Results of the PSPC
Local Food and Farming Survey

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PETERBOROUGH Social Planning Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Peterborough Social Planning Council and Farms At Work began collaborating two years ago when we came together to look at the changing face of agriculture in the context of food security and the changing social fabric of our rural communities. Jointly we prepared a discussion document: **"The Future of Peterborough Food & Farming: A Call for Reflection & Discussion".** We hoped that the questions raised in that report would increase public interest in the important role that agriculture plays in our economic and social fabric. The report presented here is the next step in our efforts to raise awareness about the importance of the local food sector. Presented here are the findings of an online survey we conducted of Peterborough County and City residents' purchasing habits, perceptions and attitudes towards locally grown and produced foods.

While the survey sample was not actually representative of the general population of Peterborough city and county, it provided good insight into expectations around local food procurement. Women, City of Peterborough residents, those aged 25-64 years, those with a college or university education, and those with a household income above $60,000 all had a higher representation in the survey sample than in the general population. The current survey data is nonetheless an important benchmark against which to measure improvement as more representative samples are sought in future surveys. The over- and under-representation of certain demographic groups notwithstanding, this survey data holds valuable insights into the purchasing habits and perceptions of local food, especially of those demographic groups with the most representation in the survey sample.

<u>Overall responses:</u> Almost all respondents had bought local food in the last six months. Most bought it at farmers' markets. Other popular locations for buying local food were grocery stores and farm gate sales. Vegetables and fruits were purchased the most. The top definitions of local food were, in descending order: grown in my region, grown within 100 km, grown in Ontario, grown in my county, and grown on a family farm.

For most respondents, the distance they have to travel to buy local food was not prohibitive. Nor was the time it takes to find local food when shopping. Respondents were split about whether or not the cost of local food is comparable to what they would otherwise buy. There was a strong feeling that the quality of local food is very high. More than half said it stays fresh for as long as non-local food (though in the written comments several said they find that local food stays fresh longer). More people disagreed than agreed that it is difficult to know if food is local or not, but not by many.

Respondents buy local food whenever possible. Many make buying local food a priority. They find it quite easy to get locally produced foods in summer, but less so in winter. There was strong agreement that the government should promote buying local food, including institutional purchasing (though this had slightly less support). About one-third felt to some degree that they have little control over whether or not they buy local food. At the same time, four-fifths agreed to some degree that they would be willing to pay more for local foods to support the local food economy. Most agreed they would buy more local foods in restaurants if menu items were clearly marked as local. The overwhelming majority care whether their food is local or not. Slightly fewer felt the same about whether or not their food is locally processed. There was almost unanimous agreement that buying local food helps maintain the vibrancy of rural communities in Ontario, reduces the threat of losing family farms to suburban sprawl and industrial scale farming, and that buying local foods is important to support the local economy.

There was near-equal agreement that buying local foods is a positive choice for the environment as well, though in the comments section many respondents wrote that on the question of environmental credentials, farming practices matter as much to them as distance from farm to table alone.

Most respondents indicated that availability in their local store would make them more likely to buy and consume local foods. Other things which would make a substantial number more likely to “eat local” are: wider availability of frozen products in winter, wider availability of locally grown foods in big box stores and large grocery store chains, lower prices, and clearer, more specific labelling.

Just over one-quarter of respondents identified as being producers in the local food economy and almost 15% considered themselves “change agents”.

<u>Factors by demographic characteristics:</u> Income had some effect on where respondents bought local food. Those on the upper end of the income scale bought more local food at grocery stores and farm gate sales than those on the lower end. The opposite was true of farmers' markets and health food stores, these locations being more popular among those on the lower end of the income scale. Instances of buying local cheeses and meats were fewest among the lowest income groups. A strong observed willingness to pay more for local food to support the local food economy was only minimally correlated to income; willingness declined with income, but only slightly. Lower prices would entice people in the second highest income group to buy more local food more than any other group, though not by much.

Age had some effect on propensity to buy local food, with the youngest age group (18-24) being least likely by a small margin. Young people felt more than older people did that the distance they have to travel to buy local food was prohibitive. On the other hand, older respondents were more likely to say that they found the time it takes to find and identify local food prohibitive. Younger respondents were more likely to say that lower prices and the opportunity to visit farms and participate in growing would entice them to buy local foods more often. Conversely, those 45-74 were much more likely to say that wider availability of local foods at big box stores and large grocery chains would entice them to buy local foods more often. Interestingly, respondents in the lowest age groups were most likely to identify as producers and change agents in the local food economy. This is despite the continual rise of the average age of farmers in Peterborough County in recent decades.

Slightly more women than men bought local food in general and at grocery stores and health food stores in particular. Men were somewhat more likely to buy local foods at farm gate sales. Men were also more likely to buy local meat than women, but women were more likely to buy all other products. Men were more likely than women to say that the distance they have to travel to buy local food and the time it takes to find local food are prohibitive. Women agreed more strongly that whenever possible they buy local food, that buying local food is a priority for them and that the government should promote buying local food, including institutional purchasing. That their food is locally grown and processed was somewhat more important to women than to men. Asked what options would make them more likely to purchase and consume local foods, women chose all options but two at a higher rate than men—“knowing the farmer” and “nothing” (both of which men chose at a somewhat higher rate).

Those in the City of Peterborough were more likely to buy local food at farmers' markets and health food stores than those in rural parts of the county. The rural group bought more local food at grocery stores and farm gate sales. City dwellers bought slightly more local vegetables, fruits and cheeses than their rural counterparts. The rural segment bought more local meat, maple syrup and honey. Not surprisingly, the rural group included more producers, processors and distributors than the urban group. However, there were slightly more change agents in the city.

Those with a high school education or less bought local meat considerably less than those with at least some education at the post-secondary level. More of those with a high school education or less said wider availability or frozen products in winter and more information about the importance of buying local foods would encourage them to buy more local foods.

Perhaps the most important finding is that there is strong support for buying local food among all of the demographic groups identified. Also important is the amount of disagreement over the cost-comparability of local foods to non-local foods. Given that the most popular place to buy local foods was farmers' markets, this findings suggests there may be a need for local food vendors to label prices in units comparable to those in grocery stores to allow for quick and easy comparison. Additionally it is worth noting that questions regarding the importance of local processing of foods resonated less with respondents than questions regarding the importance of growing food locally. This may indicate a lack of understanding of the importance of local processing in maintaining a vibrant local food system.

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BACKGROUND

The Peterborough Social Planning Council and Farms At Work began collaborating two years ago when we came together to look at the changing face of agriculture in the context of food security and the changing social fabric of our rural communities. Jointly we prepared a discussion document: "**The Future of Peterborough Food & Farming: A Call for Reflection & Discussion".** The document was presented to County Council in 2011 and Council has expressed interest in a report back.

The purpose of this discussion paper was to raise awareness about our changing farm community within the context of local food production. It served to pose questions about change in the Peterborough area, as well as provide a picture of the evolution that has occurred in the past decades. Further, we hoped that by asking questions, we would increase public interest in the important role that agriculture plays in our economic and social fabric. Finally, this paper was intended as an awareness raising document that supported the intent of Sustain Ontario's "**Bring Food Home**" conference held in Peterborough in October 2011.

The report presented here is the next step in our efforts to raise awareness about the importance of the local food sector. It presents the findings of an online survey we conducted of Peterborough County and City residents' purchasing habits, perceptions and attitudes towards locally grown and produced foods.

Why is Food & Farming important to our community?

We see it as an economic and social driver with significant impact on our community social fabric as well as being key to local food security.

Local production preserves our local farmland, helps the environment by reducing food miles and expands the local food market for producers. Buying local means you have access to the freshest food available while supporting your neighbours and building community.

How is the agricultural sector changing in our community?

- Since 1971, the County of Peterborough has lost 36% of its farms. This represents the loss of 599 farm businesses.[1] There were 1053 farms in the County in 2011, according to the Census.[2]
- Almost 91,000 farmland acres (28%) went out of production in the County from 1971 to 2011. In the last 5 years alone, more than 20,000 acres have been lost.[3]
- The average age of farm operators in the County in 2001 was 52.7 years. By 2006 it had risen to 54.7, and by 2011 it was 56.5 years. This suggests that approximately half the farmers in the County may retire in the next 10-15 years. Meanwhile the number of younger farmers is declining.[4]

1 The Peterborough Social Planning Council and Farms at Work. 2011. "The Future of Peterborough Food & Farming: A Call for Reflection & Discussion." Page 9. Online: http://pspc.on.ca/pdf/final_report_oct_6_the_future_of_food.pdf.

2 Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Agriculture, Farm and Farm Operator Data, catalogue no. 95-640-XWE.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was designed by PSPC staff with the help of staff at Farms at Work. The questions were adapted from a survey conducted by the Women's Institute of Nova Scotia by Steven Dukeshire in 2007. The survey took about 10 minutes to complete and asked people to respond to questions about their purchasing habits, perceptions and attitudes towards local foods; how they define local foods (in terms of distance travelled and region of production); how they see their role in the local food economy (consumer, producer, distributor, etc.); their access to and the availability of local foods from different food retailers; and demographic characteristics. In addition, a question at the end of the survey invited participants to provide their thoughts about the survey.

The survey was hosted online by the web-based survey tool SurveyMonkey.com. A link to the online survey was forwarded with a short explanatory message to the email contacts of PSPC staff. The email also asked recipients to forward the survey to others. A consultant to PSPC posted the survey link on his personal Facebook and Twitter accounts. The survey was open for completion online from December 5 until December 21. Survey responses were compiled and put into graphs and charts by Survey Monkey.

RESULTS

Notes on Reporting of Results

Of the 538 responses to the survey, there were 139 written responses to question 3, 34 written responses to question 4, 40 written responses to question 15, 18 written responses to question 20 and 50 additional written comments at the end of the survey. These open-ended responses were categorized by common themes and have been weaved in with the reported results.

All questions were analyzed by overall results and results broken down by five demographic characteristics—income, age, gender, municipality or First Nation of residence, and level of education. Of the results broken down by these demographic characteristics, only those which showed significant differences in responses between demographic groups are included.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Just under three-quarters of the respondents were female (71.5%). The 18-24 year age group and 65-74 year age group were the smallest, making up 4.1% and 3.3% of the survey sample, respectively. The 25-34 year (22.5%), 45-54 year (21.4%) and 55-64 year (22.9%) age groups each represented just over one-fifth of survey respondents. The 35-44 year age group represented just under one-fifth of survey respondents (17.1%). 85.4% of respondents had completed college (23.5%) or university (61.9%). Just over half (53.6%) had incomes of $60,000 or more. 71.4% of respondents lived in the largest municipality in the Peterborough Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), the City of Peterborough. Based on data from the 2006[5] and 2011[6] Canadian censuses, the survey sample is not very reflective of the population of

[5] Statistics Canada. 2007. *Peterborough, Ontario (Code529)* (table). *2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.

Peterborough CMA. For instance, according to the 2011 Canadian Census, 51.8% of the population of Peterborough CMA is female. In terms of age, the youngest and two oldest age groups were under-represented in the sample while each of the other age groups is over-represented. Those aged 18-24 years accounted for 4.1% of survey respondents, yet this age group represents 10.2% of the population of Peterborough CMA. Similarly, those aged 65 years or older made up 12% of survey respondents but 19.5% of the CMA population. 83.9% of survey respondents fell between 25 and 64 years old, whereas this same age bracket only accounts for 52% of the population of the CMA. On the education front, according to data from the 2006 Canadian Census, 52% of the population of Peterborough CMA had no certificate, degree or diploma beyond the high school level. However, 85.4% the survey sample had completed college (23.5%) or university (61.9%). Respondents from the City of Peterborough were also over-represented. Census data shows that 58.3% of those residing in the Peterborough CMA live in the city whereas City of Peterborough residents represented 71.4% of survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents also had above average household incomes. 2006 census data show Peterborough CMA's average household income is $51,660 whereas 53.6% of survey respondents had incomes of $60,000 or more.

The Peterborough Social Planning Council plans to repeat this survey exercise in the future. In doing so, it will be necessary to circulate the survey in such a way as to ensure a more representative sample of the population of Peterborough County. The current survey data is nonetheless an important starting point against which to measure improvement to our data collection methodology. The over-representation of certain demographics notwithstanding, this survey data holds valuable insights with the potential to help push local food policy development forward in Peterborough city and county.

A number of survey respondents took the time to thank the PSPC for the opportunity to fill out the survey in the comments area at the end of the survey. As one respondent put it, “Thank you for taking the time to increase awareness of the importance of buying locally - I appreciate the opportunity to take this survey”.

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http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed March 21, 2013).

[6] Statistics Canada. 2012. Peterborough, Ontario (Code 529) and Peterborough, Ontario (Code 3515014) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed March 21, 2013).

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics		Percent
Gender	Female	71.5%
	Male	26.3%
	Prefer not to answer	2.3%
Age (years)	18-24	4.1%
	25-34	22.5%
	35-44	17.1%
	45-54	21.4%
	55-64	22.9%
	65-74	8.7%
	75 or older	3.3%
Education Level	Elementary/some high school	0.6%
	Completed high school	6.2%
	Some college	6.8%
	Completed college	23.5%
	Some university	9.7%
	Completed university	61.9%
Annual Household Income	under $20,000	8.1%
	$20,000-$39,999	15%
	$40,000-$59,999	23.3%
	$60,000 and over	53.6%
Municipality or First Nation Reservation of Residence	Asphodel-Norwood	0.8%
	Cavan Monaghan	4.6%
	City of Peterborough	71.4%
	Curve Lake First Nation	0.2%
	Douro-Dummer	5.2%
	Galway-Cavendish & Harvey	1.4%
	Havelock-Belmont-Methuen	0.4%
	Hiawatha First Nation	0.4%
	North Kawartha	2.0%
	Otonabee-South Monaghan	5.4%
	Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield	8.5%

Purchasing Habits: Do You Buy Local Foods, What Types and Where?

Overall Results

Nearly all survey respondents (94%) had bought local food in the last six months. Farmers' markets were the most popular spot to buy it, with 85.2% of respondents saying they bought local food at one. The next most popular place to buy local food was grocery stores, with 58.5% of respondents checking this option. Farm gate sales were considerably less popular (32.6% bought local food this way), as were health food stores (25.5%). In the written comments, some respondents expressed a wish to have more year-round farmers' markets and more markets open on days of the week other than Saturday. One commenter had this take on it: *"Reliable distribution is critical [but] consumers have been spoiled with having a wide selection of produce available 7 days a week."* Another said: "*we are small producers and finding it difficult to develop a market for our produce - working on it."* One way local produce is sold, which was not included in the survey response options, is through Community Shared Agriculture (CSA). A commenter described being a CSA member this way: *"I've participated in a CSA for two years and this year had the opportunity to go to the farm and help with the harvest, what an eye opening experience!"*

Table 2: Where Respondents Bought Local Foods

Answer Options	Percent "Yes"
Farmers' market	85.2
Local grocery store	58.5
Farm gate sale	32.6
Other local supplier	27.9
Health food store	25.5

Nearly all survey respondents bought local vegetables (95.8%). Fruit was the second most popular category; it was purchased by 85.1% of respondents. Maple syrup or honey was the third most popular category (63.1%), followed closely by meat (61.5%). Just over half of respondents bought local cheese (53.8%). Less than one-third (27.8%) bought other types of local food. The comments section revealed that among the other products purchased the most popular were: bread and baked goods, eggs and grains (including flours). There were far fewer respondents who bought local cheeses, meats, maple syrup, and honey than who bought local fruits and vegetables. This deserves further consideration. What contributes to this difference? Is it that there are fewer of these types of products produced and marketed locally? Or is it that there is less demand for local foods of these types (because of different diet choices such as vegetarianism among local food enthusiasts or other factors)?

Table 3: Types of Local Foods Purchased

Answer option	Percent "Yes"
Vegetables	95.8
Fruit	85.1
Maple syrup or honey	63.1
Meat	61.5
Cheese	53.8
Other (please specify)	27.8

Responses Broken Down by Select Demographic Characteristics

Income had some effect on where respondents bought local food. Those on the upper end of the income scale bought more local food at grocery stores and farm gate sales than those on the lower end. The opposite was true of farmers' markets and health food stores, these locations being more popular among those on the lower end of the income scale. Instances of buying local cheeses and meats were fewest among the lowest income groups.

Age had some effect on propensity to buy local food, with the youngest age group (18-24) being least likely by a small margin.

Slightly more women than men bought local food in general and at grocery stores and health food stores in particular. Men were somewhat more likely to buy local foods at farm gate sales. Men were also more likely to buy local meat than women, but women were more likely to buy all other products.

Those in the City of Peterborough were more likely to buy local food at farmers' markets and health food stores than those in rural parts of the county. The rural group bought more local food at grocery stores and farm gate sales. City dwellers bought slightly more local vegetables, fruits and cheeses than their rural counterparts. The rural segment bought more local meat, maple syrup and honey.

Those with a high school education or less bought local meat considerably less than those with at least some education at the post-secondary level.

Table 4: Where Local Foods Were Purchased, by Level of Income

Location	Percent "Yes"			
	Under $20,000	$20,000-$39,999	$40,000-$59,999	$60,000 and over
Farmers' market	92.1%	88.7%	85.3%	83.2%
Local grocery store	34.2%	53.5%	56.9%	63.2%
Farm gate sale	23.7%	28.2%	31.2%	37.6%
Other local supplier	28.9%	28.2%	27.5%	28.4%
Health food store	36.8%	31%	27.5%	22.4%

Table 5: Types of Local Foods Purchased, by Level of Income

Local food products	Percent "Yes"			
	Under $20,000	$20,000-$39,999	$40,000-$59,999	$60,000 and over
Vegetables	94.7%	97.2%	96.3%	95.6%
Fruit	84.2%	84.5%	85.3%	85.9%
Maple syrup or honey	73.7%	59.2%	69.7%	60.6%
Meat	52.6%	63.4%	62.4%	61%
Cheese	44.7%	46.5%	52.3%	57.8%
Other	32.4%	38%	25.7%	24.9%

Table 6: Instances of Purchasing Local Foods in Last 6 Months, by Age

Age	Percent "Yes"
18-24	85.7%
25-34	96.6%
35-44	90.9%
45-54	91.8%
55-64	97.4%
65-74	97.8%
75 +	94.1%

Table 7: Instances of Purchasing Local Foods in the Last 6 Months, by Gender

Gender	Percent "Yes"
Female	96.1%
Male	91%

Table 8: Where Local Foods Were Purchased, by Gender

Location	Percent "Yes"	
	Female	Male
Farmers' market	85%	85.4%
Local grocery store	60.6%	51.2%
Farm gate sale	31.4%	38.2%
Other local supplier	28.6%	28.5%
Health food store	28.3%	19.5%

Table 9: Types of Local Foods Purchased, by Gender

Local food products	Percent "Yes"	
	Female	Male
Vegetables	96.3%	93.5%
Fruit	86.6%	79.7%
Maple syrup or honey	64.8%	58.5%
Meat	59.7%	66.7%
Cheese	55.7%	48.8%
Other	31%	20.3%

Table 10: Where Local Foods Were Purchased by Rural- and Urban-Based Respondents

Answer options	Percent "Yes"	
	Rural municipalities	City of Peterborough
Farmers' market	77%	88.5%
Grocery store	66.7%	54.6%
Farm gate sale	44.4%	28%
Other	27.4%	28.6%
Health food store	22.2%	27.4%

Table 11: Types of Local Foods Purchased by Rural- and Urban-Based Respondents

Answer options	Percent "Yes"	
	Rural municipalities	City of Peterborough
Vegetables	91.9%	97%
Fruit	77.8%	87.9%
Maple syrup or honey	65.9%	61.8%
Meat	61.5%	60.4%
Cheese	49.6%	54.7%
Other	25.2%	29.9%

Table 12: Types of Local Foods Purchased, by Level of Education

Local food products	Percent "Yes"	
	High school education or less	Post-secondary education
Vegetables	90.9%	95.9%
Fruit	81.8%	85.3%
Maple syrup or honey	60.6%	63.2%
Cheese	48.5%	54.1%
Meat	42.4%	62%
Other	21.1%	28.8%

Definitions of "Local Food"

Respondents favoured the definition of local food as that grown in "my region" most. Grown within 100 km was second, with 58.9% of respondents choosing this definition. Grown in Ontario was third (54.6%), then grown in "my county" (49.5%) and grown on a family farm (48%). Options that emphasized where food was processed garnered much less support—24.2% for processed in "my county or region", 12.4% for processed in Ontario, and 2.6% for processed in Canada. Few (13.1%) agreed that they consider any food grown in Canada to be local.

The top term, "region" is somewhat ambiguous. How do you define it? "My region" could mean Peterborough County, Southern Ontario, even all of Ontario. The choice of this ambiguous definition makes sense considering that in the text responses it was made clear that local food is a relative term where the shorter the distance from farm to table, the more local it is. The more local the better, but lack of availability causes consumers to buy food grown further afield while still considering it local, up to a certain point. As one person put it: *"I try to buy within 100 km, then my region, then in ON etc. and make my circle bigger to get what I need as close as possible."* Comments reveal that many respondents carefully consider farming practices, especially whether or not they are considered environmentally sustainable, alongside whether or not products are locally produced.

It is notable that respondents were more inclined to define local food as that which is *grown* locally than that which is *processed* locally. This data cannot reveal whether there is less desire for locally grown *and* processed products, but this would be an important question to ask in future research. Processing industries (such as dairies & cheese-makers, slaughterhouses, butchers, canneries, brewers and winemakers, community kitchens, food venture centres) are integral to a vibrant local food economy but do they register with most local food consumers as important?

Table 13: How "Local Food" is Defined

Answer Options	Percent in agreement
Grown in my region	67.9
Grown within 100 km	58.9
Grown in Ontario	54.6
Grown in my county	49.5
Grown on a family farm	48
Processed in my county or region	24.2
Grown in Canada	13.1
Processed in Ontario	12.4
Other (please specify)	6.4
Processed in Canada	2.6
I'm not totally sure what "local food" is	1.1

Propensity to Buy, Attitudes Toward & Perceptions of Locally Produced Foods

<u>Overall Results:</u>

Perceived Ability

Seven questions were designed to better understand how people perceive their ability to buy locally produced foods. These questions related to cost, distance and the time it takes to find locally produced foods, as well as seasonal availability.

Most did not find the distance they have to travel to buy locally grown foods to be prohibitive. 70.4% of survey respondents somewhat disagreed (13.5%), disagreed (23.7%) or strongly disagreed (33.2%)

that distance is a barrier for them. The highest percentage strongly disagreed (33.2%). The additional time it might take to find local foods did not register as a significant barrier to the majority of respondents either. The highest percentage (21.4%) of respondents strongly disagreed that the amount of additional time it takes to find local food is prohibitive. Overall, more than half (57.9%) disagreed with this statement to a greater or lesser extent. Those who agreed with the statement to a greater or lesser extent accounted for just over one-quarter of respondents (27.5%). From the comments it is evident that for some people, significant travel and time barriers do exist in accessing locally produced foods. One person wrote: *"I would definitely make local food a bigger priority to me if it was easier for me to access. I don't have a car and only rely on public transit. I really like when the downtown mid-week farmer's market is on because I can buy things on my way to work. It's very convenient."* Another wrote: *"As a full time working mother- ultimately I would love one store with local foods that runs regular hours- I find now that I am running around to a variety of locations to get food and I really do not have the time to do this."*

There was a clear divide in opinion about whether or not locally grown foods are comparable in price to imported foods. The number of respondents on either side of this question was almost equal, though slightly more disagreed to a greater or lesser extent (41%) that the cost of local food is comparable to what they would otherwise buy. 39.4% agreed to a greater or lesser extent with this statement. The highest percentage of survey respondents somewhat disagreed (23.5%) with the statement while the average rating was closer to the "agree" side: 3.84. The split opinion on this question may indicate that the way prices are marked by local food vendors makes them difficult to compare with prices in grocery stores. This could lead to confusion or misconceptions about the cost comparability between local and imported foods. These are some of the comments people shared:

"I... find that some local produces 'up' their prices just because it's 'local'. For me, 'local' food (at least conventionally grown) should be cheaper as there is less transportation costs, distribution costs, etc associated with it. I feel they sometimes take advantage of consumers wanting 'local' food."

"Not sure what the solution is but a lot of people purchase what they can afford and it would be nice if local food was as affordable but I understand why it is more money."

"Consumers are willing to support a higher cost providing it ensures higher quality."

There were several comments like those above which suggested that prices for locally grown food are higher than imported foods, but no comments suggesting the cost of locally grown foods is the same or less. There were different justifications and criticisms of this perceived higher cost. It may be useful to have a clearer sense, with quantifiable data, of how costs do compare. It may also be helpful for consumers to understand how local food producers set their prices.

There is some sense that it is difficult to know if food is locally grown or not. 22.3% somewhat agreed that they find it difficult. Nonetheless, a slightly greater percentage disagreed (45.5%) with the statement to a greater or lesser extent than agreed to a greater or lesser extent (38.4%). Comments affirmed that it can be difficult to know sometimes if food is locally grown or not. One comment expressed a desire for greater clarity at *"farmers market[s] who is actually a local grower vs. distributer"*.

Most people were pleased with the availability of locally grown foods in summer. A substantial majority strongly agreed (63.2%) that they find it easy to get locally produced foods in the summer. Far fewer respondents said the same for the winter season. More than half (52.2%) disagreed to a greater or lesser extent that it is easy to get locally produced foods in the winter (the highest percentage (23.1%) somewhat disagreed and 9.7% strongly disagreed). Respondents weighed in on the question of the availability of foods. Some would like to see a greater variety of foods grown and sold locally. To this effect, one person wrote: *"I purchase some imported products which I know are/can be produced locally, but they just aren't."* As for seasonal availability, one of the more improbable suggestions was that what is needed is a *"climate more conducive to growing year round. :)"* Another pointed out more reasonably that: *"everyone knows that Canadian winters make "Local" only those root veggies, etc that are grown in the summer and stored; often fresh, imported from CA may be superior in quality to veggies that have been stored for long periods."* One idea shared in the comments was to grow food year-round in rooftop greenhouses. It may be possible to increase both the supply and demand for local foods year-round through careful planning and long-term capacity building. Improvements in storage facilities will be key, as will be bolstering the food processing industry locally (including small-scale and home processing). There may also be opportunities to grow a local food culture which celebrates and promotes eating what is seasonally available through local celebrations, cookbooks, restaurant offerings, and the like. It would be particularly useful to target initiatives of this nature toward highlighting opportunities for eating locally grown or produced foods in winter.

More than half of respondents felt they had some measure of choice when it comes to whether or not they buy locally grown foods. 54.4% of respondents disagreed to a greater or lesser extent with the statement "I have little choice whether or not the foods I buy are locally grown". The highest percentage (20.4%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Almost one-third (32.3%), however, agreed to a greater or lesser extent that they have little choice whether or not the foods they buy are locally grown. This is significant. That some feel this way may be explained by the perceived higher cost of locally grown foods among many respondents, the lack of local fresh fruit and vegetables in winter, difficulties accessing local products given the limited hours of farmers' markets, distance required to travel to get to farmers' markets for many, and the time it takes to venture to different markets and shops to access locally grown foods.

Beliefs

Six questions were designed to assess respondents' attitudes toward local foods. These questions related to quality and freshness and the value of the local food sector to communities, the economy and the environment.

Locally grown food is perceived as being of high quality. There was almost unanimous agreement that the quality of local food is usually very high. Nearly half (48.4%) of survey respondents strongly agreed and over four-fifths (86.8%) agreed to a greater or lesser extent with this statement. Most respondents felt the same about the freshness of local food. Almost one-quarter (24.1%) strongly agreed that local food stays fresh for the same length of time as do non local foods. More than half (56.6%) agreed with this statement to a greater or lesser extent. Slightly more than one-quarter (26.4%) somewhat disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed. In the comments section, many respondents indicated that they find that locally grown food stays fresh longer than that which is imported.

In terms of the value of the locally grown and produced foods to communities, the economy and the environment, there is a very strong feeling that this sector makes positive contributions to each of these areas. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) strongly agreed that buying local food is a way to maintain the vibrancy of rural communities in Ontario. 69.8% strongly agreed that buying locally grown food reduces the threat of losing family farms to suburban sprawl and large industrial farms. More than three-quarters (77.7%) strongly agreed that buying locally grown food is important to support the local economy. Somewhat fewer (70.1%), however, strongly agreed that buying locally grown food is also a positive choice for the environment. Written comments indicate that many respondents only consider locally produced food better for the environment if the farming practices used to grow them are sustainable. As one person put it: *"Local food that has been grown using pesticides and harvested using petroleum products is problematic".*

Propensity

Two questions were designed to gauge respondents' propensity to buy locally grown and processed foods. The survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with these two statements: "whenever possible, I intentionally buy locally produced food" and "I make it a priority to buy locally produced food". Nearly half of all survey respondents (48.3%) strongly agreed with the former statement and less than one-tenth (8.9%) disagreed with it to a greater or lesser extent (mean: 2.14). A smaller percentage (34%) strongly agreed with the statement "I make it a priority to buy locally produced food" (mean: 2.53). The survey sample clearly has a high propensity to buy locally produced foods; many make doing so a priority and even more do so whenever it is possible or convenient.

Promotion

Three questions were designed specifically to measure the level of support for the promotion of local foods. The survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with these statements: "the government should promote buying locally grown food," "the government should promote the institutional purchasing of locally grown foods (e.g. for hospitals, schools, prisons)," and "I would order more locally produced foods in restaurants if menu items were clearly marked as locally grown".

There was more than majority support for all of these theoretical promotional initiatives. 70.4% of survey respondents strongly agreed that the government should promote buying locally grown food. Slightly less, 64.1% strongly agreed that the government should promote the institutional purchasing of locally grown food. Just over half of all survey respondents (54.8%) strongly agreed that they would order more locally produced foods in restaurants if they were clearly marked on menus. Almost nine-tenths (89.7%) agreed with this statement to a greater or lesser extent. Two other promotional initiatives were mentioned in the comments section: "buy local" billboards and a website that brings together information about producers and retailers of locally grown foods.

Attitudes

Three survey questions were designed specifically to assess respondents' attitudes toward locally produced foods. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements: "I am willing to pay more for local food to support local farmers and producers," "it does not matter to me whether or not my food is locally grown," and "it does not matter to me whether or not my food is locally processed."

There was a considerable level of willingness to pay more for local food to support local farmers and producers. The average rating was 2.53 and almost one-third agreed (31.4%) with this statement. Only 11.3% somewhat disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Despite this, respondents made it clear that cost is nevertheless a major consideration for them in buying food. After all, lower prices was fourth on the list of things respondents said would make them more likely to purchase and consume local foods (see Table 18). In the comments section, a few respondents concurred with the idea expressed by this respondent: *"It appears to me that some is overpriced simply for being 'local'"*. It seems consumers are willing to pay more for locally produced foods if and when they can, if the quality is high and if there is a justifiable reason, of which they are made aware, for the price being higher.

The overwhelming majority somewhat disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "it does not matter to me if my food is locally grown." Indeed more than half (53%) were in strong disagreement. Regarding the local processing of foods, the level of disagreement was not as significant. Less than half (38.7%) strongly disagreed while 13.3% somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that it does not matter to them if their food is locally processed. Processing is a key component of a vibrant local food economy, but the data suggests this aspect of "local food" did not register as much with respondents as did growing foods locally. It did not come up in the comments either.

Table 14: Perceptions and Attitudes toward Locally Produced Foods

Statement	Mean	Percent						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The distance I have to travel to buy local food is prohibitive	5.34	2.7%	5.5%	8.4%	13.2%	13.5%	23.7%	33.2%
The amount of time it takes to find local food (e.g. reading labels and going to different stores and markets) is prohibitive.	4.73	3.8%	11.5%	12.2%	14.7%	17.9%	18.6%	21.4%
The cost of local food is comparable to what I would otherwise buy at the grocery store.	3.84	10.2%	20%	9.2%	19.5%	23.5%	12.1%	5.4%
I find it difficult to know if food is local or not.	4.29	6.3%	9.8%	22.3%	16%	15%	16.5%	14%
I find it easy to get locally produced foods in the summer	1.72	63.2%	22.1%	5.8%	3.3%	1.5%	1.9%	2.1%
I find it easy to get locally produced foods in the winter	4.45	4.1%	8.1%	17.1%	18.6%	23.1%	19.4%	9.7%

I have little choice whether or not the foods I buy are locally grown	4.64	3.1%	10.2%	19%	13.3%	16%	18%	20.4%
The quality of local food is usually very high.	3.84	48.4%	29.8%	8.6%	5.7%	3.3%	3.1%	1.3%
Local food stays fresh for the same length of time as does non local food.	3.24	24.1%	20.3%	12.2%	17%	10.6%	8.7%	7.1%
Buying local food is a way to maintain the vibrancy of rural communities in Ontario	1.43	75%	17.1%	4.1%	0.6%	1%	1.4%	1%
Buying local food reduces the threat of losing family farms to suburban sprawl and large industrial farms	1.54	69.8%	18%	7%	2.1%	1.2%	0.8%	1.2%
Buying local is important to support the local economy	1.38	77.7%	15.7%	3.5%	0.6%	0.2%	1%	1.4%
Buying local is a positive choice for the environment	1.55	70.1%	17.1%	7.6%	2.1%	0.4%	1.6%	1.2%
Whenever possible, I intentionally buy locally produced food	2.14	48.3%	23.1%	11.8%	7.8%	3.7%	2.7%	2.5%
I make it a priority to buy locally produced food	2.53	34%	24.5%	17.7%	10.7%	7.6%	3.3%	2.3%
The government should promote buying locally grown food	1.71	70.4%	12.5%	7.4%	3.1%	2.1%	1.4%	3.1%
The government should promote the institutional purchasing of locally grown food (e.g. for hospitals, schools, prisons)	1.77	64.1%	17.6%	8.4%	3.7%	1.8%	2.3%	2.1%
I would order more locally produced foods in restaurants if menu items were clearly marked as locally grown	1.86	54.8%	24.4%	10.5%	5.3%	2.1%	1.2%	1.8%
I am willing to pay more for local food to support local farmers and food producers	2.53	29.1%	31.4%	19.8%	8.5%	4.3%	2.9%	4.1%

It does not matter to me if my food is locally grown	6.04	1.4%	1.8%	3.9%	5.3%	13.1%	21.6%	53%
It does not matter to me if my food is locally processed	5.55	2%	3.1%	8.2%	9.8%	16.8%	21.5%	38.7%

Responses were on a seven point scale with 1 = Strongly agree to 7 = Strongly disagree

Responses Broken Down by Select Demographic Characteristics:

All of the 21 questions relating to propensity, attitudes and perceptions of locally produced foods were broken down and analyzed by six demographic characteristics—income, age, gender, area of residence and educational attainment. There were few notable instances of divergence in the way people answered questions based on these demographic characteristics. Notable instances are included below.

Interestingly, a strong observed willingness to pay more for local foods to support the local food economy was only minimally correlated to income; willingness declined with income, but only slightly. Of course, one may be *willing* but not *able* to pay more for local foods. A challenge for policymakers and change agents in the local food economy is to ensure this willingness to place a high value on local foods does not go to waste by making locally produced foods fairly accessible regardless of income.

Young people felt more than older people did that the distance they have to travel to buy local food was prohibitive. This may be related to transportation options. Many young people, especially students, tend to use public transportation, walk and cycle rather than drive private vehicles. Older adults are more likely to have private automobiles and therefore have a broader range within which to travel and access locally grown foods. This demonstrates the importance of taking a holistic approach to local food policy development. It is not possible to plan a robust local food system without also thinking about how the local food system is dependent on the local transportation system. Older respondents did not find distance prohibitive, but they did indicate that the time it takes to find and identify local food was.

Men were more likely than women to say that the distance they have to travel to buy local food and the time it takes to find local food are prohibitive. Women agreed more strongly that whenever possible they buy local food, that buying local food is a priority for them and that the government should promote buying local food, including institutional purchasing. That their food is locally grown and processed was somewhat more important to women than to men.

Table 15: Willingness to Pay More for Local Foods, by Income

Statement	**Income**			
	Under $20,000	$20,000-$39,999	$40,000-$59,999	$60,000 and over
I am willing to pay more for local food to support local farmers and food producers	2.63	2.61	2.60	2.44

Responses were on a seven point scale with 1 = Strongly agree to 7 = Strongly disagree

Table 16: Perceived Ability to Purchase Local Foods, by Age

Statement	Age (years)						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75
The distance I have to travel to buy local food is prohibitive	4.19	4.91	5.29	5.36	5.67	5.93	5.76
The amount of time it takes to find local food (i.e. having to read labels and travel to different stores and markets) is prohibitive	3.57	4.49	4.44	4.93	4.98	5.16	5.18

Responses were on a seven point scale with 1 = Strongly agree to 7 = Strongly disagree

Table 17: Ability, Propensity, Promotion and Attitudes toward Local Foods, by Gender

Statement	Mean	
	Female	Male
The distance I have to travel to buy local food is prohibitive	5.42	5.13
The amount of time it takes to find local food (e.g. reading labels and going to different stores and markets) is prohibitive.	4.81	4.53
Whenever possible, I intentionally buy locally produced food	2.06	2.32
I make it a priority to buy locally produced food	2.44	2.75
The government should promote buying locally grown food	1.61	1.96
The government should promote the institutional purchasing of locally grown food (e.g. for hospitals, schools, prisons)	1.65	2.05
It does not matter to me if my food is locally grown	6.18	5.7
It does not matter to me if my food is locally processed	5.71	5.16

Responses were on a seven point scale with 1 = Strongly agree to 7 = Strongly disagree

What Would Make You More Likely to Purchase and Consume Local Foods?

Overall Results:

The top five things that would make respondents more likely to purchase and consume local foods are:

1) availability in local stores, 2) wider availability of frozen products in winter, 3) wider availability in big box stores or large grocery chains, 4) lower prices, 5) clearer, more specific labelling. 89.9% of respondents said “availability in my local store” would make them more likely to purchase and consume local foods. 77.3% said wider availability of frozen products in winter would make them more likely. 69.4% wanted wider availability of locally grown foods in big box stores or large grocery stores. 64.5% would be more likely to buy locally grown foods if the prices were lower. If there was clearer and more specific labelling of locally grown foods, 64.3% would purchase and consume more of them. Despite the high support for the idea of having a wider availability of locally grown foods in big box stores or large grocery chains, this issue was very contentious. In the comments section, many respondents raised serious concerns about the potential expansion of local food availability in these outlets, citing concerns about the effect this might have on quality and that it might drive down prices for local producers. With is how one person put it:

“I think that if you start to push local food into big box stores, it takes away from the quality of the produce, etc, as there would be pressure to make more, faster, cheaper, but not better. I like that the local farmers and those at the markets are proud of what they grow, and that you have to get their early to get what you want, it shows care and quality. I think that is a part of the local food allure. But I guess it is ultimately up to the farmer.”

At the same time, many others showed a strong desire to be able to access locally produced foods more easily, whether by having farmers' markets run on more days and for longer hours or by seeing increased availability of locally produced foods in big box stores or large grocery store chains. To this effect, another comment reads: *“I try to make it to the market on Saturday mornings to buy local food, but often I'm working or busy. It would be good to be able to buy these farmer's products at stores like Freshco etc. for when I do my shopping during the week.”*

Table 18: What Would Make You More Likely to Purchase and Consume Local Foods?

Answer Options	**Percent “Yes”**
Availability in my local store	89.9%
Wider availability of frozen products in winter	77.3%
Wider availability in big box stores (e.g. Walmart & Costco) or large grocery chains (e.g. Loblaws, Sobeys, etc.)	69.4%
Lower prices	64.5%
Clearer, more specific labelling	64.3%
More convenient access to location that sell local foods	58.1%
Having a central location to purchase local foods	55.2%

Wider availability of processed products (e.g. jams, sauces)	40.3%
Knowing the farmer	38.8%
The opportunity to visit local farms	25%
More information about the importance of buying local food	22.9%
The chance to participate in growing	16.9%
Other (please specify)	7.8%
Nothing	0.8%

What Would Make You More Likely to Purchase and Consume Local Foods? By Select Demographic Characteristics

Lower prices would entice people in the second highest income group to buy more local food more than any other group, though not by much. This is counter-intuitive, as it would be expected that those in the lowest income groups would be more interested in seeing lower prices. Of course, level of income alone cannot account for all financial barriers. More than other age groups, younger respondents were more likely to say that lower prices and the opportunity to visit farms and participate in growing would entice them to buy local foods more often. Conversely, those aged 45-74 years were much more likely to say that wider availability of local foods at big box stores and large grocery chains would entice them to buy local foods more often. Asked what options would make them more likely to purchase and consume local foods, women chose all options but two at a higher rate than men—"knowing the farmer" and "nothing" (which men chose at a somewhat higher rate). More of those with a high school education or less said wider availability or frozen products in winter and more information about the importance of buying local foods would encourage them to buy more local foods. The local food policy development process will need to take into account all of the many different needs and circumstances of different demographic groups. This data gives some sense of what those differences are.

Table 19: What Would Make You More Likely to Purchase and Consume Local Foods? by Level of Income

Answer options	Percent "Yes"			
	Under $20,000	$20,000-$39,999	$40,000-$59,999	$60,000 and over
Availability in my local store	87.5%	93.2%	93%	89.4%
Wider availability of frozen products in winter	85%	79.7%	80%	75.5%
Wider availability in big box stores or large grocery chains	57.5%	64.9%	67.8%	72.8%
Lower prices	67.5%	70.3%	73.0%	59.2%
Clearer, more specific labelling	65%	64.9%	69.6%	61.9%

Table 20: What Would Make You More Likely To Purchase and Consume Local Foods? by Age

Answer options	Percent "Yes"						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & up
Wider availability in big box stores or large grocery chains	47.6%	69%	72.7%	74.5%	66.9%	73.3%	52.9%
Lower prices	81%	70.7%	65.95%	64.5%	56.8%	64.4%	52.9%
The opportunity to visit local farms	42.9%	40.5%	15.9%	20.9%	24.6%	11.1%	11.8%
The chance to participate in growing	23.8%	31.9%	10.2%	11.8%	11.9%	8.9%	5.9%

Table 21: What Would Make You More Likely to Purchase and Consume Local Foods? by Gender

Answer options	Percent "Yes"	
	Female	Male
Availability in my local store	90.5%	89.6%
Wider availability of frozen products in winter	80.1%	80.1%
Wider availability in big box stores or large grocery chains	72.2%	63.7%
Clearer, more specific labelling	66.8%	59.3%
Lower prices	64.6%	63.7%
More convenient access to locations that sell local foods	59.1%	55.6%
Having a central location to buy local foods	56.7%	52.6%
Wider availability of processed products	40.6%	39.3%
Knowing the farmer	38.1%	43%

The opportunity to visit local farms	27%	20%
More information about the importance of buying local food	23.4%	21.5%
The chance to participate in growing	15.8%	14.8%
Other	8.2%	6.7%
Nothing	0.5%	1.5%

Table 22: What Would Make You More Likely to Purchase and Consume Local Foods? by Level of Education

Answer options	Percent "Yes"	
	High school education or less	Post-secondary education
Availability in my local store	97.1%	89.9%
Wider availability of frozen products in winter	91.2%	76.7%
Lower prices	73.5%	65%
Wider availability in big box stores or large grocery chains	64.7%	70%
More convenient access to locations that sell local foods	61.8%	58.6%
Clearer, more specific labelling	58.8%	64.4%
Having a central location to buy local foods	50%	59.9%
Wider availability of processed products	44.1%	40.4%
Knowing the farmer	41.2%	39.2%
More information about the importance of buying local food	32.4%	22.1%
The opportunity to visit local farms	29.4%	25.2%
The chance to participate in growing	17.6%	16.5%
Other	11.8%	7.8%
Nothing	0%	0.8%

Roles in the Local Food Economy

<u>Overall Results:</u>

Most survey respondents identified their only role in the local food economy as being that of a consumer. In total, 96.9% identified as consumers. Slightly more than one-tenth (22.2%) identified as producers (farmer, home or community gardener, etc.). 14.6% said they were change agents in the local food sector in the sense that they were involved in policy making, non-profit work, education and research, funding and investing, innovative farming, entrepreneurship, and grassroots volunteering. Other key players in the local food supply chain were represented in far fewer numbers. 2.9% of respondents identified as processors (dairies and cheese makers, slaughterhouses, butchers, canneries, brewers & winemakers, community kitchens, food venture centres). 1.8% identified as distributors (marketing, transportation, sourcing of local foods).

Table 23: Roles in the Local Food Economy

Roles	Percent "Yes"
Consumer	96.9%
Producer (farmer, home or community gardener, etc.)	22.2%
Change agent (policy makers, non-profits, educators & researchers, funders & investors, innovative farmers & entrepreneurs, grassroots volunteers)	14.6%
Processors (dairies & cheese makers, slaughterhouses, butchers, canneries, brewers & winemakers, community kitchens, food venture centres)	2.9%
Other	3.5%
Distributor (marketing, transportation, sourcing of local foods)	1.8%

<u>Results Broken Down by Select Demographic Characteristics:</u>

Interestingly, respondents in the lowest age groups were most likely to identify as producers and change agents in the local food economy. This is despite the continual rise of the average age of farmers in Peterborough County in recent decades. It is significant that so many young adults identify as producers. Even if they are producing on a small scale, in home or community gardens for instance, it bodes well for the future of farming in Peterborough County to see young people identifying as food growers and change agents.

Not surprisingly, the rural group included more producers, processors and distributors than the urban group. However, there were slightly more change agents in the city. This is likely because a lot of policy development work is urban-based. However, why do more producers not also see themselves as change agents? Having producers make change and lead local food policy development will make for a more robust local food economy.

Table 24: Roles in the Local Food Economy, by Age (Years)

Answer Options	**Percent "Yes"**						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75
Consumer	100%	93.9%	98.9%	96.4%	97.5%	100%	94.1%
Producer	25%	32.2%	14.8%	18.2%	21.2%	24.4%	17.6%
Change agent	25%	19.1%	9.1%	18.2%	11%	13.3%	5.9%
Processor	0%	3.5%	1.1%	4.5%	4.2%	0%	0%
Other	5%	6.1%	3.4%	1.8%	2.5%	4.4%	0%
Distributor	0%	2.6%	0%	5.5%	0%	0%	0%

Table 25: Roles in the Local Food Economy, by Place of Residence

Roles	Percent "Yes"	
	Rural municipalities	City of Peterborough
Consumer	93.8%	98%
Producer	35.4%	16.8%
Change agent	12.5%	15.4%
Processor	4.9%	2%
Other	3.5%	3.6%
Distributor	2.1%	1.4%

DISCUSSION

The main goal of the survey was to gauge the public's purchasing habits and attitudes toward local foods in order to advance policy development efforts in this area. While the survey sample was not actually representative of the general population of Peterborough city and county, it provided a good insight into expectations on local food procurement. Women, City of Peterborough residents, those aged 25-64 years, those with a college or university education, and those with a household income above $60,000 all had a higher representation in the survey sample than in the general population. The Peterborough Social Planning Council plans to do a similar follow up survey in the future to see how purchasing habits and attitudes change. It will be necessary to improve the distribution method to attempt to ensure a more representative sample. Different distribution methods, such as conducting a mail out survey, should be considered. Online survey tools such as the one used for this research, SurveyMonkey, also have resources to help reach a target audience which may help.

The most important finding of the survey was that there was very strong support for local foods among survey participants. Respondents buy local food whenever possible. Many make buying local food a priority. Most agreed they would buy more local foods in restaurants if menu items were clearly marked as local. The overwhelming majority care whether their food is local or not. Slightly fewer felt the same about whether or not their food is locally processed. There was almost unanimous agreement that buying local food helps maintain the vibrancy of rural communities in Ontario, reduces the threat of losing family farms to suburban sprawl and industrial scale farming, and that buying local foods is important to support the local economy. There was near-equal agreement that buying local foods is a positive choice for the environment as well, though in the comments section many respondents wrote that on the question of environmental credentials, farming practices matter as much to them as distance from farm to table alone. Four-fifths even agreed to some degree that they would be willing to pay more for local foods to support the local food economy. All of this indicates very strong support for local foods from a large sample of the local community (538 responses gathered in only 16 days).

This support remained strong across demographic groups. There were some minor variances. For instance, a strong observed willingness to pay more for local food to support the local food economy was only minimally correlated to income; willingness declined with income, but only slightly. Lower prices would entice people in the second highest income group to buy more local food more than any other group, though not by much. Age also had some effect on propensity to buy local food, with the youngest age group (18-24 years) reporting to have bought local food the least (though by a relatively small margin). Slightly more women than men bought local food in general and at grocery stores and health food stores in particular. Women agreed more strongly than men that whenever possible they buy local food and that buying local food is a priority for them. That their food is locally grown and processed was somewhat more important to women than to men. Understanding and responding to these nuances in how different demographics think about local food will be crucial in order to craft effective local food policies and initiatives.

Most respondents bought local foods at farmers' markets. Other popular locations for buying local food were grocery stores and farm gate sales. Vegetables and fruits were purchased the most. The top definitions of local food were, in descending order: grown in my region, grown within 100 km, grown in Ontario, grown in my county, and grown on a family farm. There was some variation in what local foods different demographic groups bought and where. Farmers' markets are still what most people imagine when they think about local foods. To expand the local food sector, farmers' markets will need to increase the availability of other products besides the most popular: vegetables and fruits. Meanwhile they will have to define what constitutes local food and help consumers be able to clearly identify such products.

For most respondents, the distance they have to travel to buy local food was not prohibitive. Nor was the time it takes to find local food when shopping. From the comments section, however, it was clear that travel distance and time are far from non-issues. Many wrote of the challenge of accessing farmers' markets due to their limited hours of operation for various reasons, such as conflicting work schedules. Others found it difficult to access farmers' markets riding public transit. It is also telling that close to one-third felt to some degree that they have little control over whether or not they buy local food. This is likely due to financial and time constraints, as well as the low availability of certain products, especially in winter.

Respondents were split about whether or not the cost of local food is comparable to what they would otherwise buy. It may be that costs are not readily comparable between grocery stores and local vendors because of different unit measurements. Some respondents also expressed frustration over the pricing of local foods, arguing that designation of a product as local gives vendors' license to raise prices for no other reason. There may be a need for greater communication between consumers and vendors about how and why prices are set the way they are.

Another positive finding for the local food sector is that there was a strong feeling that the quality of local food is very high. Additionally, more than half of respondents said it stays fresh for as long as non-local food (though in the written comments several said they find that local food stays fresh longer). More people disagreed than agreed that it is difficult to know if food is local or not, but not by many. The split over this issue may relate to a perception among some, raised in the comments section, that certain vendors merely resell foods imported from farther away without fully disclosing their place of origin.

Respondents find it quite easy to get locally produced foods in summer, but less so in winter. There may be a need to promote healthy, flavourful seasonal diets in order to expand the market for those products available in winter (such as root vegetables). Investments in storage facilities and technology will help producers offer more products for a greater part of the year. Bolstering local food processing industries will also help to increase selections of local food products year-round.

There was strong agreement that the government should promote buying local food, including institutional purchasing (though this had slightly less support). This finding suggests that there would be support for greater government involvement in strengthening the local food sector.

Most respondents indicated that availability in their local store would make them more likely to buy and consume local foods. Other things which would make a substantial number more likely to "eat local" are: wider availability of frozen products in winter, wider availability of locally grown foods in big box stores and large grocery store chains, lower prices, and clearer, more specific labelling. The issue of having more local products in big box stores and large grocery chains was very contentious. Many said this would make it easier to access local foods given that there are currently more of these food retail outlets in Peterborough than venues such as farmers' markets which sell local food. Having local foods available in these places would also increase the time frame in which people can buy local foods, since the hours of operation of big box stores and large grocery chains are much longer than farmers' markets. On the other hand, many expressed strong opposition to this idea in the comments section, arguing that large corporate retailers would drive down prices for farmers and even put a downward pressure on quality. The needs to balance here are that of convenient and affordable access to local foods, adequate compensation for farmers' and quality assurance.

Asked about their roles in the local food economy, most respondents identified as consumers. Just over one-quarter of respondents identified as being producers and almost 15% considered themselves “change agents”. Interestingly, respondents in the lowest age groups were most likely to identify as producers and change agents in the local food economy. This is despite the continual rise of the average age of farmers in Peterborough County in recent decades. This is promising as it shows some interest among younger people to maintain a local farming sector that, if you look at the statistics, seems to be dying out. Of course, these younger producers and change agents may be getting involved in farming in far different ways than traditional farmers. Supporting the entrance of younger people into the agricultural sector, in new and innovative ways that fit with different living and working styles, should be a primary focus for local food policy. Not surprisingly, the rural group included more producers, processors and distributors than the urban group. However, there were slightly more change agents in the city. Why don't more rural producers, processors and distributors think of themselves as change agents? How can they be involved in visioning a vibrant, growing local food sector?

Appendix A: Local Food in Peterborough Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey being conducted by the Peterborough Social Planning Council. Your participation is important in helping us understand purchasing habits, attitudes and perceptions of local food in Peterborough City and County. The information we gather will help drive food policy development locally.

While overall survey results will be made public in a report on Food and Farming in Peterborough County, your individual responses will be kept in strict confidence.

The survey should only take 10 minutes of your time to complete.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Dawn Berry-Merriam at dawnbm@pspc.on.ca or call 705-743-5915

Please follow these guidelines in completing the survey

• Click the Next/Previous buttons in the survey tool (not the browser) to go to the next/previous page.
• Click the "Exit the Survey Early" button if you need to exit the survey
• Click the Submit button to submit your survey.

Thank you – PSPC

1. Have you bought local food in the last 6 months?

o Yes

o No

o I'm not sure

2. If you purchased local food in the last 6 months, where did you purchase it? (Check all that apply)

❍ Local grocery store

❍ Farm gate sale

❍ Health food store

❍ Farmers' Market

❍ Other local supplier

3. If you purchased local food in the last 6 months, check which of the following you purchased (check all that apply):

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Meat

- Cheese
- Maple syrup/honey
- Other: ________

4. What does "local food" mean to you? (check all that apply)

❍ Ontario grown
❍ Grown in my county
❍ Grown in my region
❍ Grown in Canada
❍ Grown on a family farm
❍ Grown within 100 km
❍ Processed in my county or region
❍ Processed in Ontario
❍ Processed in Canada
❍ I'm not totally sure what "local food" means
❍ Other: ______________________________

5. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7. 1 indicates you strongly agree with the statement and 7 indicates you strongly disagree.

a) The distance I have to travel to buy local food is prohibitive:

1 (strongly agree)	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7 (strongly disagree)*

b) The amount of time it takes to find local food (e.g. having to read labels and travel to different stores and markets) is prohibitive

1 (strongly agree)	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7 (strongly disagree)*

c) The cost of local food is comparable to what I would otherwise buy at the grocery store

1 (strongly agree)	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7 (strongly disagree)*

d) The quality of local food is usually very high

1 (strongly agree)	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7 (strongly disagree)*

e) Local food stays fresh for as the same length of time as does non local food:

1 (strongly	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7 (strongly*

agree)						*disagree)*

f) I find it difficult to know if food is local or not

1 (strongly agree)	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7 (strongly disagree)*

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following.

	1 strongly disagree	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7 strongly agree**
Whenever possible, I intentionally buy locally produced food							
I make it a priority to buy locally produced food							
I find it easy to get locally produced foods in the summer							
I find it easy to get locally produced foods in the winter							
The government should promote buying locally grown food							
The government should promote the institutional purchasing of locally grown food (e.g., for hospitals, schools, prisons)							
I have little choice whether or not the foods I buy are locally grown							
I am willing to pay more for local food to support local farmers and food producers							

7. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following.

	1 (strongly disagree)	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7 (strongly agree)**
I would order more locally produced foods in restaurants if the menu items were clearly marked as locally grown							
It does not matter to me if my food is locally grown							
It does not matter to me if my food is locally processed							
Buying local food is a way to maintain the vibrancy of rural communities in Ontario							
Buying local food reduces the threat of losing family farms to suburban sprawl and large industrial farms							
Buying local is important in order to support the local economy							
Buying local is a positive choice for the environment							

8. What would make you more likely to purchase and consume local foods?

- ❍ Wider availability of frozen products in winter
- ❍ Wider availability of processed products (e.g. jams, sauces)
- ❍ Availability in my local store
- ❍ The opportunity to visit local farms
- ❍ The chance to participate in growing
- ❍ Knowing the farmer
- ❍ Lower prices
- ❍ More information about the importance of buying local food
- ❍ Clearer, more specific labelling
- ❍ Wider availability in big box stores (i.e. Walmart & Costco) or large grocery chains (i.e. Loblaws, Sobey's, etc.)
- ❍ Having a central location to purchase local foods
- ❍ More convenient access to locations that sell local foods
- ❍ Nothing
- ❍ Other (please explain)____

9. Please tell us about yourself:

[ ] Female [ ] Male [ ] Prefer not to answer

b) What is your age?

[ ] Under 15
[ ] 15 – 19
[ ] 20 – 23
[ ] 24 – 30
[ ] 31 – 45
[ ] 46 – 60
[ ] 61 – 75
[ ] Over 75

c) What is your education level? Please check one.
[ ] Grade school/some high school
[ ] Completed high school
[ ] Some college
[ ] Completed college
[ ] Some university
[ ] Completed university

d) What municipality do you live in?__________________

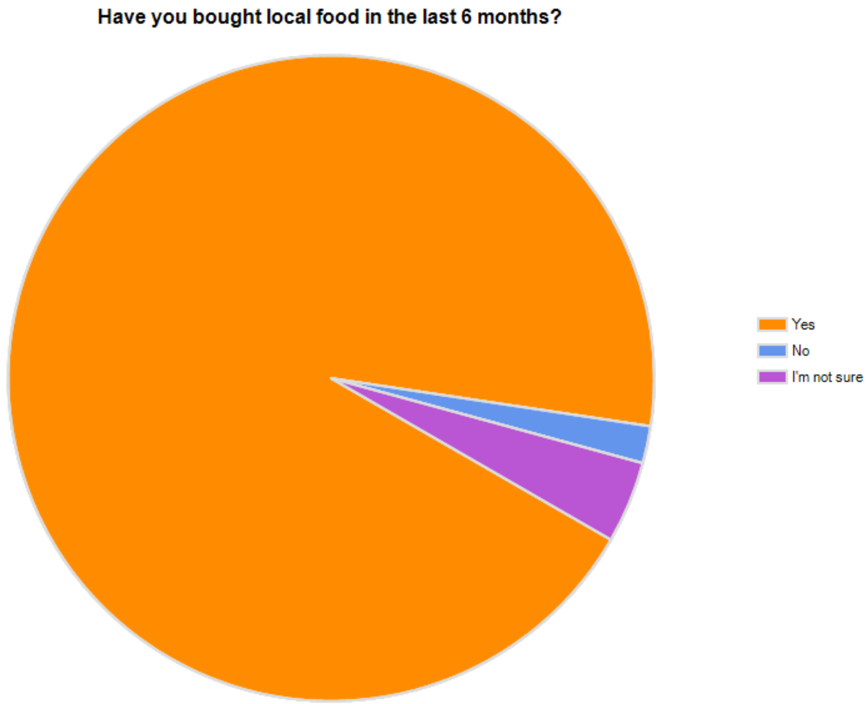
e) What is your role (or roles) in the local food economy? (Check all that apply)
[ ] Consumer
[ ] Producer (farmer, home or community gardener, etc.)
[ ] Processor (Dairies and cheesemakers, slaughterhouses, butchers, canneries, brewers and winemakers, community kitchens, food venture centres)
[ ] Distributor (marketing, transportation, sourcing of local foods)
[ ] Change agent (policy makers, non-profits, educators and researchers, innovative farmers and entrepreneurs, funders and investors, grassroots volunteers)

f) What is your annual household income before taxes? Please check one.
[ ] under $20 000
[ ] $20 000 – $39 999
[ ] $40 000 – $59 999
[ ] $60 000 and over

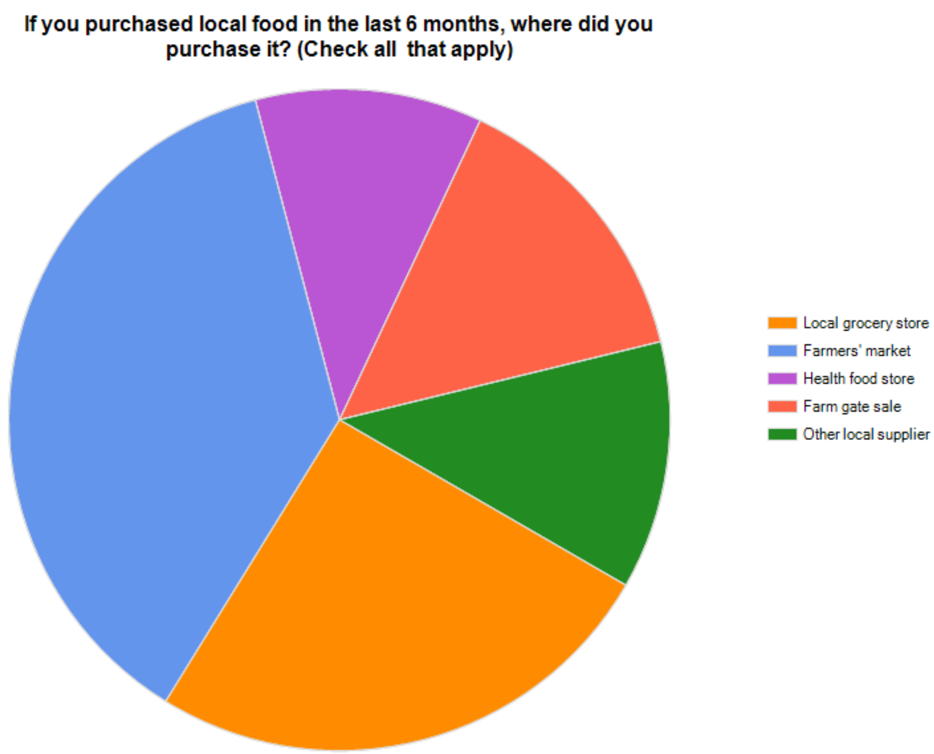
10. Do you have any further comments about our survey? Please share your thoughts:____

Appendix B: Charts and Graphs

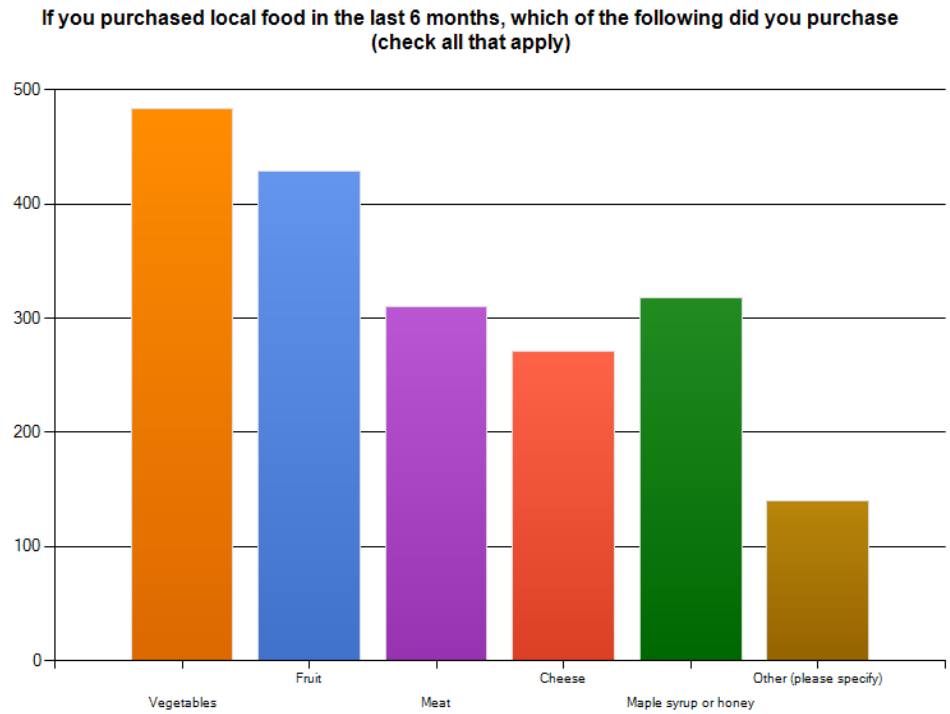
1.



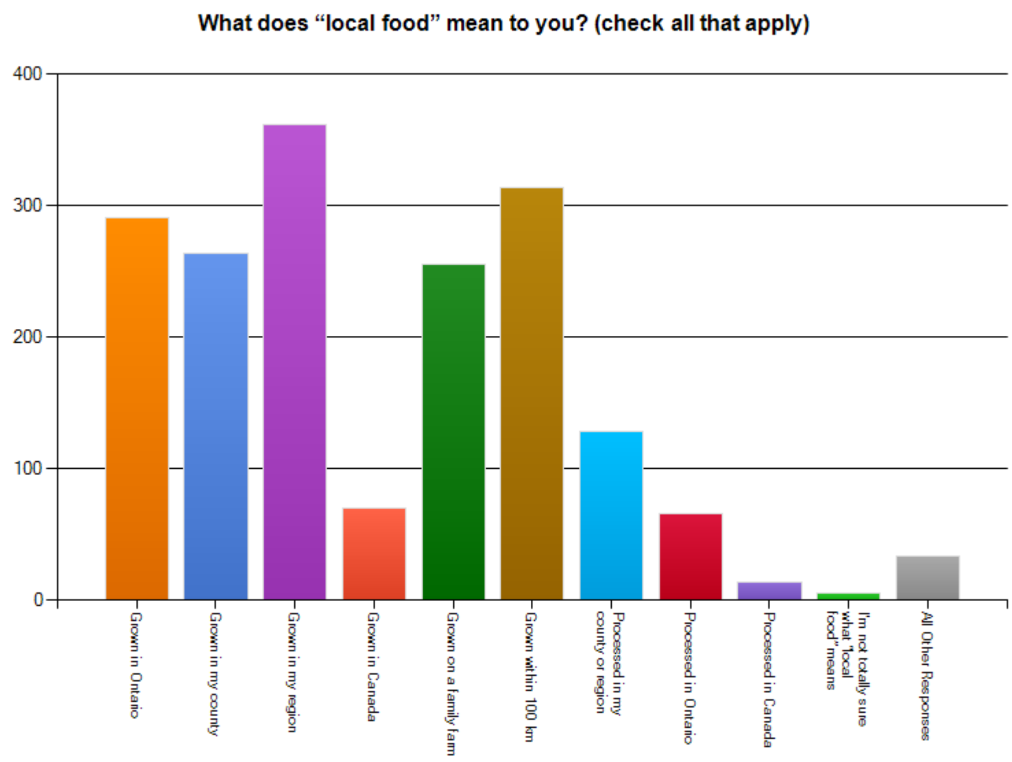
2.



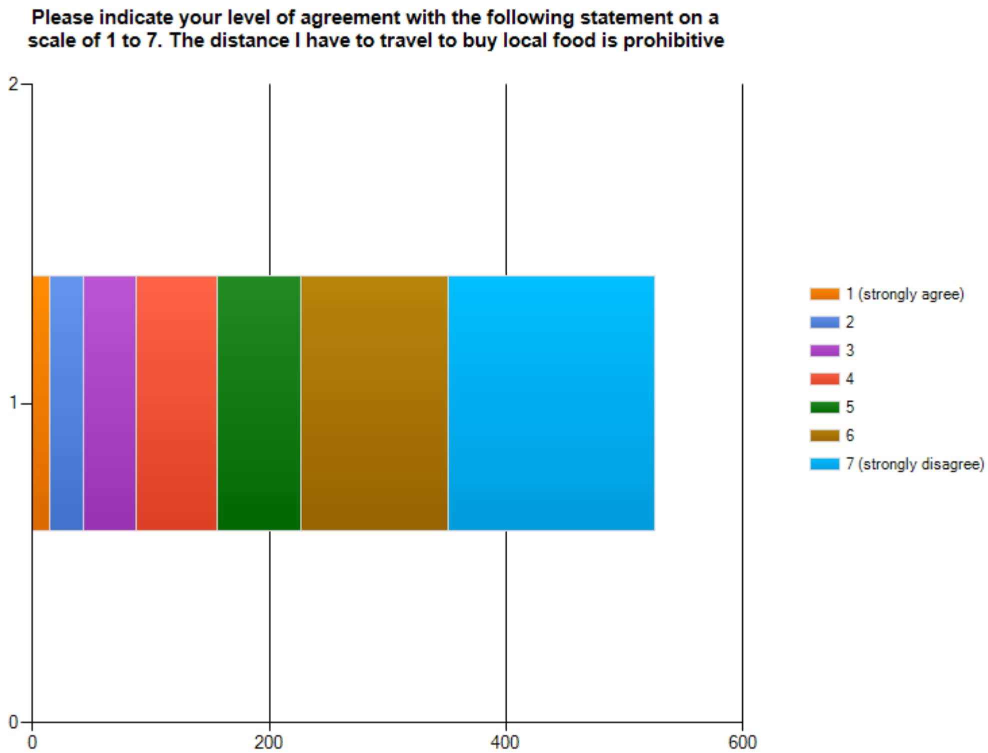
3.


If you purchased local food in the last 6 months, which of the following did you purchase (check all that apply)
500
400
300
200
100
0
Vegetables
Fruit
Meat
Cheese
Maple syrup or honey
Other (please specify)

4.

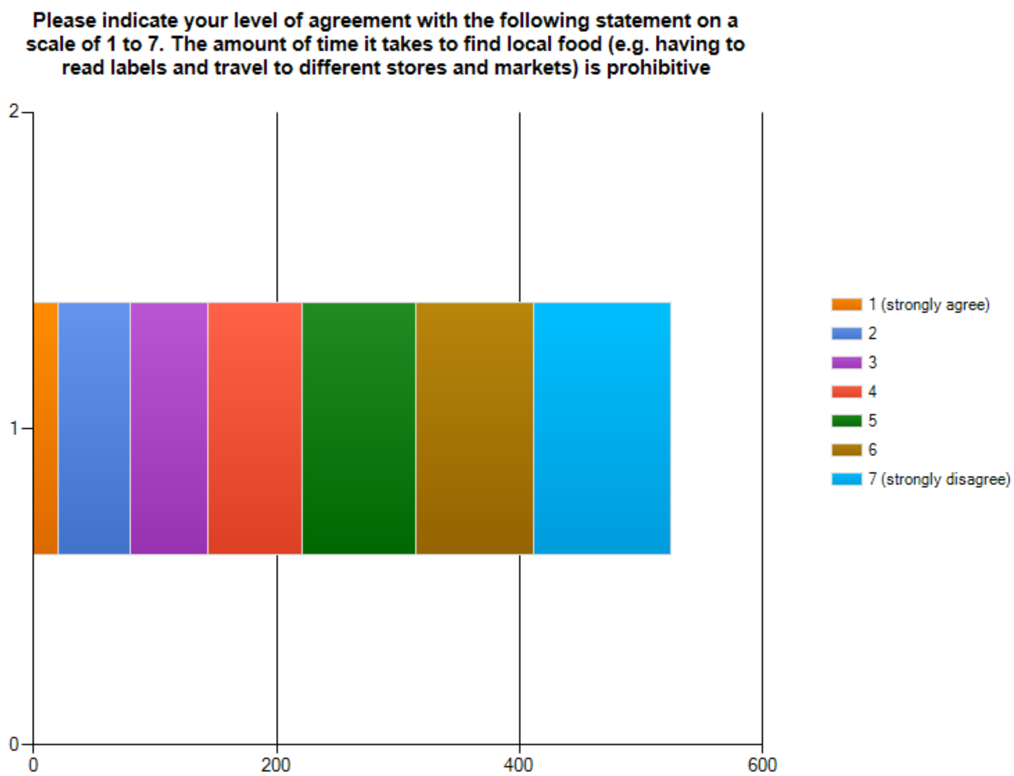

What does “local food” mean to you? (check all that apply)
400
300
200
100
0
Grown in Ontario
Grown in my county
Grown in my region
Grown in Canada
Grown on a family farm
Grown within 100 km
Processed in my county or region
Processed in Ontario
Processed in Canada
I'm not totally sure what "local food" means
All Other Responses

5. a)



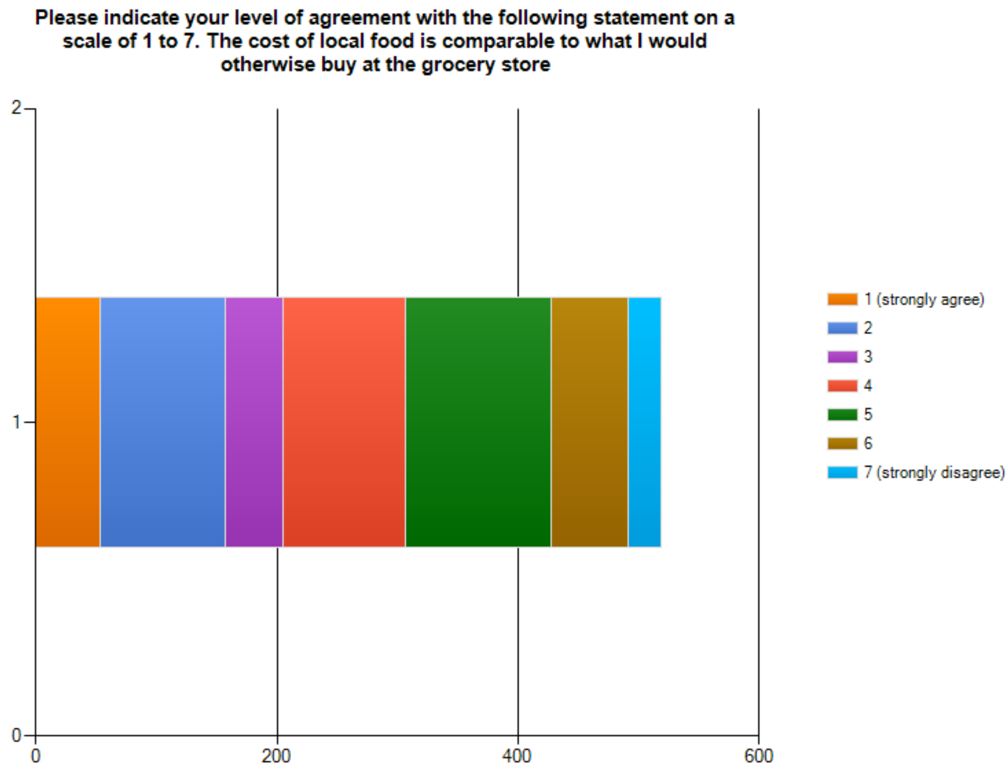
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 7. The distance I have to travel to buy local food is prohibitive
2
1
0
0
200
400
600
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

5. b)



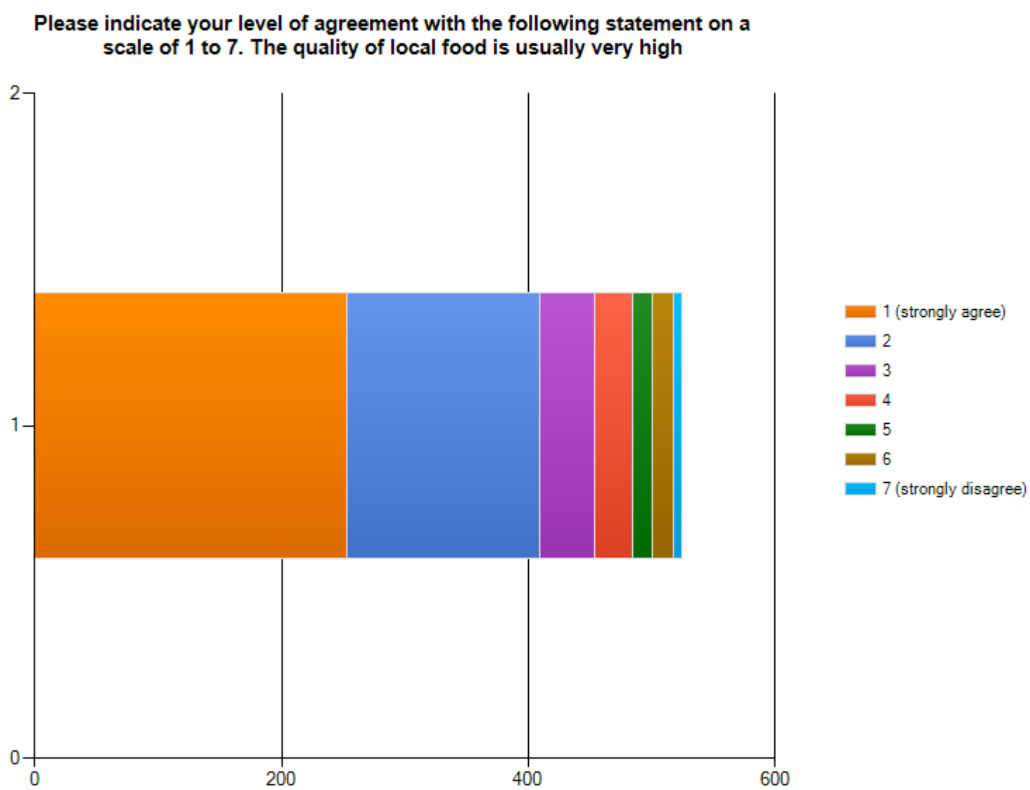
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 7. The amount of time it takes to find local food (e.g. having to read labels and travel to different stores and markets) is prohibitive
2
1
0
0
200
400
600
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

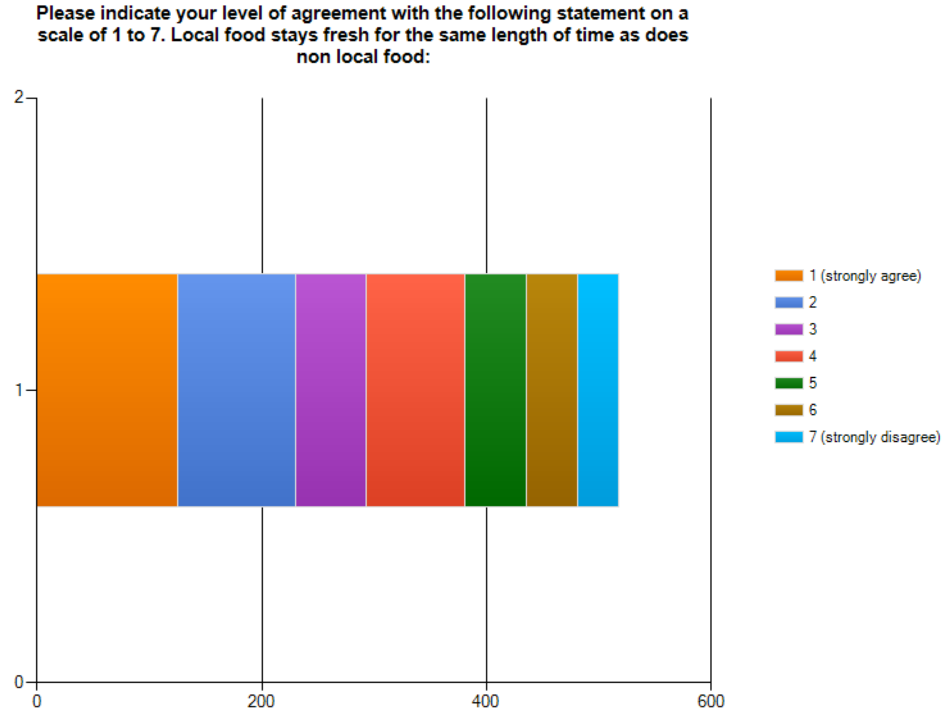
5. c)


Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 7. The cost of local food is comparable to what I would otherwise buy at the grocery store
2
1
0
0
200
400
600
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

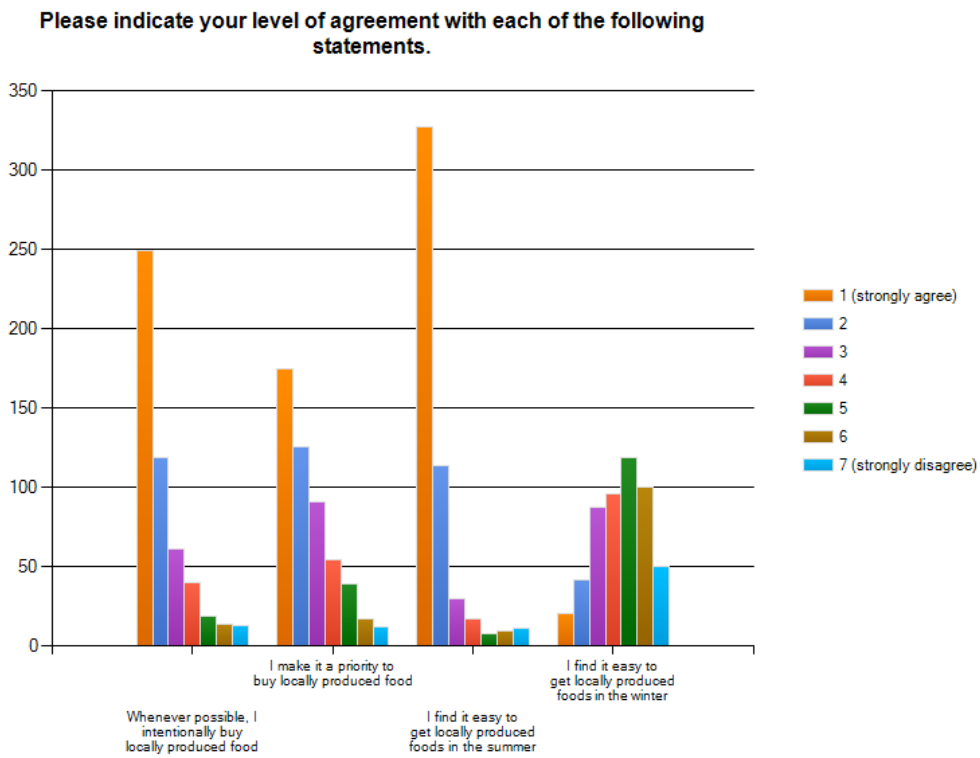
5. d)

5. e)


Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 7. The quality of local food is usually very high
2
1
0
0
200
400
600
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

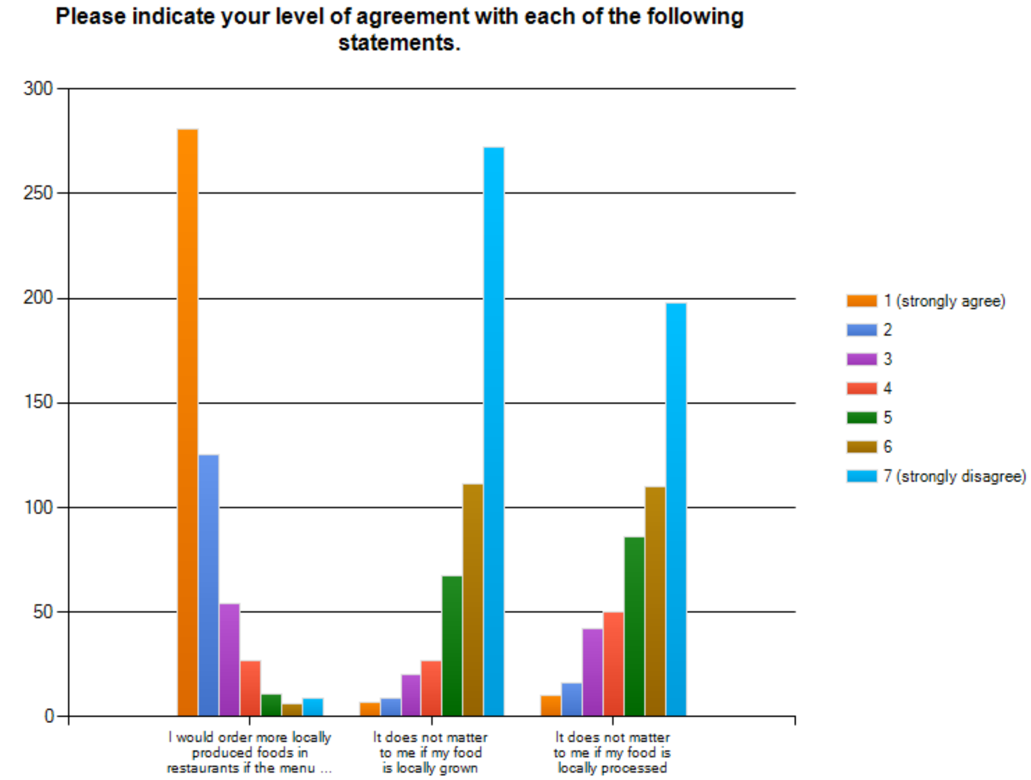

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 7. Local food stays fresh for the same length of time as does non local food:
2
1
0
0
200
400
600
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

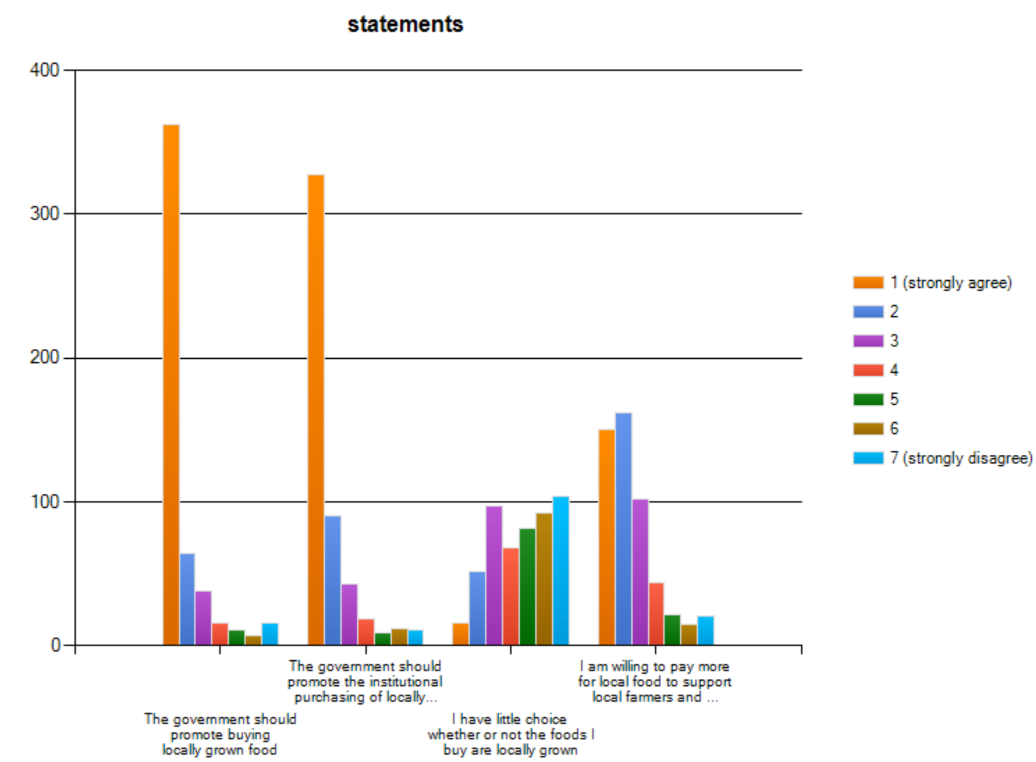
5. f)


Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Whenever possible, I intentionally buy locally produced food
I make it a priority to buy locally produced food
I find it easy to get locally produced foods in the summer
I find it easy to get locally produced foods in the winter
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

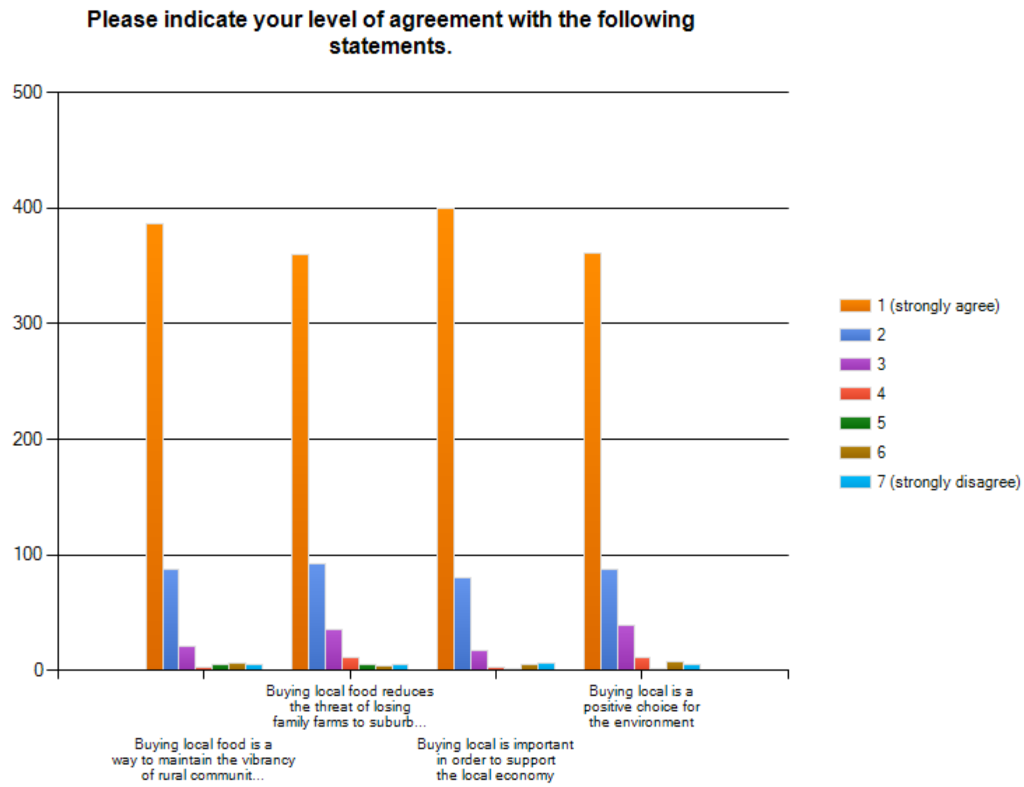
6. a)

6. b)
7. a)

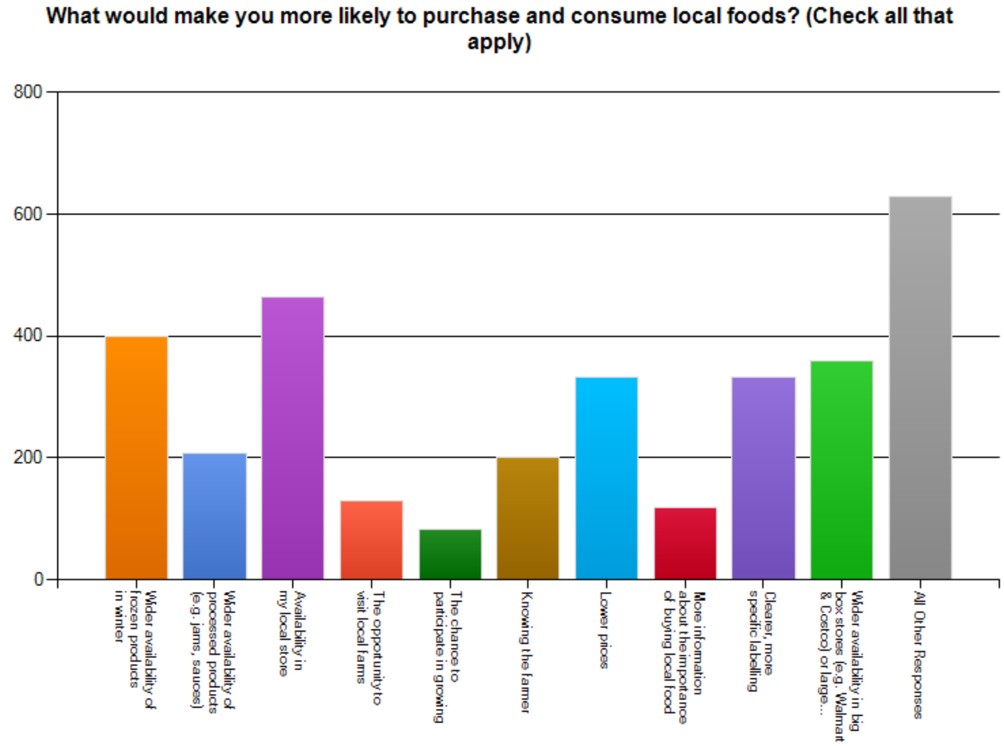

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
I would order more locally produced foods in restaurants if the menu ...
It does not matter to me if my food is locally grown
It does not matter to me if my food is locally processed
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)


statements
400
300
200
100
0
The government should promote buying locally grown food
The government should promote the institutional purchasing of locally...
I have little choice whether or not the foods I buy are locally grown
I am willing to pay more for local food to support local farmers and ...
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)

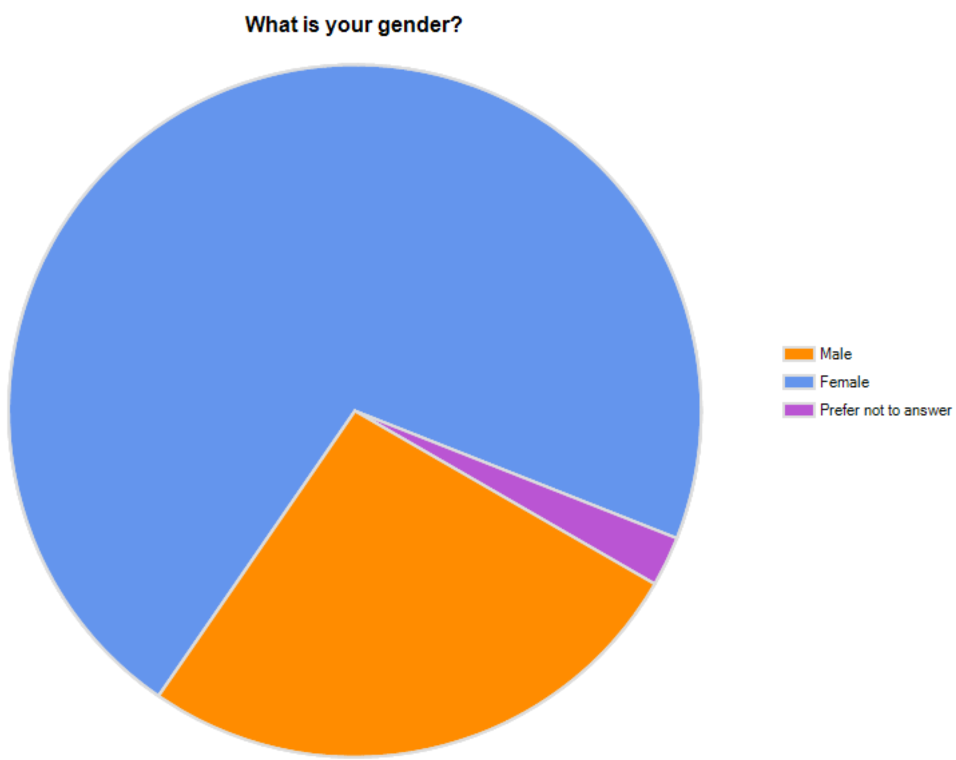
7. b)
8.



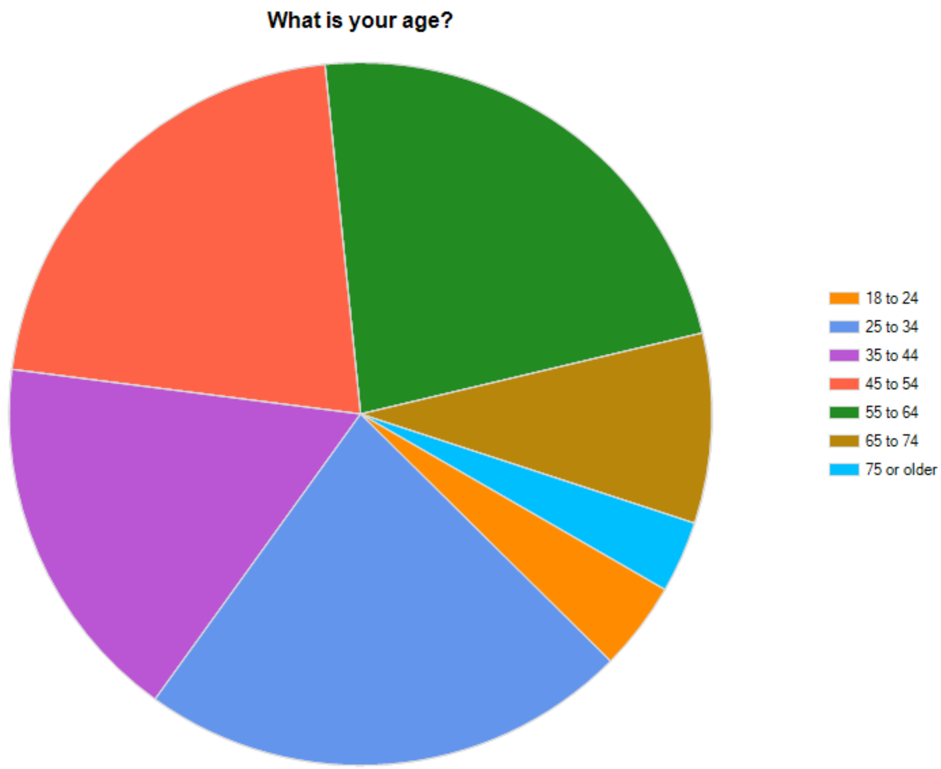
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.
500
400
300
200
100
0
1 (strongly agree)
2
3
4
5
6
7 (strongly disagree)
Buying local food is a way to maintain the vibrancy of rural communit...
Buying local food reduces the threat of losing family farms to suburb...
Buying local is important in order to support the local economy
Buying local is a positive choice for the environment


What would make you more likely to purchase and consume local foods? (Check all that apply)
800
600
400
200
0
Wider availability of frozen products in winter
Wider availability of processed products (e.g. jams, sauces)
Availability in my local store
The opportunity to visit local farms
The chance to participate in growing
Knowing the farmer
Lower prices
More information about the importance of buying local food
Clearer, more specific labelling
Wider availability in big box stores (e.g. Walmart & Costco) or large…
All Other Responses

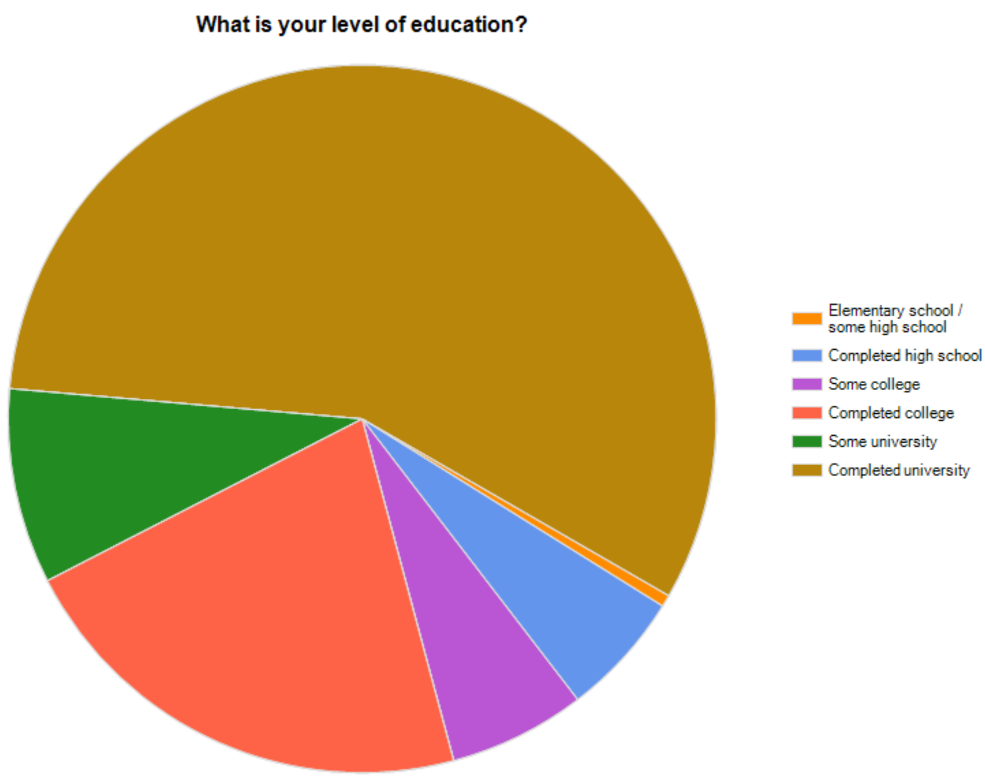
9. a)


What is your gender?
Male
Female
Prefer not to answer

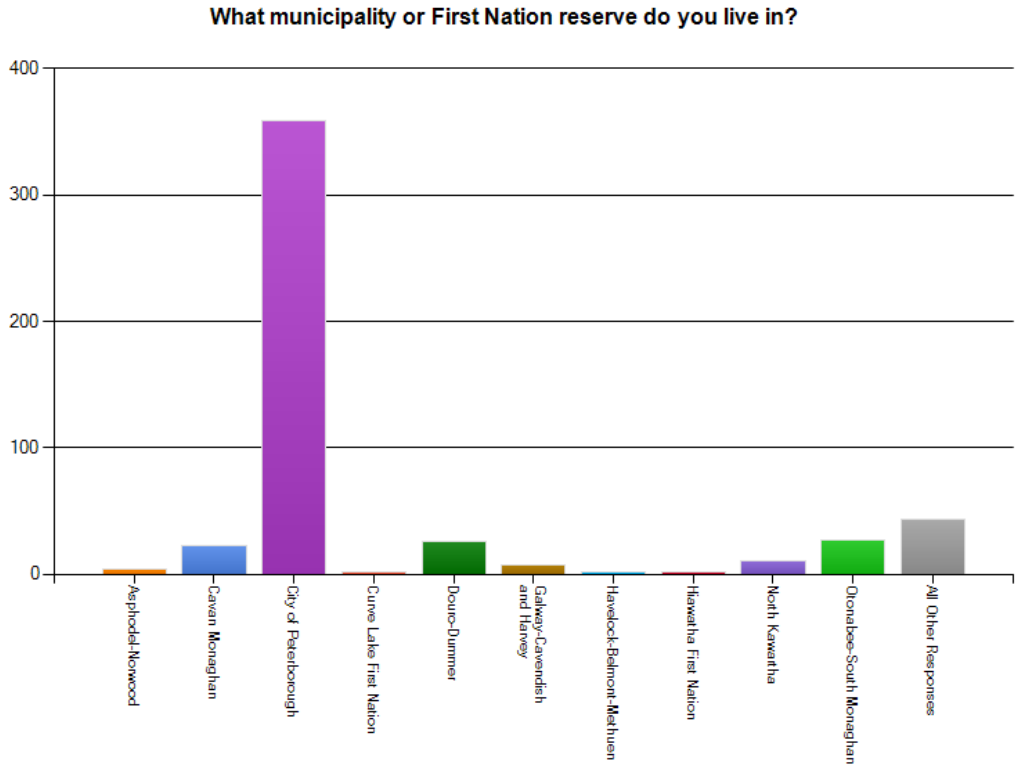
9. b)


What is your age?
18 to 24
25 to 34
35 to 44
45 to 54
55 to 64
65 to 74
75 or older

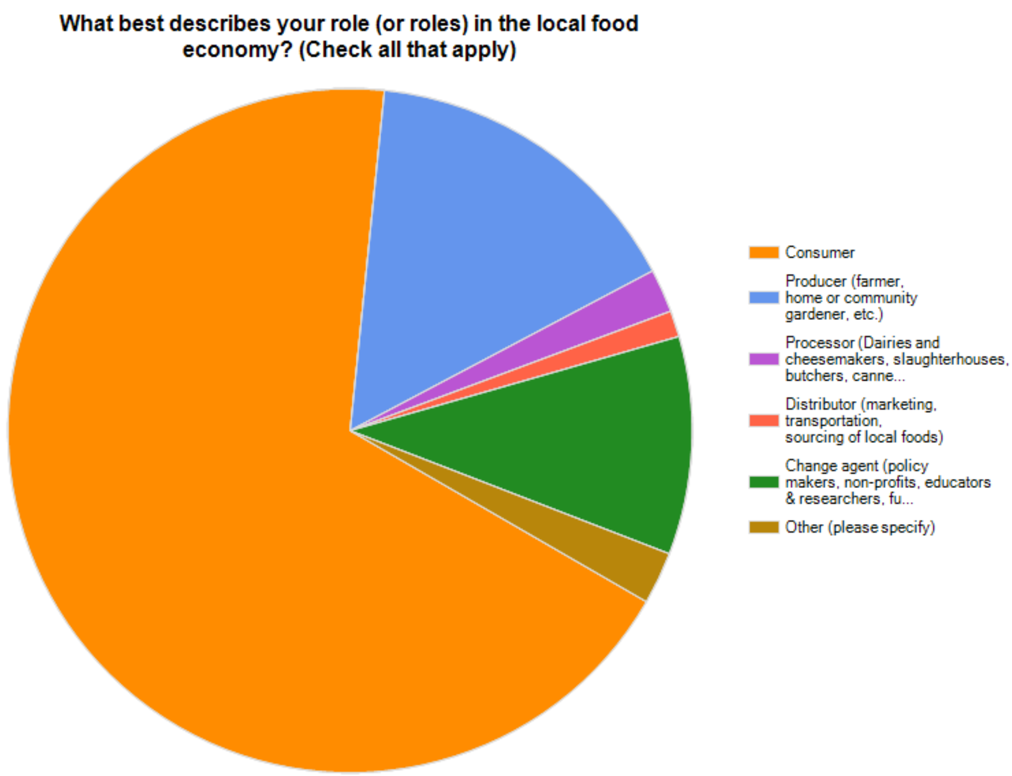
9. c)


What is your level of education?
Elementary school / some high school
Completed high school
Some college
Completed college
Some university
Completed university

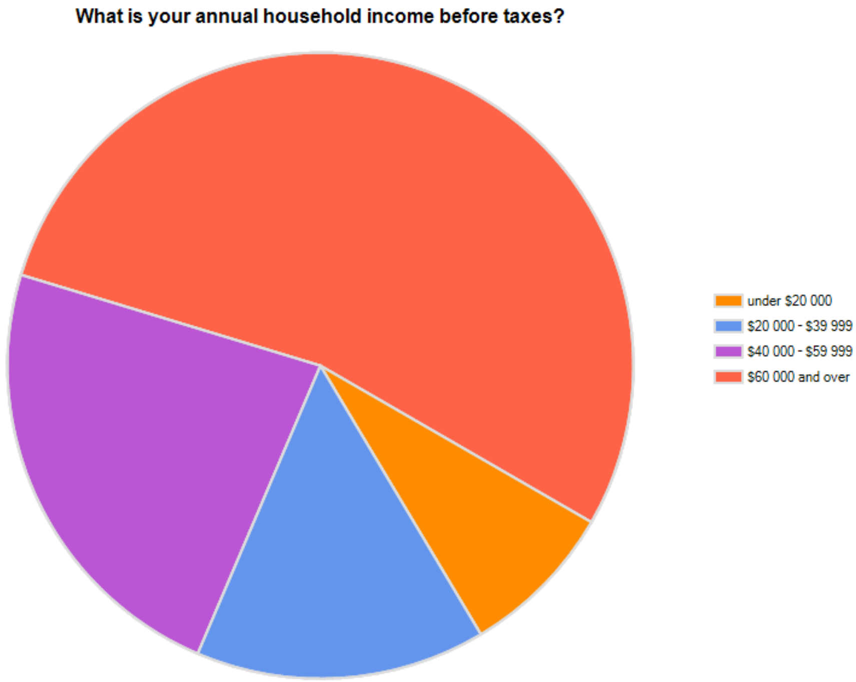
9. d)


What municipality or First Nation reserve do you live in?
400
300
200
100
0
Asphodel-Norwood
Cavan Monaghan
City of Peterborough
Curve Lake First Nation
Douro-Dummer
Galway-Cavendish and Harvey
Havelock-Belmont-Methuen
Hiawatha First Nation
North Kawartha
Otonabee-South Monaghan
All Other Responses

9. e)


What best describes your role (or roles) in the local food economy? (Check all that apply)
Consumer
Producer (farmer, home or community gardener, etc.)
Processor (Dairies and cheesemakers, slaughterhouses, butchers, canne...
Distributor (marketing, transportation, sourcing of local foods)
Change agent (policy makers, non-profits, educators & researchers, fu...
Other (please specify)

9. f)


What is your annual household income before taxes?
under $20 000
$20 000 - $39 999
$40 000 - $59 999
$60 000 and over