An Analysis of Consumers' Views and Preferences Regarding Farmer to Consumer Direct Markets in Delaware

Kristy Kuches, Ulrich C. Toensmeyer, Carl L. German, and J. Richard Bacon

The U.S. fresh produce industry is rapidly growing, with new technologies producing superior fruits and vegetables, like the flavor savor tomato, at more efficient rates. McLaughlin, Park, and Perosio (1997) claim that "the fresh fruit and vegetable industry has been one of the most dynamic in the U.S. food system for the past quarter century." Upon entering the new millennium, consumers' demand for fresh produce should continue to increase if, in fact, it follows past trends. Fresh produce consumption, on a per capita basis, has been increasing for 25 consecutive years (McLaughlin, Park, and Perosio, 1997).

With this growing demand for fresh produce, then, comes an opportunity for farmers to increase their individual profits—specifically, through the use of direct markets. The four main types of these farmer direct markets are defined as follows:

(1) Tailgate market—produce is usually sold by one or more vendors from the back of a truck;

(2) Pick-your-own farm—customers pick/harvest their own produce from a field or orchard;

(3) Roadside stand/market—a single market outlet that sells fresh produce; and

(4) Farmer's markets—a collection of independently operated roadside stands at one location.

Farmer direct markets provide a very important link between consumers who continue to search for high-quality produce items at low costs and farmers who continue trying to compete in the produce industry. Further, direct markets allow farmers to sell fresh produce directly to consumers, thus completely bypassing the complex distribution network and providing the farmers a greater share of profits. Although farmer direct markets will never displace produce departments at supermarkets, they have been, and will most likely remain, a successful niche market as long as farmers learn how to assess consumers' changing wants and needs. This study is designed to help farmers in making this assessment.

It is also important for direct market operators to understand how residents from different county locations, specifically in Delaware, differ in their attitudes and preferences concerning both fresh produce and farmer direct markets. The objectives of this study are: (1) to determine consumer attitudes toward farmer-to-consumer direct markets, by county and state, in Delaware; (2) to utilize demographic variables in order to analyze consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions at the various direct market outlets; and (3) to make recommendations, based on results, on marketing produce at the various direct market outlets.

Data and Procedures

The data were collected from a consumer mail survey on direct marketing that was mailed out in the fall of 1995 to 10,000 Delaware residents who were randomly selected through a commercially purchased mailing list. This sample was subdivided by counties in proportion to the population base. After the back-up mailing, 1,209 surveys were returned statewide, with 801 from New Castle County, 195 from Kent County, and 213 from Sussex County. Thus, the statewide response rate was 12 percent, not including unusable returns.

The first part of the questionnaire asked respondents various questions about their personal views and preferences concerning farmer direct markets in Delaware. The responses for these questions were either: (1) rated on a contingency valuation scale of 1 to 7; (2) yes, no, do not know, or have no opinion responses; or (3) free choice responses, in which the respondent checked the most accurate response(s) from those listed. Also included was a space for any additional comments or "other" selections.

The second part of the survey questionnaire asked for general demographic character-

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The authors are, respectively, Degree with Distinction Student, Professor, Extension Marketing Specialist, and Associate Scientist, Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Delaware.

istics of the respondents, including the type of residential area in which they resided, gender, age of both the respondent and his/her spouse, education level completed, race, occupation, and household income.

Chi-square testing for independence was utilized to test for any significance between specific demographic groups. The demographics being analyzed were residential area, gender, age, education level, and income level. Chi-square testing was only used for those questions based on contingency valuation and for those questions in which the responses were yes, no, and do not know /no opinion. Specifically, this test was used to relate specific demographic variables to (1) consumers' purchasing decisions and (2) consumers' beliefs about the quality and price of fresh produce at farmer direct markets. The analysis is further divided by county so as to recognize the different needs and wants of individuals residing in New Castle County, Kent County, Sussex County, and the state as a whole.

Several different factors that might influence a person's decisions to purchase fresh produce from farmer direct markets include farm-like atmosphere, money-back guarantee, graded produce, express checkout, refrigerated displays, locally grown, organically grown, special events, advertised specials, liking to help farmers, canning or freezing, and produce selection. Respondents were asked to rate each of these factors on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = very important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = slightly important; 4 = neutral; 5 = slightly minor; 6 = somewhat minor; and 7 = very minor. In order to test chi-squares, the responses were grouped in the following manner:

0 = a response of 1 to 3;
1 = a response of 4; and
2 = a response of 5 to 7.

Thus, the three columns for the corresponding tables are based on this breakdown of consumer responses, whereby the first column represents a 0, the second column represents a 1, and the third column represents a 2. All columns were given appropriate headings so as to interpret consumer responses more easily.

Demographics also affect consumers' opinions about quality and prices of fresh produce. For the question concerning prices, respondents were asked to state if they thought the price of fresh produce purchased from farmers was higher, the same, lower, or unsure in comparison with prices at the grocery store. Likewise, on the question concerning quality, respondents were asked to identify whether they thought the quality of produce grown in Delaware was better, the same, worse, or unsure versus the quality of produce grown in other states. These responses were then grouped as follows in order to run chi-square testing:

0 = a response of "higher" or "better";
1 = a response of "the same" or "unsure"; and
2 = a response of "lower" or "worse".

Thus, the three columns in the tables corresponding to these two questions are based on the preceding scale, whereby appropriate headings are given for each.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic data collected from the survey showed Sussex County respondents to be older than respondents from both New Castle and Kent counties. Approximately 42 percent of Sussex County respondents are 60 and older compared to only 25.6 percent in Kent County and 28.2 percent in New Castle County (Table 1). As far as gender, in all three counties, females are predominant in numbers over males; however, the greatest spread in percentages occurs in New Castle County, where 60.8 percent of the residents are female and only 39.2 percent are male. There are only slight variations with respect to race. Caucasians are the majority for all counties, each having 90 percent or greater. Sussex County does have more Native American respondents, with about 7 percent as compared to 2.9 percent in New Castle County and 2.1 percent in Kent County. However, Sussex County has less Black/African American respondents with only 1.5 percent, compared to New Castle County's 4.6 percent and Kent County's 5.2 percent.

In comparison to the state census, the survey respondents tended to be older. Survey results showed that 9.1, 10.3, and 4.8 percent of the respondents are between the ages of 18 and 29 for New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively. This is compared to the Delaware census, which shows 19.5, 21.1, and 15.9 percent of the population in Delaware to be in the same age

Table 1. Comparison of Age, Gender, and Race of Survey Respondents, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Characteristics	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	State
	percent			
Age				
18 – 29	9.1	10.3	4.8	8.5
30 – 44	33.8	30.2	25.8	31.8
45 – 59	28.9	33.9	27.3	29.5
60 – 74	22.8	21.5	36.4	25.0
75 or older	5.4	4.1	5.7	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gender				
Female	60.8	54.4	55.7	58.8
Male	39.2	45.6	44.3	41.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Race				
Black/African American	4.6	5.2	1.5	4.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.8	1.0	—	0.7
Native American	2.9	2.1	6.8	3.5
White/Caucasian	91.2	90.7	91.7	91.2
Other	0.5	1.0	—	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results.

category for New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties. With respect to gender, the Delaware census shows a more even ratio of males to females in comparison with the survey results. This indicates that more women than men may have answered the survey. This is especially evident in the New Castle County data, which shows that 60.8 percent of the survey respondents are female and only 39.2 percent are male. This is significantly different from the Delaware census, which shows that 51.6 percent of the population in New Castle County is female while the remaining 48.4 percent of the population is male. When analyzing race, about 90 percent of survey respondents in all three counties are Caucasian compared to the Delaware census estimate of about 80 percent for all three counties. Also of significant difference is the Black/African American distribution. Based on survey results only 4.6, 5.2, and 1.5 percent of respondents in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, are Black/African American. This is compared to the Delaware census in which 16.4, 18.6, and 16.7 percent of the residents of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties are Black/African American.

The education level of the survey respondents varies by county, with New Castle County residents slightly more educated in comparison with Kent and Sussex County respondents. To illustrate, 50.4 percent of New Castle County respondents have a college degree or higher, compared to 35.5 and 33.8 percent, respectively, in Kent and Sussex counties (Table 2). The income distribution of respondents also varies by county, with New Castle County again in the lead. Slightly more than 50 percent of New Castle County respondents (by household) claim to make $50,000 or more while 35.5 percent of Kent County respondents and 29.7 percent of Sussex County respondents make the same claim.

In comparison to the census data, the respondents who answered the survey are generally more educated. Of the survey respondents, 1.9, 7.2, and 3.8 percent, respectively, have less than a high school education for New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties. This is compared to 18.9, 26.0, and 30.0 percent of the population from the Delaware census who have less than a high school education (in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties). Likewise, the survey respondents, on average, earn more money than the Delaware population as a whole.

Table 2. Comparison of Education Level and Gross Income of Survey Respondents, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Characteristics	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	State
	----percent----			
Education Level				
Less than High School	1.9	7.2	3.8	3.1
High School Diploma	16.9	21.6	26.7	19.4
Some College	25.9	26.9	26.2	26.1
Associate's/Tech Degree	4.9	8.8	9.5	6.4
College Degree	30.7	24.2	24.3	28.5
Postgraduate Degree	19.7	11.3	9.5	16.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Household Gross Income ($)				
Less than 5,000	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.8
5,000 – 9,999	1.7	2.8	3.7	2.2
10,000 – 14,999	3.2	3.3	5.9	3.7
15,000 – 24,999	7.6	17.1	17.0	10.9
25,000 – 34,999	15.5	14.4	21.3	16.4
35,000 – 49,999	20.0	26.0	21.3	21.1
50,000 – 74,999	28.1	21.5	22.2	26.0
75,000 – 100,000	14.2	9.9	4.8	11.9
Above 100,000	9.0	3.9	2.7	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results.

With respect to county occupancy, 66.3 percent of respondents reside in New Castle County, 16.2 percent in Kent County, and 17.5 percent in Sussex County (Table 3). The Delaware census results are nearly identical to the survey results for county occupancy. Regarding the specific residential areas of the respondents, survey results are reported by county. In New Castle County, 70.9 percent reside in suburban areas while, in Kent and Sussex counties, 35.9 percent and 50.7 percent, respectively, reside in rural areas (Table 4). Statewide, the majority of the respondents claimed to live in suburban areas.

Respondents' Viewpoints and Shopping Preferences

When asked how they first learned about direct markets in their area, with respect to roadside stands, the majority of respondents knew about them by "passing it on the road" (Table 5). Other responses are by "word of mouth" and by "roadside signs." At the farmer's market, "word of mouth" is the leading information source, with 34.3, 33.8, and 15.2 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively. Regarding pick-your-own farms, the most prevalent information source is "word of mouth." The next most popular is "advertisement," especially with Sussex County respondents, of which 23.2 percent claimed to have heard about pick-your-own farms through advertisements. This compares to New Castle County's 14.6 percent and Kent County's 18.5 percent. At tailgate farms, the most common information source is by "passing it on the road," with 21.3, 22.1, and 25.6 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively.

When asked if they had ever been disappointed with the quality of fresh produce purchased from the direct markets, the majority of respondents answered that they seldom had ever been disappointed, with 78.1, 74.6, and 81.1 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively (Table 6). Only 5.3, 5.3, and 3.9 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, said that they are often disappointed.

If a respondent answered seldom or often, they were asked to give reasons why they were disappointed. In the category of fruits, the reason most cited by respondents as the cause of their disappointment is "poor flavor" with 46.3, 42.4, and 45.5 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively (Table 7). "Bruised"

Table 3. Comparison of County Occupancies of Respondents Versus the Census, Delaware, 1995.

County	Delaware Census (%)	Survey Results (%)
New Castle	66.3	66.3
Kent	16.7	16.2
Sussex	17.0	17.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Census, 1990.

Table 4. Residential Area of Survey Respondents, by County, Delaware, 1995.

	Survey Area			
Residence Area	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	State
	percent			
Rural Area	8.0	35.9	50.7	20.1
Suburban Area	70.9	22.6	9.2	52.2
City	14.2	17.9	2.9	12.8
Small Town	6.9	23.6	37.2	14.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

Table 5. Market Information Source of Survey Respondents, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Type of Market & Information Source	New Castle County	Kent County	Sussex County	State
	percent			
Roadside Stand/Market				
Word of Mouth	27.8	32.8	35.1	29.9
Passed By on the Road	70.2	71.3	73.0	70.9
Roadside Sign	24.5	30.3	24.6	25.5
Advertisement	5.4	15.9	9.0	7.7
DE Farm Market Directory	1.4	2.6	7.6	2.7
Other	1.1	2.1	2.4	1.5
Farmer's Market				
Word of Mouth	34.3	33.8	15.2	30.9
Passed By on the Road	20.3	21.5	18.5	20.2
Roadside Sign	9.9	11.8	13.3	10.8
Advertisement	11.1	19.0	14.7	13.0
DE Farm Market Directory	1.0	2.1	6.6	2.2
Other	2.5	3.1	0.9	2.3
Pick-Your-Own Farm				
Word of Mouth	20.3	27.2	27.0	22.6
Passed By on the Road	7.0	17.4	15.2	10.1
Roadside Sign	7.8	16.4	16.6	10.7
Advertisement	14.6	18.5	23.2	16.8
DE Farm Market Directory	1.3	3.6	10.9	3.3
Other	0.9	2.1	1.9	1.2
Tailgate Farm				
Word of Mouth	6.1	6.7	3.8	5.8
Passed By on the Road	21.3	22.1	25.6	22.2
Roadside Sign	4.6	6.2	6.2	5.1
Advertisement	1.3	2.6	2.4	1.7
DE Farm Market Directory	0.1	1.0	0.5	0.3
Other	0.9	1.5	0.9	1.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

Table 6. Occurrence of Respondents Being Disappointed by Produce Purchased at Direct Markets, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Occurrence of Disappointment	New Castle County	Kent County	Sussex County	State
	percent			
Often	5.3	5.3	3.9	5.0
Seldom	78.1	74.6	81.1	78.1
Never	16.6	20.1	15.0	16.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

Table 7. If a Response of "Often" or "Seldom," Why the Respondent Was Disappointed, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Produce Item and Reason for Disappointment	New Castle County	Kent County	Sussex County	State
	percent			
Fruits				
Appearance	12.6	14.6	13.1	13.0
Poor Flavor	46.3	42.4	45.5	45.5
Bruised	45.2	47.7	39.8	44.6
Not Fresh	24.3	25.8	29.5	25.5
Other	10.6	9.9	8.0	10.0
Vegetables				
Appearance	15.5	19.9	13.6	15.8
Poor Flavor	31.4	22.5	30.7	29.9
Bruised	20.8	20.5	11.9	19.2
Not Fresh	34.8	37.1	42.0	36.5
Other	11.7	12.6	8.0	17.4

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

and "Not fresh" were other important reasons for being disappointed with fresh fruits from farmer direct markets. Concerning vegetables, "not fresh" was the main reason why consumers were disappointed, with 34.8, 37.1, and 42.0 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively. A high percentage of people also claimed that they were disappointed because of "poor flavor."

Respondents were also asked to compare the price of produce purchased directly from farmers to prices at the grocery store. Almost one-half of the respondents from all three counties believed that produce purchased from farmers was actually lower in price compared to grocery stores' prices (Table 8). Approximately 21.3, 23.7, and 19.6 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, believed that prices were the same for these two outlets.

When asked to compare the quality of Delaware's produce versus the quality of produce from other states, 1.0 percent of the respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties answered that Delaware's quality of produce was lower than that of the quality of produce from other states (Table 9). A popular response is that the quality of Delaware's produce is the same as the quality of produce from other states, with 45.3, 29.7, and 26.3 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively. Likewise, a high percentage of people believe that the quality of Delaware's pro-

Table 8. Price of Delaware Produce Purchased Directly From Farmers Compared to Prices at Grocery Stores, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Response	New Castle County	Kent County	Sussex County	State
	percent			
Higher	16.2	12.1	19.1	16.0
The Same	21.3	23.7	19.6	21.4
Lower	49.3	51.6	48.1	49.5
Unsure	13.2	12.6	13.2	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

Table 9. Quality of Delaware's Produce Versus Quality From Other States, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Response	New Castle County	Kent County	Sussex County	State
	percent			
Higher	27.8	54.2	53.7	36.6
The Same	45.3	29.7	26.3	39.4
Lower	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Unsure	25.9	15.1	19.0	23.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

duce is higher, with 27.8, 54.2, and 53.7 percent from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively.

In analyzing the visiting characteristics of survey respondents, the first question asked was whether consumers purchase on impulse at direct markets. In response to this question, 83.5, 78.6, and 81.2 percent of the respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, did, in fact, purchase on impulse (Table 10). Also asked was whether or not the trip to the direct market included family members or friends. Approximately 63.5, 69.2, and 69.0 percent of respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, indicated that the trip included family members. However, only 25.8, 26.2, and 29.1 percent of respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties indicated that the trip included friends.

When asked if the main reason for their visit to the direct market was for fruits and vegetables, more than 90 percent of the respondents from all three counties replied yes. In addition, 67.3, 72.5, and 65.2 percent of respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, reported that their visit to the direct market was the main reason for the trip. In response to the question asking whether they had a preference for State Certified Markets, more than 90 percent of respondents from all three counties reported that they did have a preference.

The participants were further asked if they had ever seen or heard about the "Delaware Agricultural Products Logo" on products, packages, or in advertising. In New Castle County, only 18.4 percent of respondents replied yes versus 53.9 percent in Kent County and 46.6 percent in Sussex County. When asked whether or not they had a preference between those products with the logo and those without it, 74.3, 79.3, and 75.1 percent of the respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, said that they did have a preference for those products with the logo.

Survey respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 how important or minor the listed reasons were in decisions for purchasing from the direct markets. The most important reason is "produce selection," with roughly 85 percent of the respondents from all three counties reporting this

Table 10. Shopping Characteristics of Survey Respondents, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Characteristics	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	State
	---percent---			
Impulse Purchase at Direct Market	83.5	78.6	81.2	82.2
Does Trip Include Family Members	63.5	69.2	69.0	65.5
Does Trip Include Friends	25.8	26.2	29.1	26.4
Fruits and Vegetables Main Reason for Trip	94.3	93.5	97.0	94.7
Would You Shop if State Certified	93.5	91.6	92.4	92.9
Are Visits to Direct Market Main Reason for Trip	67.3	72.5	65.2	67.8
Have Seen State Logo on Produce	18.4	53.9	46.6	29.1
Preference Toward Products With State Logo Over Those Without	74.3	79.3	75.1	75.2

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

reason as very or somewhat important (Table 11). The next most popular reason is "locally grown" for which 76.9, 82.6, and 91.7 percent of respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, rated this reason as very or somewhat important. Another popular response was that respondents "liked to help farmers." On the contrary, approximately 50 percent of the survey respondents from all three counties indicated that "special events" had very minor importance in influencing their decisions to purchase.

Summary and Conclusions

The survey results indicate several conclusions about consumers' attitudes and preferences at Delaware farmer direct markets. First, consumers stated that they found out about roadside stands and tailgate markets mostly by passing them on the road. Thus, farmers at these two types of outlets should focus on being located somewhere that is easy to see from a major road and is also easily accessible. At pick-your-own farms and farmer's markets, location is not as crucial. At these outlets, consumers' major information source was "word of mouth." Therefore, farmers should offer specials or discounts to customers as incentive to bring friends/family along.

Regarding the price of produce from farmers compared to prices at the grocery store, almost one-half of all respondents believed that prices were lower at direct markets. Concerning the quality of Delaware's produce versus the quality of produce from other states, 54.2 and 53.7 percent of Kent and Sussex County respondents, respectively, believe that Delaware's produce was better than that of other states. However, only 27.8 percent of New Castle County respondents believe Delaware's produce was better. This suggests that farmers need to focus on promoting the high quality of Delaware produce, especially at markets in New Castle County. They should also emphasize the low prices of produce at farmer direct markets versus produce at the grocery store.

It was also indicated that a high percentage of people from all counties purchase on impulse at direct markets. Farmers should take advantage of this by creating visually appealing displays, or by possibly even providing consumers with recipes for cooking with fresh produce. More than 70 percent

Table 11. Survey Respondents Reason to Purchase at Selected Direct Markets, by County, Delaware, 1995.

Factor	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	State
	----------percent----------			
	Produce Selection			
Very Important	58.1	64.8	56.1	58.8
Somewhat Important	27.7	20.7	29.8	26.8
Slight to Very Minor Importance	2.2	1.1	3.5	2.3
	Locally Grown			
Very Important	41.9	58.1	67.1	49.0
Somewhat Important	35.0	24.5	24.6	31.5
Slight to Very Minor Importance	3.7	4.9	3.5	3.4
	Like to Help Farmers			
Very Important	29.2	33.0	30.8	30.1
Somewhat Important	27.0	27.8	28.7	27.4
Slight to Very Minor Importance	11.6	7.4	8.2	10.3
	Graded Produce			
Very Important	22.2	31.1	25.3	24.2
Somewhat Important	26.1	27.1	26.8	26.3
Slight to Very Minor Importance	15.0	9.6	10.0	13.3
	Money-Back Guarantee			
Very Important	20.7	28.1	24.8	22.6
Somewhat Important	18.5	16.3	22.7	18.8
Slight to Very Minor Importance	24.1	19.1	15.4	21.8
	Refrigerated Displays			
Very Important	16.9	19.8	17.8	17.6
Somewhat Important	21.5	18.6	24.2	21.6
Slight to Very Minor Importance	20.4	18.1	21.4	20.3
	Organically Grown			
Very Important	15.1	17.6	17.3	15.8
Somewhat Important	20.6	18.2	19.4	19.9
Slight to Very Minor Importance	24.3	19.3	16.2	22.1
	Advertised Special			
Very Important	10.2	10.6	9.7	10.2
Somewhat Important	19.2	14.0	16.7	17.9
Slight to Very Minor Importance	30.5	29.1	31.7	30.6
	Farm-Like Atmosphere			
Very Important	6.4	12.6	12.8	8.5
Somewhat Important	17.2	18.6	13.8	16.9
Slight to Very Minor Importance	28.6	25.1	24.5	27.4
	Special Events			
Very Important	1.9	4.0	2.7	2.4
Somewhat Important	6.0	5.7	3.8	5.5
Slight to Very Minor Importance	59.2	59.5	60.0	59.3

Source: Consumer Mail Survey Results and Calculations.

of respondents from all three counties in Delaware indicated that they have a preference toward products with the state logo. In Kent and Sussex counties, 53.9 and 46.6 percent, respectively, of all respondents had seen the state logo on produce. In New Castle County, the percentage was lower, at 18.4 percent. These findings imply that farmers, especially in New Castle County, should concentrate their efforts on getting the state logo on their produce.

The most important reason why respondents purchased produce at direct markets was for the produce selection. Approximately 58.1, 64.8, and 56.1 percent of respondents from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, respectively, indicated that produce selection was very important. Therefore, farmers should try to provide as wide a selection as possible of produce items. The second major reason for purchasing was because they like locally grown produce. This was especially true for Sussex County respondents, of which 67.1 percent claimed it was very important, compared to 41.9 percent of New Castle County respondents and 58.1 percent of Kent County respondents. This shows that farmers, especially in Sussex County, should put the Delaware logo on their produce or advertise that the produce is grown at their own farm or locally.

Respondents also indicated that they "like to help farmers." Approximately 60 percent of all respondents stated that this was very or somewhat important, showing that people *do* want to help farmers, and what better way to help them than to shop at farmer direct markets.

Reference

McLaughlin, Park, and Perosio. 1997. "Marketing and Performance Benchmarks for the Fresh Produce Industry." Produce Marketing Association, Food Industry Management, Cornell University, October.