

Project Completion Report

University Centre for Rural Health Lismore

5th October – 13th November 2020

A qualitative investigation into the motivations, perceptions and behaviours of Murwillumbah Farmers' Market attendees

Written and compiled by:

Amy Moores, Courtney Robinson & Tatjana Warners

Supervised by:

Narelle Greenlees



This report was written by Amy Moores, Courtney Robinson & Tatjana Warners as a partial requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics, Griffith University, under the supervision of Narelle Greenlees.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the project's key stakeholders, Adam Guise (Health Promotion Northern NSW Local Health District), Amy Colli (Destination Tweed) and Sue Beckinsale (Murwillumbah Farmers' Market). We are thankful for the support and feedback they have provided throughout the project. We are especially grateful to Sue for organising a market stall for the research, and for promoting the project at the market.

Thank you to the many participants who engaged in and contributed to the research. Their insight was essential in developing this research and understanding of what motivates FM attendees.

Finally, we would like to thank our primary supervisor Narelle Greenlees, for her assistance and support throughout this project. We are grateful to have had a friendly and welcoming supervisor who is passionate about community and public health nutrition.

Executive Summary

Introduction and Aim

Farmers' Markets (FMs) have been increasing in popularity in recent years, as an alternative food supply. In 2019, the Healthy Communities Northern Rivers Action Plan was launched, with the initiative to build community partnerships for preventative health in the region. One of the objectives is to increase access to local food through FMs. However, there is limited and inconsistent qualitative research into consumer motivations for attending FMs. Thus, the aim of this project was to qualitatively investigate the perceptions, behaviours and motivators of Murwillumbah FM attendees. This intended to add to the body of research on FMs and promote their benefits to the community.

Methods

A mixed-method design was employed to gather data over three weeks at the Murwillumbah FM. This included: (1) online consumer survey via Google Forms to collect demographic data, behaviours and perceptions of Murwillumbah FM consumers (2) verbal, semi-structured consumer interviews to understand behaviours and motivations for attending the Murwillumbah FM (3) verbal, semi-structured vendor interviews to gain perceptions of Murwillumbah FM consumers. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. Quantitative data was analysed descriptively, and qualitative data was analysed thematically.

Results

A total of 27 consumers participated in the online survey. For most participants (93%, n=25), the freshness of the produce was a key motivation for FM attendance, followed by supporting the local economy (85%, n=23). A total of 60 participants were recruited for the consumer interviews. The overarching theme reported was a sense of community spirit and trust experienced at the FM. This was important to many interview participants and was reported to make the FM special and unique. This influenced all other themes and was considered to be pivotal to the market's success. Other key themes identified were social, economic, health and environmental motivators for consumers. Important sub-themes were utilising the market to socialise with others, the atmosphere of the market, supporting the local economy, accessing fresh, quality produce, purchasing organic produce, and reducing food miles. Many respondents reported that their attendance was for multiple reasons. Consumers reported barriers to their attendance were lack of time, bad weather and

sometimes the price of produce. When asked about the influence on COVID-19 on their market attendance, most consumers reported that this did not change. For some consumers, the pandemic increased their attendance was a way to access an alternative food supply. A total of 5 participants were recruited for the vendor interviews. Most believed that consumers attended the FM for fresh produce and to support their local community. They also highlighted the value of trust between the farmer and consumer.

Conclusion

This project identified that the Murwillumbah FM are important to consumers for a wide variety of reasons, all underpinned by a sense of community spirit. This market was able to cultivate social cohesion and trust, whether that be with the farmer, the producer, the people who attend, or the way in which the FM is run.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Literature Review	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Introduction.....	7
1.3 Murwillumbah Farmers’ Market.....	8
1.4 Demographics	9
1.5 Consumer motivations and perceptions	9
1.5.1 Social.....	9
1.5.2 Economic	9
1.5.3 Health.....	10
1.5.4 Environmental.....	10
1.6 Barriers to FM attendance.....	11
1.7 Gaps in previous research	12
1.8 Aims and objectives	13
Chapter 2: Methods.....	14
2.1 Overview	14
2.2 Ethics and informed consent.....	14
2.3 Participant confidentiality and data storage	15
2.4 Project population	15
2.5 Data collection	15
2.5.1 Small group/individual interviews.....	15
2.5.2 Online surveys	16
2.6 Data analysis	16
2.6.1 Small group/individual interviews.....	16
2.6.2 Online surveys	17
Chapter 3: Findings and discussion	18
3.3 Qualitative interview responses	23

3.3.1 Community spirit and trust	24
3.3.2 Health benefits	26
3.3.3 Social benefits	27
3.3.4 Economic benefits.....	28
3.3.5 Environmental benefits	29
3.4 Barriers to Murwillumbah FM attendance.....	30
3.5 COVID-19.....	31
3.6 Vendor perceptions	32
3.7 Study strengths.....	33
3.8 Study limitations	33
Chapter 4: Recommendations for future research	35
Chapter 5: Dissemination of study results	36
References.....	37
Appendices.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Background

One of Australia's largest health challenges is chronic diseases, accounting for 89% of deaths in 2018 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2019). People living in lower socioeconomic areas are at higher risk of developing chronic diseases due to limited accessibility, variety and affordability of fresh produce (AIHW, 2014). The Northern Rivers is one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in NSW (Northern NSW Local Health District [NNLHD], 2013). All local government areas, including Murwillumbah, scored lower for income, education and employment rate than the NSW average (NNLHD, 2013). The Northern NSW region also had low fruit and vegetable consumption rates with only 47% of the population aged over 16 years of age meeting recommended serves of fruit, and only 8.7% meeting recommended serves of vegetables (NSW Ministry of Health, 2020). In 2019 the NNLHD launched the Healthy Communities Northern River Action Plan 2019 – 2021 with the initiative to build community partnerships for preventative health in the region. One of the objectives is to increase access to local food through Farmers' Markets (FMs) (NNLHD, 2019).

1.2 Introduction

In developed countries, the consumption of regionally grown produce is becoming one of the fastest-growing food trends (Godrich et al., 2019). Local food systems, such as FMs, aim to encourage local food production and agricultural sustainability while promoting healthy social and physical environments (Crawford, Byun, Mitchell, Thompson, Jalaludin & Torvaldsen, 2018). The number and popularity of FMs have rapidly increased in recent years. The first community FM was established in the USA in the 1970s, and the first Australian FM opened in Victoria in 1998 (Crawford et al., 2018). The total number of Australian FMs has nearly tripled over the past 15 years, from 70 FMs in 2004 to 192 in 2020 (Australian Farmers' Market Association [AFMA], 2020). The AFMA supports the development of sustainable FMs in Australia and describes FMs as:

“A predominantly fresh food market that operates regularly within a community, at a focal public location that provides a suitable environment for farmers and speciality food producers to sell farm-origin and associated value-added speciality foods for human consumption, and plant products, directly to the customer” (AFMA, 2020).

1.3 Murwillumbah Farmers’ Market

Murwillumbah is a coastal town located in far north-eastern NSW, 130km south of Brisbane. In 2016 the estimated resident population of Murwillumbah was 9245 (52.5% female and 47.5% male), with a median age of 45 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2016). The subtropical climate and volcanic rich soil in the Murwillumbah region support the farming of a variety of products such as fruit and vegetables, sugar cane, dairy and herbs (NSW Government, 2009). In 2009 the Community Economic Transition plan was launched in the Northern Rivers, in conjunction with Industry and Investment NSW, Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed. This aimed to build a sustainable future, with a focus on the promotion of healthy lifestyles, development of local green economies and the protection and enhancement of the environment (NSW Government, 2009). One of the initiatives that commenced in 2011 was the Murwillumbah FM, which is held at the local Showground every Wednesday morning from 7 am –11 am. The market consists of approximately 30-40 store holders selling a variety of local produce, most of which is grown and sourced within a 60km radius of the Murwillumbah area (Murwillumbah Farmers’ Market, 2020). The Murwillumbah FM continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic as FMs were declared by the Australian Federal Government as an essential service in the nation’s food chain (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, 2020). The Murwillumbah FM Committee implemented COVID-19 safety measures in accordance with AFMA which included handwashing stations, consumer limits in stalls and social distancing strictly enforced by the market manager (Murwillumbah Farmers’ Market, 2020).

Since FMs are an important aspect of a local community and food supply, it is necessary to understand who accesses these markets and why they choose to engage in them. This literature review will investigate current customer demographics of FMs and the behaviours and motivations of consumers both in Australia and internationally. It will also explore the current barriers to FM attendance and identify potential gaps which can guide future research.

1.4 Demographics

One bibliometric study reviewed 295 international publications, finding that consumers of FMs were typically older, female, Caucasian, had completed higher levels of education and were earning a greater income than the average resident in their community (Figueroa-Rodriguez, Alvarez-Avilla, Castillo, Rindermann & Figueroa-Sandoval, 2019). For most consumers, FM purchasing was a complement to regular supermarket shopping (Dodds & Holmes, 2014; Smithers, Lamarche, & Joseph, 2008; Figueroa-Rodriguez et al., 2019).

1.5 Consumer motivations and perceptions

Consumers may be motivated to attend FMs for a variety of reasons. The AFMA have outlined four domains that FMs offer communities: social, economic, health and environmental (AFMA, 2020). These domains intersect to impact consumer engagement and purchasing patterns.

1.5.1 Social

FMs provide social interaction, including the ability to meet with friends, family and local farmers. In studies from the USA, consumers were more likely to attend FMs to socialise and receive entertainment (Wolf, Spittler & Ahern, 2005; Byker, Shanks, Misyak & Serrano, 2012). This was supported by Australian research conducted in Byron Bay, where half of the interviewees found the FM was an important place to meet and interact with like-minded people (Burns, Cullen & Briggs, 2018). Furthermore, consumers consider FMs to be more personal and friendly than other purchasing locations (Figueroa-Rodriguez et al., 2019). Whilst Canadian research (Smithers, Lamarche & Joseph, 2008) reports that participants felt a desire to interact with local farmers, Australian research was conflicting. Some Australian consumers expressed disinterest, whilst others (consumers and producers) looked forward to sharing knowledge (Burns et al., 2018).

1.5.2 Economic

One Canadian study found that supporting the local economy was the single most important benefit for 31% of study participants (Dodds & Holmes, 2014). This was also reported in the USA, where many consumers were motivated to attend FMs and purchase goods that supported their local food system (Adams & Adams, 2011). Furthermore,

participants highlighted their interest in purchasing directly from farmers and locating speciality items that were specific to the area (Wolf et al., 2005).

1.5.3 Health

The notion that produce purchased from FMs is more nutritious, tastier and of better quality has been outlined in the literature. Whilst perceptions vary between locations, there is a common belief that FM produce is superior to similar products purchased elsewhere (Smithers et al., 2008). Canadian researchers reported that 80% of consumers believed freshness of the produce sets FMs apart and contributed to their regular attendance (Smithers et al., 2008). This was supported by USA research where consumers believed FM produce is of a higher-quality and more nutritious than supermarket produce (Wolf et al., 2005). In a Victorian Farmers' Market Association survey, the leading reason for FM attendance was 'freshness/quality of produce' (Parliament of Victoria, 2010). Furthermore, Burns and colleagues (2018) found that accessing fresh, healthy produce was a primary motivation for FM attendance among study participants. One Australian paper found that since shopping at the local FM 71% of participants were consuming more fruit and vegetables and 27% increased their intake by more than 40% (Payet, Gilles, & Howat., 2005). This has implications for improving the health status of these individuals.

1.5.4 Environmental

Environmental factors including the reduction of food miles and ethical farming practices may influence consumers motivations to attend and purchase goods at local FMs. Consumers in Canada and the USA reported environmental concerns and the desire to support sustainable farming as motivating factors (Dodds & Holmes, 2014; Wolf et al., 2005). However, these were not high motivators to frequently attend FMs compared to social, health and economic reasons in these countries (Dodds & Holmes, 2014). Qualitative interviews conducted in Byron Bay, Australia, found that most participants implied a commitment to reducing food miles, and a desire to support environmentally sustainable farming practices (Burns et al., 2018). Furthermore, they reported that consumers wanted to disrupt the power imbalance that supermarkets and large corporations hold (Burns et al., 2018). As this was not discussed in great depth in international research, this may be more indicative of Byron Bay consumers and their beliefs.

Research has been conducted as to whether individuals attend FMs to access produce that has been grown with small farming practices, or certified organic. Chang and Zepeda

(2005) found that most Australian participants justified certified organic as being more sustainable, ethical and nutritious. This was supported by another Australian study, where consumers perceived a health benefit from the reduced use of chemicals in farming (Burns et al., 2018). However, it is unclear as to whether consumers were specifically searching for certified organic or would be satisfied with produce grown with small farming practices. Internationally, the purchase of certified organic produce at FMs has not been well documented.

Whilst these individual factors influence consumer motivations and purchasing behaviours, it is unlikely that they occur singularly. Rather, participants are more likely to have a range of motivations that determine their engagement with the local FM.

1.6 Barriers to FM attendance

Various Australian and overseas consumers have claimed that FM products are expensive, which impacts purchasing decisions (Burns et al., 2018; Godrich et al., 2019; Dodds & Holmes, 2014; Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015; Chang & Zepeda, 2005). In some cases, consumers reported little interest in buying local products or engaging in the social and community aspect of FMs. Hence, there was limited incentive to shop at their local FM, considering the perception of elevated prices (Godrich et al., 2019). Families may not be able to justify purchasing at their local FM when a tight budget is of concern.

Consumer purchasing behaviours may be limited by FMs only supplying seasonal produce (Godrich et al., 2019; Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015; O’Kane, Richardson, D’Almeida & Wei, 2019). As supermarkets are able to import out-of-season products, they can offer their customers a greater variety of fresh produce (Millichamp & Gallegos, 2013; Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015; O’Kane et al., 2019). FM customers in Byron Bay reported regularly purchasing out-of-season produce at non-FM supply chains, to consume a wider variety that was not always available at the FM (Burns et al., 2018). If customers must shop at other locations for out-of-season products, it likely reduced the chances of them consistently shopping at FMs. A lack of awareness or education about purchasing seasonal produce may underpin these choices. The relative inconvenience of FMs compared to supermarkets may also be a deterrent to consumers. Adams & Adams (2011) found that even within FM customers, a higher proportion regularly shopped at supermarkets and smaller grocery stores than at FMs. Most consumers report that supermarkets are more convenient with better

locations and longer trading hours (Dodds & Holmes, 2014; Byker et al., 2012). FMs are also more likely to encounter issues with logistics such as inclement weather and limited parking/transportation options (Wolf et al., 2005; Freedman et al., 2016).

1.7 Gaps in previous research

A key feature of the existing research is inconsistent results among studies, both within Australia and overseas, with significant variability in priorities for FM customers (Smithers et al., 2013). Generalising this type of research also creates internal issues, especially as international research may not necessarily apply to the Australian situation (e.g. differing food systems, climate and societal norms). Consumer engagement in local food supply and consumption patterns are influenced by a multitude of factors. As such, it is unlikely the results from any one area or FM will apply to a wide group of producers and consumers, which creates the need for comparative and region-specific research.

Most studies examining consumer purchasing decisions suffer from small sample size and convenience sampling, and typically surveyed customers already at FMs. Those that attend FMs are likely well invested in the culture of FMs already, which makes it difficult to determine the barriers of those who are not attending. Some studies also had a very short period of data collection, that may not have been able to represent a wide variety of consumers or their purchasing behaviours throughout the year (O’Kane et al., 2019). By necessity, most research in this area is completed with voluntary surveys which may not provide a representative sample. Alternatively, there were concerns among authors that the use of a unidirectional Likert scale in surveys was too simplistic and constrained the answers from responders (Adams & Adams, 2011). Thus, there is likely a benefit to conducting in-depth, qualitative research to understand the perspectives and motivations of FM consumers.

Finally, AFMA’s definition of FMs highlights a ‘community sense’ however, with limited qualitative research the overarching sense of community as a motivator for consumers has not been explored in detail. This sense of community engagement and spirit embodies all of the four domains: economic (supporting farmers and local economy), social (interacting with locals, atmosphere, trust about the source of food), health (the ‘feel-good’ phenomenon, responsibility of raising healthy children) and environment (supporting a greener local and global environment). Exploring this community sense of spirit through future qualitative research at FMs may provide the key to the success of future FMs.

1.8 Aims and objectives

The primary aim of this project is to qualitatively investigate the knowledge, perceptions and behaviours of Murwillumbah FM attendees. It seeks to capture customer beliefs, the motivations behind both attendance and produce purchasing and any perceived barriers for consumer engagement in the markets. This intends to provide site-specific data that will assist stakeholders to effectively target strategies that promote Murwillumbah FM.

Objectives:

- To quantitatively collect the demographics of consumers attending the Murwillumbah FM
- To gather perspectives of consumer trends from stakeholders and vendors of the Murwillumbah FM
- To understand the purchasing behaviours of consumers attending the Murwillumbah FM
- To indicate the influence of certified organic labelling on purchasing behaviours of consumers attending the Murwillumbah FM
- To discuss whether local FM attendees share similar values and concerns to their European and American counterparts
- To provide site-specific data to inform recommendations for service improvement.

Chapter 2: Methods

2.1 Overview

The present project was completed at the Murwillumbah FM, located in Northern New South Wales. A mixed-method design was employed to gather both quantitative (i.e. consumer demographics, engagement and purchasing behaviours) and qualitative (i.e. consumer and stallholder perspectives and motivations for FM attendance) data. Participating consumers were asked to complete either a verbal interview (Appendix A) or an online survey (Appendix B). Participating stallholders were asked to complete a verbal interview (Appendix C). This use of methodological and data triangulation reduced the chance of researcher and respondent bias (Denzin, 1998). A phenomenological approach was utilised to explore Murwillumbah FM consumer behaviours, perceptions and motivations for attendance (Austin & Sutton, 2014). The semi-structured interview protocols and survey questions were developed in consultation with students (AM, CR, TW), academic supervisor (NG) and stakeholders from agribusiness, health promotion and the FM (Amy Colli, Sue Beckinsale, Adam Guide). AM, CR, TW were responsible for the collection of interview and survey data, under the supervision of NG.

2.2 Ethics and informed consent

The research was granted ethics approval by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU Ref. No: 2020/781). Participants chose to complete a survey (paper or online), be interviewed at a convenient time to them or decline to participate. Survey participants were provided with access to a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (Appendix D), and completion of the survey was formal consent. Interview participants were provided with the PIS, and verbal agreement to participate was accepted as consent. Murwillumbah FM vendors were approached by the FM manager to express interest in participating in the project. Interviews were arranged and participants were provided with the PIS, with verbal agreement accepted as consent. All interview participants were informed of the intention to audio record their interview and were provided with the option to decline this. Interview notes were handwritten for participants who declined.

2.3 Participant confidentiality and data storage

No identifying information was collected for either the online survey or interviews. Audio recordings were completed on each researcher's password-protected electronic device and uploaded to a secure Microsoft Teams folder for storage. Participants were allocated a unique research code (e.g. 3.1), which was utilised for transcription and all study documentation to ensure confidentiality. All paper data will be destroyed once analysed and electronic files will be stored in Griffith University's research storage platform.

2.4 Project population

A combination of convenience and purposeful sampling was employed. A sample of 20-40 participants was expected to be recruited for the consumer survey, 30-50 for the consumer interviews and 5-10 for the vendor interviews. This was based upon observed numbers of market patrons and considered the project timeframe. Patrons of the Murwillumbah FM were included if they were a resident, which covered the Northern Rivers and Tweed shires. Tourists were excluded as their motivations were assumed to be different from residents. Participants were screened to ensure they had only completed one mode of the research (i.e. interview or survey).

2.5 Data collection

Data collection occurred each Wednesday between 7 and 11 am over four weeks between October and November 2020. On each day of data collection, the students set up a stall to advertise the research, with assistance from the market manager. The research was also promoted via the market's weekly newsletter and social platform.

2.5.1 Small group/individual interviews

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews. Student interviewers completed research and training and were directed to ask questions conversationally whilst following participant lead. This method was chosen to engage in conversation with consumers, and a range of open-ended questions was asked to determine purchasing behaviours and motivations for Murwillumbah FM attendance. A separate set of open-ended questions were used for stallholders regarding their perceptions of the Murwillumbah FM and consumers. Prompts were utilised to encourage participants to

provide further detail and clarification. Data saturation was reached when no new themes emerged.

2.5.2 Online surveys

Quantitative (categorical) and demographic data were collected via an online survey created with Google Forms, to engage time-poor consumers. A QR code was created for participants to access the survey on their electronic device. Paper-based copies were available for participants without their electronic device. The online survey remained open for two weeks for participants to complete during or outside of the FM and was promoted via the Murwillumbah FM newsletter and Facebook page.

2.6 Data analysis

2.6.1 Small group/individual interviews

Interview recordings were listened to following data collection, with key responses and quotes transcribed. The interviews were not reviewed by participants. Age, gender, economic and produce questions were classified into categorical data in Microsoft Excel. Qualitative responses were placed into Microsoft Word. Both master documents were stored in Microsoft Teams for access by each research student and primary supervisor. Qualitative responses were analysed utilising the CREATIVE framework (Table 1) by AM, CR and TW. This included allocating themes and sub-themes to codes (i.e. theme A, sub-theme A2), which were associated with participant responses. The context in which the response was recorded was considered where possible to prevent over-simplification of participant responses. An audit trail was kept, all student researchers compared results for consistency and reviewed the coding other members had made. Any disagreements were discussed and resolved. Systematic analysis of the codes was used to identify initial themes, which were then discussed and refined between AM, CR, TW and NG. Themes were further refined to enhance the consistency and reliability of the coding. Direct quotes were utilised to indicate how the findings were generated from the data.

Table 1

CREATIVE framework (Pitney & Parker, 2009)

Steps	Descriptions
1	Consider study purposes and evaluation questions
2	Read through the transcript and understand the data
3	Examine the data
4	Assign the labels to these units of information
5	Thematise the data
6	Interpret the emergent themes to the evaluation questions
7	Verify the trustworthiness of the findings
8	Engage in the writing process to discuss findings

2.6.2 Online surveys

Online survey responses were recorded in Google Forms. Data was transferred into Microsoft Excel for analysis. This was converted into categories, counts and percentages to determine participant demographics, purchasing behaviours and beliefs.

Chapter 3: Findings and discussion

3.1 Demographic & behaviour data

27 participants completed the online survey (open for 10 days) and 60 participants were recruited for interviews (45 interviews over two weeks). The mean consumer interview time was 10 minutes and 38 seconds (± 0.17).

Questions that were common to both the online survey and interviews are reported in Table 2. Many responses were consistent across the two methods of data collection. A consistent percentage of female participants were seen from both methods, at approximately 74% (Table 2). This is consistent with the existing quantitative data from FM research, sighting a predominant female patronage (Dodds & Holmes, 2014; Smithers et al., 2018). The age of participants from the survey group were younger than the interview group, with 44% under 39 years as opposed to 26% in the interview group. The aim of the online surveys was to capture the market attendee that did not have time to do an interview at the markets. Presumably this could be younger people who are time poor because of work or young families to care for. Both groups included approximately one third of respondents over 60 years. Residents of Murwillumbah made up 44% and 60% of the survey and interview participants, respectively. Other consumers reported Tweed and the Northern Rivers as their place of residence. FM attendance was high in both groups with 81% and 94% of survey and interview participants respectively attending the FM regularly (weekly or fortnightly). The survey captured one shopper who visited the market rarely, and the interviews included two people who described their attendance as rare. It may be considered that those passionate about shopping regularly were more inclined to volunteer or agree to be interviewed.

Table 2

Consumer demographics and market attendance of online (n=27) and interview participants (n=45)

	Number of participants	
	Online survey	Interview
Gender, n (%)		
Female	20 (74)	44 (73)
Male	7 (26)	16 (27)
Age, n (%)		
Under 25	6 (22)	7 (11)
25-39	6 (22)	9 (15)
40- 59	6 (22)	22 (37)
Over 60	9 (33)	22 (37)
Residency, n (%)		
Murwillumbah	12 (44)	36 (60)
Other Northern Rivers/Tweed Shire	14 (52)	23 (38)
Did not respond	1 (4)	1 (2)
Frequency of attendance, n (%)		
Weekly	15 (55)	48 (80)
Fortnightly	7 (26)	8 (14)
Monthly	4 (15)	2 (3)
Rarely	1 (4)	2 (3)

3.1 Questions specific to online survey

Responses unique to the online survey are displayed in Table 3. Of the 19 respondents who disclosed their average household income, 47% (n=9) reported less than \$50,000 annually and 21% (n=4) reported over \$100,000. This is supported by the low-socioeconomic status of Murwillumbah compared to the state average. However, this cannot be explained by the levels of education reported by the participants. 52% of participants selected tertiary education as their highest level of completion, and just one respondent reported less than year 12 equivalent. With FMs having a reputation as being more expensive, it may be surprising to half of regular FM shoppers have a reported household income of less than \$50,000.

Table 3*Attributes of online survey participants (n=27)*

Attribute (single answer)	Number of participants
How long have you been coming to the Murwillumbah FM?	
Less than 6 months	6 (22)
6 – 12 months	6 (22)
1 - 3 years	8 (30)
4+ years	7 (26)
Who are you buying for?	
Yourself only	4 (15)
Couple	8 (30)
Family	14 (52)
Bed and breakfast	1 (4)
In the last month, what percentage of your total household food purchases will you have bought at Murwillumbah FM?	
< 25%	7 (26)
25%	10 (37)
50%	7 (26)
75%	2 (7)
100%	1 (4)
Do you receive the weekly Murwillumbah FM online newsletter?	
Yes	10 (39)
No	16 (61)
What is the highest level of study have you completed?	
Less than Year 12 or equivalent	1 (4)
Year 12 or equivalent	5 (20)
Diploma/Trade Qualification	5 (20)
Bachelor's degree (including honours)	7 (28)
Postgraduate qualifications	7 (28)
What is your average household income per year?	
Less than \$20,000	4 (16)
\$20,001 - \$50,000	5 (20)
\$50,001 - \$75,000	2 (8)
\$75,001 - \$100,000	4 (16)
\$100,001 - \$125,000	2 (8)
\$125,001+	2 (8)
Prefer not to say	6 (24)

Participants of the online survey selected their reasons for attending and barriers preventing engagement at the Murwillumbah FM, reported in Table 4. When choosing motivators for attendance, the average number of selections made by participants was 7.6. For 93% of participants, the freshness of produce was a key motivation for FM attendance. Over 75% of respondents reported supporting the local economy and non-corporate business as important. Community atmosphere and confidence with food source were also popular reasons at nearly 60%. The top barriers to attending the FM were considered to be lack of time (39%, n=7) and weather (28%, n=5). These reasons and barriers are discussed further in sections 3.4 along with interview results.

Table 4

Online survey participants' reasons for and barriers to attending the Murwillumbah FM

Attribute (multi-answer)	Frequency of response
Reasons for attending, n (%)	
Freshness of produce	25 (93)
Supporting local economy	23 (85)
Support non-corporate or local business	21 (78)
Healthy produce	18 (67)
Community atmosphere	16 (59)
Peace of mind of food source	16 (59)
Variety of produce	15 (57)
Value for money	14 (52)
Reduced food miles	14 (52)
Meeting with friends/family	13 (48)
Certified organic produce	13 (48)
Non-certified organic/spray free	9 (33)
Animal welfare	7 (26)
Barriers to attending, n (%)	
Lack of time	7 (39)
Weather	5 (28)
Market time/day	4 (22)
Cost of produce	3 (17)
Location of the market	2 (11)
On holidays	1 (6)
Baby's naps	1 (6)
Mental health / crowds	1 (6)
Difficult access for walking and car	1 (6)
Variety of produce	0 (0)

Responses varied for what changes could be made to the market to increase attendance, which included longer opening hours, starting the music earlier in the day and more shade provision. When asked to describe the Murwillumbah FM in one word, consumer responses were overwhelmingly positive: “great”, “wholesome”, “fresh”, “awesome”. One consumer responded “expensive”; however, this was the only comment of a negative nature. Most respondents expressed they heard about the market via word of mouth from friends or family.

3.2 Purchasing data from consumer interviews

45% of interview participants (n=27) felt that they purchased most of their total household food at this market. In comparison, only 11% of survey responses indicated they purchased 75% or more of their food purchases from the market. This variation may be due to participant bias with interviews being conducted in person. The online survey had the element of anonymity; thus, the outcome may be more reliable.

Consumer purchasing data is represented in Table 5. When participants were asked whether they come for specific items at the market, 60% (n=36) expressed that there were no particular items and that a wide range of products motivated their attendance. All respondents mentioned shopping outside of the Murwillumbah FM, with most discussing more than one other shopping destination. 28 participants (47%) reported they still access large chain supermarkets (e.g. Coles) and 18 people indicated they frequently access smaller, local supermarkets (e.g. IGA). Variety of produce was the most reported response by interview participants, with consumers needing to go elsewhere for food items not available at the market. In contrast, variety of produce was not selected as a barrier to market attendance by any participant in the online surveys.

Table 5*Purchasing data collected from consumer interviews*

Attribute	Frequency of response
Attending for specific item, n (%)	
None	36 (60)
Bread	14 (23)
Berries	13 (22)
Eggs	7 (11)
Mushrooms	5 (8)
Takeaway	15 (25)
Other shopping destinations	
Large chain supermarkets	28 (47)
Small local supermarkets	18 (30)
Local greengrocers and farm stalls	10 (17)
Health food stores	9 (15)
Other Farmer's Markets	0 (0)
Influences of shopping habits outside Murwillumbah FM	
Variety of produce	25 (42)
Convenience	12 (20)
Supporting local business	11 (18)
Price	10 (17)
Quality	1 (2)

3.3 Qualitative interview responses

The overarching theme among consumers of the Murwillumbah FM was a sense of community spirit and trust experienced at the market. This was important to many interview participants and was reported to make the market special and unique. Social, economic, health and environmental benefits to consumers were also key themes, which encouraged and supported their motivation to attend the market. Many respondents reported that their attendance was for multiple reasons, indicating the range of factors encouraging market engagement for different people. This has been supported in previous Australian and international studies assessing reasons for FM attendance (Crawford et al., 2018; Dodds & Holmes, 2014; Smithers et al., 2018)

“Yes, I think it is a combination of all four” (participant 33.2)

“For me, it is a little bit of all of it” (participant 28.1)

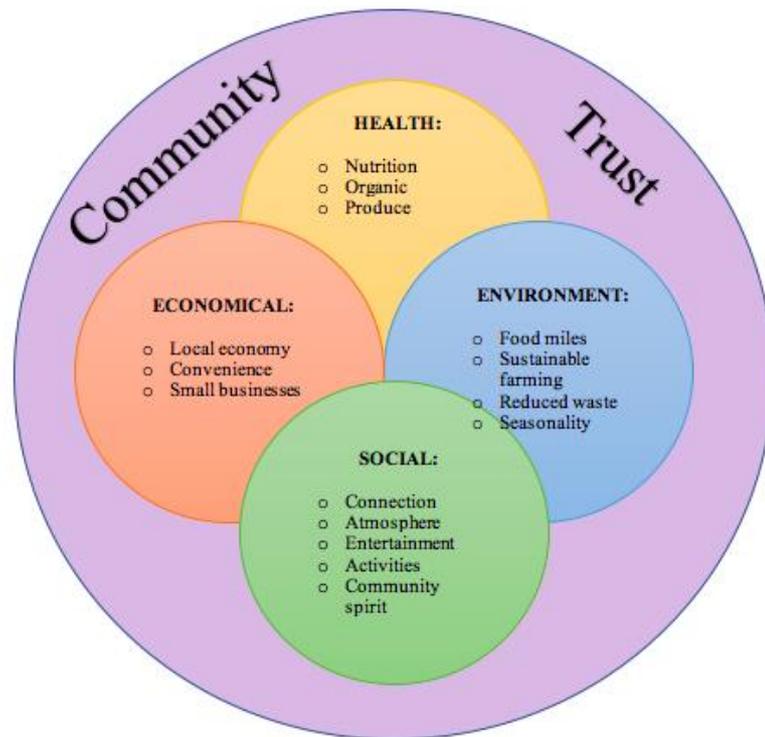


Figure 1: Thematic analysis of motivations for FM attendance

3.3.1 Community spirit and trust

A strong, overarching theme present throughout discussions with interview participants was the sense of community spirit that attending the FM provided. Community spirit has been defined as a "willingness and desire to participate in activities that promote a community" (Collins Dictionary, 2020). The way in which participants discussed how they resonated with health, economic, social and environmental reasons for coming was often underpinned by the sense of community connection the market gave them. Whilst all respondents noted the social nature of the market, for many it was so much more than that, describing a feeling of community spirit. It has been reported in research that FMs develop a personality that mirrors the community (Tiemann, 2018), which appeared to be evident in Murwillumbah. Thus, reflecting the value of community spirit and trust.

“There’s a lot of beautiful connection and chatting that I appreciate now and have spaciousness for” (participant 40.1)

“I think it’s [the market] a great asset to the town. It’s really a tremendous asset. And as you can see by the crowds, people love it” (participant 24.1)

“It feels like a community and brings anyone together” (participant 44.1)

It was frequently mentioned that Murwillumbah FM has a 'vibe'. Many respondents related this to the people of the community and the connections that the atmosphere of the market fostered. By connecting people, and customers to their purchases, FMs provide an important place of community connection (Crawford et al., 2018). This had not been well documented in FM research before the present study.

“It was a way of reconnecting to people here.” (participant 22.1)

“...also has that love vibe you know.” (participant 25.1)

“This market is really special, its calm”. (participant 28.1)

“The love, it is the best place.... I have never heard of markets that has the quality of people as they do here” (participant 43.1)

Furthermore, some respondents discussed the impact community connection had on their personal purchasing behaviours and how this influences their decision to support local farming.

“There is some wonderful store holders here and they’ve looked after me and I would like to give back to them” (participant 43.1)

“Over time we have started to come to talk to the vendors, we have really gotten to know them, so we quite enjoy that part of it now, that’s a bit of motivation now to see the people that are selling the bread and the apples, and all the things we normally buy. It’s like a weekly chat, and we kind of like that now” (participant 41.1)

Relating to this sense of community is the concept of trust, with multiple interview respondents discussing an innate sense of trust with the farmers. The trust participants expressed with local producers was in stark contrast to the distrust felt for supermarkets and large corporations. This was also found by Burns and colleagues (2018), at the Byron Bay FM with a similar demographic. It has been suggested that this perception is more frequent in regional consumers than their urban counterparts, due to the appreciation of an embedded relationship with producers (Meyer et al., 2012).

“I trust most of the people here and food here” (participant 12.1).

“I just trust them, yeah. You just trust people; they’re doing the right thing”.
(participant 24.1)

“Yeah I’ve been out to the biodynamic farms, and yeah I do trust that over mainstream farming, like supermarket stuff” (participant 22.1)

[Supermarkets] “They do all of that cold storage, they fiddle around with it, we don’t know the growers.... I like competing with the supermarkets in some way” (participant 14.1)

3.3.2 Health benefits

Most participants reported that the ability to access fresh, quality produce was a motivator for attending the Murwillumbah FM. This is consistent with participant responses from the online survey, where accessing fresh produce was the leading motivator for FM attendance. This is also supported by three Australian studies, who found this to be a primary motivator for FM attendance (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014; Crawford et al., 2018; Burns et al., 2018). Thus, accessing quality, fresh produce remains a key influence for FM attendance. Some consumers reported that choosing produce from the Murwillumbah FM assisted them to improve their nutrition.

“Better quality food for our health and more nutritious because it is fresh” (participant 45.1)

The positive impact of the market atmosphere on mental health was mentioned in multiple discussions with interview participants. Reasons for this are entwined with the sense of community, outdoors, familiarity of stallholders, and entertainment to name a few.

“It has really impacted on my life I mean look at it, it’s beautiful”. “This is my happy place every Wednesday morning”. (participant 28.1)

“The experience and mental health market, music and atmosphere” (participant 45.1)

A strong sub-theme identified by participants was purchasing organic produce for health reasons. For these consumers, organic was perceived to be more nutritious and of better quality. Many participants reported prioritising the purchase of organic over non-organic produce. However, it was not specifically clarified what they perceived organic to mean (e.g., organic certification, spray-free, organic farming processes). Burns et al., (2018) and Chang & Zepeda (2005) also noted the purchase of organic food without ‘toxic chemicals’ to be of consistently high priority to customers. However, Crawford et al., (2018)

found the availability of certified organic food mostly irrelevant to FM customer's decision making.

“Definitely organic is more nutritious and safer for my children and our bodies”
(participant 45.1)

“As much as possible stay true to organic and regenerative. That is very important to me” (participant 6.1)

Other consumers had no preference for organic, typically reporting that they were happy to purchase foods grown locally and/or with natural farming practices. This may relate to the concept of trust, as another study has found, that participants felt that the produce was fresh, and safe for health if it was purchased from local producers (Burns et al., 2018). The remaining consumers prioritised the purchase of non-organic produce, primarily due to the higher cost of organic produce.

“I think at one stage I was quite fanatical about it [purchasing organic produce]. But as you grow older you become a little bit wiser. I like organic, biodynamic but because we live in this bowl of incredible food if I buy something here and it's not organic it's not going to kill us” (participant 25.1)

“If I know that they're using natural ways for pesticides then it doesn't bother me”
(participant 14.1)

3.3.3 Social benefits

The social aspect of the Murwillumbah FM was a frequently reported motivator by participants. Most consumers discussed utilising the market to connect with friends and family. For some, the market acted as a meeting place for them. This has been supported by a study conducted in Brisbane, Australia where sociability was a higher motivator for market attendance than any other factor (Azavedo & Walsh, 2018).

“Yeah, it is [social]. After I drop off to school, I get a chance. Also, when she was younger, it was definitely a social aspect. Cause there's not much in Murwillumbah community, there's not a dedicated space for people to come together. To share ideas and things like that or create or anything like that. So, this has ultimately provided that to many people” (participant 22.1)

For other participants, social reasons were not a motivator for FM attendance. However, they noticed that other people were enjoying this and appreciated that aspect of the market.

“I really don’t come for socialising here to be honest with you. But it has a social vibe, you can sit here and have a tea by yourself and feel really lovely. But it wouldn’t be my top priority” (participant 25.1)

Numerous participants commented that the market had a positive atmosphere and ambience. Furthermore, the entertainment, music and children’s activities provided were perceived to attract consumers and be a valuable addition to the market. Participants in Burns and colleagues’ (2018) paper also reported enjoying the music of the market and being able to mingle with like-minded people. This element is likely an important feature of the market, fostering well-being and community connection. It is unknown if this is related to the regional demographic of the Murwillumbah FM, and if creating a similar ambience and atmosphere would be an important consideration for urban FMs.

“I love the atmosphere here as well, there’s usually someone playing guitar” (participant 14.1)

“Friends, the open air and just the atmosphere of the market” (participant 38.1)

“Great place to sit with the kids and this is the only market with a kid’s area, so my daughter is getting a story read to her” (participant 45.1)

3.3.4 Economic benefits

Supporting the local economy was a strong sub-theme that arose from participants and was an important motivator for them to attend the Murwillumbah FM. Consumers felt that purchasing directly from farmers was of economic benefit, and some suggested this was necessary for local resilience. This was consistent with findings from the online survey, as supporting the local economy and small businesses were the second and third highest motivators for FM attendance. Research from Byron Bay FM also found consumer enthusiasm for supporting local producers was very high (Burns et al., 2018). This may be indicative of regional locations, as urban consumers in another Australian paper were significantly less motivated to support local farmers (Parliament of Victoria, 2010). Many of

the Murwillumbah FM consumers reported their interactions with the farmers were an important aspect of their market experience.

“It’s probably more expensive here but at least the farmers are getting what they’re worth” (participant 13.1)

“Well lately there’s a huge amount of talk around local resilience, so a lot about supporting our local producers and having quality food and, people are very interested in that” (participant 40.1)

“So, you’re supporting your community and community-based business which is important” (participant 19.1)

For some consumers, the FM was reported to be a convenient shopping location for them to purchase their food. This also aligned with their values of supporting local producers.

“Small, convenient, I want to support the non-corporate world wherever I can” (participant 18.2)

3.3.5 Environmental benefits

Environmental reasons for attending the Murwillumbah FM were not as strongly represented among the participants compared to social, health and economic areas. This contrasts to the Burns and colleagues (2018) study, where many participants expressed environmental concern. Other research has suggested that the motivation to consume local foods may also be impacted by a heightened awareness of the impact of conventional industrialised systems and carbon emissions produced from food transportation (Dodds & Holmes, 2014). For consumers of Murwillumbah FM, the sub-theme of wanting to reduce food miles by purchasing locally grown foods was discussed. Whilst this was not as strongly represented in the present study, some participants did report that they avoided food that was imported or had travelled for these environmental reasons.

“The food [here] hasn’t travelled a long way and has not come from Chile or China (participant 12.1)

“I don’t like getting food that comes from way away. As much as possible I like to buy food that hasn’t travelled for a long way” (participant 21.1)

Some participants mentioned regenerative and sustainable farming influenced them when purchasing produce. Organic produce was specifically highlighted as being environmentally friendly. The present project did not delve into the consumer beliefs that created this perception of organic produce, which may be an avenue for future research.

“I think it’s [organic farming] better for the planet, things been grown organically is just more sensible and I’m just not in favour of massive monoculture, agriculture, I just think it’s bad practice and I just don’t think benefitting anyone really” (participant 41.1)

3.4 Barriers to Murwillumbah FM attendance

Consumers reported perceived barriers that others may experience to attending the Murwillumbah FM. This was predominantly lack of time, travelling to a specific destination, and the expense of produce sold at the market. Lack of time was also the primary reason survey respondents gave for not attending the market more regularly. Previous research has highlighted similar perceived barriers (Burns et al., 2018). Other participants perceived that a lack of knowledge around the existence of FMs’ and unawareness of local produce/suppliers may prevent people from attending the Murwillumbah FM. This may be related to a gap in specific advertising for the Murwillumbah FM, that could be addressed to reduce this barrier.

“It is a low socio-economic area so money could be a factor” (participant 30.1)

“Uneducated about what this is really all about, I think there needs to be a lot more exposure about the quality and whole environment for wellbeing” (participant 28.1)

Some participants perceived that people may find FMs too inconvenient as it was not a one-stop-shop. This has been previously reported, with two studies suggesting that FM lack convenience in terms of accessibility and opening hours (O’Kane, Richardson, D’Almeida, & Wei, 2019; Wolf et al., 2005). Others mentioned people as ‘lazy’ for not coming to the FM. This was an interesting perception and may have arisen from consumers being unsure why others do not prioritise shopping at the market when they so clearly do.

"Driving out of the way is a factor when you can get everything from one place and rush and run" (participant 6.1)

“I can’t see any reason why somebody wouldn’t come” (participant 37.1)

When prompted, multiple participants discussed barriers which impacted their own attendance at the Murwillumbah FM. This included lack of time due to work commitments, bad weather and sometimes the price of produce. As Murwillumbah is an area of low socioeconomic status compared to the rest of New South Wales (NNLHD, 2013), the cost may be a barrier. Interestingly, the survey results indicate that income brackets were diverse, however, many did report earning less than the average total household income per year (43% reporting < \$50,000). It is unknown whether perceptions of the cost of produce at the FM are related to income. For some participants, price comparisons were not as important as other values (e.g., freshness, supporting local producers) outweighed the cost. This finding correlates with another paper, where it was highlighted that consumers do not usually shop at FMs for inexpensive food (Parliament of Victoria, 2010). Canadian research also found that 86% of respondents were willing to pay more for a local product, such as those present at FMs (Adams & Adams, 2011). Thus, the price may be perceived as a barrier depending on the individual's perceptions and values. Further research may explore whether consumers perceive that a higher cost means greater quality or value. Other consumers expressed no barriers were impacting their attendance.

“Yes time, cause I have a time limit.... I need to go to work” (participant 29.1)

“We wouldn't come if it was raining” (participant 23.1)

“We have no real barriers at the moment so that is why we are here all the time”
(participant 33.1)

3.5 COVID-19

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their market attendance most participants reported no change, which was supported by almost 50% of survey respondents. Some interview and survey participants mentioned that it increased their attendance and described the open air and spacing of the stalls as a safer environment to shop. It was also reported that the market management handled the COVID-19 situation “brilliantly”. The existence of FMs has clearly been a benefit and was recognised by the federal government during lock-down to be a safe and necessary food supplier. It will be interesting to observe the impact COVID-19 has on food supply and whether any issues concerning the importation of international produce will make FM more relevant in the overall food supply market.

“COVID completely changed my buying habits as my work came to a halt, I was introduced to this amazing market and it has changed the way I think and purchase food (participant 28.1).

“I think they have handled the COVID situation really well by spacing things out a bit more” (participant 38.1)

3.6 Vendor perceptions

Five vendor interviews were completed with a mean vendor interview time of 7 minutes and 20 seconds (± 0.09). Vendors concurred with the customer interview findings believing the main reasons people come to the Murwillumbah FM is for fresh produce and to support their local community. Fresh food as the main motivator for customers has been reported in another study (Smithers et al., 2008) however, vendor perceptions that consumers wanted to support their local community appears unique to the present study. This may be relevant to the regional location of the market, or Murwillumbah specifically.

"To get their produce fresher, more variety, I think just for the experience itself" (vendor 2)

"Supporting their community" (vendor 4).

The majority of vendors reported consumers asked them about cooking and farming methods when buying their products. This correlates with previous research, finding customers regularly asked questions about their produce (Smithers et al., 2008).

"People are always asking about cooking methods, how to cook the produce..." (vendor 2)

"Ask about certification and how we grow our food and the difference between organic and spray-free" (vendor 4).

One vendor highlighted the importance of the trust between the farmer and consumer. This interaction was also considered to be meaningful by a producer in the Byron Bay study (Burns et al., 2018).

“I think it's important that we give the customers a certainty in the produce... the farmer is genuine, and you know them then you can actually trust what they say" (vendor 2).

In response to the impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviours, all vendors felt attendance rates had increased.

"Definitely more customers due to more awareness around health and food" (vendor 4)

"Double the foot traffic at the market as customers do not want to go to the supermarket" (vendor 5)

3.7 Study strengths

There are several strengths to the present study that have allowed for a depth of analysis. This will be a valuable contribution to the body of research on consumer perceptions and motivations for FM attendance. Firstly, the study incorporated a large sample size for the interviews, where the data was collected over three consecutive weeks. The qualitative and semi-structured nature of these interviews allowed consumers to lead the conversation and highlight their perspectives. The wide variety of opinions that arose demonstrates the complexity behind FM attendance. The three avenues of data collection also allowed for different consumers to participate in the research and were able to support the findings. Whilst this study supported the Burns paper (Burns et al., 2018) from Byron Bay in many areas, the sense of community spirit that has arisen has not previously been well described in the literature. This may be due to the regional location of the market, Murwillumbah specifically, or it may be an aspect of FMs that have been poorly documented through predominantly quantitative survey studies.

3.8 Study limitations

Various limitations were evident in this study. Firstly, participation in consumer interviews was largely driven by market attendees approaching the researchers to contribute to the study. It could be argued that participants who willingly sought out to engage in the research may hold stronger beliefs and opinions. Secondly, as these participants were already at the FM it was not possible to delve into the perspectives of those who did not attend, for contrast. As the aim of the study was to determine the motivations and beliefs of those who attend, with time as a constraint, the perspective of those who do not attend is a recommendation for future research.

Thirdly, the sub-theme of organic produce emerged frequently in participant responses, however, interviewers did not probe further as to the consumer understanding for certified organic as opposed to spray-free/chemical-free farming practices. This is a suggested area for future research. Finally, interviewer and participant bias may have occurred, which is unavoidable with the nature of the study design involving semi-structured interviews conducted by various interviewers. To minimise this, a list of prompts and areas for clarification were discussed before data collection.

Chapter 4: Recommendations for future research

To further improve the knowledge base around consumer motivations and perceptions for attending FMs, the following recommendations for future research questions have been made.

Organic certification and farming practices

- What do consumers understand about organic farming practices, the certification process, and the differences between biodynamic, spray-free and chemical-free?
- Does certification or specific farming practices change consumer perspectives on the value “organic” provides to them?
- What are the consumer motivations for buying organic produce, and does this relate to the current body of research regarding the health impacts of pesticides, etc.?

Perceptions of the cost of produce

- Perceptions of more expensive produce than the main-stream food supply at Murwillumbah FM?
- How does the cost of produce at the Murwillumbah FM compare to other FMs? Does this reflect socioeconomic status?
- Do consumers perceive higher costs to mean higher quality or value? Is value considered to underpin any or all of the four domains (social, health, economic, environmental) of FM benefits

Consumers who do not attend FMs

- To qualitatively consider the perceptions, motivations and beliefs of consumers who do not currently attend FMs. What are the barriers and enablers in their purchasing decisions?

Impact of COVID-19 on food supply

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer purchasing behaviours and preference
- Trends in consumers accessing local food supply post COVID-19

Chapter 5: Dissemination of study results

Plans have been made to disseminate the results of the present project to the local community via printed newspaper, online news, radio, organisations websites (AFMA, Destination Tweed, MFM) and social media platforms (Appendix E). This intends to increase consumer awareness of the FM and what benefits they may bring to both the individual and community.

Developed materials:

Promotional infographic (Appendix F)

Informative infographic (Appendix G)

Instagram tiles with captions (Appendix H)

Media release (Appendix I)

Executive summary (Appendix J)

Abstract (Appendix K)

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This project identified that the Murwillumbah FM are important to consumers for a wide variety of reasons, all underpinned by a sense of community spirit. This market was able to cultivate social cohesion and trust, whether that be with the farmer, the producer, the people who attend, or the way in which the FM is run. This body of literature is valuable in providing site-specific data for future marketing to encourage people to access fresh produce from this alternative food supply and take part in the local community.

References

- Adams, D.C., & Adams, A.E. (2011). De-placing local at the farmers' market: consumer conceptions of local foods. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 26(2), 74-100. Retrieved from <https://grove.olemiss.edu/jrss/vol26/iss2/4/>
- Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: getting started. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 67(6). 436-440. doi: 10.4212/cjhp.v67i6.1406
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *2016 Census QuickStats: Murwillumbah*. Retrieved from: https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12866
- Australian Farmers' Market Association. (2020). *Australian Farmers' Market Directory*. Retrieved from: <https://farmersmarkets.org.au/find-a-market/>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). *Australia's Health 2014*. No. 14. Cat. No. AUS178. Canberra, Australia
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *Chronic disease*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/health-conditions-disability-deaths/chronic-disease/overview>
- Azavedo, M., & Walsh, J. (2018). Food at farmers' markets? Evidence from Bardon Farmers' Market, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. *Academic Journal of Economic Studies*, 4(3), 32-39. Retrieved from <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=696055&fbclid=IwAR3fietrkLq79aCp7DOmlau3JixdjnAaNj0WER1XUNTKGHsUPYXWusizwal>
- Bianchi, C. and Mortimer, G. (2015). Drivers of local food consumption: a comparative study. *British Food Journal*, 117(9), 2282-2299. doi:10.1108/BFJ-03-2015-0111
- Burns, C., Cullen, A., & Briggs, H. (2018). The business and politics of farmers' markets: Consumer perspectives from Byron Bay, Australia. *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies*, 24(2), 168-190. Retrieved from: <https://search.informit-org.libraryproxy.griffith.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=915337470628876;res=IELHSS>
- Byker, C., Shanks, J., Misyak, S., & Serrano, E. (2012). Characterizing farmers' market shoppers: A literature review. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 7(1), 38-52. doi:10.1080/19320248.2012.650074
- Chang, H., & Zepeda, L. (2005). Consumer perceptions and demand for organic food in Australia: focus group discussions. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 20(3), 155-167. doi: 10.1079/RAF2004103
- Crawford, B., Byun, R., Mitchell, E., Thompson, S., Jalaludin, B., & Torvaldsen, S. (2018). Seeking fresh food and supporting local producers: Perceptions and motivations of farmers' market customers. *Australian Planner*, 55(1), 28-35. doi:10.1080/07293682.2018.1499668
- Collins Dictionary. (2020). *Definition of Community Spirit*. Retrieved from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/community-spirit>

- Denzin, N. (1988). *Contemporary Sociology*, 17(3), 430-432. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2069712>
- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. (2020). *Food security and agriculture and COVID-19*. Retrieved from <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/coronavirus/food-agriculture>
- Dodds, R., & Holmes, M. (2014). Consumer choice and farmer's markets. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 27(3), 397-416. doi: 1007/s10806-013-9469-4
- Figueroa-Rodríguez, K., Alvarez-Avila, M.C., Castillo, F.H., Rindermann, R.S., Figueroa-Sandoval, B. (2019). Farmers' market actors, dynamics, and attributes: a bibliometric study. *Sustainability*, 11(3), 745. doi: 10.3390/su11030745
- Freedman, D., Vaudrin, N., Schneider, C., Trapl, E., Ohri-Vachaspati, P., Taggart, M., ... & Flocke, S. (2016). Systematic review of factors influencing farmers' market use overall and among low-income populations. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 116(7), 1136-1155. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2016.02.010
- Godrich, S., Kent, K., Murray, S., Auckland, S., Lo, J., Blekkenhorst, L., Penrose, B., & Devine, A. (2019). Australian consumer perceptions of regionally grown fruits and vegetables: importance, enablers and barriers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(1), 63. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17010063
- Meyer, S.B., Coveney, J., Henderson, J., Ward, P.R., Taylor, A.W. (2012). Reconnecting Australian consumers and producers: identifying problems of distrust. *Food Policy*, 37(6), 634-640. doi: 10.1016/j.foodpol.2012.07.005
- Millichamp, A., & Gallegos, D. (2013). Comparing the availability, price, variety and quality of fruits and vegetables across retail outlets and by area-level socio-economic position. *Public Health Nutrition*, 16(1), 171-178. doi: 10.1017/S1368980012000766
- Murwillumbah Farmers' Market. (2020). *About Us: Murwillumbah Farmers' Market*. Retrieved from: <https://murwillumbahfarmersmarket.com.au/about/>
- Northern NSW Local Health District. (2019). *Healthy Communities Northern Rivers Action Plan 2019 – 2021*. Retrieved from: https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/health-promotion/files/2019/09/FINAL.HealthyCommunities_digi.pdf
- Northern NSW Local Health District. (2013). *Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2013- 2017*. Retrieved from: https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/PLA-NNSW-Northern_NSW_Local_Health_District_Strategic_Plan_2012-2017-V-001.pdf
- NSW Government. (2009). Caldera community economic transition plan (unpublished integrated project). Lismore, Australia.
- NSW Ministry of Health. (2020). *Fruit and vegetables: recommended daily consumption by adults*. Retrieved from: http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/beh_veg_statage/beh_veg_lhn_trend
- O'Kane, G. M., Richardson, A., D'Almeida, M., & Wei, H. (2019). The cost, availability, cultivars, and quality of fruit and vegetables at farmers' markets and three other retail streams in Canberra, ACT, Australia. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 14(5), 643-661. doi: 10.1080/19320248.2018.1465003
- Parliament of Victoria. (2010). *Enquiry into Farmers' Markets*. No. 372. Retrieved from <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/papers/govpub/VPARL2006-10No372.pdf>

- Payet, J., Gilles, M. and Howat, P. (2005), Gascoyne Growers Market: A sustainable health promotion activity developed in partnership with the community. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 13(1) 309-314. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1584.2005.00722.x
- Pitney, W., & Parker, J. (2009). *Qualitative research in physical activity and the health professions*. Retrieved from <https://us.humankinetics.com/products/qualitative-research-in-physical-activity-and-the-health-professions-pdf>
- Tiemann, T. (2008). Grower-only farmers' markets: public spaces and third places. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 41(3), 467-489. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas_Tiemann/publication/227983038_Grower-Only_Farmers'_Markets_Public_Spaces_and_Third_Places/links/5c190f30a6fdccfc7056b722/Grower-Only-Farmers-Markets-Public-Spaces-and-Third-Places.pdf
- Wolf, M.M., Spittler, A. & Ahern, J. (2005). A profile of farmers' market consumers and the perceived advantages of produce sold at farmers' markets. *Journal of Food Distribution Research*, 36(1). 192-201. doi: 10.22004/ag.econ.26768