



Evaluating an On-Campus Farmers Market

October 15, 2012
AASHE Conference

Farmers Market Evaluations

- Self-assessments most common
- Outside evaluations:
 - Meta-analysis of the markets' self-reporting
 - Analysis of the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits

Most Common Forms

- Rapid Market Assessments
- Consumer Intercept Surveys
- Web Surveys

Rapid Market Assessment

- Attendance levels estimated by counting entering shoppers hourly for 10 or 20 minutes, multiplying the results by 6 or 3 to represent the full hour
- Dot Surveys – posters with 4 or fewer questions, colorful stickers represent answer
 - Quick, eye-catching, and users can easily see results
 - Different colored stickers can represent different demographics
 - Easily comparable to other markets' results
 - But users could be influenced by others' responses, it collects far less info, and only tracks current market users

Consumer Intercept Survey

- Approach people at the market to fill out a survey or answer questions verbally (like exit polls)
- Only tracks current market users

Web Surveys

- Cheapest, fastest way to conduct a qualitative survey
- Yield information on how respondents fill out the survey - time spent on it, which questions prevent them from finishing
- Self-selection bias (younger, interested)
- Lower response rates than in-person or mailed surveys
 - Rates can be improved by prenotifications and follow-ups in different mode

Farmers Market Evaluations

- Lack of consistent data make generalizing conclusions based on national trends difficult
- Two most important factors in deciding whether a customer shopped at a farmers market: location and convenience
- Largest benefit of farmers markets over regular supermarkets: quality of the produce

USDA Farmers Market Dot Survey

- Most customers discovered the market as they walked past (even though USDA employees learned about it mostly by email and word of mouth)
- Most common suggestion: extend the season
- No change in fruit and vegetable consumption due to shopping at the market

Northwestern Vermont Markets Intercept Survey

- Most shoppers women in their fifties with household incomes above \$60,000
- Most discovered through road signs – more than double discovered through newspapers or word of mouth

Florida Farmers Markets Intercept Survey

- Most customers young (18–24) with smaller average income (less than \$20,000 a year), who attended colleges in the area
- Willing to pay more for local food
- Believed it to be cheaper overall

Berklee College of Music



Berklee College of Music Farmers Market

- Sells the same local and organic food served by the college's dining services—at cost.
- Offers fruit, vegetables, baked goods, cheese, meat, herbs, and maple syrup
- Held outside of 7 Haviland Street the last Wednesday of each month, April through October
- Staffed by ARAMARK employees and Berklee volunteers

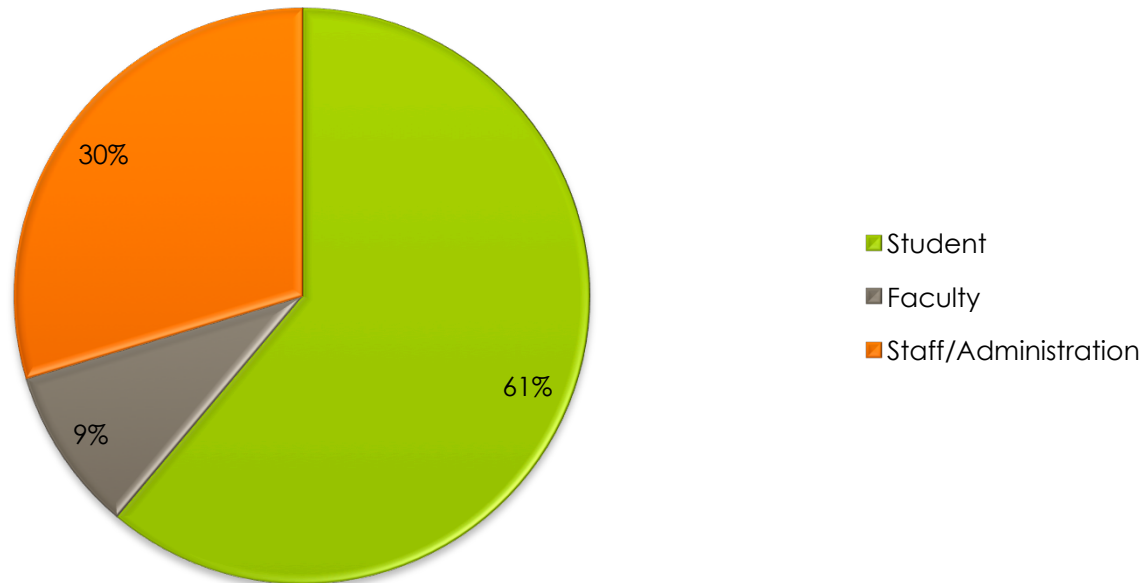
Evaluation Questions

- Is there demand for an expansion of the farmers market to once a week?
 - How much do members of the Berklee community know about it?
 - How is it currently used?
 - What is the current level of satisfaction with it?

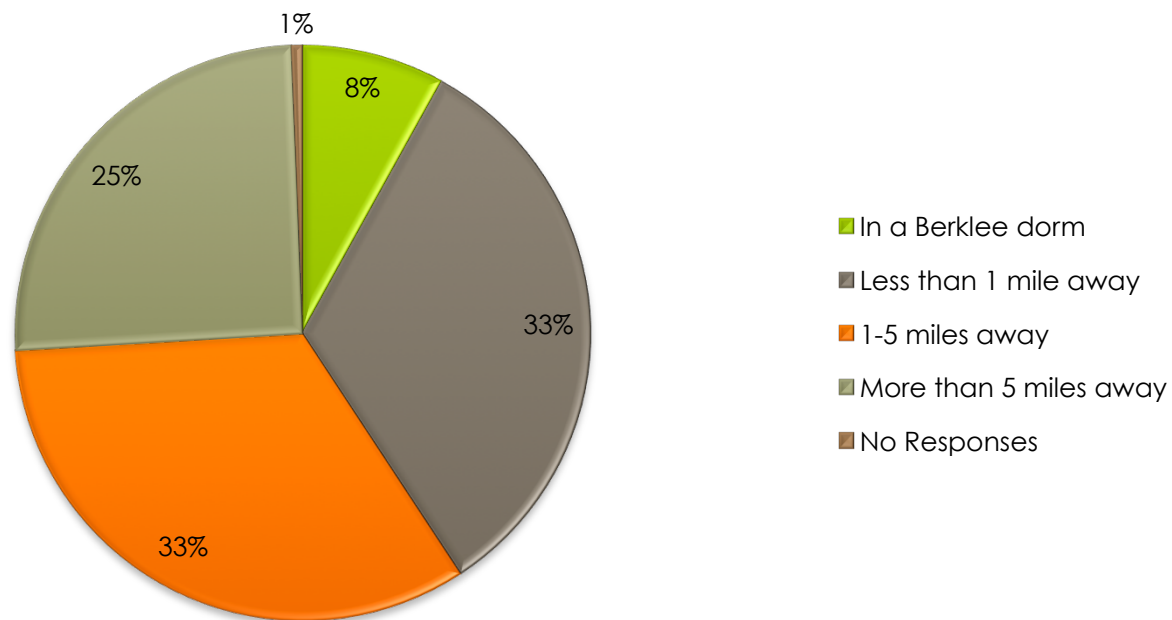
Berklee Web Survey

- Audiences: students, faculty, and staff (local residents not surveyed)
- Incentive: drawing for five free meals in the cafeteria
- Advertising: Faculty/Staff Newsletter, Student Portal
- In-person with iPad in main classroom building
- 2% of students, faculty, and staff
- Constant Contact (Survey Monkey a good free tool)
- 23 questions

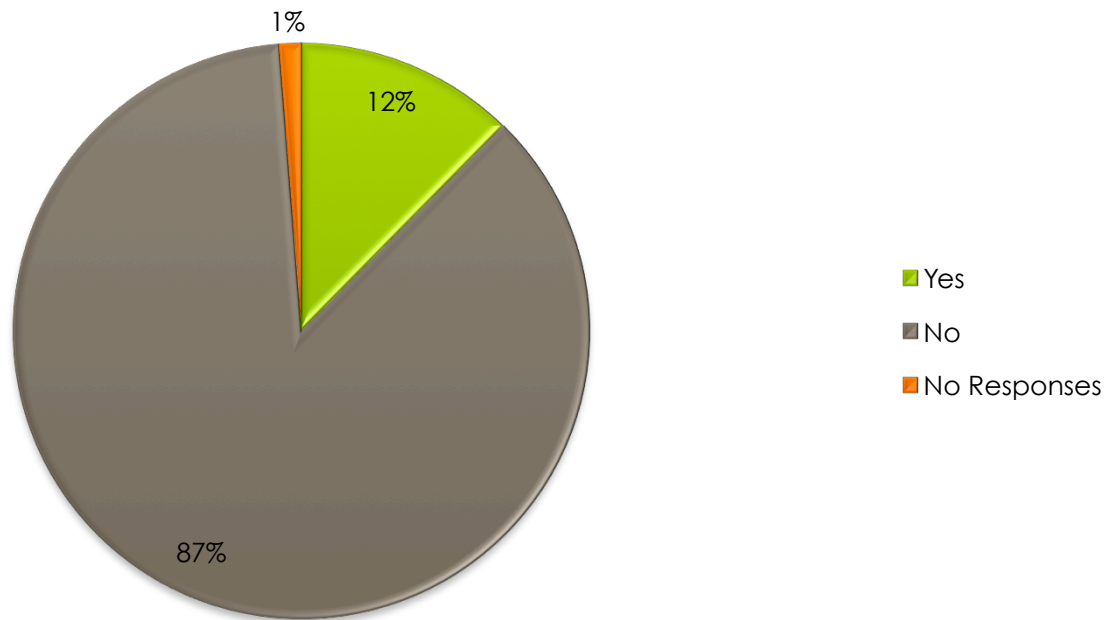
What is your role at the college?



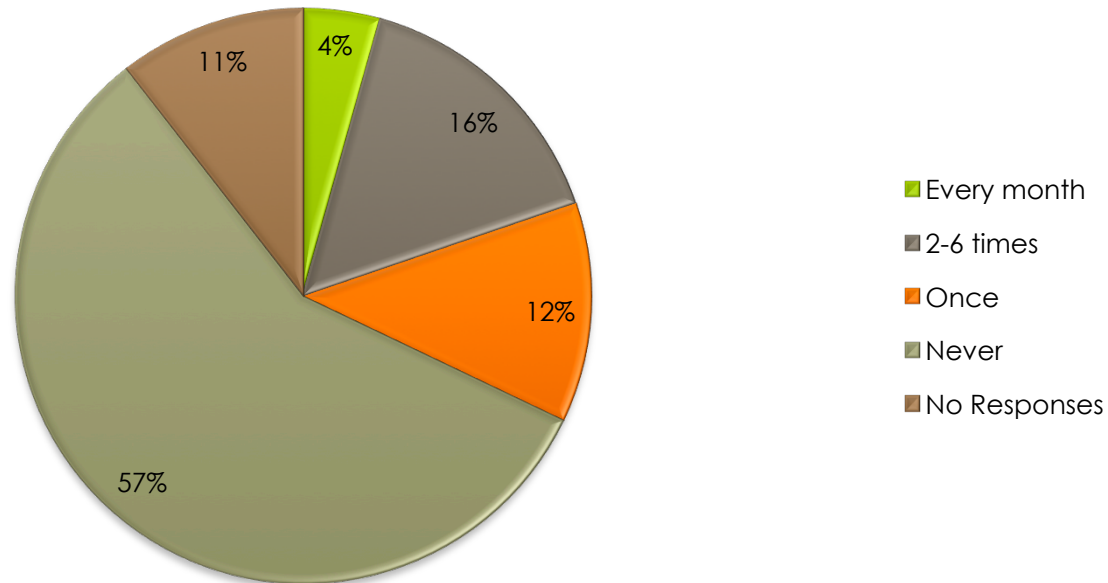
How close do you live?



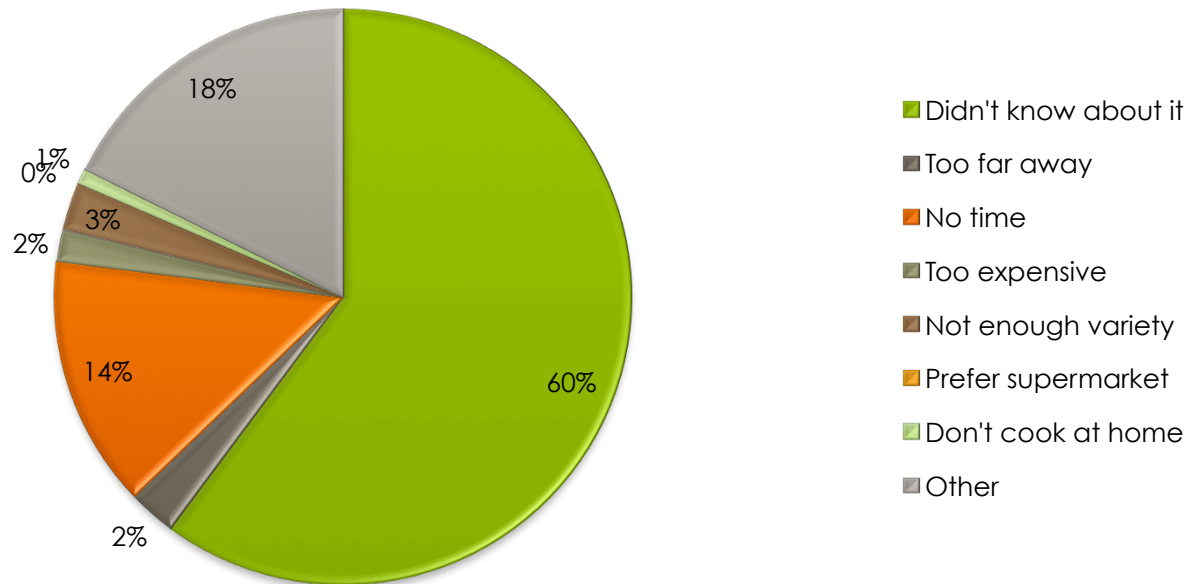
Are you on a meal plan?



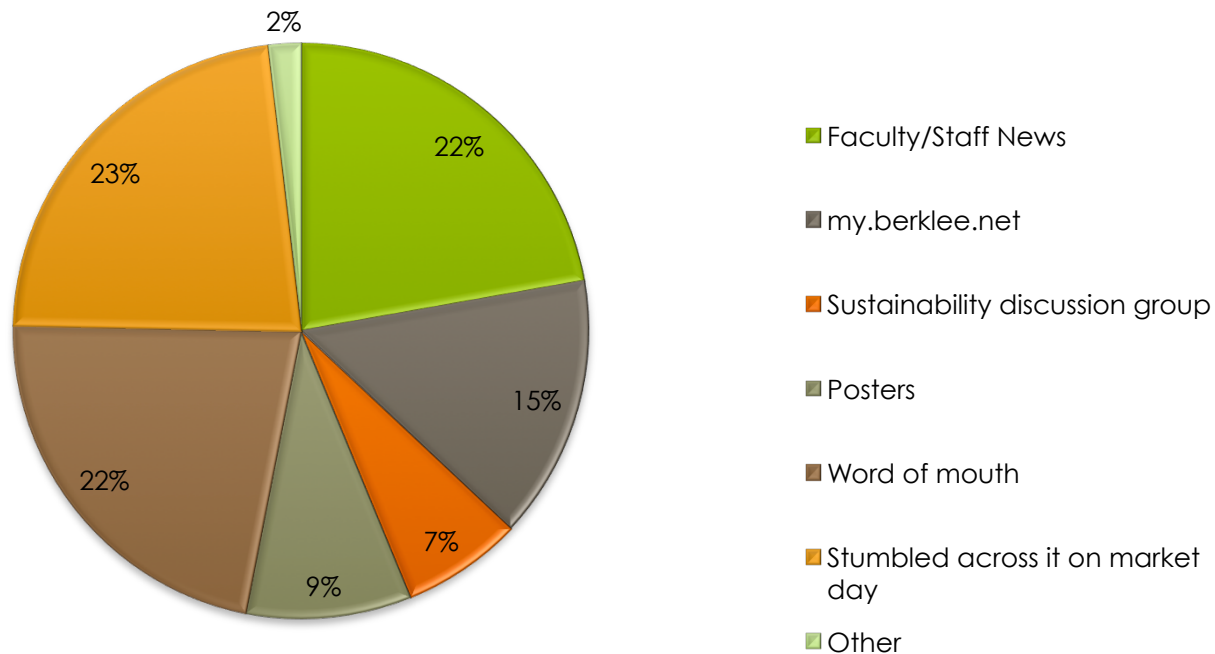
How often do you visit the market?



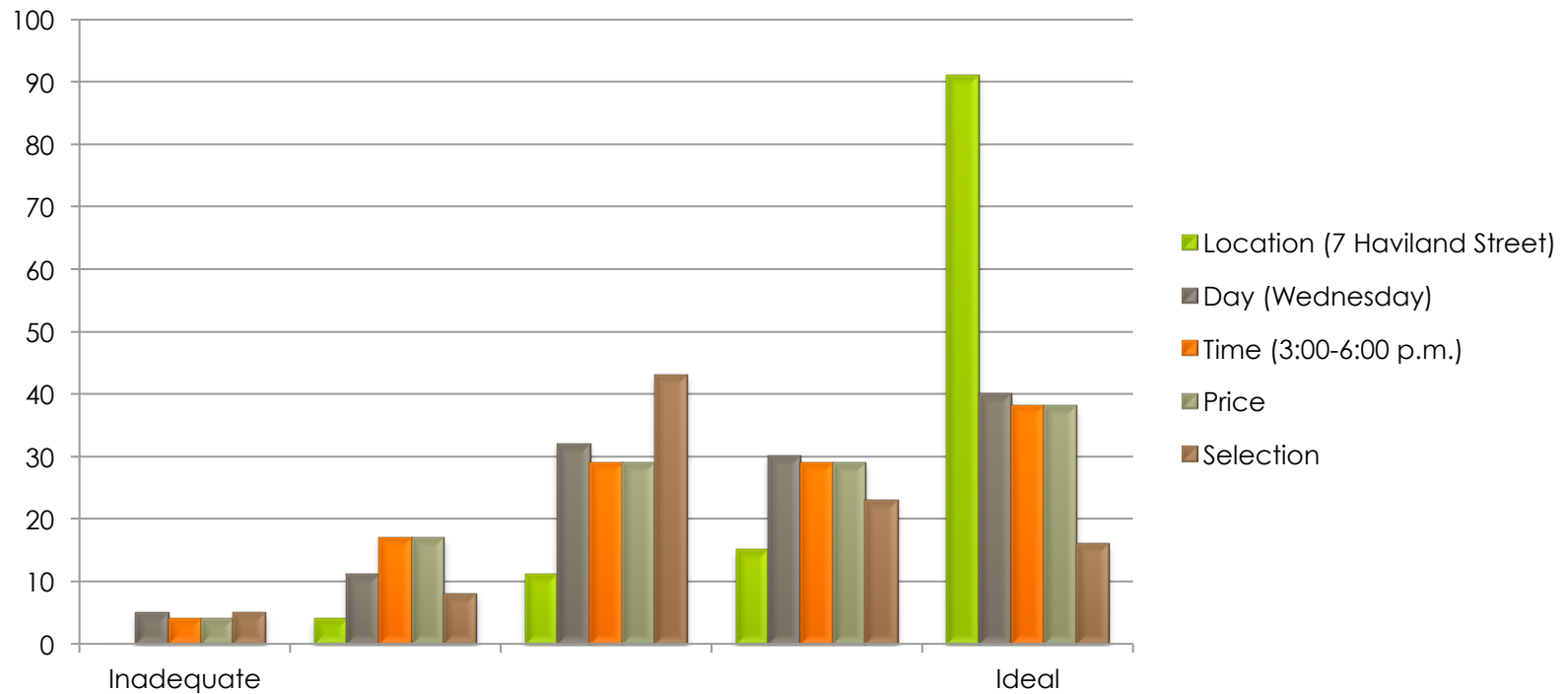
If never, why not?



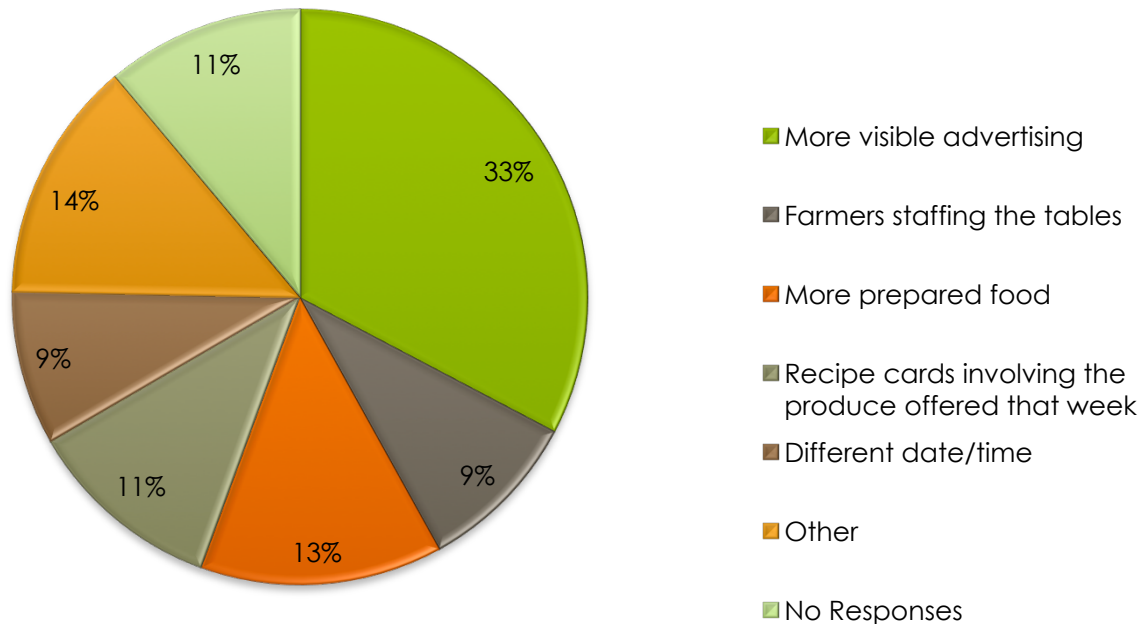
How did you hear about the market?



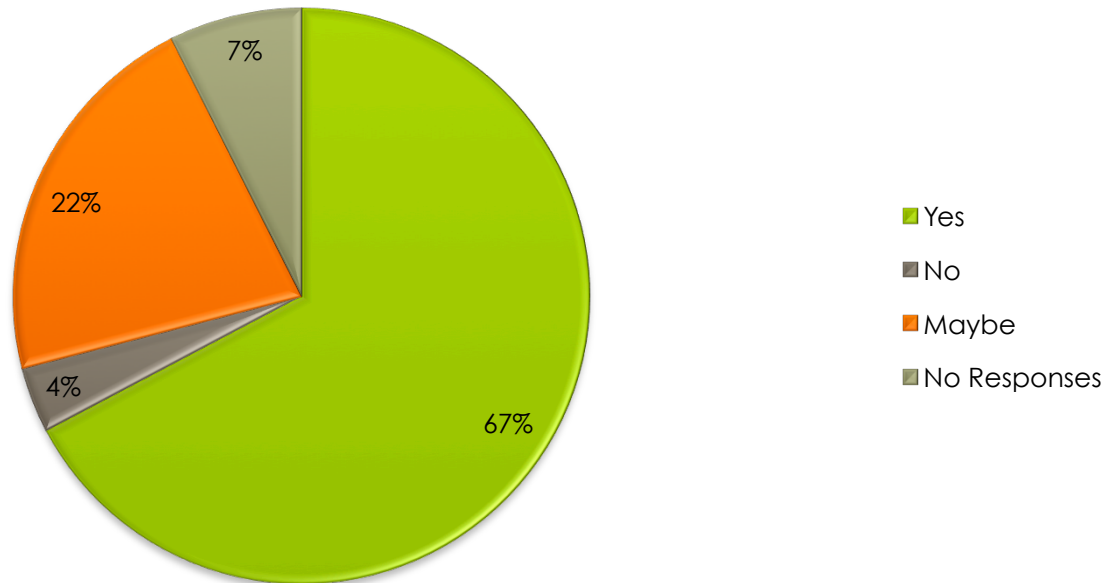
How would you rate these aspects of the market?



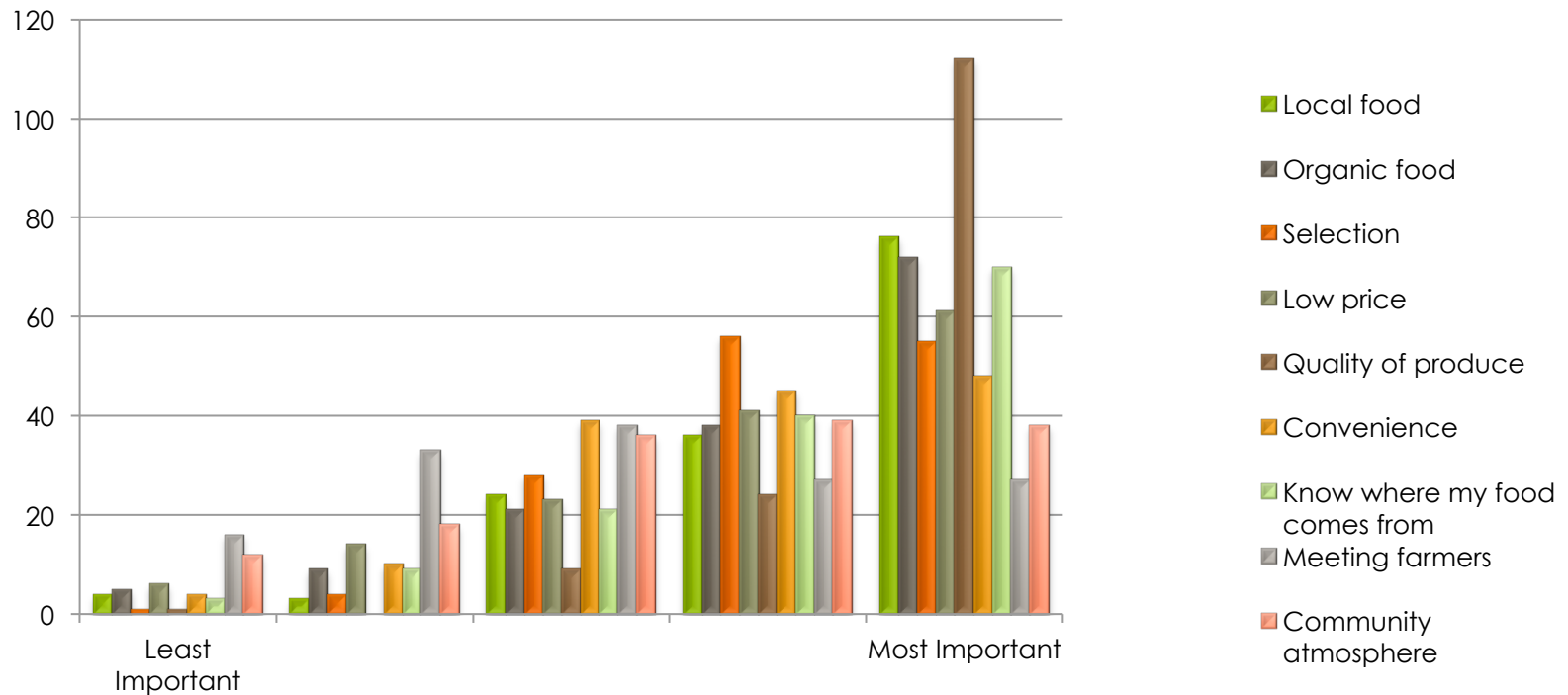
What would encourage you to use the market more often?



Would you be more likely to visit if it took place once a week?



How would you rate these reasons for visiting farmers markets?



Lessons Learned

- Survey not just a way to gather data, but also an advertising tool
- Signage is best advertisement – most people visit farmers markets spontaneously
- Quality of produce is most important, although larger selection is desired
- Location and timing are the deciding factors in whether people visit the market



Questions?

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