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Analysis of Consumers' Interest in Alternative Food Delivery Systems: Results from a Consumers' Survey in New Jersey

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Changes in consumer demographic composition, advances in information technology, labor force participation, and time demands of the workplace have created demand as well as opportunities for the food retailing industry to deliver food using new alternative methods. Using a logit analysis, this research analyzes consumers' interest in patronizing four alternative food delivery mechanisms by examining the impacts of various socioeconomic and preference variables on consumers' interest in using these services. The four alternative food delivery mechanisms include (1) home delivery of prepared meals; (2) home delivery of a full line of groceries; (3) drive-through pick-up service; and (4) neighborhood truck delivery of vegetables and meat products.

The data was obtained via surveys conducted at various locations of New Jersey to gather in-

formation on consumers' socioeconomic conditions and their interest in using four different methods of accessing food. Empirical results suggest that there is considerable interest among consumers in alternative food delivery systems. Among various socioeconomic groups, younger consumers, individuals with at least a college education, and households having a larger food budget are more likely to use these services. Interest in convenience contributes positively while concern over product quality, diversity, and prices negatively affect consumers' interest in using one or more of these services. Gender, employment, and marital status, and driving distance to the nearest supermarket seem to have effects on consumers' interest level for some, but not all, of the alternative food delivery methods analyzed.