

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

The French Broad Food Co-op (FBFC) Wednesday Tailgate Market was surveyed on June 11, 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 116 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 450 total customers for the entire morning.

ASAP staff also conducted written survey administrations at the FBFC Wednesday market in 2003 and 2004, with a total of 173 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 32.2%. The Mountain Express registered 27.8%, with the Asheville Citizen-Times following a distant third at 9.6%. The Local Food Guide registered 7.8%.

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 28.4% and 34.5% respectively. Newspapers registered 13.8%. Surprisingly, only 4.3% of respondents named the French Broad Food Co-op, even though the market is located in its parking lot. This may indicate a much different demographic among Wednesday shoppers versus the Saturday morning market shoppers at the same location.

Question 3- How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today? Of 116 respondents, 55.2% indicated that they were spending less than \$10 at the market that day. Thirty point two percent spent between ten and twenty dollars, and 9.5% spent between twenty and thirty dollars. 3 respondents (2.6%) spent between \$30 and \$40, and three respondents ((2.6%) spent more than \$40.

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 June 11, 2003, results were as follows:

Determining Per Capita Expenditures- Dot Surveys

\$ Category Average	X	% of total Respondents	=	
\$5	X	55.2	=	276
\$15	X	30.2	=	453
\$25	X	9.5	=	237.5
\$35	X	2.6		91
\$45	X	2.6		117
Total				1174.5

Dividing the sum on the lower right hand side by the percentage amount of 100 gives a per capita expenditure estimate of \$11.74. With 450 customers estimated to have attended that day, the June 11, 2003 FBFC Wednesday total market sales value is estimated at \$5,283. There were 13 vendors at the market on that day, giving a per vendor expenditure of \$406.38.

The dot survey responses on per capita expenditures agree with findings from the 173 written surveys administered in 2003 and 2004, where 50.3% of respondents spent \$10 or less and 16.7% spent more than \$20.

Question 4- How many miles away from this market do you live? Of 116 valid responses to this question, 36.2% of respondents lived five miles or less from the market. This is much lower as a percent of shoppers than the Saturday morning market, where nearly 60% of respondents lived within five miles. A significant 41.3% of respondents lived between 10 and 50 miles from the market. This may reflect people who work in the downtown Asheville area and live in the country or other towns. An additional 8.6% were visiting the area.

On comparison with written surveys administered at this market in 2003 and 2004, findings on where people live are very different. Of 168 responses to this question on written surveys, 57.1% said they lived within 5 miles of the market. Nineteen point six percent said they lived between 10 and 50 miles of the market, with 6.5% visiting the area.

Question 5- How often do you shop at this tailgate market? Of 116 respondents, 33.6% said they shopped there every week. Eighteen point one percent shopped there every 2 weeks, with 9.5% shopping there once per month. A very significant 29.3% of respondents were shopping there for the very first time. While a portion of these respondents were tourists or outside visitors to the region, more than three-quarters 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 variety, more vendors

Location/Facilities: More parking, more shade, more space

Organization: Extended hours, have it more often

Marketing/General Comments: More accessible to the media, make it more comfortable so people will stay longer

What do you like best about the market?

Environment: Sense of community, music, support for farmers

Food/Products: Local, fresh, quality, variety, organic

Summary- The FBFC Wednesday Tailgate Market enjoys a relatively high weekly attendance, but smaller per capita customer expenditures when compared to most Saturday markets. This may be explained by the market's high number of first-time shoppers, who typically do not spend very much. The number of vendors allows for a healthy per vendor expenditure of just over \$400.

More detailed information about the FBFC Wednesday 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.