challenges

CONNECTING

Over the last decade, there have been significant efforts to promote and market locally-produced food:

- Farmers markets
- Retail
- Farm-to-table restaurants

Despite growing interest in purchasing local foods, local food producers and consumers are not connecting (Khachatryan, Rihn, Campbell, Behe, & Hall, 2017).
More and more farmers are encouraged to promote their businesses on social media.

But it can be challenging to create effective content that reaches your audience. Does this resonate with your experiences?
The unanswered questions

In order for local food producers to market their products to consumers, they need to know:

- what products do consumers find most appealing
- what is the level of interest in local food
- what are the perceptions consumers have towards these types of products
- what barriers exist to purchasing these products
- what is the range of prices consumers would find acceptable
- where would consumers access these products
- what media channels do consumers use to find information about local foods
MARKETING MIX

PROMOTION
How will they find out about it?

PLACE
Where is it offered?

PRODUCT
The value or desired outcome.

PRICE
Consider the cost of the product or offering.
Appeal

- Economic impact
- Social impact
- Quality and freshness
The golden quadrant

ACHIEVING THE OPTIMAL LEVEL OF BOTH COMPETENCE AND WARMTH IN YOUR MESSAGING CAN LEAD TO BETTER PURCHASE OUTCOMES (ZAWISZA AND PITTARD, 2015).
WHAT WE SOUGHT TO FIND OUT

RQ1: Based on previous literature, what are consumers' current attitudes and perceptions toward local foods?

RQ2: Would videos, such as the ones we produced in collaboration with local farmers, be viewed by our participants as an appropriate way for local food producers to connect with audiences?

RQ3: Will a framing of warmth as opposed to competence affect participants' perceptions of local farmers? RQ3a asked, do warmth versus competence framings subsequently modify participants' attitudes and perceptions towards local foods?

And do demographics play a role in these responses for each of the questions?
Method

Kingbird Farms

Plowbreak Farms

Created a warmth and competence video for two farms, keeping the length under 90 seconds. Survey respondents were randomly selected to watch one of the four videos.
RQ1: In a nationally representative sample, what are consumers’ attitudes and perceptions towards local foods?

What is your level of interest in purchasing locally produced food? (M = 4.22, SD = 0.85, n = 966)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Interest</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very interested</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1 BENEFITS OF PURCHASING LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits the local economy</td>
<td>77% (n = 744)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports the community</td>
<td>75% (n = 728)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better quality of food</td>
<td>63% (n = 607)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More environmentally friendly/sustainable</td>
<td>52% (n = 506)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better tasting</td>
<td>50% (n = 481)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthier</td>
<td>46% (n = 445)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More affordable</td>
<td>22% (n = 210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/Other</td>
<td>2% (n = 19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2 BARRIERS OF PURCHASING LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>56%(n = 540)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>41%(n = 398)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>21%(n = 205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>18%(n = 172)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar with the farm/producer</td>
<td>15%(n = 148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/Other</td>
<td>12%(n = 119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure what to make</td>
<td>6%(n = 62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Public perceptions of farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard-working</td>
<td>70% (n = 677)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>51% (n = 494)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>50% (n = 485)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>42% (n = 406)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>24% (n = 228)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging</td>
<td>19% (n = 184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>18% (n = 178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>17% (n = 168)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ 2: Should farmers get social?

Do you think social media, such as Instagram, is a good platform for farmers to engage with local consumers?
(M = 3.81, SD = 1.02)

There is a preference among women between the ages of 30-64, as well as individuals that identify politically as Democrats, that would enjoy or have an interest in sharing or viewing local producer videos and messages on social media.
### What's in a label?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willingness to purchase foods labeled as locally produced</th>
<th>Percentage (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, if they were clearly labeled and only slightly more expensive than the alternative.</td>
<td>34% (n = 326)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, if they were clearly labeled with the name of a farm I recognize.</td>
<td>31% (n = 302)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, if they were clearly labeled and cheaper than the alternative.</td>
<td>26% (n = 252)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I would only purchase directly from a local food producer or farmer's market.</td>
<td>4% (n = 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I will just purchase what is most convenient and cheapest.</td>
<td>5% (n = 48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Studies examining visual attention to labels indicate that visual attention decreases with increased exposure and familiarity, but reduced visual attention does not diminish the importance of designating products as locally produced (Khachatryan et al. 2018).
The warmth-framed videos had a positive effect on the perception that farmers and local food producers are approachable (B = 0.355, SE = 0.170, p = 0.05).

The warm videos had a positive effect on the appeal of purchasing locally produced foods for supporting the community (B = 0.408, SE = 0.197, p = 0.05), but a negative effect on the perception of locally produced foods are better tasting (B = -0.414, SE = 0.163, p = 0.01).

Watching the video decreased the perceived barrier of being unfamiliar with a farmer as a barrier to purchasing local foods (And watching the video had a positive effect on how trustworthy people perceive farmers to be.)
Familiarity with a local food producer may increase purchase intentions, which is consistent with the suggestions provided by Witzling and Shaw (2019), especially if trying to connect with groups that tend to be more conservative.

Food quality, safety, and health benefits are the primary values of purchasing local foods, as well as the economic benefits, which span economic and political status (Broad et al. 2022; DeLind 2002; Onozaka et al. 2010).

Videos are a useful tool for advertising locally produced foods. However, dimensions of warmth and competence combined could result in higher levels of interest.

The results from our survey suggest videos on social media could be a useful method for promoting and sharing information about local food producers among women between the ages of 18 and 44.
TAKEAWAYS

• Warmth does slightly affect perceptions of the approachability of local producers, and the perceived benefit of supporting the community by purchasing locally produced foods.

• Social media style videos overcome aspects of psychological distance between a consumer and food producer.

• Social presence is the contact between communication partners. The higher the social presence, the higher the impact of the communication.

• Social media style videos build connection and trust between communication partners through a high social presence and the ability to deliver high-quality information that can reduce ambiguity and uncertainty.

[social presence theory (Short, Williams, and Christie, 1976) and media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986)]
Food involvement has been shown to influence the effectiveness of messaging about food.

Food and people’s relationships with food can waffle between high involvement (pleasure) and low involvement (utility). However, decisions about purchasing local foods may be mediated by other factors such as perceived health benefits, economic benefits, and quality of food (Lu & Chi, 2018).

Personal involvement with a product, such as food, elicits excitement and enthusiasm and leads to positive emotions toward the product (Campbell and DiPietro, 2014).
“TRUST, ENCOURAGED BY SOCIAL MEDIA, SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTS INTENTION TO BUY/DONATE. THEREFORE, TRUST HAS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ECOMMERCE BY DIRECTLY INFLUENCING INTENTION TO BUY AND INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING PERCEIVED USEFULNESS.” (HAJILI, 2014)
Steps

01. Develop a clear strategy for telling your story. What makes you/your farm unique? What is your golden quadrant?

02. Clarify your message and have a clear call to action.

03. Establish a clear primary and secondary audience.

04. Determine the most effective channels for reaching your target audience.
Common Goals

Financial gains or savings

Increased satisfaction

Participation levels

Expressions of trust

Expressions of loyalty - retention or renewals

Change in tone or attitude

Change in knowledge or understanding

Increased demand or desire

Joining, subscribing, following

Increased readiness or empowerment to act

Increased levels of influence over target groups (media, policy, industry)

Change in behavior
Common Strategies

Permission-based
Sharing content with subscribers - they permitted you to send them marketing materials.

Content
Attracting people to your work by creating and distributing valuable content.

Event and Experience
Events or experiences to promote programs and services.

Relationship
Creating and maintaining long-term relationships with strong supporters.

Word of Mouth
Tell family or friends about the program.

Peer-to-Peer
Training volunteers to advocate on your behalf.

Influencer or Ambassador
Building relationships with people that can influence your target audience.

Partner or Alliance
Cooperating with other organizations to jointly promote your cause.
Tactics

Often used

The content you make and channels you distribute through

- Websites and blogs
- Email, as single topic notices and appeals and as multitopic newsletters
- Social media
- Media relations or public relations
- Events, including hosted gatherings, presentations and public speaking, personal visits, and displays and booths
- Direct mail, including invitations, appeals, and print newsletters

Additional options:
- Paid advertising
- Signage
- Brochure, flyers, and other “leave behind” materials
- Additional online tools such as mobile apps and instant messaging
- Guest writing or syndication on other people’s blogs or publications
If using social media, when to post

- Social media (in general): The best times to post on social media, in general, are 7:00 PM, 3:15 PM, and 8:41 AM on Friday, Wednesday, and Monday.
- Instagram: The best times to post on Instagram are 9:00 AM, 8:00 AM, and 10:00 AM on Wednesday, Friday, and Tuesday.
- Facebook: The best times to post on Facebook are 9:00 AM, 7:00 AM, and 10:00 AM on Friday, Wednesday, and Monday.
- Twitter: The best times to post on Twitter are 10:00 AM, 9:00 AM, and 12:00 PM on Wednesday, Friday, and Thursday.
- LinkedIn: The best times to post on LinkedIn are 11:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 12:00 PM on Tuesday, Thursday, and Wednesday.
- Pinterest: The best times to post on Pinterest are 9:00 PM, 4:00 PM, and 8:00 PM on Friday, Tuesday, and Thursday.
Know your audience
Without segmentation:

- Sales (price x demand)
- Unaddressed value in the market

With segmentation:

- Sales
- Additional revenue from additional products

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## Segmentation variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEOGRAPHIC</th>
<th>DEMOGRAPHIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Socio-economic group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban vs. rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSYCHOGRAPHIC</th>
<th>BEHAVIORAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Rate of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Benefits sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Loyalty status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Readiness to purchase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **GEOGRAPHIC** variables focus on geographic location.
- **DEMOGRAPHIC** variables include demographic characteristics like age, gender, occupation, etc.
- **PSYCHOGRAPHIC** variables delve into personality, lifestyle, and attitudes.
- **BEHAVIORAL** variables look at usage rates, benefits sought, and readiness to purchase.
Consider changing dietary patterns

- Globally, the food production system is focused on ultra-processed foods (UPFs).
- UPFs, currently represent the fastest growing segment of the food supply.
- These foods, high in sodium, sugar, saturated fats, and highly refined grains dominate diets of low-income individuals and middle to high-income individuals who do not know how/do not want to cook.

(Mismatch: Biology which evolved over millennia clashes with modern technology)

Core biochemical and physiologic processes have been preserved from those who appeared in Africa between 100,000 and 50,000 years ago.

**Biology evolved over 100,000 Years** | **Modern technology has taken advantage of this biology**
--- | ---
Sweet preferences | Cheap caloric sweeteners, food processing create habituation to sweetness
Thirst, hunger/satiety mechanisms not linked | Caloric beverage revolution
Fatty food preference | Edible oil revolution — high yield oilseeds, cheap removal of oils, modern processed food/vendor, stall & restaurant sector
Desire to eliminate exertion | Technology in all phases of work and movement reduce energy expenditure, enhance sedentarism
Snacking Behavior | Modern food marketing; accessibility everywhere of unhealthy, nonessential, ready-to-eat snack foods
Real food with minimally processed ingredients "new" | Ultra-processed foods: more energy density, additives, smells, hyperpalatable; Beverages: many sweeteners used

(Popkin and Wen Ng, 2021)
Additional changes that present new consumer segments

- EAT Lancet – developed a global scientific framework for healthy and sustainable diets, which is influencing government nutritional recommendations
- Supply chain disruptions
- Availability and costs of foods and nutrition decline
Another way to think about segmenting or targeting audiences:
Micro-moments

I-want-to-know moments

65% of online consumers look up more information online now versus a few years ago.²

66% of smartphone users turn to their phones to look up something they saw in a TV commercial.³

I-want-to-go moments

2X increase in "hear me" search interest in the past year.⁴

82% of smartphone users use a search engine when looking for a local business.⁵

I-want-to-do moments

91% of smartphone users turn to their phones for ideas while doing a task.⁶

100M+ hours of "how-to" content have been watched on YouTube so far this year.⁷

I-want-to-buy moments

82% of smartphone users consult their phones while in a store deciding what to buy.⁸

29% increase in mobile conversion rates in the past year.⁹
Content marketing is basically creating marketing that is valuable on its own, adds value beyond a transaction, and leads to a business outcome.

Andre and Edouard Michelin founded their world-famous tire company, fuelled by a grand vision for France’s automobile industry at a time when there were fewer than 3,000 cars in the country.

The brothers created their guide to help French motorists plan out their road trips with suggestions for where to stay and eat. Longer, more frequent trips meant more tire sales!

Michelin published its first guide for French motorists in 1900 with helpful tips for travel and ratings for top restaurants. The company created a win-win by adding value and empowering their customer base to enjoy what they loved, and Michelin grew as a result.
Thank you!

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