

Demand for local food growing in Alberta

by Mimi Lee

More than ever, Alberta consumers are purchasing locally-grown and locally-prepared foods.

According to a recent study conducted by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF), food sales at farmers' markets, farm retail and restaurants serving local food in Alberta exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2016.

The average household spent \$2,341 at the local food market channels mentioned above, which is one-quarter of the average Albertan's household food expenditure for 2016.

Since 2004, AF has conducted several studies to gauge how much money is spent on local food sold through various direct-to-consumer market channels in Alberta. The goal of the studies is to help local producers identify areas of growth, and capitalize on purchasers' increased interest.

The 2016 study was specifically designed to assess the demand for local food* available through farmers' markets, farm retail outlets and restaurants.

For the study, a 22 minute telephone survey was

conducted on a random selection of households across Alberta. In all, 1,200 completed surveys were obtained, 400 from each of three defined regions: Calgary census metropolitan area (CMA), Edmonton CMA and Other Alberta area.



Awareness

Albertans' awareness of farmers' markets continues to increase, with the greatest increase, (11 per cent), occurring between 2012 and 2016.

Overall, awareness of farm retail also grew, with more respondents reporting that they "know a lot" in 2016 (15 per cent) as compared to any other year.

Market Size

In 2016, an estimated 1.29 million households purchased from farmers' markets, 586,000 households purchased from farm retail, and 383,000 households purchased from Alberta restaurants serving locally-grown or made ingredients.

Based on future estimated household spending, the projected rate of growth in the next 12 months is three per cent for farmers' markets and eight per cent for farm retail. This translates into 1.33 million households in Alberta that will be purchasing from farmers' markets, and 631,000 households purchasing from farm retail.

*For the purpose of the study, local food is defined as "food grown or made within Alberta."

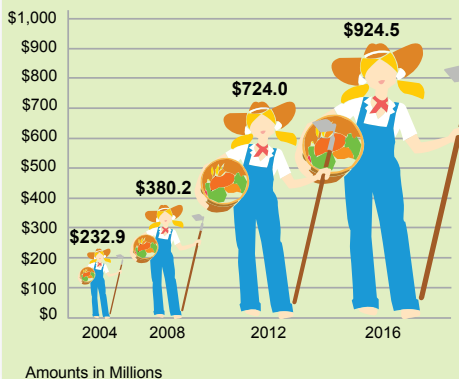
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Why Albertans Buy Local Food

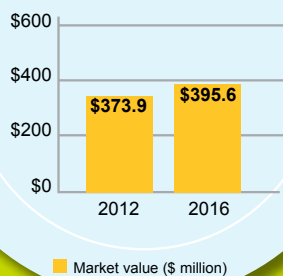


The majority (96%) of Alberta consumers accept food grown or made in Alberta as local food.

Food Purchased at Farmers' Markets

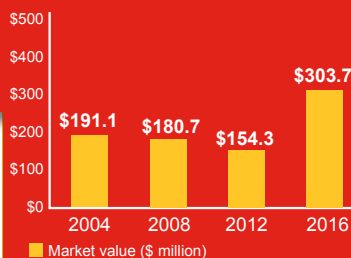


Food Purchased at Restaurants Serving Local Food



Farm Retail

Food purchased at farm retail reached \$303.7 million in 2016



R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

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Market Value

Visitation is up across the farmers' market and farm retail channels, with a higher proportion of households purchasing 14 or more times as compared to 2012. Further, households are spending more annually at farmers' markets and farm retail.

The estimated market value for the 2016 year is \$924.5 million for farmers' markets and \$303.7 million for farm retail.

Among the markets explored, farmers' markets continue to be the most highly used local market channel. The majority (78 per cent) of respondents

had made at least one purchase at a farmers' market in 2016, up from 72 per cent of respondents in 2012.

Although fewer people used the farm retail channel, overall it saw the greatest increase in utilization across the four years; a nine per cent increase since 2012.

The CSA/box channel showed a three per cent gain, and restaurants serving local foods or ingredients was up one percentage point.

The complete study is available on the [Explore Local website](#). In addition, our website contains many other interesting studies and useful resources to help you grow your business and increase your market share. [Click here](#) to browse the entire library. ●

StatsCan 2016 Census includes farm direct marketing question

by Mimi Lee

For the first time in its history, the 2016 Statistics Canada Agriculture Census included a three-part question that looked at farm direct marketing.

According to the census, about 12.6 per cent of all farms in Canada reported selling agricultural products directly to consumers. This ratio is much higher than compared to the USA which sits at about 6.9 per cent.

Compared to the national percentage, Alberta has a slightly lower per cent of farms with value-added products sold (10 per cent vs 14 per cent) and using farm gate sales, stands, kiosks, or U-pick (85 per cent vs 89 per cent).

The province of Alberta was divided into 19 census divisions (CD). Not

surprisingly, the sections with the highest populations (Calgary CD6, Edmonton CD11) had more direct sales farms than the other CDs. CD6 totalled 265, while CD11 had 264. Together, the two CDs contain about 25 per cent of the province's direct marketing farms.

In terms of population growth since 2011, both divisions with Edmonton and Calgary experienced a 14 per cent growth, 8 per cent for the CD with Lethbridge and 10 per cent for Grande Prairie.

The next issue of Field Notes will feature a complete analysis of the data obtained by Statistics Canada. You can also find the complete study on the [StatsCan website](#). ●

Online food safety course for meat processors

Developed by Environmental Public Health, this course is designed to help meat processors prepare a final product that is safe for their customers to eat.

Learn about the impacts of foodborne illness, the potential hazards associated with meat products, and the control measures that are necessary to reduce or eliminate the risk to customers.

Study the course booklet at your own pace, watch the linked online videos and then complete the online exam. Upon passing the exam, you will receive an Alberta Food Safety for Meat Processors Certificate, valid for three years.

This course is intended as additional training for all meat processors, but not as a replacement to the food safety training described under Section 31 of the Food Regulation.

For complete details, or to register for the course, [click here](#). ●



Explore Local Resources

Looking for advice, instruction or just want to expand your knowledge of Alberta's food industry?

Visit explorelocal.ca under the [Tools and Resources](#) tab for marketing, human resource, regulatory, food safety resources and more.

The same link will also connect you to Explore Local webinars on a variety of topics. ●

Regional Food Producer Profiles

From garlic to berries, French pastry to mead and just about everything in-between, Alberta's crop of home-grown entrepreneurs have it all — just waiting to be discovered.



The Explore Local Producer Profiles project is a collection of business profiles focusing on producers operating in Alberta who sell their local food products direct to consumers through a variety of local market channels.



This collection of profiles celebrates the success of producers selling direct to consumers and highlights the uniqueness of their food products.



Browse through the list on the [Explore Local](#) website and get to know your colleagues, establish real-world connections that will expand your market knowledge and your business opportunities. ●



Calling all Alberta entrepreneurs!

Have your work featured in the new Royal Alberta Museum (RAM) Shop!

The RAM is looking for Alberta-based artisans and designers who are interested in having their products showcased at the new museum shop in downtown Edmonton. The Museum Shop will be a destination location offering an original, eclectic and ever-changing selection of gifts and memorabilia for all ages, with a focus on locally made, environmentally responsible products. [Click here](#) to learn more. ●

Upcoming Events

WEBINAR SERIES

SELLING ONLINE: CARVE OUT YOUR NICHE, INCREASE SALES AND GAIN LOYALTY

December 6, 2017, 9am MST

Deb Foisy of Debs Greenhouse sells plants online through her website, using various social media platforms to advertise it. Deb will share the successes and challenges she's faced since adding the online hub to her greenhouse operation two years ago. What are the benefits of selling online? How hard is it to make a website? What did it cost? What about shipping? The answers to these questions and more will be answered and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

BRINGING YOUR STORY TO LIFE

December 13, 2017, 9am MST

Marketing expert Jonathan Strome will discuss the importance of developing your brand and explore strategies for sharing your story with your customers to build brand loyalty. You will discover the value of diverse online platforms from websites to social media outlets to build a community around your brand using written, photo and video content.

ONLINE MEAT MARKETING

January 9, 2018, 9am MST

Farm direct meat producers know the importance of connecting to their customers online. Join Julia and Jered Serben, owners of Serben Farms near Smoky Lake, to discover how they sell pork, poultry, sausages and vegetables online, streamline customer connections

and manage product deliveries and pick-ups. Julia and Jered will share the triumphs and challenges of building their online store.

CREATING TOP NOTCH JOB DESCRIPTIONS

January 31, 2018, 9am MST

Join HR industry expert Renee Paul as she shares insights and techniques for creating top notch job descriptions that deliver results. Renee will explore practical tools and techniques using simple templates to achieve the perfect combination of technical and performance factors for your business. Apply these techniques to build job descriptions that will attract new recruits to your business.

WORKSHOP SERIES

USING SHOPIFY: BUILD YOUR OWN PROFITABLE ONLINE STORE

Tuesday, January 16, 2018, 8:30am-4:30pm, Red Deer College \$23.75 + GST/per. incl. lunch & snacks. Register by January 9, 2018: 1-800-387-6030.

Leverage your existing webpage or domain into an online marketplace using Shopify. In this hands-on one-day workshop, you will create your online store, learn how to manage and sell your products, adjust inventory and be found by search engines. You will discover how to set-up visuals such as logos and store themes; add products, categories and maintain inventory; create pages and navigation links; understand search engine optimization, how to drive traffic to your store and much, much more!

PRICING PRINCIPLES: MOVING TO RETAIL

**January 18, 2018, 9am-3:30pm Agriculture Centre, Airdrie
January 30, 2018, 9am-3:30pm Provincial Building, Grande Prairie
\$25/per. incl. GST, lunch & snacks.
To register call 1-800-387-6030.**

Planning on selling to retail? Expand your understanding of the costs related to setting a profitable price. Attend this workshop if you are looking to: price your products for profit; understand the components of pricing for the retail market; and understand retail buyers' needs.

GETTING INTO LOCAL FOODS

Thursday, January 18, 2018, 8am-4:30pm, Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Hall, 1320 5 Ave NW, Calgary, \$25/per. incl. GST, lunch & snacks. Register by January 11, 2018: 1-800-387-6030, or <https://eservices.alberta.ca/agriculture/getting-into-local-food-workshop.html>

This one-day workshop is for producers who are new to selling food through farmers' markets or other direct to consumer methods. You will learn about the regulations, available services and market options for selling food direct to consumers.

EVENTS



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE, OR FUTURE EVENTS, [CLICK HERE](#) OR CALL 1-800-387-6030.

Field Notes is published up to four times per year and is available online at explorelocal.ca. For further information about anything you've read here, or to be included on our email list, please contact Donna Skoworodko at donna.skoworodko@gov.ab.ca.