Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Network Report

Preliminary Research for the Vermont Locally Grown Collaborative

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Vermont's Sustainable Agriculture Network was formed to support a more unified and focused strategy for developing local food systems, connecting consumers with local farmers and their products, and increasing the income of the Vermont agriculture communities.

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Sustainable Agriculture Network members include:

- Center for Sustainable Agriculture at UVM
- Farms to Communities (NE Kingdom)
- Intervale Foundation
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
- Rural Vermont
- UVM Extension Service
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture
- Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
- Vermont Food Venture Center
- Vermont Fresh Network
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
- Vital Communities

Executive Summary:
Vermont Locally Grown Collaborative

This report examines Vermonters' perceptions and purchasing of local food. On behalf of the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) and the Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont conducted preliminary research through a survey analysis and focus groups. This report is designed to provide information that will assist in the direction and marketing efforts for the Vermont Locally Grown Collaborative.

The following report is divided into three components: the 2003 Vermonter Poll survey results and analysis; a summary of focus group discussions; and an overview of Buy Local campaigns across the nation. Survey questions related to local food buying were developed for the statewide 2003 Vermonter Poll in February, and data were then analyzed through bivariate and regression analysis. Further, to gain a clearer picture of how to continue and how to better differentiate target groups, six focus groups in three regions of Vermont were conducted in May 2003, and discussions were recorded and assimilated. Finally, to gather additional recommendations, ideas and strategies for the Locally Grown Collaborative, a sample of 'buy local' campaigns and programs across the nation were researched and summarized for this report.

In summary, preliminary research from survey and focus group data suggests:

- **According to survey results, Vermonters' spend an average of $97 on food consumed at home, while $25 of that amount is spent on local food consumed at home.**
- **Consumers want to buy local foods and feel that buying local is important.** A large portion of survey respondents stated that when considering vegetables, milk and meat, 'local' was more important than 'organic,' and 'local' was competitive with 'price.'
- **Price and convenience are barriers to many consumers.**
- **Freshness and supporting local farmers/economy are triggers to buying locally grown products.**
- **Focusing the campaign on increasing consumers' commitment to local should increase purchases of beverages, meat & fish, vegetables, candy, and herbs.**
- **There may be some confusion among consumers in the area of where local foods are available.** Eighty-one percent of Vermonters stated they bought local food products in the supermarket. However, focus groups revealed there were some misconceptions as to what qualified a local food product, and whether supermarkets offered an adequate selection of locally grown foods.
- **Focus group respondents revealed they would like to see more local foods sold at supermarkets.**
- **Identification of local foods can be confusing to consumers.** Though 76% of survey respondents claimed local foods were easy to identify, focus groups revealed that respondents were not sure what the labels really meant.
- **In survey and focus group data, little to no connection surfaced between local foods and institutions in Vermont.** Many buy local programs and campaigns across the nation have worked to diligently to establish profitable relationships between local farmers and institutions, and can serve as examples for Vermont's initiative.
- **Most consumers report some local buying (95%).**

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Section One:

<u>2003 Vermonter Poll Analysis:</u>
Local Food Buying in Vermont

Presentation by Jane Kolondinsky, PhD
summarized by Erin Croom

Local Food Buying in Vermont

I. Introduction

In preparation for the direction and marketing efforts of a Locally Grown collaborative, the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) collaborated with the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) and the Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont to conduct preliminary research. Survey questions for the statewide 2003 Vermonter Poll were jointly developed and focused on local food product purchases (food at home) and opinions on local foods. Through bivariate and regression analysis of the survey results, this study found:

- Local food expenditures have the potential to increase regardless of how much a consumer is currently spending on local food products.
- Lower income consumers buy a different array of products as do higher income consumers, and are less likely to buy directly from the farmer.
- Consumers' expenditures on non-local organic food products compete with expenditures on local non-organic food products. Food products that are both organic and local may have a niche in the market.
- Focusing the campaign on increasing consumers' attitude towards local should increase purchases of meat and fish, vegetables, candy, beverages and herbs.

II. Methodology

The data used in this report were collected by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont as part of the annual "Vermonter Poll." The polling was conducted between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. beginning on February 18, 2003 and ending on February 26, 2003. The telephone polling was conducted from the University of Vermont using computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI). The sample for the poll was drawn through random digit dialing and used all of the telephone exchanges in the state of Vermont as the sampling frame. Only Vermont residents over the age of eighteen were interviewed. The poll included questions on food and agricultural issues in the state of Vermont. This study focused on 436 to 478 respondents, and is representative of the Vermont population (over 18 years of age). Bivariate and Multivariate analysis were conducted for this study.

For the purpose of the survey, local food products were defined as food grown, harvested, or produced anywhere in the state of Vermont. Consumers were categorized as having low, medium or high importance of buying local food products and, expenditures on local foods were categorized into 3 groups: < \$10, >\$10 and <=\$10, and >\$25 (based on the distribution of the data).

III. Description

A. Demographics:

The mean age of respondents was 48 years old. Forty percent were college educated. The average number of family size is three, with 37 % of families having children under the age 18 living with them. Twenty-eight percent of households reported incomes over $65,000 while 10% reported incomes under $20,000. Seventeen percent of respondents live in a single adult household

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Variables reported	
Mean years of age	48 years
College educated	40 %
Average number of members in family	3
Families with children	37%
Households with incomes over $65,000	28%
Households with incomes over $20,000	10%
Live in single adult household	17%

B. Food Buying Behaviors:

Consumers reported spending an average of $97 per week total on food at home, and an average of $26 per week on local food products at home. Per capita expenditures for food at home were reported at $41.24. Seventy-one percent of consumers report buying organic foods and 95% of people report buying local foods. Seventy-eight percent of consumers reported purchasing food at coops, natural food stores, direct from farmer, farmer's market and CSA's. Seventy-five percent of consumers reported it was easy to identify local foods and 26 % always read food labels. The total food budget spent at home was 76%, while the food budget spent away from home was 24%.

Table 2: Average Food Buying Behaviors:

Variables Reported	
$ spent per week on Food at Home	$97.00
$ spent per week on Local Food products	$26.00
$ spent per capita on Food at Home	$41.24
Report buying organic	71%
Report buying local	95%
Report purchasing local food at coops, natural food stores, direct from farmer, farmer's markets, and CSA's	78%
Report purchasing local food at supermarkets	81%
Always read food labels	26%
Percent of total food budget spent at home	76%
Percent of total food budget spent away from home	24%

Many consumers reported that they identified local food products by use of store labels (42%), while 13% identified local food if they purchased it directly from a farm. Ten percent of consumers identified local foods by the Vermont Seal of Quality. The majority of respondents (75%) stated that local foods were easy to identify. Forty-two percent of respondents were in the 'medium' importance category for local foods, while only 8% were categorized as having a 'high' importance. When asked about their expenditures on local food products, 67% responded spending between $10 and $25 dollars a week.

Table 3: Local Food Products

Variables reported	Percentage
Consumers who identify local foods by store labels	42%
Consumers find local foods hard to identify	25%
Found local to be of either medium or high importance	50%
Spent between $10 and $25 a week on local food	67%
Spent over $25 a week on local food	32%

IV. Bivariate Analysis

There is a relationship between the consumers' rating of the importance of local and their expenditures on local foods. People who ranked as perceiving local foods as having 'middle' importance purchased more beverages, candy, meats and fish, and vegetables, compared to those who were ranked as 'high' importance. Expenditures on vegetables, jams, candy, pasta and pizza did not differ by importance. Expenditures and importance were related with beverages, herbs, meat and fish. However, importance does not matter for cheese and milk, coffee or ice cream. More consumers in the 'middle' local importance category buy organic. Fewer consumers in the 'high' local importance category buy organic. The group that was in the highest local expenditure group also had the highest organic expenditures.

V. Multivariate Results

A. Basics:

Univariate and bivariate analyses give some indication of what is important. However, multivariate analyses give a more complete picture. We know that some people (5%) do not report any local buying. Also, food buying is not linear and there is much variability in expenditures. As income increases, food expenditures increase at a decreasing rate. There is more variation in food spending at high expenditure levels than at low expenditure levels. The following discussion is based on a regression analysis where local food expenditure was modeled as very dependent on a variety of demographic factors and buying habits.

B. The Effect of Demographics:

For every additional person in the household, local buying increases by $2.62. If a household makes less than $20,000 per year, their local expenditures are $3.10 less than if their incomes are over $20,000 per year. There is no effect of being in the highest income category (over $65,000), or education, or family type. For every 10-year increase in age, there is a decrease in local expenditures by $0.92.

C. The Effect of Buying Habits:

Consumers who reported buying organic, spent $2.92 less on local foods. Purchasing local cheese increases local food expenditures by $4.57 a week. Purchasing local meats and fish increases local food expenditures by $4.16 per week. Purchasing local beverages increases food expenditures by $6.66 per week. There is no relationship between any other types of local food on total food expenditures. There is no relationship between expenditures of consumers who make purchases at alternative markets versus conventional markets. For every dollar increase in food expenditures overall, local food buying increases by one cent.

VI. Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusions

- Lower income consumers (below median) who believe buying local is important spend less on local food products than higher income consumers. Lower income consumers buy more grains and cereals; these consumers purchase fewer prepared foods, meat and fish, pasta & pizza. Also, lower income consumers are less likely to buy directly from a farmer, farmer's market, or buy organic. Highest income consumers buy more beverages, jams, meat and fish, pasta, pizza and salsa and are more likely to buy directly from the farmer.

  Conclusion: High and low income consumers purchase different array of local food products, and purchase local foods from different locations.

- As importance of local foods increases in a purchase decision that includes price, organic and local, about $0.76 is gained for each unit increase in the importance of buying local.

  Conclusion: To increase local food expenditures, focusing on increasing a consumer's perception of importance of local purchasing should be included in promotional materials.

- More consumers in the middle local importance category buy organic, than consumers in the higher importance category. The highest local expenditure group has the highest organic expenditures. Consumers who reported buying organic, spent $2.92 less on local foods.

Conclusion: Organic foods compete for local expenditures (or the perception thereof). If local and organic foods are combined, they could provide a competitive edge in the market place.

- Most consumers report some local buying (95%).

  Conclusion: There is potential for more expenditures on local food products for every expenditure category.

- Beverages (other than coffee and alcoholic), local cheese, and meat & fish gave the greatest gains in local expenditures according to multivariate analysis. Consumers' level of expenditures and perceptions of importance of local food were related to purchases of beverages, herbs, and meat & fish. Consumers categorized as perceiving local food buying as a 'middle' importance purchased more beverages, candy, meat & fish, and vegetables compared to consumers in the 'high' importance category. When examining the effect of buying habits, consumers purchasing local cheese increase local food expenditures by $4.57 a week, while consumer purchasing local meats and fish (+$4.16) and local beverages (+$6.66) also increase per week local food expenditures.

  Conclusion: Focusing the campaign on increasing consumers' commitment to local should increase purchases of beverages, meat & fish, vegetables, candy, and herbs.

- Shopping at alternative markets and the importance of local are related.

  Conclusion: Focusing on and understanding distribution networks to increase purchases of local foods could be beneficial.

- To gain a clearer picture of where to go from here and how target groups might be better differentiated, focus groups should be developed to answer the following questions:

  - What makes local important?
  - What does local mean to you?
  - How do you know you are buying local?
  - What would induce you to buy more local products?
  - Where would you like to see more local products offered?

Section Two:

2003 Vermonter Poll Results:
Vermonters' Views on Local Food Products

2003 Vermonter Poll Results:
Vermonters' Views on Local Food Products

I. Introduction

The following report presents the results of a statewide public opinion poll conducted in February 2003. Specifically, questions in this survey were developed to gain insight into how Vermonters' view local food products, where they purchase these products and how they are identified. This report focuses on Vermonters' buying behaviors and attitudes towards local food products.

II. Methods

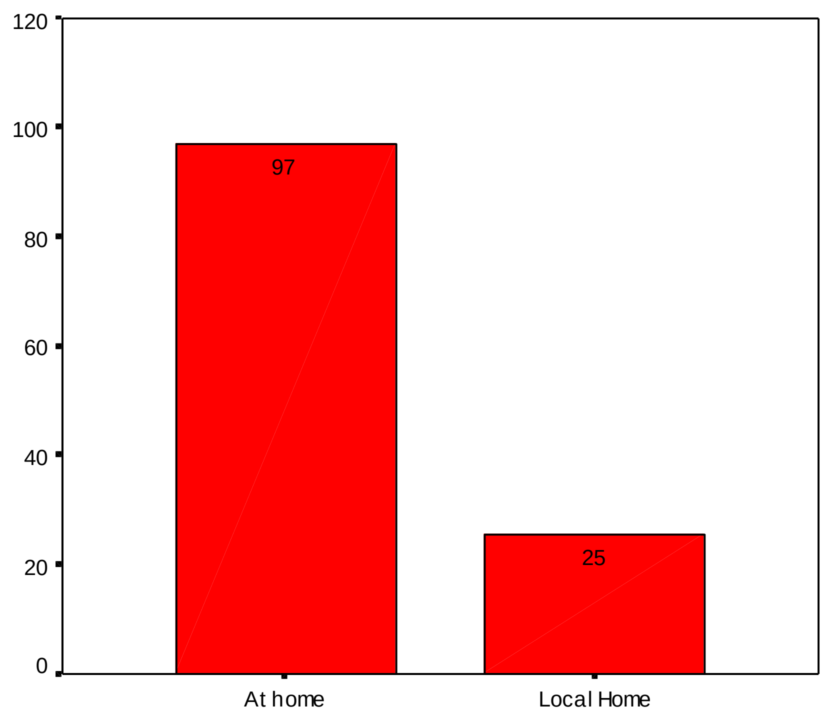
The data used in this report were collected by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont as part of the annual "Vermonter Poll." The polling was conducted between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. beginning on February 18, 2003 and ending on February 26, 2003. The telephone polling was conducted from the University of Vermont using computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI). The sample for the poll was drawn through random digit dialing and used all of the telephone exchanges in the state of Vermont as the sampling frame. Only Vermont residents over the age of eighteen were interviewed. The poll included questions on food and agricultural issues in the state of Vermont. This study focused on 436 to 478 respondents, and is representative of the Vermont population (over 18 years of age).

III. Results

A. Vermonter's 'At Home' Food Expenditures

- How much money does your household spend in an average week on ALL foods and beverages consumed AT home (grocery stores, etc)?
- How much money does you household spend in an average week on all LOCAL foods and beverages consumed AT home (grocery stores, etc).

Figure 1: Average dollar expenditures on all food and local food consumed at home.



Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

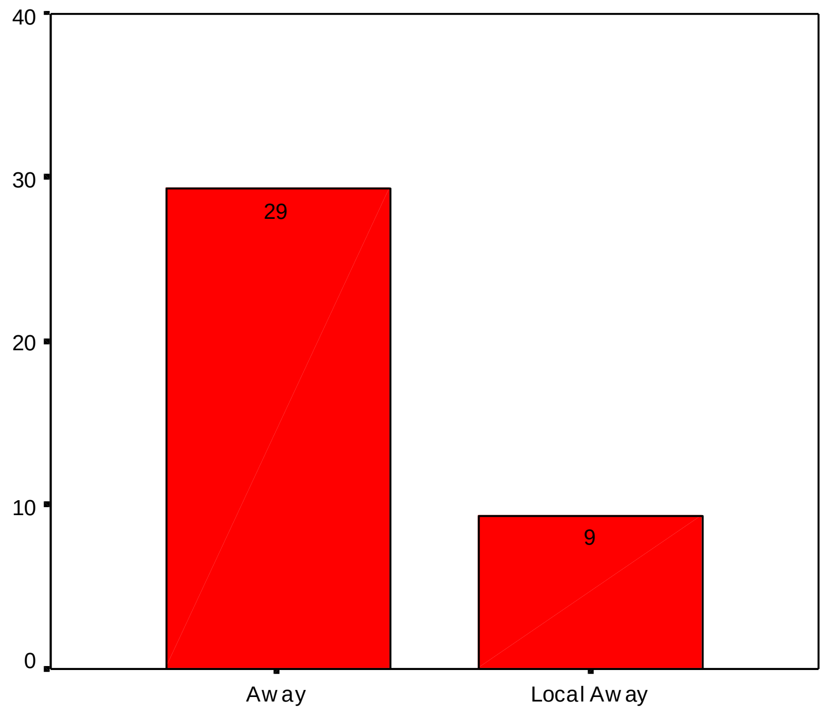
Table 1: Weekly Expenditures on all foods and local foods consumed at home.

	Weekly Expenditures in Dollars
All food at home	$97
Local food at home	$25

B. Vermonter's 'Away From Home' Food Expenditures

- How much money does your household spend in an average week on ALL foods and beverages consumed AWAY from home (restaurants, etc)?
- How much money does you household spend in an average week on all LOCAL foods and beverages consumed AWAY home (Restaurants, etc)

Figure 2: Average dollar expenditures on all food and local foods consumed away from home.



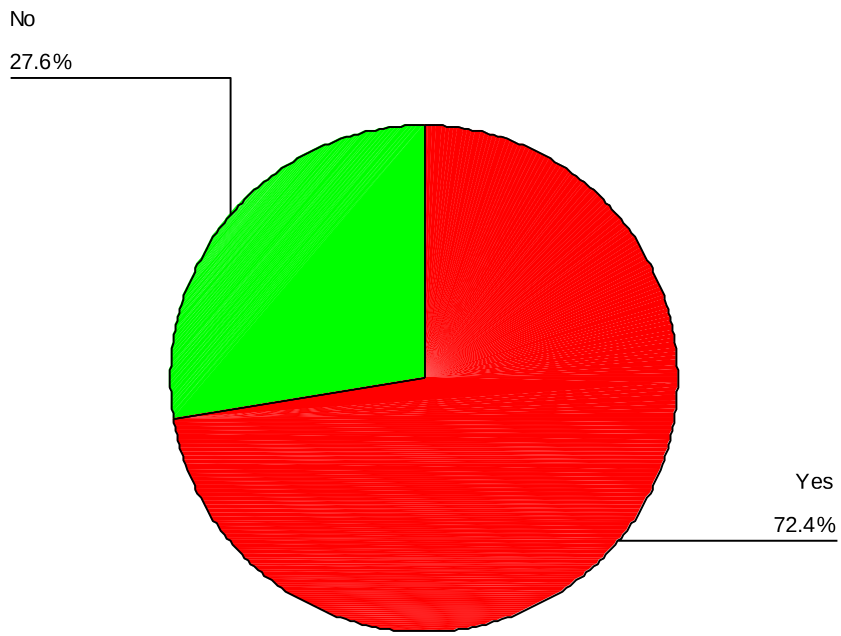
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 2: Average dollar expenditures on all food and local foods consumed away from home.

	Weekly Expenditures in Dollars
All food away from home	$29
Local food away from home	$9

C. Purchase of Organic Food Products

Figure 3: Yes or no, in the past 12 months have you purchased any organically produced food products?



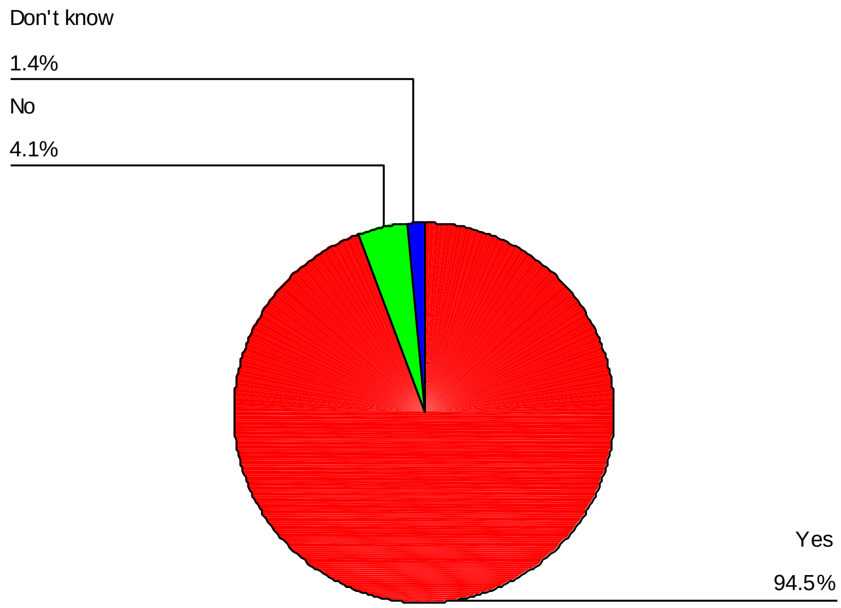
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 3: Yes or no, in the past 12 months have you purchased any organically produced food products?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	331	72.4
No	126	27.6
Total	457	100.0

D. Purchase of Local Food Products

Figure 4: Yes or no, in the past 12 months have you purchased any local food products? (For the purpose of this study the term "local food products" refers to foods grown, harvested, or produced anywhere in the state of Vermont.)



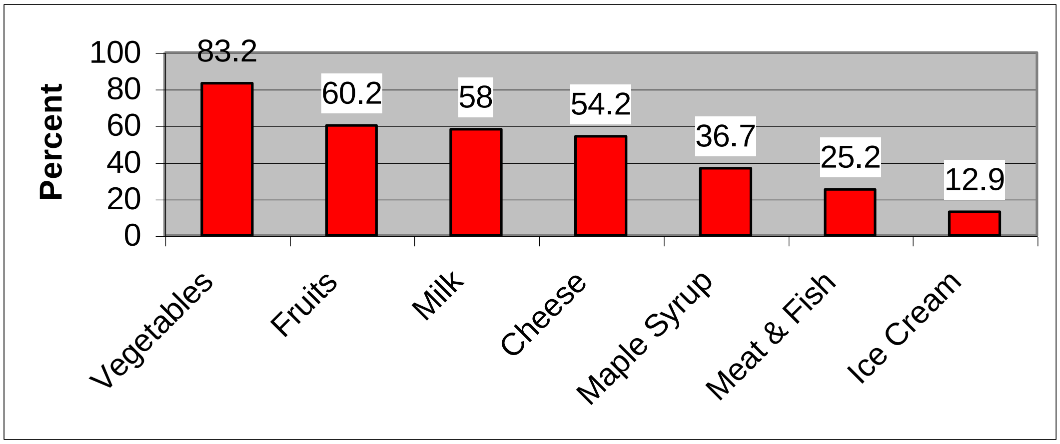
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 4: Yes or no, in the past 12 months have you purchased any local food products?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	606	94.5
No	26	4.1
Don't know	9	1.4
Total	641	100.0

E. Types of Local Food Products Purchased

Figure 5: List all the types of local food products that you have purchased in the last twelve months. (Most frequent responses)



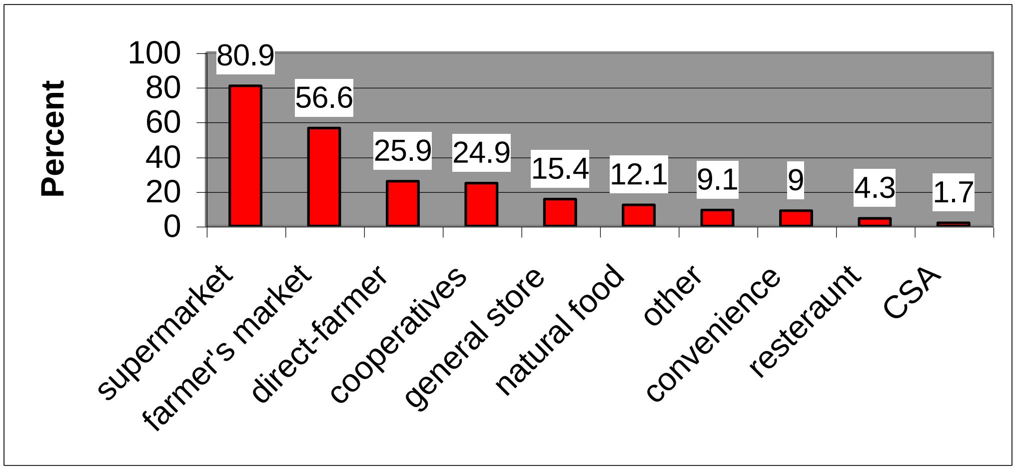
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 5: List all the types of local food products that you have purchased in the last twelve months. (Complete List)

Local Food	Percent
Vegetables	83.2
Milk	58
Cheese	54.2
Maple Syrup	36.7
Meat & Fish	25.2
Ice Cream	12.9
Other	9.6
Jams	9.2
Sauces/Salsa	8.8
Alcohol	8.3
Cereal/Grain	7.3
Honey	6.5
Flour mixes	5.6
Beverages	5.4
Prepared Food	5.4
Herbs	5.1
Pasta/Pizza	4.7
Coffee	4.6
Candy	2.2

F. Location of Local Food Products Purchased

Figure 6: Please list all the types of places where your household buys local food products



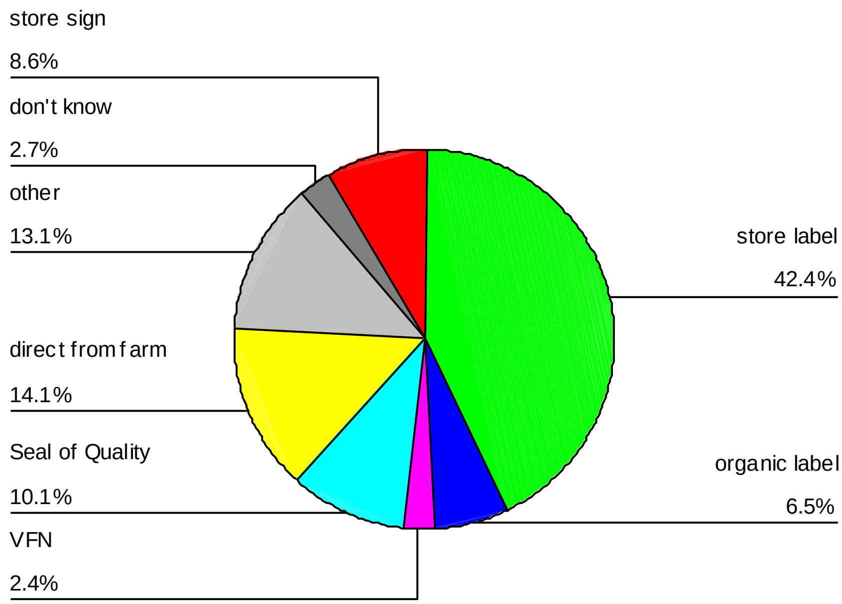
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 6: Types of places where local food products are purchased

Locations	Percent
supermarket	80.9
direct-farmer	25.9
cooperatives	24.9
general store	15.4
natural food store	12.1
other	9.1
convenience store	9
restaurant	4.3
CSA	1.7

G. Identification of Local Food Products

Figure 7: How do you primarily identify whether or not a product is a local product?



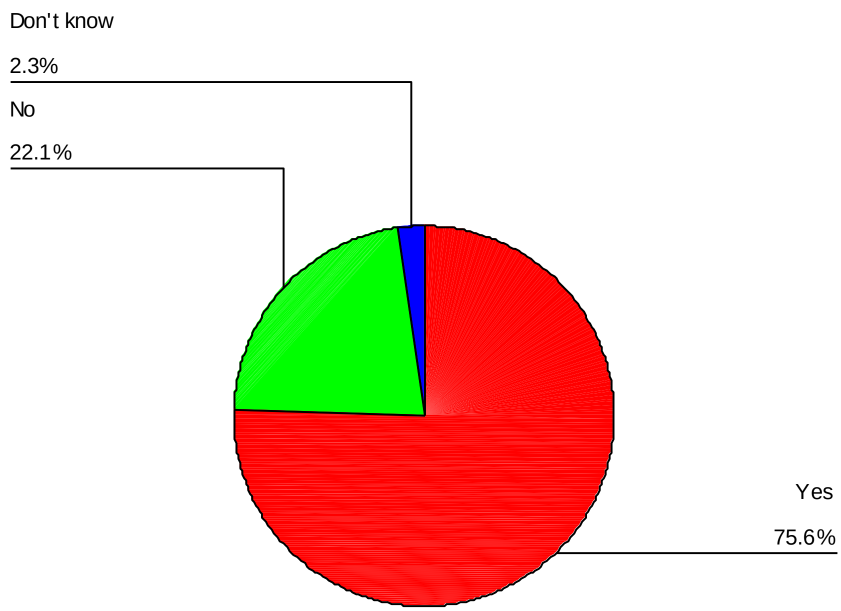
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 7: How do you primarily identify whether or not a product is a local product?

	Frequency	Percent
Store sign	40	8.6
Store label	196	42.4
Organic label	30	6.5
VFN	11	2.4
SOQ	47	10.1
Direct from farm	65	14.1
Other	61	13.1
Don’t know	13	2.7
Total	462	100.0

H. Ease of Identification of Local Food Products

Figure 8: Do you find local products to be easy to identify?



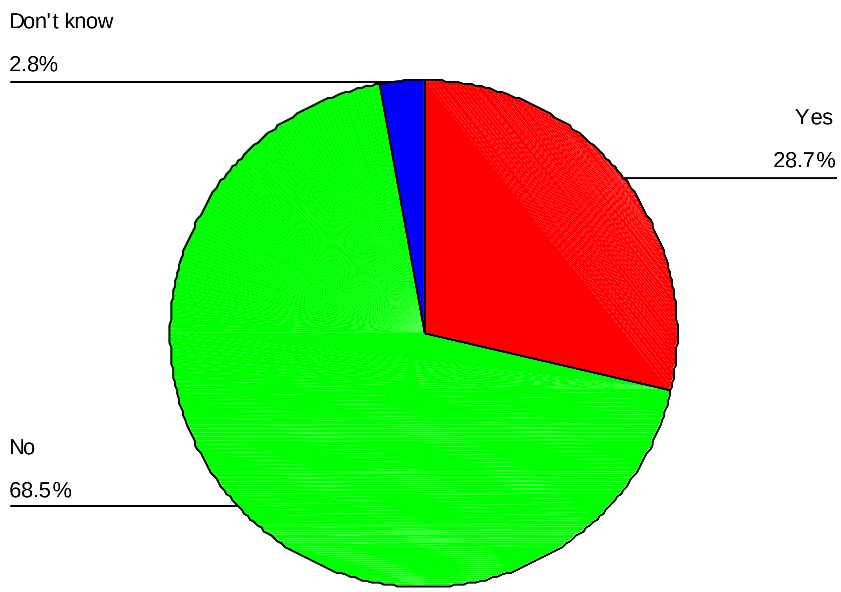
Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 8: Do you find local products to be easy to identify?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	351	75.6%
No	103	22.1%
Don't know	10	2.3%
Total	464	100.0%

I. Vermonters Who Have Heard of the Vermont Fresh Network

Figure 9: Have you ever heard of the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN)?



Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 9: Have you ever heard of the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN)?

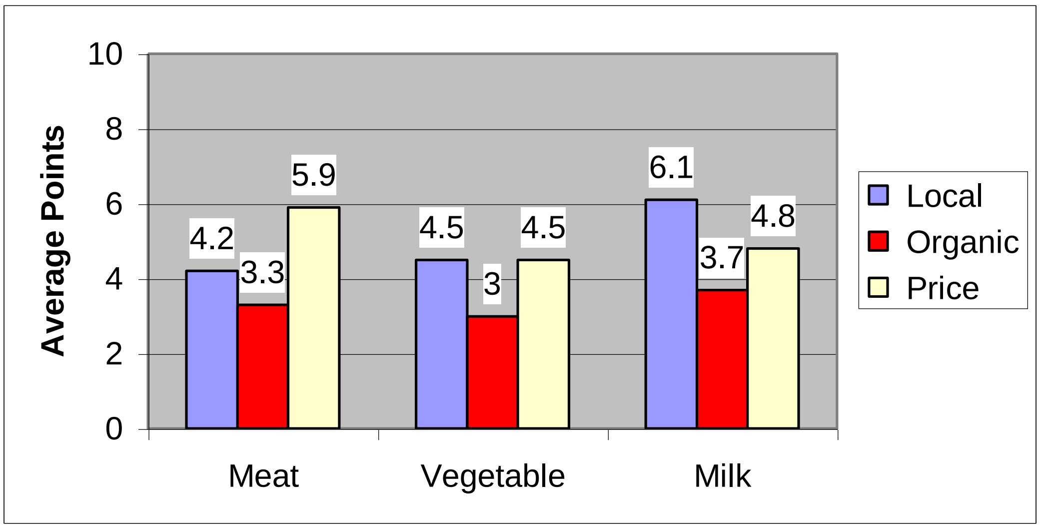
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	133	28.7
No	318	68.5
Don't know	13	2.8
Total	464	100.0

J. Importance of 'Local,' 'Price,' and 'Organic'

The following questions were asked to ascertain how important respondents viewed the variables of 'local,' 'price,' and organic' when considering vegetables, meat, and milk.

- You are in a grocery store buying vegetables. When making your choice you will consider the vegetables' price, whether it's organic, and whether it's locally-produced. You have ten points to split among price, organic and locally produced. What is most important to you when buying vegetables: Price, Organic or Local? *(Respondents were asked the same question about meat and milk.)

Figure 10: Points Allotted for the importance of Local, Organic and Price when considering Vegetables, Milk and Meat.



Source: Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, Vermonter Poll 2003

Table 10: Total Average Points

Local	14.8
Organic	10.0
Price	15.2

Section Three:

Locally Grown Collaborative Focus Group Report

<u>Executive Summary</u>

On behalf of the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Network's collaborative of 12 organizations, six focus groups were conducted as preliminary research for a statewide Locally Grown initiative. The purpose of these focus groups was to gain greater insight into Vermonters' perceptions of local food purchases and their activity in the marketplace. The following conclusions were based on the discussions.

- Panelists often tied their personal definitions of 'local' to where food was purchased.
- Vermont grown and produced foods were considered to be fresh, of high quality and beneficial to local economy.
- Most panelists agreed that 'locally grown' meant a food grown anywhere in the state of Vermont.
- Panelists depend on reliable labels and clear store displays when identifying local food products in stores.
- Major influences on buying local foods included freshness and supporting local farmers.
- Major reasons for not buying more local foods included short growing season, lack of convenience, and lack of promotion and education of who and where to purchase local food.
- Price was a major barrier if local foods were much more expensive than non-local food alternatives. However, most panelist were willing to pay a little more if the product was perceived as having a higher quality.
- Panelists would like to see more local products sold at supermarkets.
- The most important aspects of locally grown foods were quality (freshness, taste and nutrition) and price.
- Panelists favored slogans with the terms 'local' 'fresh' and 'Vermont.'

Implications and recommendations include:

- ❑ Focusing on panelists' recognition and belief that Vermont local products are of high quality and are beneficial to the local economy.
- ❑ Educating consumers on the actual costs of local foods and convenient ways to purchase them would be one way to eliminate the barriers of inconvenience and perception of high cost.
- ❑ According to focus group feedback, the words 'Vermont', 'local' and 'fresh' should be incorporated into a Buy Local slogan.
- ❑ Strengthening the channels between institutions and local foods, so as to increase both consumption and awareness of local foods by the consumer.

Vermont Buy Local Focus Group Summary

I. Introduction

A. Background and Purpose

In preparation for the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Network's (SAN) Locally Grown Collaborative, focus groups were held in three regions across the state. The Center for Rural Studies and the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont conducted these focus groups on behalf of SAN.

The purposes of these focus groups were to:

- Gain insight into panelists' attitudes, beliefs and experiences of 'local foods.'
- Identify the 'triggers' and 'barriers' to purchasing local foods.
- Collect consumer feedback on potential buy local slogans for the upcoming campaign.

B. Methods and Procedures

Based on information gained from the 2003 Food and Agricultural Vermonter Poll, consumers possessed varying definitions of the term 'local food.' For this reason, each focus group this discussion began by asking for examples, definitions and clarifications on what 'local' is and why participants felt certain food products are defined as 'local,' while others are not. After discussing the panelists' various definitions, clear pre-established definitions for 'locally grown food' and 'locally produced food' were presented. This ensured consensus among group members and limited confusion in data collection. After the new definitions were established, the groups discussed identification of, influences on, and locations to purchase locally grown and produced foods. A dot-exercise was then utilized to ascertain the importance of locally grown food to the participants. Finally, potential slogans for a Vermont Buy Local campaign were discussed and voted on. When appropriate, a brief summary of specific methodology is stated for individual topics.

Focus group discussions were recorded by both audiotape and note takers. The duration of each discussion was approximately two hours. Disagreement was encouraged to help foster a balanced and representative discussion.

Participants were recruited and chosen by SAN regional coordinators. Coordinators were directed to assign participants to the following categories:

- 'Involved consumer' (an individual familiar with the concept of a local food system or Community Supported Agriculture member)
- 'Conventional shopper' (an individual who shopped most always at larger, chain grocers)
- Co-op shopper (an individual who shopped very frequently at cooperatives)
- Low-income shopper.

Each participant was given either $20 cash or a $25 gift certificate to the Gardeners' Supply Company.

C. Sample

Six focus groups were held between May 12 and May 18, 2003. There were two focus groups held per region: Northeast Kingdom (Newport), Upper Valley (White River Junction), Chittenden County (Burlington). The average age of the 33 panelists was 47 years old. Sixty-seven percent were female. Forty-nine percent of panelists stated that their household earned less than $20,000, while 13% earned over $50,000. When asked about educational attainment, 75% of participants stated having at least some college level education, of which 23% stated having obtained a bachelors degree or higher. See appendix for regional demographics.

D. Six Key Discussion Topics:

1. Respondents' meanings of the term 'local' pertaining to foods
2. Identification of local foods
3. Influences on buying local food
4. Location of food purchases
5. Importance of buying local food
6. Feedback on Buy Local Slogans

II. Summary of Findings

A. Respondents' Meanings of the term 'Local' Pertaining to Foods

Each focus group began with an open discussion of the term 'local.' The purpose of beginning with this topic was to uncover discrepancies in individuals' definitions of the term 'local' as the term relates to foods. By gaining an understanding of how consumers' define 'local,' SAN will be able to understand the implications of using the term in a statewide campaign.

Panelists were asked to list foods they described as 'local,' and then asked to explain why they would describe these foods as 'local.' Next, they explored their views of local food businesses and shared their criteria for defining a local food business. Finally, panelists were asked to consider the difference between 'locally grown' and 'locally produced foods' and offer their own opinions and definitions for each.

Great efforts were made to keep the initial discussion about the term local separate from discussions about identification and location of food purchases. This proved difficult as these two aspects served as a major way that individuals defined local foods. The following written discussion is broken down into four sections: What is local and why each example considered is local; the concept and criteria of local food business; a debate over the difference of locally grown and locally produced foods; and definitions of 'local.'

1.What is Local / Why is it local?

Though panelists gave a wide range of local food examples, most examples were either produce, dairy or bread. Meat products were also listed, but less consistently. When asked what about these foods made them local, panelists frequently tied where the food was purchased into their answers. For example, corn was local if/because it came from a roadside stand; likewise bread was local if/because it came from a local bakery. A small independently owned store in the Upper Valley region was often cited as evidence for why certain vegetables were defined as local. Panelists often assumed, without the help of labels or signs, that small independent stores, roadside stands and such carried mostly local produce. When this assumption was challenged, participants admitted, "the only way you can know is if you ask." Panelists placed a high level of trust in roadside stands' verbal promise of offering local foods. Participants did not mention needing certification or other standardized systems for proving the foods were local.

Labels were another indicator for defining local foods**. If the label stated "Vermont," a local address, or a recognizable farm name, the food was considered local.** Many participants admitted that they had not considered if the ingredients were locally grown. Ultimately, people understood that farmers were a major part of making food local. Evidence of this is seen in that most of the products listed as local are easily associated with farms. Produce, cheese, bread, milk and meat could all feasibly come from a neighbor farm.

2. Local food businesses:

The most important factor in defining a local food company was that it was based in Vermont. The group debated the relative importance of both the companies' ownership and the origins of a products' ingredients, as pertaining to the idea of a local business. These debates centered around companies whose brands are commonly associated with Vermont, but are either no longer a Vermont owned company or do not necessarily use 100% locally grown ingredients. As one panelist stated concerning a Vermont beer company whose ingredients are not all locally grown, "It's still local, what matters is that people are employed here." If locally owned franchises were part of a national chain, participants did not perceive them as local.

3. Locally Grown vs. Locally Produced:

> Panelists considered local foods to be fresh, of high quality and beneficial to the local economy.

Several times during the discussion, panelists used the term 'local' for both locally grown and locally produced foods. When asked, most felt that there was a difference between the two terms, but that ultimately both were 'local' and both terms had positive connotations. Panelists considered local foods to be fresh, of high quality and beneficial to the local economy.

This being said, in this specific discussion panelists suggested that **locally grown foods are more true to the term 'local' than are locally produced foods**. A Chittenden County panelist summarized the overriding consensus best when she said, "I would say if it's local, it is a good thing."

Several participants felt more comfortable with the idea of calling locally grown food 'local', since the origins are clear. A panelist stated, "Locally grown [food] is obvious, processed [food] could come from anywhere." Along these lines, many panelists mentioned it is difficult to discern what percentage of Vermont maple syrup is produced by Vermont trees versus what percentage was imported. Most panelists were resigned to the fact that not every Vermont produced product can be 100% Vermont ingredients. As one man stated, "In a perfect world we could supply all the meat for local producers…," but he acknowledged that Vermont was just too small to do so.

4. Individuals' definitions of local food:

Participants considered what the term local food meant to them. Many stated that it was food that was grown "nearby" or "in my community", but **most agreed it was a food that was grown in the state of Vermont.** Participants struggled with the idea of an exact criteria for defining local that entailed specific parameters of distance. "Defining local as '[sold] 30 miles [from where food is grown]' is not worth much," stated one woman. Several agreed that if there was a connection to a farm it could be defined as local. Also, the food could not simply be processed in Vermont. At the same time, the closer it was to home, the better. This raised some questions in the different regions, especially those close to the Vermont borders.

> "If you know who the farmer is, then it is local."

In the Northeast Kingdom, panelists were asked to consider that New Hampshire and Canada were both less than 35 miles away, while Southern Vermont is more than 150 miles away. Panelists from the Northeast Kingdom were split on whether to the term local should be associated with out-of-state regions. "Geographically, New Hampshire is closer (than Southern Vermont). I guess I would have to be a loyal Vermonter." In the Upper Valley Region, where panelists are on the border of New Hampshire, there was a similar sentiment. Although the group felt that New Hampshire was a natural extension of their region, this group felt a stronger connection with the state of Vermont. Chittenden County panelists (who were mostly informed consumers) felt that local was defined as being from the community, but felt comfortable with Vermont being labeled as local. Though Chittenden County borders New York state, panelists never mentioned New York as part of the region.

Other definitions included:

"When you think local, you think fresh"

"Within 100 miles of where it is grown"

"Could be wild food"

"Near by, here, in this area or city"

"Vermont is local"

At the conclusion of this discussion, the moderator defined these terms identically for all groups and explained that these definitions would be used for the remainder of the focus group**. Locally grown was defined by the moderator as 'food grown, harvested and sold in the region** (whether Northeast Kingdom, Chittenden County, or Upper Valley**)**.' Locally produced food was defined as 'food that was produced and sold in the state of Vermont.'

B. Identification of Local Foods

Panelists felt locally grown and produced foods were fairly easy to identify with the help of labels and store displays. However, those conventional shoppers who were not familiar with many local foods, were at a loss on how to identify them at stores. As stated earlier, many panelists assumed that certain locally grown foods could be easily identified by where there were purchased (roadside stands, etc).

This dependence on grocers to display local foods was a common theme among a majority of 'conventional shopper' panelists. One such shopper said, "I feel its hard, I only shop at supermarkets and I have no idea unless its states it in the produce section." Several panelists identified local products by reading labels (which contained either a seal, local address or a familiar farm name) or recognizing certain brands, like Booth Brothers, Cabot and smaller farms brands. Some panelists mentioned that they could find local foods by word of mouth, or advertised in the local paper. There were other misconceptions in identifying local foods; an extreme example might be that some participants felt they could identify local eggs if they were brown, not white.

C. Influences on Purchasing Local Foods

Panelists cited numerous influences for buying locally grown and produced foods. Panelists were then asked to consider why they do not purchase more products, and then what would influence them to buy additional products. Finally, panelists were asked how the variables of price and organic affected their purchases of local food products.

Reasons for purchasing local foods often included freshness and supporting local farmers and/or economy. Other influences included availability**,** selection and variety, and being able to purchase food close to home**.** Several felt that if they knew the farmers, they were more likely to buy their produce. As one panelist stated, if people knew the local growers, they "are more apt to continue to go [support] them." Another individual in support of local farmers mentioned, "If you want the local farmers to continue to produce the things that you want, you need to support them." Ultimately, establishing a relationship with the farmer played a key role in consumers' willingness to purchase local foods. Others mentioned that locally grown food has a better flavor and was nutritious, because it is fresh and often organic.

When panelists were asked their reasons for not buying more locally grown foods, a frequent answer was due to the short growing season and lack of convenience. If they could not purchase locally grown food at supermarkets, many were not willing or able to drive around to several different locations to purchase a variety of local products. Others mentioned not knowing where to go, and one woman from the Northeast Kingdom mentioned that the hours at the farmers market should be lengthened. **Respondents felt that more promotion and education of what some farmers have would be helpful.** However, several admitted that they were merely affected by "what's on sale at the supermarket." Only one informed consumer mentioned more complex reasons for purchasing locally grown foods. These included saving energy for transportation, polluting less, keeping land open and acknowledging long-run economic costs.

1. Organic vs. Local:

Generally, respondents felt that the aspect of local was more important than organic as it pertains to food. The exception to this rule was a few staunch advocates of organic foods. However, these organic buyers admitted that it depended on what kind of food they were considering, and who the food was intended for. One mother stated, "if it is not organic, but I can peel it, I would go for the local [food]." Though the terms local and organic were interchangeably by some, this was usually done by those who claimed to frequently purchase local and organic food products. Several participants were leery about organic products and/or felt they were overpriced. For these people, organic provided little to no additional benefits over food that was merely locally grown. Others who acknowledged that organic food was probably healthier, stated the cost was just too high.

2. Price vs. Local:

Overall, if the price was reasonable, panelists felt they would choose the local food product over a non-local food product (given the local product was more expensive.) However, price does play a big role as most people acknowledged that despite their wanting to purchase all local foods, they were unable to because of the price.

"Freshness is a ritual in terms of eating habits… Simply, if the product was superior, then there is little comparison."

"The price has to be the same or less from me. I can't afford to spend the extra on the Vermont product," stated one low-income panelist from Chittenden County. However, this individual did comment later on having spent a little more for Cabot cheese because of the higher quality. An informed panelist mentioned, "I would prefer to buy something local as long as it isn't too expensive. [However], you get what you pay for." One person stated, "There are ways to get the local products cheaper by going to the co-ops and the farmers markets…" Though price was a major obstacle for some, others felt it really was not a barrier at all. "I like to support local farmers… and I think Vermont products are the best. I don't think that price is a factor. Freshness is a ritual in terms of eating habits… Simply, if the product was superior, then there is little comparison."

D. Location of Food Purchases

Panelists were asked where they usually shop so as to get an idea of where the bulk of their food dollars were going. Conventional and low-income consumers stated larger grocery chains, panelists chosen as 'Co-op' consumers stated co-ops, farms and grocery chains, as did 'involved consumers.' Those with gardens, in all stratification categories, often mentioned a combination of all sources. Generally, **individuals enjoyed the idea of buying local foods and the experience of going to farmers markets, but for everyday shopping it simply was not practical.**

Panelists were then asked where they would like to see more local foods sold. The most frequent answer was **supermarkets**, so as to alleviate the inconvenience of shopping at other locations. "I don't have time to stop after a full day's work or go to a farmer's market on Saturday mornings." However, exceptions to this rule were panelists who were older and/or without children. " I am a devoted follower of Price Chopper. I plan my purchasing, am a coupon person and do the sales. However, once the season comes around I am at the farm stands…"

"I don't have time to stop after a full day's work or go to a farmer's market on Saturday mornings."

Other suggestions were convenience stores or additional farm stands in the city. The convenience stores could offer "… fruits for people who stopped on their way to work to get coffee." Chittenden County panelists mentioned in-town farm stands or another outdoor market downtown. No one mentioned that restaurants, schools or other institutions should offer more local food products, but nothing indicates that panelists would be against this idea. Simply, **there seems to be little connection between local food products and institutions.**

E. Importance of Buying Local Foods

After discussing various aspects of the term local and panelists' activity in the marketplace regarding locally grown and produced food, the following dot exercise was introduced. Panelists were asked to list everything that was important about purchasing food, locally produced food and locally grown food (using the agreed upon definitions for the two terms). This list was completed on a flip chart in the center of the room. Panelists were given nine dots, three red to signify most important, three blue to signify somewhat important and three yellow to signify least important. The dots could be distributed however the panelists saw fit (eg. if one variable was extremely unimportant it could receive 3 yellow dots). Some terms (such as taste, freshness, and nutrition), which were listed separately in the focus group sessions, have been combined for clarity in this analysis.

It is important to remember that all of the variables on the list below were important to the panelists; the points derived from dots indicate the degree of importance. It is interesting to note that although supporting the local farmer/economy was listed as a major influence for buying locally grown foods, it did not register as important as price or quality. Food security ranked as least important, which was surprising due to the passing of September 11 and the recent war in Iraq. Panelists commented that they felt this was not a major issue, because it either had not crossed their mind or they felt that the government was taking care of this. One woman stated, "I think of trust as a good extra." Also, though lack of convenience was mentioned multiple times as a barrier to purchasing more locally grown food, it did not rank excessively high.

Table 1: Dot exercise. Panelists' Perceptions on What is Important about purchasing Locally Grown Foods

	Most important	Somewhat Important	Least Important
Quality(Fresh, Nutrition, Taste)	46	21	7
Price	16	6	8
Availability	8	9	5
Convenience (location, how far away, ease)	7	8	8
Supporting Local Economy/Farmer	5	10	4
Organic (chemical free)	5	8	10
Environmental (sustainable)	3	4	2
Food Security (Trust)	4	10	21
Knowing the farmer (reputation)	3	4	4
Knowing where food comes from	1		4
Friendliness of Staff			4
Cleanliness		3	4
Quantity		3	

F. Feedback on Buy Local Slogans

Participants in the Upper Valley region and Chittenden County were asked to consider six slogans that might appear in a Vermont buy local campaign. Participants were initially asked to comment on their first thoughts regarding each slogan, and then asked if the slogan could be successful in motivating consumers to purchase local foods (both grown and produced). Finally, participants were asked to vote on their first, second and least favorite choice for a slogan.

- ‘**Buy Local, by jeezum’** This slogan was poorly received by all groups. Many stated that they simply did not like it because it sounded silly. “It’s a nonsense thing,” one panelist stated. Another mentioned if they saw the slogan it would make them laugh, but not purchase anything. Several felt that it might be religious, as in ‘by Jesus.’ Very few picked up on a political connotation or mentioned that it was a Vermont phrase.
- **“Vermont Fresh!”** Panelists felt this slogan had a pleasant, fresh sound to it. Some felt it was a positive message, but that there was not enough connection to produce. A couple of people felt cynical about the use of Vermont as a brand.
- **“Get Fresh, Buy Local”** Reactions were split between finding this slogan cute and a little too cute. Some thought it might be too laced with sexual innuendos (“sounds dirty”), while many others perceived it as hip. Overall, people realized that this slogan was ‘gimmicky,’ but didn’t seem to mind.
- **“Homegrown Tastes Best”** Several participants liked this slogan because it related to produce. The major disagreement with this slogan was that the term homegrown was too nebulous, for example, “Whose homegrown?” Several felt that this slogan needed to have ‘Vermont’ in it somewhere, or some other tie to a specific location. Others felt that homegrown was old-fashioned; it would work at a farm stand, but not in a store.
- **“Taste the Local Flavor”** Since taste was rated as high importance, panelists somewhat identified with this slogan. Negative reactions included that it sounded like a ‘yuppie’ slogan, cheesy and unappealing, or too specific. Again, several mentioned wanting Vermont to appear in the slogan.
- **“Buy Fresh… Buy Local”** Panelists generally had positive feedback for this slogan, as they saw it as both direct and strong, as well as incorporating the words fresh and local. The word ‘buy’ was up for debate by some who thought repeating it twice was a little too demanding. Suggestions for improving the slogan were to include ‘Vermont.’

It is important to note that many panelists favored a combination of slogans, such as “Vermont Homegrown” or “Buy Vermont Fresh.” Several participants mentioned feeling that the slogans should somehow exhibit a relationship to produce.

Table 2: Buy Local Focus Groups' Votes on Slogans

	First Choice	Second Choice	Least favorite choice
Buy Local, by Jeezum			57 %
Vermont Fresh	38%	23%	14%
Get Fresh, buy Local	19%	35%	
Homegrown Tastes Best	29%	5%	
Taste the Local Flavor		23%	19%
Buy Fresh, Buy Local	14%	12%	10%

(n=21)

"Vermont Fresh" was the first choice for 38 % of participants, while 57% voted "Buy Local, by Jeezum" as their least favorite. The second favorite choice was split between "Get Fresh, Buy Local" (35%), "Vermont Fresh"(23%), and "Taste the Local Flavor (23%)."

III. Implications and Recommendations

Although qualitative data derived from focus groups does not represent the population as a whole, it does provide some insight into Vermont consumers' perspectives on purchasing local foods.

1. Triggers to purchasing local food include the rally cry of supporting local farmers and economy. However, panelists admit that while the idea is noble, when it comes to purchasing their food it is price, convenience and quality that are the deciding factors. Educating consumers on the actual cost of local foods and convenient ways to purchase them would be one way to eliminate these barriers.

2. Panelists want to find local foods in supermarkets and need the aid of displays and food labels to facilitate their identification. To increase local food purchases, the challenge is to find a way to either increase the supply of local foods in supermarkets or make shopping elsewhere more convenient.

3. Though panelists have varying definitions of the term local, most could agree that food from the state of Vermont is local, regardless of what part of Vermont the food originates. Vermont products are viewed as possessing the positive attributes of high quality, freshness and benefiting the local economy.

4. Panelists have an emotional connection to local foods and Vermont businesses. When they have an experience with a farmer or farm, they feel they are more likely to purchase

a food product that is associated with it. Educating consumers on where farms are and what these farms have to offer would be one way to tap into this connection.

5. Panelists favor the words ‘Vermont,’ ‘local,’ and ‘fresh’ in a buy local slogan. This is evident in their allegiance to Vermont as a state and desire to support local farmers, as well as a strong importance placed on the quality of the food.

6. Focus group discussion revealed that panelists made little to no connection between local food products and institutions. Strengthening the channels between institutions and local foods can be a step towards increasing awareness and consumption on a larger scale, while building upon the relationship of consumers to their food sources.

Section Four:

Overview of 'Buy Local' Campaigns

Overview of Buy Local Campaigns and Programs

I. Introduction

This summary highlights a variety of 'Buy Local' campaigns and initiatives across the nation. In preparation for a statewide Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) Locally Grown collaborative, existing buy local campaigns have been researched to examine common themes and recommendations. Though very few buy local programs have conducted thorough evaluations of their work, valuable information can be gained through examining the structure and functions of these programs. Efforts have been made to highlight both the programmatic and marketing work of each program.

Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) is made up of twelve food-based organizations in Vermont. The goal of SAN is to increase locally grown food products in Vermont, through identifying and expanding local food systems and implementing a locally grown campaign to increase consumer demand. This organization also intends to increase the supply of locally grown products, support the agricultural infrastructure and expand locally grown educational efforts statewide.

II. Overview of Programs

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) *
Marshall, North Carolina
Slogan: "Get Fresh. Buy Appalachian"

With a staff of four, and one full-time staff working on the Buy Local program, this organization serves the Southern Appalachian mountain region in Western North Carolina. One of the most important services is a "Local Food Guide," which highlights western North Carolina family farms, Community Supported Agriculture ventures (CSA's), tailgate markets, grocers, restaurants, caterers, u-pick farms, and bed & breakfast establishments that sell locally grown farm products. Because advertising is a large expense, this group has found more success with direct marketing efforts to institutions and also listen closely to the farmers' feedback on various market experiences.

ASAP currently uses a logo that they promote in grocery stores, though the project coordinator has discovered numerous problems with the current logo. He strongly suggests having a very **simple logo** that can be used in a variety of colors and shapes. They have found using the quality and **"freshness**" to be the most important selling points.

MOFGA and Eat Local Foods Coalition (ELF) *
Unity, Maine

Their Buy Local initiative is based on three strategies: encouraging consumers to spend $10 per week; connecting farmers and restaurants (Eat Fresh Delivery Service); and linking four colleges and hospitals with local farmers (Farm Fresh Connection). A special ten page **educational** piece in newspaper form has been distributed, and highlights the concept of how ten dollars per week spent on local foods would reinvest $100 million in farmers' incomes and the Maine economy each year. This group is less interested in traditional marketing, as they are in changing the **public perception** of buying local foods. Monthly meetings are held with all statewide commodity groups to discuss and understand relevant topics. Also, they choose to influence policies in a number of ways, including writing opinion editorials to major newspapers. Maine Department of Agriculture has a separate campaign which currently uses the slogan “Get Real, Get Maine.”

<u>Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI)*</u>
Ames, IA
“Buy Fresh, Buy Local”

This organization collaborates with institutional buyers (hospitals, nursing homes, colleges, restaurants and groceries) to find ways that they can spend a larger portion of their budget on local/regional farmers and processors in Northeast Iowa. The University of Northern Iowa (associated with PFI) has conducted numerous studies on local food systems, including a local food survey and local food market opportunities for institutions. PFI recently provided a workshop titled “Putting Your Farm on the Menu,” which educated farmers on how to market their products to restaurants and other food buyers.

PFI is currently utilizing a “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” label to identify locally grown products in grocery stores and restaurants. Also, PFI has published a directory for local foods called “Get Yourself a Farmer.” This directory includes farmers markets, meat lockers, u-pick operations, as well as farms and businesses who sell locally grown products directly to consumers.

<u>Adirondack Harvest Small Farm Marketing Project</u>
Essex County, New York

The goal of Adirondack Harvest is three-pronged: to connect farmers with local consumers through a Buy Local initiative; to establish connections between restaurants and farms; and to make e-commerce a more accessible avenue for farmers and craftsmen to utilize.

The group has identified restaurants in Lake Placid as a key opportunity for farmers to sell their products, and have conducted workshops with restaurant owners as well as surveys. Educational components include workshops on niche products for farmers such as organic wheat and cheese; pre-season farmer’s market workshops for new farmers to gain tips from seasoned vendors; and the Agri-connection, which serves as a networking opportunity for both farmers and restaurants. This group also plans to write a total of twelve **press releases** in the year of 2003, which will are intended for organization, local and state newspapers.

Adirondack Harvest targets both local and non-local consumers. The group distributes a map of farmers in the region, which includes farmers’ products, schedules, growing seasons and background information, as well as highlighted scenic byways in the vicinity of member farms for tourists. The group has developed a logo in both full color and black and white designs for members to display. Sample stickers, banners, stamps, postcards and vinyl signs are available for farmers to see how they could promote

Adirondack Harvest members. There is no slogan, but use the phrase “Farm fresh food and local products from Champlain Valley to the High Peaks” on both their website and brochure.”

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)
Santa Cruz, CA
“Taste the difference, Buy Fresh Buy Local”

CAFF recruits farmers, retailers, and community members to participate in the “Taste the difference, Buy Fresh Buy Local” campaign. Both farmer and retailer members may utilize the label to identify their products on the shelf or in the store. Currently, a direct marketing pilot project promotes existing CSA’s through media and public outreach. The staff also assists in the development of agricultural tourism, assesses the need of local markets and connects farms to schools. Educational components include flyers for both farmers and consumers to relate the benefits of local community support for small-scale farmers.

Hudson Valley Harvest (HVH)
New York

Two local newspapers support this campaign with weekly **articles** (extension agent authors) highlighting what products are available locally. Extension agents then receive and respond to inquiries about how to access products. The logo is the rallying point/identifying symbol. A professional trade show booth was developed and is used at fancy food an international trade shows.

The target audience is both local and visiting consumers. The program is promoted through **community events** and **brochures** used at farmers markets and farm stands. Messages emphasize benefits beyond good taste and healthy eating and point to **tax advantages** to keeping farmland.

Berkshire Grown
Great Barrington MA

Berkshire Grown facilitates the collaboration between producer and consumer. A paid coordinator conducts member communication, serves as a weekly producer contact, facilitates chef’s advisory group, and networks growers with chefs. A problem-solving meeting between chefs (chefs’ advisory board has strong leadership/commitment) and producers takes place in the winter. An advisory board which consists of producers and people from umbrella organization (Berkshire Land and Food Council) also exists.

Education/promotion includes: three-fold flyer, cards served with restaurant check, restaurant front door logo, 8”x10” posters in restaurants. Participation at major county events focus on agriculture and media coverage has included multiple newspaper articles and **radio interviews**. This group also prepares a weekly-prepared **“ fresh fax”** which lists growers and available products.

Red Tomato (Reinventing Local Food Systems)
Canton, MA

A coordinator **brokers** produce (develops relationships, places, orders, handles distribution), and coordinates everything involved in physically getting product in front of the consumer. Approaches include **direct marketing** (farmers-to-chefs) educational programs, as well as partnering with existing community organizations to provide local expertise and credibility. Red Tomato has expanded their resources through training, planning marketing, and network communication. Affordable, sustainable grown products are marketed to lower-income markets and higher end market opportunities are offered. An information service and **source directory** that will link farmers and food manufacturer/trade buyers/consumers is being developed. A source book will include products, farmer practices, transport options and more.

Food Choices (Moving Toward a Sustainable Food System in the Upper Midwest)
Madison, WI

Four phase multi-year project includes: preliminary research (1998) that convened focus groups, interviewed farmers, consumers and retailers and distributors, and examined existing programs; preliminary design (1999) includes planning related to marketing, production, product identification, and creation of an initial set of operational criteria for sustainable farms and sustainable farming practices, along with a "seal of approval" program; test marketing (late 1999 to late2000) will include marketing in selected co-ops, supermarkets, and direct farmer-to-consumer programs; and implementation (late 2000-2004) will include mainstreaming the project by expanding the region to include more participants an adaptation of the model in other parts of the US. (CFI)

The Food Alliance (TFA)
Portland, OR

The Food Alliance uses market based incentives to promote sustainable agricultural practices and farmers who satisfy the requirements of The Food Alliance become eligible to market their products with a "TFA-Approved" **seal of approval**. Approval is based on a series of evaluations focusing on three different areas: pest and disease management, soil and water conservation, and human resource development. The application process consists of five main sections: The Food Alliance Guiding Principles; Written Application/ Farm Plan; On-site Evaluation; Review Committee Evaluation; and Post Harvest Update.

Consumer education and marketing pieces include TFA point of purchase information that identifies TFA-Approved products in the marketplace and serves as a way for consumers to familiarize themselves with the goals of TFA. Other outreach activities occur in the form of speaking at neighborhood association meeting, publishing a quarterly newsletter for members, and having bi-monthly, participating farmer and TFA-staffed booths at farmers markets, offering consumers educational information and coupons (TFA eats the costs) to save money on approved products.(CFI)

Community Involved In Sustainable Agriculture (CISA)

Amherst, MA

While the Department of Agriculture has statewide a campaign in place, CISA is only promoting the western Massachusetts region. CISA is a major, generously-funded communications campaign focused on educating consumers: common point of purchase materials in grocery and convenience store, **map** of area retail outlets and farm stands inserted in daily newspapers, bus side advertising, radio ads, and newspaper articles introducing individual, participating farmers. Tastings, **presence at community events**, and meet-the-farmer events are planned. Printed materials encourage retailers and farmers to participate and technical and marketing assistance in available.(CFI)

Surveys conducted prior to this campaign gave evidence that a single campaign could be used to advertise locally grown foods to all residents of Western Massachusetts, and that **local economy** and **fresh** were important messages. An evaluation on the Be a Local Hero campaign in 2002 showed that awareness of the campaign was still high after three years and was actually increasing. CISA uses a variety of mediums to communicate the buy local message, and the study found that exposure through multiple mediums was successful. Creating linkages with larger goals such as protecting the environment and maintaining open spaces is important, as many consumers are concerned with these issues. Finally, most respondents felt that it was still important to continue the campaign after three years. Consumers feel that the message is an imperative motivator for buying locally grown foods, as well as other local goods and services.

Select! Sonoma County

Sonoma County, CA

Although currently non-existent, the following is a brief summary of its structure and explanation as to why it ended. Several levels of **membership** (that differ in cost and marketing and promotional support) were available at prices ranging from $2000 (Platinum level) to $150 (Small Scale Farmer). Membership services were extensive and included point-of-purchase materials, products logos, liaison with retailers and restaurants, regularly scheduled promotional events, reduced fees for publicist/public relation services, and organization's newsletter. Associate memberships were available to non-producers (restaurants, caterer hotels, retailers) interested in promoting local producers. Retail Liaison (staff person) promoted members' products in retail locations and restaurants. (CFI)

This program began in 1989 and was ended due to financial stresses. The program depended heavily on grant supports, as well as a small portion of government support which were both terminated. Marketing was a huge component of the program, and costs could no longer be covered through grants, subsidies or membership fees. Farmers perceived membership fees as too expensive, but overall the fees barely helped defray the cost of marketing.

The FoodRoutes Network

Millheim, PA

This network is currently working towards building a national framework for buy local campaigns and has conducted surveys in four regions across the nation. Consumers stated that **freshness** and **supporting the local economy** were among the most important reasons to buy local food. Inconvenience and ignorance were the biggest barriers to building support for locally produced and grown food. Consumers responded that freshness and supporting the local economy were also the most persuasive messages for buying local foods. Price was important, but not an obstacle to buying local. Based on these interviews, the following recommendations were made to build support for buy local efforts. (FoodRoutes Network)

1. Tap into existing values – freshness and local economies are already important to people.
2. Make the link to **food safety**- the presence of chemicals, pesticides and hormones are of great concern to many consumers, and many state that as a reason for buying local. However, many local, family farms do use these chemicals and pesticides.
3. Go where you find the consumer- people mostly shop at large grocery stores, where local foods are not available. People rarely look at labels. Educational campaigns need to go where consumers are, if not only to promote CSA's or farmer's market and persuade other institutions to buy local foods.
4. Target groups- **Women** tend to be primary shoppers more likely to support local food. Older women (50 +) are thought to be more thoughtful shoppers and open to local. In some areas, married women with children and senior citizens were found as target groups.

FoodRoutes Network has developed a high quality logo that incorporates the message of Fresh and local that other buy local programs can use at a minimal cost.

III. Strategies and Recommendations:

Based on the previous summaries, there are many common strategies and recommendations that should be considered in Vermont's campaign.

- **Education is vital.** Education is often considered a first step in buy local campaigns. Fliers, newspaper articles, and presence at community events can help consumers learn the reasons for buying local foods or what local foods are available to them.
- **Maps.** Since convenience is frequently cited as a major barrier to buying local food, maps can help consumers find farms and markets that sell local products.
- **Building the Framework.** Building relationships with farmers and food businesses can be just as important or more important for buy local campaigns on a budget. Technical assistance and workshops for farmers are needed to help farmers realize the benefits of the campaigns. Monthly meetings of key group leaders can mobilize important issues through connections and policy making.
- **Logos/slogans should be simple.** There are many benefits to having a simple logo, as they can be easily adjusted to serve a variety of purposes. Multiple slogans may be confusing to a consumer.*

- **Freshness and Local Economy.** Several campaigns have found that these are key motivators to buying local foods for consumers.
- **Websites.** In addition to other educational tools, many programs offer links to websites of growers and food businesses, as well as announcements of activities and scheduled events.

* indicates that this program is a Foodroutes Network Buy Local initiative.

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Helpful Websites and Articles:

www.foodroutes.org

www.foodalliance.org

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Appendix A

2003 Vermonter Poll Questions related to Local Food Buying
19. How much money does your household spend in an average week on ALL foods and beverages consumed AT home (grocery stores, etc)?
19b. How much money does your household spend in an average week on ALL foods and beverages consumed AWAY from home (restaurants, etc)?

20. Yes or no, in the past 12 months have you purchased any organically produced food products?

21. Yes or no, in the past 12 months have you purchased any local food products? *(for the purpose of this study the term "local food products" refers to foods grown, harvested, or produced anywhere in the state of Vermont.

22. List all the types of local food products that you have purchased in the last twelve months.

23. How much money does you household spend in and average week on all LOCAL foods and beverages consumed AT home (Grocery stores, etc).

23 b. How much money does you household spend in and average week on all LOCAL foods and beverages consumed AWAY home (Restaurants, etc)

24. Please list all the types of places where your household buys local food products

25. How do you primarily identify whether or not a product is a local product?

26. Do you find local products to be easy to identify?

27. Have you ever heard of the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN)?

28. You are in a grocery store buying vegetables. When making your choice you will consider the vegetables' price, whether it's organic, and whether it's locally-produced. You have ten points to split among price, organic and locally produced. What is most important to you when buying vegetables: Price, Organic or Local?

29. You are in a grocery store buying meat. When making your choice you will consider the vegetables' price, whether it's organic, and whether it's locally-produced.
You have ten points to split among price, organic and locally produced. What is most important to you when buying meat: Price, Organic or Local?

30. You are in a grocery store buying milk. When making your choice you will consider the vegetables' price, whether it's organic, and whether it's locally-produced.
You have ten points to split among price, organic and locally produced. What is most important to you when buying milk: Price, Organic or Local?

Appendix B

Buy Local Guided Discussion

(Approximately 2 hours**)**

A. Meaning of Local

1. Can you give some examples of foods you would describe as local foods?
2. What are some examples of companies who sell local foods?
4. Is there a difference between buying local food and locally grown food?
3. When would you look at produce and consider it not local?
    What makes it not local?
5. If someone were to ask what a local food was, what would you tell them?
6. About what percent of your all the food you buy is local?

7. Think about the terms:
    Locally processed
    Locally sold
    Locally produced
    Locally grown

Do these terms help you define local better?

8. What do you think is a good definition for local?
9. What do you think is a good definition for locally grown food?

For the sake of this discussion, let's define local foods as foods that were produced or processed in the state of Vermont.
Let's define locally grown foods as food that were grown in this region and sold in this region.

B. Identification

1.
    a) Now that we have established a definition of locally grown food- do you think you have purchased locally grown food in the last 12 months?
    b) Have you purchased local food in the past 12 months?

2.How do you know you are buying local food?
3.What kinds of local food do you buy?

-*If no*
    Can you talk about why you don't buy local food?

C. Influence

1. What influences you to buy locally grown foods?
2. Why don't you buy more local foods?
3. If you consider local- is that more or less important than price?
4. If you consider local- is that more or less important than organic?

5. What would make you buy more locally grown foods?

D. Location

1.Do you have trouble finding local foods where you normally shop?
2.Where would you like to see more local products sold?

E. Importance – Dot Exercise

1. What's important about buying food?
2. Is that also important when buying locally grown foods?
3. Is that also important when buying local foods?

After leaving it open-ended, prompt:

a. *support local economy*
b. *security of food issues*
c. *food safety issues*
d. *freshness*
e. *taste*
f. *organic*
g. *knowledge of where food comes from*
h. *something else*

F. Reflect / slogan

1.Think about the following slogans. How do you feel about each one? Would it make you want to purchase locally grown foods? Others?
"Buy Local, by jeezum"
Vermont Fresh
get fresh , buy local
Homegrown tastes best
Taste the local flavor
Buy Fresh… Buy local

2. Has your view of local foods changed since the beginning of our conversation?

3. Now that we have discussed what is important to you, what do you think would get more people to buy local foods?

Appendix C

Table 1: Focus Group Demographics for Chittenden County, Northeast Kingdom and Upper Valley Region:

Totals:			
# of Subjects	33		
Avg. Age	47.4		
Gender:		Gender:	
Females	22	Females	66.7%
Males	10	Males	30.3%
Unknown	1	Unknown	3.0%
Total Subjects	33		
Incomes:		Income:	
< 20,000	16	< 20,000	48.5%
< 35,000	7	< 35,000	21.2%
< 50,000	5	< 50,000	15.2%
< 65,000	1	< 65,000	3.0%
> 65,000	4	> 65,000	12.1%
Total Subjects	33		
Education:		Education:	
< 9th Grade	2	< 9th Grade	6.1%
9-12 (no degree)	3	9-12 (no degree)	9.1%
High School Graduate / GED	4	High School Graduate / GED	12.1%
Some College	11	Some College	33.3%
Associates/technical	2	Associates/technical	6.1%
Bachelor	6	Bachelor	18.2%
Post-Graduate / Professional	5	Post-Graduate / Professional	15.2%
Total Subjects	33		

Appendix D

Table 2 and 3: Focus Group Demographics for Upper Valley Region

Percentages			
Gender:		Education:	
Females	75.0%	< 9th Grade	12.5%
Males	25.0%	9-12 (no degree)	12.5%
		High School Graduate / GED	12.5%
Income:		Some College	43.8%
< 20,000	75.0%	Associates/technical	6.3%
< 35,000	6.3%	Bachelor	6.3%
< 50,000	18.8%	Post-Graduate / Professional	6.3%
< 65,000	0.0%		
> 65,000	0.0%		

Numbers	
# of Subjects	16
Avg Age	48.4
Gender:	
Females	12
Males	4
Unknown	0
Total Subjects	16
Incomes:	
< 20,000	12
< 35,000	1
< 50,000	3
< 65,000	0
> 65,000	0
Total Subjects	16
Education:	
< 9th Grade	2
9-12 (no degree)	2
High School Graduate / GED	2
Some College	7
Associates/technical	1
Bachelor	1
Post-Graduate / Professional	1
Total Subjects	16

Appendix E

Table 4 and 5: Focus Group Demographics for Chittenden County

Percentages			
Gender:		Education:	
Females	57.1%	< 9th Grade	0.0%
Males	42.9%	9-12 (no degree)	0.0%
		High School Graduate / GED	14.3%
Income:		Some College	28.6%
< 20,000	42.9%	Associates/technical	0.0%
< 35,000	14.3%	Bachelor	28.6%
< 50,000	0.0%	Post-Graduate / Professional	28.6%
< 65,000	0.0%		
> 65,000	42.9%		

Numbers	
# of Subjects	7
Avg Age	38
Gender:	
Females	4
Males	3
Unknown	0
Total Subjects	7
Incomes:	
< 20,000	3
< 35,000	1
< 50,000	0
< 65,000	0
> 65,000	3
Total Subjects	7
Education:	
< 9th Grade	0
9-12 (no degree)	0
High School Graduate / GED	1
Some College	2
Associates/technical	0
Bachelor	2
Post-Graduate / Professional	2
Total Subjects	7

Appendix F

Table 6 and 7: Focus Group Demographics for Northeast Kingdom

Percentages			
Gender:		Education:	
Females	60.0%	< 9th Grade	0.0%
Males	30.0%	9-12 (no degree)	10.0%
Unknown	10.0%	High School Graduate / GED	10.0%
		Some College	20.0%
Income:		Associates/technical	10.0%
< 20,000	10.0%	Bachelor	30.0%
< 35,000	50.0%	Post-Graduate / Professional	20.0%
< 50,000	20.0%		
< 65,000	10.0%		
> 65,000	10.0%		

Numbers	
# of Subjects	10
Average Age	52.2
Gender:	
Female	6
Male	3
Unknown	1
Total Subjects	10
Incomes:	
< 20,000	1
< 35,000	5
< 50,000	2
< 65,000	1
> 65,000	1
Total Subjects	10
Education:	
< 9th Grade	0
9-12 (no degree)	1
High School Graduate / GED	1
Some College	2
Associates/technical	1
Bachelor	3
Post-Graduate / Professional	2
Total Subjects	10