5
More than \$40		7.0%	4



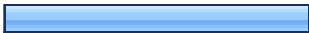

Other (please specify) 1

answered question	57
skipped question	0

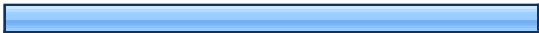


5. How far is your home from the market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
5-10 minutes		47.4%	27
10-20 minutes		33.3%	19
20-30 minutes		14.0%	8
30+ minutes		5.3%	3
answered question			57
skipped question			0

6. How old are you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
15-24		5.3%	3
25-44		38.6%	22
45-64		45.6%	26
65+		10.5%	6
answered question			57
skipped question			0





7. Do you follow the Alachua County Farmers Market on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count
yes!		80.4%	41
no, I don't have Facebook.		2.0%	1
no, I'm not interested.		17.6%	9
answered question			51
skipped question			6

8. How do you prefer to receive news and updates from the market?

					Rating Average	Rating Count
Email	86.7% (26)	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	1.23	30
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest)	90.2% (37)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	7.3% (3)	1.24	41
Direct Mail	45.5% (5)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	27.3% (3)	2.27	11
Other	55.6% (5)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (3)	2.11	9
answered question						52
skipped question						5

9. What type of information would you like to receive about the Alachua County Farmers Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
What's In Season		92.5%	49
Recipes		39.6%	21
Specials		64.2%	34
Upcoming Events		67.9%	36
Other (please specify)			4
answered question			53
skipped question			4

10. Do you have any recommendations for improving the market?

	Response Count
	27
answered question	27
skipped question	30

Q1. How often do you visit the Alachua County Farmers Market?

1	Just started going and hope to go every weekend.	Jun 22, 2013 6:18 AM
2	I am a vender.	Jun 19, 2013 3:43 PM
3	I never go. It's too early and I always forget.	Jun 19, 2013 7:32 AM
4	Not often enough	Jun 19, 2013 6:46 AM
5	sometimes every weekend, sometimes every other, depending on what else i'm doing	Jun 18, 2013 10:30 PM

Q2. How did you hear about the Alachua County Farmers Market?

1	online	Jul 5, 2013 3:44 PM
2	I've been a customer since it first opened	Jun 23, 2013 5:42 PM
3	vendor	Jun 19, 2013 11:21 PM
4	found google searching	Jun 19, 2013 12:33 PM
5	can't remember - been going for > 10 years I think	Jun 18, 2013 11:32 PM
6	local turnip www.localturnip.com	Jun 18, 2013 10:44 PM
7	google, before i moved here	Jun 18, 2013 10:30 PM
8	Google	Jun 18, 2013 10:23 PM

Q3. Why do you visit the market?

1	preferably organically grown	Jul 9, 2013 6:14 PM
2	All of the above + organics	Jul 5, 2013 11:16 PM
3	Fresh produce from the garden tastes so much better then what has been picked early in the market.	Jun 22, 2013 6:18 AM
4	Access to organic produce, Flour Pot bakery, plants	Jun 19, 2013 7:18 AM
5	high quality fresh pick produce	Jun 18, 2013 11:32 PM
6	all of the above	Jun 18, 2013 11:20 PM
7	Hlgher quality and produce lasts longer. Fun.	Jun 18, 2013 10:38 PM
8	the produce is often pesticide-free, the animal products are from animals not given antibiotics or growth hormones	Jun 18, 2013 10:23 PM

Q4. How much do you spend at the Alachua County Farmers Market on an average trip?

1	Because I am a vender I do trading too.	Jun 19, 2013 3:43 PM
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Q9. What type of information would you like to receive about the Alachua County Farmers Market?

1	All Above	Jul 5, 2013 11:16 PM
2	List of the local farms that are working the market	Jun 22, 2013 6:18 AM
3	which farmers are orgainc or no pesticides	Jun 19, 2013 8:26 AM
4	What to expect the upcoming week. If it'll be the first week for a certain item, I'd like to hear about it on Friday to plan. Or if it's peak of the season and there's lots available for something and a good time to get a lot for canning/freezing.	Jun 18, 2013 10:38 PM

Q10. Do you have any recommendations for improving the market?

1	Expand...size and hours, maybe add a second day during the week...	Jul 9, 2013 6:14 PM
2	Love it the way it is!	Jun 23, 2013 11:17 PM
3	more vendors with variety	Jun 23, 2013 11:04 AM
4	Not at this time. Love the farmer's market, helping out local farmers, and getting great food.	Jun 22, 2013 6:18 AM
5	Let farmers sell products like bannanas,allow some buying and selling	Jun 21, 2013 11:55 AM
6	Some additional seating would be nice. Even though it's small, sometimes I can't make it all the way around. In the SHADE of course!	Jun 20, 2013 9:40 AM
7	No	Jun 19, 2013 11:33 PM
8	The time advertised does not coincide with the time the market truly ends. If venders do not wish to stay then the closing time should correlate. Last week a toddler ran behind a truck backing up!!!! That was scary!! This is a reasonable. Safety issue which should be resolved. There should not be a mix of moving trucks with patrons! Plus!! Who wants to be subject to exhaust fumes while shopping? Change the time or change a rule or make a rule! I am not up to witnessing an accident!	Jun 19, 2013 3:43 PM
9	I think it is great as it is.	Jun 19, 2013 12:41 PM
10	more parking	Jun 19, 2013 9:16 AM
11	Through UF, I used to have a weekly share of veggies but was not able to continue the next season. I was missing my fresh veggies and have tried to get into the habit of visiting the Farmers Market every Sat morning. I have gone two out of the last three weekends and I am very pleased. Since I am new to the Market, I do not have any ideas for improving as it's very nice right now. What I would like in the future is to continue with organic growing and if possible some organic free range chicken and turkey that would be more affordable. I noticed that ground chicken and turkey was \$10.00 a pound, I can't afford that amount but would love to be able to purchase at a lesser per pound amount, but maybe that isn't realistic.	Jun 19, 2013 9:11 AM
12	have signs saying which farmers no do use pesticides	Jun 19, 2013 8:26 AM
13	The FACEBOOK photos would be more effective if posted earlier to entice buyers who may be debating shopping at the market.	Jun 19, 2013 8:12 AM
14	Having a coffee and gluten free pastries table would be wonderful.	Jun 19, 2013 7:34 AM
15	I have waited years for organic growers to be present consistently. Keep it up!	Jun 19, 2013 7:18 AM
16	Stay open later. Open half hour earlier	Jun 19, 2013 7:13 AM
17	Just be sure not to abandon the farmers markets!!! I so appreciate them!	Jun 19, 2013 6:48 AM
18	I don't want too much information coming at me, but would like to be able to access information when I want it.	Jun 19, 2013 6:46 AM



Q10. Do you have any recommendations for improving the market?

19	It has been getting better this year. Just one thing, a while back I wanted to sell my goods at your market, and got turned down. I have my own chickens wnd bake pound cakes and other things with the eggs. I was told they have a contract with the Flour Pot bakery and they were the only ones that they let let have baked goods only.	Jun 18, 2013 11:20 PM
20	Quit moving the vendors around - customers prefer to find their farmer at the same place from week to week. And I have seen cooking shows at other markets, why don't you have one?	Jun 18, 2013 11:15 PM
21	I think it is lovely.	Jun 18, 2013 10:43 PM
22	Maybe a second day with later hours (like a weekday afternoon). Sometimes I can't get there on Saturday mornings because of other obligations (kids' sports games, birthday parties, weekend plans). ATM on site, though I'm better about keeping cash around just for the market. I REALLY appreciate that it's a real farmer's market with no trinkets/jewelry/tie dye stuff. Always keep it that way. I'm really very happy with you the way you are.	Jun 18, 2013 10:38 PM
23	additional days of the week would be great!	Jun 18, 2013 10:30 PM
24	Nope :)	Jun 18, 2013 10:27 PM
25	Rearrange the vendors!!! There's a goddamn traffic jam just inside the gate. Remove vendors from that area and put everyone underneath the two parallel rows.	Jun 18, 2013 10:24 PM
26	Maybe have one or more locations around town an cycle between them so you make local food more accesable for everyone around town	Jun 18, 2013 10:23 PM
27	Not moving vendors around would be great. Also, I really wish there was a vendor that sold beef, but I'm sure you don't have much control over that :-)	Jun 18, 2013 10:23 PM


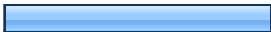


Alachua County Farmers Market: Marketing Survey June 2013, In Person






1. Is this your first time visiting the Alachua County Famers' Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		3.7%	1
No		96.3%	26
answered question			27
skipped question			0


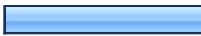


2. How often do you visit the Alachua County Farmers Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Every Weekend		28.0%	7
A few times a month		40.0%	10
Once a month		8.0%	2
Every couple of months		24.0%	6
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			25
skipped question			2




3. How did you hear about the Alachua County Farmers Market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Word of mouth/From a friend		66.7%	16
Driving by		29.2%	7
Advertisements		8.3%	2
Facebook		0.0%	0
	Other (please specify)		0
answered question			24
skipped question			3

4. How far is your home from the market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
5-10 minutes		63.0%	17
10-20 minutes		29.6%	8
20-30 minutes		3.7%	1
30+ minutes		3.7%	1
answered question			27
skipped question			0

5. Why do you visit the market?

		Response Percent	Response Count
For locally-grown goods		84.0%	21
To support local farmers		64.0%	16
Because it is more affordable		36.0%	9





Other (please specify) 4

answered question	25
skipped question	2

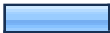

6. Do you have any recommendations on how we can improve the market?

	Response Count
	3
answered question	3
skipped question	24

7. How old are you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
15-24		3.7%	1
25-44		25.9%	7
45-64		59.3%	16
65+		11.1%	3
answered question			27
skipped question			0

8. Do you follow the Alachua County Farmers Market on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		15.4%	4
No		84.6%	22
answered question			26
skipped question			1

9. Would you like to provide us with your email address so you can receive news and promotions from the market?

	Response Count
	19
answered question	19
skipped question	8

Q5. Why do you visit the market?

1	the music	Jul 11, 2013 4:18 PM
2	because the food/produce is better	Jul 11, 2013 4:14 PM
3	For fun	Jul 11, 2013 3:50 PM
4	Quality	Jul 11, 2013 3:47 PM

Q6. Do you have any recommendations on how we can improve the market?

1	coffee/tea for sale	Jul 11, 2013 4:18 PM
2	coffee and gluten-free pastries	Jul 11, 2013 4:15 PM
3	coffee	Jul 11, 2013 4:14 PM

Q9. Would you like to provide us with your email address so you can receive news and promotions from the market?

1	@aol.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:20 PM
2	@aol.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:20 PM
3	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:18 PM
4	@hotmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:16 PM
5	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:15 PM
6	@hotmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:14 PM
7	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:14 PM
8	@bellsouth.net	Jul 11, 2013 4:13 PM
9	@yahoo.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:12 PM
10	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:11 PM
11	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 4:10 PM
12	@aim.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:52 PM
13	@outlook.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:50 PM
14	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:49 PM
15	@yahoo.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:48 PM
16	@aol.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:47 PM
17	@yahoo.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:46 PM
18	@gmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 3:00 PM
19	@hotmail.com	Jul 11, 2013 2:59 PM

Local Food Systems in North-Central Florida: Consumer Characteristics and Economic Impacts

By Alan W. Hodges, Ph.D., Extension Scientist
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For the full report, visit: <http://bit.ly/1cylKeY>

February 6, 2013

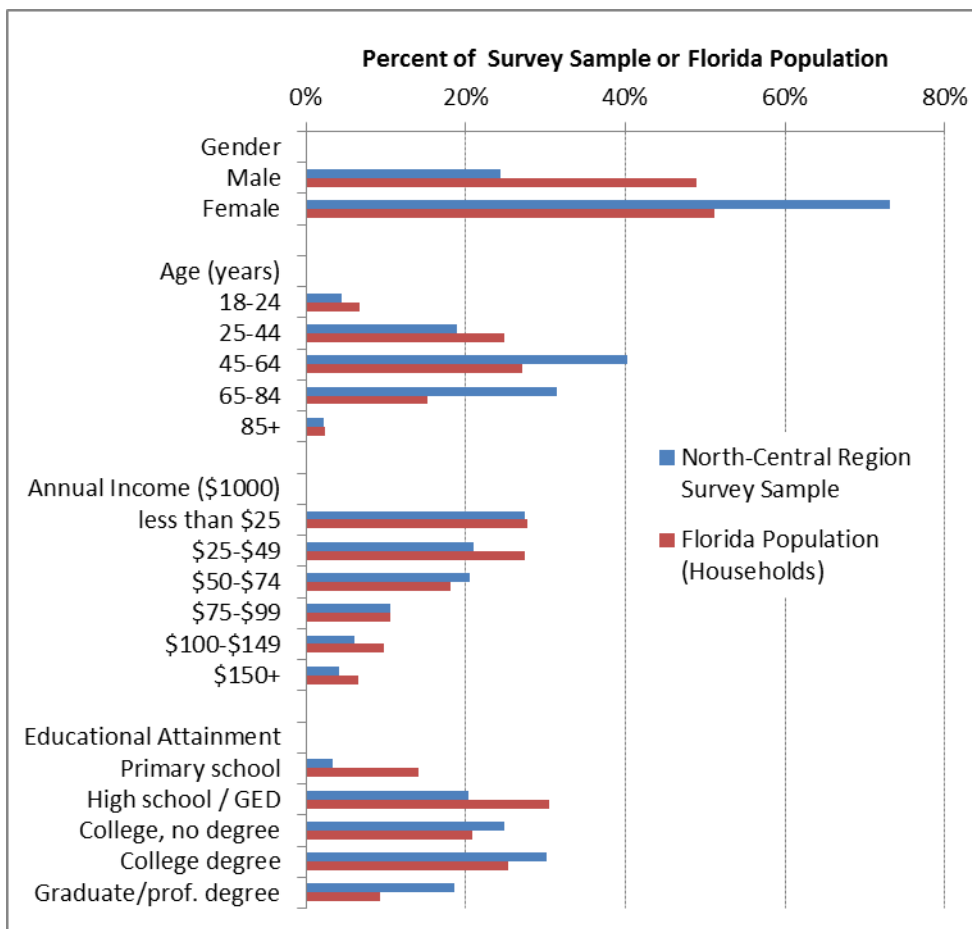


Local Food Systems in North-Central Florida: Consumer Characteristics and Economic Impacts

Executive Summary

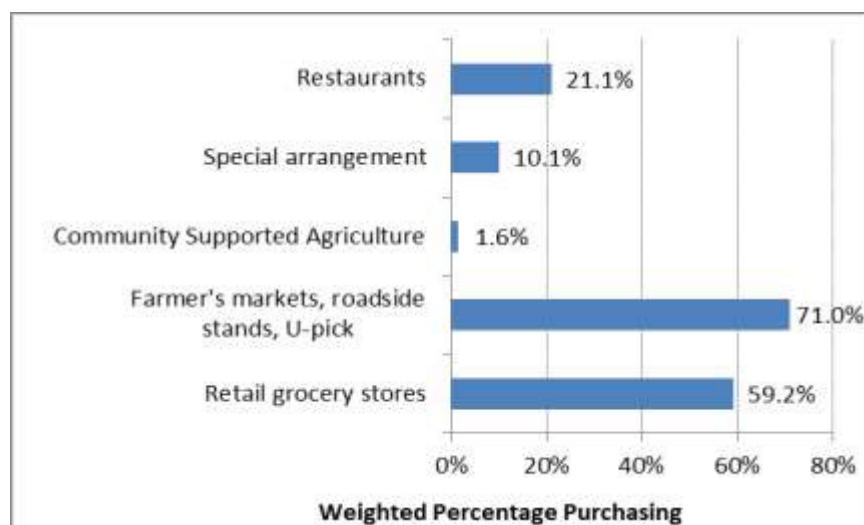
Direct and intermediated marketing of food products to local consumers in the United States has developed rapidly over the past 10 years, in response to concerns about food safety and quality, and local economic development, however, the characteristics of local food systems have not been widely studied. With support of a research grant, a public mail survey was conducted with a random sample of 2,500 households in a ten-county region of north-central Florida to document local food purchasing patterns and economic impacts, and attitudes toward local foods. Usable survey responses were received from 621 respondents, representing a 25 percent response rate. Survey respondents were predominantly female, middle aged, middle income, and well educated compared to the overall Florida population (Figure ES1). Survey sample data were weighted based on location (county), age, education and income factors to account for differences in sampling intensity. The value of local food purchases reported by survey respondents was expanded to estimate the total annual value for all north-central Florida households.

Figure ES1. Summary of survey respondent demographic characteristics compared to the Florida population



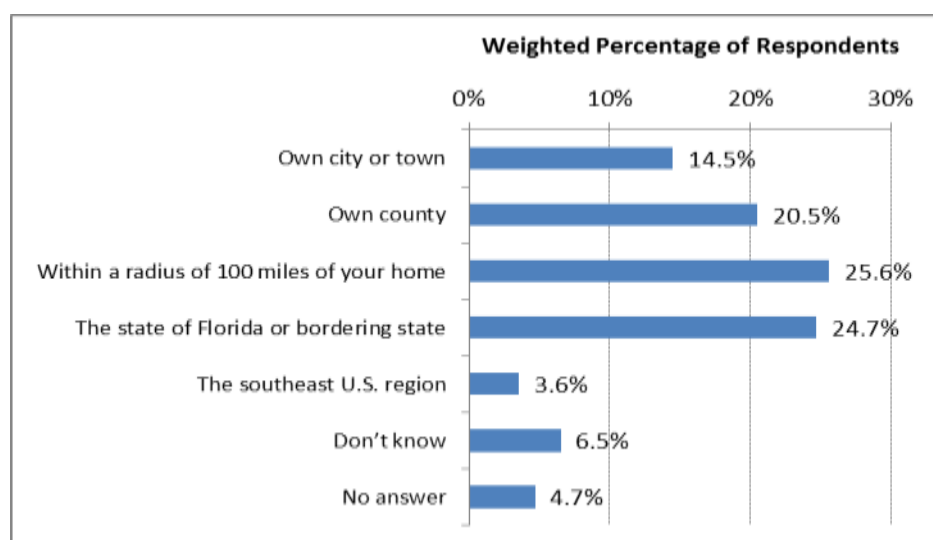
The weighted share of respondents who reported purchasing local food or through local market channels included 59.2 percent at retail grocery stores, 71.0 percent at farmer’s markets, roadside stands or self-harvest (“U-pick”) operations, 1.6 percent from Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organizations, 10.1 percent purchasing directly from producers by special arrangement in advance, and 21.1 percent at restaurants or other food service establishments (Figure ES2). Respondents reported shopping at farmer’s markets or roadside stands on a weekly basis (13.8%), twice weekly (3.1%), every other week (7.2%), monthly (22.9%) or at other or irregular intervals (19.8%), and the remainder didn’t know or gave no answer (33.2%).

Figure ES2. Summary of participation in local food marketing channels in north-central Florida



Although there is no standard accepted geographic definition of “local” foods, the most common definition reported was “within a radius of 100 miles of home”, chosen by 25.6 percent of respondents, and a substantial number chose the more expansive definition of “within the state of Florida” (24.7%), while many chose the more restrictive definitions of “within my county” (20.5%) or “within my own city or town (14.5%) (Figure ES3).

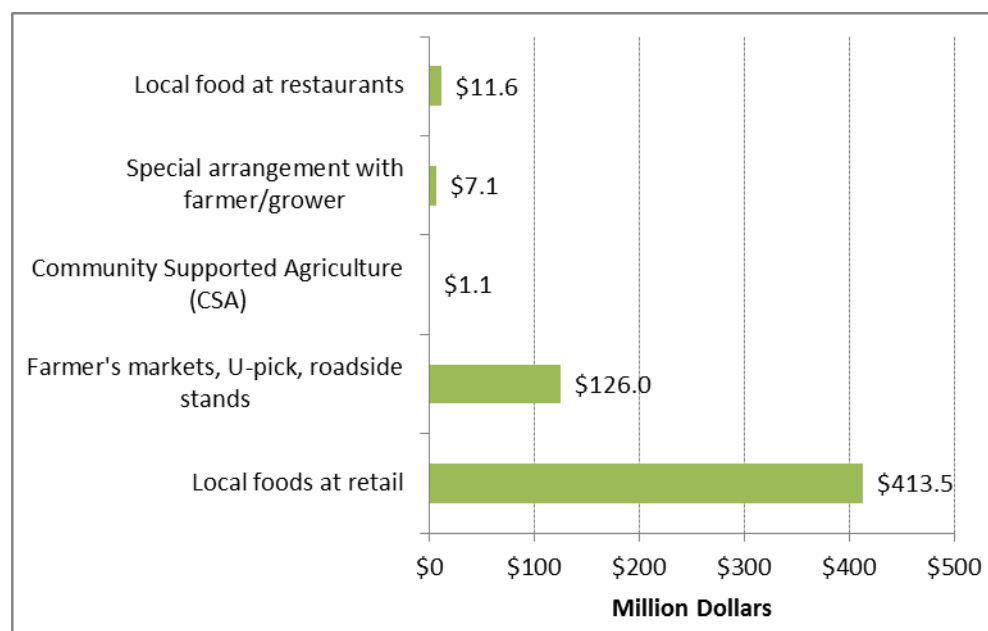
Figure ES3. Area in which foods are considered to be “local” reported by survey respondents in north-central Florida



Values represent weighted percentages of survey respondents for largest area chosen.

The total annual value of foods purchased through local market channels in north-central Florida during 2011-12 was estimated at \$559 million, including \$414 million from grocery stores, \$126 million from farmer's markets, roadside stands and U-pick operations, \$11.6 million from restaurants and food services, \$7.1 million by special arrangement with producers, and \$1.1 million from CSAs (Figure ES4). The total value of local food purchases averaged \$1,353 per household annually. Local foods purchased through direct-to-consumer market channels (farmer's markets, roadside stands, U-pick, special arrangement, CSA) were valued at \$134 million, and local foods purchased for at-home consumption (excluding restaurants), amounted to \$548 million. The total value of all foods purchased for at-home consumption, including non-local foods purchased at retail stores, was estimated at \$2.184 billion. Local foods represented 25.1 percent of total food purchases for at-home consumption, and 20.2 percent of total food purchases at retail stores. These values are much higher than has been reported in the literature, and suggest that local food systems in Florida are better developed than most other areas of the United States, perhaps due to the favorable year-round growing conditions.

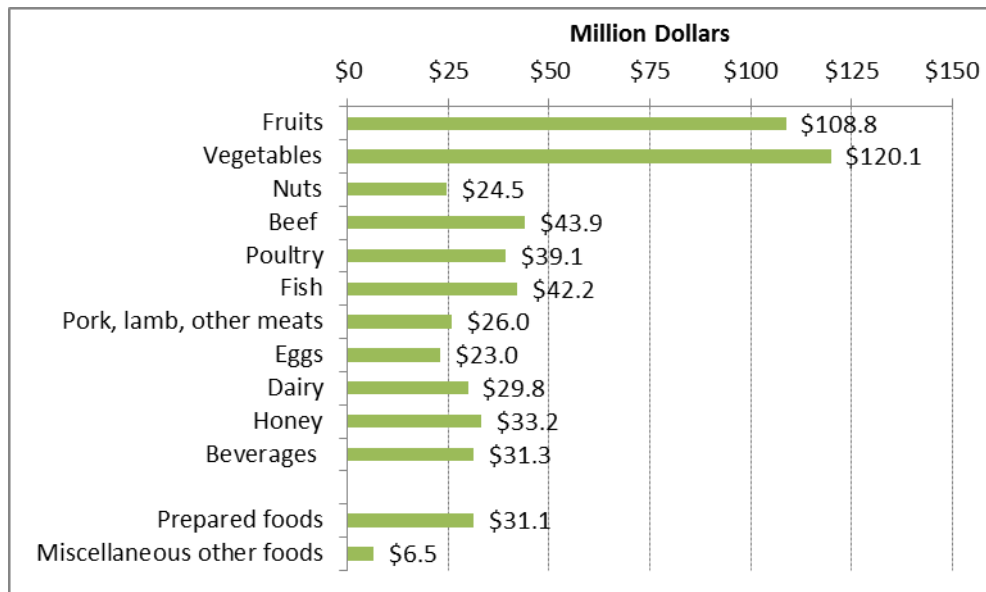
Figure ES4. Summary of local foods purchased through market channels in north-central Florida in 2011-12



Values represent weighted purchases reported by survey respondents.

For local foods purchased from all sources in north-central Florida, the largest food category was vegetables, valued at \$120 million (M), representing 21.5 percent of the total, followed closely by fruits (\$109M, 19.5%), beef (\$44M, 7.8%), fish (\$42M, 7.5%), poultry (\$39M, 7.0%), honey (\$33M, 5.9%), beverages such as juices, beer or wine (\$32M, 5.6%), prepared foods such as breads, pastries, jams or jellies (\$31M, 5.6%), dairy (30M, 5.3%), pork, lamb and other meats (\$26M, 4.6%), nuts (\$25M, 4.4%), eggs (\$23M, 4.1%), and other miscellaneous foods (\$7M, 1.2%) (Figure ES5).

Figure ES5. Summary of types of foods purchased through local market channels in north-central Florida in 2011-12



The total economic impacts of new final demand for locally produced food purchases in Florida were estimated using a regional economic model (*IMPLAN*). The total value of local food purchases through direct-to-consumer market channels (farmer's markets, roadside stands, U-pick, CSA and special arrangement with growers) were assigned directly to farm or food manufacturing producer industry sectors, while local foods purchased at retail stores were margined (split) between producers, retailers, wholesalers and truck transportation firms, and purchases from restaurants were split between producers, food services, wholesalers and transportation. The producer margins were considered as new final demand to the region, by displacement of competitive international and domestic imports, and therefore subject to direct, indirect and induced multiplier effects, however, the retailer and food service sector gross margins were treated as regional economic contributions subject only to direct multiplier effects. The total economic impacts for the region in 2011-12 were estimated at 10,927 fulltime and part-time jobs, \$267 million in labor income (employee wages, salaries and benefits), \$466 million in value added contribution to Gross State Product, \$913 million in industry output or revenues, and \$41 million in indirect business taxes, expressed in 2013 dollars (Table ES1).

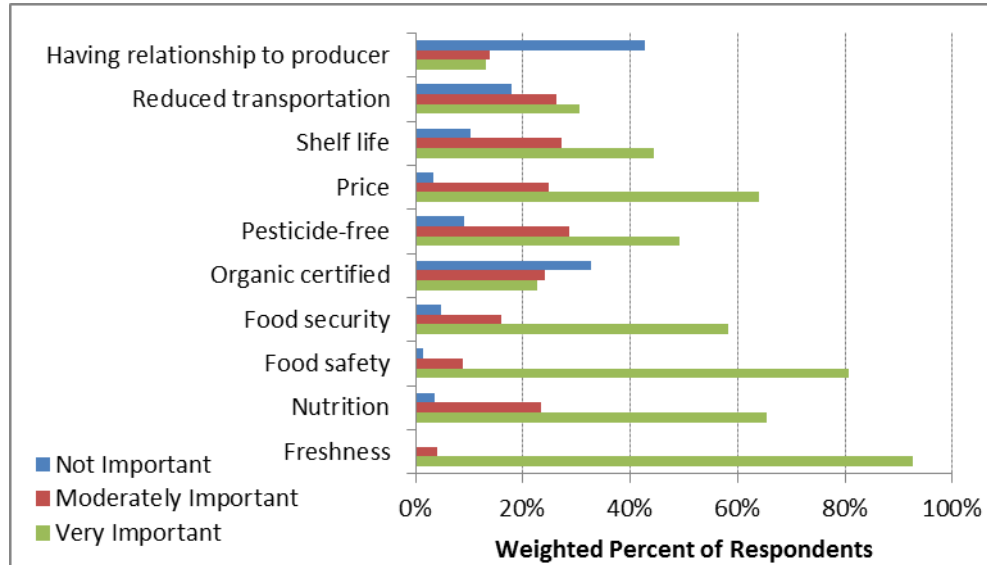
Table ES1. Summary of total economic impacts of local food purchases in north-central Florida in 2011-12

Impact Type	Employment (Jobs)	Labor Income (M\$)	Value Added (M\$)	Output (M\$)	Indirect Business Taxes (M\$)
Producer Margin-Direct Effect	4,870	\$78.0	\$159.3	\$383.5	-\$0.4
Indirect Effect	1,191	\$30.2	\$49.2	\$115.7	\$2.9
Induced Effect	2,235	\$82.9	\$144.0	\$234.0	\$12.8
Total Effect	<u>8,296</u>	<u>\$191.1</u>	<u>\$352.5</u>	<u>\$733.3</u>	<u>\$15.3</u>
Retailer Margin-Direct Effect	2,486	\$73.1	\$109.0	\$170.4	\$24.8
Restaurant Margin-Direct Effect	145	\$3.0	\$4.7	\$8.9	\$0.7
Total All Industries	<u>10,927</u>	<u>\$267.1</u>	<u>\$466.2</u>	<u>\$912.5</u>	<u>\$40.8</u>

Values in millions 2013 dollars; employment represents fulltime and part-time jobs. Estimates reflect total multiplier effects for producer margin, and direct effects only for retailer and restaurant margins.

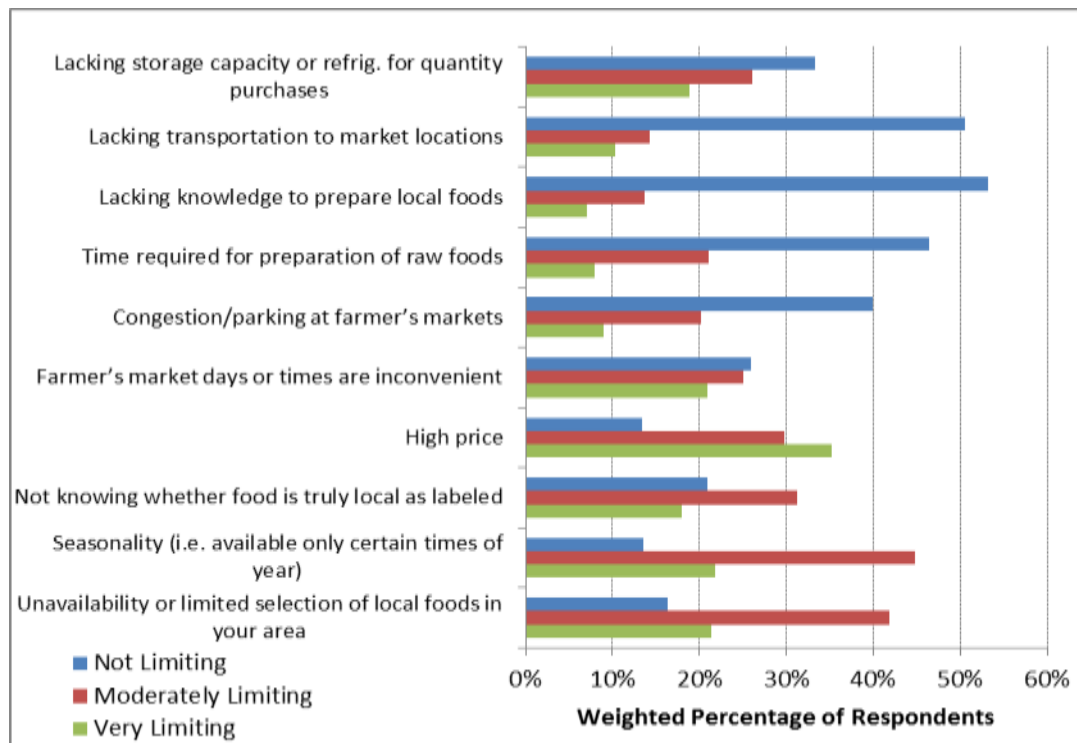
The attributes of local food systems that were indicated by respondents as “very important” were “freshness” (92.6%), and “food safety” (80.8%), followed by “nutrition (65.4%), “price” (63.9%), “food security” (58.2%), “pesticide free (49.2%), “shelf life” (44.5%), “reduced transportation” (30.5%) “organic certified” (22.6%) and “having a relationship to producers” (13.1%) (Figure ES6).

Figure ES6. Summary of important attributes for local food systems in north-central Florida



The factors that were regarded as potentially “very limiting” for local food systems by at least 20 percent of weighted respondents were “high price” (35.2%), “seasonal availability only certain times of year” (21.8%), “unavailability or limited selection of local foods in your area” (21.3%), and “farmer’s market days or times are inconvenient” (20.9%) (Figure ES7).

Figure ES7. Summary of factors limiting purchases of local foods in north-central Florida

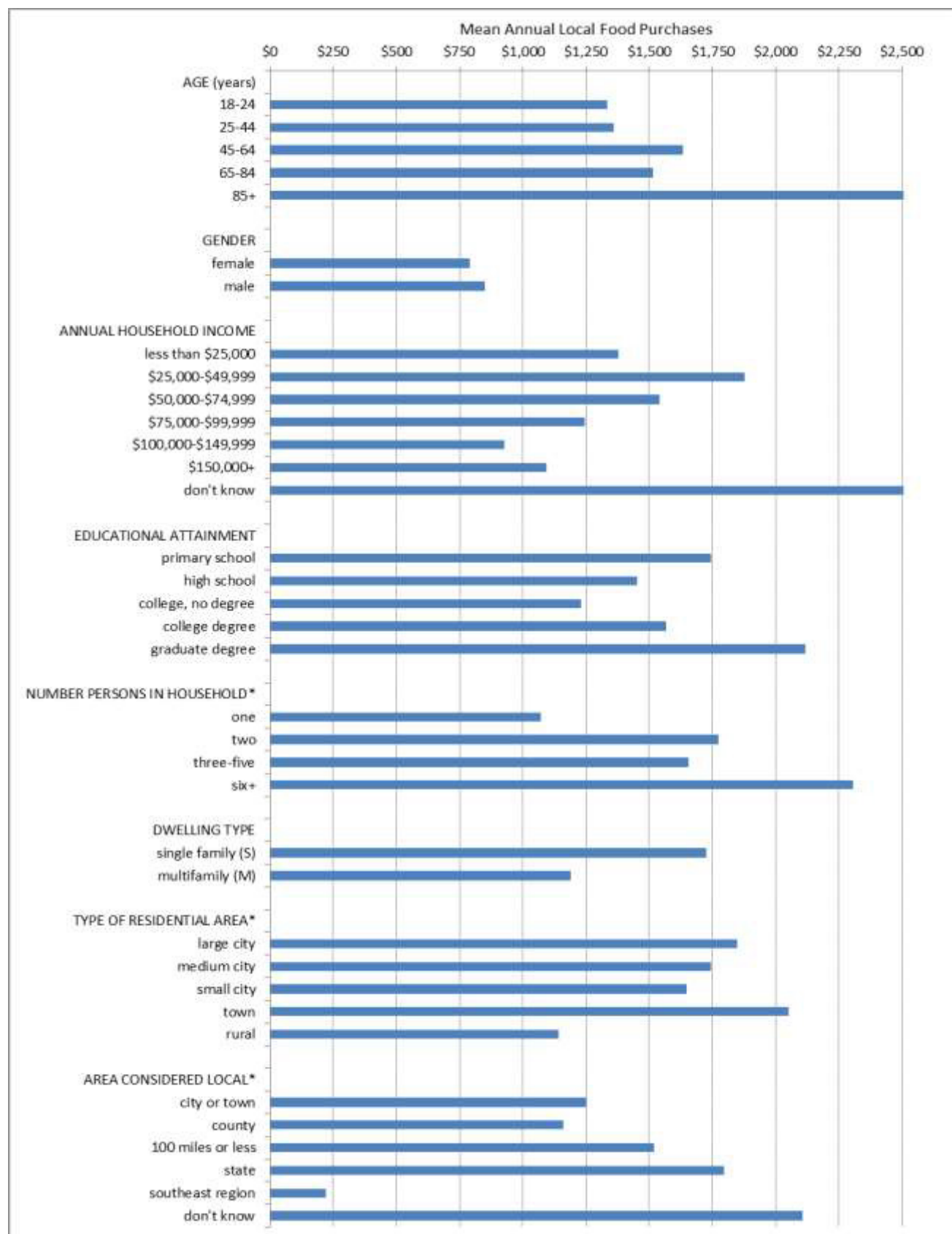


Statistical analysis of the survey data revealed that several demographic variables were significantly related ($p < 0.05$) to the total value of local food purchases, including respondent Gender, Household income and Florida region, and the two factor interactions of Age x Household income, Age x Educational attainment, Age x Gender, Household income x Number of persons in household and Household income x Dwelling type. In addition, respondent importance ratings of the attribute “Having a relationship to producers” was a significant predictor of total local food purchases, and the attribute “Pesticide free” was a predictor of local food purchases at retail stores. The limiting factors of “Seasonality...” and “Lacking transportation to markets” were significantly related to local food purchasing at retail stores.

Average annual purchases were highest for respondents aged 45-64 years (\$1,632) and 85 or over (\$2,515), and purchases by males (\$851) were slightly greater than females (\$790), although these differences were not statistically significant (Figure ES8). Purchases of local food were positively associated with larger household size, with households of two persons (\$1,775) greater than one-person households (\$1,073). Residents of medium cities and towns had higher purchase of local foods (\$1,745 and 2,051, respectively) than did residents of rural areas (\$1,141). Purchases were generally larger for respondents who considered the state to be “local” (\$1,795) than for those who considered it to be the “city or town” (\$1,254) or “county” (\$1,160), although not significantly. In contrast to previous study findings, local food purchases were not consistently related to annual household income or educational attainment. Respondents who reported that the attributes of “Nutrition” and “Having a relationship to producers” were either “very important” or “moderately important” had greater purchases of local food than those for whom it was “not important”, and respondents who indicated that the attribute “Reduced transportation” was “moderately important” had higher purchases than those for whom it was “very important” or “not important”. Local food purchases were higher for respondents indicating that the limiting factor “Farmer’s markets are inconvenient” was “moderately limiting” rather than “not limiting”. Interestingly, there were no consistent findings in relation to the limiting factors “High price”, “Unavailability of local foods in my area” or “Seasonality”.

Implications of the study findings for food policy are briefly discussed. Results of the survey for all statewide respondents in Florida are provided in a companion report.

Figure ES8. Summary of mean annual purchases of local foods in north-central Florida by demographic factor level



Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in mean values are indicated by an asterisk.

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