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The Lents International Farmer's Market: A Case and Comparative Study

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Abstract

The Lents neighborhood is a designated urban renewal area that has historically lacked access to ample grocery stores offering fresh produce. The Lents International Farmer's Market enhances health and community by providing a community space to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. Examining the Lents International Farmer's Market is an invaluable opportunity to learn more about consumer shopping behavior and market expectations. This study also seeks to identify vendor opportunities and barriers when establishing themselves as retailers at Lents International Farmer's Market. From both a business and consumer perspective, it is crucial for the market's survival to gain a sense of what is and is not working. Information obtained through customer surveys and structured vendor interviews could benefit the market and help secure its longevity in the Lents neighborhood. This market could also serve as a model to be replicated in other similar neighborhoods should it remain successful. Additionally, I will be comparing data from the Lents International Farmer's Market to data collected from the more affluent Moreland Farmer's Market, to compare information that comes from different demographic areas in Portland.

Research Questions

What are the opportunities and challenges facing vendors when establishing themselves at the Lents International Farmer's Market and the Moreland Farmer's Market? What are the buying habits and food values of the customers at these markets?

Introduction

Access to nutritious food should not be an issue for people residing in any neighborhood. However, many urban American communities do not have access to healthy food choices, either due to a scarcity of retail outlets or economic inability to purchase such foods. When Americans began to migrate out of urban areas into the suburbs, a number of supermarkets also relocated to the suburbs. Many urban centers were left without desirable and affordable places to purchase food. This type of urban transformation dotted the urban landscape with what are now called food deserts.

In the article "The Geography of Eating Well" author Joy Margheim (2007) stated, "In the mid 1990's, British researchers coined the term food desert to describe neighborhoods with a combination of concentrated poverty, limited public transportation, and few or no retail stores" (2007, pg. 14). The absence of full service supermarkets has created ample opportunities for fast food restaurants and convenience stores, which can dominate low-income urban areas. Diets high in processed foods have been linked to chronic disease and obesity, which creates a great public health concern in communities that are abundant with unhealthy places to purchase food.

Literature compiled on food deserts provided different findings that were dependent on the geographical location of each individual study. It appears that America suffers from higher rates of inequitable food access than other industrialized nations. For example, studies conducted in Glasgow in 1999 and Montreal in 2007 found no significant difference in food access for those living in poor or more affluent neighborhoods. (Apparicio 2007; Cummins, 1999). However, an American study

published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2001 concluded that food access might not be equal depending on where one lives. (Moreland, 2001, pg. 28).

Author of the book titled Closing the Food Gap Mark Winne (2008) stated the “lack of access to affordable supermarkets is rising to the top of the list of public health concerns” (pg. 92). According to the literature, it appears that food deserts are more prevalent in the American landscape than abroad, and that this continues to be an issue for people in the United States.

While safety and concern over profit may deter major supermarkets from opening new venues in so called “food deserts”, the placement of farmers’ markets in areas where access to food is a challenge can provide opportunities for residents to purchase seasonal, fresh foods directly from local farmers. Demand has become increasingly high for farmers’ markets, and according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) website (2009) there were 1,755 farmers markets in operation, and in 2008, that number has increased to 4,685. These markets are a valuable way to promote nutritional health, enhance community, and support local agriculture and economies.

Farmer’s markets have existed in the United States for many years. These markets traditionally sell fruits and vegetables, but some markets sell dairy, meat, and specialty items too. The popularity of farmers’ markets has fluctuated over time. Changing attitudes regarding food and concern over food safety are just a couple of possible reasons that the markets are once again in high demand. With the wave of new farmer’s markets opening all over the country, technology has also made its way into the markets. Vendors now have the ability to accept WIC (Women, Infants and Children) coupons, food stamps, debit cards, and Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program checks. Greater

variety in payment options allow customers multiple methods of purchasing food, which in turn can possibly increase customer traffic and diversify the customer base. Most farmers' markets are open on the weekends during the main growing season, weekdays, evenings, and some operate year round.

Why study the Lents International Farmer's Market?

The Lents neighborhood in southeast Portland has struggled with a lack of food access. As the atlas map shows (see Appendix 1), there are several full service grocery stores along the borders of the Lents community. Depending on where one lives, getting to one of these locations could be difficult, especially without a personal vehicle or reliance on public transportation. Also worth noting are the number of convenient stores and fast food restaurants. Given this context, the Lents International Farmer's Market that was established in 2007 could prove quite beneficial to its residents. Since the market is still relatively new, a case study on the Lents International Farmer's Market is needed as a way to check in with the customers and vendors. Its importance to the neighborhood should not be underestimated; therefore, anything that can be done to enhance or improve the market should be considered.

Case Studies of Farmer's Markets

A number of case studies have been conducted on farmers' markets. Some studies were focused on low-income farmer's markets, while others looked at mixed-income markets. A vital theme in any farmer's market study is community. Without support from the local residents, any farmer's market is destined to have a shaky future. In particular,

in reviewing these studies, I sought information pertaining to successes, failures and cultural relationships at the markets. Since the case study I am conducting is looking to find what is working and what can be improved, reviewing what other scholars have discovered about farmer's market is a great asset to this study.

The study "Managing Farms and Consumer Expectations: A study of a North Carolina Farmer's Market (2002) by Susan Andreatta and William Wickliffe II focused on the relationship and culture between farmers and consumers. The study aimed to provide information regarding customer's purchasing habits, and obtain information that can be used to improve the market. Through interviews and focus groups with farmers and personal interviews with consumers, the study concluded that farmers and vendors could have complications with the market policies and rules, resulting in dissatisfaction. The researchers generally found that reasons that the consumers shopped at the market included "...an interest in fresh, locally grown produce, a desire to support local farmers and local farm economy, an interest in cooking with seasonally available foods, and enjoyment of the market atmosphere." (2002, pg.175). This article served as a model for my study, as I chose to conduct vendor interviews and consumer surveys in order to gain a sense of how the Lents International Farmer's Market is doing.

Lloyd, Nelson and Tilley (1987) describe the three stages in the development of farmers' markets. Stage one is a time of instability, when a market is trying to secure its longevity, and like many businesses, spends a couple of years in this stage. Stage two occurs when the market has obtained a variety of vendors, including farmers and gardeners, and produce is the main product being sold. Finally, stage three happens when the market has gained a base of regular shoppers, and the volume of produce that the

market sells has grown. (Lloyd, Nelson, and Tilley 1987, cited in Andreatta, 2002, pg. 169). This information is useful when looking at specific farmer's markets because it can help one identify the characteristics of the markets and to figure out what stage it is currently in and help researchers better assess the market.

A lengthy case study titled "Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers' Markets in Low Income Communities" was published in 1999. This study looked at 8 case studies of farmer's markets from California to the Bronx. The study first looked at four markets that had failed, and examined why they had failed. The successful cases were then reviewed, also describing why these markets were able to gain success in their communities.

One of the failed cases was in Van Nuys, California. This market existed for only 6 months. Part of the reason for its failure was that "unlike other successful low-income markets, the Van Nuys Market was unable to attract middle class Anglos from surrounding communities, which could have subsidized the market in its infancy" (Fisher, 1999, pg. 11). Other explanations were that there was already an inexpensive food store close by, high prices at the market, and that the direct community did not embrace the market enough. Issues of safety were also noted, as the neighborhood had been known to have gang activity.

Another case of a failed market was also in California, the Alvarado Certified Farmer's Market in Los Angeles. Despite the good intentions of three people who tried to get this market going, the market was only open for 10 days in the spring of 1996! The reasons cited for this failure were that the community failed to show interest, poor location, and ineffective management.

It is also equally important to look at the successes of low-income farmers' markets. "Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers' Markets in Low Income Communities" reported on some successful farmer's market stories. At the Poe Park market in the Bronx, a market subsidized by the city, looked as if it was headed toward failure. However, this was not to be the case. Reasons for its success were that local residents worked as staff, and the added diversity of Spanish speakers and an African American farmer helped to draw in more residents. Although initially businesses were not thrilled about having the market nearby, they eventually realized that their sales were better on market days. A WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program for women, infants, and children program was started, and now 70% of purchases at this market are made with these checks. (Fisher, 1999, pg. 24). Bringing in ample sales, these coupons remain a major reason for its continued success.

Finally, the San Francisco "Heart of the City" market did not look like it would initially be successful. Despite its tense relationship with area businesses and the city, and its less than desirable location, the market did survive. The primary reason for starting this market was to address the lack of food access in the community. (Fisher, 1999, pg. 31). Beginning in 1981, the market now has approximately 60 farmers in the summer and 30 farmers in the winter, and the market managers control the products that are sold there so that there is not too much of the same thing. A great variety of fresh produce is available there, including many Asian foods to serve the large Asian population in the area. Processed foods are not available at this market. The prices are also quite good, which has added to the success of the market.

A study titled "Working Toward a Just, Equitable Local Food System" was published in Social Science Quarterly in December of 2008. Author Thomas Macias examined three different systems of local agriculture: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), organic local farms, and community gardens. With these three different agricultural methods, Macias studied how they affect the local population through three sociological principles: food equity, social integration, and natural human capital. Through a qualitative approach, the study was conducted with personal interviews, direct observation, and direct participation. The results of the study reflect that due to social class, the level of participation in local agriculture vary. The researcher suggests that more research in this field should be conducted in order to allow more equal access to local agriculture. (Macias, 2008, pg. 1099).

The findings regarding the organic market farms were interesting because Macias (2008) found that social integration was high at the farmers' markets, low in human capital, and mixed in terms of food equity. (pg. 1097). I believe that this was due to the fact that organic farmers sell to high-end consumers as well as a diverse mix of people at the local markets. It was also mentioned that the farmer's spent one day a week in a lower income neighborhood where much of their revenue came from "farm-to-family coupons." While I believe that this group sought to include people of all incomes, this clearly represents the challenge of getting healthy, nutritious food into the hands of everyone. On a community-based level, much socialization occurred at the farmers' markets bringing together the residents and achieving a cohesive community is vital in having a farmer's market remain successful.

A local study conducted by Garry Stephenson and Larry Lev (2004) compared two close but different communities and measured their level of support for locally grown food. These researchers studied the towns of Albany and Corvallis, Oregon, and find that both communities are supportive of local agriculture. By mailing out surveys to both Albany and Corvallis residents, Stephenson and Lev were able to collect consumer data regarding local agriculture and shopping habits. While the demographics of each community vary, the study concluded that local agriculture was important to both communities. Garry Stephenson concluded, "The results indicate that there is potential for the development of more localized food systems in both communities" (2004, pg. 216). Given these results, both markets in Albany and Corvallis are likely to maintain success due to the community support of local agriculture.

In conclusion, the literature demonstrates the barriers and opportunities regarding farmers' markets. Several themes have appeared as a result of examining the literature. First of all, community is truly one of the most important factors in maintaining a successful market. If people don't shop there, the market will cease to exist. Location, price control, and having a diverse mix of farmers and customers have also seemed to work well for the markets that have succeeded. Socially and culturally, it is important to get fresh fruits and vegetables into the hands of the entire community, therefore some subsidizing and community outreach may also need to be taken into consideration. Establishing a relationship with the city and having the community greatly involved in market happenings also seems to create greater social integration and enhance the success of the markets. My study will compare two farmer's markets that reside in different neighborhoods, Moreland, being more affluent and not lacking in food access, and Lents,

which has lacked food access and it is not as affluent. By analyzing consumer surveys and vendor interviews, this study will attempt to find out what people are saying about these markets, in regards to shopping behaviors, opportunities, and barriers. This will add to the literature on farmers' markets in different demographic areas.

Theory and Methodology

During the month of July 2009, the height of the growing season, I used quantitative and qualitative research methods to study the Lents and Moreland Farmer's Markets. I observed, took photographs, and generally described the settings of the both the Moreland Farmers market and the Lents International Farmer's Markets. I confirmed approximately how many vendors are present at each market, what types of products were being sold, and also looked at parking and transit opportunities. Having these accurate descriptions of each market enhanced the study because introduced the audience to each market through imagery and description.

To learn consumer values and opinions of the consumers, I used convenience sampling to survey customers while they were at the market. Convenience sampling was used in order to find customers to take the survey, as well as to obtain vendor interviewees. According to Anthropology professor H. Russell Bernard (2006) "Convenience sampling is a glorified term for grabbing whoever will stand still long enough to answer your questions" (2006, pg. 191). However, my study paid a bit more attention to detail. Stationed inside of both the Lents and Moreland Farmer's Markets, I was able to target a specific population of farmer's market shoppers. Customers that I

sought to survey were those who appeared over the age of 18 who had visibly made a purchase at the market.

The survey instrument (see Appendix 2) was one page front and back, and did not take more than 5 minutes for anyone to complete. The majority of the questions were check box questions, with only several allowing space for comments. I chose to do this for easier analysis and ease of completing the survey promptly at the busy market. As an incentive for completing the survey, I held a raffle each day I was at the market for all customers that took the survey, with a prize of \$10 in farmer's market tokens that could be redeemed at the participating farmer's market. I surpassed my goal of obtaining at least 30 surveys from each market.

In order to obtain vendors available for interviews, I first asked the market managers of both the Lents and Moreland Farmer's Markets for recommendations. I wanted to be sure to obtain an established vendor (of more than 1 season) and a new vendor (first season at the market). I interviewed 3 vendors for the study. Two interviews have been conducted with vendors from the Moreland Farmer's Market, and one vendor interview from Lents. These were semi-structured personal interviews that did not take more than one hour to conduct.

Community Demographics

The following tables will describe the different physical and demographic characteristics of the Lents and Moreland neighborhoods. This information is from the 2000 U.S. Census, the most current data available at this time. Having this data available is helpful when comparing survey results of the two markets.

Physical Area (in acres)

Lents	1,943
Moreland	1,157

Population (in thousands)

Lents	15,570
Moreland	10,475

High School Graduates (in thousands)

Lents	3,142	28%*
Moreland	1,313	15%*

Population with a 4 year College Degree

Lents	751	6%*
Moreland	2233	26%*

% Of Population below Poverty Line

Lents	15.49%
Moreland	10.22%

Housing Demographics

	Med. Home Value	Occupied Units	Vacant Units
Lents	\$121, 523	5,576	438
Moreland	\$171,636	5,159	229

	Owner	Renter
Lents	3,192	2564
Moreland	2,682	2,471

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Portland by Neighborhood Census 2000: Median Household Income

Lents	\$17,105-37,574
Moreland	\$37,575-\$44,285

Source: Getting to Know Lents

*For map, please see Appendix 3

Percent of Population Earning \$125K or More

Lents	1.80%
Moreland	5.30%

Source: Regional Equity Atlas

Sources: US 2000 Census, Getting to Know Lents: A Thematic Atlas of Healthy Eating and Active Living, and the Regional Equity Atlas: Metropolitan Portland's Geography of Opportunity.

*Percentages of High School and College Graduates were calculated by only using the number of residents in each neighborhood that reported being 18 years or older.

As these demographics show, there are slight differences in these communities, particularly in poverty levels and educational attainment.

Market Descriptions**Lents International Farmer's Market**

The Lents International Farmer's Market is located in southeast Portland, on SE 92nd Ave. and Foster Rd. The market is currently in its third season, and now has approximately 15-20 vendors. As this is not a year round market, there is no covered area, just an open, grassy space. Market hours are Sundays from 9-2 from mid-May-October. Approximately 10-15 tents are set up at each Sunday, and usually one or two are

a rotating community member that provides information about a specific topic. For example, one week that I was present at the market there was someone providing information about not using pesticides, while another week there was a representative from the Community Cycling Center. The topic varies from week to week.

Food tents are usually produce, however there is one bakery, as well as several prepared food tents as well. Beautiful plants and flowers for sale are in abundance at the Lents International Farmer's Market. Demonstrations are a theme at each market as well, cooking or urban farming are popular topics. Musical acts are normally booked in the afternoon, adding variety to the normal hum of the market.

The information booth is the place to visit if one wants to sign up to volunteer, snag up flyers for upcoming events, or to purchase farmer's market currency with either a debit card or the Oregon Trail food stamp card. WIC vouchers and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition vouchers can be used if the vendor has been through an application process and been granted approval. One other great feature that I discovered that Lents offers is a free rides program. If people express a need or desire to be picked up and brought to the market, the Lents International Farmer's Market has obtained a bus that can transport people to and from the market if the customer lives within a certain boundary.

Moreland Farmer's Market

The Moreland Farmers Market is located in a bustling little area in inner southeast Portland. This market is in a parking lot on SE 14th and Bybee. It is slightly larger than the Lents market, and has ample parking for customers, utilizing a parking lot of a nearby funeral home. This market commences every Wednesday from 3:30 to 7:30, from mid-

May through September. At last count, there were approximately 30 vendors selling at this market. The product mix is slightly more diverse at this market. While the majority of the market booths sell fruits and vegetables, there are several vendors who have diversified. For example, one vendor sells treats specifically for dogs, while another performs massage, and another sharpens knives!

Results

Part 1: Quantitative Analysis

To complete the data collection process, I have collected 35 customer surveys from the Moreland Farmer's Market, and 38 customer surveys from the Lents International Farmer's Market. On the survey instrument (see Appendix 2), 17 questions were asked, and an area for consumer comments was provided. In examining the quantitative data, some interesting results have been discovered.

To begin, one theme that was very apparent is that the majority of survey takers were women. In fact, at the Moreland Farmer's Market, only 8 respondents were male (23%). At the Lents International Farmer's Market, 10 of the respondents were male (26%), leaving 28 of the survey takers female (74%). Was it that more women frequent the market than men? Is it because I am female so women were more inclined to approach and speak to me? Unfortunately, these are research questions that I did not account for in the study. However, they are interesting results.

When asked whether or not this was their first time at either of the farmer's markets, many reported that it was not their first time, indicating that there are many repeat customers at both markets. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, 9 people

were first time customers at the market (24%), and 29 consumers had previously attended the market (76%).

At Moreland, the story is similar. Only 5 customers recorded that it was their first time at the market (14%), while the remaining 30 had visited the market previously (79%). To get a sense of how many times customers had previously shopped at the market, I asked a contingency question on the questionnaire. At Moreland, 7 reported having visited between 1-5 times (20%), 9 people reported that they had been at the market 5-10 times before (26%), and 13 respondents stated they had been there more than 10 times (29%). The data regarding this matter is relatively evenly distributed, representing a good mix of people, from newcomers to seasoned shoppers.

I was interested in finding out how far customers were traveling to get to the market. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, the number of respondents stating they traveled 5 miles or less was a bit higher at 33 people (87%). Only one person reported traveling between 5-10 miles (3%), and 4 people stated that they had come more than ten miles to get to the market (11%). At the Moreland Farmer's Market, a smaller community, 28 respondents reported traveling 5 miles or less to shop at the market (80%). 6 customers traveled between 5-10 miles (17%), and just one person traveled more than 10 miles to get to the market (3%). This data shows that both of these markets are clearly serving their local communities, as the majority of respondents didn't have to travel a long distance to come to the market.

Interestingly enough, although many respondents reported not traveling a long distance, many people reported that they drove their cars to get to the market. Out of 38 people surveyed at Lents, 24 of those arrived at the market via personal automobile

(63%), while 10 walked or bicycled (26%), 2 took public transportation (5%), and 2 obtained “other” methods of arriving to the market (5%). At Moreland, 20 consumers drove personal vehicles (57%), 13 walked or bicycled (37%), 1 person took public transportation (3%), and one person arrived with “other” means (3%). Over 50% of people at both markets drove personal vehicles. The results demonstrate that both of these markets seem to be well attended by those residing in the neighborhood, although the main method of getting to and from the market is the personal automobile.

Another element of the farmer's market study that I thought would greatly assist the market managers is to find out why people attend the markets. On the survey, I allowed for customers to check all that apply, so the total number of selections is more than the 38 customers that took the survey. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, there were 8 selections for atmosphere (22%), 32 selections for purchasing food (52%), 4 selections for meeting friends (7%), and 10 selections for educational/entertainment purposes (17%). In addition, there were 2 selections of other (2%). At the Moreland Farmer's Market, there were 13 selections for atmosphere (28%), 25 selections for purchasing food (53%), 6 selections for meeting friends (13%), and 3 selections for education/entertainment (6%). The data suggests that purchasing food is the main reason that people come to the farmer's markets; however there were a number of selections for the other categories, suggesting that entertainment, atmosphere, and socializing are other reasons that people come to enjoy the markets. For charts, please see Appendix 4, Figures 1 and 2.

Consumers were also asked what type of stores they tend to conduct most of their food shopping. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, 25 respondents reported that

they do the majority of their grocery shopping at large grocery stores, such as Winco or Fred Meyer (66%), and 8 reported that they shop at mid-size stores such as QFC or New Seasons (215%. 3 reported “other” (8%) and 2 respondents did not answer the question (%%). At the Moreland Farmer's Market, only 12 respondents stated that they shop at large grocery stores (34%), while 23 consumers shop at mid-size stores (66%). 2 people reported that they shop at “other” locations (6%).

The question of whether or not the hours of these farmer's markets are convenient for the shoppers, 34 of the consumers at Lents stated “yes” (89%), 1 said “no” (3%) and 3 did not answer the question (8%). At Moreland, 33 consumers said that the hours were convenient (94%), while 2 people said “no” (6%).

Additionally, a contingency question was presented for those who stated that the hours were inconvenient. 3 consumers at Lents reported that weekdays would be preferable, 3 consumers also reported that Saturdays would be good, and 2 marked other. At Moreland, 1 consumer reported that weekends would be preferable, and 1 consumer marked “other” on the survey.

One of the most intriguing questions that I was curious about was whether or not people preferred to purchase food from local producers, and if so, would they be willing to pay more for it. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, I found that 3 people did not have a preference for locally produced food (8%), 30 people responded “yes” (79%) and 5 wrote in that it depends (13%). When asked if they would be willing to pay more for locally produced food, 36 respondents said “yes” (95%) while only 2 respondents stated that it “depends” (5%). See Appendix 4, Figure 3.

At the Moreland Farmer's Market, the same questions were presented. All 35 respondents stated that they prefer to purchase local food, and when asked whether or not they would be willing to pay more for locally produced food, 31 stated "yes" (89%) while 4 people simply said "no" (11%) See Appendix 4, Figure 4.

In order to gain a sense of how many people were shopping with WIC or food stamps, I presented a question on the survey. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, only three people reported that they had made a purchase with WIC or food stamps (8%). 31 respondents stated "no" (81%) and 4 respondents did not answer the question (11%). A similar story occurred at the Moreland Farmer's Market. 4 people reported paying for products with WIC or food stamps (11%), while 29 respondents reported not using them (83%). 2 people did not answer the question (6%). From the data, it appears that the majority of shoppers at the markets do not utilize the WIC and food stamp payment options. See Appendix 4, Figures 5 and 6.

A very important question about the farmer's markets that was on the survey was what consumers would like to see improved at each market. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, 8 consumers reported that longer hours would be an improvement (21%). 14 consumers want greater food variety (36%), 1 consumer preferred more convenient parking (3%), 2 respondents stated that cost of food needed improvement (i.e. cheaper) (5%) and 4 people reported that more social events would be an improvement (11%). For chart, see Appendix 4, Figure 7.

At the Moreland Farmer's Market, only 4 people stated that they would prefer longer market operating hours (11%), 1 consumer reported that convenient parking would be an improvement (3%), 4 respondents stated that cost of food needed improvement

(11%), 6 people would like greater food variety (17%), and just one consumer preferred more social events (3%). For chart, see Appendix 4, Figure 8.

Finally, the survey asked for consumers to rank their overall satisfaction of the market. At the Lents International Farmer's Market, 19 consumers were "very satisfied" with the market (50%), 16 were "satisfied" (42%) and 3 consumers did not answer the question (8%). At the Moreland Farmer's Market, 27 consumers reported that they were "very satisfied" with the market (77%), and 7 consumers reported that they were "satisfied" (20%). 1 consumer did not answer the question (3%). We can assume from these results that the majority of visitors to these markets seem to be quite satisfied with their respective market, given that not one respondent rated the markets as unsatisfactory.

Results Continued

Part 2: Qualitative Analysis

Three vendor interviews were conducted for this project. Two of the vendors sell at the Moreland Farmer's Market, and one sells at the Lents International Farmer's Market. In the original research proposal, I had hoped to interview another vendor from Lents, but unfortunately, the vendor I arranged to speak with canceled (at the last minute). With such a small sample size, there were several commonalities, but no general themes emerged from the research.

To briefly introduce the vendors, I will begin with John, who sells at the Lents International Farmer's Market. He sells oyster mushrooms, which he grows at his home in the Lents neighborhood. John has been cultivating them for about a year, and he is solely behind the operation. During the day, he operates a food cart in downtown

Portland. This is his first season at the Lents market, and the only market that he currently participates in.

Meg, a vendor at the Moreland Farmer's Market, sells sheep cheese. She began this venture when she realized her son had a dairy allergy. Although she said he eventually outgrew the allergy, she and her husband decided to keep on producing sheep cheese. This is not her only source of employment. Formally trained as a nurse, she teaches clinical coursework during the winter. She lives in Washington, yet makes the trip down to Portland to sell at the Moreland market, as well as several other markets here in the metropolitan region.

Another vendor from the Moreland Farmer's Market is Charles, and he has been farming for over 30 years. Unlike the other two vendors, he cultivates a variety of fresh produce to sell at the 5 farmer's markets that he participates in. His farm is approximately 120 acres, and he employs three full time employees to help out on the farm. This is his main form of income.

One common theme that all three vendors demonstrated is their work ethic. In addition to the niche products that two of the three vendors sell at the farmer's markets, they also have other jobs. The third farmer has 120 acres with crops that are quite diversified and farming is the only job he maintains. Two of the three vendors also sell at more than one market. Their work entails much more than the shoppers see. Growing, producing, setting up and taking down the booths and merchandise, these vendors are hard at work much of the year.

When I asked all three vendors what they liked most about their markets, the people were the general consensus. John, the oyster mushroom vendor, enjoyed that

people in the community recognized him and that he gets to see the regular customers from week to week. Meg, a sheep cheese producer who sells at the Moreland Farmer's Market also said that the people were her favorite part of the market. Charles from the Moreland Farmer's Market also agreed that it was the people were his favorite part of the market. To directly quote Charles, he stated, "It's the people. They're friendly. It's just a slice of Americana there" (Charles Stevens, personal communication, July 27th, 2009). While there may be other motivating factors for selling at the farmer's markets, the community and the people were definitely important to all three vendors.

When the vendors were asked about opportunities that they have had from selling at the market, Meg from Black Sheep Creamery and John who sells oyster mushrooms at Lents, both commented that they have gained exposure from selling at their markets. John sells to several restaurants now, and Meg is able to sell her cheese to retailers New Seasons and Steve's Cheese. Charles, on the other hand, primarily grows produce to sell at farmer's markets. He does not currently have any outside opportunities that he mentioned in the personal interview, although he may be too busy to take on any other outside opportunities. However, Charles does grow a large amount of wheat that exports rather than selling at the market.

Another question that I asked the interviewees was in regards to challenges and barriers. The responses to this question all vary. John, a mushroom vendor from Lents has had challenges with the WIC process. Although his product qualifies as a WIC purchasable item, the application process was not easily accessible to someone who already has a Monday-Friday 9-5 job. So John does cannot currently accept WIC checks for purchases.

Meg from Black Sheep Creamery has had challenges that are specific to her product. Her product is seasonal; as the sheep do not lactate year round. So during the market season, she frequently runs out of cheese. Some of the cheeses are not ready until the markets have nearly closed for the season, so finding cheese buyers in the winter has been challenging. Though as previously mentioned, New Seasons and Steve's Cheese are selling her product. Barriers for Meg are not specifically related to the farmer's market itself, rather just the seasonality of the product.

Charles, from Stevens Farm, states that his biggest challenge has been competition. Prices and too much of the same type of product can cause farmers to compete for business, all the while competing with large grocery chains. For many markets, the managers strive to ensure that there is not too much of the same product at the market. Each vendor has mentioned unique barriers and challenges to selling at the market.

When I asked the vendors if they felt that anything could be improved at the markets they sold at, all three seemed quite pleased with the way the market functions already, and had very little to comment on. One vendor thinks that eventually the Moreland Farmer's Market might want to consider being a year round market, while another vendor wishes that the market would open a couple of weeks earlier. Other than those comments, all three vendors are really quite happy about their markets, and didn't see much room for improvement.

Discussion

After examining the data collected from the Lents International Farmer's Market and the Moreland Farmer's Market, several conclusions can be made. Since the overall sample size is quite small, these results cannot be representative of the general population. However, referring back to the literature review, the preliminary results from this study remain interesting.

Examining this study to the model study, I did not find that any of the vendors took issue with market policies as the model study found, but I did find that people come to both the Lents International Farmer's Market and the Moreland Farmer's Market to support local agriculture rather than to save money. In looking at the stages of farmers' markets, described in the model study, the data collected at Lents seems to show that this market is still in stage one, This means that it is still relatively unstable and volatile. While some of the vendors have been there for more than one season, some are new to market, and the market itself is definitely still developing. Moreland, on the other hand, seems to be in stage 3, meaning that it is well established and the market have a substantial amount of produce, and that many people shop there weekly. While many results of these markets were similar, this was one difference that really stood out.

Garry Stephenson and Larry Lev (2004) compared two demographically different communities and found that both generally supported local agriculture. My study found similar results when customers were asked if they preferred to purchase food locally. Even though the demographics and food access options differed in these two neighborhoods, both neighborhoods reported a high rate of support for local agriculture.

When referring back to “Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers’ Markets in Low-Income Communities”, the multi market case study, I did not find any of the reasons for these market failures present in the markets that I studied, which is a positive sign for the longevity of the Lents International Farmer’s Market and the Moreland Farmer’s Market. The communities are interested and involved in the markets, and the management seems effective and efficient. Safety did not come up as an issue for customers, though some did comment on the fact that dogs are allowed at both of these markets.

Some of the reasons for success of the market studies in “Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers’ Markets in Low-Income Communities.” included local residents getting involved, community support, the implementation of programs such as WIC, and good pricing. For the “Heart of the City” market in San Francisco, having a variety of international foods for the city’s diverse population has proved successful. In terms of what I found at the Lents and Moreland Farmer’s Markets, there was great resident and community support at both markets. Moreland is more established market, so it has a bit more of a homely and cohesive feel to it. Both markets participate in WIC and Food Stamp programs, which can help bring in more shoppers. The markets prices seemed average; overall, I found Lents to be slightly cheaper during the weeks that I was collecting data (and purchasing food) from the markets. Lents is an “international” farmer’s market, so it has a great international flair to it. The shoppers are extremely diverse, and the products sold there are too.

The study conducted by Thomas Macias (2008), “Working Toward a Just, Equitable Food System” suggested that social integration was high at the farmers’

markets. My results suggest the same. All three of the vendor interviewees stated that the people were the main reason they participate in the market.

A recent article published in the "Oregonian" newspaper titled "Farmers' Markets Work to Draw People on a Budget" (2009) suggests that farmer's markets are working on trying to get more people on a food budget to attend and purchase produce at the market. Data results suggest that this is a good area to work in, as the majority of customers who took part in the study did not make purchases with WIC or Food Stamps.

Conclusion and Implications for Further Research

This pilot study attempted to find out about consumer values and expectations of two farmer's markets. It also sought to discover vendor opportunities and barriers. Overall, this research has found that consumers are generally satisfied with the markets, and that there is a strong support for locally produced food, even to the point of being willing to pay more money for it. Vendors are happy with the customer and market setup at both markets, and also seem quite content with the product mix and hours of operation. Even though food access varies between these two neighborhoods, both markets appear well attended and ranked satisfactory by those who attend and shop the market.

This study provided just a tiny glimpse of the Lents International Farmer's Market and the Moreland Farmer's Market. A longer, more in depth study would be beneficial to existing research on farmer's markets. Interviewing more vendors from each location would be good to gain a greater sense of opportunities and barriers that vendors face at the markets would be valuable. Surveying more customers over an entire growing season could possibly present different data. Printing surveys in multiple languages and possibly

conducting a mail survey could also help to grasp a greater sense of neighborhood values and expectations of the farmer's market.

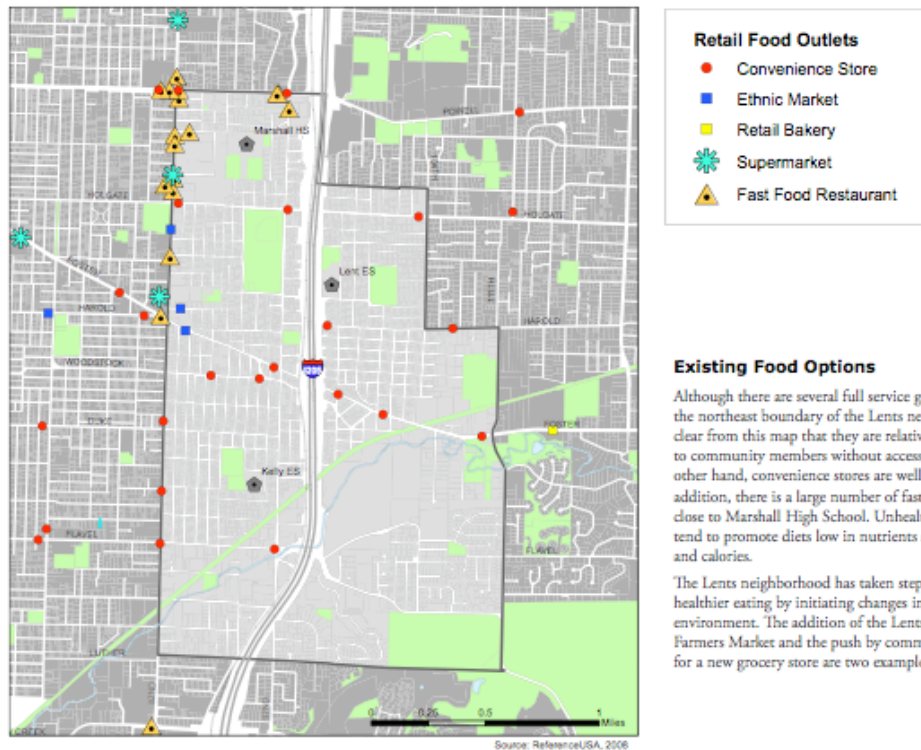
Overall, a study that is conducted over a longer period of time with a larger sample size could produce results that could be representative of a population. In addition, new data suggests that other areas in the Portland metropolitan area may be in greater need of improved food access. The study titled "Finding Food Deserts: Methodology and Measurement of Food Access in Portland Oregon" (2009) identified a handful of neighborhoods that could be identified as food deserts. Therefore, studies that focus in other neighborhoods may be useful to farmer's market research.

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Appendix 1

Lents Access to Food Sources



Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

The Lents/Moreland Farmer's Market Consumer Survey

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. How far did you travel today to get to the farmer's market?

☐ Less than 5 miles ☐ 5-10 miles ☐ More than 10 miles

3. How did you get to the farmer's market today?

☐ Personal automobile ☐ Public transportation ☐ Walk or bicycle

☐ Other: _____

4. What brought you to the market today? Please check all that apply:

☐ Atmosphere ☐ Purchase Food ☐ Meet Friends ☐ Entertainment

5. Is this your first time at the Lents/Moreland Farmer's Market?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. If you answered no to number 5, how many times have you visited the Lents/Moreland Farmer's Market?

☐ 1-5 ☐ 5-10 ☐ More than 10

7. How did you find out about the Lents/Moreland Farmer's Market?

☐ Friends/Family ☐ Local Media ☐ Other: _____

8. What types of products do you normally purchase at the market?

☐ Vegetables and Fruits ☐ Bread ☐ Prepared Foods

☐ Meats and Cheeses ☐ Flowers ☐ Other

9. Do you prefer to purchase food from local farmers rather than at a large grocery store?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No preference

10. If you answered yes to question 8, are you willing to spend more money on food that is locally grown and produced?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Where do you tend to shop for your groceries the most?

☐ Large grocery stores (Fred Meyer, Winco etc) ☐ Mid-size grocery stores (New Seasons, Wild Oats, QFC, etc.)

☐ Small convenience stores ☐ Other: _____

12. Are the hours of the Lents International Farmers Market convenient for you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. If you answered no to question 11, when would you prefer to the market to be open?

☐ Weekdays ☐ Saturdays ☐ Other: _____

14. Is there anything about the market that you would like to see improved? Please check all that apply.

☐ Longer hours ☐ Convenient parking area ☐ Lower cost of food
☐ Greater food variety ☐ More Social Events

15. If you made a purchase today, did you use WIC or Food Stamp Vouchers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

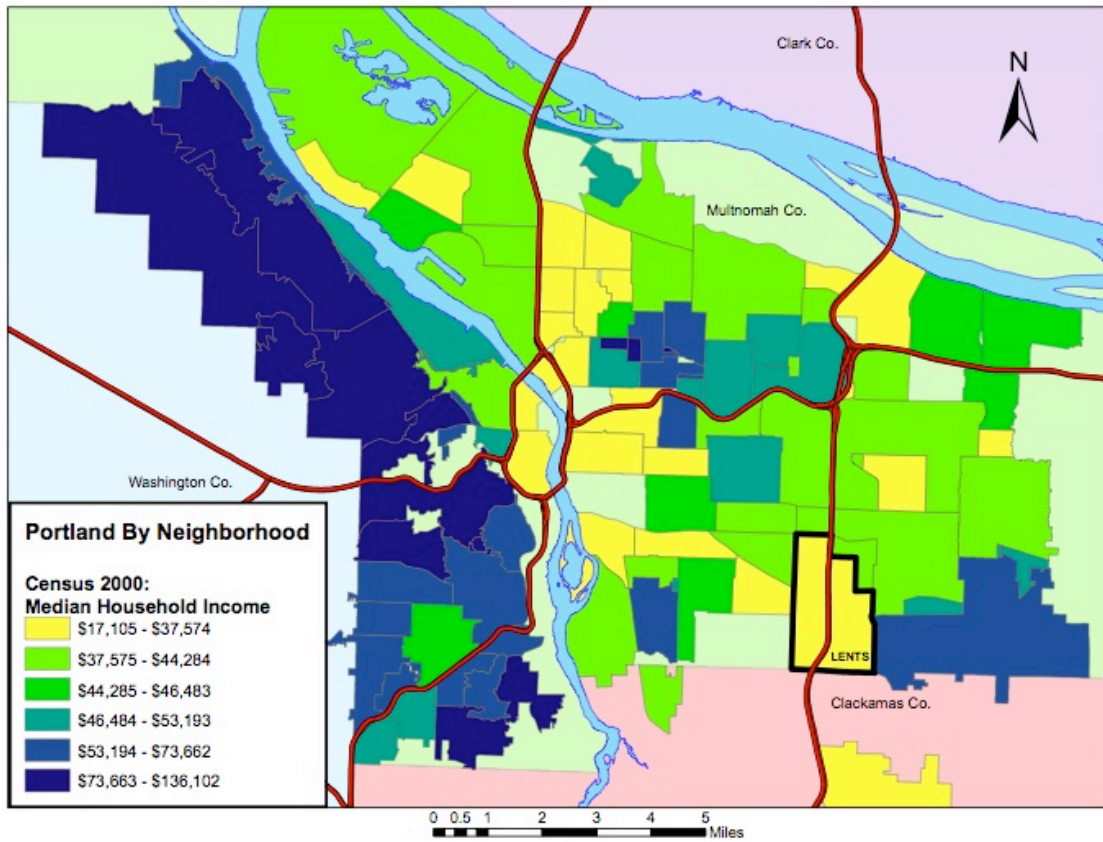
16. Please rank your overall satisfaction with the Lents International Farmers market:

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied

17. Please add any additional comments below:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your input is very valuable to this study

Appendix #3 Portland By Neighborhood Census 2000: Median Income



Appendix 4 Customer Survey Results

Figure 1

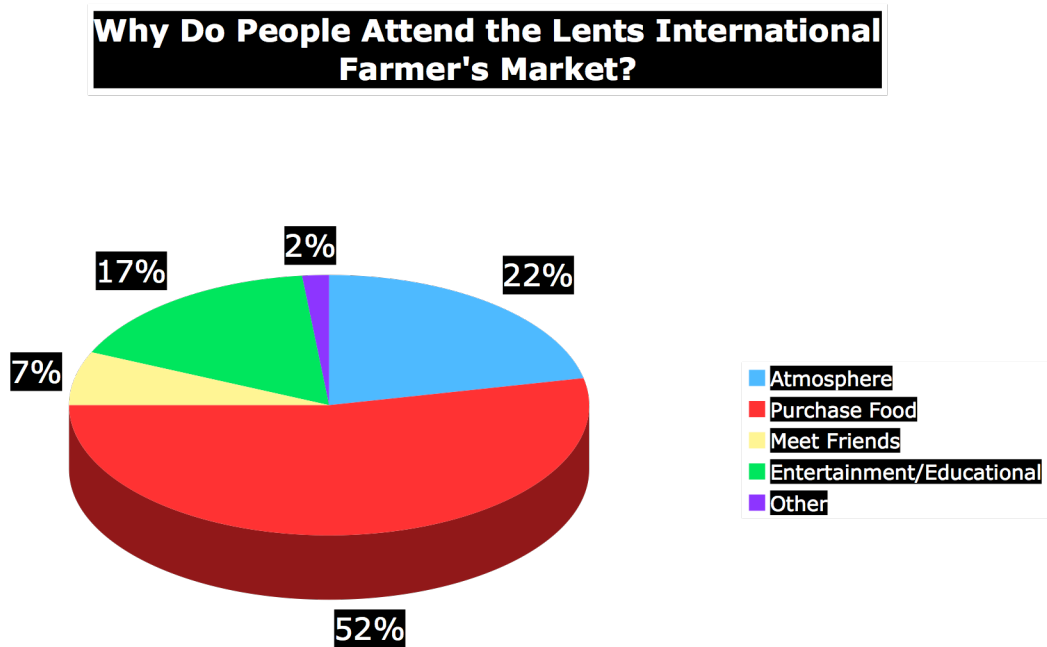


Figure 2

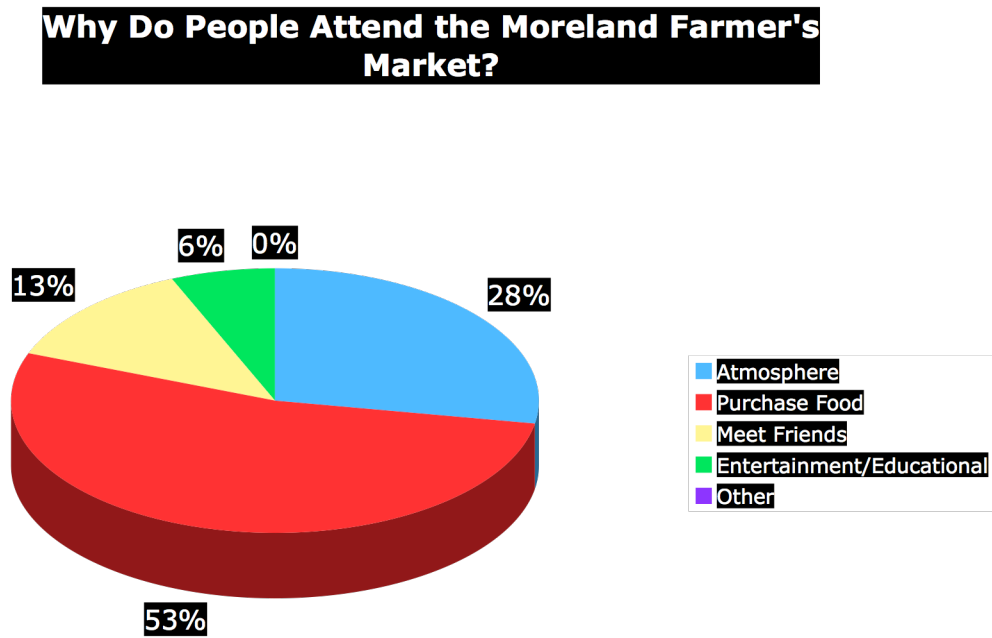


Figure 3

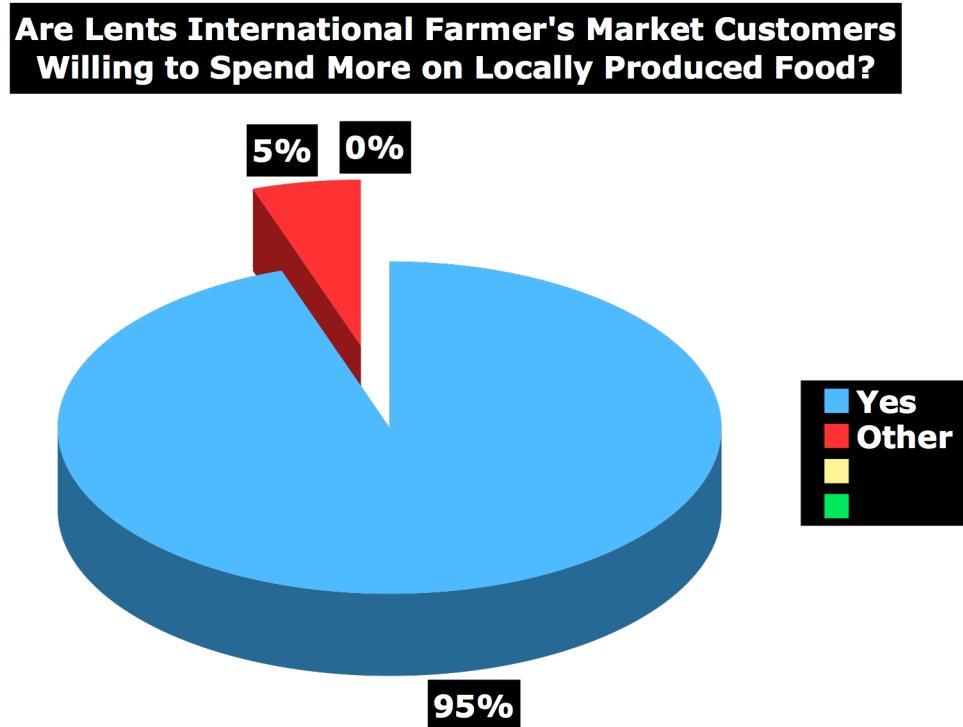


Figure 4

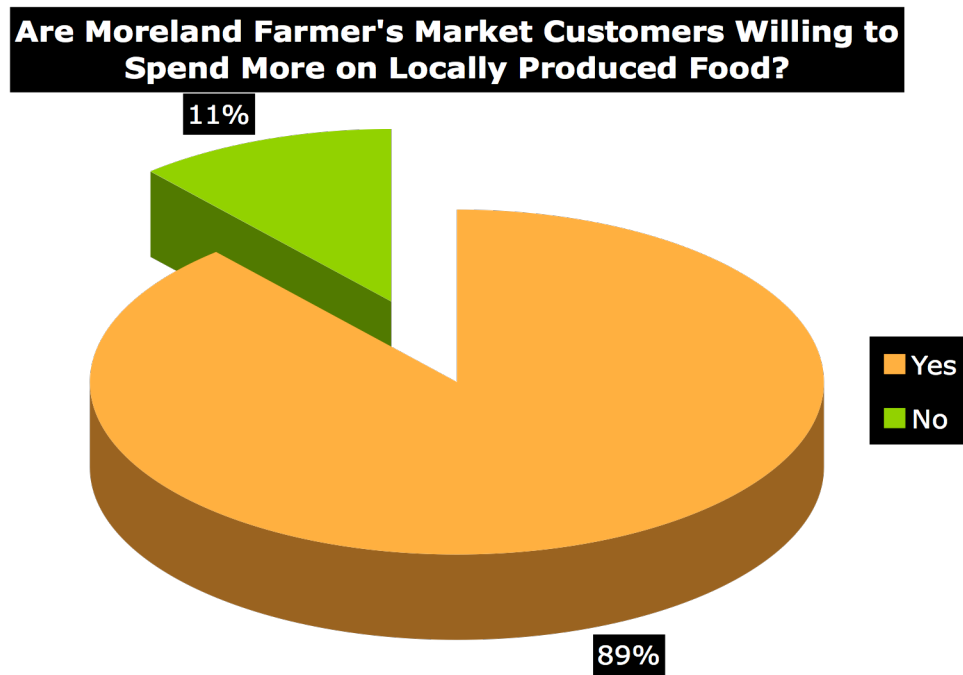


Figure 5

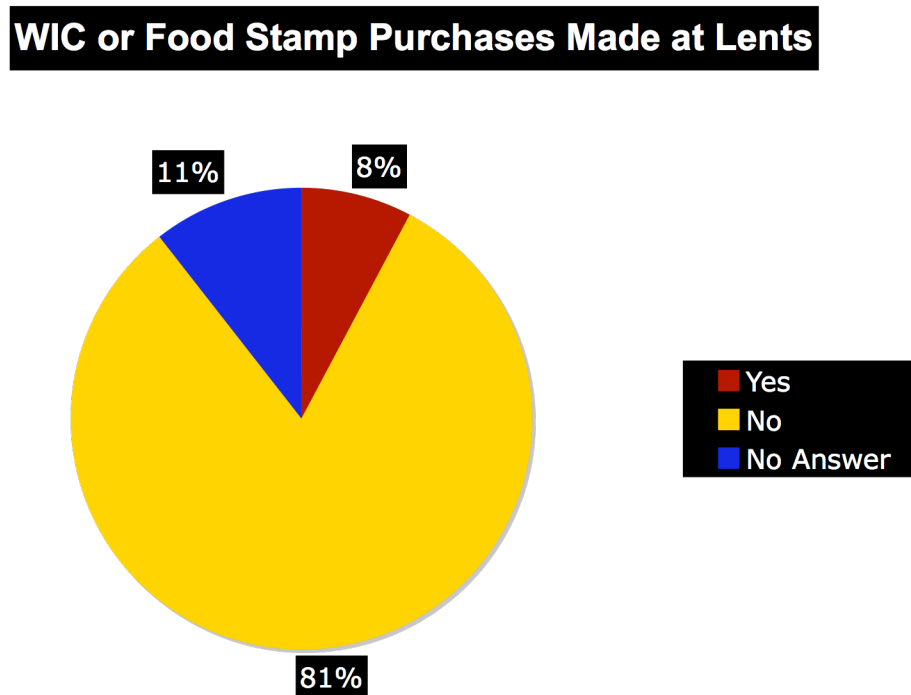


Figure 6

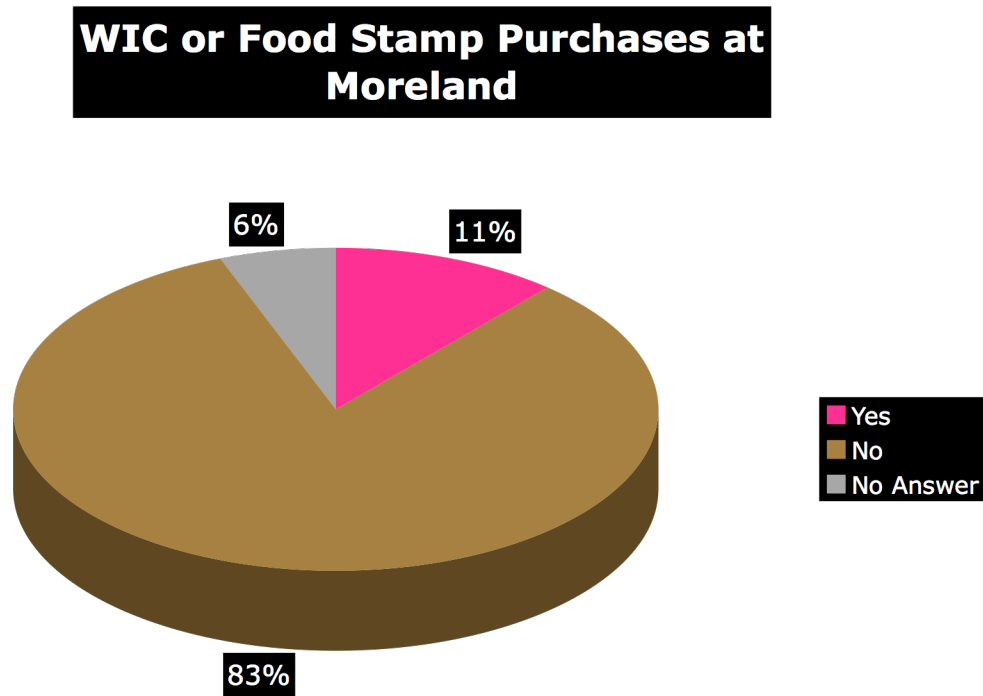


Figure 7

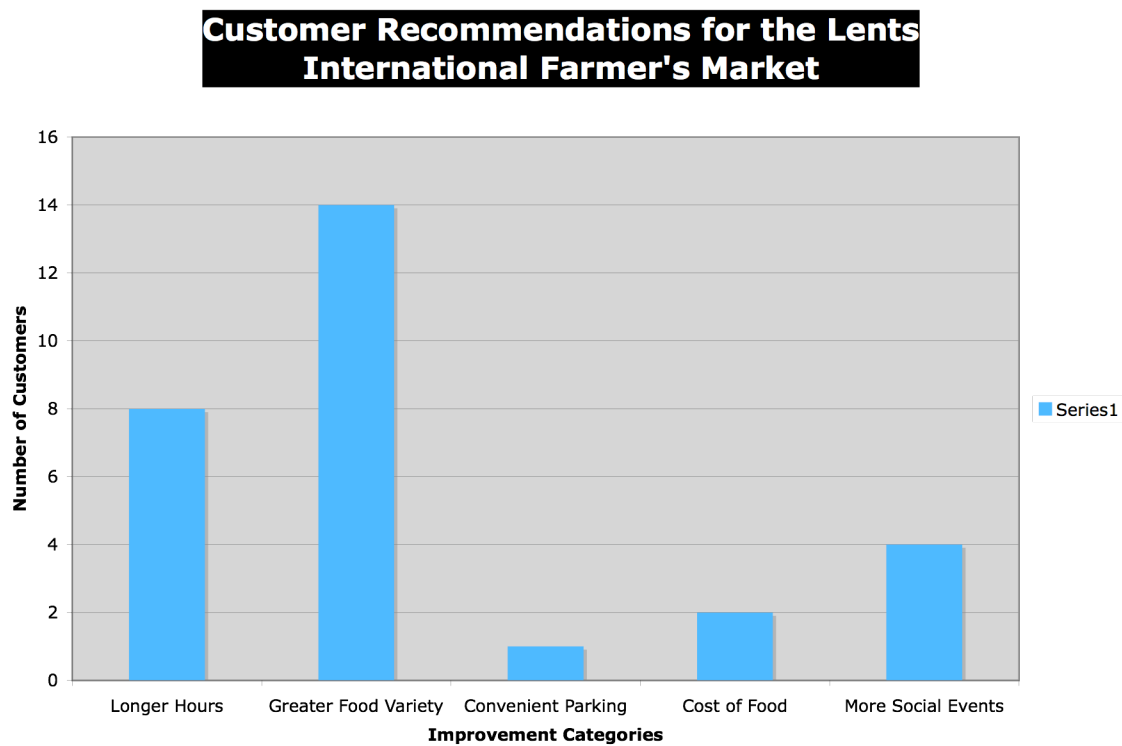


Figure 8

