

Value Chain Research

This project is a partnership between:

- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
- Center for Environmental Farming Systems
- ECU Center for Sustainable Tourism

The goal of the value chain research is to compare the perceptions of various audiences regarding the North Carolina local/organic food value chain.

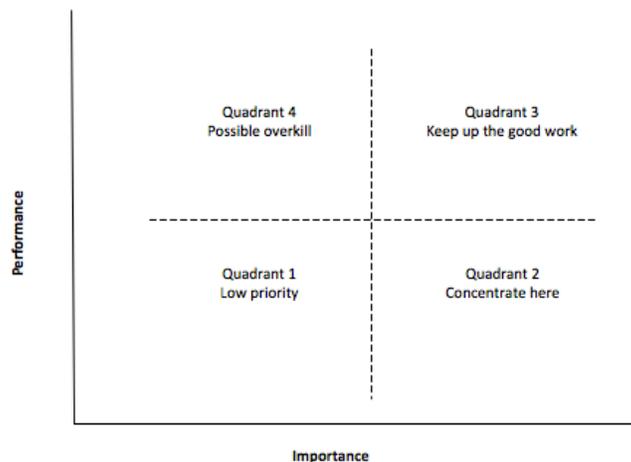
Phase One - Dephi study

In this phase, we are 1) identifying all the issues, and 2) narrowing down which ones will make the final cut of the survey. We are seeking input from practitioners from various perspectives and stages of the supply chain, as well as academics (for example, professors from ECU Supply Chain Management, Cultural Geography, Public Policy, Hospitality, Nutrition, Public Health have contributed to date). Phase one will conclude in May.

Phase Two- Importance-Performance Analysis

In this phase, we will conduct a survey to determine how various audiences perceive these issues in terms of their importance and in terms of their “performance” in their county. IPA was developed over thirty years ago as a tool for management decision-making, and since has been utilized as an economic tool for strategic planning processes. The data will illuminate both the strong and weak points of North Carolina’s food systems by illustrating where each issue falls in one of four quadrants, according to each audience:

- important and performs well,
- important but does not meet expectations,
- not important but performs well, and
- not important and does not perform well.



Surveys will be distributed both online and in hardcopy/in person. Survey distribution will be rolled out in stages each month, for example, farmers in May, restaurants in June, service providers in July (these are not real examples). The technical reports for each audience can be written in stages as well. Responses will be compared among audiences.

Regional Analysis - Qualitative Study

This project is a partnership between:

- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association - ECU Center for Sustainable Tourism

The regional analysis will focus on Pitt County and its surrounding counties. The goal of the regional analysis is to identify opportunities to expand the storage, processing, distribution and marketing of organic crops, and so help farmers drive economic growth in the communities they serve. Information will be collected from farmers, Extension, crop consultants and other food/agriculture stakeholders in the region to inventory 1) the existing food system infrastructure available that might be used to support the goal, and 2) the infrastructure that would be most desired by farmers, given the crops they produce/would like to produce.

Foodie Market Scale

Not all foodies are alike. This scale will segment foodies into submarkets of foodie-ism, for example “locavore foodie, activist foodie, elitist foodie,” and so on. The scale is comprised of a list of approximately 60 food-related activities; respondents indicate how often they participate in the activity (often, sometimes, never). The responses are then run through a statistical package to see how the activities “clump together” for that sample. To validate the scale, it must be tested on several samples to see if the groupings compare across samples. To date, we have a sample from the 2010 Terra Vita Festival that took place in Chapel Hill, a group of undergraduate students from California Polytechnic Institute, and a farmers’ cooperative in California. We are currently collecting them over the course of several weekends at the Charlotte 7th Street Uptown Public Market and actively looking for ways of tapping large “nameable” groups of people to sample without resorting to listservs.

Additional assessments related to local food include 1) Interviews with Food Entrepreneurs regarding their entrepreneurial skills, motivation, and their perspective on the entrepreneurial climate of their community, 2) a Visitor Study Pilot Program for rural NC counties, and 3) 2011 Animal Products Survey Results (soon to be released).

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