

Ohio Direct Marketing Survey Research Report

Exploring changes in marketing practices and market access for Ohio food producing farmers and other key players in Ohio's food chain

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*Report prepared by Julie M. Fox & Stan Ernst
The Ohio State University, October 2009*

Bringing Knowledge to Life



OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Farm venture profitability and sustainability can be increased by assisting producers in improving marketing practices, expanding market access, and reducing the price spread between the producer and the consumer. Lucrative niche markets in large population centers may be promising opportunities but limited access to markets, the high cost of market intelligence and scale-related inefficiencies are inherent barriers to entry for Ohio's food producing farmers.

Ohio is rich in diversity with rural Appalachian communities to the southeast, a lakefront region to the north, and growing immigrant populations in numerous metropolitan areas. Ohio is one of the most urbanized states in the country, yet retains over half its land base in agricultural uses (Clark, Sharp, Irwin & Libby, 2003). Seventy-three (73%) of all urban land cover in Ohio is located within 5 miles of a highway (Reece & Irwin, 2002). This unique proximity of metropolitan and micropolitan areas, combined with growing interest in local foods, presents unique marketing opportunities. Since market systems are rarely defined by state boundaries, it is also significant that Ohio is conveniently located within a 600 mile radius of 60-70% of the U.S. population and 51% of the Canadian population and within a day's trucking of some of North America's most lucrative and diverse food markets.

The primary opportunities addressed in this project were to better understand these significant marketing opportunities, identify the best ways to assist Ohio food producing farmers in more efficient and orderly marketing to reach these markets, and to begin measuring the impacts of these marketing improvements. Electronic markets and technology have the potential to reduce marketing and transactions costs and otherwise level the playing field for these enterprises. An electronic infrastructure, such as MarketMaker, that successfully connects food producers to its best suited market, has the capacity to significantly impact rural economies as well as better serve a dynamic market place.

The project included a three phase work plan that began with survey-based research to profile producers and identify their perceived marketing challenges and opportunities. The second and third phases included case study research and a web-based survey to further study the impacts of improved market access. This report is one of three reports associated with the project, "Exploring and improving marketing practices and regional market access for Ohio's food producing farmers".

Related research and Extension work continues through the Ohio Direct Marketing Team, a statewide team with representatives from numerous organizations committed to enhancing the growth of the agricultural industry through increased direct sales of products, services, and experiences.

Acknowledgements

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Project Partners

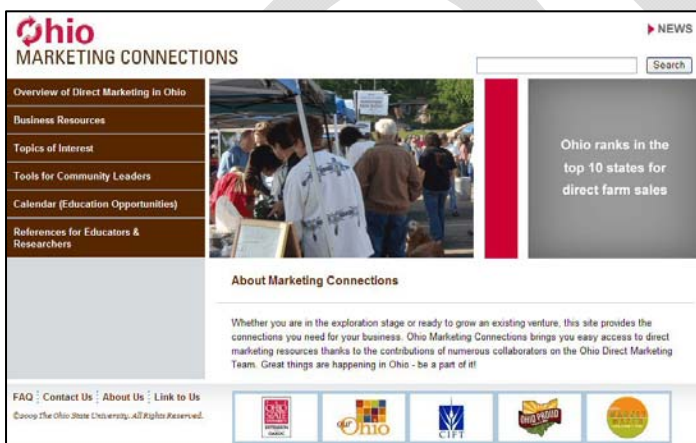
Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Markets

The Ohio State University

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Project Overview & Findings

PROJECT OVERVIEW

According to the Census of Agriculture, Ohio ranks in the top ten states for direct farm sales. In addition to Census data, other signs of growth include an increasing number of farm markets, farmers markets, wineries linked to tourism, community supported agriculture programs, produce auctions, chef-grower networks, and farm-based garden centers. According to the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, direct marketing, as it relates to agriculture, is "selling direct to consumers - individuals, families, restaurants, tour groups, big companies and others."

Survey research represents one of the most common types of quantitative, social science research. For this study, the questionnaire was a written document mailed to agricultural producers in Ohio who sold through direct marketing methods in 2008. The research questions under investigation focused on the profile of producers and identification of their perceived marketing practices, plans, challenges, opportunities and priorities. There were 397 respondents, with a 22 percent rate of deliverable questionnaires. As direct marketers nationwide address challenges and opportunities, this study contributes to better identification of education and resources to help producers improve marketing practices and performance.

FIELD PROCEDURES

Field Procedure for this Survey Research Project

For this non-experimental quantitative research study, the questionnaire was a 2-page written document mailed to agricultural producers in Ohio who sold through direct marketing methods in 2008. Data was gathered through a single informant survey (Appendix A). There are a number of advantages to using only a single informant (Lyons, Lumpkin, and Dess, 2000). Producers in Ohio who sold directly to consumers and targeted wholesale buyers were invited to respond to a questionnaire, reporting on their direct marketing activity, plans and perceptions. Twenty-two percent of the producers responded.

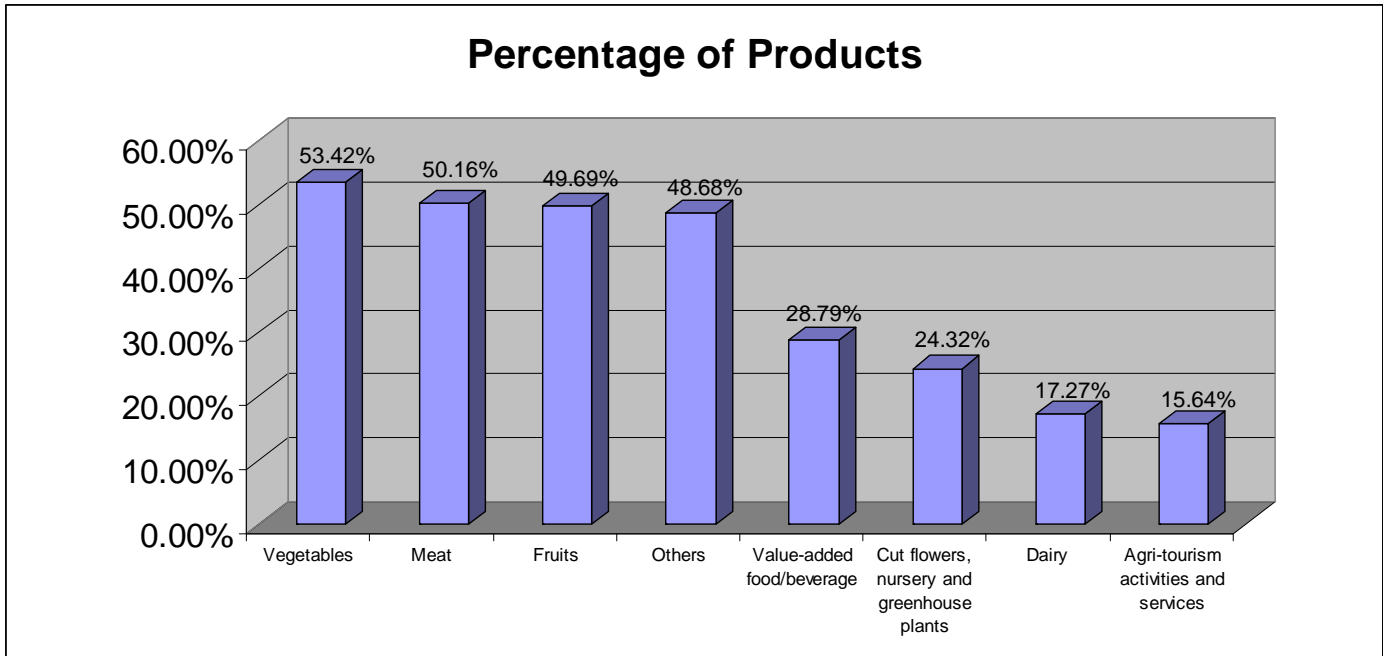
Consistent with most survey-based business research, the business owners or managers (CEO), were placed in the role of key informant to minimize biases associated with hierarchical levels (Glick, Huber, Miller, Doty, and Sutcliffe, 1990) and the perceptual agreement problem (James, 1982). Senior leaders typically provide a reasonably accurate picture of the organization's conditions (Hambrick, 1982; Chandler & Hanks, 1993). Entrepreneurship studies have often used self-reports to gather performance data and they have been shown to be reliable (Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, and Buchholz, 2001).

The target population was mailed a personalized letter, a printed questionnaire, and a stamped return envelope. Prior to the deadline, non-respondents were sent a second invitation. The questionnaire included 15 questions to gather data on the profile of producers and identification of their perceived marketing practices, plans, challenges, opportunities and priorities. There are advantages and disadvantages to an approach based on managerial perceptions. Advantages include practicality of convenience and interpretability, as well as validity advantages because perceptions typically provide the most precise assessments of conditions within an organization (Lyons, Lumpkin, and Dess, 2000). Disadvantages include measures of perception may lack internal consistency due to functional bias which can impact reliability. To establish reliability and validity, the questionnaire was first reviewed by a panel of experts. Data was entered and analyzed through descriptive statistics, using SPSS 17.0, a statistical software program commonly used for analyzing research data (Norusis, 2004). Data from the questionnaire was recoded as needed for consistent reporting. Analysis included screening data for potential errors and considering non-response bias. Results were reported in statistical summaries so that information about individual companies could not be identified.

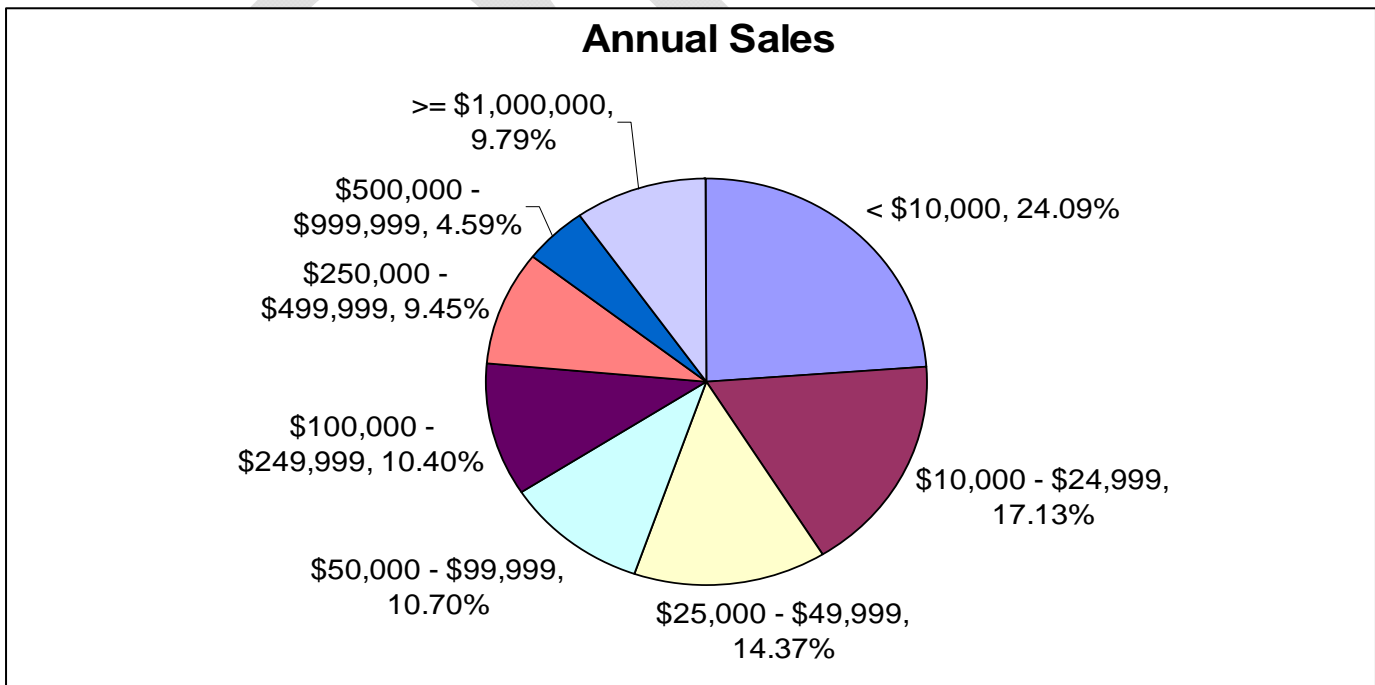
FINDINGS

Products

Respondents were to write the percentage of product sales they made through direct marketing in 2008, with their combined total of all of their products sold being 100%. Fruits and vegetables were in the top four products sold. Meat and other products also ranked in the top four. Other products reported include grain, pine trees, nuts, straw and show animals. In addition, many of the other products listed could have been included in the value-added food/beverage category such as wine, maple syrup, honey, sauces, and jams.



Annual Sales

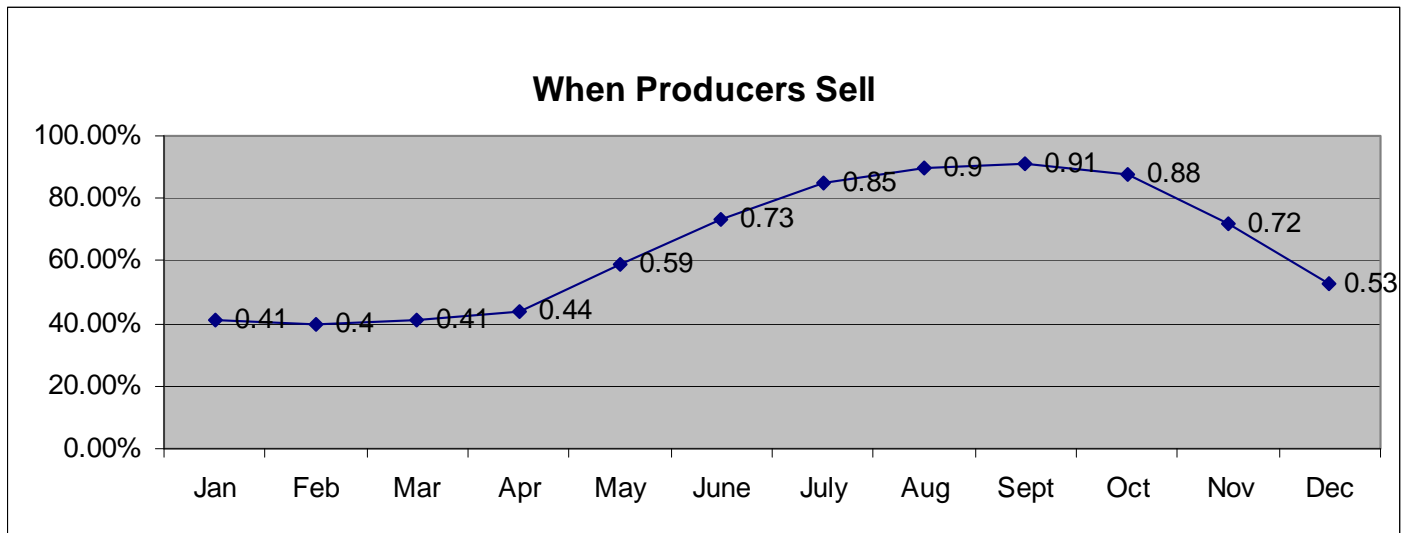


Respondents

Respondents represented businesses in all areas of the state of Ohio.

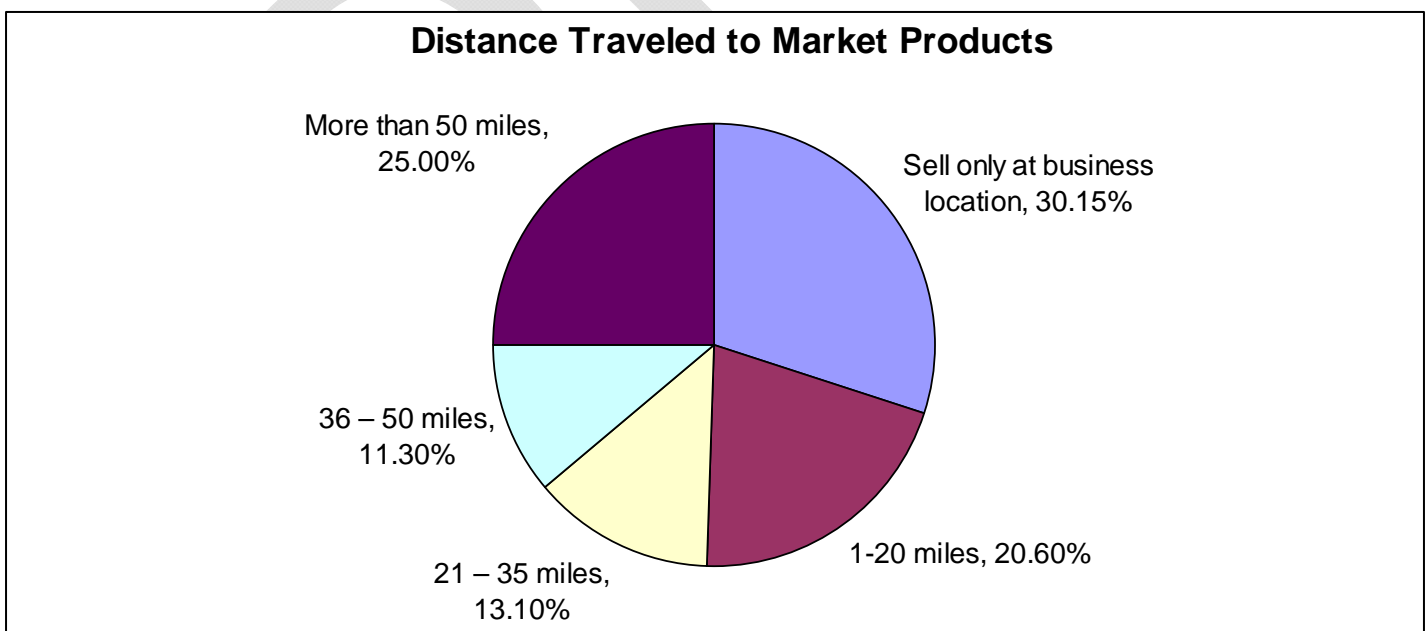
- The average age of the primary operators of the business was 55.79 years (significantly lower than the average age of Ohio farmer).
- The number of male primary operators of the business: 68.51% of respondents
- The number of female primary operators of the business: 14.11% of respondents (above Ohio farm operator average)

When Producers Sell



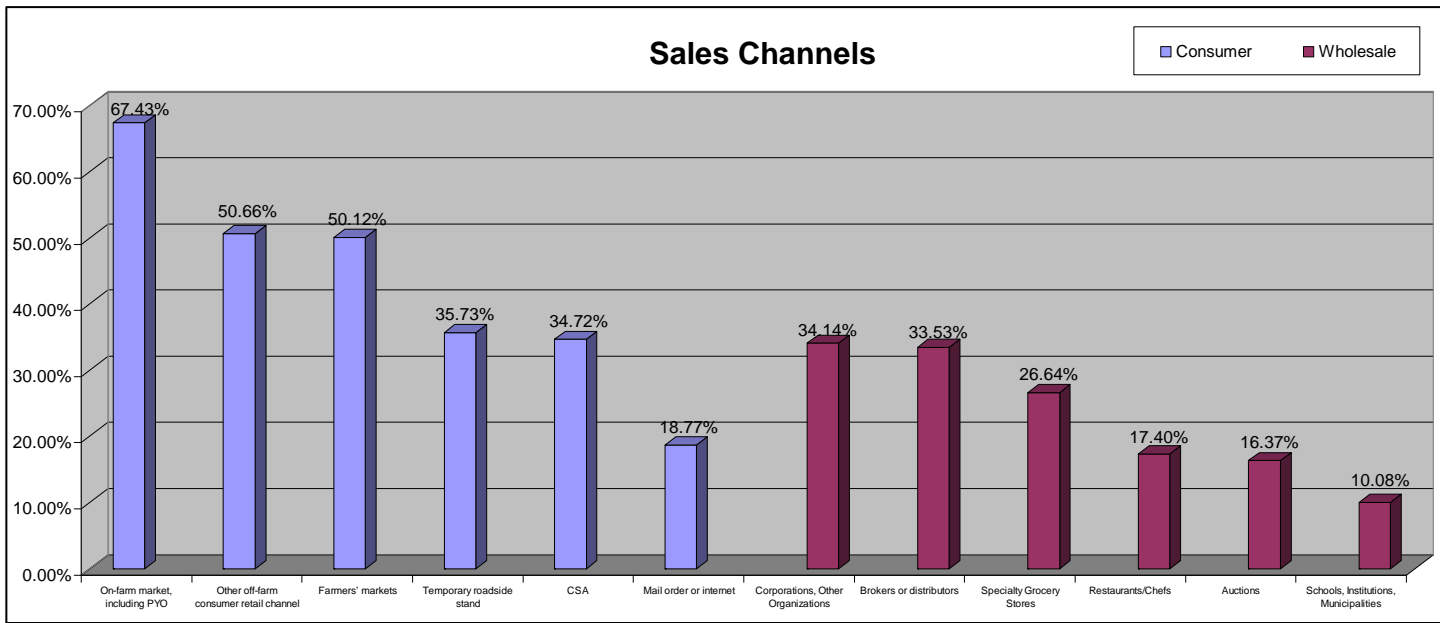
Distance

When asked what was the furthest distance traveled to directly market products, 30 percent of respondents reported selling only at their business location. Forty-five percent reported traveling 1 – 50 miles. Twenty-five percent reported traveling distances greater than 50 miles.

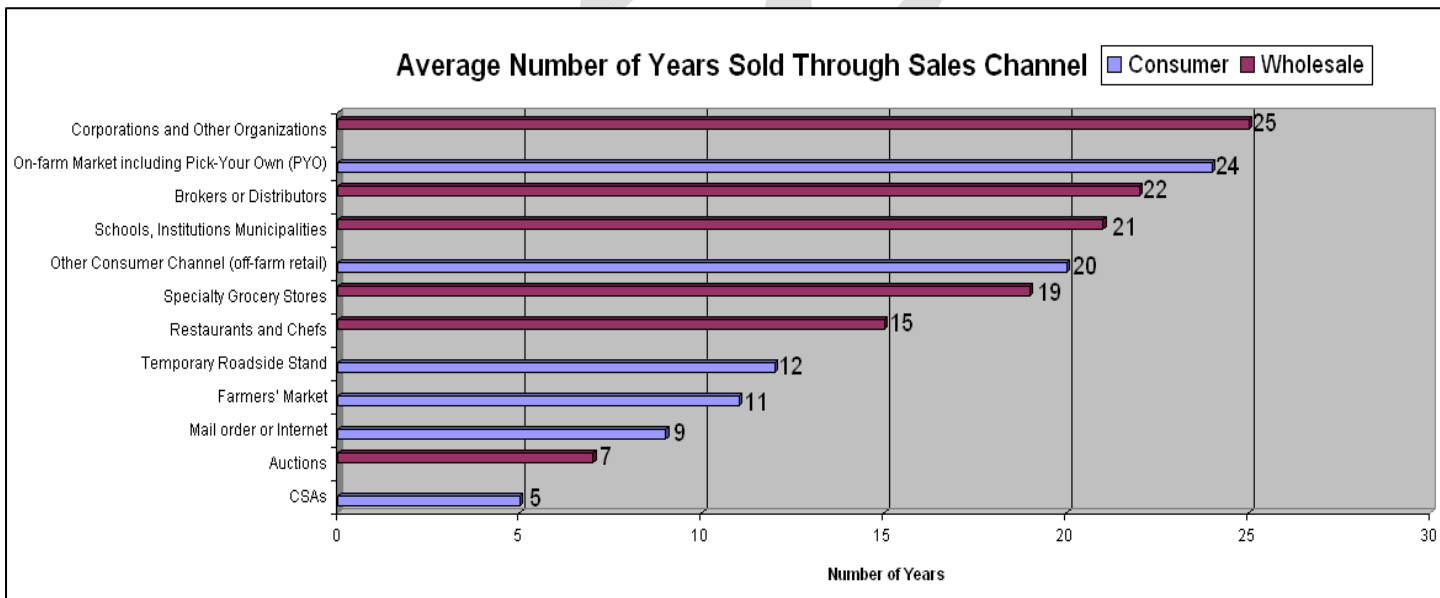


Customers –Sales Channels

Respondents sold directly to consumers and wholesale buyers. Consumer sales channels indicated in the “other” category included off-farm retail stores; fairs and festivals; cooperatives; food banks; private contracts; and sales to friends, relatives and neighbors.

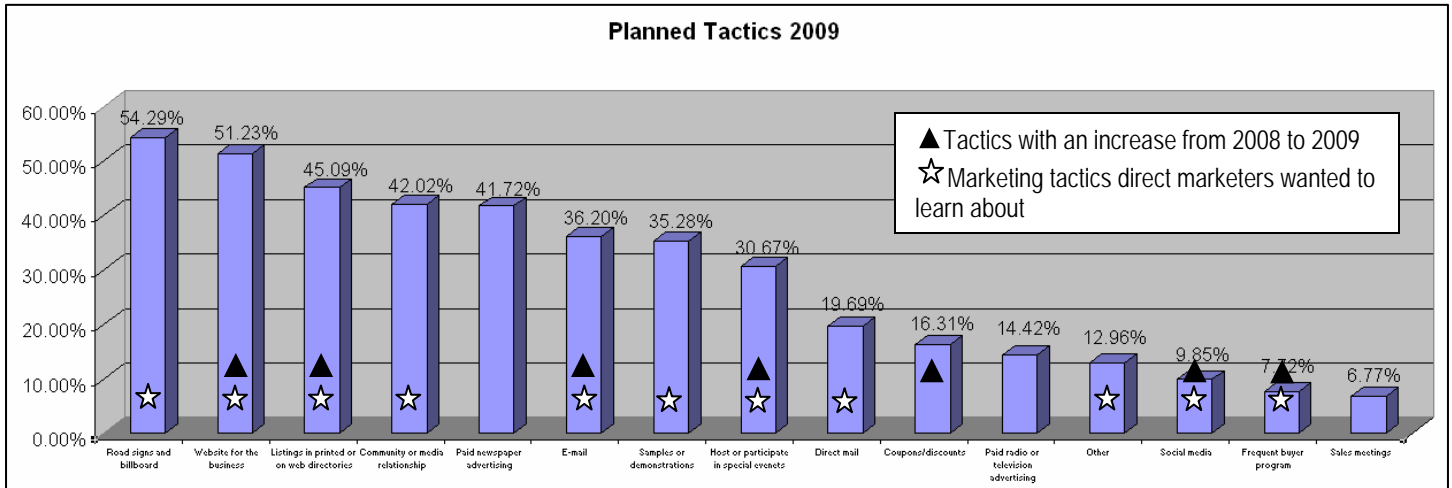


Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is the newest reported sales channel.

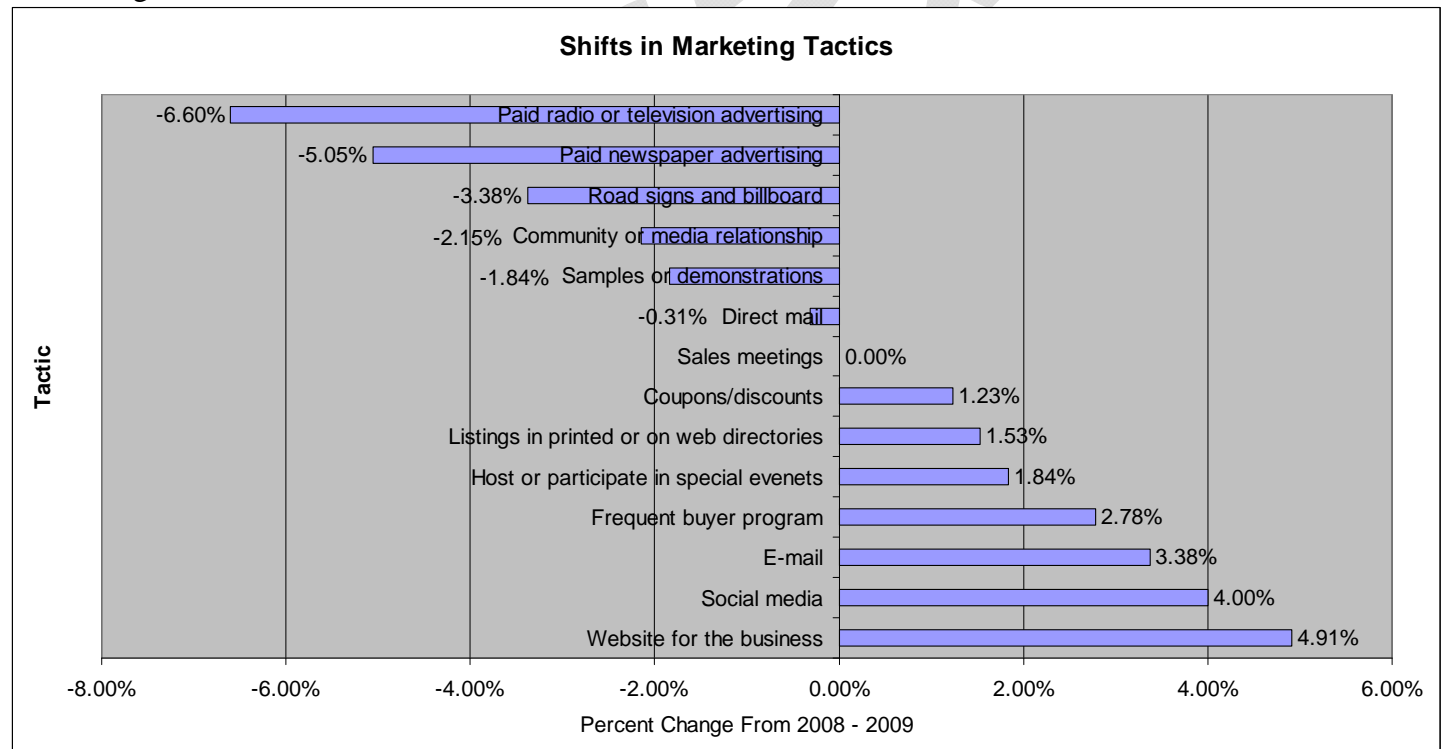


Marketing Tactics

This study investigated direct marketing tactics in 2008, planned tactics for 2009 and the level of interest in learning more about specific topics. Respondents indicated that their top eight planned tactics for 2009 were road signs and billboards 54.29%; business website 51.23%; listings in printed or web directories 45.09%; community or media relationship 42.02%; paid newspaper advertising 41.72%; E-mail 36.20%; samples or demonstrations 35.28%; host or participate in special events 30.67%.



Producers are shifting their tactics from 2008 to 2009, with increased emphasis on new media such as websites, social media and E-mail and reduced emphasis on traditional media such as radio, television and newspaper advertising. Tactics with an increase from 2008 to 2009 are indicated with a ▲ on the chart above.

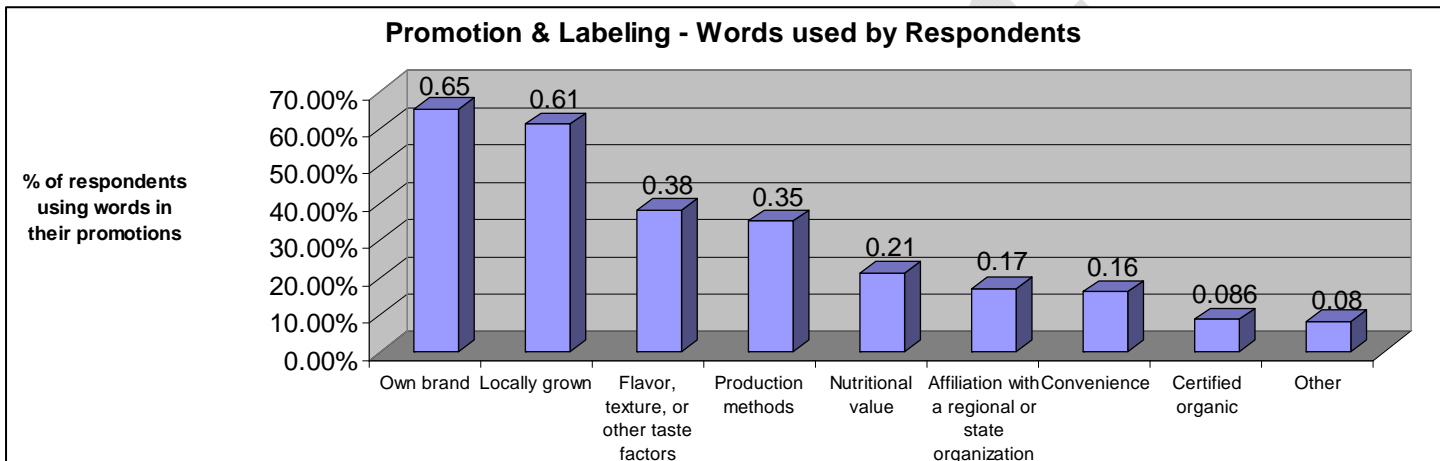


To determine what marketing tactics direct marketers were interested in learning more about, respondents were asked to circle a number between 1 and 6 on the interval level scale that best represented their level of interest, with 1 indicating not interested and 6 indicating very interested. Tactics rated with at least a 3 (somewhat interested) included community or media relationships 4.34; website for the business 4.33; listings in printed or web directories 3.97; E-mail 3.92; other (word of mouth, cooperative marketing and merchandising) 3.73; road

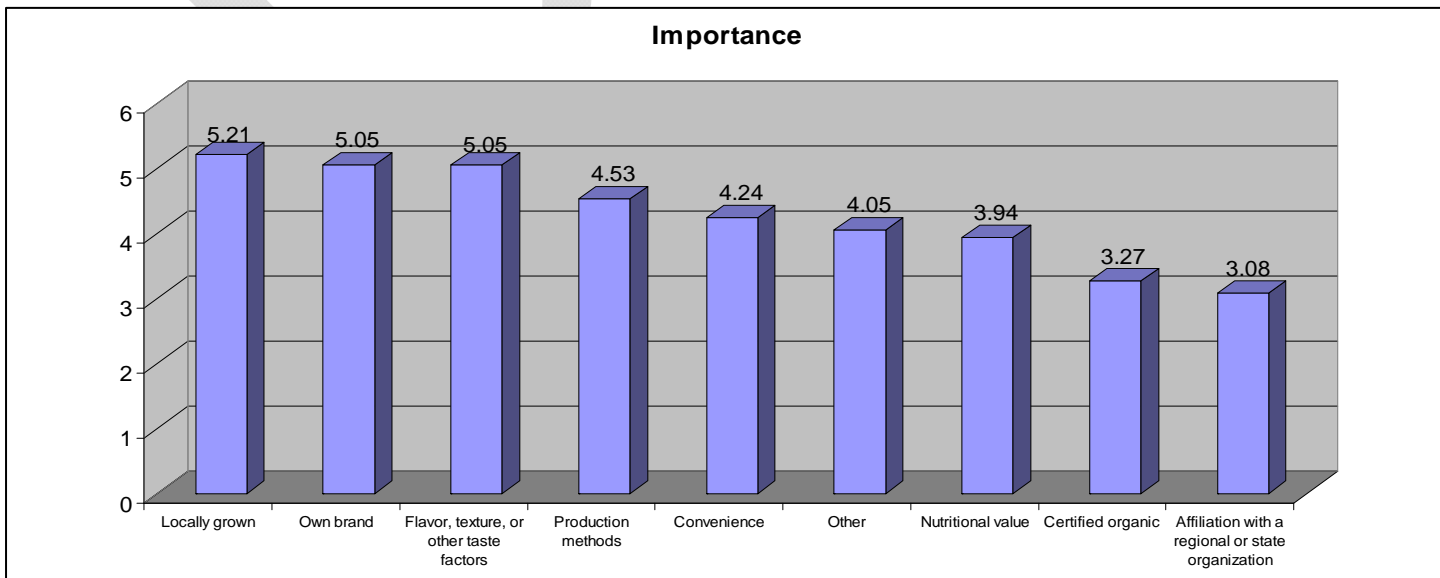
signs and billboard 3.7; host or participate in special events 3.67; samples or demonstrations 3.55; social media 3.28; direct mail 3.28; frequent buyer program 3.03. These are indicated with a ☆ on the chart above. There were six tactics that respondents indicated they would increase and they were interested in learning more. These include website for the business; listings in printed or web directories; E-mail; host or participate in special events; social media; frequent buyer program.

Promotion and Labeling

To determine what words were important in the promotion and labeling of direct marketed products, respondents were asked to indicate what words were currently used and what words were important. Respondents reported that brand, locally grown and flavor are the three most commonly used words in the promotion or labeling of products.



Importance of various words was indicated by circling a number between 1 and 6 on the interval level scale that best represented the level of perceived importance, with 1 indicating not important and 6 indicating very important. Locally grown, brand and flavor were the most important. In addition to the words on the chart below, other words reported to have importance included fresh, family farm, home made, FDA/ODA inspected, certified, unique ingredients, # of years in business, appreciation for selecting product, value-added words – how to use, care for, etc., biodegradable packaging. There were some differences in current practices that respondents perceived to be important. For example, locally grown was the most important, convenience was reported to be more important and affiliation was perceived to be less important.



Marketing Affiliations

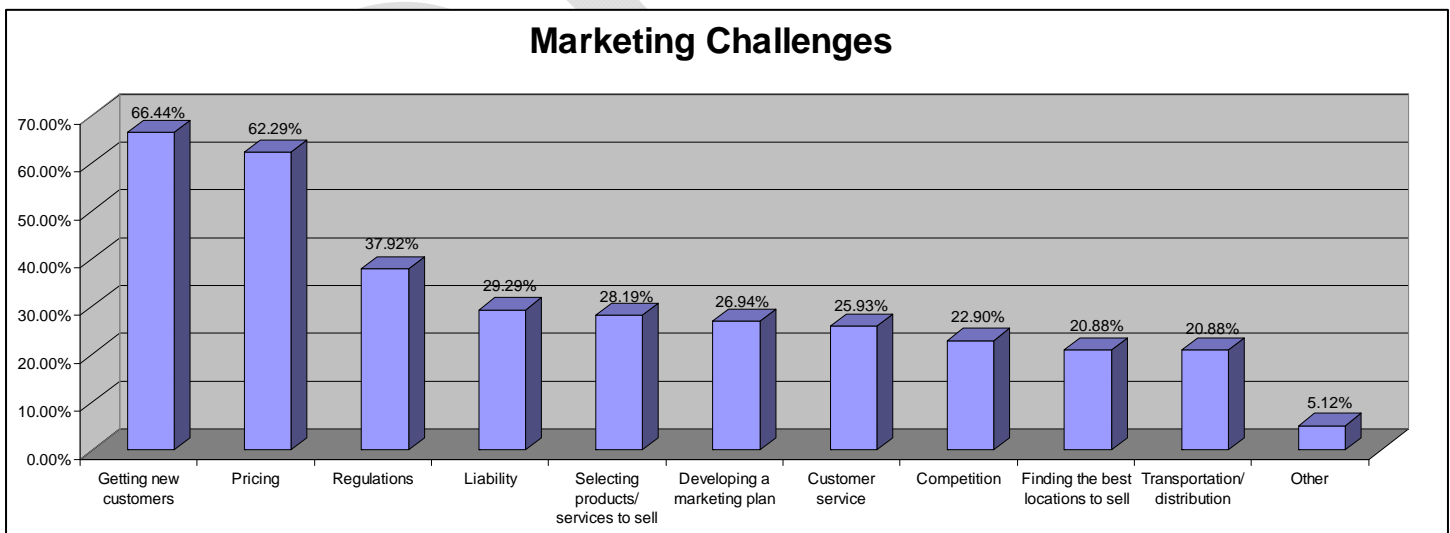
To determine what organizations direct marketers affiliated with, respondents were asked to circle a number between 1 and 6 on the interval level scale that best represented their level of involvement, with 1 indicating not involved and 6 indicating very involved. Respondents were also asked circle a number from 1-6 to indicate how much their involvement impacts their marketing.

Affiliation with...	Average Involvement Level	Average Marketing Impact
State commodity organization	2.38	2.63
National agriculture organization	2.13	2.22
Ohio Proud	2.39	2.98
Our Ohio	2.40	2.53
Ohio MarketMaker	1.85	2.32
Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association	2.02	2.46
Chamber of Commerce or Convention/Visitor's Bureau	2.33	2.68
Others local organizations, organizations in adjoining states	2.25	2.98

All organizations have an opportunity to increase direct marketer affiliation, involvement and impacts. Affiliation had limited perceived value as reported in the promotion and labeling questions (page 9).

Marketing Challenges

To determine perceived marketing challenges, respondents were asked to indicate what challenges they were currently facing. To determine what marketing challenges direct marketers were interested in learning more about, respondents were asked to circle a number between 1 and 6 on the interval level scale that best represented their level of interest, with 1 indicating not interested and 6 indicating very interested. Getting new customers and pricing were the most significant challenges reported by respondents.



The average interest level in learning more about the challenge ranged from a high of 5.01 (getting new customers) to a low of 3.33 (transportation/distribution). Consistent with the reported challenges, respondents were most interested in learning about getting new customers 5.01; pricing 4.35, development a marketing plan 4.22, regulations 4.13, liability 4.09, customer service 4.05, finding the best locations to sell 4.04, selecting products/services to sell 3.74, competition 3.71, other 3.47, transportation/distribution 3.33. All of the challenges had at least a 3.

Marketing Priorities and Opportunities

To continue identifying marketing priorities and opportunities, the questionnaire included the following three questions:

1. What is one of the most effective marketing STRATEGIES you have seen?

The most common responses to this question focused on consistently selling quality products and experiences, generating word of mouth marketing and using Internet technologies such as websites, email lists, popular web directory links, blogs and social media. Other responses are grouped into the following categories:

People	Find a niche
Products	Figure out what customers need and meet that need or want Have fresh good tasting products Great products bring customers back for more Product attributes such as organic, natural, grass-fed, etc. help sell product Offer awesome and interesting quality products Sell products made in Ohio Packaging and appearance of products makes is easy to sell them
Place	Prominent, easily accessible location,
Promotion	Just be personal, smile, engage people in conversation and treat customers with respect Demonstration and taste testing always improves sales Give customers a sample of what you have to sell Make personal contacts (sales calls) with buyers, such as direct sales call to chefs When customers see people picking fruit, they want fresh products/experiences Give a well-crafted presentation to as many civic groups as possible Hold special events for customers Get local and national media involved and benefit from media coverage Participate in Ohio Proud and other cooperative programs Provide good customer service and customer service/employee training Offer direct or instant coupons in advertisements, inserts and direct mail Have regular communication and standard promotional items such as a brochure and personal references Billboards, eye catching roadside signs & simple strategically placed informational signs Local radio, television, newsletter and direct mail to prospective and existing customers Work with other companies to market "like" products (non-competing)

2. What is one of the most valuable RESOURCES that helped you with your marketing?

Numerous organizations, events, publications and websites were mentioned in response to this question, including OSU Extension, the State of Ohio, the Ohio Aquaculture Association, the Ohio Soybean Council, Farm Bureau/Our Ohio, the Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association (OEFFA), the Ohio Produce Growers & Marketers Association (OPGMA), the Ohio Division of Natural Resources (ODNR), Innovative Farmers of Ohio (IFO), Ohio Wine Producers, Ohio Grape Industry Council, Ohio Apple Marketing program, American Bee Journal, Bee Culture magazine, Ohio Proud, A Taste of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's coop marketing, Convention & Visitors' Bureaus, North American Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA), the Organic Price Index, food shows, community festivals, local media, advertising agencies, local farmers' markets, auctions, local food programs, Local Harvest, and Ohio MarketMaker. Respondents also reported that customers were their most valuable resource – providing customer feedback as well as word of mouth marketing from customers. Some respondents reported that talking with other producers was their most valuable resource.

3. What is one thing that would most help you IMPROVE your marketing?

Many respondents thought that an improved economy would improve their business. Some reported satisfaction with their current marketing performance. Most, however, suggested various things that would help them improve their marketing. The most common responses were the desire for more time and more money to help improve marketing. Other comments included:

People	Attract more customers Schedule school tours – this generates business for years Uncertain – something to help expand our customer base in order to move our direct marketing towards becoming a full-time enterprise
Product	Determine what the customers want before others figure it out Expand production - Have enough supply for demand (need land, buildings, equipment)
Promotion	Improve Internet marketing (website, email marketing, strategic links, blog, social media) Develop co-op opportunities Create better signs (permanent, semi-permanent directional signs, display signage) Take advantage of better advertising opportunities Provide better service Local PR - More exposure through local media and national press Connect with individual and restaurant buyers Work with retail store programs that feature and sample Ohio products Sell through independent grocers and larger retailers Educate consumers on benefits of local products and teach people how to use products Statewide promotion of agritourism
Place/ Distribution	Have a market at farm location Be on a main road More distributors and partners to reach larger markets
Planning & Management	Human Resources – hiring and retaining productive reliable talent Finance – improve cash flow and budgeting for marketing Develop a better understanding of marketing and a better plan Take more time for reading, talking, planning, taking action, evaluating Improve off-season comprehensive planning Find a way to make our farm a "destination" Improve organization Increase capacity such as more space, land, buildings and equipment Work with others to improve infrastructure and capacity, such as regional distribution, high-speed connectivity, statewide signage, buy local promotions, addressing regulations
Education	Classes, seminars and round table discussions with other growers/marketers Topics: marketing tactics (see page 8), price information, Internet technologies, how to transition from hobby to business mode, regulations (educate growers and regulators)
Other	We need is more farmers

Project Summary & Next Steps

Summary

The primary opportunities addressed in this project were to:

- profile producers to better understand the size and scope of their operations.
- better understand marketing challenges, opportunities and priorities for Ohio direct marketers.
- identify the best ways to assist Ohio food producing farmers in more efficient and orderly marketing.

Respondents represented businesses throughout the state that ranged in size, products sold, distance traveled to market, sales channels they sold through, marketing tactics they used and marketing challenges they faced.

Common themes from respondents included increased emphasis on locally grown foods, new developments in technologies that improve marketing, interest in attracting new customers and importance of quality.

Locally Grown Food

When asked what words were important in promotions and labeling, locally grown had the highest response rate. Educating consumers on the benefits of local products was also included as one of the things that could most improve the marketing of respondents.

Technology

Three of the top five topics that producers were interested in learning more about included technology utilization. In addition, the largest shifts in marketing tactics were technology- related:

Website for Business

Social Media

Email

Internet technologies were reported as one of the most effective strategies seen by respondents.

Selling to New Customers

Interest in attracting new customers was reported as the number one challenges of respondents. Tactics may vary between direct to consumer and direct to wholesaler marketers.

Quality

Respondents recognized the need to have quality products, employees and service.

Numerous organizations were mentioned as the producer's most important resource. Organizations helping advance direct marketing in Ohio have tremendous opportunity to increase involvement of producers to help them improve their impacts (page 10).

When asked about marketing strategies, resources and improvements, respondents reported in all marketing elements -- people, products, promotion, place, planning and management. A balanced approach to marketing assistance will address issues expressed by food producers and marketers.

Next Steps

Findings from this study will be combined with case study research and a MarketMaker evaluation to better understanding direct marketing activity and impacts in Ohio. To improve future research, the Ohio Direct Marketing Team will work on refining the database used for this research and other team projects. Additional research will be explored, such as product-specific marketing, market-specific opportunities (direct to consumer / direct to wholesale), marketing strategy impacts and feasibility of marketing cooperatives. These findings provide a framework for further discussion and development in Ohio and the surrounding region.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Ohio Direct Marketing Survey

Please take a few moments to complete this 2-page questionnaire. Your responses to these 15 questions will help direct marketing educators better understand, communicate, and respond to opportunities and challenges here in Ohio. We know you are busy throughout the year and thank you for taking 10 to 15 minutes to complete this survey. Please send this completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by January 29, 2009. Thank you! We look forward to visiting more with you in 2009.

1. Did you direct market agricultural products to consumers or wholesale buyers in 2008? (Place an X by yes or no)

Direct marketing includes selling through various methods – see Question 3 below for details.

- Yes *Please continue to question 2.*
 No *To help us understand why you are not involved in direct marketing and how you do sell your products, please write comments here (attach additional pages if needed). There is no need to complete questions 2- 15.*

2. WHAT DID YOU SELL IN 2008?

a. Write the percentage of sales you made through direct marketing in 2008. The combined total of all products will be 100%.

Fruits	_____%
Vegetables	_____%
Meat / Fish	_____%
Dairy / Eggs	_____%
Value-added food/beverage	_____%
Agri-tourism activities and services	_____%
Cut flowers, nursery & greenhouse plants	_____%
Other _____	_____%
TOTAL	100%

b. For each product you sold, write the % you produced and the % of products you acquired from another source and re-sold through your business ("not produced").

	Produced		Not produced	
Fruits	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Vegetables	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Meat / Fish	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Dairy / Eggs	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Value-added food/beverage	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Agri-tourism activities and services	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Cut flowers, nursery & greenhouse plants	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%
Other _____	_____%	+	_____%	= 100%

3. WHERE DID YOU SELL & WHO WERE YOUR BUYERS?

a. Write the percentage of your sales for each method during 2008. The total products sold directly to consumers and wholesale buyers should be 100%. If you sell through other methods, write the method on the "other" line provided.

<u>Directly to Consumers</u>	% of Sales	<u>Directly to Wholesale Buyers</u>	% of Sales
Temporary roadside stand	_____%	Auctions	_____%
On-farm market, including PYO	_____%	Restaurants / Chefs	_____%
Farmers' markets	_____%	Specialty Grocery Stores	_____%
Community Supported Ag. (CSA)	_____%	Schools, Institutions, Municipalities	_____%
Mail order or Internet	_____%	Corporations, Other Organizations	_____%
Other _____	_____%	Brokers or distributors	_____%

b. Write the number of years you have sold through each method. If you Plan to sell through a NEW channel in 2009, put a "P" in the column for # Years. If you sell through other methods, write the method on the "other" line provided.

<u>Directly to Consumers</u>	# Years	<u>Directly to Wholesale Buyers</u>	# Years
Temporary roadside stand	_____	Auctions	_____
On-farm market, including PYO	_____	Restaurants / Chefs	_____
Farmers' markets	_____	Specialty Grocery Stores	_____
Community Supported Ag. (CSA)	_____	Schools, Institutions, Municipalities	_____
Mail order or Internet	_____	Corporations, Other Organizations	_____
Other _____	_____	Brokers or distributors	_____

4. PROMOTION & LABELING - What words do you use in the promotion or labeling of your products?

In the left column, place an X for all that applied to your promotion or labeling in 2008.

Then, for EACH item, circle a number from 1-6 that indicates the level of importance you think each has for your customers.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
____ Your "brand" (name, image, contact information, etc)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Locally grown	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Production methods (chemical-free, natural, free-range, etc.)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Certified organic	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Nutritional value (low fat, high fiber, high in vitamin C, etc.)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Flavor, texture or other taste factors	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Convenience	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Affiliation with a regional or state organization	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
____ Other _____	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		

5. WHEN DO YOU SELL YOUR PRODUCTS? Place an X by each month you sold direct in 2008.

2008 ___ Jan. ___ Feb. ___ Mar. ___ Apr. ___ May ___ June ___ July ___ Aug. ___ Sept. ___ Oct. ___ Nov. ___ Dec.

6. DISTANCE - What is the furthest distance you travel to directly market your products? (place an X in one)

___ I sell only at my business location ___ 0-3 miles ___ 4-7 miles ___ 8-15 miles
 ___ 16-20 miles ___ 21-35 miles ___ 36-50 miles ___ more than 50 miles

7. HOW DO YOU MARKET?

In the left column (2008), use an "X" to indicate all of the marketing tactics you used in 2008.

In the 2009 column, place an "X" to indicate for tactics you plan to use in 2009.

Then, circle a number, from 1-6, indicating how much you are interested in learning more about EACH of the marketing tactics.

2008	2009		Not interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested
___	___	Road signs or billboards	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Community or media relations (free PR)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Paid newspaper advertising	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Paid radio or television advertising	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Direct mail	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Website for the business	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Listings in printed or on web "directories"	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	E-mail	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Social media (Blogs, YouTube, Facebook,...)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Coupons / discounts	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Samples or demonstrations	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Frequent buyer program	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Host or participate in special events	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Sales meetings	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___	___	Other _____	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		

8. AFFILIATION - First, circle a number from 1-6 to indicate your level of involvement with each of the following. Then, for those that you are involved with, circle a number from 1-6 to indicate how much your involvement impacts your marketing.

Not Involved	Very Involved		No Marketing Impact	High Impact
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Any state commodity organization	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Any national agriculture organization	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Ohio Proud (Department of Agriculture)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Our Ohio (Farm Bureau)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Ohio MarketMaker	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association (OEFFA)	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Chamber of Commerce or Convention & Visitor's Bureau	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	Other _____	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

9. MARKETING CHALLENGES - In the left column, place an X to indicate your marketing challenges in 2008.

Then, circle a number, from 1-6, indicating how much you are interested in learning more about EACH marketing challenges.

	Not interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested
___ Selecting products/services to sell	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Pricing	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Getting new customers	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Customer service	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Finding the best location/s to sell	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Transportation/distribution	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Regulations	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Liability	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Competition	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Developing a marketing plan	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		
___ Other _____	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6		

10. ANNUAL SALES - What were your total annual direct marketing sales in 2008? (check one)

___ Less than \$10,000 ___ \$ 10,001 – 25,000 ___ \$ 25,001 – 50,000 ___ \$ 50,001 – 100,000
 ___ \$ 100,001 – 250,000 ___ \$ 250,001 – 500,000 ___ \$ 501,000 – 1 million ___ More than \$1 million

11. EMPLOYEES - Including yourself, how many people worked in this business?

Indicate the number in each category for 2008. (If someone is part-time, but goes to fulltime hours in season, include them in your "part-time all year" count.)

___ full time all year # ___ part time all year # ___ full time seasonal # ___ part time seasonal

12. What is AGE & GENDER of the primary operator of this business? ___ years old ___ Male ___ Female

13. What is one of the most effective marketing STRATEGIES you have seen? (Please describe. Attach pages if needed.)

14. What is one of the most valuable RESOURCES that helped you with your marketing? (Describe. Attach pages if needed.)

15. What is one thing that would most help you IMPROVE your marketing? (Please describe. Attach additional pages as needed.)

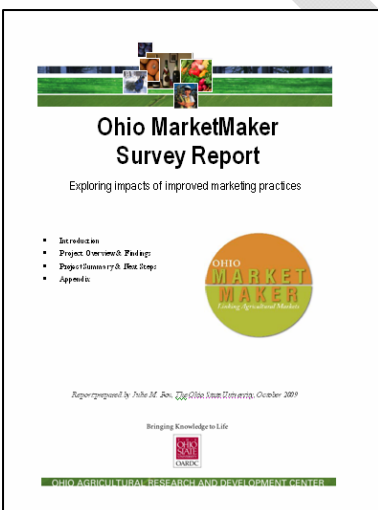
This report is one of three reports associated with the project, “Exploring and improving marketing practices and regional market access for Ohio’s food producing farmers”.



The project included a three phase work plan that began with survey-based research to profile producers and identify their perceived marketing challenges and opportunities.



The second phase included case study research. Individual case studies are presented to explore, explain, describe, and illustrate real-life marketing situations in Ohio’s food chain.



The third phase included web-based survey research to further study the impacts of improved market access.



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OARDC is....

- Nationally ranked in the top 10 in terms of research cited.
- The largest and most comprehensive agricultural research facility in the United States.
- Credited with more than 30% of all royalty income for The Ohio State University.
- Involved in annual collaborations with more than 130 businesses throughout the world.
- Credited with a 15-30% annual increase in grants and industry support for its scientists.
- Some 230 scientists conducting more than 400 research projects annually.
- A generator of more than \$1 billion of annual economic impact and cost savings to Ohio and the United States.

Direct Marketing – Important to Ohio’s Economy



The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences focuses on direct marketing in the current Strategic Plan. Goals include increasing the number of producers and counties receiving direct marketing education.

The Ohio Direct Marketing Team

The Ohio Direct Marketing Team works collaboratively to improve Ohio’s economy through direct marketing research and education. Team members include representatives from colleges and universities, state agencies, industry associations, nonprofit businesses, community groups and other organizations.


Ohio MarketMaker

Improving connections in Ohio’s food system

To gain more from the food economy, the Ohio Direct Marketing Team supports Ohio MarketMaker, which improves connections between food producers, buyers and others in the food chain. This free web-based resource combines easy-to-use information that food businesses need, including demographic, food consumption and business profile data that can be mapped to show concentrated markets and strategic business partners. Ohio MarketMaker is supported through the leadership of OSU Extension in partnership with the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Farm Bureau, the Center for Innovative Food Technology and other organizations.

www.oardc.ohio-state.edu

Ohio
 MARKETING CONNECTIONS
<http://directmarketing.osu.edu>



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