

Juan Zhang: Student Research Conference Abstract Poster

Consumer Food System Issues

This poster presents findings on characteristics and local shopping behaviors by home gardeners in Vermont. Specifically, I seek to identify what other access those households who have a home garden in Vermont have to local food in the Vermont economy. This can help policymakers make decisions related to economic development at the local level. This study was based on the data that was collected by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont as part of the 2012 Vermonter Poll. Analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The survey demonstrated that more than 60% of the Vermonter had a garden with vegetables and/or fruit. Rural residency, education, age and family composition significantly impact garden ownership. Gender and income have no effect on having a garden. In addition, the people who have a garden do appear to shop for more local food than those who do not. For those people, home garden appeared to be used as a complement rather than a substitute to other ways to purchase local food. The implication could be suggested that encouraging more gardening could in fact lead to more local food purchases. Future research could be developed to test this new hypothesis.