



ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS AND THE CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE: A REPORT

May 2011

SUPPORT FOR HEALTHY EATING IN WHEAT RIDGE

LiveWell Wheat Ridge

(LWWR), a community initiative funded by LiveWell Colorado, advocates healthy eating and active living (HEAL) policies and infrastructure improvements in Wheat Ridge. LWWR is working with city policymakers, staff and residents to incorporate plans for increasing access to healthy foods, particularly for lower income and Latino residents of Wheat Ridge.

In partnership with the Jefferson Conservation District and CREA Results, a community-based outreach organization, LWWR conducted a community

needs assessment in the fall of 2010 of access to fresh fruits and vegetables and locally grown foods. A 25-item survey in English and Spanish was administered online and in hardcopy to Wheat Ridge residents and nonresidents to gather information on consumption patterns, attitudes and barriers to accessing fresh foods. Over two hundred respondents completed the survey. For the purposes of this report, we have confined our analysis to the 135 Wheat Ridge residents who completed the survey.

Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Gender	Age
72% Female	Mean age = 46 years 17% seniors (65 years and older)
Ethnicity	Income
46% White 52% Latino 2% Multiracial	7% Under \$15,000 27% \$15,000-\$29,000 21% \$30,000-\$49,000 19% \$50,000-\$99,000 9% ≥\$100,000 17% Chose not to respond

What to Eat

WHAT RESIDENTS REPORT

Shopping

The vast majority (over 90%) of respondents report going to grocery stores to get their fresh fruits and vegetables regardless of the time of year and most use their own cars to get there.

Almost half (47%) of the respondents get their produce at farmers' markets, fruit and vegetable stands or gardens during the summer. A far greater percentage of Whites (69%) go to these locations compared to Latinos (20%).



A majority (72%) of respondents report freshness as an important aspect of deciding which fruits and vegetables to eat, followed by 62% who report cost as important, 47% who report healthiness as important and 43% who report taste as important.

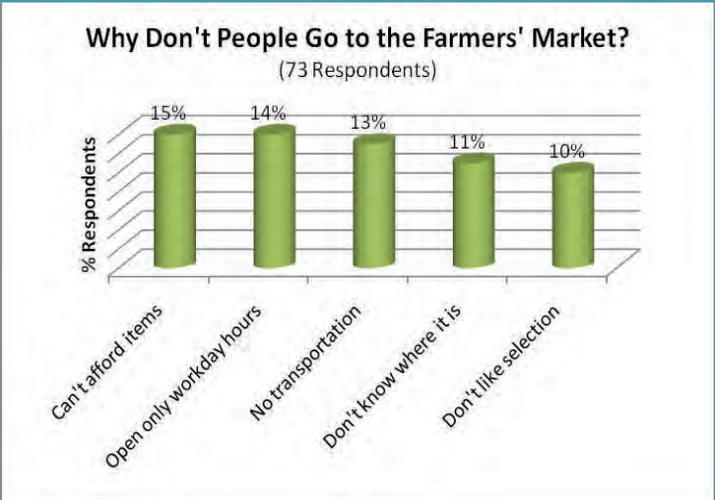


Farmers' Markets

Almost half (46%) of the respondents go to the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market. Most (over 70%) buy fruits and vegetables. A quarter buy other food items, a quarter don't buy anything and 5% buy flowers or plants. Sixty-nine percent of Latinos, 45% of males and 32% of lower income respondents who go to the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market do not buy anything compared to only 9% of Whites who do not buy anything.

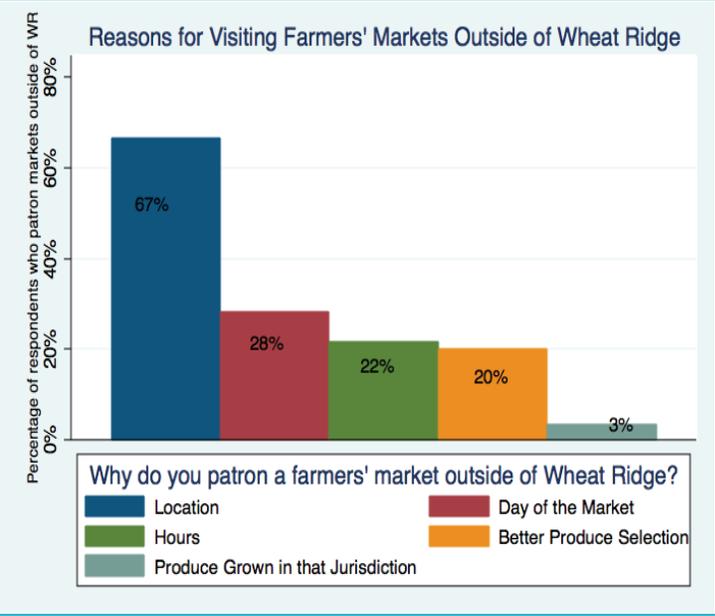


Fifty-four percent of respondents, or 73 people, do not go to the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market.



Other reasons for not going to the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market reported by only a few respondents include: prefer going to grocery store, only eat organic, grow my own, not interested, don't think about it, hard to walk around or find parking, forget because market open only one day a week, part of Community Supported Agriculture.

Twenty-six percent of the respondents (35 people) report going outside of Wheat Ridge to another farmers' market. Reasons include: more convenient locations, better days of the week, more convenient hours or better produce selection at the other markets. A very small percentage (3%) report that they go to another market because the produce at the market is grown locally in that jurisdiction.

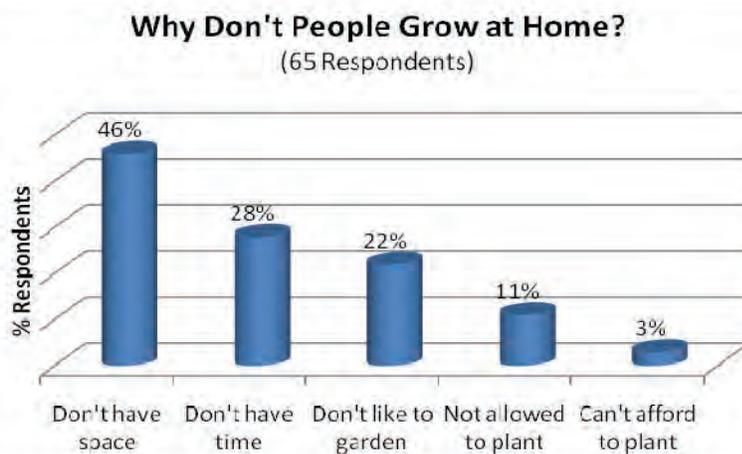


This fact sheet was designed and created by Center for Research Strategies www.crsllc.org



Gardening at Home

Just over half of respondents (52%) garden at home. Seventy percent grow vegetables, 54% grow flowers, 49% grow spices and herbs and 37% grow fruit. Forty-eight percent, or 65 people, do not grow at home. The most common reasons for not growing at home are shown in the graph below. Additional reasons noted by a few respondents include: living in an apartment, no desire, having moved or contending with squirrels. Of the 30 respondents who report not having enough space to garden, only 5 are interested in renting space at the Wheat Ridge community garden called the Happiness Garden.



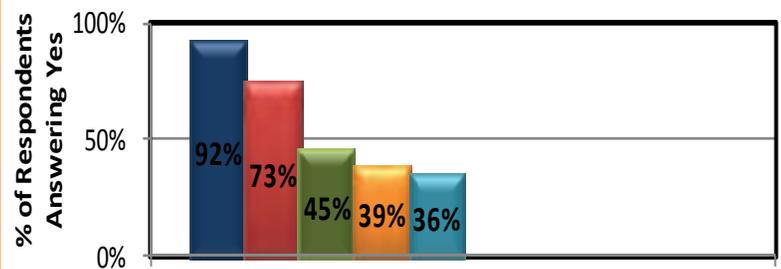
Locally Grown Foods

Wheat Ridge residents are interested in having access to locally grown foods.

Respondents report that they think it is important for markets to carry locally grown foods, that they would be more likely to go to a restaurant if it served locally grown food, that they would be interested in buying produce from a local farmer and that they would consider joining a local food co-op grocery store that sells local produce.

Thirty-one percent report they want more information about buying from a local farmer. Twenty-four percent want more information about food co-ops.

Locally Grown Foods



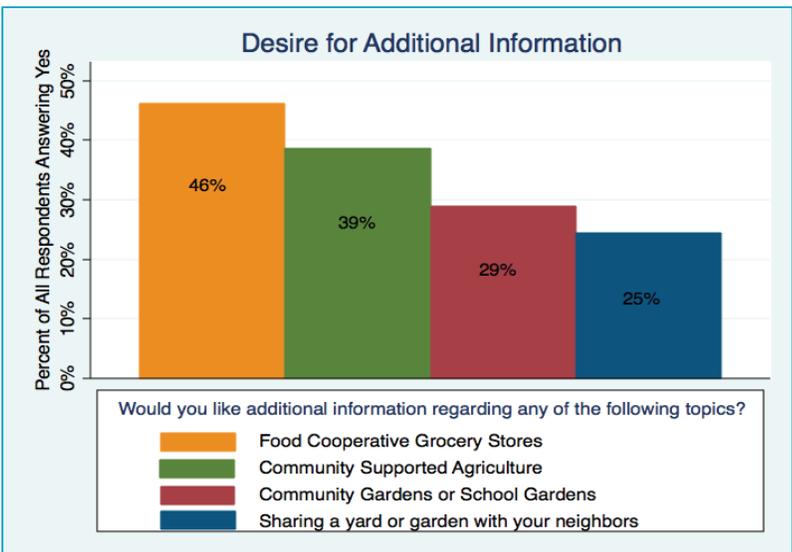
- Important for Wheat Ridge food markets to carry locally grown produce
- More likely to go to a Wheat Ridge restaurant using locally grown food
- Willing to pay more for locally grown foods
- Interested in buying produce from a local farmer and having it delivered to their homes
- Want to be part of a food co-op grocery store to access more locally grown products

Getting Involved

Wheat Ridge residents want to get involved and they want more information. Almost half (46%) of the respondents report they are interested in coming to a community event that raises awareness of the importance of locally grown produce. A quarter (25%) report they would like to join the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Task Force. Only 3 respondents report they had ever called the City of Wheat Ridge about growing or selling fruits and vegetables, farming, composting or other gardening questions.

Message to Policymakers

Respondents also report they would like more information about urban agriculture.



Most residents buy their produce at grocery stores, but almost 50% also buy at farmers' markets.

*Should the city encourage more grocery and produce stores to locate in Wheat Ridge?
Should the city partner to create additional farmers' markets, perhaps on a weekend day, to encourage greater participation?*

Almost 75% of the respondent group rates freshness of produce as an important aspect of considering what fruits and vegetables to buy. Two-thirds are sensitive to cost.

*What can be done to ensure freshness of produce?
How can we ensure produce is affordable?*

Not quite half of the respondent group patronizes the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market. When asked why they don't go, reasons include cost, inconvenient time, not having transportation and not knowing where the market is.

*How do we ensure produce is affordable at the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market?
How do we do a better job of marketing the Wheat Ridge Farmers' Market?*

Half of the respondents grow gardens at home. Half do not. Individuals surveyed don't have space or time to grow at home. Additionally, those surveyed did not want to rent space at the Wheat Ridge community garden.

*Should the city use resources, such as city-owned land or funding, to help create new community gardens?
How do we support home gardening in Wheat Ridge?*

Residents want locally grown foods to be available, not only to prepare and consume at home, but to eat at local restaurants.

*How can more locally grown produce be available in Wheat Ridge?
Are there policies or incentives that the city could provide to encourage restaurants to use local produce?*

For more information, please contact Molly Hanson, LiveWell Wheat Ridge Coordinator, at mhanson@jeffco.us.

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