



Toronto Based Restaurants' Motivation for Using Locally Sourced Food

What is the issue?

The local food movement is continually growing both within the city of Toronto and beyond. As interest in sustainable food practices increases, it is important to understand the motivations for restaurants to use locally sourced food.

What did the researcher do?

The researchers conducted interviews with the manager or chef of 50 Toronto based restaurants actively using locally sourced food. The study was performed from September-December 2014, and was completed through both face to face and telephone interviews. Participants were asked a series of questions surrounding their motivations for using local food products, as well as any challenges or barriers of doing so.

Why is this research Useful?

As consumers become better informed on local food offerings and availability, restaurants are increasingly implementing local suppliers. This research is useful for restaurants, consumers, suppliers, producers, and communities alike. It will assist farmers and restaurants in developing lasting relationships and understanding how to maintain purchasing orders in future. In addition, it will help restaurants understand the benefits of using locally sourced food, and will enable restaurants to better manage the challenges of doing so.

What were the outcomes?

The findings establish that local food usage is essential to each of the restaurants interviewed. The most prominent motivation for local sourcing is superior food quality and freshness (85%). Other recurring motivations include guest interest and appreciation (78%), the desire to support the local economy (76%), ecological sustainability (57%), and improved health (35%). Respondents cited several challenges of using local food, involving seasonality (74%), financial cost (67%), lack of availability/supply (39%), and lack of consumer demand (9%). A substantial finding is that a large majority of respondents possess strong beliefs regarding the importance of using local food, and feel it is a philosophy that should be prevalent across the restaurant industry.

About the Researcher

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