Ohio Direct Marketing Survey Research Report

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

- Introduction
- Findings
- Summary
- Appendix: Questionnaire

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

Bringing Knowledge to Life

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Purpose of the Study

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

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

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

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

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

This project was made possible through funding from the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program, Transportation and Marketing Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

A special thanks to the direct marketing team members who assisted with this project, including Julie Strawser-Moose, Kim Darby Eckhart and those who served as expert panel reviewers.

Project Partners

Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Markets

The Ohio State University
Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) & OSU Extension
College of Food, Agricultural & Environmental Sciences (CFAES)

Contact Information

Julie Fox, Ph.D.
Specialist, Direct Marketing
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
The Ohio State University South Centers
1864 Shyville Rd.; Piketon, OH 45661
Tel: 740-289-2071 or 614-292-4900, ext. 225
Fax: 740-289-4591 or 614-292-1953;
Email: fox.264@osu.edu

http://directmarketing.osu.edu
PROJECT OVERVIEW

According to the Census of Agriculture, Ohio ranks in the top ten states for direct farm sales. In addition to Census data, other signs of growth include an increasing number of farm markets, farmers markets, wineries linked to tourism, community supported agriculture programs, produce auctions, chef-grower networks, and farm-based garden centers.

According to the North American Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association, direct marketing, as it relates to agriculture, is “selling direct to consumers - individuals, families, restaurants, tour groups, big companies and others.”

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

As direct marketers nationwide address challenges and opportunities, this study contributes to better identification of education and resources to help producers improve marketing practices and performance.

FIELD PROCEDURES

Field Procedure for this Survey Research Project

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

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

The questionnaire included 15 questions to gather data on the profile of producers and identification of their perceived marketing practices, plans, challenges, opportunities and priorities.
FINDINGS

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

![Percentage of Products](chart)

Annual Sales
More than one-third of respondents reported annual sales of more than $100,000. (34 percent > $100,000 annual sales; 66 percent < $100,000 annual sales)

![Annual Sales](chart)
Geographic Location
Respondents represented businesses throughout the state of Ohio.

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

When Producers Sell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance Traveled to Market Products</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sell only at business location, 30.15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-20 miles, 20.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 – 35 miles, 13.10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>36 – 50 miles, 11.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 50 miles, 25.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distance
When asked what was the furthest distance traveled to directly market products, 30 percent of respondents reported selling only at their business location. Forty-five percent reported traveling 1 – 50 miles. Twenty-five percent reported traveling distances greater than 50 miles.
Customers – Sales Channels
Respondents sold directly to consumers and wholesale buyers. Consumer sales channels indicated in the “other” category included off-farm retail stores; fairs and festivals; cooperatives; food banks; private contracts; and sales to friends, relatives and neighbors.

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

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

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

To determine what marketing tactics direct marketers were interested in learning more about, respondents were asked to circle a number between 1 and 6 on the interval level scale that best represented their level of interest, with 1 indicating not interested and 6 indicating very interested. Tactics rated with at least a 3 (somewhat interested) included community or media relationships 4.34; website for the business 4.33; listings in printed or web directories 3.97; E-mail 3.92; other (word of mouth, cooperative marketing and merchandising) 3.73; road
signs and billboard 3.7; host or participate in special events 3.67; samples or demonstrations 3.55; social media 3.28; direct mail 3.28; frequent buyer program 3.03. These are indicated with a ★ on the chart above.

There were six tactics that respondents indicated they would increase and they were interested in learning more. These include website for the business; listings in printed or web directories; E-mail; host or participate in special events; social media; frequent buyer program.

**Promotion and Labeling**

![Promotion & Labeling - Words used by Respondents](image)

To determine what words were important in the promotion and labeling of direct marketed products, respondents were asked to indicate what words were currently used and what words were important. Importance was indicated by circling a number between 1 and 6 on the interval level scale that best represented the level of perceived importance, with 1 indicating not important and 6 indicating very important. Other words reported to have importance include fresh, family farm, home made, FDA/ODA inspected, certified, unique ingredients, # of years in business, appreciation for selecting product, value-added words – how to use, care for, etc., biodegradable packaging. There were some differences in current practices that respondents perceived to be important. For example, locally grown was the most important, convenience was reported to be more important and affiliation was perceived to be less important.

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

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

All organizations have an opportunity to increase direct marketer affiliation, involvement and impacts.

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

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

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

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

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

**People**
- Find a niche

**Products**
- Figure out what customers need and meet that need or want
- Have fresh good tasting products
- Great products bring customers back for more
- Product attributes such as organic, natural, grass-fed, etc. help sell product
- Offer awesome and interesting quality products
- Sell products made in Ohio
- Packaging and appearance of products makes it easy to sell them

**Place**
- Prominent, easily accessible location,

**Promotion**
- Just be personal, smile, engage people in conversation and treat customers with respect
- Demonstration and taste testing always improves sales
- Give customers a sample of what you have to sell
- Make personal contacts (sales calls) with buyers, such as direct sales call to chefs
- When customers see people picking fruit, they want fresh products/experiences
- Give a well-crafted presentation to as many civic groups as possible
- Hold special events for customers
- Get local and national media involved and benefit from media coverage
- Participate in Ohio Proud and other cooperative programs
- Provide good customer service and customer service/employee training
- Offer direct or instant coupons in advertisements, inserts and direct mail
- Have regular communication and standard promotional items such as a brochure and personal references
- Billboards, eye catching roadside signs & simple strategically placed informational signs
- Local radio, television, newsletter and direct mail to prospective and existing customers
- Work with other companies to market "like" products (non-competing)

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

Numerous organizations, events and websites were mentioned in response to this question, including the State of Ohio, the Ohio Aquaculture Association, the Ohio Soybean Council, the Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association (OEFFA), the Ohio Produce Growers & Marketers Association (OPGMA), the Ohio Division of Natural Resources, Innovative Farmers of Ohio (IFO), the Ohio Wine Producers and Ohio Grape Industry Board, American Bee Journal and Bee Culture magazines, Ohio Proud, A Taste of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's coop marketing, the Convention & Visitors' Bureau, food shows.
What is one thing that would most help you IMPROVE your marketing?

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

**People**
- Attract more customers
- Schedule school tours – this generates business for years

**Product**
- Determine what the customers want before others figure it out
- Have enough supply for demand

**Promotion**
- Improve Internet marketing (website, email marketing, strategic links, blog, social media)
- Develop co-op opportunities
- Create better signs (permanent, semi-permanent directional signs, display signage)
- Take advantage of better advertising opportunities
- Provide better service
- Local PR - More exposure through local media and national press
- Connect with individual and restaurant buyers
- Work with retail store programs that feature and sample Ohio products
- Sell through independent grocers and larger retailers
- Educate consumers on benefits of local products and teach people how to use products

**Place**
- Have a market at farm location
- Be on a main road

**Planning & Management**
- Human Resources – hiring and retaining productive reliable talent
- Finance – improve cash flow and budgeting for marketing
- Develop a better understanding of marketing and a better plan
- Take more time for reading, talking, planning, taking action, evaluating
- Improve off-season comprehensive planning.
- Find a way to make our farm a "destination"
- Improve organization
- Increase capacity such as more space, land, buildings and equipment
- Work with others to improve infrastructure and capacity, such as regional distribution, high-speed connectivity, statewide signage, buy local promotions, addressing regulations

**Education**
- Classes, seminars and round table discussions with other growers/marketers
- Topics: price information, Internet technologies

The only thing is we need more farmers.- similar growing practice and

**Transition from hobby to business mode**
I'm not sure what that would be. Our biggest challenge is expanding our customer base in order to move our direct marketing towards becoming a full-time enterprise
Opportunities, Challenges and Priorities
How Market & Level of Interest in Learning
- Website for Business – greatest interest in leaning more / 2nd ranked in 2009 use
- Social media - greatest increase in tactic from 2008 - 2009

Perceived Challenges
- Getting new customers & pricing

Attributes
- Locally grown / Own Brand / Taste

Observations
- Direct to consumer vs. direct to wholesaler (retail ready / commercial ready)
  
  • Relationship between number of years selling directly to consumers and affiliation, marketing challenges and annual sales
    o Same issue as above – affiliations with various agencies are not independent for each observation, etc.
    o Idea:
      ▪ For each observation, the highest number of years selling directly to consumers through any channel will be used as the response variable
      ▪ For each observation, the highest involvement level of all agency types will be used as an explanatory variable for affiliation
      ▪ Marketing challenges variables are binary indicator variables
    o Result:
      ▪ Annual sales and several marketing challenges (selecting products, finding locations, and developing marketing plan) have significant impact on the number of years selling directly to consumers
      ▪ The resulting model has a very low adjusted R-square and the result maybe dubious – signs does not seem right too and inconsistent with the previous result
  
  • Relationship between number of years selling to wholesale buyers and affiliation, marketing challenges and annual sales
    o Results:
      ▪ Annual sales and pricing are the only variables that have a significant impact on the number of years selling to wholesale buyers
  
  • Relationship between percentage direct sales to consumers (wholesale buyers) and distance, marketing strategy, affiliation, marketing challenges and annual sales
    o Idea:
      ▪ All consumers direct sales percent were summed up and used as the response variable
      ▪ Since both percentage of direct sales to consumers and wholesale buyers should add up to 100%, it is sufficient to examine only one of them. The signs of the coefficient estimates for the direct sales to consumer should be opposite that of the wholesale buyers. Slight variation in coefficient estimates occurs due to the nature of response, such that some observations do not total up to 100%
    o Result:
- Distance, annual sales, marketing challenges (pricing) and marketing strategy (billboard sign, social media, hosting or participating in special events and sales meeting) have significant impact on the percentage of direct sales to consumers
- Distance has a negative relationship with the percentage of direct sales to consumers. This makes sense as respondents should be less likely to sell directly to consumers if long distance travel is needed
- Adjusted R-square seems to be low

Instrument validity and reliability
There are advantages and disadvantages to an approach based on managerial perceptions. Advantages include practicality of convenience and interpretability, as well as validity advantages because perceptions typically provide the most precise assessments of conditions within an organization (Lyons, Lumpkin, and Dess, 2000). Disadvantages include measures of perception may lack internal consistency due to functional bias which can impact reliability. To establish reliability and validity, the questionnaire was first reviewed by a panel of experts.

Exemption from Human Subjects Committee

Data Collection
The questionnaire was developed based on the Tailored Designed Method (TDM) consisting of five elements which individually have been shown to significantly improve response to mail surveys (Dillman, 2000). These elements include a respondent-friendly questionnaire, up to five carefully timed contacts with the questionnaire recipient, inclusion of stamped return envelope and personalized correspondence (Dillman, 2000). Tailored Design is a set of procedures for conducting successful self-administered surveys that produce both high quality information and high response rates (Dillman, 2000, p. 29).

For this study, the target population was initially contacted through email to introduce the study. One week after this email, a package, with a personalized letter, a printed questionnaire, and a stamped return envelope, was mailed to the target population. One week later, non-respondents were sent an email with a second invitation to participate and a link to a web-based version of the questionnaire. A second email was sent to non-respondents the following week. After two weeks with the web-based option, non-respondents were sent a fax reminder with response options. As a final contact, non-respondents were contacted through a telephone call to request their participation in this study. All respondents were mailed a summary of the study (Figure 3.3).

Data Analysis
Data was entered and analyzed through descriptive statistics, using SPSS 17.0, a statistical software program commonly used for analyzing research data (Norusis, 2004). Data from the questionnaire was recoded as needed for consistent reporting of 1 as an indication of a less entrepreneurial organization and 8 as an indication of a more entrepreneurial organization.

Analysis included screening data for potential errors and considering non-response bias. Results were reported in statistical summaries so that information about individual companies could not be identified.

Non-respondents

These findings provide a framework for further discussion and recommendations.
Appendix

Questionnaire

Ohio Direct Marketing Survey

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

1. Did you direct market agricultural products to consumers or wholesale buyers in 2008? (Place an X by yes or no)
   Direct marketing includes selling through various methods – see Question 3 below for details.
   ___ Yes  ___ No
   Please continue to question 2.
   To help us understand why you are not involved in direct marketing and how you do sell your products, please write comments here (attach additional pages if needed). There is no need to complete questions 2-15.

2. WHAT DID YOU SELL IN 2008?
   a. Write the percentage of sales you made through direct marketing in 2008. The combined total of all products will be 100%.

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

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

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

3. WHERE DID YOU SELL & WHO WERE YOUR BUYERS?
   a. Write the percentage of your sales for each method during 2008. The total products sold directly to consumers and wholesale buyers should be 100%. If you sell through other methods, write the method on the "other" line provided.

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

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

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

4. PROMOTION & LABELING - What words do you use in the promotion or labeling of your products?
   In the left column, place an X for all that applied to your promotion or labeling in 2008.
   Then, for EACH item, circle a number from 1-5 that indicates the level of importance you think each has for your customers.

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

15
5. WHEN DO YOU SELL YOUR PRODUCTS? Place an X by each month you sold direct in 2008.


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 miles</td>
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<td>4-7 miles</td>
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<td>8-15 miles</td>
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<td>16-20 miles</td>
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<td>21-35 miles</td>
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<td>36-50 miles</td>
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<td>More than 50 miles</td>
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7. HOW DO YOU MARKET?

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
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8. AFFILIATION - First, circle a number from 1-6 to indicate your level of involvement with each of the following. Then, for those that you are involved with, circle a number from 1-6 to indicate how much your involvement impacts your marketing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Involved</th>
<th>Very Involved</th>
<th>No Marketing Impact</th>
<th>High Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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9. MARKETING CHALLENGES - In the left column, place an X to indicate your marketing challenges in 2008.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Interested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
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10. ANNUAL SALES - What were your total annual direct marketing sales in 2008? (check one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales Range</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,001 - 25,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$25,001 - 50,000</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$50,001 - 100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001 - 250,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,001 - 500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$501,000 - 1 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 million</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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

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

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

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

15. What is one thing that would most help you IMPROVE your marketing? (Please describe. Attach additional pages as needed.)
This report is one of three reports associated with the project, “Exploring and improving marketing practices and regional market access for Ohio’s food producing farmers”.

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

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

The third phase included web-based survey research to further study the impacts of improved market access.
Direct Marketing – Important to Ohio’s Economy

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

The Ohio Direct Marketing Team

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

Ohio MarketMaker

Improving connections in Ohio’s food system

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