

Where do tomatoes come from? - Sources of Local Food in Vermont

Poster Presentation Abstract

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As a leader in the local food movement, Vermont provides a unique opportunity to study the diverse components of a local food system. Local food is made available from a wide variety of sources such as farmer's markets, community supported agriculture shares and household gardens. Certain factors influence the likelihood that a household would choose to maintain a garden as a source of food, directly support farmers or not participate in a local food movement at all. This research is intended to highlight what those influences might be.

In recent years there has been immense development of initiatives in both the public and non-profit sectors to promote the production, distribution and consumption of locally grown foods in Vermont. The results of this research can help to continue this expansion. By first understanding how Vermonters are able to access local food sources, we can begin to better understand how to expand access. Based on what we learn through this study we can hopefully make more meaningful recommendations for expansion.

This research will examine data from the 2012 Vermonter Poll analyzed through SPSS statistical software. The results will be used to highlight differences and similarities in the demographics of Vermonters and how these differences relate to the local food movement. By examining these results hope to make recommendations on how to expand access to local food in the State of Vermont.

Specifically, research focuses on housing and income of Vermont residents and how those factors may be indicators of the strength of their connection to local food. Our initial hypothesis is that the majority of urban and suburban residents are more likely to participate in the local food movement through purchasing goods directly from a farmer at a farmers market or by participating in CSA. We hypothesized that rural residents are more likely to rely on household gardens as a source of local food.