



Sustainable Healthy Cities

A National Science Foundation-supported Sustainability Research Network (SRN)



Motivations of Consumers at MSP Metropolitan Farmers' Markets: Linden Hills Results

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OVERVIEW

Agricultural production within city boundaries is a growing trend that offers more options to consume locally produced food,¹ and is seen as a means to improve multiple different facets of local communities. We understand different types of agriculture markets (i.e. farmers' markets, CSAs and wholesale) influence our communities in different ways. In this research we work to understand how the perception of 'personal benefits', 'market experience', and 'social benefits' influence consumers to attend farmers' markets and **purchase fresh fruits and vegetables**.

Background

Farmers' markets are a growing trend in direct-to-consumer marketing, growing steadily in number since the 90s and accounting for over \$1 billion in sales per year (AMS, 2009). They are seen as a positive impact on an area's sense of community

and the local economy while also providing fresh food (Brown and Miller, 2008). Farmers' markets are used to promote local food systems that can benefit producers with better pricing and consumers with information production methods (Gillespie et al., 2007). Motivations for attendance range from traits of the food, social experiences, and political cause. Fresh food, high-quality food, support of local agriculture, and social appeal were some of the most documented reasons (Appendix 1). Some motivations such as convenience and price were listed as barriers for some, but not for others. Others stressed the importance of food safety, taste, and organic foods.

Preliminary Results: Linden Hills Farmers' Market

As shown in Figure 1, survey participants are highly motivated by the perceived

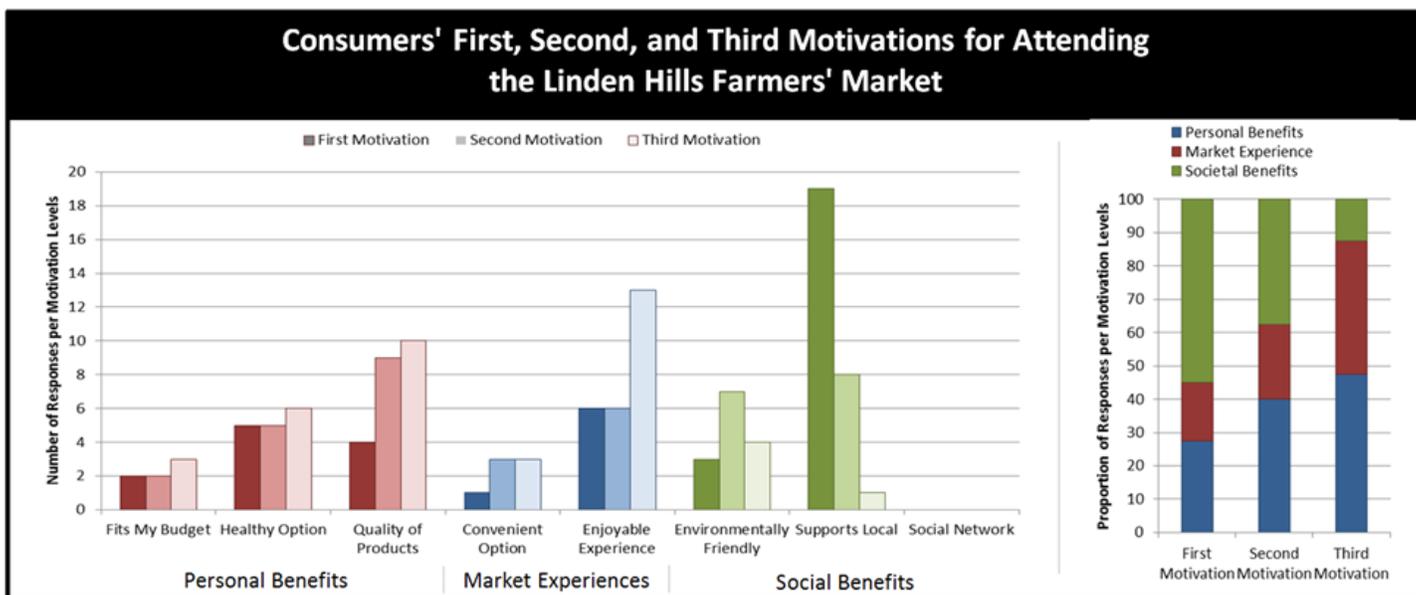
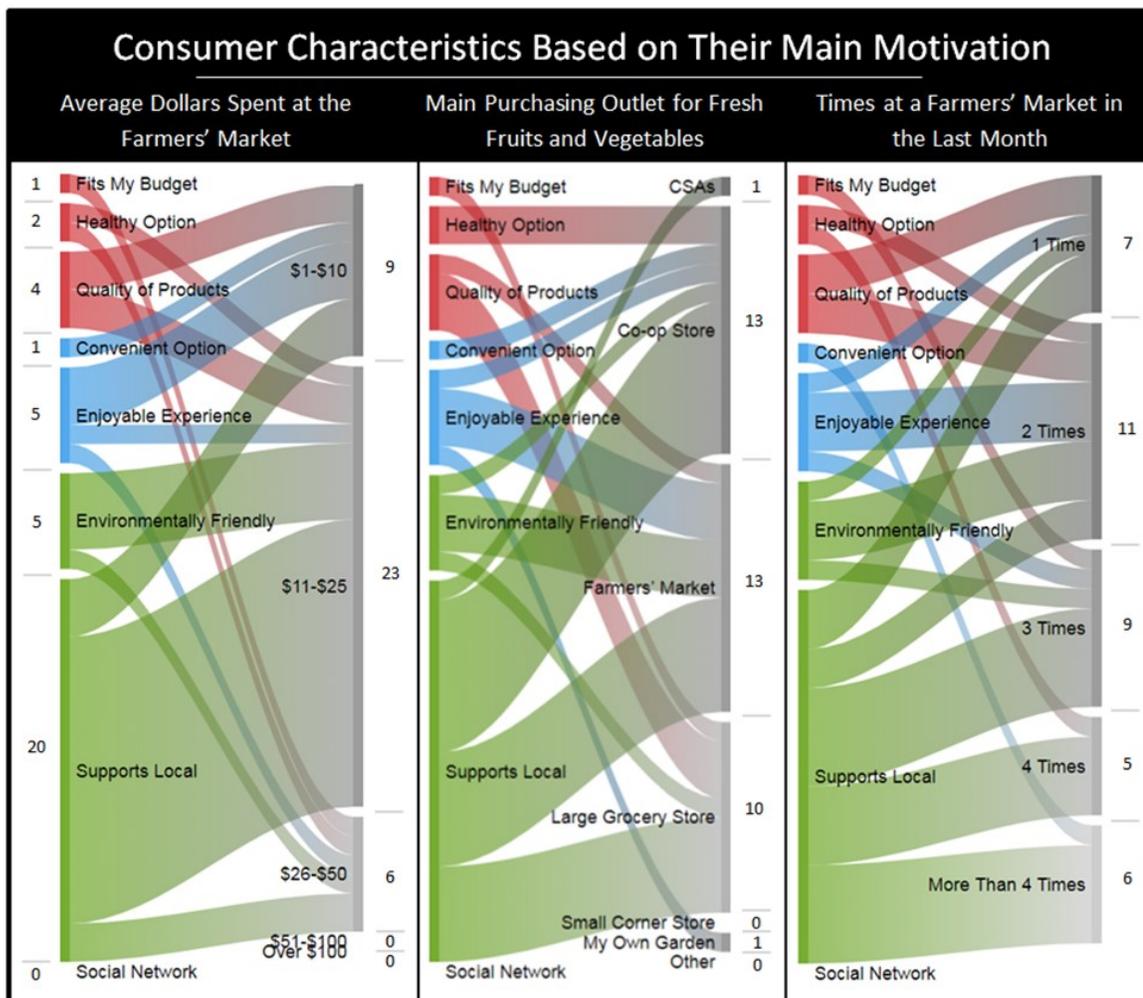


Figure 1|

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Take-Aways: Linden Hills Farmers' Market

Linden Hills is the only market we have studied which has such a strong bias towards 'Social Benefit' motivations. While 'Supporting Local' is always a top five motivation, results have never been this heavily skewed. In past studies, consumer motivations often match market branding, so skewed result may be the result of a strong and consistent market message.

While it is expected a large proportion of respondents are

Figure 2|

social benefit of the Linden Hills Farmers' Market. The perception of 'Supporting Local' ranks as the top primary motivation and among the top secondary motivations. While 'Societal Benefits' decrease in times-selected moving from primary to tertiary motives, the selection of 'Personal Benefits' increases. Across all motivation levels, 'Market Experience' is modest.

Figure 2 aims to connect Linden Hills Farmers' Market's consumers' main motivation to attend to their basic consumer characteristics. While 'Social Benefits' consumers are the largest group sampled, they are also statistically more likely to spend more and attend more frequently than any other group.

purchasing a majority of their fresh fruits and vegetables from a Large Grocery Store, it has been uncommon to see such a large proportion of consumers site the farmers' market as their main market outlet. The research group has never surveyed a market where purchasing from a Co-op Store is so prevalent. This looks to further exemplify the motivation of the consumers to support local.

Citations/References

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