**Factors Impacting Participation In and Purchases Made by Members of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative**

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*Selected Paper prepared for presentation at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting Corpus Christi, Texas, February 6-9, 2011*

**Abstract:** The Oklahoma Food Cooperative (OFC) facilitates transactions between producers and consumers of locally-grown food items. Even with more than 3,000 members and roughly $1M in annual sales, the OFC still needs to establish its long-term sustainability. Both customer-members and supplier-members of the OFC were surveyed to determine the factors driving their current and continued participation in the cooperative.

**Key words:** cooperative, local food movement, member communications, business sustainability, strategic planning

**Factors Impacting Participation In and Purchases Made**

**by Members of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative**

## Introduction

The Oklahoma Food Cooperative (OFC) was established in 2003. According to its articles of incorporation, the OFC's purpose was to "sell Oklahoma grown and/or Oklahoma processed foods and non-food items, for the mutual benefit of its producer and customer members." The OFC's intent was to "educate members, and the general public, regarding cooperative principles, the local food movement, its core values, and the practical implementation of these principles." (Oklahoma Food Cooperative 2010) With that goal in mind, the OFC set out to become a marketplace for customer-members and supplier-members. A handful of suppliers and roughly 50 interested consumers formed the OFC, each agreeing to pay a membership fee of $51.75, which consisted of a $50 share and a $1.75 processing fee.

In 2010, the OFC had 150 supplier-members marketing mostly food products, although some suppliers market locally grown/manufactured pet products, healthy and beauty products, home décor items, and even apparel items. More than 3,000 individuals constitute the customer-members (Oklahoma Food Cooperative 2010), although many of these are infrequent purchasers of products. The OFC board has also noticed that some of their costumer-members have never purchased any products through the cooperative, leading to speculation that some customer-members simply paid their membership fees as a show of support for the concept or for other altruistic reasons. While rapid growth has allowed the OFC to maintain its financial viability thus far, the leveling off of both supplier and customer memberships has forced the OFC board of directors to become more strategic in their planning efforts and more determined to ascertain the wants and needs of cooperative members.

OFC founder Bob Waldrop, during the planning phase of the cooperative, once stated that: "The cooperative will not be buying products to sell, it will be in the 'business' of providing a marketplace for producers and consumers to meet in." (Galor 2004) Although his initial concept was based on a storefront (physical location) model with daily business hours, the OFC was established as a web-based order facilitation business with physical transactions taking place one day each month. Ordering takes place in a given time window each month, after suppliers update their OFC web pages to inform members of their product availability and prices for that month.

Starting in the fall of 2003, customers and suppliers would meet at a chosen site in Oklahoma City on the third Thursday of the month to make product exchanges, with members supplying the volunteer labor to transform bulk supplier deliveries into bundled customer orders. Because of the OFC's rapid growth, by the end of 2010 the cooperative had a salaried general manager to coordinate and oversee the 50-plus member volunteers who process orders at the supplier drop-off site and deliver products to more than 40 locations, most within a 160-mile radius of Oklahoma City (Oklahoma Food Cooperative 2010; Wallace Center 2009; Diamond 2010). The members have incentives to volunteer: $7/hr credit on purchases, $0.36/mile for drivers taking orders to certain drop-off points, and even a $7.50 cash payment for home deliveries ($5 for elderly/disabled/homebound) (Oklahoma Food Cooperative 2010).

Even with over 3,100 total members and an annual business volume nearing $1 million, the OFC board has realized than an average month's business will be conducted by roughly 60 of the 150 supplier-members (40%). Furthermore, monthly orders are received from an average of approximately 650 customer-members, or slightly more than 20% of the cooperatives 3,000-plus customer-members (Wallace Center 2009; Oklahoma Food Cooperative 2010).

*A Model of Innovation*

The structure and performance of local food supply ventures has not been extensively studied, although the increasing number of such ventures has warranted some recent work (King et. al 2010). The OFC itself remains a work in progress, even after seven years of operation. However, in that brief time the OFC has shown itself to be an innovative model for similar efforts in both the US and Canada. Its operational structure, i.e. serving as an intermediary for the exchange of goods between suppliers and customers, combined with a national trend towards greater consumption of locally-grown products have made the OFC a blueprint for other cooperative planners. This fact is evident in three primary areas:

1. <u>Technology development and transfer.</u> The OFC's goal of facilitating transactions in a web-based environment resulted in the creation of an open source software program that has received both national and international acceptance (SourceForge.com 2010). The software was designed specifically for the OFC, but the multiple versions of the software created by SourceForge.com have become a standard for other cooperatives.
2. <u>Classroom and outreach case studies.</u> The OFC's initial planning steps and current operations have been the subjects of published case studies (Galor 2004; Wallace Center 2009), blogs (Diamond 2010), and various stories generated by the media with regards to the local food movement (LocalHarvest.com 2006; Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture 2010). The OFC is both a first-of-its-kind local food cooperative and the most documented food cooperative, allowing its use as a classroom example and an Extension planning tool.
3. <u>Recognizable impact on other ventures.</u> The OFC can be directly traced to the development of more than a dozen similar ventures in the US and at least two such

cooperatives in Ontario, Canada (Wallace Center 2009). The cooperative's relatively simple and inexpensive operating structure has made it the blueprint of choice for efforts in the neighboring states of Texas, Kansas, and Colorado. But, the OFC has also been used as the basis for forming local food cooperatives in states such as Massachusetts, Michigan, and Iowa.

**Planning the Future of the OFC**

Even with its early successes, the OFC faces common cooperative management problems. The cooperative is still challenged with the need to establish its long-term sustainability. The OFC depends heavily on the use of incentivized volunteer labor to carry out its monthly supplier/customer transactions, yet still struggles to break even. The OFC and its board members still lack a basic understanding of customer-members wants/needs and the significance of the co-op to the overall business volume of its producer-members. Communication to members has always been viewed as a positive attribute of the cooperative, but little communication has been pursued or received from members.

The board lacks information on how attributes such as "locally grown" or "organic" influence buying decisions of customer-members. The cooperative has no information on additional products the customer-members would like to purchase. The monthly availability of products is determined by what the supplier-members have or choose to offer for sale, yet the cooperative has no information on their alternative market outlets. These factors contribute to the board's concerns regarding the sustainability of the cooperative's business volume, a concern that could impact both its supplier-members and customer-members, and their continued participation in the OFC.

**Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to provide original insights into the supply and demand decisions of the OFC's two types of members. The overall objective was to assist the OFC board's strategic planning capabilities by determining the factors impacting the level of active participation in the OFC (i.e. purchasing frequency and volume) by its customer members and assessing the importance of the cooperative as a marketing outlet for its producer members.

**Survey Procedure**

The OFC board members and representatives of the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center at Oklahoma State University developed surveys for both customer-members and supplier-members during the summer of 2010. Surveymonkey.com was used to carry out and manage the responses from these surveys in November and December 2010. The OFC provided a complete list of all active and non-active cooperative members' email addresses for the purposes of this study. The intended uses of the survey instruments were to (a) determine the factors driving customer-members' participation in the OFC and (b) assess the significance of the OFC as a marketing outlet to supplier-members.

**Survey Findings**

Responses to the survey, in whole or in part, were received from 37 supplier-members and 343 customer-members. In terms of total (active and inactive) members, these responses represent a response rate of 24.7% for supplier-members and 11.0% for customer-members. However, it should be noted that a typical month's business activity through the cooperative is transacted by an average of 60 supplier-members and 650 customer-members.

*Compared Characteristics of Customer-Member and Supplier-Member Respondents*

Several questions on both surveys were similar, assessing the socio-demographic characteristics of members, length of their membership in the OFC, their attitudes about the cooperative, their experiences with other cooperatives, and even their use of the Internet. Comparisons of the responses suggest that the two groups are in many ways divergent. Table 1 suggests that even the length of time as a cooperative member varies significantly. Almost 30% of the responding customer-members have been a member less than one year, and 72.5% have been a member less than three years. Conversely, 61.2% of responding supplier-members have been OFC members for at least four years.

For both types of members, word-of-mouth and personal contact with existing OFC members were the most common means of hearing about the OFC (Table 2). However, almost 30% of the customer-member respondents first learned of the OFC via web searches for local food providers, whereas none of the supplier-member respondents used the Internet to identify the OFC as a potential market outlet.

Table 3 shows one of the greatest differences between member types and their participation in the OFC. Almost 84% of the supplier-members had attended at least one OFC annual meeting, while a similar high percentage of customer-members had never attended an OFC annual meeting. This suggests that the customer-members view the cooperative more as a service provider, as opposed to a member-owned business where their vote can impact OFC operations.

Table 4 indicates respondents' involvement in other types of cooperative entities. Over half of the supplier members and over 80% of the customer members were members of credit union, The market share of credit unions in the U.S. is generally considered to be in the 10% range so this result suggests that the OFC members are more committed to the cooperative business model than the general population. , Not surprisingly over 80% of the supplier members were also members of rural electric cooperatives. However only 17% were member of farm supply cooperatives.  This suggest that there is relatively little overlap between the membership of traditional agricultural cooperatives and OFC.

The age distribution of customer respondents was much more uniform than that of the supplier members (Table 5).  Approximately half of the customer members were 45 years of age or younger and 50.3% between 46-75 years of age.  Suppliers tended to be older, with only 13.9% being 45 years of age or younger, 80.5% between ages 46-65, and 5.6% over the age of 65.

Unlike the differences in age and active attendance at OFC annual meetings, the responding members were much more similar in gender and ethnic background.  The OFC has benefitted from an extremely active and involved core of female members – customers and suppliers.  Table 6 shows the vast majority of both member types consist of female members: 82.7% of customer-members and 62.9% of supplier-members are female.  Additionally, as shown in Table 7, well over 80% of respondents from each member type were white/Caucasian. The second most common self-identified race/ethnicity in both member types, with less than 4% for each member type, was American Indian.

One of the biggest questions facing the OFC board relates to the scheduling of delivery days.  As the volumes have increased – along with the demand for volunteer labor on delivery days – the board has considered having more than one delivery day per month.  The cost-benefit assessment for this issue is relatively simple:  more volunteer credits/payments would be have to be offered to get enough help for multiple delivery days, but some board members believe the benefit would be greater opportunities to make purchases by customers and more opportunities for suppliers to move seasonable/perishable food items.  Because both member types have to be in agreement for an increase in the number of delivery days to take place, this survey question was of high priority for the board members. Table 8 shows that half of the respondents from each member type preferred the current once-per-month transaction, although 42% of customers and 36% of suppliers would prefer twice-per-month delivery days. Preferences for a weekly transaction day were decisively less prevalent.

*Customer-Member Preferences and Opinions Regarding the OFC*

As previously stated, one of the greatest concerns of the OFC board is the high number of inactive customer-members. The board is concerned that current product offerings may not entice members to sustain their purchasing practices. Several questions in the customer-member survey were designed to ascertain preferences for products available through the OFC and their opinions regarding the OFC's operational structure.

Tables 9 and 10 show that 70.4% of customer-member respondents live in urban/suburban settings, 20% have a total household income between $25,000-$50,000, and an additional 36.6% have a household income between $50,000-$100,000. These findings suggest that most of the OFC customers are city-dwellers who, regardless of the wide range of household incomes, desire to purchase locally-grown foods for their families. Over 93% of these respondents indicated that they were the primary shoppers for their households.

Table 11 displays the ratings of customer respondents for attributes of the OFC that drew them to establish membership and maintain their active status. The highest average ratings (1-5 scale), in order of importance to the members, were: locally grown, quality (taste, freshness), health/nutrition, organically produced, and "all natural" products. Locally grown was by far the most significant factor for customer-members, with 85% rating this factor a 5 and 99.1% rating it a 4 or 5. The least significant factors were interactions with suppliers ("know your farmer"), the availability of a wide range of products, and lastly the fact that members have a say in the cooperative's operations. Over 40% of the customer respondents were neutral regarding the importance of their right to vote as a factor in their choice to become a member. This finding, combined with the fact that most of these respondents have never attended an annual meeting of the OFC, suggests that they view the OFC as a buying club similar to a Sam's Club, where their membership has been paid primarily to gain access to the market outlet.

The OFC board has been concerned about the "experience" of the customer-members: Are they able to get the products they want? Are the pick-up sites and the delivery system satisfactory? Are customers finding what they can't get elsewhere? Are the interactions and communications acceptable to the customers? Table 12 suggests that members are adequately satisfied with their cooperative experience. A majority of the respondents either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with statements regarding the acceptability of the distribution system, the condition of the products received, and the generally positive interactions with cooperative members. However, over half were not certain that they would purchase more OFC products if the website ordering system was somehow further simplified, and respondents were fairly evenly split over the idea of the same products being available to them through other market outlets.

Communications to customer-members has also been a concern of the OFC board. The OFC provides regular emails to its members, reminding them of the ordering window for the month, providing information on product availability, and sharing information related to locally grown food products that might be of interest to members. Even the supplier-members provide emails to customer-members, relating information on upcoming product availability or even something as simple as a recipe suggestion. Customer-members were asked to provide their level of agreement with several statements regarding OFC communications. Table 13 shows that most respondents were satisfied and/or even enjoyed the communications they received from the

OFC board and the supplier-members. While most did not feel that they received too many emails from the OFC, a majority were not interested in receiving additional emails from the OFC. Surprisingly, even for a group in which well over 90% accessed the Internet daily over a high-speed connection, following the OFC and its activities via social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) were not choices made by a vast majority of the respondents.

Over half of the responding customer-members ordered from the OFC at least 10 out of 12 months during an average year (Table 14). Almost 75% ordered more than 6 out of 12 months. Of these orders, almost two-thirds (64.7%) were for less than $100 in total value, more than one-third (36.8%) were for $75 or less, and 25% were between $100-$200 (Table 15). With the exception of meat and poultry (not including eggs), a vast majority of purchases in any given product category were less than $25 per monthly order (Table 16).

Realizing that most customer orders are relatively small compared to an average family's monthly total food expenditure, the OFC board wanted to know what percentage of total monthly food expenditures were made through the cooperative by its customers. Table 17 shows that 58% of respondents spent less than 20% of their monthly food budget on OFC food items. Table 18 shows that virtually all of the respondents (97.9%) supplemented the locally-grown items purchased through the OFC with purchases from conventional supermarkets. More than two-thirds (71.6%) also purchased items from specialty food stores focusing on local/organic/natural food items and roughly two-thirds (66.5%) additionally attended farmers markets to purchase desired food items for their households. CSA ventures and other food outlets were also used by 26% (each) of the respondents. The percentage of the food budget attributed to each of the outlets was also collected by the survey, and that data is being used for subsequent analyses.

*Supplier-Member Preferences and Opinions Regarding the OFC*

The OFC's supplier-members are very supportive of the venture as a marketing channel, with 94.6% of respondents stating that the cooperative is an important marketing channel for their farm/business. From responses to questions not reported in this paper, 97.3% of the suppliers somewhat/strongly agreed that the OFC should in the future place its primary emphasis on locally grown products and 81.1% thought the OFC should simultaneously emphasis sustainable production along with locally grown. Alternatively, 80.5% were indifferent or to some level disagreed with the concept of placing greater emphasis on certified organic production. Several of the supplier members offer more than one type of product for sale through the OFC, but the most common offerings are fruits/vegetables (32.4%), meat/poultry (29.7%), and dairy/eggs (29.7%). "Other" products/services offered by the respondents included cookbooks, food preparation aids, and even by-products from food handling/processing activities (Table 19).

While the OFC remains a popular marketing outlet for locally grown products, respondents to the survey indicated that in many cases the OFC does not account for a large share of their annual sales. Forty-three percent of the responding supplier-members indicated that OFC sales account for less than 20% of their annual sales, and 85.8% indicated that the OFC accounts for less than half of their annual sales (Table 20). As shown in Table 21, monthly sales transactions through the OFC account for less than $100 in sales for 34.3% of the supplier respondents. Another 25.7% of respondents indicated that an average month's business volume through the OFC would generate between $100-$500 in sales, and 28.6% averaged between $500-$1,500 in monthly sales. For a small percentage of respondents (four respondents in all, or 11.4%) the OFC generated an average monthly sales volume exceeding $2,500, with half of those stating they average more than $3,500 in sales each month.

As indicated by Table 22, the supplier-members utilized several other market outlets for their products. Farmers markets (67.7%) were the most common market outlet used by the suppliers, but more than half (51.6%) also marketed products through specialty stores, 29% marketed products through conventional grocery/supermarket stores, and more than a third (35.5%) were active suppliers in other food cooperatives. CSA efforts also served as market outlets for 29% of the respondents.

While some of the OFC's supplier-members are larger, well-recognized Oklahoma agricultural producers, most of the suppliers are smaller producers and 69.4% operate as sole proprietors. Other business forms utilized by supplier-member respondents for their farms/operations included LLCs (19.4%), S corporations (8.3%) and general partnerships (2.8%). Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that their operations were located in or near the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, suggesting that the proximity to the drop-off site made the OFC a more viable market outlet.

Table 23 shows the suppliers' responses to a question about their 2009 pre-tax farm/business income. Most were small operations, with 51.4% stating that their gross income from operations was less than $25,000 in 2009. Almost two-thirds (65.7%) had less than $50,000 in gross income for that year, although 14.3% generated more than $100,000 in pre-tax income for 2009. Further analysis will examine the linkages between sales and farm/business characteristics, types of products, and market channels.

**Summary and Implications**

The survey of the two member types indicated that both customers and suppliers are drawn to the locally-grown concept of the OFC, more so than any emphasis placed on certified organic, "all natural", sustainably-produced, or minimally-processed characteristics of the products offered through the cooperative. This shared vision is what has allowed the OFC to grow both its membership and its transaction volume every year since 2003. However, the two groups tend to significantly differ in age, years of involvement in the OFC, and consideration of the cooperative as a member-owned business that can be directed by their votes. Overall, the customer-members tend to be younger individuals with less experience in the OFC (or other types of cooperatives) and less personal involvement in the operations of the OFC. These factors, combined with the OFC board's recognition that a majority of its customer-members are inactive, suggests that customer-members as a whole are inclined to become less active in the cooperative rather than use their overwhelming majority of votes to set the course for the cooperative. Although a majority of the respondents appreciate the many communications they receive from the OFC, they tend to act as second-class members of the cooperative, letting the supplier-members decide the direction of the OFC and serve as a majority of the board's members.

Supplier-members of the OFC tend to be smaller, specialized farmers/producers who adhere more to the cooperative concepts, possibly as a result of their greater involvement in other cooperative-structured organizations. However, unlike members of a traditional grain marketing cooperative, they also utilize every market channel at their disposal to make their sales.

Because the OFC is just one of many food transaction arenas for both customer-members and supplier-members, the cooperative faces the challenge of maintaining its sustainability as a business venture and its convenience/viability for members. If both customers and suppliers can facilitate the transaction of the same goods/services in multiple arenas throughout the state, the OFC must consider ways of keeping member interest in the cooperative's trading capacity. Otherwise, the current monthly trading regimen may give way to options such as warehouse trading or even storefronts, where suppliers can maintain inventories of products and customer transactions can occur on a daily basis.

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| Table 1. Length of membership in the Oklahoma Food Cooperative. | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Customer Responses (n=342) | Supplier Responses (n=37) |
| Less than 12 months | 29.2% | 2.7% |
| Between 12 and 24 months | 18.4% | 2.7% |
| 2-3 years | 24.9% | 27.0% |
| 4-5 years | 15.8% | 37.8% |
| 6-7 years | 9.1% | 24.3% |
| Don't remember | 2.6% | 5.4% |

| Table 2. Means of first discovery about the Cooperative. | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Customer Responses (n=342) | Supplier Responses (n=37) |
| Word of mouth/From a member of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative | 47.4% | 75.7% |
| Media (newspaper, TV, or radio story) | 9.4% | 5.4% |
| Public presentation at a school, at a civic event, or to an organization | 1.2% | 2.7% |
| Internet/Website search | 29.8% | 0.0% |
| Local farmer/farmers market | 4.4% | 8.1% |
| Other (please specify) | 7.9% | 8.1% |

Table 3. Attendance at one or more annual meetings of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative.

| | Customer Responses (n=343) | Supplier Responses (n=37) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 21.6% | 83.8% |
| No | 78.4% | 16.2% |

Table 4. OFC members' experiences/affiliations with other common types of cooperatives.

| | Customer Responses (n=175) | Supplier Responses (n=24) |
|---|---|---|
| Rural electric cooperative | 29.1% | 83.3% |
| Rural water cooperative | 9.1% | 12.5% |
| Credit union | 81.7% | 54.2% |
| Farm/ranch supply cooperative | 3.4% | 16.7% |

Table 5. Age of OFC member survey respondents.

| | Customer Responses (n=338) | Supplier Responses (n=36) |
|---|---|---|
| 18-24 | 2.1% | 0.0% |
| 25-35 | 27.8% | 8.3% |
| 36-45 | 19.8% | 5.6% |
| 46-55 | 24.9% | 47.2% |
| 56-65 | 21.3% | 33.3% |
| 66-75 | 4.1% | 2.8% |
| Over 75 | 0.0% | 2.8% |

Table 6. Gender of OFC member survey respondents.

| | Customer Responses (n=336) | Supplier Responses (n=35) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 17.3% | 37.1% |
| Female | 82.7% | 62.9% |

Table 7. Ethnicity/race of OFC member survey respondents.

| | Customer Responses (n=334) | Supplier Responses (n=36) |
|---|---|---|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 3.6% | 2.8% |
| Arab-American | 0.3% | 0.0% |
| Asian-American/Pacific Islander | 0.6% | 0.0% |
| Black/African-American | 1.5% | 0.0% |
| Hispanic/Latin-American | 0.9% | 2.8% |
| White/Caucasian | 83.5% | 86.1% |
| Prefer not to answer | 5.7% | 5.6% |
| Other self-identifier | 3.9% | 2.8% |

Table 8. Order/delivery timeline preferences of OFC member survey respondents.

| | Customer Responses (n=337) | Supplier Responses (n=37) |
|---|---|---|
| Monthly (current) | 49.3% | 50.0% |
| Twice monthly | 42.4% | 36.1% |
| Weekly | 8.3% | 13.9% |

Table 9. Classification of home location by OFC customer-member respondents. (n=338)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Urban | 26.0% | 88 |
| Suburban | 44.4% | 150 |
| Small town | 11.5% | 39 |
| Rural/Farm | 7.7% | 26 |
| Rural/Non-farm | 10.4% | 35 |

Table 10. Total household income (pre-tax dollars) for OFC customer-member respondents. (n=334)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| $25,000 or below | 5.7% | 19 |
| $25,000-$50,000 | 21.0% | 70 |
| $50,000-$75,000 | 18.0% | 60 |
| $75,000-$100,000 | 18.6% | 62 |
| $100,000-$150,000 | 14.7% | 49 |
| Over $150,000 | 7.8% | 26 |
| Prefer not to answer | 14.4% | 48 |

Table 11. Relative importance of factors impacting the decision to become/remain a member of the OFC. (n=343 customer-members)

| | Not Important = 1 | 2 | Neutral = 3 | 4 | Most Important = 5 | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locally grown items | 0.6% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 0.3% (1) | 14.0% (48) | 85.1% (291) | 4.83 | 342 |
| Organically grown items | 2.0% (7) | 2.6% (9) | 8.5% (29) | 35.0% (120) | 51.9% (178) | 4.32 | 343 |
| "All natural" products | 2.0% (7) | 2.9% (10) | 12.3% (42) | 33.0% (113) | 49.7% (170) | 4.25 | 342 |
| Quality (taste, freshness) | 0.6% (2) | 0.3% (1) | 1.5% (5) | 23.0% (79) | 74.6% (256) | 4.71 | 343 |
| Health and nutrition | 0.3% (1) | 1.8% (6) | 4.1% (14) | 28.7% (98) | 65.2% (223) | 4.57 | 342 |
| Wide selection/easy shopping | 2.6% (9) | 7.3% (25) | 22.0% (75) | 35.8% (122) | 32.3% (110) | 3.88 | 341 |
| Interaction with suppliers, i.e. "Know Your Farmer" | 2.1% (7) | 5.6% (19) | 23.9% (81) | 36.6% (124) | 31.9% (108) | 3.91 | 339 |
| Having a say in the operations of the Co-op (i.e. your right to vote as a member) | 10.6% (36) | 12.3% (42) | 43.1% (147) | 22.6% (77) | 11.4% (39) | 3.12 | 341 |

| Table 12. Customer-member level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the OFC. (n-343) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral/Indifferent | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Products I want to buy are usually in stock. | 3.2% (11) | 18.1% (62) | 8.2% (28) | 52.0% (178) | 18.4% (63) | 3.64 | 342 |
| The Co-op has an order pick-up site within an acceptable distance of my home. | 1.5% (5) | 6.2% (21) | 3.5% (12) | 17.7% (60) | 71.1% (241) | 4.51 | 339 |
| The timing for order pick-ups is acceptable/convenient. | 2.4% (8) | 6.2% (21) | 6.8% (23) | 37.3% (126) | 47.3% (160) | 4.21 | 338 |
| Most of the items I buy from the Co-op are also available at my Farmers Market or nearby health food store. | 10.3% (35) | 31.1% (106) | 17.6% (60) | 31.4% (107) | 9.7% (33) | 2.99 | 341 |
| Refrigerated/frozen products are still cold/frozen when I pick up my order. | 1.2% (4) | 2.7% (9) | 5.6% (19) | 24.8% (84) | 65.8% (223) | 4.51 | 339 |
| Products I receive are adequately packaged and in good condition when I pick up my order. | 0.3% (1) | 3.2% (11) | 2.6% (9) | 29.4% (100) | 64.4% (219) | 4.54 | 340 |

| Table 12. Customer-member level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the OFC. (n-343) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would purchase more food through the Co-op if the Co-op made deliveries twice each month. | 5.3% (18) | 15.0% (51) | 27.9% (95) | 29.3% (100) | 22.6% (77) | 3.49 | 341 |
| The process of picking up my food was convenient/easy. | 3.2% (11) | 12.9% (44) | 14.6% (50) | 34.8% (119) | 34.5% (118) | 3.85 | 342 |
| I would purchase more from the Co-op if the website was easier to use. | 16.1% (55) | 24.0% (82) | 35.7% (122) | 17.0% (58) | 7.3% (25) | 2.75 | 342 |
| Interactions with Co-op volunteers have been positive. | 1.2% (4) | 2.1% (7) | 8.0% (27) | 19.5% (66) | 69.3% (235) | 4.54 | 339 |
| Interactions with Co-op producers have been positive. | 0.6% (2) | 1.5% (5) | 19.6% (66) | 23.1% (78) | 55.2% (186) | 4.31 | 337 |
| I understood the Co-op's mission and basic procedures when I joined. | 0.6% (2) | 3.2% (11) | 4.1% (14) | 24.1% (82) | 67.9% (231) | 4.56 | 340 |

Table 13. Customer-member level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the OFC's member communications. (n-343)

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral/Indifferent | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emails from the Co-op are helpful and informative. | 0.3% (1) | 3.2% (11) | 9.1% (31) | 47.6% (162) | 39.7% (135) | 4.23 | 340 |
| I receive too many emails from the Co-op and Co-op volunteers. | 22.4% (76) | 25.1% (85) | 33.9% (115) | 15.6% (53) | 2.9% (10) | 2.52 | 339 |
| I like receiving producer notes via email. | 1.2% (4) | 6.5% (22) | 13.0% (44) | 40.4% (137) | 38.9% (132) | 4.09 | 339 |
| I like receiving reminder calls on delivery day. | 5.6% (19) | 11.5% (39) | 35.1% (119) | 19.8% (67) | 28.0% (95) | 3.53 | 339 |
| I would like to receive more communication from the Co-op in some form. | 10.5% (36) | 24.8% (85) | 52.2% (179) | 10.8% (37) | 1.7% (6) | 2.69 | 343 |
| I keep up with the Co-op via social | 45.9% (157) | 16.4% (56) | 12.3% (42) | 16.7% (57) | 8.8% (30) | 2.26 | 342 |

Table 13. Customer-member level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the OFC's member communications. (n-343)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| media (Facebook and/or Twitter). | | | | | | | |
| It is easy to reach a volunteer when I have questions. | 3.5% (12) | 11.7% (40) | 51.0% (174) | 19.4% (66) | 14.4% (49) | 3.29 | 341 |

Table 14. Average times PER YEAR customer-member respondents ordered from the OFC. (n=338)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Never order | 1.8% | 6 |
| 1-3 times | 10.9% | 37 |
| 4-6 times | 13.6% | 46 |
| 7-9 times | 21.3% | 72 |
| 10-12 times | 52.4% | 177 |

Table 15. Average PER ORDER total value of customer-member purchases from the OFC. (n=337)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Less than $25 | 3.6% | 12 |
| $26-$50 | 14.8% | 50 |
| $51-$75 | 18.4% | 62 |
| $76-$100 | 27.9% | 94 |
| $101-$200 | 25.8% | 87 |
| $201-$300 | 6.8% | 23 |
| More than $300 | 2.7% | 9 |

Table 16. Average PER ORDER values of items purchased by OFC customer-member respondents. (n=335)

| | Less than $10 | $11-$25 | $26-$50 | $51-$75 | $76-$100 | More than $100 | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Meat and Poultry (not including eggs) | 18.0% (59) | 20.8% (68) | 27.8% (91) | 19.9% (65) | 6.7% (22) | 6.7% (22) | 327 |
| Dairy Products and Eggs | 42.0% (132) | 38.5% (121) | 15.9% (50) | 2.5% (8) | 1.0% (3) | 0.0% (0) | 314 |
| Fresh Fruits Vegetables, and Herbs | 40.1% (125) | 40.1% (125) | 16.0% (50) | 3.5% (11) | 0.3% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 312 |
| Bakery, Grains, and Flour/Meal Products | 61.5% (193) | 30.3% (95) | 7.0% (22) | 0.6% (2) | 0.6% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 314 |
| Canned Foods, Condiments, Soup Mixes, and Soup Stocks | 88.3% (264) | 10.7% (32) | 1.0% (3) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 299 |
| Entrees and Side Dishes (e.g. pizza, enchiladas, casseroles, appetizers, dips) | 77.4% (233) | 15.6% (47) | 5.6% (17) | 0.0% (0) | 1.0% (3) | 0.3% (1) | 301 |
| Other Food Products (e.g. nuts, honey, candy, gift baskets) | 52.8% (167) | 37.7% (119) | 7.9% (25) | 0.6% (2) | 0.9% (3) | 0.0% (0) | 316 |
| Non-Food Products (e.g. apparel, home decor, bath/beauty, pet products) | 72.2% (218) | 23.8% (72) | 3.0% (9) | 0.7% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 0.3% (1) | 302 |

Table 17. Percentage of monthly food purchases made through the OFC by customer-members. (n=337)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| 0-10% | 27.0% | 91 |
| 11-20% | 30.9% | 104 |
| 21-30% | 16.0% | 54 |
| 31-40% | 13.1% | 44 |
| 41-50% | 8.6% | 29 |
| 51-60% | 3.0% | 10 |
| More than 60% | 1.5% | 5 |

Table 18. Other market channels besides the OFC where customer-members purchase food for their families. (n=331)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Supermarket(s) | 97.9% | 324 |
| Store(s) specializing in organic, natural, and/or locally grown products | 71.3% | 236 |
| Farmers market(s) | 66.5% | 220 |
| Other food cooperative(s) | 26.0% | 86 |
| Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) effort | 26.0% | 86 |
| Other | 27.8% | 92 |

Table 19. Types of products/services* offered by OFC supplier-member respondents. (n=37)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh fruits/vegetables/herbs | 32.4% | 12 |
| Canned foods (e.g. salsas, sauces, soups, jams, jellies, etc.) | 8.1% | 3 |
| Meat/poultry | 29.7% | 11 |
| Dairy or eggs | 29.7% | 11 |
| Prepared foods (e.g. entrees, side dishes, holiday foods, pizzas, etc.) | 10.8% | 4 |
| Bakery products, grains, flours, and/or dry mixes | 16.2% | 6 |
| Beverages | 0.0% | 0 |
| Candy, fudge, natural sweetners, and/or condiments | 8.1% | 3 |
| Bath and beauty, laundry care, and/or scented home items | 5.4% | 2 |
| Apparel (men, women, and/or children) | 8.1% | 3 |
| Gift baskets/boxes | 16.2% | 6 |
| Jewelry and/or home décor | 13.5% | 5 |
| Art items (includes music) | 10.8% | 4 |
| Pet products | 5.4% | 2 |
| Gardening items (includes seeds, live plants, soil amenities, and growing aids) | 16.2% | 6 |
| Other (please specify) | 32.4% | 12 |

| Table 19. Types of products/services* offered by OFC supplier-member respondents. (n=37) |
|---|
| *Totals exceed 100% because some suppliers offer more than one type of product. |

| Table 20. Percentage of supplier-members’ annual sales generated through the OFC. (n=35) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Less than 20% | 42.9% | 15 |
| 21-30% | 14.3% | 5 |
| 31-40% | 14.3% | 5 |
| 41-50% | 14.3% | 5 |
| 51-60% | 0.0% | 0 |
| 61-70% | 5.7% | 2 |
| Over 70% | 8.6% | 3 |

Table 21. Average value of MONTHLY sales generated through the OFC for supplier-members. (n=35)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Less than $100 | 34.3% | 12 |
| $101-$500 | 25.7% | 9 |
| $501-$1,500 | 28.6% | 10 |
| $1,501-$2,500 | 0.0% | 0 |
| $2,501-$3,500 | 5.7% | 2 |
| More than $3,500 | 5.7% | 2 |

| Table 22. Other marketing outlets besides the OFC where supplier-members market their products (n=31) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Retail grocery/Supermarket(s) | 29.0% | 9 |
| Store(s) specializing in organic, natural, and/or locally grown products | 51.6% | 16 |
| Farmers market(s) | 67.7% | 21 |
| Other food cooperative(s) | 35.5% | 11 |
| Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) effort(s) | 29.0% | 9 |
| Other outlets | 90.3% | 28 |

Table 23. Gross income for OFC supplier-members' farm/business operations in 2009 (pre-tax dollars). (n=35)

| | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| $25,000 or below | 51.4% | 18 |
| $25,000 - $50,000 | 14.3% | 5 |
| $50,000 - $75,000 | 2.9% | 1 |
| $75,000 - $100,000 | 5.7% | 2 |
| $100,000 - $150,000 | 11.4% | 4 |
| $150,000 - $250,000 | 2.9% | 1 |
| More than $250,000 | 0.0% | 0 |
| Prefer not to answer | 11.4% | 4 |