Marketing recommendations for community supported agriculture:
Member recruitment and retention

February 2017

Laura Witzling[1], Bret Shaw[1,2]

[1]University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dept. of Life Sciences Communication
[2]University of Wisconsin-Extension

Table of contents

Summary

FairShare CSA Coalition sought to better understand consumer attitudes and behaviors related to community supported agriculture (CSA) by surveying current and former CSA members, in addition to individuals who have never purchased CSA. CSA farmers have expressed concern that not all shares are selling. FairShare worked with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Individuals were surveyed between November 2016 and February 2017. A total of 3,083 responses were collected among individuals who identified themselves as having currently, formerly, or never purchased CSA (referred to as the Current, Former, or Never groups).

The data suggest that the market for CSA is growing — more individuals were new to CSA than the number of Current members who plan to quit. However, new membership may not be growing fast enough to keep pace with the number of new shares offered by new or expanding CSA farms. This means increased efforts to publicize CSA are warranted, especially considering that a large minority of people who have never bought CSA are unsure if CSA options are even available in their area. Recommendations based on key findings include:

Messages should focus on fresh and healthy
Promoting CSA should focus on showing why CSA offers the freshest and healthiest food and how CSA supports local farmers. Advantages to highlight include that members get food right after it is harvested and most members (88%) say because of CSA, they eat healthier. Farmers could highlight why CSA helps local farmers more than other ways to buy local, and members could share stories about how and why CSA brought about healthier eating for them.

Gear marketing toward women
Marketing efforts geared women are appropriate as most respondents (75%) were women, even though women were not specifically targeted.

Use Wisconsin in marketing imagery
In crowded media environments like Facebook, an image like the shape of Wisconsin may be strategic as this immediately signifies the ad contains local content. Other research finds that Wisconsinites widely accept “Wisconsin” as a definition of local food.

Send frequent, short, and personable updates
Younger CSA members feel less updated about their farms and report knowing their CSA farmers less personally than older customers. This is critical, because members choosing to switch farms or stop buying CSA also feel that way. Sending numerous and brief messages about the farm on social media that showcase the farmer or farm crew members may help improve retention with younger members.

Use the word sustainable
Use the word sustainable in addition to organic, as the term sustainable resonates more with younger Current members and people who have never bought CSA.

Advertise through social networks and target people who like cooking
Younger CSA members recommend CSA more than older members, implying they may be important players when it comes to spreading the word about CSA. Ideas to encourage word of mouth include a campaign where Current members share a CSA meal with friends, giving members an incentive or discount for helping to spread the word, asking members to share their best photos of CSA-made food, and asking members to "like" a Facebook page (this enables advertising to their online networks).

Geographically targeted ads to individuals who also express interest an interest cooking is a strategy to pursue on social media.

Promote CSA options that address food waste concerns
Food waste was one of the highest rated reasons for people to stop buying CSA. Food waste may be related to one of the other highly rated reasons that people stop CSA, preferring to shop at farmers markets, because if individuals select their own items at market, there may ultimately be less waste. To address these issues:

- Advertise options that make food quantity more manageable (half shares, biweekly shares, or sharing between households). Ask members to share with others how these strategies work for them — they appear popular with Current members.
- Offer a small, trial-sized share or a one-time box a potential member could purchase. These are lower-risk ways for potential members to experience CSA.
- Encourage farmers to offer market shares (members pre-pay for a season's worth of food which they then select themselves when their farm is at the farmers market). Few Current members have market shares. The market share option may also be popular with Former members who left because they prefer the market (many Former members indicated they are open to doing CSA again).

Show customer appreciation
Farms should explore the feasibility of offering discounts for returning customers or for early sign up. These items are highly rated among members (even more so than options like home delivery). Being able to reschedule boxes when out of town should also be explored, as members rated that as highly desirable. One option for this is have members pay for 20 weeks of a 22 week season, and let them pick 2 weeks to skip.

Expand workplace CSA
Younger CSA members like the idea of workplace CSA quite a bit, while older CSA members are much less interested in it. To expand CSA to younger demographics, workplace offerings are an important strategy. Only a small percentage of Current members actually have the option now, however. Additionally, workplace CSA may be more popular in urban and suburban areas, rather than rural or small town settings.

Explore installment options
Paying in installments was very appealing to people who have never bought CSA, so that may be important to attracting new members. Advertising the price break down (e.g., a half share is like spending $18 a week on produce) may work well.

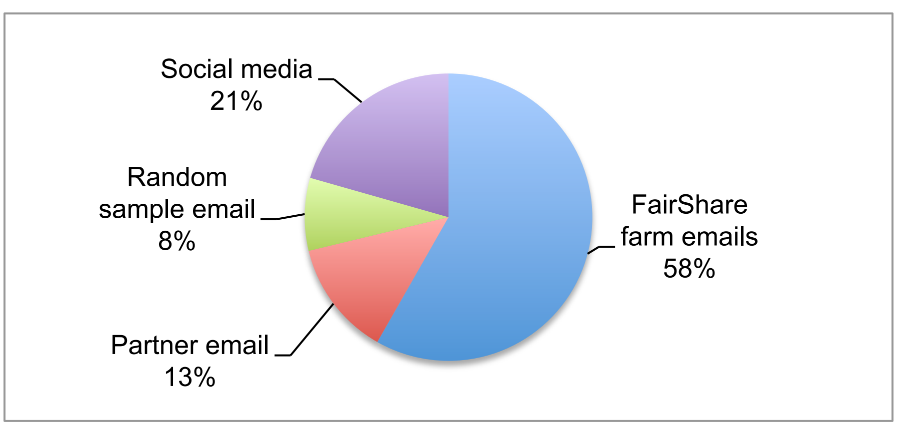
Introduction
FairShare CSA Coalition sought to better understand attitudes and behaviors related to community supported agriculture (CSA) by surveying current and former CSA members, in addition to individuals who have never purchased CSA before. The goal of the project was to generate marketing and strategy recommendations that help increase CSA member recruitment and retention. FairShare worked with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Wisconsin-Extension to develop the survey instrument, distribute the survey, and analyze results. FairShare funded the study with a United States Department of Agriculture Farmers Market Promotion grant.

Methodology
The survey instrument was drafted based on reviewing relevant literature, including other CSA surveys, and through relying on knowledge that FairShare staff have about CSA. After questions were drafted, feedback was sought from farmers in the FairShare coalition (8 provided feedback), in addition to educators in the University of Wisconsin-Extension Community Food Systems Team (29 provided feedback). The survey was then piloted with 19 individuals who fit the target respondent categories (i.e., several were current or former CSA members). The survey was finalized and data was collected between November 2016 and January 2017.

Responses were collected in four ways (**Figure 1**):
1. Farmers in the FairShare CSA Coalition emailed a survey link to their current and former members
2. FairShare and partner organizations involved with local food emailed a survey link to their membership through email
3. Targeted social media ads promoted the survey
4. A randomly selected group of Wisconsin residents were emailed a survey link through the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Survey Research Center

A total of 3,227 individuals responded to the survey. However, this analysis focuses on 3,083 responses, as 4% of respondents were removed because they were not sure if they had ever bought a share, or did not answer that question.

Figure 1. Sources of data (%)



Often survey research uses scientific polling methods (i.e., individuals in a target area are contacted randomly). However, in this research, farmers and partner groups needed to send the survey link to ensure that a large group of current and former members could be reached, and that responses would be collected from individuals most likely to be interested in local food and CSA.

Analysis strategy

Much of this report compares the responses of individuals who are current CSA members, former CSA members, or who have never bought CSA (referred to hereafter as Current, Former, or Never groups), as displayed in **Figure 2**. In addition, for some survey items, the responses of Current members are further divided based on their future plans for CSA (**Figure 3**).

Figure 2. CSA membership status (%)

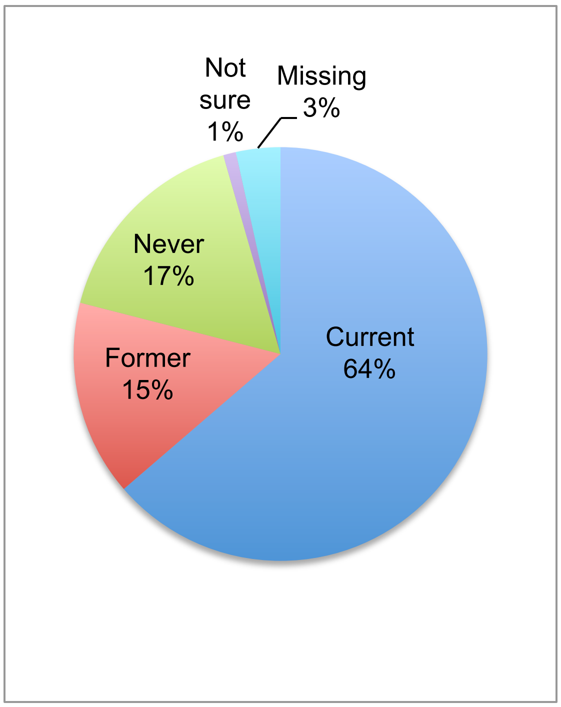
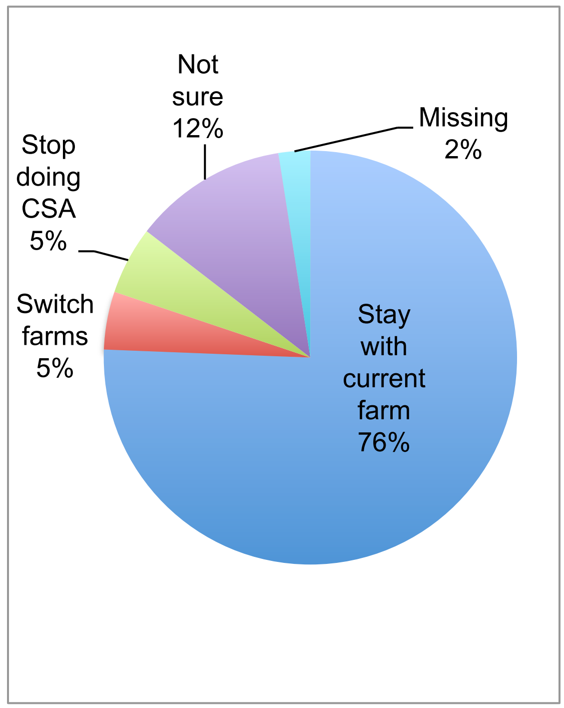


Figure 3. Current members - CSA plans for next year (%)



CSA Growth and retention

New CSA members accounted for 17% of the Current CSA members in the sample (**Figure 4**). Considering that only 5% of the Current members report that they plan to stop buying CSA next year (**Figure 3**), this signifies a net gain for membership. However, new membership may not be growing fast enough to keep pace with the number of new shares offered by new or expanding CSA farms.

The data also suggest that, on average, farms might expect about 19% of their membership to leave annually (about 5% will stop doing CSA, and 14% will switch farms). It appears that 14% of Current members switched CSA farms this year because 31% of Current members reported being new to their farms this year (**Figure 5**) but only 17% of all members are new to CSA (**Figure 4**). Although only 5% of Current members report planning to switch farms next year (**Figure 3**), an additional 12% say they are unsure of their plans for next year, which means some will switch farms, and some may quit.

Also noteworthy is that a third of Current CSA members are long-term members, as they have been CSA members of any farm for six years or more (**Figure 4**). Only 18% have been with their Current farm that long (**Figure 5**), however. This suggests that it is common for even committed CSA members to have been members of different farms.

Figure 4. Current members - total years as a CSA member (%)

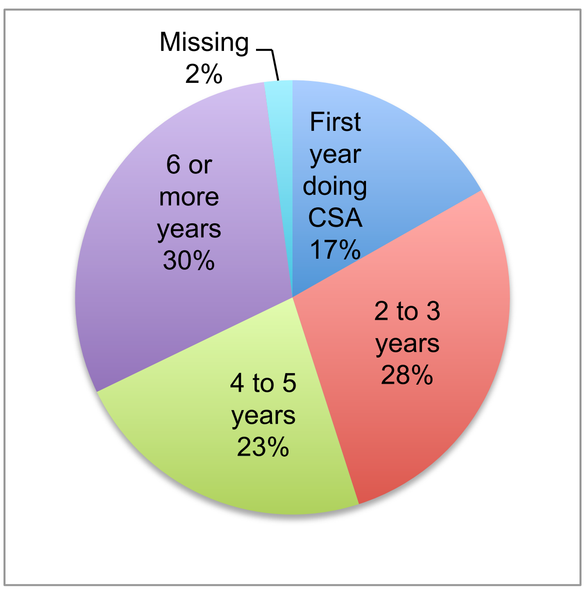
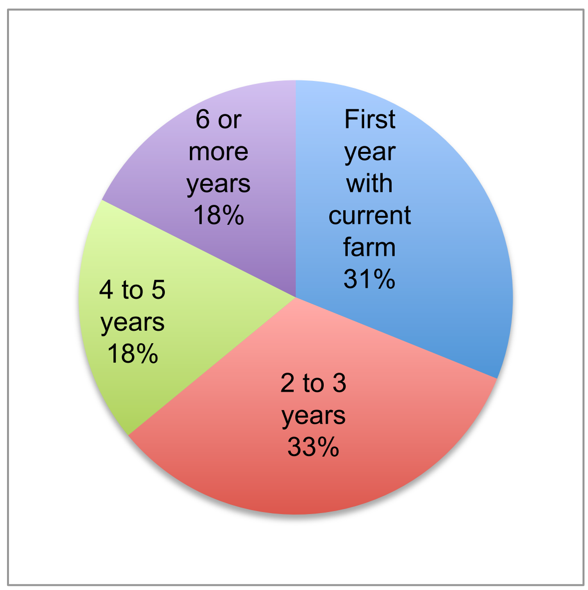


Figure 5. Current members - years with current farm (%)

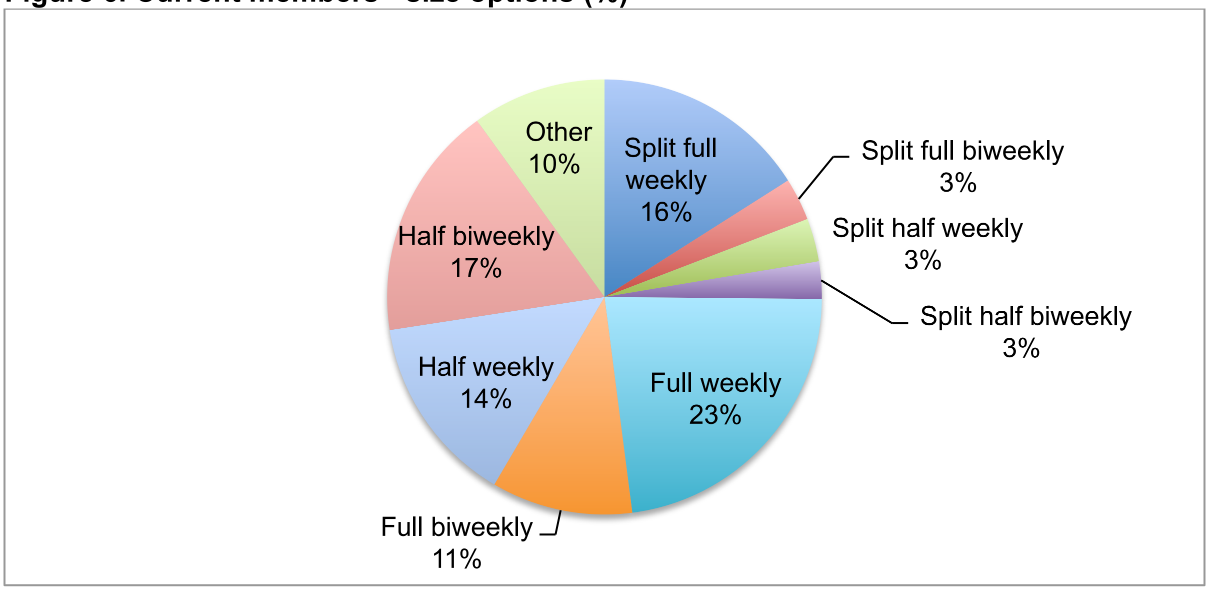


Share features

Size and delivery

Alternative size and delivery options should be widely promoted, in addition to the practice of households sharing CSA membership. Among the Current group, 67% (**Figure 6)** take advantage of ways to reduce the total quantity of food they receive. These strategies include getting a full share every other week (11%), a half share each week (14%) or every other week (17%), and splitting a share with another household (25%).

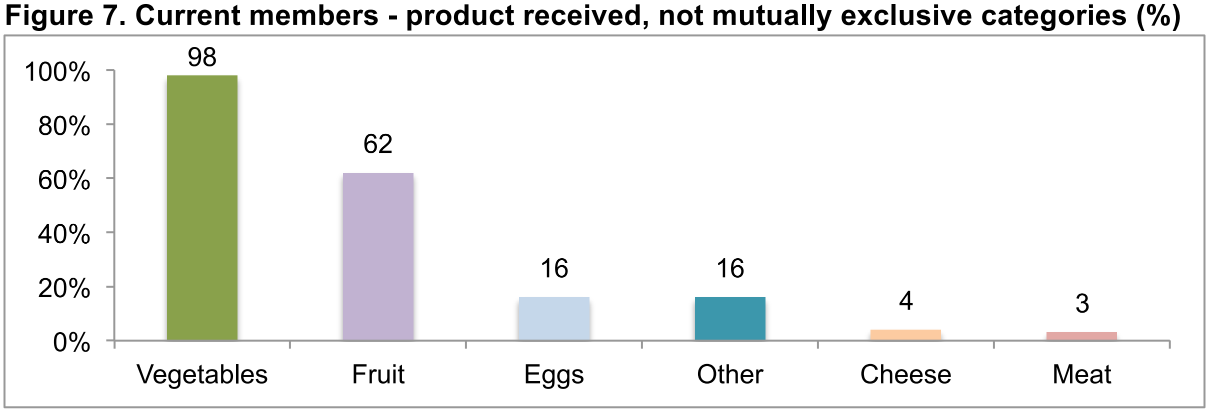
Figure 6. Current members - size options (%)



Product

General marketing can safely focus on vegetables, as such almost all Current members receive at least vegetables (**Figure 7**). Fruit is also common, with 62% of the Current group receiving fruit in their share.

Figure 7. Current members - product received, not mutually exclusive categories (%)

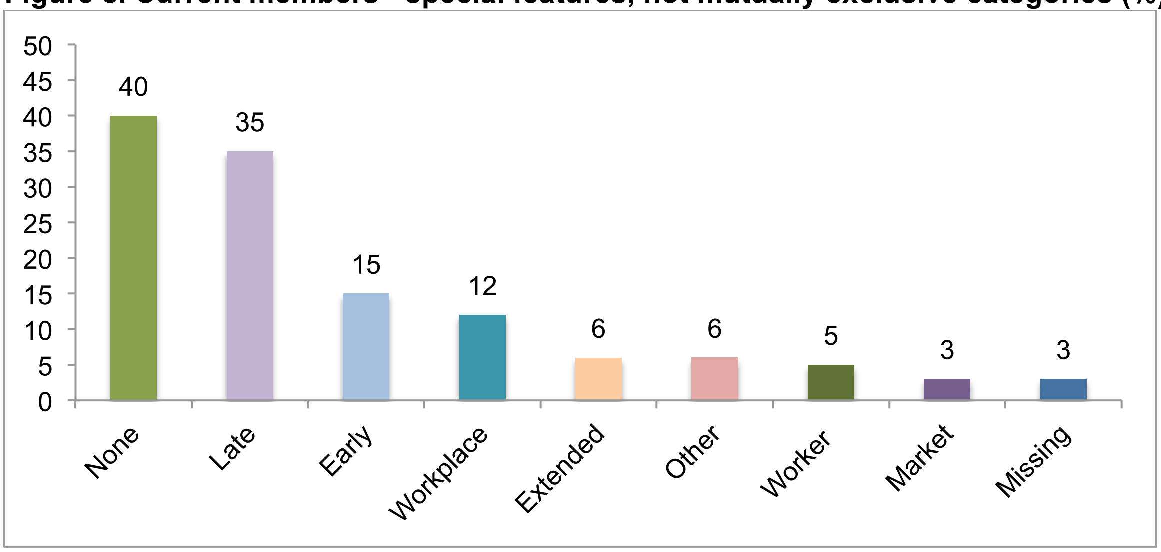


Special options

Among special options, a late season share was most popular with 35% of Current members reporting purchasing one (**Figure 8**). About 12% participated in workplace CSA. Very few participated through a worker share (where members provide farm labor in return for a share) or a market share options (members pre-pay for a season's worth of food which they then select themselves when their farm is at the farmers market).

Further promoting the offering of the market share option among CSA farmers may be advantageous, as preferring the farmers market to CSA was rated highly as a reason to not do CSA among people who have never done CSA, and as a reason Current members plan to stop (see page 13).

Figure 8. Current members - special features, not mutually exclusive categories (%)



Health insurance rebate

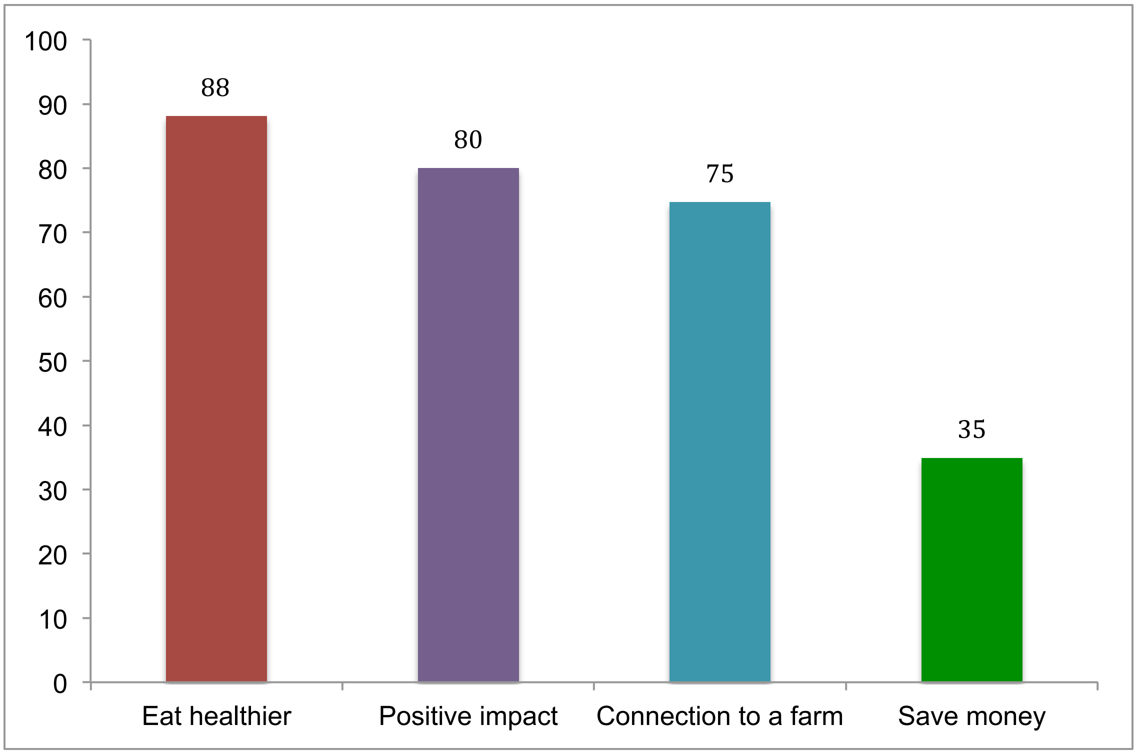
Health insurance rebates remain critical to CSA purchases, in particular for individuals with lower income. A large minority of Current members receive a rebate (38%). On average, the Current group agreed “slightly,” or about a 2 on a 5-point scale, that they would *only* buy CSA if they received a rebate. When dividing the Current group by income, however, people with a lower household income (under $25,000 per year) averaged higher, at about the scale midpoint. At another point in the survey, individuals were asked about the rebate as a reason to join CSA. People with a lower household income (under $25,000 per year) rated the rebate as a reason to join CSA at 3.8 out of 5, which is relatively high. The wealthiest group, however, rated the rebate as a reason to join more than a half point lower.

Food values

Perceived value of CSA

Promoting CSA should focus on health. Current members overwhelmingly agree they eat healthier because of their CSA (**Figure 9**). Many Current members also report that they feel they make a positive impact in the world and have a connection with a farmer because of CSA, though only about a third said they save money.

Figure 9. Current members – Responded "yes" to "because of CSA do you…" (%)



General food beliefs

It is good news for CSA that so many Current members believe they eat healthier because of their CSA, as eating healthy was rated as a high priority across all groups (Current, Former, and Never) regarding general food beliefs. Averages are displayed in **Figure 10**. For these questions, respondents rated on a 5-point scale how important each item was, with a 5 being the most important. Overall, the values rated more highly include:

- Eating healthy
- Eating local
- Supporting family farms
- Environmental sustainability

Fair labor and eating organic were rated less highly.

The Current and Former groups rated items consistently higher than the Never group. Additionally, among Current members, women and older members consistently rated all items a little more highly. The general patterns were the same though, suggesting that messaging does not need to differ substantially to appeal to particular groups.

The one exception is with organic. As can be seen in **Figure 10**, the gap between the Current and the Never group is larger on that item. The Current group averaged a 3.5 out of 5 on the importance of eating certified organic, while the Never group averaged a 2.9. Age (not shown in the figure) plays a role, with older Current members favoring organic more (ages 55 to 74 averaged 3.8, ages 35 to 54 averaged a 3.5, and ages 18 to 34 averaged a 3.3 on the importance of organic certification). Given this, it may be beneficial to use the word sustainable in marketing in addition to organic when targeting individuals new to CSA, especially younger people.

Organic certification and sustainability

Another set of questions asked more specifically about preferences related to organic certification, a sustainability claim, or neither for three product categories: produce (**Figure 11**), meat (**Figure 12**), and eggs (**Figure 13**). Overall, a greater proportion of respondents in the Current and Former groups favor organic (as opposed to sustainable or no preference) when compared to the Never group. The difference is most apparent with produce, where near to 40% of the Current and Former members favor organic certification, compared to about 30% of the Never group.

Demographic differences include that Current members with the lowest household income ($25,000 or less) favor sustainable a little more and organic a little less, and people in rural areas favor organic more. By age, organic is more appealing to older members.

Consistent with these findings are the results from another question that asked respondents how much they agreed that they would only buy a share from a certified organic farm. Overall, Current members averaged a 2.4 out of 5 (between “slightly” and “somewhat”). Older Current members averaged higher — close to the scale midpoint.

Figure 10. Food beliefs by CSA status (%)

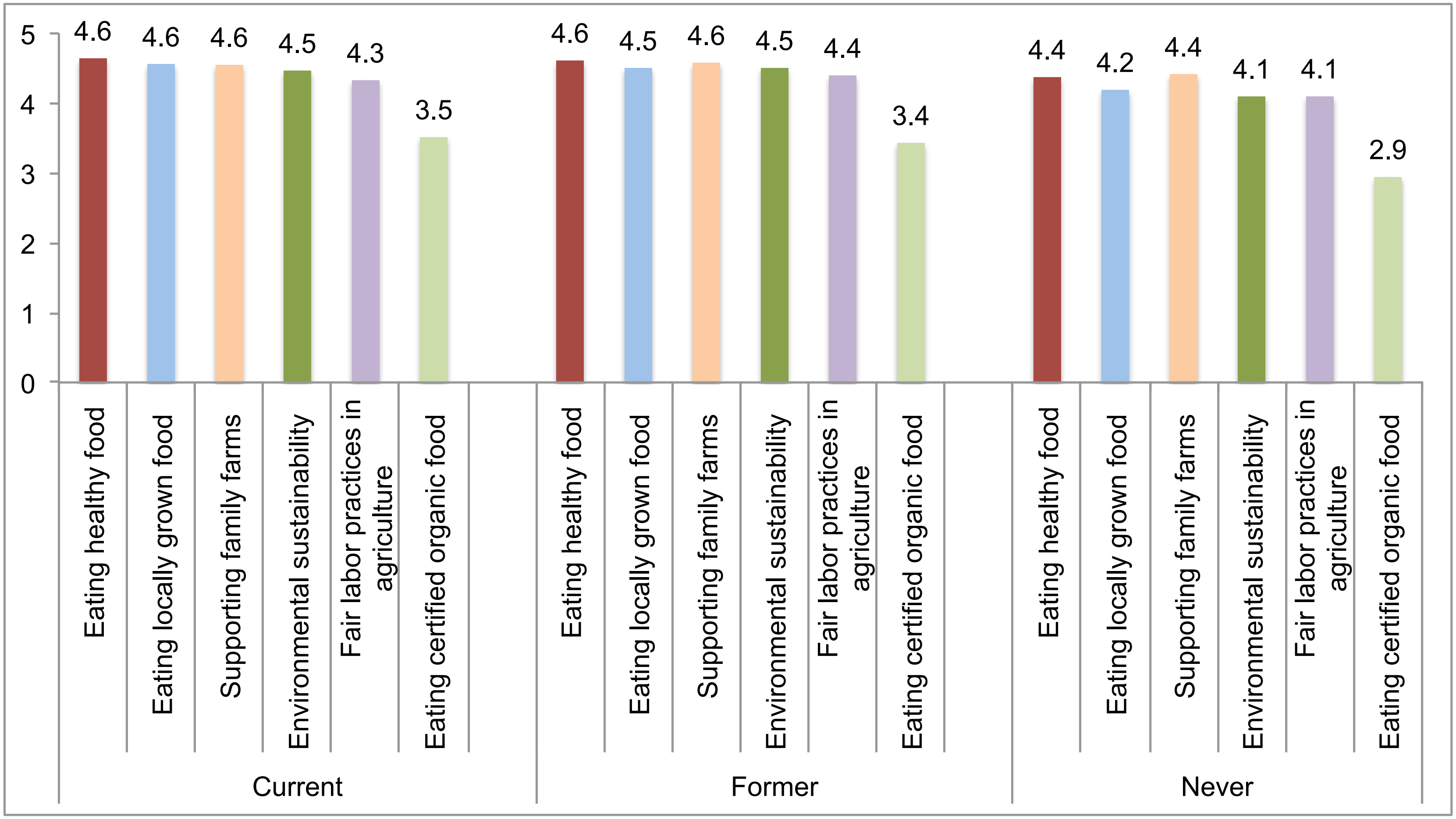


Figure 11. Produce - organic and sustainable preferences by CSA status (%)

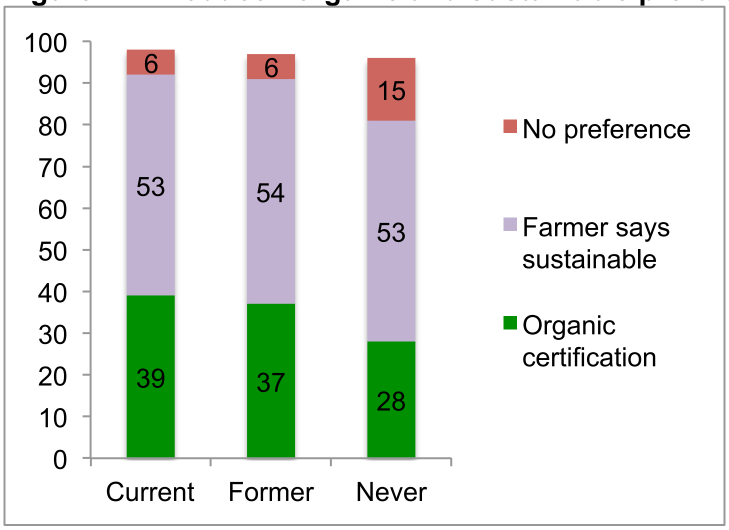


Figure 12. Meat - organic and sustainable preferences by CSA status (%)

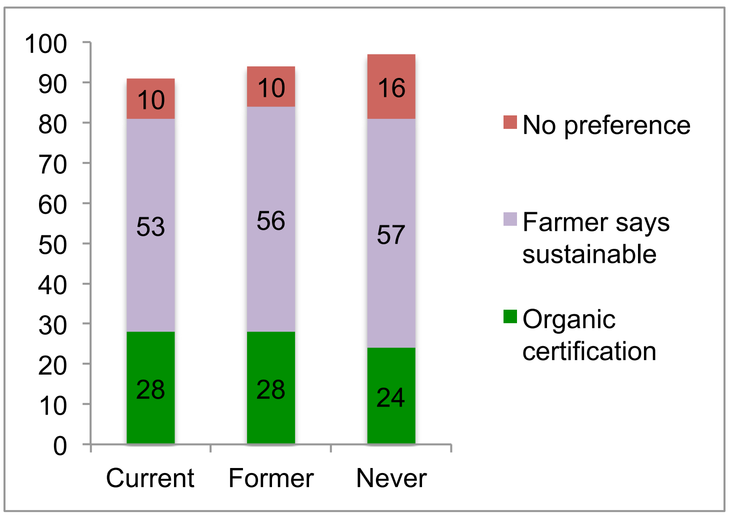
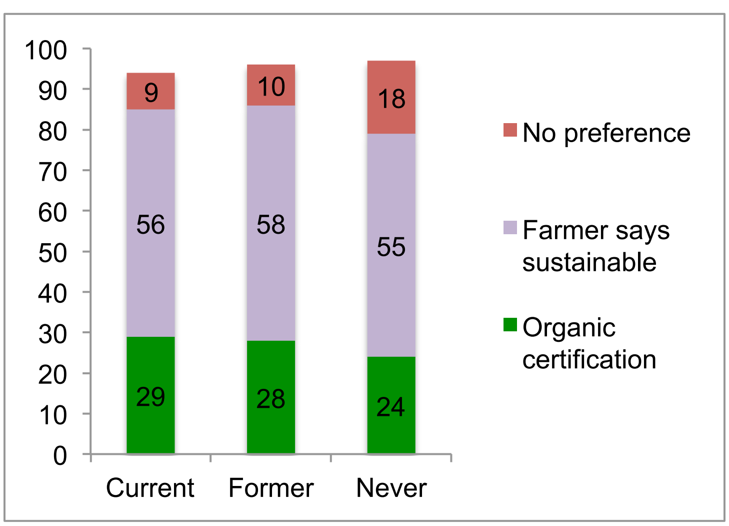


Figure 13. Eggs - organic and sustainable preferences by CSA status (%)



Reasons to do CSA

Promoting CSA should focus on showing why CSA offers the freshest and healthiest food, and why it is the most supportive of local farmers. This is because the top rated reasons to become a CSA member are to get:

- Fresh food
- Healthy food
- Local food

Some advantages to highlight include that members get food right after it is harvested and most members (88%) say because of CSA, they eat healthier (see page 8). Farmers could highlight why CSA helps local farmers more than other ways to buy local, and members could share stories about how and why CSA brought about healthier eating for them.

In general, the Current and Former group feel consistently stronger about the items than the Never group. Averages are shown in **Table 1**, where a 5 indicates a respondent feels most strongly that the item was or would be a reason to join a CSA. While averages for the Never group were lower, this group still followed the same pattern with fresh, healthy, and local being the top-rated reasons.

Mid-rated reasons are to support local farmers, eat seasonally, support organic farmers, eat organic food, try new food, and get to know farmers. The reasons rated least highly were getting to use an insurance rebate, being part of a CSA community, and because family or friends suggested it.

When the Current group is divided by their future CSA plans (not shown in the table), the same general pattern is found for each group. However, individuals who plan to stay with their current farm consistently rated all reasons slightly higher than people planning to stop buying CSA.

Table 1. Reasons to join CSA by CSA status (averages on 5-point scale)

	Current	*Former*	*Never*
Eat local	4.6	4.6	4.2
Eat fresh	4.6	4.5	4.1
Eat healthy	4.6	4.5	4.1
Support local farmers	4.4	4.4	4.1
Eat seasonally	4.0	3.9	3.8
Support organic farmers	3.9	3.8	3.6
Eat organic	3.8	3.7	3.5
Try new food	3.6	3.4	3.3
Get to know farmers	3.5	3.3	3.1
Use rebate*	3.2	2.9	2.9
Community	2.9	2.8	*not asked*
Family/friends encouraged	2.0	2.0	*not asked*

*Only includes responses from individuals who indicated they received a rebate

Regarding demographics, among Current members, women rated items consistently higher than men. Current members with different incomes rated items similarly, though people with the lowest incomes rated supporting local and organic farmers a bit higher.

Current older (55 to 74) members rated most items slightly higher. The gap, while still relatively small, is most apparent when it comes to eating organic food, supporting organic farmers, getting to know farmers, and being part of a CSA community. These items, where the gap between age groups is larger, are shown in **Table 2** by age group.

Table 2. Current members - reasons to join CSA by age category (averages on 5-point scale)

Age group	*Eat organic food*	*Support organic farmers*	*Get to know farmers*	*Be part of a CSA community*
55 to 74	4.1	4.2	3.6	3.2
35 to 54	3.8	3.8	3.4	2.9
18 to 34	3.5	3.6	3.3	2.7

Challenges to CSA

The primary issues that prevent people from buying or continuing to buy CSA include:

- Food goes to waste
- Preferring to select one's own food, instead of a farmer selecting it
- Prefer the farmers market to CSA
- Product mix
- Price

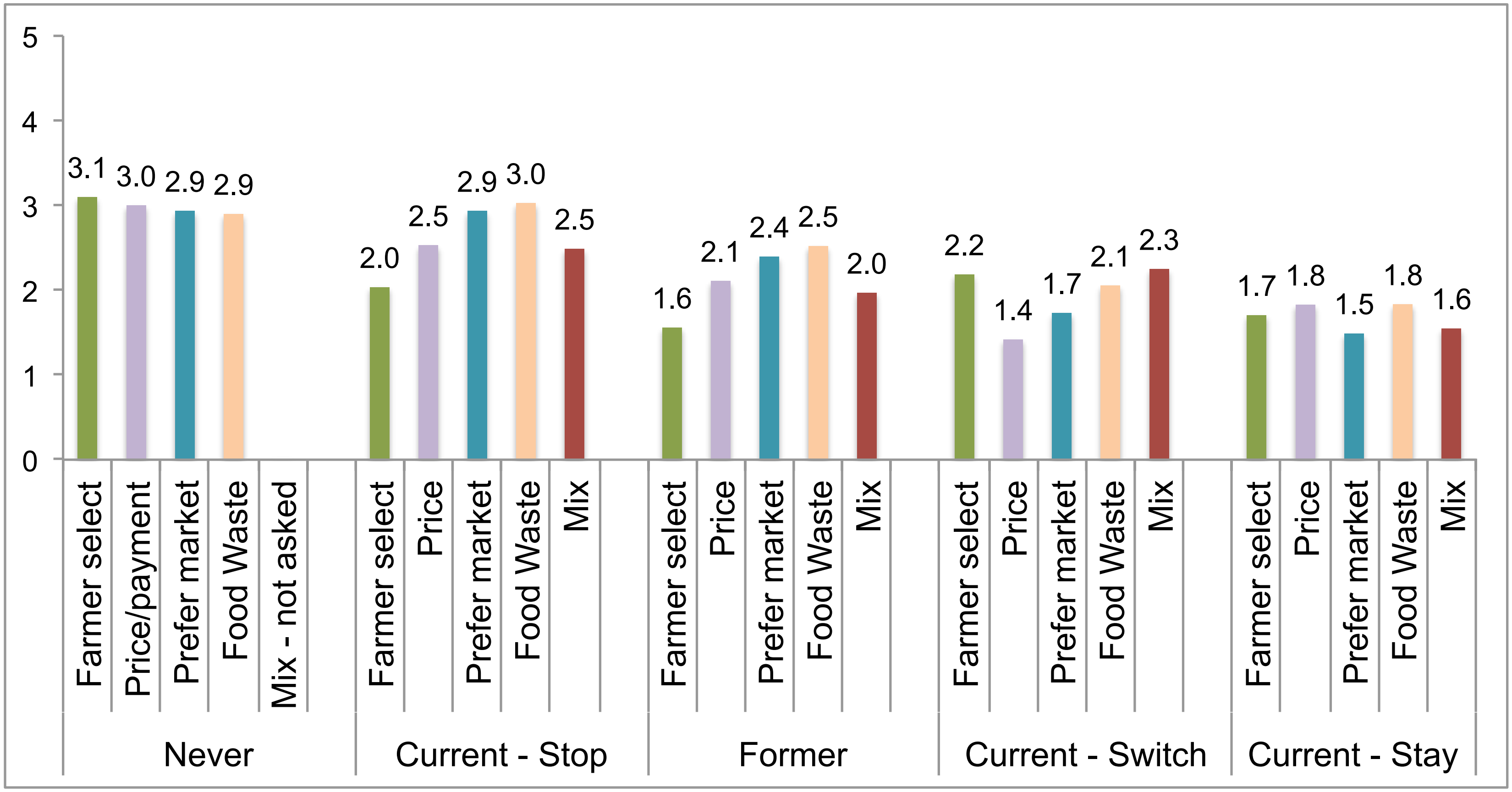
Specifically, food waste and preferring the farmers market were rated most highly among the Former group and Current members that plan to stop CSA. Younger Current members reported being a little more challenged by food waste (and cooking as well) than older members.

To address these issues, options that make food quantity more manageable should be promoted. Many members currently do this (see page 6). More farmers should offer the market share option, and the option should be promoted to potential members.

Questions related to CSA challenges were asked on a 5-point scale. Averages for items among five groups (Former, Never, Current who plan to stop doing CSA, Current who plan to stay with their CSA farm, and Current who plan to switch CSA farms) are shown in **Figure 14.** Only issues that at least one group rated as a 2.5 or higher are shown. Questions were worded slightly differently for the groups, but a higher number in **Figure 14** always indicates a greater concern.*

*The Former group, and the Current members who indicated they plan to stop CSA, were asked if the items were reasons they stopped (or planned to stop) CSA. For Current group planning to continue doing CSA, items were asked in terms of satisfaction and were then reverse coded. The Never group was asked about the items in a hypothetical way.

Figure 14. CSA challenges by CSA status (averages on 5-point scale)



Issues not shown in the figure, as they did not stand out for any group as particularly challenging, include:

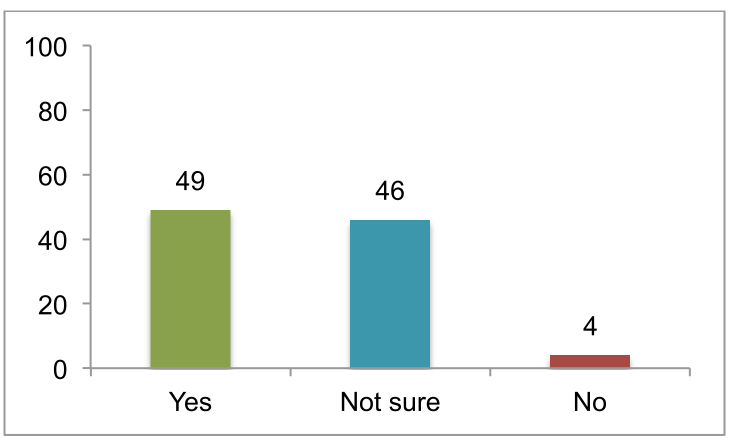
- CSA takes too much time
- CSA means much cooking
- Growing one's own food instead
- Family or friends stopped buying CSA*
- Product quality of the share
- Pickup inconvenience

In general, the Never group rated items as more concerning than the other groups. To further examine challenges among the Never group, additional questions were asked regarding CSA availability (**Figure 15**), pick up (**Figure 16**), and payment (**Figure 17**). Their responses reveal that a large minority of them are unsure if CSA options are available in their area. This means increased efforts to publicize CSA availability are warranted.

Regarding payment, only a quarter of the Never group feel that making an upfront, full payment for a share would be possible — they believe they need to pay in installments, receive a health insurance rebate, or receive a low income discount to make CSA work. This may be, in part, because, on average, the Never group has a lower household income (see page 24). If paying in installments is a realistic option, that should be promoted. Alternatively, advertising the price break down (e.g., a half share is like spending $18 a week on produce) could be attractive.

With pickup, the Never group appears less concerned, as most agreed pick up would be fine, or fine as long as it would be convenient.

Figure 15. Never group - Believe that CSA is available in their area (%)



*Only asked of Former members and Current members who indicated they would stop buying CSA next year.

Figure 16. Never group - Opinions about pick up (%)

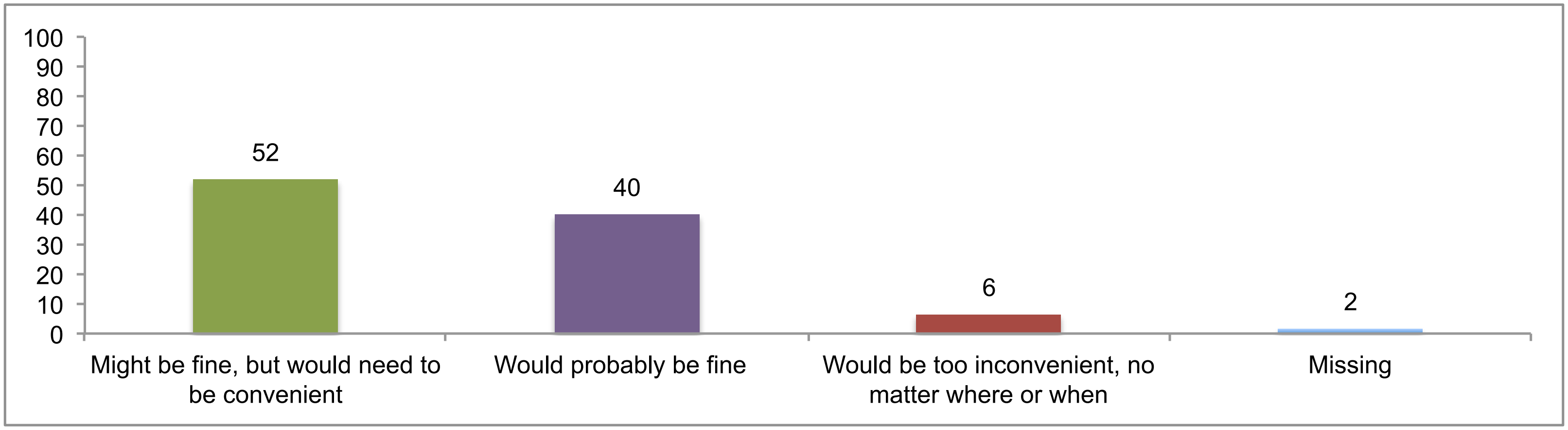
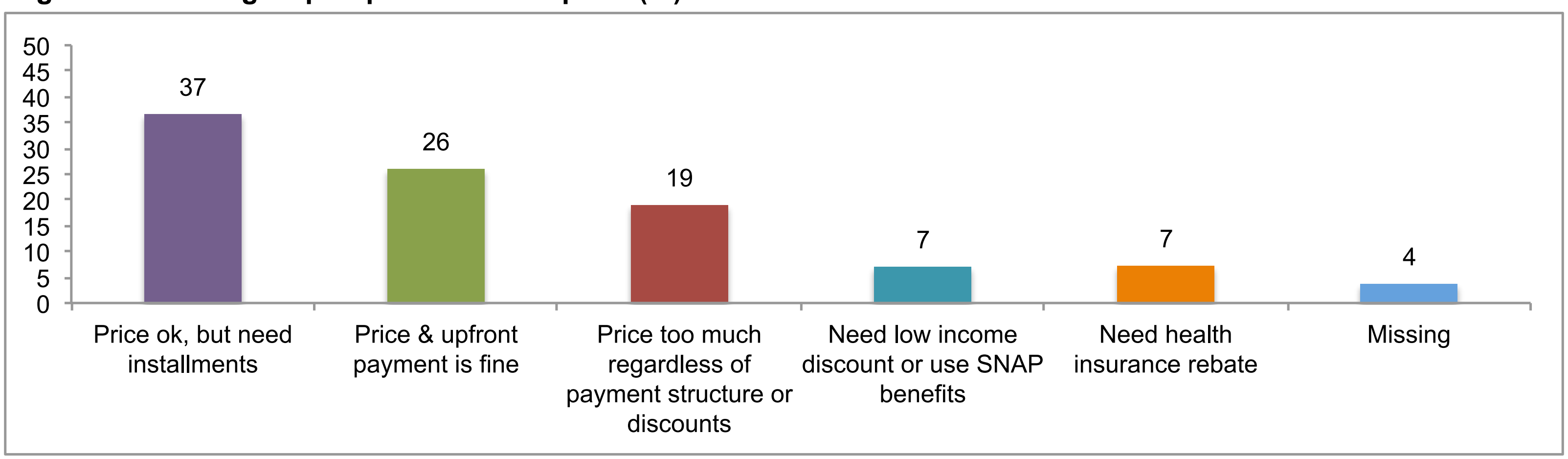


Figure 17. Never group - opinions about price (%)



Courting Former members by promoting strategies that speak to their concerns (e.g., smaller size options, biweekly delivery, market share) may bring them back on board with CSA. When asked about plans for next year (**Figure 18**), 18% of Former members indicated they planned to start buying a CSA again. Another 41% said they were unsure about their plans, meaning CSA was at least under consideration. While there is a gap between intention and behavior (e.g., clearly not all Former members who say they want to buy CSA again are going to follow through), this suggests that many former members are still open to the idea of CSA.

Figure 18. Former members - CSA plans for next year (%)

Variations to traditional CSA

The top-rated variations or modifications to traditional CSA among Current members, which are also popular among the Former and Never groups, include:

- Discounts for members that sign up early
- Discounts for returning members
- Being able to reschedule boxes for weeks that members are out of town

Items related to CSA modifications were asked on the survey on a 5-point scale, where a higher number indicates a greater preference for the idea. Averages are shown in **Table 3**, with any items rated as a 3.5 or above appearing in red.

Overall, the Former and Never groups appear more interested in alternatives to traditional CSA. Ideas that are relatively more popular with them include:

- A small share for an individual (Former and Never)
- Ordering items online that the farm has available (Former and Never)
- Home delivery (Former)
- Paying per box (Never)

Table 3. CSA Modifications by CSA stats (averages on 5-point scale)

	Current	*Former*	*Never*
Getting a discount for being a returning member	**4.0**	**3.6**	**3.7**
Getting a discount for early sign up	**4.0**	**3.5**	3.4
Rescheduling boxes for weeks I am out of town	**3.9**	**4.0**	**4.0**
Ordering items (that the farm has available) for my share online	3.4	**3.8**	**3.8**
Having a wide range of products beyond those produced by my farm that I could pay to have added to my share	3.2	3.4	3.2
Home delivery of my share	3.1	**3.5**	3.2
Having my work place be a pick up site for shares	3.0	3.1	2.5
Paying for two years at once in return for perks (like discounts on add-on products)	2.7	2.2	2.0
A smaller share designed for an individual	2.5	**3.5**	**3.7**
Packing my own box from a set list at pick up while the farmer is there to answer questions	2.5	3.0	3.3
Paying upfront for a punch card that I can use to select items myself at a farm stand or market on weeks I choose	2.4	3.3	3.4
Harvesting items myself from the farm as extras for my CSA box	2.3	2.5	2.5
Paying upfront for a share, but for specific weeks instead of a whole season	2.3	2.9	2.9
Paying on a per-box basis without a commitment to buy more	2.1	3.2	**3.6**
Sampler share - the farm providing the share would change every few weeks in order to see what several different farms offer	*not asked*	*not asked*	3.2

Based on these findings, farms should explore the possibility of discounts for returning customers, discounts for early sign up, and rescheduling boxes for when people are out of town, as these ideas were popular with all groups. One option for this is have members pay for 20 weeks of a 22 week season, and let them pick 2 weeks to skip.

In terms of courting new members, offering an individual-sized share, or offering a pay per box option once or even a few times during the season, may be ways to help these individuals take a step toward CSA membership. Such options would be lower price, less commitment, and overall lower risk for customers who have never tried CSA.

Additionally, to attract younger members, workplace CSA should be further explored. While workplace CSA and home delivery do not appear particularly popular among Current members, younger members actually like the idea of workplace CSA quite a bit. The younger Current members (not shown in table) rated it a 3.7, while oldest group rated this closer to a 2.2 (some of these individuals are likely retired). Small town and rural residents were less favorable toward workplace CSA, so the strategy might work best in urban and suburban areas.

Other demographic factors play a role regarding opinions about modifications among Current members:

- Women consistently rated modifications more favorably
- Households with children favor home delivery more
- Households with children favored individual-sized shares less, as did rural residents
- People with lower income were more interested in strategies that save money or reduce risk — paying per box, using a punch card at the farmers market, an individual-sized share, and harvesting food at the farm
- Urban and suburban residents were more favorable toward home delivery
- Harvesting at the farm was less appealing to suburban residents
- Packing a box with a farmer present was more appealing to small town residents

Communication

Current members and their farm

Farmers should consider sending more frequent updates to members, and to share more information that helps their members get to know them or crew members personally. Among Current members, those planning to stay with their current farm feel more updated, that they got to know the farmer personally, and that the farmer is more responsive to concerns. These questions were asked on a 5-point scale, where a higher number indicates more agreement. Averages for the Current group (divided by CSA plans for next year) are shown in **Table 4.**

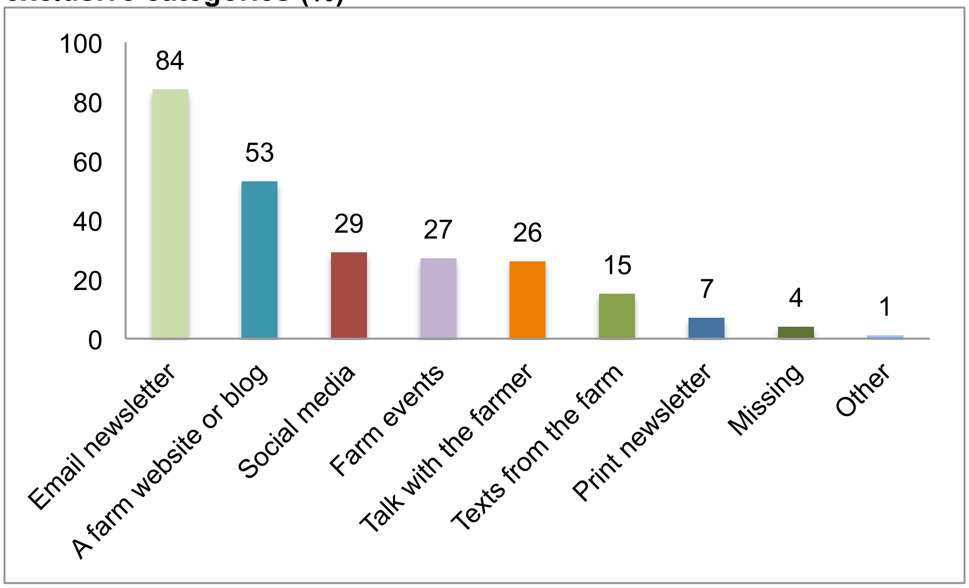
Table 4. Current members - communication with the farm (averages on 5-point scale)

	Stay	*Switch*	*Stop*	*Unsure*
I got updates about what was happening at the farm	4.8	4.4	4.5	4.5
I got to know the farmer(s) personally	3.7	3.3	2.7	3.1
The farm was responsive to my questions or	4.4	3.8	3.8	4.0
Recommended CSA to someone	3.1	3.0	2.5	2.6
Shared food from my CSA with others	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.6
Invited someone to a CSA event	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.2
Visited my CSA farm	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.5

Age is a factor with communication, with younger Current members reporting that they feel less updated about the farm and feeling less like they know farmers personally. Meeting such expectations of younger members is another reason farmers should consider more frequent contact with members. Perhaps making the content of contact shorter could balance out the need more for frequent contact, which lends itself to a social media format. At the same time, younger members report recommending CSA to others more than older members do.

Additionally, farmers should focus on electronic communication. When asked about ways to get information about the farm, electronic communication dominated. **Figure 19** shows the percentage of Current members that chose each form of communication as a preferred method. They could choose up to three, so these categories are not mutually exclusive. Email newsletters, farm websites or blogs, and social media are the communication methods most often selected as favorites.

Figure 19. Current members - preferred methods of communication, not mutually exclusive categories (%)



Attention to information sources

When it comes to sources to get information about food, Current CSA members rate their CSA most highly. Among all three groups, other sources that were popular include cooking sites and friends/family. These items are shown in **Table 5** and represent averages for each group based on a 5-point scale, where a higher number means the respondent pays more attention to the information source. Not surprisingly, when breaking Current members out by age (not shown in chart), younger members use social media more.

To capitalize on the importance of word of mouth communication with family and friends, strategies might include:

- A campaign where Current members share a CSA meal with friends
- A special incentive or discount for members who help spread the word
- Members share their best photos of healthy food they made with their share
- Ask members to like a Facebook page and then advertise to their networks (an option for Facebook ads)

Geographically targeted ads to individuals who also express interest an interest cooking is a strategy to pursue on social media, in addition to doing social media ads that target the networks of people who already "like" CSA.

Table 5. Attention to information sources by CSA status (averages on 5-point scale)

	Current	*Former*	*Never*
My CSA	4.0	*not asked*	*not asked*
Cooking or recipe websites	3.5	3.2	3.3
Friends or family	3.4	3.1	3.3
The farmers market	2.7	3.3	3.2
Signs at grocery stores	2.5	2.7	2.9
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest)	2.5	2.5	2.7
My doctor or health clinic	2.4	2.4	2.7
Local news	2.4	2.4	2.6
Cooking shows	2.3	2.2	2.5
National news	2.3	2.3	2.4
Other farmers /farmers	2.3	3.2	3.0
University, Extension, or government resources	2.2	2.5	2.6
Non-profits	2.1	2.4	2.4

Social media ads

Part of this research also involved testing messages on Facebook. Four different ads promoted the survey on Facebook. Each ad related to a different theme: social norms (e.g., people like me also do CSA), Wisconsin, supporting local farmers fresh and healthy food. Each theme had text and an image that corresponded to it. The ads targeted individuals in Wisconsin who also had at least one of the following attributes: an interest in health, an interest in organic food, parents.

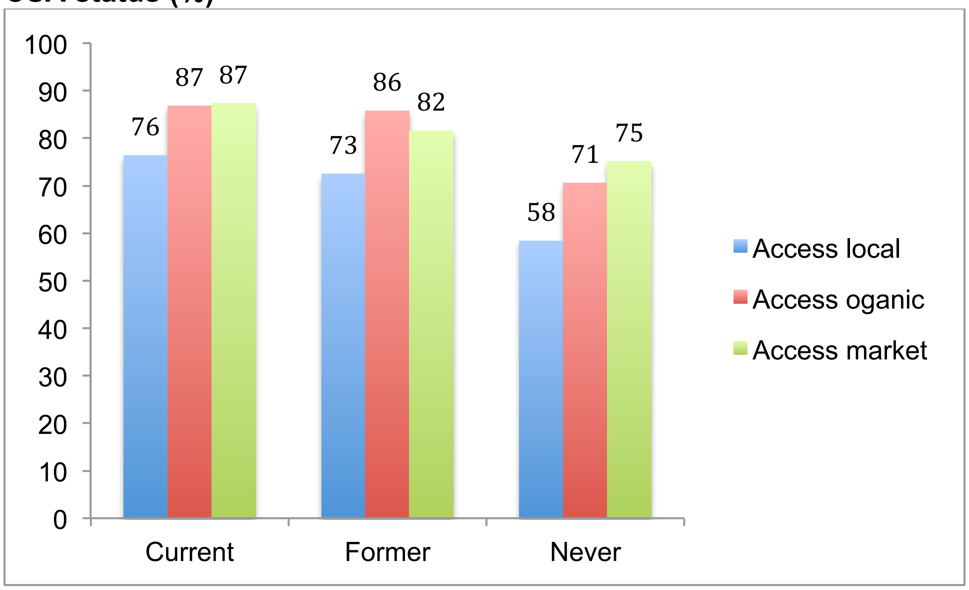
Overall, the Wisconsin theme was most successful at getting clicks. The farmer ad was the second most successful. The social norms and fresh food ads tied for last place. This was a little surprising, given that fresh and healthy food are top reasons to join CSA. It may that in a crowded social media environment, images or words that immediately identify the ad as locally based stand out the most. Additionally, previous research finds that most Wisconsinites accept Wisconsin as a definition for local food. For the most part, the ads did not attract different demographics.

The ad that featured this image of Wisconsin (left) was most successful at generating clicks, while the social norms themed ad, featuring the image at right, was one of the least successful.

Food access

The majority of Current and Former members report having convenient access to local food in grocery stores, organic food in grocery stores, and farmers markets (**Figure 20**). A greater proportion of people who have Never bought CSA, however, report reduced access. This may be because, proportionally, more responses from the Never group came from rural respondents, and rural respondents reported reduced access to local and organic food in stores, as well as farmers markets.

Figure 20. Respondents reporting "yes" they have access to local and organic food, by CSA status (%)



Regional differences

Because the data was not collected as a random sample, caution should be taken regarding regional trends. Some regions of the state have fewer CSA farms, meaning responses could be more representative of experiences individuals had at particular farms rather than regional trends. With that in mind, some trends observed among Current members include:

- Organic preferences appear higher in the Southwest, Northeast, and the Central regions
- Regarding reasons to do CSA, averages generally trend higher in the Southwest, Central, and Northeast regions
- With challenges to CSA, averages trend higher in the Northwest.

The greatest number of responses came from the South Central region (**Table 6**), followed by the Southeast, Central, and Illinois. This may be in part because the greatest proportion of respondents took the survey through an email from FairShare farmers, who are concentrated in this region.

Table 6. Respondents by region (%)

South Central	49%
Unknown	13%
Southeast	17%
Central	5%
Illinois	4%
East central	3%
Northwest	3%
Southwest	2%
Minnesota	2%
Northeast	1%

The regions were divided using the Wisconsin Department of Tourism divisions. Counties in each region were categorized in this way:

- Central: Adams, Clark, Green Lake, Juneau, Marathon, Marquette, Menominee, Portage, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Wood
- East Central: Calumet, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Sheboygan, Winnebago
- Northeast: Brown, Door, Florence, Forest, Kewaunee, Langlade, Lincoln, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Vilas
- Northwest: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Iron, Peirce, Polk, Price, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, Taylor, Washburn
- South Central: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Rock, Sauk
- Southeast: Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha
- Southwest: Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Richland, Trempealeau, Vernon

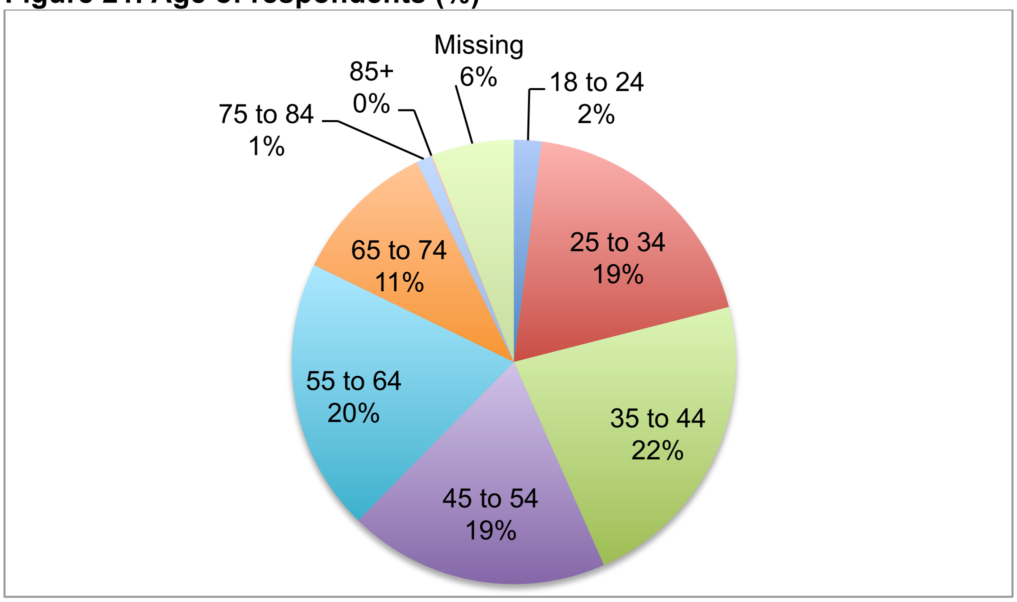
Demographics

Gender: Most respondents identified as female (75%). This suggests that targeting marketing efforts toward women would be appropriate.

Ethnicity: Most respondents identified as white (86%), which is consistent with Wisconsin demographics.

Age: The most often selected age category was 35 to 44 years old, however, about 20% of respondents selected each of the following categories: 25 to 34, 45 to 43, and 55 to 64 (**Figure 21**). That means fewer respondents were very young (18 to 24) or over 65. Individuals in the Former and Current groups were similar in terms of age, while the Never group trended slightly younger.

Figure 21. Age of respondents (%)



Education: The Current and Former groups report having more education. On average, they had a 4-year bachelor's degree. The Never group, on average, has less than a 4-year bachelor's degree.

Income: The Current and Former groups, on average, reports household incomes between $75,000 to $99,999. The Never group reports a lower household income, at $50,000 to $74,999.

Political ideology: Overall, the sample trends between moderate and somewhat liberal. In terms of economic issues, on average, the Never group rates themselves as moderate white the Current and Former groups rate themselves between moderate and somewhat liberal. On social issues, the Never group is between moderate and somewhat liberal, while the Current and Former groups are somewhat liberal.

Household size: Most often, respondents lived with two or more other people (57%), with a solid minority living with one other person (28%), and fewer than 10% living alone. Of people living with others, about 60% live with adults only, and 40% have at least one child under 18 living in their home. Current members averaged slightly higher in terms of having larger household sizes and children in their homes.

Shopping and cooking: The majority of respondents (86%) do half or more of the shopping for the households, and 60% report they cook dinner with fresh ingredients almost every night. On average, Current and Former respondents cook dinner with fresh ingredients a little more frequently than the Never group.

Community type: A large minority of respondents live in cities, with the fewest proportion of responses coming from rural areas (**Figure 22**).

Figure 22. Community type (%)