



# Consumer Motivations for Attending Utah Farmers' Markets

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## Introduction

Farmers' markets (FMs) offer opportunities for local farmers and small businesses to sell directly to consumers, grow a customer base, as well as test new products and pricing strategies. FMs provide opportunities for consumers to purchase fresh, high quality produce, attend educational events, concerts, and to socialize. Neil (2002) claims that FMs are important because they give local farmers the chance to sell the food they raise directly to customers, they allow consumers to buy fresh food from the farmers who raise it, and they help create new farms and food businesses. FMs also provide communities the opportunity to create excitement and activity in downtown areas and local neighborhoods. Finally, FMs provide an opportunity to reconnect consumers with the food supply chain.

In the U.S., FMs have grown steadily since 1970. According to Brown (2001) and Cole (2010), between 1970 and 1986, FMs increased tenfold in some states, with the national total rising nearly 500%. Beginning in the late 1980s, FMs entered another growth phase due to the rapidly growing popularity of fresher, healthier food. USDA-AMS (2011) reports a growth from 2,863 farmers' markets in 2000 to 7,175 by mid-2011, a 151% increase.

There are reasons that explain the rapid increase in FMs in the U.S. These markets attract a significant number of consumers due to their reputation for carrying locally produced fresh and organic produce (Brown, 2001; Brown and Miller, 2008; Cole, 2010). Furthermore, economic factors such as the need for local farmers to diversify their sources of income (Brown, 2002), the socioeconomic effects that FMs have on communities (Oberholtzer and Grow, 2003; Brown and Miller, 2008), and job development motives (Curry and Oland, 1998) have made them important to communities.



The major aim of this fact sheet is to inform existing and potential vendors about consumer primary motivations for attending FMs. The four primary motivations, or reasons why consumers choose to attend FMs are to purchase fresh produce, for social interaction, to buy ready-to-eat food and

to purchase packaged foods or crafts/arts. This information will assist them in making informed promotional and product offering decisions. In addition, market managers may use this information to respond to the needs of attendees and revise vendor recruitment strategies and promotional strategies accordingly.

## Data Overview

To describe consumer characteristics for each of the primary FM attendance motives, this fact sheet uses survey data collected from 819 consumers who visited four FMs in the summer of 2011 in Utah (Logan, Downtown Salt Lake City, Kaysville, and Park City). Among the respondents, 76% are primary shoppers, 63% have home gardens, 52% are willing to join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, 62% are female, 59% are married, 62% reported an annual income above \$70,000, and 49% spend about \$24.78 per FM visit. Table 1 presents the mean statistics for the overall sample and for each of the four study FMs.

On average, a representative respondent visits FMs between four and seven times each season (May to October). Respondents ascertain that FMs attributes are very important to them. They are concerned with both the safety of food products and their health/diet. Another characteristic of respondents is that they are agricultural enthusiasts, in that they support agricultural open space and supporting local growers is important to them.

## Primary Reasons for FM Attendance

Survey respondents were given a list of alternatives and asked to indicate (choose only one option) the primary reason for their farmers' market attendance. Table 2 presents the results for each primary motivation in percentages for the overall sample and for each of the four separate FM locations.

The primary motivation for individuals to attend FMs in Utah is to purchase produce. On average, 73% of respondents come to FMs to shop for fresh produce. On average, 18% are primarily motivated by social interactions; this includes meeting with friends, attending concerts and music events.

Among respondents, 5% are primarily motivated by ready-to-eat foods. The remaining 4% of respondents choose to attend farmers' markets primarily to purchase packaged food, arts and crafts.

Notable differences between market locations include very similar preferences for fresh produce and social interaction with the exception of the Kaysville location, where social interaction was a non-motive (only 4%). Ready-to-eat foods were in higher demand at the Park City location, and arts/crafts at the Logan location.



## Consumer Profiles by Attendance Motive

Table 3 illustrates the consumer characteristics by primary FM attendance motive. It indicates the specific characteristics of individuals who attend FMs for each specific primary motivation.

According to study results, the individuals whose primary motivation (595/819) is to purchase produce are likely to be the household's primary shopper (79%), have a home garden (67%), are willing to join a community supported agricultural programs (54%), are female (65%), and are married (64%). They strongly support local growers and attend FMs often.

Amongst those who attend primarily to buy ready-to-eat food, 68% are primary shoppers, 39% have home gardens, 29% are willing to join a community supported agricultural program, 34% are females, and 66% are married. This group is more commonly male, less interested in fresh produce and

gardening, and supporting agriculture open space and local growers is not a high priority. They attend FMs less than the other groups.

Respondents across all four primary motivations agree that food safety is an important issue and also have concerns about their health/diet. Young attendees (average of 33 years) are primarily looking for packaged food, arts and crafts, while older attendees (average of 40 years) come to purchase fresh produce.



## Conclusions

Consumer primary motivations for attending FMs are grouped into four categories. The predominant primary motive to attend FMs is to purchase fresh produce. The majority are primary shoppers, agricultural enthusiasts, home gardeners, females, married, and those with annual incomes above the sample average. The second noticeable primary motive is social interaction. The survey results show that few participants attend FMs primarily to buy read-to-eat food or shop for packaged food, arts and crafts. Additionally, there are some differences in attendance motivations across the four markets examined. Primarily, social interaction was not a priority at the Kaysville location and ready-to-eat

foods were a stronger motivator at the Park City location.

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**Table 1: Survey Sample Statistics**

Consumer Characteristics	Sample Mean	Farmers' Market Location			
		Logan	Salt Lake City	Kaysville	Park City
Primary shopper	76%	81%	77%	71%	71%
Number of visits per season	4 to 7	4 to 7	4 to 7	2 to 3	4 to 7
Home gardener	63%	60%	69%	71%	51%
Join CSA	52%	57%	55%	45%	48%
Food safety concerns	4.29	4.198	4.294	4.352	4.338
Diet/health concerns	4.32	4.343	4.304	4.344	4.298
Age	39.00	33.79	40.04	43.30	39.22
Female	62%	62%	62%	67%	58%
Married	59%	54%	54%	77%	61%
Income	\$70,000	\$54,877	\$73,668	\$75,914	\$76,693
FM presence attributes	3.60	3.633	3.543	3.496	3.689
FM convenience attributes	3.66	3.607	3.535	3.790	3.819
Agriculture enthusiast	4.20	4.297	4.228	4.144	4.088
Income above mean	62%	46%	59%	75%	67%
Spent above mean at FM	49%	33%	56%	43%	60%
Observations	819	207	289	125	198

**Table 2: Primary Motivations for Attendance by Market (%)**

Primary Motive	Overall Sample	Farmers' Market Location			
		Logan	Salt Lake City	Kaysville	Park City
Purchase Produce	73	69	74	93	62
Social Interaction	18	20	21	04	21
Buy Ready-to-Eat Food	05	04	02	01	11
Buy Packaged Food, Arts/Crafts	04	07	03	02	06
Observations	100	25	35	16	24



**Table 3: Consumer Characteristics by Primary Motivation**

Consumer Characteristics	Primary Motivations			
	Purchase Produce	Social Interaction	Buy Ready-to-Eat Food	Packaged Food, Arts/Crafts
Primary shopper	79%	68%	68%	65%
Number of visits per season	4 to 7	4 to 7	2 to 3	4 to 7
Home gardener	67%	52%	39%	54%
Join CSA	54%	50%	29%	57%
Food safety concerns	4.35	4.11	4.18	4.11
Diet/health concerns	4.38	4.11	4.11	4.32
Age	40	36	38	33
Female	65%	52%	34%	76%
Married	64%	44%	66%	32%
Income	\$71,151	\$67,540	\$71,726	\$59,469
Agriculture enthusiast	4.27	4.02	3.97	3.99
Spent above mean at FM	52%	38%	47%	51%
Income above mean	62%	55%	61%	59%
Observations	595/819=73%	149/819=18%	38/819=5%	37/819=4%

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