

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Extension



# Southwest Iowa Institutional Foods Survey

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# Overview

- **Adding value-added niche growers into the regional economy**
- **Identifying the market before recruiting new and solidifying the market for existing producers**
- **Determination of need inside a relatively stable market sector (i.e. institutional)**
- **Determination of demand by product type to show possible growth trends (e.g. need for more potato growers)**

# Methodology

- Database developed through IDIA and regional CACFP-1,711 food vendors
- Database was coded to track vendors by type-restaurants, schools, nursing homes, etc.
- Survey instrument developed with the assistance of, local producers, FS, CEED's and external relations professionals
- Determine demand for natural, conventional, organic, or source-verified products.

# Returns

- Of the 1,711 surveys mailed by CD-DIAL more than 250 were found to have duplicate, bad or return addresses-but the return rate was still 29.5%
- 9.2% of those returning surveys also sent back return cards requesting contact and additional information regarding local food supply linkages

# Important Factors in Purchasing Food Products

- **Quality**-99%-somewhat to very important
- **Cost**-88%-somewhat to very important
- **Service**-82%-somewhat to very important
- **Locally Grown** -36%-somewhat to very important-25% not that important
- **Method of Growth** -32%-somewhat to very important-31% not that important

# Method of Growth-VALUE

- **Source Verified**-about the same 66%-more value-30%
- **Organic**-about the same 66%-more value-23%
- **Natural**-about the same 61%-more value-32%

# Does Growth Method have Marketing Advantage?

- NO-36%
- YES-23%
- DON'T KNOW-41%

Comments: fresher, better taste, local/homegrown, natural, no chemicals or preservatives and good for the local economy

# Purchasing Local Product

- 83% would “purchase” local product with 48% considering either fresh or processed items.
- In purchasing these products:
  1. 31%-direct from grower
  2. 24%-from local grocer
  3. 17%-from farmers market
  4. 12%-from local cooperative

# Delivery, Packaging & Price

- 62% wanted direct delivery with 13% considering central pick-up points
- 57% wanted weekly delivery, 23% bi-weekly and 7% daily
- 41% wanted the products packaged in bulk and 20% wanted the product in prepackaged units
- 42% responded with 22% willing to pay 1-10% more and 10% willing to pay 10-50% more

# Vegetables\*

- The “Top Five”
  1. Tomatoes
  2. Peppers & Potatoes (tie)
  3. Onions
  4. Lettuce
  5. Green Beans & Carrots (tie)

\* An average of 80 respondents per category

# Small/Tree Fruit\*

- The "Top Five"

1. Strawberries

2. Apples

3. Grapes

4. Peach

5. Raspberries

\* An average of 46 respondents/ category

# Poultry and Meat Products\*

- The “Top Five”
  1. Eggs
  2. Grass Fed Beef
  3. Free Range Pork
  4. Free Range Chicken
  5. Aquaculture Fish

\*-an average of 37 respondents/category

# Dairy Products\*

- The "Top Five"
  1. Fluid Milk-2%
  2. Butter
  3. Ice Cream (vanilla)
  4. Fluid Milk-Whole
  5. Fluid Milk-Skim and Flavored Fluid Milk (chocolate)-(tie)



\*an average of 29 respondents per category

# The Top Ten Overall

1. Tomatoes
2. Peppers/Potatoes
3. Onions
4. Lettuce
5. Eggs
6. Strawberries
7. Apples
8. Green Beans/Carrots
9. Beef
10. 2% Milk

# Surprises (first blush)

- 29.5 % response rate
- No perceived value of organic, per se, with this client base
- Natural seems to carry more validity than organic or source verified
- Vegetable/seasonal dominate demand (education, extended growing season or further processing needed)
- Across the board interest in a variety of products

# Special Thanks

- Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture- Rich Pirog
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- Naturally Iowa, LLC-Bill Horner
- KMA and May Broadcasting-Ed May

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