



Examining the Benefits of Farmers Markets to Tourism and the Community

What is the issue?

Farmers' markets have become increasingly popular in the last two decades and provide multiple benefits to the communities in which they are located. These benefits include spending more money in the surrounding community and are seen as a culinary and social gathering place. There is little evidence, however, on the role that tourists play. This study focused on examining farmer's markets as tourist attractions in Toronto and to determine if and how they are a tourist attraction, what benefits they bring to the community and what recommendations can be made about whether markets should be considered tourist attractions or remain for the enjoyment of the local community.

What did the researcher do?

The researchers conducted 50 questionnaires with vendors at three markets across Toronto, Ontario (Saurauen, Dufferin Grove and Leslieville). They then undertook eight in-depth interviews with experts in culinary tourism and farmers markets.

What were the outcomes?

Farmers markets are important both to the local community and tourism. They provide an interesting local destination that increases the multiplier effect of local dollars as well as directs traffic to other local attractions and businesses. More support is required including increased marketing and promotion, funding, financial support, partnerships with the local community. Focus on farmers market as both a tourist attraction to taste the local flavour but also to support the local community.

Why is this research Useful?

This study focuses on examining the benefit of farmers' markets to local communities and tourism. This study examines best practices of the local food movement worldwide with a focus on how communities incorporate and support farmers markets. With a focus on Toronto, three popular farmers' markets were examined to identify what is integrated into the farmers' markets to attract consumers on market day. Recommendations on how to improve and increase attendance and participation at farmers' markets were explored.

About the Researcher

Dr. Sonya Graci is an Associate Professor at the Ted Rogers School of Management. Her research interests focus on aboriginal ecotourism, sustainable tourism and food tourism. Meagan Barley was a fourth year student and Dr. Graci's research assistant.

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