

Based on findings from two preliminary market studies, there appears to be a demand for a place-based designation system for Vermont food products both in Vermont and in metro areas in the northeastern United States. In the Philadelphia, Boston, and New York metro areas, the minimum levels of interest among primary household food shoppers in a place-based designation system are 2.8, 2.1, and 4.0 percent, respectively. In order to obtain results that could be generalized to the population, a self-administered, cross-sectional survey design using a stratified, random sample was selected for this study. These specific metro areas were selected for the study, because they were identified as having the three highest levels of visitation to the state of Vermont, according to the Vermont Department of Tourism (2010). Findings include that consumers are willing to pay an average premium of up to 52.0 percent in Vermont and 59.6 percent in the metro areas for food products that have two or more of the characteristics that are important to them; and that consumers would like to see this labeling system run by an independent, third-party certification committee and not by a state or government agency. Overall, the study suggests that any place-based designation system for Vermont food products should originate from a genuine, sincere effort to inform interested consumers (in Vermont and the northeastern United States) of the beneficial attributes of specific Vermont-based food products.