SUPPLY AND DEMAND TASK FORCE

SELLING LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS AT VERMONT'S INDEPENDENT GROCERS:

An Assessment of Opportunities and Barriers

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Most of the food Vermonters consume is imported from elsewhere and purchased at supermarkets, warehouse clubs, and supercenters (e.g., Walmart). But Vermont is also a national leader in a countermovement toward local food purchases at farm stands, farmers' markets, co-ops, and independent grocery stores. The *Supply and Demand Task Force*—a subgroup of the *Aggregation and Distribution Working Group*—formed in early 2012 to create more opportunities to match the supply of and demand for local food. With funding from the Farm to Plate Network Fund, the task force conducted a survey of Vermont's independent grocery stores to understand interest in and barriers to selling local food products. The project team also includes *ACORN*, *City Market*, and the *Vermont Grocers' Association*.

The results of this survey provide important information for addressing two goals of the *Farm to Plate Strategic Plan*:

- **Goal 1: Consumption of Vermont-produced food by Vermonters and regional consumers will measurably increase.**
- **Goal 13: Local food will be available at all Vermont market outlets and increasingly available at regional, national, and international market outlets.**

Many of the findings are very promising. 95% of survey respondents stated they would like to source more local food, particularly produce, meat, dairy, and bakery items. Larger stores cited lack of consistent supply as their greatest barrier to purchasing more local food, while smaller stores reported they need more consumer demand for local products. The *Farm to Plate Network* will utilize these findings to develop projects aimed at addressing barriers and increasing local food in retail establishments. The Supply and Demand Task Force is also completing an in-depth analysis of supply and demand issues at five stores.

SUMMARY

Store characteristics

<table>
<tr><th>LARGE STORES</th><th>SMALL STORES</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Sell products in nearly all product categories</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Sell local products in nearly every product category stocked</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Need lower prices to sell more local</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Carry local products because customers demand it</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Carry local products to support the local economy</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Carry local products as part of store brand</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Interested in selling more local products</td></tr>
<tr><td>Get lower margins on local products than other products</td><td>Get the same margins on local products as other products</td></tr>
<tr><td>Need more consistent supply to sell more local</td><td>Need more customer demand to sell more local</td></tr>
<tr><td>Use a wide variety techniques to promote local products</td><td>Rely on store signage to promote local products</td></tr>
</table>

On average, these independent grocers:

- Are self-described country or convenience stores
- Occupy around 2,500 square feet and have $1 million in gross annual sales
- Represent every county in Vermont

Large stores describe themselves as grocery (43%) or food co-ops (21%), while small stores describe themselves as country (56.7%) or convenience (36.7%) stores.

Not surprisingly, revenue and square footage are related, with large stores having higher annual sales (58% of large stores have sales $5 million or more).

Product stocking, sales, and promotion

All product categories, except bulk foods (32%) and gasoline (49%) are carried by more than half of the independent grocers, with coffee, dairy, grocery, general merchandise and beer/wine stocked by nearly all stores (more than 9 out of 10 grocers carry products in these categories).

The highest ranked revenue generating categories overall are:

- Grocery and beer/wine
- Gasoline, prepared foods, dairy, meat/seafood

Among those who stock products in a category:

- Local dairy is sold by 9 out of 10 stores
- Local bakery, produce, grocery, beer/wine, coffee are sold by more than 2 out of 3 grocers who sell products in this category
- Local bulk foods, meat/seafood, prepared foods and non-dairy perishables are sold by about half of the grocers who sell products in each category

Among those who stock local products in a category, local coffee, dairy, prepared foods and produce are the highest revenue generators within the category

- There may be opportunities for these kinds of stores to make money with local foods as indicated in Table 7.

Larger stores reported to lower margins on local products, while than small and medium stores reported getting the same margins for local products as other products.

All sizes of stores use in-store signage and many also use displays to advertise local products. However, larger stores use a wider variety of promotional tools, including signage, displays, demos, and web marketing to promote local products.

Local product supply and demand

About half of local products are sourced through a distributor, while 40% are of local products are sourced directly from the producer.

No single distributor is used by more than 1/3 of the stores and stores work with 6 direct producers, on average, to source local products.

Nearly all (9 out of 10) stores believe that customers look for local products at their store, believe the store should carry local products to support the local economy and value local products as part of the store's brand. In fact, 100% of larger stores value local as part of their brand.

Barriers and opportunities

Vermont retailers value local foods as part of their brand, to support the economy and because their customers ask for them—and **95% are interested in selling more local products.**

The biggest demand across all stores is for local produce, dairy and bakery items.

Larger stores are most interested in produce (86%), dairy (71%), meat (71%)and bakery (71%). Smaller stores are interested in fewer product categories, with just 44% interested in produce and fewer interested in other product categories.

Lack of consumer demand and price were the biggest barriers. About half of the retailers said they need more consumer demand and better prices. Larger stores reported that the thing they need most is more consistent supply (64%).

METHODS

The online survey of independent grocers was developed by the *Intervale Center* and the *Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont* and reviewed by the *Vermont Grocers' Association* and the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund. The survey was conducted in August and September of 2013. A list of grocers was compiled using resources from the Vermont Grocers' Association and the *Vermont Food System Atlas*. The compiled list was checked for duplicates. The Vermont Grocers' Association shared the survey link with their members on the list if an email address available. Other stores were emailed the link by the Intervale Center (if an email address was available).

Approximately 390 stores were contacted by email, 73 stores completed the survey. 19 stores who did not complete the survey were contacted in October 2013 to check for any systematic bias; all 19 stated that they did not see or receive the email.

This report provides frequency analysis and cross tabulation by size of store. Cross-tabulations were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics v 20.

STORE CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1: Which category best describes your store? (N = 69)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet (N = 33)	2,500-4,999 square feet (N = 21)	>5,000 square feet (N = 14)
Convenience store	19	28.0%	36.7%	26.9%	7.1%
Grocery store	15	22.0%	3.3%	30.8%	42.9%
Country store	30	43.0%	56.7%	42.3%	21.4%
Food co-op	4	6.0%	3.3%	0.0%	21.4%
Health food store	1	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%

Stores classified themselves into type and size for this survey. Country stores formed the largest group of respondents (43%), followed by convenience stores (28%) and grocery stores (22%). Country stores made up the majority of small stores (56.7%) and a large percentage of mid-sized stores (42.3%). Grocery stores formed the largest group within the large store category (42.9%).

Table 2a. Approximately how many square feet is your store (retail space only)? (N = 68)

	Frequency	Percent
<2,500 square feet	33	48%
2,500-4,999 square feet	21	31%
>5,000 square feet	14	21%

Maximum = 35,000 square feet; minimum = 500 square feet; mean = 4,308 square feet; median = 2,500 square feet.

Table 2b: What were your gross annual sales for 2012? (N = 70)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Less than $250,000	1	1.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%
$0.25-1.0 million	30	43.0%	70.6%	28.0%	0.0%
$1-5 million	29	41.0%	26.5%	60.0%	41.7%
$5-15 million	8	11.0%	2.9%	8.0%	41.7%
Over $15 million	2	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%

The majority of stores reported their gross annual sales between $250,000 and $5 million (84%). The physical size of the store seems to be related to gross annual sales, as 70% of small stores reported sales between $250,000 and $1 million, 60% of mid-sized stores reported sales between $1 million and $5 million, and nearly 83% of large stores reported sales between $1 million and $15 million.

PRODUCT STOCKING, SALES, AND PROMOTION

Table 3: What type of products does your store carry? (N = 73)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Bakery	59	81.0%	70.6%	88.5%	85.7%
Bulk Foods	23	32.0%	20.6%	23.1%	71.4%
Coffee / other Hot Beverages	67	92.0%	85.3%	96.2%	92.9%
Frozen	65	89.0%	82.4%	92.3%	92.9%
Meat & Seafood	57	78.0%	64.7%	84.6%	92.9%
Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt) & Eggs	67	92.0%	85.3%	96.2%	92.9%
Non-Dairy Perishables (Hummus, Tofu)	51	70.0%	61.8%	65.4%	92.9%
Prepared Foods	64	88.0%	76.5%	96.2%	92.9%
Produce	59	81.0%	73.5%	80.8%	92.9%
Health & Beauty	63	86.0%	82.4%	88.5%	85.7%
Grocery (non-alcoholic beverages, maple syrup, honey)	68	93.0%	88.2%	96.2%	92.9%
General Merchandise (cleaning supplies)	67	92.0%	88.2%	96.2%	85.7%
Beer & Wine	68	93.0%	88.2%	96.2%	85.7%
Gasoline	36	49.0%	55.9%	42.3%	42.9%
Tobacco	55	75.0%	76.5%	80.8%	57.1%

The percentages of stores reporting to carry certain products were largely consistent across size categories. Exceptions to this occurred at the large stores, which carried more bulk and non-dairy perishables and less tobacco products than the small and mid-sized stores. Overall, over 90% of stores reported carrying coffee and other hot beverages (92%), dairy/eggs (92%), grocery products (93%), and general merchandise (92%).

Table 4: Among these categories, which are your top 4 revenue-generating products? (N = 68)

	Frequency of Ranking				Percent of Ranking			
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4
Bakery	1	1	1	2	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	2.9%
Bulk Foods	0	0	1	2	0	0	1.5%	2.9%
Coffee / other Hot Beverages	0	2	3	5	0	2.9%	4.4%	7.4%
Frozen	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2.9%
Meat & Seafood	4	9	4	5	5.9%	13.2%	5.9%	7.4%
Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt) & Eggs	0	3	9	12	0	4.4%	13.2%	17.7%
Non-Dairy Perish-ables (Hummus, Tofu)	0	1	0	0	0	1.5%	0	0
Prepared Foods	8	4	8	8	11.8%	5.9%	11.8%	11.8%
Produce	1	5	4	4	1.8%	7.4%	5.9%	5.9%
Health & Beauty	0	2	3	1	0	2.9%	4.4%	1.5%
Grocery (non-alcoholic beverages, maple syrup, honey)	24	12	10	3	35.3%	17.6%	14.7%	4.4%
General Merchandise (cleaning supplies)	0	1	1	4	0	1.5%	1.5%	5.9%
Beer & Wine	5	15	16	12	7.4%	22.1%	23.6%	17.6%
Gasoline	17	4	3	5	25.0%	5.9%	4.4%	7.4%
Tobacco	5	7	4	3	7.4%	10.3%	5.8%	4.4%

Of the 16 product categories, grocery products were most consistently rated as the top revenue-generating product (49 stores and 72% across all 4 rankings), followed closely by beer and wine (48 stores and 70.7%), while general merchandise and non-dairy perishables were reported the least (6 stores [8.9%] and 1 store [1.5%], respectively).

Table 5: In which product categories do you stock local products (as a percentage of those who carry products in this category)? (N =73)

	Frequency	Percent
Bakery	53	83.0%
Bulk Foods	14	61.0%
Coffee / other Hot Beverages	47	70.0%
Frozen	25	39.0%
Meat & Seafood	30	53.0%
Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt) & Eggs	62	93.0%
Non-Dairy Perishables (Hummus, Tofu)	23	45.0%
Prepared Foods	36	56.0%
Produce	46	78.0%
Health & Beauty	22	35.0%
Grocery (non-alcoholic beverages, maple syrup, honey)	53	78.0%
General Merchandise (cleaning supplies)	17	25.0%
Beer & Wine	51	75.0%

At least three quarters of stores reported stocking local dairy/eggs (93%), bakery (83%), produce (78%), grocery products (78%), and beer and wine (75%).

Table 6: Within the categories that you stock local products, approximately what percentage of total revenue do the local products account for? (N =73)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Bakery	50	38.0%	33.0%	39.0%	45.0%
Bulk Foods	13	17.0%	12.0%	15.0%	20.0%
Coffee / other Hot Beverages	47	55.0%	61.0%	56.0%	46.0%
Frozen	24	15.0%	22.0%	14.0%	9.0%
Meat & Seafood	29	37.0%	36.0%	39.0%	37.0%
Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt) & Eggs	60	47.0%	48.0%	52.0%	35.0%
Non-Dairy Perishables (Hummus, Tofu)	23	26.0%	17.0%	37.0%	24.0%
Prepared Foods	29	42.0%	32.0%	51.0%	43.0%
Produce	43	29.0%	25.0%	30.0%	32.0%
Health & Beauty	22	12.0%	17.0%	7.0%	12.0%
Grocery (non-alcoholic beverages, maple syrup, honey)	49	15.0%	16.0%	13.0%	17.0%
General Merchandise (cleaning supplies)	17	5.0%	2.0%	7.0%	6.0%
Beer & Wine	48	18.0%	18.0%	15.0%	25.0%

Local coffee and prepared hot beverages were reported consistently as accounting for a high percentage of total revenue, both across size categories (61% for small, 56% for mid-sized and 46% for large) and as an overall percentage (55%). Dairy/eggs also made up sizeable percentages of stores' total revenues (47% overall), particularly for small and mid-sized stores (48% and 52% respectively). Mid-sized stores also reported higher percentages in the non-dairy perishables (37%) and prepared food (51%) categories.

Table 7: Summary table of top revenue generators, local products, by product category

	Sell products, but not local (n = 73)	Sell local products	Don't sell products in this category	Percent of total revenue from local products	Number who ranked as a top 4 revenue category	Of those who sell local products in this category, number who ranked as a top 4 revenue category
Bakery	8%	73%	19%	38.0%	5	5
Bulk Foods	12%	19%	69%	17.0%	3	3
Coffee	27%	64%	9%	55.0%	7	6
Frozen	55%	34%	11%	15.0%	2	1
Meat	37%	41%	22%	37.0%	20	15
Dairy	7%	85%	8%	47.0%	24	23
Non-Dairy Perishables	38%	32%	30%	26.0%	1	0
Prepared Foods	38%	49%	13%	42.0%	23	19
Produce	18%	63%	19%	46.0%	14	14
Health & Beauty	56%	30%	14%	12.0%	5	4
Grocery	21%	73%	6%	15.0%	49	39
General	68%	23%	9%	5.0%	6	1
Beer & Wine	23%	70%	7%	18.0%	48	34
Gasoline	48%	1%	51%	0.0%	29	1
Tobacco	75%	0%	25%	0.0%	19	0

These independent grocers sell a wide variety of products. More than 90% of the stores sell coffee (91%), dairy (92%), grocery (94%), beer/wine (93%) and general merchandise (91%). More grocers sell local dairy products (85%) than local products in any other category, followed by bakery (73%), grocery (73%), beer/wine (70%), coffee (64%) and produce (63%). The most commonly sold but not local products are tobacco (75%), general merchandise (68%), health/beauty products (56%) and frozen products (55%).

The biggest revenue generating categories are coffee, dairy, produce, and prepared foods, while beer/wine and grocery are most likely to be ranked as a top revenue generator.

Table 8: Is your profit margin for local products more, less or about the same as other products? (N = 64)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
More than other products	5	8.0%	10.7%	0.0%	15.4%
Less than other products	28	44.0%	25.0%	52.2%	69.2%
About the same as other products	31	48.0%	64.3%	47.8%	15.4%

About half (48%) of all stores responded that local products had the same profit margin as other products. However, among large stores only 15% get the same margin for local as other products, while 69% report lower margins for local products.

Table 9: In what ways do you promote local and/or Vermont products? (N = 73)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
In store signage	54	74.0%	67.6%	73.1%	85.7%
Outside store signage	16	22.0%	20.6%	15.4%	35.7%
Displays	34	47.0%	38.2%	34.6%	85.7%
Advertising	26	36.0%	17.6%	34.6%	78.6%
Web or social media promotions	25	34.0%	23.5%	26.9%	71.4%
Demos	19	26.0%	20.6%	11.5%	64.3%
Store name or tagline	8	11.0%	2.9%	7.7%	35.7%
None	7	10.0%	14.7%	7.7%	0.0%%

In store signage was the most commonly mentioned method of promotion for all stores, both overall (74%) and within size categories (67.6% for small, 73.1% for mid-sized, and 85.7% for large). Large stores also reported high usage of displays (85.7%), advertising (78.6%) and web or social media promotion (71.4%), while small and mid-sized stores reported using fewer promotions.

LOCAL PRODUCT SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Table 10: What percent of your local products are sourced...

	...through a distributor	...directly from producer	...by supplying your own products	...through another type of source
Mean	53	44	13	11
Median	50	40	10	5
Number of respondents	60	61	30	13

	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
% through a distributor	62	46	50
% directly from producer	40	46	45
% by supplying own products	16	10	9

Independent grocers report that about half (median of 50%) of their local products are sourced through a distributor and 40% of local products are sourced directly from the producer. On average, small stores source more than half (62%) of their local products through a distributor.

On average, grocers who source products directly source from 6 producers. However, the average is much higher (28.8 producers) due to a few who work directly with a large number of producers.

Table 11: How many producers do you source directly from? (N = 54)

Average	28.8
Median Value	6

Table 12: What distributor(s) do you use? (N = 51)

	Frequency	Percent
Black River Produce	17	33%
Capital Candy	14	27%
A.G. New England	12	24%
VT Roots	10	20%
UNFI	10	20%
Best of Vermont	9	18%
Pine State	6	12%
Dowling's	5	10%
Hibbert McGee	5	10%
Farrell	5	10%
Baker	5	10%
Provisions International	4	8%

Distributors listed below were mentioned by three or fewer grocers.

Calmont
Upper Valley Produce
Tree of Life
Local farmers
Green Mountain Farm
Direct
N&R Dairy
Albert's
g.housen
Thomas Dairy
Chex
Associated Buyers

Maple Meadow
Sprague Dairy
State of Vermont Liquor
Booth Brothers Dairy
Kehe
Wilcox Dairy
Haddon
Hood
MacAuley's
Hillcrest Foods
D+S Distribution
C&S

AB
Katherine Killian
VT Wine Merchants
Green Mountain Coffee
Mazza Farm
Brigantes
My Kid's Kitchen
Blue Heron Farm
Conamak Farm
Darby Farms
WR Paper

There are a wide variety of distributors supporting independent grocers in Vermont, with 47 distributors mentioned by at least one grocer. Most commonly, these grocers rely on Black River Produce (33% of all stores), Capital Candy (27%), A.G. New England (24%), VT Roots (20%) and UNFI (20%).

Table 13: Please indicate yes in the box below if you...

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
...believe your customers look for local products at your store?	57	88.0%	93.1%	73.9%	100.0%
...believe your store should carry local products to support the local economy?	61	97.0%	96.4%	95.5%	100.0%
...carry local products because they are more profitable than other products?	3	5.0%	8.3%	4.3%	0.0%
...value local and/or Vermont products as part of your store's brand?	53	88.0%	85.2%	86.4%	100.0%

Nine out of ten stores believe customers look for local products at their store (88%), believe their store should carry local products to support the local economy (97%) and value local/ Vermont products as part of the store's brand (88%). However, only a small percentage of stores (8.3% of small stores, 4.3% of mid-sized and none of the large stores) carry local products because they are more profitable than other products (5% overall).

BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Table 14: Why do you stock local products? (N = 53)

	Frequency	Percent
Community and Ideological reasons: *-Part of initial mission statement* *-Trying to promote local health*	27	51.0%
Business, marketing, and profit reasons: *-Tag line, advertising, brand recognition* *-Seeing demand and matching it*	16	30.0%
Quality reasons: -Feel local are better quality (e.g., more fresh produce)	5	9.0%
More than 1 of above reasons	5	9.0%

Over half of the respondents report stocking local products for Community and Ideological reasons (51%), and nearly one-third of respondents stock local products for business, marketing, and profit reasons (30%). These percentages could be potentially higher, as 9% of respondents indicated that there decision is due to more than one reason. This question was asked open-ended and the uncoded responses can be found in Table 21.

Table 15: Are you interested in selling more local products? (N = 57)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Yes	54	95.0%	100.0%	85.7%	100.0%
No	3	5.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%

Nearly all respondents indicated that they were interested in selling more local products (95% overall and 100% of small and large stores). The only exception to this appears with mid-sized stores, of which 14.3% reported that they were not interested.

Table 16: What are the current barriers to selling local or Vermont-made products? (N = 61)

	Average barrier rank (1 = most important)	Number providing rank for item
Consumers don't buy it	3.34	61
Too expensive	3.63	52
Perishable	4.02	43
Distributor doesn't carry	4.33	30
Would displace a product that is currently carried	4.22	18
Inconsistent supply	6.18	11
Requires additional accounting	4.82	11
Takes too much time	5.88	8
Other	7.33	3

All respondents to this question (61) indicated lack of consumer interest and nearly all respondents (52) indicated high cost as the most important barriers to selling local or Vermont-made products.

Table 17: What are the three things that you would need most to be able to sell more local products? (N = 73)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Distributor to carry more products	25	34.0%	32.4%	30.8%	42.9%
Bigger store	14	19.0%	14.7%	26.9%	14.3%
Customer demand	39	53.0%	55.9%	53.8%	42.9%
Marketing support	11	15.0%	14.7%	7.7%	28.6%
Lower prices	36	49.0%	44.1%	53.8%	50.0%
More consistent supply	30	41.0%	35.3%	34.6%	64.3%
More non-perishable items	8	5.0%	14.7%	7.7%	7.1%

Approximately half of stores overall reported customer demand (53%) and lower prices (49%) as being important to increasing sales of local products. Over one-third of small and mid-sized stores and over two-thirds of large stores would like to see more consistent supply (35.3%, 34.6%, and 64.3% respectively), and roughly one third of small and mid-sized stores and over 40% of large stores would like distributors to carry more products (32.4%, 30,8%, and 42.9%).

Table 18: What local product types would your customers be most interested in? (N = 58)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Bakery	35	60.0%	35.0%	50.0%	71.0%
Bulk Foods	10	17.0%	3.0%	8.0%	50.0%
Coffee / other Hot Beverages	17	29.0%	15.0%	19.0%	50.0%
Frozen	12	21.0%	6.0%	15.0%	43.0%
Meat & Seafood	25	43.0%	24.0%	27.0%	71.0%
Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt) & Eggs	36	62.0%	38.0%	50.0%	71.0%
Non-Dairy Perishables (Hummus, Tofu)	12	21.0%	9.0%	8.0%	50.0%
Prepared Foods	23	40.0%	26.0%	23.0%	57.0%
Produce	40	69.0%	44.0%	50.0%	86.0%
Health & Beauty	10	17.0%	3.0%	15.0%	36.0%
Grocery (non-alcoholic beverages, maple syrup, honey)	29	50.0%	35.0%	38.0%	50.0%
General Merchandise (cleaning supplies)	9	16.0%	3.0%	12.0%	36.0%
Beer & Wine	29	50.0%	32.0%	35.0%	64.0%

More than half of stores overall report their customers would be most interested in local produce (69%), local dairy/eggs (62%) and local bakery goods (60%), and half of overall stores also report customer interest in local grocery products (50%) and local beer and wine (50%). Large stores reported higher customer interest in local products than small or mid-sized stores in every product category, at sometimes double or triple the percent.

Table 19: What specific local products or brands would your customers be most interested in? (N = 35)

Beer and wine	Pete's Greens, Alchemist and Hill Farmstead beer, jams	Affordable meat
Produce	Pretty much anything from Vermont works for us	Fruits, meals, non-perishables
Bread, bagels	Local produce, locals wines and beer, meat ravioli	Maple syrup, produce
Cheeses and dry grocery items (easy to ship items)	Cheeses, craft beer, deli meat	Strafford Creamery, Heady Topper beer
Produce, groceries	Produce, meat, prepared foods	Homemade products that the government doesn't have to regulate
Eggs, bakery, meals	Chicken, grains, beans, produce off-season	Honey, maple syrup, cheese, seasonal produce
Toys, clothing, jewelry, books	Vermont Gluten-Free, Patchwork Bakery	Cheese, salsa, jams
Sweet corn, maple syrup, honey	Produce	Meats, fruits, veggies, baked goods
Meats, cheeses, bakery	Meats, produce, bakery, dairy	Not sure

Table 20: Would you be interested in participating in a local foods assessment? (N = 52)

	Frequency	Percent	<2,500 square feet	2,500-4,999 square feet	>5,000 square feet
Yes	27	52.0%	43.5%	44.4%	81.8%
No	25	48.0%	56.5%	55.6%	18.2%

Stores were overall fairly evenly split on whether they would be interested in participating in a local foods assessment. Across store sizes, over 80% of large stores were interested, compared to half of all small and mid-sized stores indicated that they were not interested.

Table 21. Why do you sell local products?

Why wouldn't we? We need to restart our own local economy and by stocking local products the money stays in the local area and usually comes back to us in one way or the other.
I want to support the people that support me.
We value small producers and local entrepreneurs.
We discount Vermont products as a draw -this is signed and is definitely remembered by our customers especially around holidays and other special gift times.
Since we are a local store it enhances the appeal of the store.
Market niche.
Quality, support local.
Goodwill.
Customer demand, to support local businesses.
Good for all parties.
Part of our mission is to support the local economy and to provide our members with healthy local choices.
Because they sell.
People look to support local products.
Good for the local economy. I am a small town businessman: I always try to reach out to other small businesses, local contractors, non-profit organizations.
We enjoy supporting local because we are also local. Also helps separate us from the larger chain stores.
Mission: support local economy, environmental benefit, long range food security better quality food, food safety differentiates us from other stores.
It's part of our mission as a co-op.
To support local farmers and it SELLS.
Support local business and have good standing reputation for fresh products. Can't get much fresher than local.
Customer demand and quality of product.
It's part of our core values and we've been doing it for almost 30 years.
To promote a vibrant local economy.
Because this is VT and local has a certain cachet that is very marketable. I also like to support my neighbors.
Personally I like the products and feel it is in the communities best interest for my store to support the local economy in any way I can.
To support local businesses.
Customers are looking for them and trying to help the local vendors out.

Table 21. Why do you sell local products? Continued

Suppliers of some products are my customers also so I support them as they support me, some customers prefer VT products.
I buy products from local people, because they support my business.
Quality and "Buy Local."
I feel that it's great to support our beautiful state of Vermont.
People like to see them.
Customer demand and because some of the local products are produced by the people in town.
Believe in the product.
Customer recognition. Alignment with "Buy Vermont First." Quality.
It is part of our mission statement and, as a coop, we want to support local growers and local businesses.
Because it is good for us and is what our customers want. We are not re-inventing the wheel here just getting back to the basics and our roots.
Support our town/state!
To help our local farmers.
Want to support local companies.
Great products! Keeps the money in Vermont and the sales people are wonderful.
Fresher. Higher Quality. Consumer Demand.
Helps drive local economy. Helps attract tourists. We expect people to buy local and support us, we in turn had better support local people.
Support the local business.
Quality fresher, as in corn delivered same day it's picked or cider on the same day it's made.
Commitment to the customers and support of local producers.
Customer request, help local economy.
They sell.
Help local producers.
Easily available and competitive price.
It's the right thing to do. It supports VT and local economies.
The customers want it and I as an owner am glad to help our local people who have these "fresh" products.
We like to support other local businesses, if there products fit into our mix.
To sustain local economy, and to have a direct relationship with food producers, and to differentiate from competitors.