

# Luring locavores: Research shows female and older consumers highly motivated to buy local

August 1 2012

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(Phys.org) -- A study by a Kansas State University researcher could help farmers better serve a niche market.

Sarah Bernard, who recently earned her master's degree in agribusiness, studied consumers' motivations behind buying local beef. She found that farmers should be marketing more to female and older consumers because they are more likely to buy local products, and that farmers should promote local agriculture in their marketing messages.

The research could help farmers capitalize on the [local food](#) movement by enhancing their marketing efforts to attract locavores -- people who try to eat locally produced and grown food. Bernard has seen more demand from consumers who want to buy local beef from her family's farm, the Burns Farm in Pikeville, Tenn.

In an [online survey](#) of more than 400 consumers, Bernard asked what motivated and discouraged them in the purchase of local beef. Motivating factors to buy local included local support, environment and health, while barriers included price, inconvenience and unfamiliar brand.

Women responded with higher levels of agreement to all motivating factors compared with males. Those under 25 years old agreed more with barriers to buy, while those older than 55 years old showed higher

[levels of motivation](#) for purchasing local beef.

"Females, who tend to be the primary consumer when it comes to [food products](#), and the older population seemed to have a greater motivation and calling to buy local products, and this appeared to be very important to them," Bernard said.

Consumers among all demographics in the survey rated local support as the greatest motivating factor and price as the main barrier in the purchase of local beef. However, those who had previously purchased local beef found greater [disagreement](#) with barrier factors compared with those who had not.

"Many of the barrier factors were lower for those who had previously purchased local beef," said Kevin Gwinner, Bernard's [adviser](#) and professor and head of the department of marketing. "As such, there is an opportunity to lower barriers by providing opportunities for consumers to taste the beef or by enticing them to make a small initial purchase."

The findings could help farmers in their promotional campaigns, Bernard said, because buying local is a new [niche market](#) for farmers.

"The theme of supporting local agriculture found appeal across all ages, genders and income levels, and this theme would likely be favored in marketing campaigns," she said. "Buying local is not meant to compete with larger beef production in America, but [farmers](#) can better serve this small market to fill the very specific needs of consumers who want to buy local products."

Provided by Kansas State University

Citation: Luring locavores: Research shows female and older consumers highly motivated to buy

local (2012, August 1) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-08-luring-locavores-female-older-consumers.html>

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