



Direct Marketing Grass Fed Beef Survey

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July 2006

Direct marketing grass fed beef begins with producers understanding consumers, and then finding opportunities to share what they have to offer. The Living Off the Land Grazers (Juneau and Neighboring Counties) hosted an educational event entitled “A Taste of Country” on September 24, 2005 at the Irvin Osterloh Farm. Although other locally grown or raised products were promoted, the focus was on direct marketed grass fed beef.

Based upon survey results (n=33) 58% of participants considered themselves Non-Farm Residents, 36% Farm Owner/Operators and 6% other. A comparison of survey responses showed no difference between Non-Farm Residents and Farm Owner/Operators thus results are being reported as a whole.

When asked how likely is it that they would consider buying meat directly from the producer, 91% indicated “Very Likely”, or “Somewhat Likely” and 9% indicated “Not Likely”. When asked what predetermined size they would prefer 7% answered “Whole”, 59% answered “Half”, 10% answered “Quarter”, 17% answered “Eighth” and 7% answered “Other”. When asked if it would increase their desire to purchase directly from the producer if they could purchase selected cuts (steaks, roasts, ground, etc.) rather than predetermined sizes, 64% said “Definitely” or “Maybe” and 36% said “Probably Not”.

Participants were asked to place an importance on attributes that they look for when buying meat. All participants indicated that “grass fed/pastured” beef was “Very Important or “Somewhat Important” to them. Other attributes are summarized in the table below.

Attributes you most look for when buying meat.	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Locally grown	71%	23%	6%
Humanely raised	73%	23%	3%
Grass fed/pastured	79%	21%	0%
Antibiotic free	90%	3%	7%
Hormone free	94%	3%	3%

One educational component of this event was to present benefits of CLA beef. Ninety-seven percent of participants indicated “Considerable” or “Some” increase in knowledge about the benefits of CLA beef. When asked what ideas they would take home with them that they haven’t heard before, the majority of comments were regarding the benefits of CLA. Selected comments given included: “benefits of CLA”, “Increase CLA in family’s diet”, “Importance of CLA(s) and exercise” and “the connection between farmers’ raising beef on pasture increases the CLA amount and equals more healthy consumers”.

Although some of these numbers will be similar across the region, the greatest benefit of this type of survey is to the local producer, in this case, Irvin Osterloh. Irvin now has a much clearer understanding of what his customers are looking for. All direct marketers should consider some type of information gathering process.