

A Brief Analysis of the Madison County Tailgate Market

The Madison County Tailgate Market was surveyed on June 21, 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 102 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 240 total customers for the entire day.

ASAP staff also conducted limited written survey administrations at the Madison market in 2003. However, with only 25 total survey responses, the data cannot be regarded as statistically reliable.

Survey Question Results

Question 1- Of the promotions you have seen or heard for tailgate markets, which is most memorable? Of 92 valid responses to this question, the largest category was “Not seen or heard anything,” at 41.3%. The Mountain Express registered 15.2%, tying with the “Other” category. The Citizen-Times was next at 13%, with the Local Food Guide registering 8.7%.

Question 2- How did you first find out about this market? As with all markets surveyed, the vast majority of respondents said they first heard about the market either through word of mouth or by passing by. In Madison County the numbers were 46.1% and 21.6% respectively. Newspapers were third at 19.6%.

Question 3- How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today? Of 100 respondents, 56% spent \$10 or less at the market, with 27% spending between ten and twenty dollars. The remaining 17% spent between twenty and thirty dollars.

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 4, 2003, results were as follows:

Fig 4.2 Determining Per Capita Expenditures

\$ Category Average	X	% of total Respondents	=	
\$5	X	56	=	280
\$15	X	27	=	405
\$25	X	17	=	425
Total				1110.00

Dividing the sum on the lower right hand side by the percentage amount of 100 gives a per capita expenditure estimate of \$11.10. With 240 customers estimated to have attended that day, the June 21, 2003 Madison County total market sales value is estimated at \$2,664. There were 20 vendors at the market on that day, giving a per vendor expenditure of \$133.20.

Question 4- How many miles away from this market do you live? Of 101 valid responses to this question, 38.6% of respondents lived five miles or less from the market. This is the lowest percentage of customers living within five miles of the market of any tailgate market surveyed. Forty-four point six percent lived 5 to 10 miles from the market, with 6.9% living 25 to 50 miles away. An additional 9.9% were visiting the area.

Question 5- How often do you shop at this tailgate market? Of 100 respondents, 27% were shopping there for the very first time. Thirty-one percent shopped there every week, with 16% shopping there every two weeks. Between these two categories, 47% can be said to have been regular customers of the Madison County Tailgate Market.

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 BBQ, more vendors, more organic, more variety
- Location/Facilities: Bathrooms, larger, under cover
- Organization: More music, open earlier in the year, stay open one hour later
- Marketing/General Comments: More advertising and promotion, promote farm tours

What do you like best about the market?

- Environment: Sense of community, friendly farmers

Food/Products: Fresh food/produce, baked goods, plants, apples, organic vegetables

Summary- A look at a cross-tabulation between distance from the market and per capita expenditures shows that all expenditures of less than \$10 were from people living within 5 miles of the markets, while all expenditures in the \$10 to \$20 range were from those living 5 to 10 miles away. All expenditures of more than \$20 were from those living more than 5 miles away. Strikingly, all nine visitors to the region who responded spent from \$20 to \$30 at the market. This is by far the highest per capita expenditure of visitors from any market surveyed. Still, visitors represent a small portion of total sales.

How many miles away from this market do you live? * How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today? Crosstabulation

		How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today?			Total
		\$0-10	\$10-20	\$20-30	
How many miles away from this market do you live?	0 to 5	39	0	0	39
	5 to 10	17	27	1	45
	25 to 50	0	0	7	7
	Visiting	0	0	9	9
Total		56	27	17	100

Per capita expenditures show the Madison County Tailgate Market to be on the low range of customer expenditures by market. The relatively large number of vendors may pose a problem, in that per vendor expenditure averages are by far the lowest of any of the surveyed markets.

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. Particular focus should be on visitors to the area and what types of purchases they are making at this market.