

A Brief Analysis of the West Asheville Tailgate Market

The West Asheville Tailgate Market was surveyed on June 4, 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 62 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 182 total customers for the entire day.

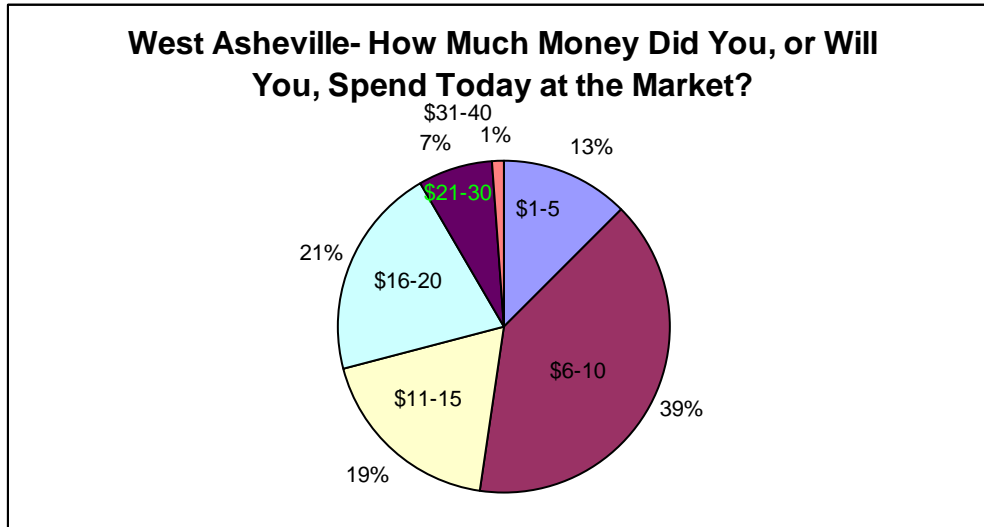
Survey Question Results

Question 1- Of the promotions you have seen or heard for tailgate markets, which is most memorable? Of 62 valid responses to this question, the largest category was “Not seen or heard anything,” at 35.5%. The “Other” category was next at 24.2% of respondents, with the Asheville Citizen-Times and the Mountain Express combining for 35.4%.

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 West Asheville the numbers were 32.3% and 38.7% respectively. Newspapers were a distant third at 12.9%.

Question 3- How much did you, or will you, spend at the market today? Of 62 respondents, 48.4% spent \$10 or less at the market, with 43.5% spending between ten and twenty dollars. The remaining 8.1% spent between twenty and thirty dollars.

Written surveys were also administered at this market in 2003 and 2004. The same question was asked of 102 written survey respondents, with different expenditure categories. Results were as follows:



This survey methodology showed similar results, with 52% of respondents spending \$10 or less at the market and 40% spending from \$11 to \$20. Eight percent spent from \$21 to \$40, with no respondents 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 4, 2003, results were as follows:

Fig 4.2 Determining Per Capita Expenditures

\$ Category Average	X	% of total Respondents	=	
\$5	X	48.4	=	242
\$15	X	43.5	=	652.5
\$25	X	8.1	=	202.5
Total				1096.5

Dividing the sum on the lower right hand side by the percentage amount of 100 gives a per capita expenditure estimate of \$10.96. With 182 customers estimated to have attended that day, the June 4, 2003 West Asheville total market sales value is estimated at \$1,994.72. There were 7 vendors at the market on that day, giving a per vendor expenditure of \$284.96.

It is worth noting that customer counts at the West Asheville market conducted on July 9, 2003 of 280 customers and on July 28, 2004 of 258 customers showed dramatically increased customer attendance over the June 4, 2003 counts. A prime factor in making this market economically attractive for farmers is the number of vendors in operation on a given day. We can compare this using the \$10.96 per capita expenditure determined on June 4, 2003 as a conservative estimate for the other days. On July 9, 2003, with 14

vendors present, the per capita vendor expenditure is estimated at \$219.20. For July 28, 2004, with only 8 vendors present, per vendor expenditure is estimated at \$353.46.

Question 4- How many miles away from this market do you live? Of 62 valid responses to this question, 71% of respondents lived five miles or less from the market. Fourteen point five percent lived 5 to 10 miles from the market, with 9.7% living 10 or more miles away. An additional 4.8% were visiting the area.

Question 5- How often do you shop at this tailgate market? Of 62 respondents, 30.6% were shopping there for the very first time. This figure is not surprising given that the West Asheville Market was only one year old when the survey was done. Forty point three percent shopped there every week, with 16.1% shopping there every two weeks. Between these two categories, 56.4% can be said to have been regular customers of the West Asheville 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 variety, more vendors
Location/Facilities: More parking, make it bigger
Organization: No comments
Marketing/General Comments: More road signs

What do you like best about the market?

Environment: Sense of community, atmosphere, friendliness, meeting growers
Food/Products: Organic, freshness, local, variety, supporting farmers

Summary- Survey results are reflective of the 2003 West Asheville Tailgate Market being a very new market where local customers were just becoming familiar with it.

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 48.1% of expenditures in the \$10 to \$20 range were from those living more than 5 miles away. All expenditures of more than \$20 were from those living more than 25 miles away.

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	30	14	0	44
	5 to 10	0	9	0	9
	10 to 25	0	4	0	4
	25 to 50	0	0	2	2
	Visiting	0	0	3	3
Total		30	27	5	62

Per capita expenditures show the West Asheville Tailgate Market to be on the low range of per capita expenditures by market. A mitigating factor for vendors is that the total vendor count per market tends to be lower than elsewhere. This allows for a larger average expenditure per vendor than if vendor counts were higher. Future survey activity at this market should include a statistically valid number of respondents and more questions pertaining to shopper demographics such as age, sex, and product preferences.