

Michigan Apple Committee

NEWS



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Consumers Prefer Locally Grown Produce

Research indicates that consumers are interested in purchasing locally grown produce

LANSING, Mich. – Consumers prefer locally grown produce, according to a recent study by Nielsen, which also supports data collected by the Michigan Apple Committee using focus groups over the past decade. Participants in the studies expressed that their perception of local produce is that it is fresher and tastes better.

According to a Nielsen Homescan Survey conducted in December 2018, 58 percent of consumers considered it “very important” to buy local produce. The survey also indicated that large families with young, school-aged children, older bustling families and Boomers felt it was “extremely important” to buy locally grown produce.

“Because Michigan is located within 500 miles of half the U.S. population, Michigan apples have a smaller carbon footprint,” said Diane Smith, executive director of the Michigan Apple Committee. “Being near this population, Michigan apples have become considered the local apple for many consumers, especially for those in the Chicago area.”

Although 42 percent respondents considered produce within 50 miles to be local, some respondents indicated that local meant that it came from within a certain radius of the store. MAC considers surrounding states such as Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois and Ohio to be local.

“MAC has conducted consumer research since 2008 to identify consumers’ preferences,” said Smith. “Our research aligns with other studies and supports the claim that consumers prefer locally grown produce.”

Not only does research point to a consumer preference for locally grown, but MAC's focus groups also show a preference for Michigan Apples. Focus groups were conducted in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Chicago, Houston and Atlanta. In 15 of 18 focus groups, Michigan grown Honeycrisp ranked number one in taste and appearance. Michigan grown Fuji and Jonagold were also consistently ranked in the top four. Additional focus groups are being planned for this fall.

The Michigan Apple Committee is a grower-funded nonprofit organization devoted to marketing, education and research activities to distinguish the Michigan Apple and encourage its consumption in Michigan and around the world. To learn more, visit MichiganApples.com.

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