

A Brief Analysis of the French Broad Food Co-op Saturday Tailgate Market

The French Broad Food Co-op (FBFC) Saturday Tailgate Market was surveyed on May 31, 2003 using a rapid-response “dot survey” method. These surveys were administered using large flip charts posing five questions. For each question, tailgate customers were asked to place a dot sticker in the response category that they most agreed with. The questions asked were:

- Of the promotions you have seen or heard for tailgate markets, which is most memorable?
- How did you first find out about this market?
- How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today?
- How many miles away from this market do you live?
- How often do you shop at this tailgate market?

Using data gathered from 67 market customers, this report summarizes findings on economic impact of the market, including per capita spending of customers, demographic characteristics of customers.

ASAP staff also conducted a customer count at the market to arrive at a valid estimate of the total number of people who shopped on that day. This process involved getting an accurate and complete arrival count of customers for a ten-minute period during every hour of the given market’s operation. Multiplying each-ten minute count by six gave a reasonable estimate of the number of customers arriving at the market during that given hour. Cumulative figures for all hours of operation arrived at a valid estimate of 348 total customers for the entire afternoon.

ASAP staff also conducted written survey administrations at the FBFC Saturday market in 2003 and 2004, with a total of 181 respondents.

Dot Survey Question Results

Question 1- Of the promotions you have seen or heard for tailgate markets, which is most memorable? Of 65 valid responses to this question, the largest category was “Not seen or heard anything,” at 41.5%. The Mountain Express registered 36.9%, with the Local Food Guide following a distant third at 12.3%. No other category registered more than 5%.

Question 2- How did you first find out about this market? Like most other markets, the top two selections were “Word of Mouth,” and “Passing By,” at 23.9% and 32.8% respectively. The French Broad Food Co-op was a close third at 20.9%. Newspapers registered 9% and road signs followed at 7.5%. The impact of passing by and the relatively high number who responded to road signs demonstrates this market’s high visibility in a heavily trafficked area. The relationship between Co-op shoppers and the market demonstrates the close relationship between the market and the store.

Question 3- How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today? Of 66 respondents, 43.9% indicated that they were spending less than \$10 at the market that day. Thirty-six point four percent spent between ten and twenty dollars, and 18.2% spent between twenty and thirty dollars. Only one respondent spent more than \$30.

Per capita customer expenditures were estimated by multiplying the valid percentages of each dollar range category in the survey by the mid-point average of each dollar category. A conservative estimate of expenditures in the \$40+ range was made at \$45. Based on the rapid-response dot surveys and customer counts on May 31, 2003, results were as follows:

Determining Per Capita Expenditures- Dot Surveys

\$ Category Average	X	% of total Respondents	=	
\$5	X	43.9	=	219.5
\$15	X	36.4	=	546
\$25	X	18.2	=	455
\$35	X	1.5	=	52.5
Total				1,273

Dividing the sum on the lower right hand side by the percentage amount of 100 gives a per capita expenditure estimate of \$12.73. With 348 customers estimated to have attended that day, the May 31, 2003 FBFC Saturday total market sales value is estimated at \$4,430. There were 9 vendors at the market on that day, giving a per vendor expenditure of \$492.22.

The dot survey responses on per capita expenditures closely align with findings from the 181 written surveys administered in 2003 and 2004.

Question 4- How many miles away from this market do you live? Of 66 valid responses to this question, 59.7% of respondents lived five miles or less from the market, reflecting this market’s central location. Twenty-two point four percent lived 5 to 10 miles from the market, with 9% living more than 10 miles away. An additional 9% were visiting the area.

Question 5- How often do you shop at this tailgate market? Of 67 respondents, 35.8% said they shopped there every week. Sixteen point four percent shopped there every 2 weeks, with 9% shopping there once per month. A very significant 29.9% of respondents were shopping there for the very first time. While a portion of these respondents (9%) were tourists or outside visitors to the region, more than two-thirds of first time shoppers lived in the area.

Open-ended Question Results

Survey respondents were asked two questions that can help inform market organizers on improving the tailgate market experience. A summary of the relevant responses grouped according to topic follows:

What would you do to improve the market?

Food/Vendors: More vendors

Location/Facilities: More parking, make it bigger

Organization: Extended hours, have it more often

Marketing/General Comments: More promotion at the Co-op, signs for the market, mixed arts, tables for political cultural issues.

What do you like best about the market?

Environment: Sense of community, music and guitars

Food/Products: Organic, fresh, local

Summary- The FBFC Saturday Tailgate Market enjoys higher than average weekly attendance compared to most other markets, but smaller per capita customer expenditures when compared to some other markets. The relatively low number of vendors allows for a healthy per vendor expenditure well over \$400.

More detailed information about the FBFC Saturday market can be derived through further research of written survey responses. Future survey activity at this market should include a larger number of respondents over multiple days and more questions pertaining to shopper demographics such as age, sex, and product preferences.