



Restaurant Survey

Find Local Food is an online platform (<http://farmsatwork.ca/local-food>) that can help link the local wholesale market (eg. restaurants, hospitals, schools) with local food producers. It is at early stages of promotion, research and development.

During the fall of 2014, Farms a Work conducted a study to assess interest in and increase knowledge of the Farms at Work Find Local Food platform specifically among Peterborough restaurants. Partial funding support was provided by Peterborough Economic Development, and two Trent University students assisted.

Participation

Farms at Work compiled a list of 95 restaurants in the Peterborough area. Of these, 62 establishments were contacted and provided with Find Local Food promotional materials. 25 of the 62 establishments also agreed to answer survey questions, including 12 casual dining restaurants, 4 bistros, 2 fine dining restaurants, 2 take-away restaurants, 2 bars, 2 cafés, and 1 diner. Only one chain restaurant and one franchise took part in the survey, while the rest were locally or family-owned and operated.

Survey Results

Current Sourcing of Local Food

More than half (56%) of the surveyed food establishments purchase local food frequently. About a quarter (24%) purchase local food occasionally, and 16% never purchase local food. One establishment was unsure. Of the establishments that purchase local food frequently or occasionally, 85% are motivated by a combination of supporting local farmers, keeping money in the community, taste, variety, and freshness of food. 10% are motivated solely by the combined factors of taste, variety, and freshness, and another 5% are motivated solely by an effort to keep money in the community. Among the establishments that never purchase local food, 50% cited price and convenience as preventing factors, 25% cited price alone, and 25% cited issues with quantity of quality of the food.

Interest in Using the Find Local Food Service

An overwhelming majority (96%) of the representatives indicated that the Find Local Food service would be a useful service for their establishment. Many representatives were eager to discuss their commitment to supporting local farmers, even though it is not always convenient. Many representatives were pleasantly surprised to find that this service is free. Several participants explained that they might consider using the service more frequently in the summer, when local food is more readily available. Find Local Food has the capacity to assist restaurateurs to deepen their understanding of the Peterborough region's seasonal crop varieties.

Possible Directions for the Find Local Food Service

96% of representatives agreed that it would be useful for them to be able to see what farmers have available at a given time of the year. Given the overwhelming interest, this is a potential option for building out the Find Local Food service, if funding is available.

Follow-Up

96% of survey participants provided contact information for follow-up regarding the Find Local Food service. Many participating restaurant representatives indicated their willingness to participate in a second survey once they have had the chance to use the Find Local Food service.

Observations

What types of restaurants are showcasing local food?

- Generally locally or family-owned restaurants, bars, cafés, diners and bistros
- Restaurants with daily specials and/or seasonal menus ie control over their menus
- Restaurants whose owners have a personal desire to create relationships with farmers (e.g. restaurants whose owners come from another country where this close farmer-wholesaler relationship is the norm)