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*Journal of Food Distribution Research*  
*Special Issue*

## **Innovations in Short Supply Chains for Horticultural Products**

### **Introduction**

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The papers included in this issue describe research activities of several university faculty members who participate in the multistate regional project S1050: Assessing the consumer behavior, market coordination and performance of the consumer-oriented fruit and vegetable sector (<http://bit.ly/1iSrNjY>). The concept for this Special Issue stems from a S1050 co-sponsored oral presentation session, “Innovations in short supply chains for horticultural products,” held during the 2014 Western Education and Research Activities Committee on Agribusiness (WERA-72) annual meeting in Santa Clara, California.

The articles range in topics related to community supported agriculture (CSA) in examining, “Food Consumption Attitude and Behavioral Change among CSA Members” to a survey exploring trends occurring within the CSA movement in, “CSAs and the Battle for the Local Food Dollar.” A third article examines the spending patterns of consumers in a four state survey of “Local Wine Expenditure Determinants in the Northern Appalachian States,” while the fourth article gauges the effectiveness of using Audience Response Systems (ARS) in Extension programs to assess knowledge gains and findings from workshops conducted with farmers in “Using Audience Response Systems for Extension Programming Impact Evaluation.”

The articles represent some of the diverse research and extension efforts within S1050’s general topics of consumer behavior, market coordination and performance of the consumer-oriented fruit and vegetable sectors. These issues address S1050’s objectives, which consist of the following:

1. Develop demand and market valuation models for the produce sector that can be used to evaluate effects of increasingly complex product differentiation schemes (organic, enhanced health claims, biodynamic), trade, commodity marketing programs, labeling

programs (local, food miles, Fair Trade), traceability systems, and food safety events in the U.S. produce markets.

2. Analyze the relative benefits and costs, to producers and consumers, of government and industry-led marketing and policy programs (certifications, Leafy Greens marketing order, Country of origin labeling, farmers markets) using both theoretical approaches and empirical evidence from multi-state applied research projects.
3. Assess the changing coordination and supply chain management strategies being implemented in the fruit and vegetable sector and identify strategic organizational and marketing implications for a set of firms that are diverse in terms of commodity, marketing approach and size of operation (including small and mid-sized farms).

A key component of this multistate regional project is to help participants identify other faculty with similar interests and facilitate collaborations. With 26 official members representing a variety of universities and more than a dozen other researchers and extension specialists attending annual meetings and report activities, efforts have included submission of multi-state proposals resulting in funded research projects, co-sponsored oral presentation sessions, as well as special journal issues and extension publications.

One of our goals is to strengthen the S1050 membership by identifying potential participants who value interaction with group members while lending their expertise to others' projects and efforts. We welcome the opportunity to learn about others who would be a good fit for the S1050 multistate regional project and discuss their interest in joining our group. Whether they are new to academia, mid-career, or more senior in their tenure, the ability to interact with researchers and extension personal with similar interests is an immeasurable benefit for all involved.

We hope you enjoy reading the issue. Please contact us if you would like to learn more about our new multistate regional project, S-1067, Specialty Crops and Food Systems: Exploring Markets, Supply Chains and Policy Dimensions, which will replace S1050 in October 2015. You may also view the project outline, directory of participants, and other information at: [http://www.nimss.org/lgu\\_v2/homepages/home.cfm?trackID=17616](http://www.nimss.org/lgu_v2/homepages/home.cfm?trackID=17616).

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