

A Brief Analysis of the North Asheville Tailgate Market

The North Asheville Tailgate Market was surveyed on June 14, 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 303 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 787 total customers for the entire morning. This is by far the largest customer count of any market in the region.

ASAP staff also conducted written survey administrations at the North Asheville market in 2003 and 2004, with a total of 185 respondents.

Dot Survey Question Results

Question 1- Of the promotions you have seen or heard for tailgate markets, which is most memorable? Of 298 valid responses to this question, the largest category was “Not seen or heard anything,” at 37.2%. The Asheville Citizen-Times followed at 28.5% and the Mountain Express registered 16.8%. The “Other” category and the Local Food Guide followed, at 9.7% and 5% respectively.

Question 2- How did you first find out about this market? Like other markets, “Word of mouth” was the top answer at 54.1%, with “Passing by” a distant second at 16.2%. Newspapers were the answer for 13.2% of respondents, with “Can’t remember” at 7.9%. No other response exceeded 5%.

Question 3- How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today? Of 303 respondents, 35.3% indicated that they were spending less than \$10 at the market that day. Forty point nine percent spent between ten and twenty dollars, and 16.2% spent

between twenty and thirty dollars. Five point six percent spent between \$30 and \$40, with 2% spending 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 14, 2003, results were as follows:

Determining Per Capita Expenditures- Dot Surveys

\$ Category Average	X	% of total Respondents	=	
\$5	X	35.3	=	176.5
\$15	X	40.9	=	613.5
\$25	X	16.2	=	405
\$35	X	5.6		196
\$45	X	2		90
Total				1481

Dividing the sum on the lower right hand side by the percentage amount of 100 gives a per capita expenditure estimate of \$14.81. With 787 customers estimated to have attended that day, the June 14, 2003 North Asheville total market sales value is estimated at \$11,655.47. There were 21 vendors at the market on that day, giving a per vendor expenditure of \$555.02.

The dot survey responses on per capita expenditures differ only slightly with findings from the 185 written surveys administered in 2003 and 2004. In the written surveys, 32.2% of respondents said they were spending less than \$10 at the market that day, with 37.7% spending from \$11 to \$20. Based on the written responses we can arrive at another per capita expenditure estimate as follows:

\$ Category Average	X	% of total Respondents	=	
\$2.5	X	8.7	=	21.75
\$7.5	X	23.5	=	176.25
\$12.5	X	19.7	=	246.25
17.5	X	18	=	315
25	X	23		575
35	X	3.3		115.5
45	X	3.8		171
Total				1620.75

Dividing the sum on the lower right hand side by the percentage amount of 100 gives a per capita expenditure estimate of \$16.20. The difference with the dot surveys of 2003 may be reflective of increased per capita spending in 2004 over 2003.

Question 4- How many miles away from this market do you live? Of 302 valid responses to this question, 70.5% of respondents lived five miles or less from the market. Seventeen point five percent lived 5 to 10 miles from the market, with 8.3% living more than 10 miles away. An additional 3.6% were visiting the area.

Question 5- How often do you shop at this tailgate market? Of 302 valid responses, 49.3% said they shopped there every week. Twenty-three point four percent shopped there every other week, with 11.9% shopping there once per month. Ten point six percent of respondents indicated they were at the market for the first time.

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, sanitation guarantees on prepared foods

Location/Facilities: More parking, better location, more space

Organization: Extended hours, have it more often

Marketing/General Comments: More road signs, more publicity, more advertising

What do you like best about the market?

Environment: Sense of community, supporting local economy, local growers, small and friendly, convenience, fun

Food/Products: Variety and selection, organic, quality, baked goods, plants and flowers, local

Summary

Research clearly shows the North Asheville Tailgate Market to be the largest area tailgate market in terms of size, number of customers and vendors, and dollars spent. While vendors at this market typically enjoy higher sales than at other markets, the discrepancy is offset by the higher total number of vendors selling at the North Asheville Market.

The North Asheville Tailgate Market also has the highest per capita customer expenditures of any market in the region.

More detailed information about the North Asheville 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.

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