

# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & MARKETING IN THE FRESH PRODUCE INDUSTRY

To make sales and stay in business, fresh produce farmers and retailers need to understand their customers and their marketing options. To help the fresh produce industry keep up with evolving markets, 26 universities are working together to study consumer behavior and effective marketing strategies.

Successful marketing raises consumer awareness of diverse food choices they have, boosts revenues for farmers and retailers, and keeps our agricultural systems competitive.

## MARKETING PROGRAMS BOOST FARMER SALES & PROFITS

Extension workshops have helped produce farmers understand the profitability of their operations and how to target consumers with effective marketing strategies. Better information and strategies have boosted farmers' sales and profits.

Marketing programs are helping farmers reach more consumers and make more sales. Farmers in 15 states are using the Market Ready program to identify retailers and restaurants.

The Market Maker tool helps farmers connect with retailers, grocery stores, processors, chefs, consumers, schools, and food banks.

## POLICIES CREATE NEW WAYS TO BUY AND SELL FRESH PRODUCE

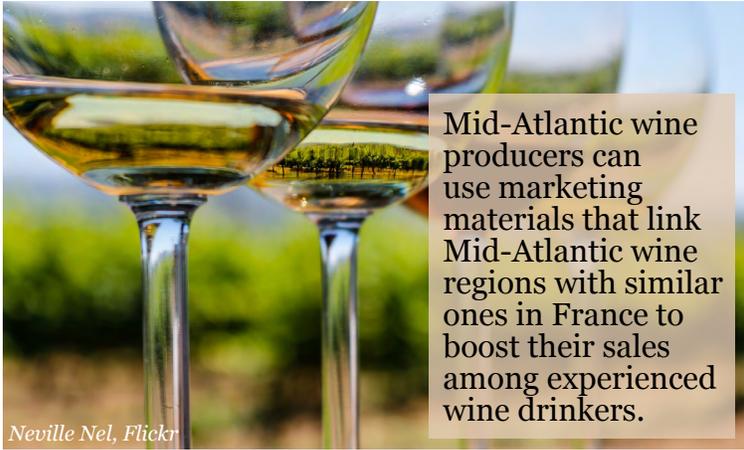
Research is helping the USDA make decisions about mobile food markets and pantries, which could bring fresh produce into new communities and give farmers a new outlet for sales.

Research is informing policy that would allow food banks to accept free produce that cannot be sold elsewhere. This would reduce food waste, lower food bank operating costs, and provide fresh produce to more communities.

Research is helping agencies make policies that would allow food stamp spending at CSAs, opening this type of fresh, local produce market to more potential buyers.



# RESEARCH FINDINGS HELP FARMERS MARKET FRESH PRODUCE



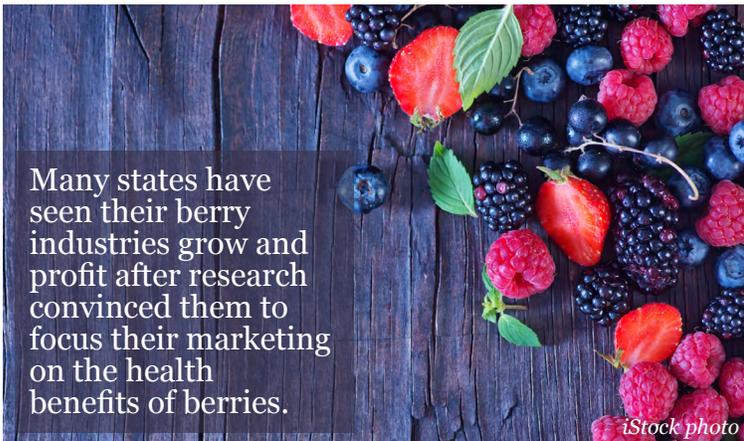
Neville Nel, Flickr

Mid-Atlantic wine producers can use marketing materials that link Mid-Atlantic wine regions with similar ones in France to boost their sales among experienced wine drinkers.



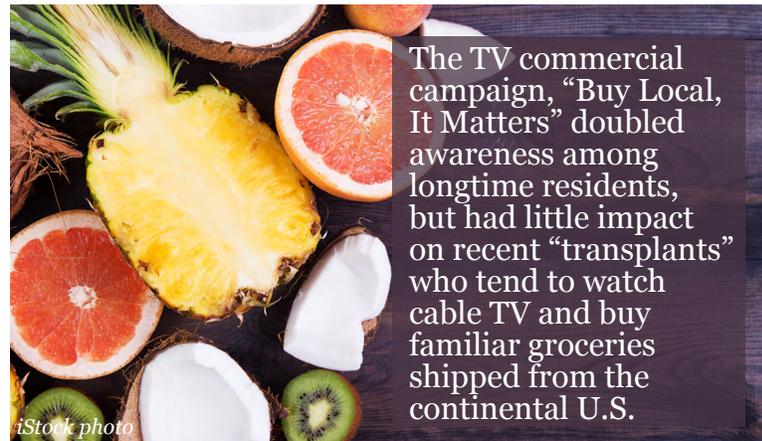
Justin Taylor, Flickr

Labels can help farmers reach customers who are willing to pay more for certain goods like certified local, non-GMO, fair trade items, and items with sensory names like "Honeycrisp apples."



iStock photo

Many states have seen their berry industries grow and profit after research convinced them to focus their marketing on the health benefits of berries.



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The TV commercial campaign, "Buy Local, It Matters" doubled awareness among longtime residents, but had little impact on recent "transplants" who tend to watch cable TV and buy familiar groceries shipped from the continental U.S.



Jules, Flickr

East Coast farmers could profit from marketing organic ethnic greens and herbs like bok choy, purslane, turmeric, and garlic chives to Chinese, Indian, Mexican, and Puerto Rican consumers who care about food safety and health.



Rob Bertholf, Flickr

Mid-Atlantic farmers can profit from marketing produce directly to consumers through websites, catalogs, and email, and from farm-based activities such as pick-your-own produce. Farmers using these strategies save money on packaging and transportation.

Multistate Research Project *Assessing Consumer Behavior, Market Coordination & Performance of the Consumer-Oriented Fruit and Vegetable Sector (S-1050, 2010-2015)* is supported by the Multistate Research Fund through USDA-NIFA and grants to project members from the following institutions:

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