

Direct Marketing in the 1990s: Tennessee's New Farmers' Markets

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Introduction

Direct marketing of specialty products from producers to final consumers is generally defined as a transactional situation where producers sell products to final consumers without the assistance of middlemen. This one-stage marketing channel experienced a resurgence of interest that began in the mid 1970s and continued into the 1980s. Nationwide interest in direct marketing of specialty products was recognized at the federal level and supported by the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 (U.S. Government Accounting Office).

The major factors that contributed to grower and consumer interest in this fundamental marketing channel, termed direct marketing, have been the focus of several studies across the United

States (e.g., Roy, Leary, and Law; Connell, Beierlein, and Vroomen; and Henderson and Linstrom). One contributing factor was the high rate of inflation experienced in the 1970s, which provided the motivation for many consumers to seek new ways to control food costs. Consumers seeking good values for their food dollars sought to replace some of the value added and convenience of purchases at retail supermarkets with cost-saving purchases that could be made directly from farmers. Another contributing factor that fueled interest in direct purchases from producers was the growing consumer interest in nutrition, combined with interest in good taste and flavor (Roy, Leary, and Law; and Eastwood, Orr, and Brooker).

Public support for farmers' markets was the focus of several studies conducted in Tennessee

(Brooker and Jenkins; Brooker, 1985; Brooker, 1982). In the past few years the state has funded the establishment of farmers' markets in Memphis and in Jackson. Another market funded by the state is under construction in Jefferson County. Knox County funded the construction and operation of a new farmers' market called the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market, which opened in mid June of 1992. The market in Jackson is called the West Tennessee Farmers' Market, and it in mid May of 1992. Of concern to people involved in these markets and the funding governments (and tax payers) is the potential for success. This concern is succinctly expressed in the following statement. "This form of marketing has reached the mature stage where further growth will be limited and existing operations will face intense competition. The conditions necessary for success have consequently become most stringent" (How, p. 329). If this assertion by How is valid, then new farmers' markets have a compelling need to understand their market environments and clientele so as to tailor marketing strategies to match the desires of consumers. Earlier work by Eastwood, Orr, and Brooker revealed that consumers will not buy locally grown products just to support local farmers. The foremost consideration of consumers is quality and value. Hence, farmers' markets operate in an environment where they must compete with other suppliers and retailers. Likewise, additional support from state, county, and city governments will probably depend to some extent upon the success of the new markets that opened this year in Jackson and Knoxville.

The setting of the two markets in Jackson and Knoxville offer a unique opportunity to compare differences between two new markets where one is located in the smallest and the other in one of the larger Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) of Tennessee. The seven counties in the Knoxville MSA had a combined population of 604,816 in 1990, while the Jackson MSA (Madison County) had a population of 77,982. The Knoxville market opened with a 27,000 square-foot, enclosed, year-round retail sales building with 53 monthly rental spaces and a 3,600 square-foot attached canopy with 16 stalls intended for farmers to rent by the day. Jackson opened with one 95-foot wide open-sided building with 28 stalls for farmers, a separate building with

space for 20 to 25 retail vendors (primarily crafts), and another building featuring plants and flowers. The Jackson market is located in the center of town and is being used as part of the community's efforts to revitalize the downtown area. The Knox County market is located adjacent to a major interstate highway (I-640) and is within one mile of a major shopping mall.

Objectives

The overall purpose of this study was to determine shoppers' attitudes and perceptions about the two new, publicly-owned, farmers' markets that opened in Jackson and Knoxville in 1992. Three specific objectives were to:

- (1) determine the demographic characteristics of shoppers that currently are patronizing the markets,
- (2) evaluate shopper attitudes and perceptions about the markets, and
- (3) compare responses of shoppers in Jackson and Knoxville to reveal possible differences in a rural versus an urban market.

Procedure

Personal interviews with shoppers on the farmers' markets were conducted between August 16 and 23, 1992, in both Jackson and Knoxville. Two interviewers worked at each location, with their time allocated to cover most of the markets' operating hours. Knox County's market is open seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. except for Sunday, when the market is open from noon to 5 p.m. The market in Jackson is open Monday through Saturday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Interviews were conducted with shoppers selected at random as they moved about the markets. In Jackson, a few of the respondents took the questionnaire home and mailed it back to the market manager. Of course, participation by the shopper was voluntary so a sampling bias is possible because non-respondents may represent certain socio-demographic groups that have different opinions than respondents.

Results

A total of 235 and 197 questionnaires were completed in Jackson and Knoxville, respectively. When asked if this was their first shopping trip to any farmers' market, slightly less than one-fourth of the Jackson shoppers said yes, compared to one-third in Knoxville (Table 1). Shoppers indicated past experiences with several different out-of-state markets, which were all combined together in one category, excluding Ashville and Atlanta (Table 1). While 33 percent of the shoppers in Jackson reported previous shopping experience at a farmers' market in another state, only two shoppers had been to Atlanta's market. On the other hand, 38 percent of Knoxville's shoppers reported an out-of-state farmers' market shopping experience in addition to 30 percent that had shopped at Atlanta's farmers' market and 10 percent in Ashville. Memphis and Jackson food fairs were reported by 31 and 42 percent of Jackson's shoppers. Western Avenue (Knoxville) was reported by 30 percent of Knoxville's shoppers.

When asked about shopping activity at roadside stands, pick-your-own operations, on-farm markets, and farmers' markets last year (1991), the percentages indicating yes were higher in Jackson than in Knoxville (Table 1). Roadside stands were the most frequently used outlet, reported by 55 percent of shoppers in Jackson and 49 percent in Knoxville. In contrast, 51 percent of the shoppers in Jackson used another farmers' market in 1991 compared to only 16 percent in Knoxville. One possible implication is that Jackson's new market may be attracting business away from markets in Memphis and food fairs in Jackson, while most of the shoppers on the Knoxville market did not patronize a farmers' market in 1991.

In Jackson, 15 percent of the interviewed shoppers indicated that this was their first trip to the market (Table 2). However, in Knoxville it was the first trip for 55 percent of the interviewed shoppers. Not enough evidence is available to determine whether this indicates a potential problem for Knox County's Regional Farmers' Market in attracting repeat customers or an indication of

the larger population base and overall larger number of market visitors.

Among several possible ways that shoppers could have learned about these new farmers' markets, the local newspaper was first in Jackson and television was first in Knoxville. Friends as the source of initial information was second in Jackson while the newspaper was second in Knoxville. In both Jackson and Knoxville, the most frequently reported type of shopping trip was "a special trip to the farmers' market," 80 and 64 percent, respectively. In Knox County, the proportion of shoppers stopping at the market as part of a trip to or from other stores was 25 percent. Shoppers in Knoxville traveled greater distances, on average, than shoppers at the Jackson market. Three-fourths of the shoppers interviewed at Jackson live within nine miles of the market, compared to one-third in Knoxville. While 10 percent of Jackson's shoppers live 25 or more miles from the market, 26 percent of Knoxville's shoppers live 25 or more miles from the market. The shorter travel distances reported in Jackson coincide with the larger number of shoppers reporting that the trip to the market was a special trip. Most of the shoppers lived inside the county with the market, 73 percent in Knoxville and 83 percent in Jackson. The contiguous counties accounted for 18 percent of the shoppers in Knoxville and 14 percent in Jackson.

Because of the fact that shoppers may enter and exit farmers' markets buildings at several places, and the need to not interfere with busy shoppers, the interviewers were not restricted to shoppers as they left the market. Many shoppers were interviewed before the end of their visit to the market. Therefore, the percentage of shoppers that reported making a purchase that day may not represent the proportion of all shoppers that made purchases. However, among the shoppers interviewed, 89 percent in Jackson and 85 percent in Knoxville reported making a purchase (Table 3).

Among these shoppers, most of their purchases were of fruits and vegetables. The percentage of shoppers spending \$10 dollars or more was slightly higher in Knoxville. The average reported purchase was \$6.52 in Jackson and \$8.05 in Knoxville.

Table 1

Direct Marketing History of Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets in Jackson and Knoxville, TN

Item	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number ^a	percent	number ^a	percent
Is this the first time you've ever shopped at a farmer's market?				
yes	53	23.7	65	34.0
no	<u>171</u>	<u>76.3</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>66.0</u>
totals	224	100.0	191	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 5.45*		
Location of other farmers' markets used in the past.^b				
Memphis				
Food Fairs (Church parking lots)				
Nashville	31	27.7	--	--
Chattanooga	43	38.4	7	5.9
Atlanta	11	9.8	2	1.7
Knoxville (Western Avenue)	1	0.9	1	0.8
In another state	2	1.8	36	30.5
Ashville	2	1.8	35	29.7
	37	33.0	38	32.2
	--	--	12	10.2
Direct marketing outlets used to purchase fruits or vegetables in 1991.				
Road-side stands				
yes	126	55.3	92	48.7
no	<u>102</u>	<u>44.7</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>51.3</u>
totals	228	100.0	189	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 1.80		
Pick-your-own				
yes	55	24.1	35	18.5
no	<u>173</u>	<u>75.9</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>81.5</u>
totals	228	100.0	189	101.0
		Chi. Sq. = 1.92		
On-farm markets				
yes	60	26.3	20	10.6
no	<u>168</u>	<u>73.7</u>	<u>169</u>	<u>89.4</u>
totals	228	100.0	189	100.0
Farmers' markets				
yes	117	51.3	30	15.9
no	<u>111</u>	<u>48.7</u>	<u>159</u>	<u>84.1</u>
totals	228	100.0	189	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 56.9*		

^aBased on number of respondents to a particular question.

^bRespondents could indicate more than one location.

*Indicates statistical significance at .05 probability level.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers on the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers on the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Table 2

Selected Characteristics of Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets in Jackson and Knoxville, TN

Item	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number ^a	percent	number ^a	percent
Was this your first trip to this market?				
yes	34	14.7	108	55.4
no	<u>197</u>	<u>85.3</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>44.6</u>
totals	231	100.0	195	100.0
Chi. - Sq. = 78.7*				
How did you learn about this market?				
friend	63	33.0	30	20.0
television	9	4.7	48	32.0
radio	4	2.1	4	2.7
newspaper	105	55.0	41	27.3
driving by	<u>10</u>	<u>5.2</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>18.0</u>
totals	191	100.0	150	100.0
Chi. Sq. = 70.3*				
Regarding this shopping trip, today, was it:				
-a special trip	181	80.8	121	64.0
-part of trip to other stores	36	16.1	47	24.9
-part of recreational trip	7	3.1	14	7.4
-just driving by	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3.7</u>
totals	224	100.0	189	100.0
Chi. Sq. = 19.9*				
County residency in TN:				
-same county as market	190	83.2	111	72.5
-county contiguous to mkt. county	31	13.5	28	18.3
-other counties	<u>7</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>9.2</u>
totals	228	100.0	153	100.0
Distance from home to market:				
2 miles or less	65	28.0	17	9.1
3 thru 9 miles	107	46.1	44	23.7
10 thru 24 miles	38	16.4	77	41.4
25 miles or more	<u>22</u>	<u>9.5</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>25.8</u>
totals	232	100.0	186	100.0
Are your shopping alone or with someone?				
alone	127	54.5	46	24.0
with a spouse	41	17.6	77	40.1
with children	12	5.1	15	7.8
with spouse & children	5	2.2	13	6.8
with friend(s) or relative(s)	<u>48</u>	<u>20.6</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>21.3</u>
totals	233	100.0	192	100.0
Chi. Sq. = 49.9*				

^aBased on number of respondents to a particular question.

*Indicates statistical significance at the .05 probability level.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers on the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers on the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Table 3

**Purchasing Behavior and Perceptions of Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets
in Jackson and Knoxville, TN**

	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number ^a	percent	number ^a	percent
Made a purchase today:				
yes	206	88.8	163	84.9
no	<u>26</u>	<u>11.2</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>15.1</u>
totals	232	100.0	192	100.0
Chi. Sq. = 1.4				
Products purchased:^b				
fruits	121	57.1	81	43.3
vegetables	130	61.3	110	58.8
crafts	2	0.9	2	1.1
plants/flowers	1	0.5	6	3.2
other ^c	15	7.1	32	17.8
Value of purchase:^d				
Less than \$10	147	76.6	86	64.2
\$10 thru \$19	35	18.2	37	27.6
\$20 or more	<u>10</u>	<u>5.2</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8.2</u>
totals	192	100.0	134	100.0
Chi. Sq. = 5.9				
Plan to shop at Farmers' Market on regular basis:				
yes	219	94.0	155	80.3
no	<u>14</u>	<u>6.0</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>19.7</u>
totals	233	100.0	193	100.0
Chi. Sq. = 18.4*				
Frequency of shopping trips:				
weekly	135	63.4	70	49.6
bi-weekly	67	31.4	31	22.0
monthly	<u>11</u>	<u>5.2</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>28.4</u>
totals	213	100.0	141	101.0
Chi. Sq. = 37.2*				

^aBased on number of respondents to a particular question.

^bRespondents could indicate more than one product group.

^cHomemade jellies, honey, country ham, etc.

^dAverage dollar value of purchases was \$6.52 in Jackson and \$8.05 in Knoxville.

*Indicates statistical significance at .05 probability level.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers at the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers in the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

When asked if they plan to shop at the farmers' market regularly, 94 percent in Jackson and 80 percent in Knoxville said yes. Among those who said yes, roughly two-thirds in Jackson and one-half in Knoxville reported the intention to shop at the markets weekly. On a percentage basis, five times as many shoppers in Knoxville as in Jackson intended to limit trips to once a month.

With respect to the products shoppers were most interested in purchasing, fruits and vegetables were identified much more frequently than other products (Table 4). In Knoxville, more shoppers identified an interest in craft products than in Jackson. On the other hand, 16 percent of the Jackson shoppers were interested in flowers compared to 11 percent in Knoxville.

Table 4

**Interest and Perceptions of Interviewed Shoppers Regarding Products Offered for Sale
At Farmers' Markets in Jackson and Knoxville, TN**

Item	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number ^a	percent	number ^a	percent
Products most interested in purchasing:				
fruits - yes	205	91.5	148	79.6
no	<u>19</u>	<u>8.5</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>20.4</u>
totals	224	100.0	186	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 12.1*		
vegetables - yes	202	90.2	163	87.2
no	<u>22</u>	<u>9.8</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>12.8</u>
totals	224	100.0	187	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 0.9		
crafts - yes	18	8.0	40	21.4
no	<u>206</u>	<u>92.0</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>78.6</u>
totals	224	100.0	187	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 15.0*		
plants/flowers - yes	37	16.5	21	11.2
no	<u>187</u>	<u>83.5</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>88.8</u>
totals	224	100.0	187	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 2.4		
other ^b - yes	14	6.2	22	11.8
no	<u>210</u>	<u>93.8</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>88.2</u>
totals	224	100.0	186	100.0
		Chi. Sq. = 3.9		

	Jackson				Knoxville			
	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
	-----percent-----				-----percent-----			
Perception of overall assortment:								
fruits	87.5	9.5	3.0	100.0	95.8	4.2	--	100.0
vegetables	91.2	7.8	1.0	100.0	92.6	6.9	0.5	100.0
crafts	50.8	21.3	27.9	100.0	86.9	10.9	2.2	100.0
plants/flowers	46.5	19.0	34.5	100.0	89.8	10.2	--	100.0
Perception of overall quality:								
fruits	96.9	2.5	0.6	100.0	97.9	1.6	0.5	100.0
vegetables	98.7	1.3	--	100.0	97.3	1.6	1.1	100.0
crafts	65.3	30.4	4.3	100.0	96.3	3.7	--	100.0
plants/flowers	60.5	15.8	23.7	100.0	95.6	4.4	--	100.0

^aBased on number of respondents to a particular question.

^bHomemade jellies, honey, country ham, etc.

*Indicates statistical significance at the .05 probability level.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers in the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers in the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Shoppers were asked to note on a scale of poor, fair, or good, their perceptions of the overall quality and assortment of vegetables, fruits, flowers, and crafts available at the markets. For both assortment and quality, more than 90 percent of the respondents at Knoxville indicated good except for the assortment of crafts, which had 87 percent. While the assortment of crafts was graded fair or poor by 13 percent of Knoxville's shoppers, 96 percent indicated that the quality of craft products was good. At Jackson, 28 percent reported that they thought the assortment of craft products was poor and 34 percent felt the assortment of flowers was poor. While approximately one-third of the Jackson shoppers felt the quality of craft products was fair or poor, nearly a fourth felt the quality of plants and flowers was poor.

The distribution of shoppers by occupational categories was quite similar on both markets (Table 5). Retired individuals were the dominant group, followed by professional workers and homemakers. The distribution of shoppers by gender was also similar, with 57 percent females being interviewed in Jackson and 51 percent in Knoxville. In Jackson, 24 percent of the interviewed shoppers were black, compared to 3.7 percent in Knoxville.

As expected from the large percentage of retired shoppers, the distribution of shoppers by age was skewed towards the elderly. Only 12 and 13 percent of the shoppers in Jackson and Knoxville were less than 35 years in age. Surprisingly few households reported more than four people in the home. Approximately half of the shoppers indicated that they were part of two-person households.

In Jackson, roughly one-third of the shoppers reported they completed high school and another third completed college. The percentage of college graduates was nearly identical in Knoxville, but the percentage of high school graduates was much larger, 52 percent. With respect to household incomes, the shoppers in Jackson were fairly evenly distributed among the three income groups. The percentage of household incomes in the upper income group was slightly higher in Knoxville than in Jackson, 35 versus 30 percent. A major difference was in the proportion

of household in the lower and middle income groups, where 36 percent of Jackson's shoppers were in the less than \$20,000 group, compared to 22 percent in Knoxville.

When asked to identify the most desirable feature about the market, location and appearance (atmosphere, building) were tied with a response rate of 29 percent for the respondents in Jackson (Table 6). Appearance was the most frequently noted feature by the interviewed shoppers in Knoxville (26%). Second in frequency of listing in Knoxville (23%) was product freshness (quality, homegrown). The presence of local people selling products was noted by 10 percent in Knoxville and 6 percent in Jackson. Price was noted as a desirable feature by only one shopper in Jackson and six shoppers in Knoxville.

The most undesirable market feature identified by 41 percent of the interviewed shoppers in Jackson was parking (Table 7). Three other features were tied for second, each with 12 percent of the shoppers--appearance, product selection, and traffic pattern. None of the shoppers in Knoxville indicated parking as an undesirable feature; however, 20 percent indicated that the traffic pattern (absence of traffic light in front of the market) was the most undesirable feature. Price was the most frequently noted undesirable feature in Knoxville (29%), which is quite different from the four percent in Jackson.

In a separate question the shoppers were asked to indicate changes or additions that would make the market a more desirable place to shop (Table 8). Shoppers were not limited to one item, so several shoppers made more than one suggestion. The number one priority in Jackson, according to the interviewed shoppers, is the need for an improved parking area (41%), with the need for more farmers selling products second (29%), and a greater assortment of fruits and vegetables third (24%). In Knoxville, the most requested change was for lower prices (26%), followed by a desire for more farmers (16%) and more craft products (13%). A suggestion that was unique to Knoxville was the suggestion by nine percent of the shoppers for a restaurant and more entertainment.

Table 5

Demographics of Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets in Jackson and Knoxville, TN

Item		Jackson		Knoxville	
		number ^a	percent	number ^a	percent
<i>Shopper occupation:</i>	blue collar	3	1.7	12	7.6
	sales	5	2.8	7	4.4
	professional	64	36.2	47	29.7
	homemaker	23	13.0	22	13.9
	student	6	3.4	9	5.7
	retired	<u>76</u>	<u>42.9</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>38.6</u>
totals	177	100.0	158	100.0	
<i>Shopper gender:</i>	female	115	56.9	97	51.1
	male	<u>87</u>	<u>43.1</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>48.9</u>
totals	202	100.0	190	100.0	
Chi. Sq. = 1.4					
<i>Shopper race:</i>	black	48	23.9	7	3.7
	asian	3	1.5	3	1.6
	white	137	68.1	175	93.6
	hispanic	<u>13</u>	<u>6.5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1.1</u>
totals	201	100.0	187	100.0	
Chi. Sq. = 42.8*					
<i>Shopper age:</i>	less than 25	16	8.1	8	4.5
	25 thru 34	8	4.0	14	7.9
	35 thru 44	29	14.6	21	11.8
	45 thru 54	33	16.7	41	23.0
	55 thru 64	29	14.7	36	20.2
	65 and over	<u>83</u>	<u>41.9</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>32.6</u>
totals	198	100.0	178	100.0	
Chi. Sq. = 10.6					
<i>Number of people in household:</i>	1	32	16.4	30	18.9
	2	94	48.2	83	52.3
	3	40	20.5	21	13.2
	4	21	10.8	19	11.9
	5	2	1.0	4	2.5
	6	4	2.1	1	0.6
	7	--	--	1	0.6
	8	<u>2</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>
totals	195	100.0	159	100.0	
<i>Shopper education:</i>	11th grade or less	27	14.1	6	4.2
	high school graduate	66	34.4	75	52.4
	1-3 years of college	28	14.6	7	4.9
	college graduate	<u>71</u>	<u>36.9</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>38.5</u>
totals	192	100.0	143	100.0	
Chi. Sq. = 21.9*					
<i>Household income:</i>	less than \$20,000	57	36.6	31	22.3
	\$20,000 thru \$40,000	52	33.3	59	42.5
	more than \$40,000	<u>47</u>	<u>30.1</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>35.2</u>
totals	156	100.0	139	100.0	
Chi. Sq. = 7.2*					

^aBased on number of respondents to a particular question. *Indicates statistical significance at the .05 probability level. Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers at the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 179 shoppers at the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Table 6

**Desirable Market Features Identified by Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets
In Jackson and Knoxville, TN**

Item	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number	percent ^a	number	percent ^a
Location	47	29.0	27	16.9
Appearance, atmosphere, building	47	29.0	42	26.2
Freshness, quality, homegrown	32	15.4	37	23.1
Variety	25	19.8	32	20.0
Local people selling	10	6.2	16	10.0
Prices	<u>1</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3.8</u>
totals	162	100.0	160	100.0

^aBased on a number of respondents.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers at the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers at the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Table 7

**Undesirable Market Features Identified by Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets
In Jackson and Knoxville, TN**

Item	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number	percent ^a	number	percent ^a
Parking	20	40.8	--	--
Appearance, atmosphere	6	12.2	10	14.3
Product selection	6	12.2	6	8.6
Traffic pattern (or light)	6	12.2	14	20.0
Location	5	10.2	5	7.1
Hours	4	8.2	3	4.3
Prices	2	4.1	20	28.6
No carts or elderly transportation	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>17.1</u>
totals	49	99.9	70	100.0

^aBased on number of respondents.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers at the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers at the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Table 8**Suggested Changes or Additions Identified by Interviewed Shoppers at Farmers' Markets
In Jackson and Knoxville, TN**

Item	Jackson		Knoxville	
	number	percent ^a	number	percent ^a
More parking	90	50.8	3	2.5
More farmers selling	51	28.8	20	16.5
Greater assortment of fruits and vegetables	43	24.3	14	11.6
More plants/flowers	25	14.1	1	0.8
Open later in evening	21	11.9	3	2.5
Lower prices	18	10.2	31	25.6
No changes needed	18	10.2	3	2.5
More craft products	14	7.9	16	13.2
More vendors ^b	--		12	9.9
Restaurant, entertainment	--		11	9.1
Open earlier in morning	2	1.1	6	5.0
Number of respondents ^c	177	72.8	121	61.4

^aBased on number of respondents.

^bUnsure if this refers to produce, plants or crafts.

^cMany respondents identified more than one item.

Source: Personal interviews with 235 shoppers at the West Tennessee Farmers' Market (Jackson) and 197 shoppers at the Knox County Regional Farmers' Market (Knoxville) during August, 1992.

Concluding Comments

Personal interviews were conducted with shoppers at two new farmers' markets in Tennessee during one week in mid-August 1992. Both markets first opened for business earlier in the summer. The state funds the Jackson market and Knox County the one in Knoxville. This study set out to learn about attitudes and perceptions of shoppers at these two new markets.

Most of the interviewed shoppers on both markets had previous experience with other farmers' markets: 76 percent in Jackson and 66 percent in Knoxville. The Jackson shoppers reported previous experience with the farmers' markets in Memphis (28%), unspecified markets in other states (33%), and food fairs in Jackson (38%), which usually involves the temporary use of

church parking lots on designated afternoons. Nearly one-third of Knoxville's shoppers had previous experience with the Western Avenue market, the Atlanta market, and markets in other states. Only six percent of Knoxville's shoppers reported previous experience at food fairs.

Among the four major direct marketing outlets used by fruit and vegetable growers--roadside stands, pick-your-own operations, on-farm, and farmers' markets--roadside stands were used most frequently by the shoppers interviewed during the summer of 1991. While slightly more than half of Jackson's shoppers patronized a farmers' market in 1991, only 16 percent of Knoxville's shoppers patronized one. The implication here is that Jackson may be drawing customers away from another farmers' market, but not so for Knoxville's shoppers.

On the Jackson market, during the week of the interviews in mid August, only 15 percent of the shoppers were there for the first time. More than half of Knoxville's shoppers were on their initial trip. This is, perhaps, influenced by the shorter distance most shoppers traveled in Jackson. Nearly three-fourths of Jackson's shoppers were less than 10 miles from home. In contrast, two-thirds of Knoxville's shoppers were 10 or more miles from home. Also, 80 percent of Jackson's shoppers were on a special trip to the farmers' market, compared to 64 percent in Knoxville. More than half of Jackson's shoppers were there alone, while the dominant pattern in Knoxville was with a spouse, 40 percent.

The proportion of shoppers that made purchases and the average value of purchases were not significantly different between the two markets. There was a statistically significant difference between Jackson and Knoxville in the intention of shoppers to patronize the farmers' market on a regular basis and planned frequency of shopping trips. In Jackson, 94 percent of the shoppers expressed the intent to be regular shoppers, and 63 percent of these on a weekly basis. In Knoxville, 80 percent stated they would be regular shoppers, and half of these on a weekly basis.

As expected, respondents ranked fruits and vegetables highest among products they were most interested in purchasing. However, one-fifth of Knoxville shoppers were most interested in crafts, compared to 8 percent in Jackson. On the other hand, 16 percent of Jackson's shoppers were most interested in plants and flowers, compared to 11 percent in Knoxville. Roughly half of Jackson's shoppers also felt that the assortment and quality of plants and flowers were not good.

Parking was the foremost problem noted by the Jackson shoppers. Of Knoxville shoppers, 20 percent said the most pressing need was for a traffic light at the market entrance. However, an even larger percent (28%) of Knoxville shoppers said prices were the most undesirable feature.

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