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# **A Comparison of Purchasing Behaviors and Consumer Profiles at San Luis Obispo's Thursday Night Farmers' Market: A Case Study**

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Over the past several years, farmers' markets all over America have been growing in popularity. Since 1994 the number of farmers' markets in the United States increased by 63 percent (Klotz 2001). Currently, 2,863 seasonal and year-round markets exist throughout the country. In California alone there are over 340 farmers markets. Farmers' markets have gained popularity for many reasons. Lifestyles of the American population have changed significantly over the past years. Maintaining a healthy and nutritious diet has become a major concern, causing an increased demand for more freshness and quality in the produce industry. In addition, the reasonably priced produce and an atmosphere that is vibrant, upbeat, and fun make farmers' markets sociable and enjoyable experiences.

In 1983 the San Luis Obispo Downtown Association was looking for a way to draw shoppers downtown on Thursday night. This was one of the only nights in which stores were open later than the usual 5:00 p.m. closing time. It was a popular hang-out for teens who cruised Higuera Street, deterring people from coming to shop on Thursday night. To combat this problem, the Downtown Association decided to barricade six blocks of Higuera on Thursday nights. Soon the Downtown Association began arranging special activities and entertainment on Thursday night. Downtown restaurants began barbecuing a variety of foods, and farmers were invited to sell their produce—hence the beginning of Thursday Night Farmers' Market.

Thursday Night Farmers' Market in San Luis Obispo is the primary fresh-produce buying event on the central coast, attracting people from all over the state. In fact, the city's Farmers' Market recently earned a place on the "Best 50 Spots in the West," a list compiled by American West Travelogue. Farmers' Market involves more than 100

vendors who sell a variety of different products. Farmers work out of their trucks, and restaurants wheel out massive barbecue pits for grilling ribs, chicken, sausages, and tri-tip. Patrons can purchase freshly harvested fruits and vegetables, bouquets of flowers, and other seasonal food items. People have the opportunity to shop for produce, shop at downtown stores, meet friends, eat, and be entertained all at the same time.

One of the Downtown Associations' major concerns is maintaining the Farmers' Market's popularity and excitement. Thursday Night Market is a year-round event, drawing large crowds of both locals and tourists. The Downtown Association is responsible for coordinating the Farmers' Market activities and also manages all promotions that occur in the Downtown area. This includes sidewalk sales, holiday programs, annual rib cookoff, and various other special events. The Association also schedules free entertainment at four intersections along Higuera Street. The entertainment ranges from kid-oriented puppet shows to swing bands to rock bands to ethnic bands. A constant effort is made by the Thursday Night Activities and Promotional Coordinator to appeal to all types of people. Whatever the reasons people choose to attend Farmers' Market, there will always be a need to understand consumer behaviors and identify what type of people come for what reason in order to promote and advertise effectively.

## **Consumer Trends and Preferences for Fresh Produce**

In order to market effectively, farmers must be knowledgeable about consumer behavior patterns. Rhodus believes that successful entry into any business venture, including direct markets, begins with understanding consumer perceptions and behaviors (1994). Moreover, according to Rhodus, "a larger measure of the growth in direct marketing can be

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attributed to consumer interest in improved nutrition" (1994). This growing interest in nutrition can be seen through the change in the American diet over the past two decades. The average American eats approximately 300 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables a year, which is twice the amount consumed 25 years ago. Furthermore, Americans now consume, on average, one-fifth more fruits and vegetables than did their 1970 counterparts (Shore 1994). The United States Department of Agriculture believes "this trend is likely to continue expanding into the next decade as consumers heed nutritionists messages on healthful eating" (Glickman 2002).

One study on "Marketing and Performance Benchmarks for the Fresh Produce Industry" indicates that the increase in produce consumption is based on two current demographic trends, the first being the aging of the U.S. population (McLaughlin 1997). As society ages, a greater number of people fit into older age segments, and "research consistently has shown that produce consumption increases continuously with age" (McLaughlin 1997). Secondly, real income has risen over the last decade and a half, causing more people to indulge in fresh food, which is generally more expensive (McLaughlin 1997).

Demographic trends and nutritional concerns are important in explaining consumers' shopping behaviors regarding fresh produce. There are several other reasons consumers decide to purchase produce from direct-market outlets. A University of California, Davis study found that people shop at direct markets for "high quality food, lower prices, and atmosphere" (Rhodus 1994). Customers also cite wide selection, social factors, and helping farmers as reasons for direct marketing shopping (Cottingham 1994). Furthermore, "research reveals that consumers respect farmers, and believe that they produce a high quality, consistent product. . . . The selling point then may simply be one-on-one contact" (Tevis 1998). Direct markets give producers the opportunity to promote this one-on-one contact, which heightens the consumer's experience.

### **Direct Marketing**

Farming, both in California and nationwide, is becoming increasingly more difficult and competi-

tive. One such indication is the decrease in the farmers' share of the food dollar. In 1910, 41 percent of the food dollar went to farmers, compared to only 9 percent in 1990 (Tevis 1998). Cottingham believes this is due in large part to "farm prices and income levels, financial problems, and uncertainty of government programs" (1994). These factors have inspired farmers to try direct-marketing methods in order to receive higher profits. Moreover, farmers are able to eliminate many of the expensive marketing functions of the middleman by utilizing direct marketing. This includes packing, shipping, storage, exchange, and processing. Instead, the farmer sells fresher, higher-quality products directly to the consumer, reaping such benefits as "cash sales, immediate payment, and more control over prices" (Young 1995).

Direct marketing of produce through farmers' markets in California has become an important distribution outlet for farmers since the introduction of California certified farmers' markets in 1978 (Wolf 1997). Even though the concept of direct marketing is fairly old, it has recently been experiencing rapid expansion and growth throughout the United States. According to current USDA statistics, the number of farmers' markets in the United States increased by 63 percent in past 6 years, from 1,755 in 1994 to 2,746 in 1998, and to 2,863 in 2000 (Klotz 2001). Furthermore, recent statements characterize roadside-market growth as "rapid" and "booming," with an estimate of the number of roadside stands nationwide at over 25,000 (Rhodus 1994).

### **Types of Markets**

All forms of direct marketing are becoming increasingly popular with consumers. There are several types of direct markets: roadside markets, tailgate markets, pick-your-own farms, and farmers' markets. Roadside markets consist of a single farm producer who sells fresh produce. Roadside markets can range from a small stand on the side of a road to a large open-air structure. Some roadside markets are open all year and include multiple checkouts, shopping carts, and a wide variety of farm produce. According to Gibson, "Repeat customers—happy and satisfied customers—are the key to success in a roadside market" (Tronstad 1995). A tailgate market is similar to a roadside market in

that both require a good location. However, at tail-gate markets there are usually one or more vendors selling produce from the back of a truck.

The third form of direct marketing allows customers to pick and harvest their own produce from the field or orchard. This type of market is known as pick-your-own markets (PYOs), sometimes referred to as u-pick operations. "Most successful pick-your-own markets are known for a specialty, such as strawberries or Christmas trees" (Cottingham 1994). What attracts customers to PYO markets is the fresh produce and farm experience. According to Tronstad, "A U-Pick opportunity allows individuals to get out in the fields and fully absorb the countryside atmosphere" (1995). Customers are often willing to pay higher prices for produce that is purchased at PYO farms, because they know first-hand that the produce they picked is fresh.

Farmers' markets are operated fairly differently than the three forms of direct marketing listed above. For the purpose of this report, *farmers' market* is defined as a common facility or area where several farmers/growers gather on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and other farm products directly to consumers (Burns and Johnson 1996). Farmers' markets give consumers direct access to fresh, nutritious produce. "They are appealing in that each grower can specialize in production and not be as involved with marketing activities as the other direct market alternatives" (Tronstad 1995). At farmers' markets, "producers are on an even footing which strengthens local identity and togetherness" (Lyson et al. 1995). Thus, the public can be confident about the freshness of the produce, ask questions, and get closer to the sources of local foods.

### **Beneficiaries of Farmers' Markets**

According to Denny Johnson, "Direct-sales markets provide many small and medium sized farmers their only access to consumers" (Burns and Johnson 1996). Without this access, the existence of many small-sized growers would be threatened. Farmers sell their products directly to the consumers, enabling them to stay in business or increase profit. Smaller farmers have been closed out of the mass markets by their inability to invest in systems to get products "market ready" (O'Neill 1994).

According to O'Neill, many medium-sized farmers use farmers' markets to supplement their income and increase cash flow. The research indicates that additional income from sales at farmers' markets is sometimes the factor that enables medium-sized growers to farm profitability (1994). Dr Edward W. McLaughlin of Cornell University estimates that, in 1997, national sales of fruit and vegetables through direct marketing channels totaled \$1.1 billion (McLaughlin 1993).

In addition to serving small- and medium-sized farmers and benefiting consumers, farmers' markets provide various other benefits. They supply a sales outlet for nonperishable products such as honey, baked products, and jams. According to Johnson, this will encourage the development of new businesses in small communities. Also, increased economic activities from successful farmers' markets benefit local governments by generating tax revenue from retail sales, licenses, property taxes, and employment (1996). Farmers' markets spur economic activity in communities by attracting consumers to those areas. Lastly, farmers' markets provide consumers with a convenient place to buy healthy, fresh foods.

### **Methodology**

This research examines farmer's market consumers in San Luis Obispo, California. The data for this research was collected through personal interviews using a consumer survey. Questionnaires represented a random sample of patrons at San Luis Obispo's Thursday Night Farmers' Market. Surveys were administered between September 1994 and August 1995 from 6:30 to 9:00 PM on Thursday evenings. A total of 1,270 surveys were completed.

### **Shopper Subgroups Examined**

Two shopper-subgroup analyses are presented in this research. The first analysis of consumer subgroups is an analysis of primary produce shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers. Primary produce shoppers represent 19% of Thursday Night Farmers' Market attendees and are defined as those persons who primarily attend Farmers' Market to shop for produce. Non-primary produce shoppers are characterized as those persons who primarily

attend Farmers' Market for all other reasons: to eat, to socialize, to shop at the downtown stores, and for the entertainment.

The second subgroup analysis consists of four groups: planned purchasers, impulse purchasers, planned non-purchasers, and unplanned non-purchasers. Planned purchasers are defined as those who planned to and actually did purchase produce, compared to impulse purchasers, who did not plan to but did purchase produce. Impulse purchasers represent 14% of produce shoppers at Thursday Night Farmers' Market. Planned non-purchasers are defined as those who planned to but did not purchase produce, compared to unplanned non-purchasers, who neither planned to nor purchased produce.

### **Demographic-Profile Comparison of Primary Produce Shoppers versus Non-Primary Produce Shoppers**

An analysis of the demographic profile of shoppers who primarily attend Farmers' Market to shop for produce reveals that they tend to be older and are more likely to be married than are non-primary shoppers of produce. The education levels and employment statuses of primary produce shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers are comparable. Primary produce shoppers are in the middle of the income distribution. These demographic-profile results are similar to those found by Wolf in her analysis of the daytime San Luis Obispo's Farmers' Markets. Wolf found that the Farmers' Market shopper during the day tended to be older and was more likely to be married than was a non-shopper.

The profile of age in Table 1 indicates that primary produce shoppers at Farmers' Market tend to be older, with 55% of shoppers over the age of 30. Non-primary produce shoppers tend to be younger, with 60% under the age of 29.

Table 1 shows that primary produce shoppers are more likely to be married than are non-primary produce shoppers. Thirty-two percent of shoppers are married, while 57% of non-primary produce shoppers are single. This result is similar to that found by Wolf in her analysis of San Luis Obispo's Farmers' Markets.

Table 1 also shows that primary produce shoppers are more likely to be middle-income consumers, while non-primary produce shoppers tend to cover both ends of the spectrum. Forty-six percent

of non-primary produce shoppers have an income level below \$20,000, while 41% of primary produce shoppers have an income level below \$20,000. Twenty-five percent of primary produce shoppers have an income level between \$30,000 to \$59,999 while only 15% of non-primary produce shoppers fall in this range.

### **Farmers' Market Attendance**

Table 2 indicates that the main reason primary produce shoppers attend Farmers' Market is to shop for produce, while the main reason non-primary produce shoppers attend Farmers' Market is to eat. One-hundred percent of primary produce shoppers attend Farmers' Market mainly to shop for produce. Thirty-nine percent of non-primary produce shoppers attend Farmers' Market primarily to eat, followed by 27% who attend mainly to socialize.

An analysis of all reasons for attendance at Farmers' Market indicates that primary produce buyers also attend to eat and socialize. Non-produce shoppers are more likely to attend Farmers' Market for entertainment and other. Forty percent of non-primary produce shoppers attend Farmers' Market for the entertainment, compared to 33% of primary produce shoppers. Reasons for attending Farmers' Market such as eating, socializing, and shopping downtown stores occur with similar frequency between produce primary shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers.

Table 3 shows significant differences in attendance behaviors. A greater proportion of people who primarily attend Farmers' Market to shop for produce are more likely to attend Farmers' Market alone or with a spouse. Twenty-one percent of primary produce shoppers attend Farmers' Market alone, while 11% of non-primary produce shoppers attend with others. Table 3 shows that 93% of primary produce shoppers have attended Farmers' Market multiple times, while non-primary produce shoppers are more likely to be first time attendants.

Table 4 reveals that people who primarily attend Farmers' Market to shop for produce attend Farmers' Market more times throughout the year than do non-primary produce shoppers. Primary produce shoppers are more likely to attend Farmers' Market during any season. Primary produce shoppers attended Farmers' Market a total of 15.48 times within the past year, compared to the non-

**Table 1. Demographics of Primary Produce Shoppers and Non-Primary Produce Shoppers.**

	Produce Primary (n = 244)	Non-Primary (n = 1023)	Chi-Square <sup>a</sup>
<b>Age</b>			
18-24 years	36%	48%	
25-29 years	9%	12%	
30-34 years	10%	8%	
35-39 years	9%	7%	
40-44 years	8%	7%	
45-49 years	5%	6%	
50-54 years	9%	4%	
55-59 years	3%	3%	
>60 years	11%	5%	30.71*
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married	32%	27%	
Living with Partner	10%	10%	
Single	48%	57%	
Separated/Divorced	8%	5%	
Widowed	2%	1%	10.28*
<b>Education Levels</b>			
Grade school or less	1%	1%	
Some high school	3%	4%	
High school graduate	10%	13%	
Some college	48%	20%	
College graduate	21%	10%	
Post graduate work	48%	52%	9.14
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Employed full time	44%	43%	
Employed part time	29%	29%	
Not employed	27%	28%	.227
<b>Income Levels</b>			
<\$20,000	41%	46%	
\$20,000-\$24,999	9%	7%	
\$25,000-\$29,999	8%	5%	
\$30,000-\$34,999	4%	5%	
\$35,000-\$39,999	5%	5%	
\$40,000-\$49,999	6%	6%	
\$50,000-\$59,999	10%	4%	
\$60,000-\$69,999	4%	5%	
>\$70,000	13%	17%	18.81*

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence between produce primary shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 2: Reasons for Attending Farmers' Market.**

	Produce Primary (n = 244)	Non-Primary (n = 1023)	Chi-Square <sup>a</sup>
<b>Primary Reason</b>			
Shop for produce	100%		
Eat		39%	
Socialize		27%	
Shop Downtown Stores		4%	
Entertainment		14%	
Other		17%	1270*
<b>All Reasons</b>			
Shop for produce	100%	39%	55.85*
Eat	63%	58%	1.65
Socialize	49%	54%	1.83
Shop Downtown Stores	25%	29%	1.38
Entertainment	33%	40%	4.6*
Other	14%	22%	8.22*

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence between produce primary shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 3. Purchasing Behaviors in Attending Farmers' Market.**

	Produce Primary (n = 244)	Non-Primary (n = 1023)	Chi Square <sup>a</sup>
<b>People Accompanying</b>			
Come alone	21%	11%	
Come with others	79%	89%	18.77*
Spouse came	29%	21%	5.81*
<b>Number of Visits</b>			
First time attendant	7%	15%	
Repeat attendant	93%	85%	10.01*

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence between produce primary shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 4. Total Visits to Farmers' Market.**

	Produce Primary (n = 244)	Non-Primary (n = 1023)	t-statistic
Summer	4.92	3.26	4.741*
Fall	4.15	3.05	4.218*
Winter	2.76	2.03	3.123*
Spring	3.69	2.92	2.716*
Total past year	15.48	11.16	4.541*

\* significant at the 0.05 level using independent t-test.

primary produce shoppers, who attended Farmers' Market a total of 11.16 times.

Table 5 shows that a large proportion of local residents, 48%, attend Farmers' Market primarily to shop for produce. Table 5 also indicates that non-primary produce shoppers are more likely to be students. Approximately 50% of non-primary produce shoppers are students, while only 36% of primary produce shoppers are students. Twenty-two percent of non-produce shoppers are visitors to the area, compared to 18% of primary produce shoppers.

**Purchasing Behaviors**

Table 6 shows significant differences in total dollars spent at Farmers' Market between the two groups. Primary produce shoppers spend approximately three times as much money on produce as do to non-primary produce shoppers. Table 6 reveals that primary produce shoppers spend \$6.45 on produce, while non-primary produce shoppers spend \$2.05. Non-primary produce shoppers spend more money on eating, shopping downtown stores,

and other miscellaneous things compared to primary produce shoppers. Table 6 shows that non-primary produce shoppers spend \$11.39 on eating, shopping downtown stores, and other things, compared to primary produce shoppers who spend \$6.65 on eating, shopping downtown stores and all other things. Total dollars spent at Farmers' Market is similar between primary produce shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers, but the distribution of dollars varies greatly.

**Demographic Comparison of Impulse Purchasers and Other Farmers' Market Attendants**

An examination of the demographic profile of impulse shoppers indicates that they tend to be younger to middle-age purchasers, more likely to be married, and more likely to be college graduates compared to planned purchasers, planned non-purchasers and unplanned non-purchaser. Impulse purchasers are in the middle to higher ends of the income distribution. The employment status is similar

**Table 5. Description of Farmers' Market Attendant.**

	Produce Primary (n = 244)	Non-Primary (n = 1023)	Chi-Square <sup>a</sup>
Student	36%	48%	12.62*
Non-student	64%	53%	
Local Resident	48%	37%	10.89*
Local College Student	32%	37%	
Visitor to area	18%	22%	
Other	2%	4%	

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence between produce primary shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers.  
 \* Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 6. Dollars Spent at Farmers' Market.**

	Produce Primary (n = 244)	Non-Primary (n = 1023)	t-test
Shopping for produce	6.45	2.05	12.03*
Eating	4.32	6.01	-3.12*
Shopping Downtown stores	1.99	4.13	-1.2*
Other	.34	1.25	-2.6*
Total Dollars Spent	13.03	13.21	-.087

\* significant at the 0.05 level using independent t-test.



among all four groups.

The delineation of the age of respondents in Table 7 reveals that impulse shoppers tend to be younger to middle-aged consumers, with 45% of impulse produce buyers between 25 and 39 years of age. Planned non-purchasers and unplanned non-purchasers are significantly younger. Fifty-five percent of planned non-purchasers and 47% of unplanned non-purchasers are between the ages of 18 and 24.

Table 7 shows that impulse purchasers are more likely to be married than are all other groups. Forty-one percent of impulse shoppers are married, while 21% of planned non-purchasers are married. Planned purchasers are more likely to have done post-graduate work. Seventeen percent of planned purchasers have done post-graduate work, compared to 9% of impulse buyers. Impulse purchasers are more likely (24%) to be college graduates. Lastly, planned non-purchasers and unplanned non-purchasers are more likely to have some college education: fifty-four percent of planned non-purchasers and 53% of unplanned non-purchasers have had some college education, compared to 42% of impulse purchasers.

Table 7 indicates significant differences in the income levels of the four groups. Impulse purchasers tend to be middle- to high-income consumers. Forty-three percent of impulse purchasers earn more than \$40,000. Impulse shoppers are more likely to have an income of \$70,000 and above—21% of impulse purchasers have an income of \$70,000 and above, while 12% of unplanned non-purchasers have an income of \$70,000 and above. Lastly, 14% of impulse shoppers are in the income range of \$40,000 to \$49,000, compared to 4% of planned non-purchasers.

### **Impulse Shopper Purchasing Habits**

Purchasing behaviors among the four subgroups—impulse shoppers, planned purchasers, planned non-purchasers, and unplanned non-purchasers—vary significantly. Impulse purchasers are more likely to be first time attendees and are less likely to attend Farmers' Market throughout the entire year, compared to planned purchasers. Impulse shoppers primarily attend Farmers' Market to eat and are more likely to attend Farmers' Market with children and other family members compared to all

other groups. The analysis also indicates that impulse shoppers are more likely to be visitors to the area. Lastly, impulse shoppers spend the most money at Farmers' Market.

Table 8 reveals important differences in reasons for attending Farmers' Market. Forty-five percent of impulse purchasers attend Farmers' Market primarily to eat, compared to 24% of planned purchasers and 34% of planned non-purchasers and unplanned non-purchasers. Planned purchasers are most likely to attend Farmers' Market primarily to shop for produce compared to all other groups. Table 8 also shows that 46% of impulse shoppers, and 45% unplanned non-purchasers are more likely to attend Farmers' Market for the entertainment. Unplanned non-purchasers and planned non-purchasers are more likely to attend Farmers' Market to socialize; 59% of unplanned purchasers and 53% of planned non-purchasers attend Farmers' Market to socialize. Unplanned non-purchasers are more likely to attend Farmers' Market to shop downtown stores and to eat, compared to all other groups.

The data indicate that impulse purchasers are more likely to be visitors to the area, less likely to be repeat shoppers, and less likely to be students, which is consistent with tourist shoppers. This possibly suggests that a proportion of impulse purchasers are visitors to the area.

Table 9 shows that 28% of impulse shoppers are visitors to the area, compared to 22% of planned purchasers. Planned purchasers are more likely to be local residents. Forty-six percent of planned purchasers are local residents, compared to 37% of impulse purchasers. Table 9 indicates that planned non-purchasers and unplanned non-purchasers are more likely to be college students, compared to impulse purchasers and planned purchasers; 63% of impulse shoppers and 64% percent of planned purchasers are not students. Table 9 suggests that impulse buyers are more likely to be first-time attendants—25% of impulse buyers are first-time attendants, compared to only 9% of planned purchasers.

The research shows that impulse purchasers are more likely than other groups to attend Farmers' Market with children and other family members; they are also more likely to have children between the ages of 7 and 12 living at home. Table 10 indicates that 20% of impulse purchasers attend Farm-

**Table 7. Demographics of Impulse and Other Purchasers at Farmers' Market.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	Chi-square <sup>a</sup>
<b>Age</b>					
18-24 years	34%	31%	55%	47%	
25-29 years	11%	14%	12%	9%	
30-34 years	8%	15%	7%	8%	
35-39 years	8%	16%	5%	6%	
40-44 years	9%	3%	6%	9%	
45-49 years	9%	5%	4%	8%	
50-54 years	7%	3%	5%	4%	
55-59 years	4%	5%	2%	3%	
>60 years	10%	8%	4%	6%	80.34*
<b>Marital Status</b>					
Married	36%	41%	21%	28%	
Living with Partner	11%	20%	9%	10%	
Single	44%	34%	64%	53%	
Separated/Divorced	7%	5%	5%	7%	
Widowed	2%		1%	1%	53.34*
<b>Education Levels</b>					
Grade school or less	1%		1%	1%	
Some high school	3%	2%	4%	4%	
High school graduate	12%	23%	12%	12%	
Some college	48%	42%	54%	53%	
College graduate	20%	24%	19%	20%	
Post graduate work	17%	9%	10%	11%	23.48**
<b>Employment Status</b>					
Employed full-time	47%	48%	42%	40%	
Employed part-time	28%	27%	29%	27%	
Not employed	25%	25%	29%	34%	6.91
<b>Income Levels</b>					
<\$20,000	40%	37%	49%	47%	
\$20,000-\$24,999	8%	8%	8%	8%	
\$25,000-\$29,999	7%	3%	6%	5%	
\$30,000-\$34,999	4%	6%	5%	6%	
\$35,000-\$39,999	6%	3%	4%	4%	
\$40,000-\$49,999	6%	14%	4%	9%	
\$50,000-\$59,999	8%	3%	3%	6%	
\$60,000-\$69,999	5%	5%	4%	5%	
>\$70,000	16%	21%	18%	12%	40.01*

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence among all four groups.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Significant at the 0.10 level.

**Table 8. Reasons for Attending Farmers' Market.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	Chi-square <sup>a</sup>
<b>Primary Reason</b>					
Shop for produce	51%			21%	
Eat	24%	45%	34%	34%	
Socialize	11%	28%	27%	22%	
Shop DT stores	1%		5%	2%	
Entertainment	9%	19%	14%	10%	
Other	6%	9%	21%	11%	399.89*
<b>All Reasons</b>					
Shop for produce	100%			100%	1196*
Eat	66%	47%	50%	69%	38.87*
Socialize	49%	45%	53%	59%	7.43**
Shop DT stores	32%	22%	21%	40%	33.24*
Entertainment	36%	46%	36%	45%	7.70**
Other	15%	20%	22%	20%	7.01**

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence among all four groups.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Significant at the 0.10 level.

**Table 9. Description of Farmers' Market Attendants.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	Chi-square <sup>a</sup>
College Student	36%	37%	51%	49%	
Non-Student	64%	63%	49%	51%	23.84*
Local Resident	46%	37%	37%	35%	
Visitor to Area	22%	28%	22%	18%	
Local Student	29%	29%	38%	42%	
Other	3%	6%	3%	4%	19.46*
First time shopper	9%	25%	18%	10%	
Repeat shopper	91%	75%	82%	90%	25.39*

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence among all four groups.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

ers' Market with children. Table 11 shows that 17% of impulse purchasers have children between the ages of 7 and 12 living at home. Planned non-purchasers are more likely to attend Farmers' Markets with friends, while planned purchasers are more likely to attend Farmers' Market with a spouse. Table 10 shows that 69% percent of planned non-purchasers attend with friends and only 17% with a spouse, while 30% of planned purchasers attend Farmers' Market with a spouse.

Table 12 indicates that planned purchasers attend Farmers' Market more times throughout the year than all other groups. Planned purchasers attend Farmers' Market more frequently in the summer and fall compared to all three groups. Table 12 shows that people who planned to and actually did purchase produce attend Farmers' Market a total of 13.40 times per year. Planned purchasers at-

tend Farmers' market 4.16 times throughout the summer and 3.51 times during the fall. The frequency of Farmers' Market attendance during the winter and spring are similar among all four groups.

Table 16 shows significant differences in the amount of dollars spent at Farmers' Market among the four groups. Impulse purchasers spend the highest total dollar amount. Table 16 reveals that impulse purchasers spend a total of \$19.14 at Farmers' Market, compared to planned purchasers, who spend \$15.87. Impulse shoppers spend more money on produce and eating than do planned purchasers, planned non-purchasers, and unplanned non-purchasers. Table 16 indicates that impulse shoppers spend a total of \$8.44 on produce and \$8.63 on eating. People who planned to but did not purchase any produce spend more money on other miscellaneous things compared to rest of the group.

**Table 10. People Accompanying Farmers' Market Shoppers.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	Chi-square <sup>a</sup>
Friends came	54%	55%	69%	65%	22.61*
Children came	17%	20%	10%	17%	11.21*
Spouse came	30%	19%	17%	25%	23.85*
Other family	18%	19%	11%	15%	11.61*
Business acquaintance	4%	3%	3%	7%	6.43**
Others came	5%	9%	4%	4%	4.77

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence between all four groups.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Significant at the 0.10 level.

**Table 11. Age of Children Living at Home.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	Chi-square <sup>a</sup>
< 2 years old	4%	11%	5%	5%	4.42
2 to 6	11%	11%	7%	8%	4.93
7 to 12	7%	17%	6%	11%	13.69*
13 to 14	4%	2%	4%	6%	2.93
15 to 18	8%	9%	6%	8%	1.21

<sup>a</sup> Tests for independence among all four groups.

\* Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 12. Total Visits to Farmers' Market.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	F-Statistic
Total	13.40	11.68	10.93	11.25	2.73*
Summer	4.16	3.77	3.14	2.98	4.28*
Fall	3.51	2.97	2.91	3.32	2.16**
Winter	2.39	2.01	2.02	1.92	1.41
Spring	3.36	2.97	2.82	2.91	1.53

\* significant at the 0.05 level using ANOVA.

\*\* significant at the 0.10 level using ANOVA.

**Table 13. Total Visits to Farmers' Market During Past Year.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	1.7151
	Planned non-purchaser	2.4679*
	Unplanned non-purchaser	2.1441
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	-1.7151
	Planned non-purchaser	.7528
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.4290
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-2.4679*
	Impulse purchaser	-.7528
	Unplanned non-purchaser	-.3238
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-2.1441
	Impulse purchaser	-.4290
	Planned non-purchaser	.3238

\*Significant difference at the .05 level.

**Table 14. Total Visits to Farmers' Market During Past Fall.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	.5374
	Planned non-purchaser	.5997
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.1826
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	-.5374
	Planned non-purchaser	-.0062
	Unplanned non-purchaser	-.4171
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-.5997
	Impulse purchaser	.0062
	Unplanned non-purchaser	-.4171
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-.1826
	Impulse purchaser	.3548
	Planned non-purchaser	.3238

\*Significant difference at the .10 level.

**Table 15. Total Visits to Farmers' Market During Past Summer.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	.3838
	Planned non-purchaser	1.020*
	Unplanned non-purchaser	1.176*
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	-.3838
	Planned non-purchaser	.6371
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.7926
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-1.020*
	Impulse purchaser	-.6361
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.1565
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-1.176*
	Impulse purchaser	-.7926
	Planned non-purchaser	-.1565

\*Significant difference at the .05 level.

**Table 16. Dollars Spent at Farmers' Market.**

	Planned Purchaser (n=392)	Impulse Purchaser (n= 65)	Planned Non-purchaser (n= 516)	Unplanned Non-purchaser (n= 220)	F-Statistic
Produce	7.53	8.44	0.00	0.00	367.48*
Eating	5.91	8.63	5.39	4.72	4.86*
Shopping DT	1.99	2.02	5.51	2.43	1.79
Other	0.51	1.18	1.47	0.74	3.21*
TOTAL	15.87	19.14	12.51	7.93	4.61*

\* significant at the 0.05 level using ANOVA.

**Table 17. Total Dollars Spent at Farmers' Market.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	-3.2672
	Planned non-purchaser	3.3609
	Unplanned non-purchaser	7.9478*
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	3.2672
	Planned non-purchaser	6.6281
	Unplanned non-purchaser	11.2150*
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-3.3609
	Impulse purchaser	-6.6281
	Unplanned non-purchaser	4.5869
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-7.9487*
	Impulse purchaser	-11.2150*
	Planned non-purchaser	-4.5869

\*Significant difference at the .05 level.

## Summary and Conclusion

This research examines purchasing behaviors and demographics among Farmers' Market consumers in San Luis Obispo, California. Two shopper-subgroup comparisons are presented in this research. The first analysis compares primary produce shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers. Primary produce shoppers represent 19% of Thursday Night Farmers' Market attendees and are defined as those persons who primarily attend Farmers' Market to shop for produce. Non-primary produce shoppers are characterized as those persons who primarily attend Farmers' Market for all other reasons: to eat, to socialize, to shop at the downtown stores, and for the entertainment.

The second subgroup analysis consists of four groups: planned purchasers, impulse purchasers, planned non-purchasers, and unplanned non-purchasers. Planned purchasers are defined as those who planned to and actually did purchase produce. Impulse purchasers did not plan to but did purchase produce. Impulse purchasers represent 14% of produce shoppers at Thursday Night Farmers' Market. Planned non-purchasers are defined as those who planned to but did not purchase produce. Unplanned non-purchasers, who neither planned to nor purchased produce.

An analysis of the demographic profile of shoppers who primarily attend Farmers' Market to shop for produce reveals that they tend to be older and are more likely to be married than are non-primary shoppers of produce. The education levels and employment status are comparable between primary produce shoppers and non-primary produce shoppers. Primary produce shoppers are in the middle of the income distribution. An examination of all reasons for attending a Farmers' Market indicates that primary produce buyers also attend to eat and socialize. Primary produce shoppers spend approximately three times as much money on produce as do non-primary produce shoppers.

An examination of the demographic profile of impulse shoppers indicates that they tend to be younger to middle-aged purchasers, are more likely to be married, and are more likely to be college graduates compared to planned purchasers, planned non-purchasers, and unplanned non-purchasers. Impulse purchasers are in the middle to higher ends of the income distribution. The employment status is similar among all four groups. Impulse purchasers are more likely to be first time attendees and are less likely to attend Farmers' Market throughout the entire year compared to planned purchasers. Impulse shoppers primarily attend Farmers' Market to eat and are more likely to attend Farm-

**Table 18. Total Dollars Spent on Produce at Farmers' Market.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	-3.2672
	Planned non-purchaser	3.3609
	Unplanned non-purchaser	7.9478*
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	3.2672
	Planned non-purchaser	6.6281
	Unplanned non-purchaser	11.2150*
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-3.3609
	Impulse purchaser	-6.6281
	Unplanned non-purchaser	4.5869
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-7.9487*
	Impulse purchaser	-11.2150*
	Planned non-purchaser	-4.5869

\*Significant difference at the .05 level.

ers' Market with children and other family members compared to all other groups. The analysis also indicates that impulse shoppers are more likely to be visitors to the area. Lastly, impulse shoppers spend the most money at Farmers' Market.

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**Table 19. Total Dollars Spent On Eating At Farmers' Market.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	-2.7231*
	Planned non-purchaser	.5186
	Unplanned non-purchaser	1.1872
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	2.7231*
	Planned non-purchaser	3.2417*
	Unplanned non-purchaser	3.9103*
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-.5186
	Impulse purchaser	-3.2417
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.6686
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	-1.1872
	Impulse purchaser	-3.9103*
	Planned non-purchaser	-.6686

\*Significant at the .05 level.

**Table 20. Total Dollars Spent On Other At Farmers' Market.**

N=1173		Mean Difference
Planned Purchaser	Impulse purchaser	-.6652
	Planned non-purchaser	-.9537*
	Unplanned non-purchaser	-.2314
Impulse Purchaser	Planned purchaser	.6652
	Planned non-purchaser	-.2885
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.4337
Planned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	.9537*
	Impulse purchaser	.2885
	Unplanned non-purchaser	.7223
Unplanned Non-purchaser	Planned purchaser	.2314
	Impulse purchaser	-.4337
	Planned non-purchaser	-.7223

\*Significant at the .05 level.



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