

How do Tailgate Market Interactions Influence Consumer Behavior? A Pilot Study in a Locavore Community

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ASU Environmental and Resource Economics Workshop

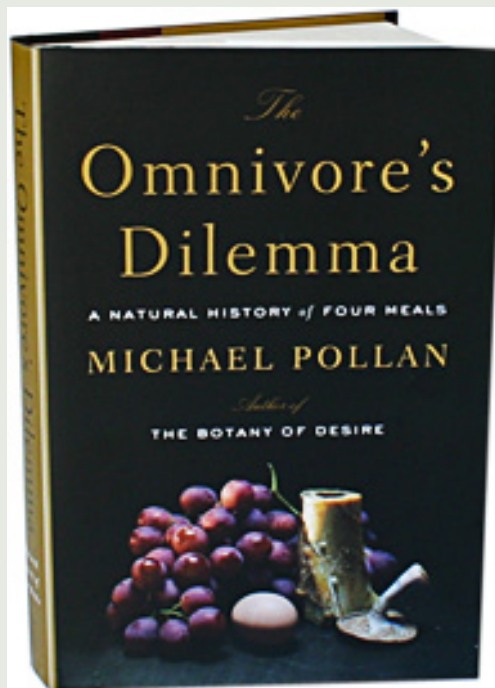
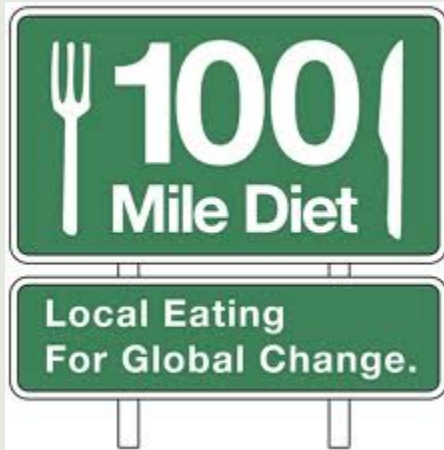
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Motivation

- Intangibles are important to Western North Carolina residents & visitors
- Blue Ridge Parkway Scenic Experience Project
- Farmland Values Project

- Hypothetical nature of nonmarket valuation
- Preference snapshots are frustrating
- Link with other intangibles, social values



Consumer Preferences for Local Food

- High quality
- Freshness
- Health benefits
- Support of farmers



Thilmany et. al, 2008; Onozaka et. al., 2010

Consumer Motivations for Buying Local

Local food consumers are motivated by personal values, beliefs, and norms

- Maintaining local farmland
- Strengthening local economy
- Reduction in chemical inputs
- Fair treatment of farm labor and livestock



Embedded Values

- Feagan and Morris (2009) identify non-economic values that motivate consumers including
 - A sense of community, belonging
 - Relationships
 - Connection
 - Place



Regional Importance: Western North Carolina

- Favorable growing conditions
- Strong demand for local food
 - Tailgate markets
 - CSA subscriptions:
 - Supermarkets (Whole Foods, Ingles, etc.)
- Committed, dedicated people, non-profits, and farm services
 - Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

How did Asheville become a locavore community?

- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's 10 year local food campaign
- "Foodtopia"
- Food entrepreneurship
- Beer!
- Buy Local campaign for businesses



What benefits, if any, do you believe farmland brings to your county (Western NC)?

		Resident	Visitor
	<i>Number of respondents</i>	764	276
1	Locally produced food	92.3%	97.8%
2	Scenic beauty	80.6%	89.5%
3	Jobs for farmers & their suppliers, pickers, packers, and truck drivers	80.1%	89.9%
4	Agricultural heritage	79.8%	89.9%
5	Open space	74.9%	76.4%
6	Wildlife habitat	74.7%	71.4%
7	Soil conservation	60.7%	72.5%

Purchase Behavior at Tailgate Markets

- Consumers are willing to pay more for local food
- Consumers seek direct assurances
 - interactions, conversations, etc.
- Interactions and enjoyment of the market increase willingness to pay
- Consumers are greatly influenced by sensory stimulation

Darby et. al., 2008; Kirby et. al, 2007;
Hunt, 2007



Vendor Motivations

- Gain a loyal clientele
- Cultivate a relationship with customers
- Receive greater revenue (retail v. wholesale pricing)
- Independently manage their business
- Educate consumers

Hunt, 2007; Andreatta and Wickliffe, 2002



Research Questions

- How do social interactions influence local food purchasing behavior?
- What about the interaction is driving the change in purchase behavior?
 - Information (about product, environmental practices of grower, etc.)
 - Trust-building
 - Loyalty
 - Social capital
- Hypothesis: public good characteristics are driving purchase behavior

Methods

- Observations of tailgate market interactions
 - Length of interaction
 - Type of interaction
 - Information exchange (price, product information, production methods, etc.)
- Surveys
- Interviews



Study Sites: Tailgate Markets in WNC

- Asheville & Buncombe County
 - 3-4 different markets?
 - Asheville City Market: largest EBT usage of any tailgate market in the southeastern US
- Adjacent counties?
- Rural counties
 - Different market culture, level of knowledge about products, familiarity with vendors?



Possible extensions/curiosities

- Follow preferences over time?
- Potential change in health outcomes?
- How do market interactions affect social/community capital accumulation?

Related Research

- *Keeping the Value with the Farm*
- Joint work with ASAP, Carpio
- Using information from FVP to design messages for local food branding program
- Use grocery store scanner data to identify which of the messages are effective in changing purchase behavior

Questions?

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