



GATEWAY

Centre of Excellence
in Rural Health

G.R.E.A.T. Local Food Report 2023



Information Page

Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health (CERH) is a rural health research organisation in Southwestern Ontario whose mission is to improve the health and quality of life of rural residents through research, education and communication.

Gateway CERH was founded in 2008 as a not-for-profit organisation with a charitable status, governed by a volunteer board of directors. For more information about Gateway CERH activities and project, you can learn more on our website: www.gatewayruralhealth.ca

This project was funded in full by Libro Credit Union, a Credit Union and Certified B Corporation. This project was initiated under their Food Accessibility pillar, as Libro aims to promote prosperity by improving food systems to increase access to local food for all. To learn more about Libro click on the link: <https://www.libro.ca/about/pillars/>

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Executive Summary

The goal of the project was to determine the scope and accessibility of local food and make recommendations to increase access to local food for all residents of Huron County. This project took place in three phases: (1) preliminary analysis and producer interviews, (2) consumer survey, and (3) discussion with third-parties and creation of deliverables.

The following took place:

133 Local Producers Identified	51 Local Producers Interviewed
82 Local Producer Mapped	165 Consumer Survey Respondents
13 Farmers' Markets/Produce hubs Mapped	7 Stakeholder/organization Discussions

Phase 1: Huron County is a rich agricultural hub and, ironically, a location where many people are food insecure with an estimated 15% of the population as recently as 2020. There are many local producers that sell to the local area that are mapped below using google maps.

In conversation with local producers, growing up on a farm, wanting to benefit their community and seeing a business opportunity are the three most common ways producers started their business. Most sell directly to consumers (78%), and sell more than one product and most of their business is in Huron County out of their local food venture. Other more common sales include local retail/artisanal stores and farmers markets both virtual and in-person. More producers would like to sell more locally here but there are a lot of barriers.

These barriers include barriers to accessing retail stores, restaurants, and grocery stores, financial constraints and lack of consumer education and understanding.

Phase 2: Based on our survey results, consumers of local food are typically older (60-69), more affluent and educated individuals. They are often married with no dependents. 30% of survey respondents' household income was \$ 110,000 + but that represents under 0.4% of Huron County population.

The most common way consumers purchase food locally is directly from producers either at the farmers market or at the producer's farm. But there are barriers to access which include cost, transportation and lack of knowledge of local producers.

Phase 3: Recommendations, as a result of discussions, were as follows:

(1) Develop a directory or information hub for producers and local retailers to connect and find opportunities to sell their products; (2) Initiate a producer town hall; (3) Create educational resources for local producers including: case studies and workshops; (4) Develop strong supporting infrastructure such as internet, highway signage and processing capabilities for use by local producers; (5) And Create educational resources for local consumers to raise awareness and understanding of local food within the area.

Introduction

Project Background

In the summer of 2021, Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health (CERH) designed and implemented a study, the G.R.E.A.T. (Growing, Raising, Eating, Accessible, Thriving) Local Food project, to understand the local food landscape of Huron County.

This project was initiated, in part, as a result of a growing concern for Food Insecurity within rural communities. As defined by Huron-Perth Public Health, Food Insecurity is the “inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints”. Huron County is of particular interest since it is estimated that 15% of residents between Huron and Perth Counties in 2020 struggled to pay for food¹.

**15% of residents between
Huron and Perth Counties,
in 2020, struggled to pay
for food**

Despite these statistics on lack of access to food, Huron County is, ironically, a rich agricultural hub with over 2,500 Census farms within the county². Some factors that result in a large production of food, and many people not accessing that food is the consolidation of family farms into corporate farms. This has led to large farms that produce primarily to the global market. This is the great irony, people living in some of the richest agricultural lands in Canada have inadequate or insecure access to food within their area.

The goal of the project was to determine the scope and accessibility of local food and make recommendations to increase access to local food for all residents of Huron County. Activities and objectives to achieve that goal included:

1. Identify the gaps within the local food landscape;
2. Create measures that address these barriers;
3. Develop resources for the community to provide knowledge and showcase the benefits of engaging with local food;
4. And ultimately, to end up with a thriving local food system in Huron County.

To accomplish these objectives, we set out to gain the perspectives of local producers and consumers in Huron County. The goal was to interview fifty producers who sold to the local market and survey 150 consumers of local food. Through interviews with local producers and a survey of local consumers, Gateway CERH hopes to address this issue in a comprehensive manner. To supplement the report, informal discussions were conducted with local organisations and individuals connected to the local food network.

¹ Huron-Perth Public Health, <https://www.hp-ph.ca/en/health-matters/food-insecurity.aspx#:~:text=Who%20is%20affected%20by%20food,living%20on%20a%20fixed%20income>

² <https://www.ontario.ca/page/agriculture-census>

Preliminary research into local food showed there are positive benefits to having a strong local food economy. For the individual consumer, Huron County has a strong and rich diversity of agricultural products produced, meaning that it can provide a balanced selection of food to meet nutritional goals and needs. Additionally, the food is on average fresher, as it has less distance to travel. This means that eating locally can be more sustainable and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions and an individual's carbon footprint. The increased shelf life and enhanced taste qualities from fresher ingredients are further benefits. As well, a significant amount of food is wasted as it moves through the food supply chain. By eating locally, 60% of Ontario's food waste reaching landfills could be diverted by consumers having access to food that stays fresher longer³.

There are positive community benefits associated with local food. For example, there is significant value in investing in your community with every dollar spent on local food programs, exponentially increasing in a net positive value⁴. Furthermore, local food has strong cultural values and facilitates community building experiences through agri-tourism⁵. As a large agricultural hub, the agricultural sector is deeply entrenched in family histories and a significant number of residents have family members or themselves who have worked or work within the agricultural sector. Thus, enhancing the strength and opportunities in local food is a community building exercise.

Defining 'local food' for the purpose of our project limited our scope to studying food produced within 'Huron County' for the community residents. Although many producers who are nearby in Perth, Bruce or Lambton County sell food to nearby consumers in Huron County, and many producers sell to nearby community stores in Perth, Bruce or Lambton County, we excluded them from this study.

³ Government of Ontario. (2021, July 29). Food and organic waste framework. Ontario.ca. Retrieved September 1, 2021, from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/food-and-organic-waste-framework>.

⁴ Shideler, D., & Watson, P. (2019). Making Change through Local Food Production: Calculating the Economic Impact of Your Local Food Project. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 8(C), 165–177.

⁵ Giampiccoli, A. and Kalis, J.H. (2012), Tourism, Food, and Culture: Community-Based Tourism, Local Food, and Community Development in Mpondoland. *CAFÉ*, 34: 101-123.

Project Timeline

Phase 1 Preliminary Research Producer Interviews	2021 July 2022 - July 2023
Phase 2 Consumer Survey	August 2022 - August 2023
Phase 3 Discussion with Third-parties Creation of Deliverables	July - August 2023 August - October 2023

Figure 1: *Project timeline G.R.E.A.T. Local Food Project (2023, Gateway CERH).*

Methods

The goal of this project is to determine the scope and accessibility of local food and make recommendations to increase access to local food for all residents of Huron County. For the purposes of this study, methods included an initial assessment of local food producers and mapping; interviews were conducted with producers to identify their issues regarding their businesses, the knowledge of the consumers who partake in their products, the barriers present within the local food sector and create recommendations to help.

Phase 1: Preliminary Assessment and Producer Interviews

Following an initial assessment of the need for research into the local food landscape in Huron County, in 2021, Phase 1 of the project included an extensive literature of 'local food' research and the creation of a directory for 'local producers' in Huron County (eg. who are selling to the local market, where are they located and how they are selling to consumers).

Throughout the entirety of the project, an active list of local producers was continuously expanded as other producers were discovered. Based on that list, producers were approached for an interview.

Beginning in 2022, Gateway CERH Research Assistants conducted semi-structured interviews with local producers. The main objectives of these interviews was to understand local producers' operations, the local food sector in rural Ontario, and ways to better support local producers.

Producer interviews were conducted online (on the phone or on Zoom) or in person, taking place on their home farms, stores and even at the Gateway CERH's office depending on the preference of the producer. The interviews took under an hour to complete. If an in-person interview was conducted on the producer's farm or operations, many producers showed the interviewers their farming operation.

In total, 51 interviews with local producers took place. The interviewees included producers who have been operating for various lengths of time: entering the local food market, established local producers and producers transitioning out of selling to the local food market. Producers ranged from selling meat and/or dairy, fruits and/or vegetables, beverages and speciality items. Producers with different scales of local food production were approached ranging from self-identified "hobbyists" to larger-scale production that sold within Huron County

The questions were centred around three main themes of the producer's perspective on their individual business operations, their understanding of how the local food system operates, and any recommendations or changes they think would make a positive change to the local food sector.

Producers were encouraged to expand on answers as necessary and some follow-up questions were asked at the discretion of the interviewer. As the interview followed a semi-structured

format, producers were able to bring up points that may have missed through the asked questions. As well, questions were skipped at the producer's discretion.

Phase 2: Consumer Survey

In the summer of 2022, Gateway CERH created and distributed an online consumer survey using the Qualtrics platform. The survey collected data on the perspective of consumers in Huron County. The survey was active for one year (August 2022 - August 2023). The consumer survey was intended to gain insight into the knowledge of local consumers, where and how local consumers access local food, and what barriers may prevent them or others from participating in local food purchasing.

The survey included questions regarding where and how often the consumer engaged with the local food network, barriers and methods to accessing local food and their recommendations to improve uptake of local food in Huron County.

Distribution of the survey took place through Gateway CERH's social media and website. Other external distribution took place through brochures and pamphlets with a QR code linked to the survey. These brochures were distributed to local libraries, third-party local food distributors, tourism offices, through the local news, Gateway CERH's lecture series, food banks, a community centre, and at farmers' markets to gain a broad representation of consumers.

Phase 3: Discussion with Third-Parties and Creation of Deliverables

After closing the consumer survey and wrapping up producer interviews, identified third-party organisations intimately connected with the local food network were approached to fill in knowledge gaps. Follow-up conversations were initiated with third-party sellers of local food or distributors and other interested parties including, but not limited to, various farmers markets, the Bruce-Huron Produce Auction, Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre and Huron County Economic Development. These parties are considered important stakeholders.

Questions included: the inception date of various projects or initiatives within the local food sector; where the general public access their local food resources; how many community members and/or producers are involved with their organisation and to what capacity; and, what is the impact of their organisation.

Results

Mapping Local Food Production in Huron County

One of the project deliverables is an interactive local producer map for Huron County. Please use the link below to access this map and share it with others. The map shows you the location of the producer, what they sell and what type of sales they conduct. If you have any questions or concerns please email: info@gatewayruralhealth.ca

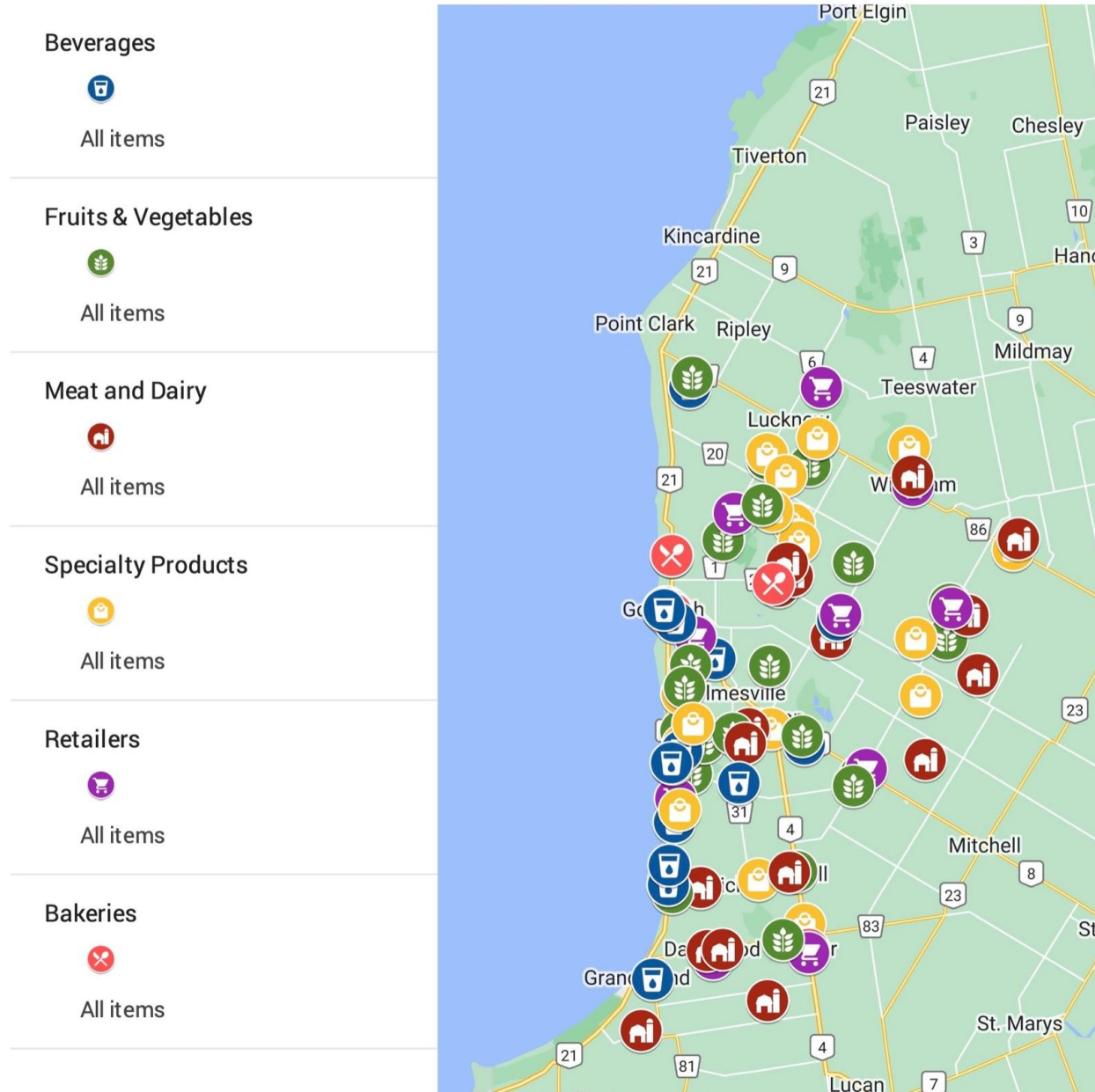


Figure 2: Photo of the *G.R.E.A.T. Local Food Project Map of Local Producers Huron County* developed on Google Maps (2023, Gateway CERH).

Map Link: [Click here](#)

Profiling Local Producers in Huron County

The producer interviews offered critical insight into a range of scale and products produced and distributed to the local food market in Huron County. Interviewed producers sold products in a range of categories including: beverages, meat & dairy, specialty products, fruits & vegetables, retailers, and bakeries for a total of 51 interviews.

Categories of Producers	Number	%
Beverages	7	≈13.7%
Meat & Dairy	13	≈25.5%
Specialty Products	14	≈25.5%
Fruits & Vegetables	13	≈25.5%
Retailers	2	≈6%
Bakeries	2	≈4%
Total	51	

Figure 3: Distribution of Producer Interviews in Huron County (2023, Gateway CERH).

Journey to Sell for the Local Market

Gateway CERH asked local producers to explain their journey in becoming involved in selling to the local market. This resulted in a range of responses from local producers. Questions were asked regarding (1) why they began their business, (2) their central motivation and (3) why they sold to the local market?

Reflecting the rich agricultural history in Huron County, the predominant motivation for starting a business that sold to the local market was family history with agriculture. 47% of respondents indicated that growing up on a family farm, or taking over an agricultural business that sold to the local market was how their business began and part of their motivation for selling locally.

Interestingly enough, 10% of local producers interviewed did not grow up in Huron County. In describing their journey to produce for the local market, they specified that following their move to the local area, they began their business or activities that sold goods to the local market for a plethora of reasons including wanting to escape the city, entering a new life stage, in retirement, and pursuing a hobby that they developed in the city, on a much larger scale.

Many producers indicated that being a positive part of the community, providing to their community members or community-building was the second most dominant motivation

producers had for selling to the local market. Approximately 25% of local producers mentioned that this was a central motivator. Adding on to that, many producers were not in this business to make money.

They sell to the local market because they want to “feed the world”. Their particular goal is to make local food more accessible and is driven by considerations other than financial gains.

"Home-grown, healthy food should be available to everyone, and it should be affordable to everyone"

For 10 other producers, they do specify that they saw local food as a niche opportunity. Many breweries and wineries saw a unique opportunity to start selling alcohol to the local market. For others, it was a unique breed of cattle or specialty product that was not readily available within Huron County and the surrounding area that they were able to capitalise on. For one specialty producer, they stated that “no one else in the area was doing what I was doing”. One beef producer discussed how their proximity to Bayfield with its large cottager traffic, who like to have summer BBQs, presented them a unique opportunity to sell their beef locally.

Seven producers started their journey, producing for the local food market, as a hobby while six others stated it emerged from a place of personal enjoyment, which led to greater sales as they saw a demand for local food production. For one producer, he started producing maple syrup as a hobby then increased production to sell locally as “I know every neighbour and friend, I always know somebody who wants a jar of maple syrup. In spring, it’s fresh and people are looking for it. I would rather sell it to you [interviewer], someone I know, than sell it to somebody overseas.”

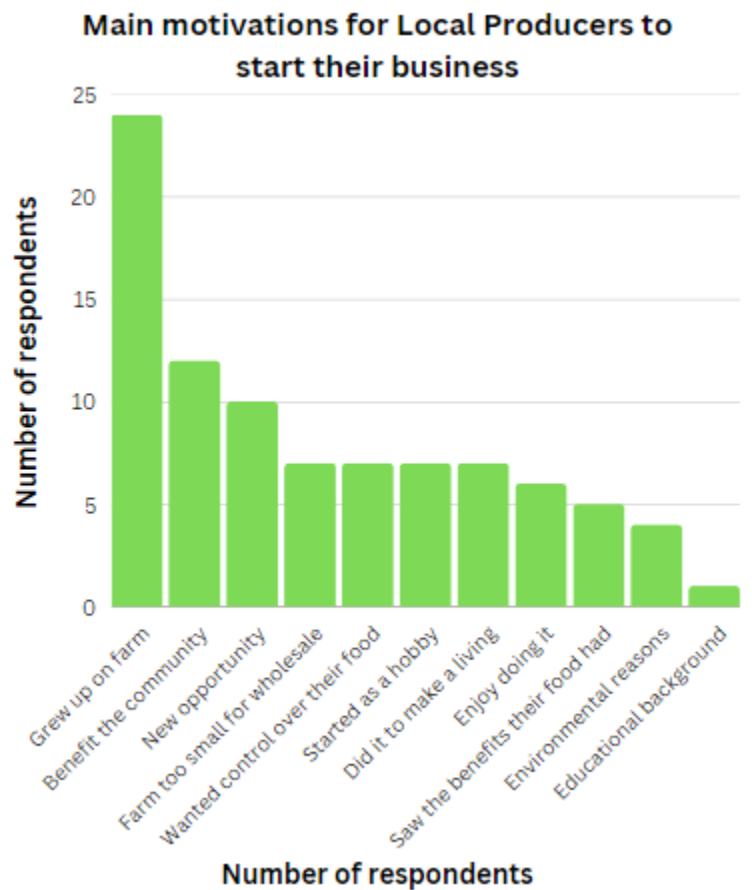
Nearly 15% of producers indicated that production of local food started as a “hobby”. In contrast, an equal number specified that they entered the local market to “make a living”. For two local producers, it was due to the COVID-19 Pandemic that they had found themselves unemployed and created a business that sold food to the local market to create employment for themselves.

For 10% of producers that sold to the local food market, the perceived health benefits, whether it be personal health benefits of their product or recognizing the positive environmental health benefit involved with selling to the local food market, motivated their journey. Although not strictly a motivator for selling to the local market, many local producers emphasised the taste or quality of their products.

The lack of capacity to sell wholesale was one reason why seven producers specified that they began selling to the local food market. One farming family stated that they were excluded from selling to the conventional market as their farm property is less than the 500 acres of arable land required to start to sell cash crops. They state that “the only option we had was to produce something that we were the end seller of.”

Of particular interest, only one producer stated that it was the direct result of their education that led them to produce for the local market. Two other producers indicated that they attended a one-time presentation or course but they already were aware of their particular local food

industry, prior to attending the presentation and completing a course. Education does not initially seem to act as a motivator for local food production but many producers mentioned that they sought out educational opportunities following or wanted more to be made available once they had already started to sell for the local food market.



In comparison to many people's motivation for selling the local food network, 2022 was the last year for two fruit and vegetable producers and a meat producer selling to the local food market in Huron County. Identified reasons for leaving the food network included one producer moving their farm operations out of province. Another retired and slowly transitioned out of the business. The last producer interviewed found that it took up more time than it was worth to be involved with the local food market and he valued spending more time with his growing family.

Figure 4: Bar Graph of Main motivations for Local Producers to start their business (2023, Gateway CERH).

What Do Producers Sell Locally?

Producers sold a wide variety of products within Huron County ranging from products straight from the fields such as sweet corn, to value-added products such as pepperettes, pizza and granola. These products encompass a wide-range of categories including beverages, meat and dairy, fruits and vegetables, specialties products, and baked goods.

Producers interviewed are not a proportional representation of the various producers that sell within the county. For example, we identified a total of 133 producers that at some point sold to the local market in the area, but we only mapped 84. For those that were mapped, in comparison to our interviews, a full list can be found on the chart below:

Category	of Producers	Number of Producers Mapped	% of Market	Number of Producers Interviewed	% of Market
Beverages		16	19%	7	13%
Meat & Dairy		17	20%	13	25%
Fruits & Vegetables		24	29%	13	26%
Specialty Products		18	21%	14	28%
Retailers		3	4%	2	4%
Bakeries		7	8%	2	4%
Total		84	100%	51	100%

Figure 5: Table representing producers number and proportion of mapped and producers interviewed in various producer categories(2023, Gateway CERH).

One notable detail was a total of six producers interviewed were not mapped at their discretion (three were exiting the market and three did not want to be mapped) so the number of producers is less than the full amount that exists within the area. Other producers, not interviewed, were not mapped for various reasons.

Sold One Food Item	Sold More than One Food Item
15	36

Over two-thirds of local producers, 71% sold multiple products to the local food market. Some sold across multiple categories including selling meat and dairy, specialty products, fruits and vegetables all produced at the farm.

Figure 6: Comparative image of producers selling one item and more than one item (2023, Gateway CERH).

For those that sold only one type of produce item, their products were dominated by specialty products such as maple syrup, followed by beverages, meat and dairy, and fruits and vegetables.

Products were self-described as one product or several during the interview. For example, some producers indicated that they sold all cuts of beef from one animal. The animal in the entirety was considered one product even though it had different cuts such as ribs or steaks. However, if they had any value-added activity to the meat, they were determined to have sold multiple products. For example, maple syrup is a distinct product from maple candy as the value added activities to make the candy. Value added products that were not for consumption such as lumber or non-consumable animal products were excluded from consideration.

Within the category of meat and dairy, the most common meat product was beef with eight producers selling beef. Others included eggs, chicken, lamb, goat, duck, turkey and pork. Most sold many different types of animals if they sold meat products. However, some producers sold exclusively one type of cow to the market and no other types of animals. Of the cheese produced in Huron County, only sheep or goats were identified as the source of milk.

For fruits and vegetables, “seasonal vegetables” was the most common description but some focused on more artisanal types such as many varieties of pumpkin/squash or different variations of berries. More common were sweet corn, beans, beets and carrots produced seasonally.

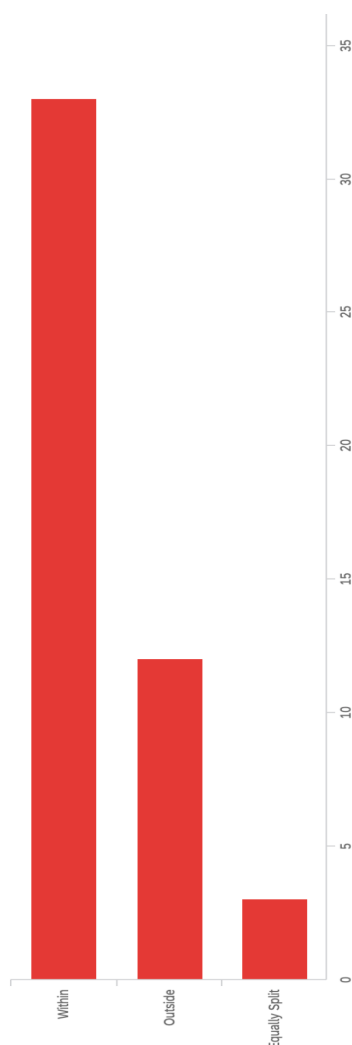
There was a significant number of beverage producers that made alcoholic products such as wine, craft beer and ciders along with some non-alcoholic varieties such as pressed juice and almond milk. Unlike many of the other producers, the wine, cider and beer producers have only emerged in the past few years due to several factors including new grape varieties, climate change, enabling proper weather for certain grapes, and changing regulations on the sale of alcohol.

Specialty products were used to generalise a broad range of value-added food or goods not easily categorised. The most dominant specialty item of producers interviewed was maple syrup with eight producers selling to the local market, both as their main business and as one of many products being sold to the area. All the producers described that they had easy access to the bush and that the soil and trees within their geography were ideal for producing maple syrup.

Common value-added products made by local producers were baked-goods with five producers baking their products. One producer stated that adding a bakery was the most successful aspect of their business as it got people “off the road” and into their farm store. As such, some products are sold by producers as a catalyst for facilitating interest in other products or as a tool to support their other activities.

Another common value-added product made by local producers was home preserves which helped extend their season of operations and reduce any potential food waste from fluctuating weather patterns and consumer engagement during the growing season.

Where Do Local Producers Sell?



Most producers that sell for the local market sell a greater proportion within the County but it can also be difficult to gauge. Such as who is picking up food from a roadside stand.

It should be noted that some producers sell cash crops or act as growers for industrial farming operations. As such, the interviews excluded conversation of products that would never be sold to the local market, and only asked for them to include if they sold products both to the local market and outside.

One challenge with this project is that Huron County is a large agri-tourism destination and tourism overall. A large population of consumers are those that come up for cottaging in the summer, on a weekend trip, or are driving through the area. As such, while they may sell within the county, the population consuming the food comes from outside Huron County when they drive up and buy something from a roadside produce stand.

Overwhelmingly, the most common way local producers sold to consumers was through direct sales with 78% people specifying that they sold directly to consumers with no intermediary.

Figure 7: Bar Graph of proportion of local producers who mostly sell within, outside or equally split in Huron County (2023, Gateway CERH).

Direct sales included the following sales methods:

- CSA Farm Shares
- Farmgate stands
- Farm store
- Delivery directly to consumers
- Freezer trade



Figure 8: Photo of Huron County Farm Stand (2023, Gateway CERH).

- U-pick orchard
- Online orders (Facebook, Instagram, Email and/or Producer Website)

The percentage of sales of producers from direct sales ranged from 18% to 100% of total sales. Eight producers stated that 90-100% of their sales were directly to the consumer, four of which direct sales were their only venue of sale. Direct sales to consumers were also considered to be the most successful venue of sale by local producers. 69% of local producers consider it to be their most successful venue of sale.

Over half of local producers sold in local retail stores (not including groceries stores). This included various small health food and artisanal stores in the local area, and Eat Local Huron, a virtual farmers market. 12% of local producers considered retail to be their most successful venue. One of the reasons specified is that consumers were able to see the products. There was an even split of discussion on virtual opposed to a physical store being more successful for producers.

Over the course of this project, seventeen producers (33.3%) that were interviewed were already involved or recently joined Eat Local Huron. Other online farmers markets also attracted vendors, some shared and some different between the different virtual farmers markets platforms including the Bayfield Farmers' Market and the Blyth Farmers' Market. Some vendors indicated they only participated seasonally with the online farmers markets.

Although many producers considered direct sales to be their most successful venue of sale, some producers indicated that they would prefer if they were able to sell more products in local stores so they don't have to sit in the market all-day.

Eat Local Huron

Started in 2021, Eat Local Huron is a non-profit organization that operates as an online farmers market throughout the entire year. Customers can order local food on their website and receive a delivery to their doorstep every week on Wednesdays. Other ventures that they conduct are events including Farm Crawls where you tour from farm to farm to see and learn where food is grown.

They have 50 active local food vendors that input their product, price, photos and description and inventory into the network. Consumers may then select their groceries based on the offerings. The offerings include fruit and vegetables (frozen and seasonal), herbs, meat, dairy, honey, soups, maple syrup, frozen pizza and more. Anything that is not locally available, they work to source from regional producers such as those from Grey-Bruce Counties to offer a full breadth of selections. They work towards creating a positive experience for both producers and consumers. They want to get as much local food into the hands of our community members as possible.

In-person farmer's markets were another large venue for producers with 8-50% of sales a direct result of the market. One producer indicated they attended six markets, not all that come from the local area. There are a total of eight farmer or community markets in the local area of Huron

County which include Goderich, Blyth, Seaforth, Bayfield, Brussels, Dungannon and two in Exeter. These markets operate on a weekly or monthly schedule that bring together local vendors of food from early as May to late October, running for a maximum of 6 months in-person. Following this period some markets, such as Bayfield run an online farmers market that continues into other months of the year. The products sold in the markets range from fruits and vegetables, meat, specialty items such as baked goods, honey and more. Some vendors at the market only accept payments by cash (so make sure to bring some!), but increasingly there are several that accept e-transfer or payments over Square for purchases.

A full list of farmers' markets can be found in the graphic below:

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>BLYTH FARMERS' MARKET 444 Queen St, Blyth July to October: 10 am - 2 pm</p> <p>SEAFORTH COMMUNITY MARKET Seaforth Agri-Plex, Seaforth June to October: 3:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<p>BAYFIELD FARMERS' MARKET Clan Gregor Square, Bayfield May to October: 3:00 - 7:00 pm</p> <p>BRUSSELS FARMERS' MARKET Richmond Square, 589 Turnberry Street, Brussels Monthly: May to September 10:00 am - 2:00 pm</p> <p>EXETER FARMERS' MARKET Townhall Parking Lot, 322 Main Street S., Exeter Monthly: May to October 1: 3:00 - 7:00 pm</p> <p>DUNGANNON FARMERS' MARKET May to September: 4:00 - 8:00 pm</p>	<p>GODERICH FARMERS' MARKET Courthouse Square, Goderich May to October: 8:00 am - 2:00 pm</p> <p>MASS-E-DDINGTON MARKET Eddington's of Exeter, Exeter July to August: Saturdays, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm</p>

Figure 9: Table of Farmers' Markets and Community Markets in Huron County (2023, Gateway CERH).

Goderich BIA Farmers' Market is the largest in the area and is considered a successful venture. They attract a steady amount of local producers, drive tourism and create an accessible means of local consumers accessing a wide array of local food products.

Not all farmers markets in Huron County have the same level of local producer engagement. In conversation with the Exeter Community Farmers Market, they state they have only one local producer that shows up consistently to the market and they say that it has been a struggle recruiting more vendors to come and sell. They still have local artisans show up to sell other products weekly. They speculate that this has been in-part due to COVID 19 and because it can be a large ask for producers to take up 5-6 hours of their day to set up a booth at the market. The impact on the town can be huge by having a farmers market as a person from out-of-town comes back to the market and drives people to go to other local stores and restaurants while they are in the area.

Most recently Dungannon farmers market opened this year after receiving a 2022 grant from the Huron County Economic Development to help fund the establishment of the market.⁶

A small number of local producers sold in grocery stores of which most sold a negligible amount (1% or less), wholesale it to a third-party who was present in retail stores, and only one specialty producer indicated that their niche allowed them to sell 20% of their sales in grocery stores.

Restaurants were another large venue for producers. Only a few sold directly to local restaurants, but it totalled around 25%-40% of their total sales to restaurants in the area. Only local restaurants were listed and all were tourism hubs such as Goderich, Bayfield or other destination sites. One local producer was hesitant to sell to restaurants as they produce a small amount that would not be able to supply all the restaurant's needs. It would not be fair to the existing customer base who wants the same choice cuts of meat. Furthermore, the producer explained that not a lot of restaurants can afford to pay the price he needs to be compensated for the cost of cattle. For another producer, COVID disrupted pre-existing relationships with local restaurants that sold their products. Other producers appreciated the ability to sell in restaurants as it was a more stable year-round venue of sale as opposed to markets whose attendance of consumers and operations fluctuate due to weather and seasonally.

Wholesalers were an instance where goods were moved outside the county (and sometimes within) for a bulk order of sales. Three producers indicated that 50-85% of their total sales were sold to wholesalers. Surprisingly, a large number of local producers sold frozen baked goods at small-scale through wholesalers such as pie shells, cookies and scones. Another common item was cheese and meat products. No local fruits or vegetables grower indicated they sold a large amount of produce through wholesale within the county.

Interestingly, no producers stated that they sold to any secondary producers within Huron County. However, in discussion with other producers in the area that made value-added

The Goderich BIA Farmer's Market

The largest Farmers' Market in the County and one of the older continuous markets in Canada. Started in 1977 by the Goderich BIA, it was intended to draw tourists into the downtown core and increase people's access to locally grown food.

The market in Goderich has over 100 registered vendors! An average market may feature between 30-50 of those vendors weekly. Food producers from Southwestern Ontario make up around 30 of the total registered vendors.

There is an economic benefit as the hours the market is open are the busiest times for retail and restaurants on the weekends. There are also positive community benefits as the market allows many individuals who do not own a car to buy from local producers in a centralized location and acts as a friendly gathering place. It also acts as an incubator for local business with businesses around such as Cait's Cafe and Blake St. Bakery getting their start at the market.

Approximately 15 community members work together to make the market run smoothly.

⁶ <https://www.huroncounty.ca/news/county-of-huron-announces-2022-sled-fund-recipients/>

products, such as sausages or sauces, they would describe where they sourced from local producers (some of which were interviewed) in the area. One reason for this gap in knowledge is that some producers purposefully omitted where they were used in the area because of competition.

Other sales methods included:

- Christmas markets and festivals
- School tours
- Direct to Inns within the local area
- The LCBO

Of which, school tours and Christmas markets were considered the most successful venue for two producers respectively, both who sell specialty products.

Some producers throughout the interview, expressed that they were trying to find local retail stores, restaurants, and other venues of sale. During one interview, producers actively asked where they could sell their produce, stressing their difficulty finding a venue and not wanting to ship a heavy product.

Although not mentioned in the interviews, a significant amount of local food is distributed through the Huron-Bruce Produce Auction. The produce auction is for local businesses and other producers within the area to purchase local food. Both large and small-scale producers can participate⁷. The only limitation is that the producer's farm has to operate within 75 km of the Lucknow Area. *"The Huron Health Unit [now, Huron-Perth Public Health] and the Bruce County Health Unit made the produce auction possible"*, Elmer Brubacher, member of the Board of Directors for Bruce-Huron Produce Auction. They take cash or cheques on the day of sale.

⁷ A full list of Huron-Bruce Produce Auction information can be found in the appendixes

Who are the Local Consumers (According to the Producers)?

When asked an open-ended question, “what population is aware of your business?”, there was a range of responses from local producers. Some identified the geography of where their consumers are from, or the scale of awareness in Huron County or the marketing medium people become aware of their business or the demographic characteristics of the population.

In terms of the scale of awareness, it varied widely from different producers from everyone to only a small amount within the county. However, most producers who identified scale stated that only a small population in Huron County or “5-10%” was aware of their business.

24% of local producers identified that there was a specific marketing medium that made people aware of their business. These include:

- Farmers’ Markets
- Farm Stands
- Social Media
- Word of Mouth
- Pancake and Bush Tours
- Roadside Sign

Out of the following above, 9.8% of the total producers interviewed said farmers’ markets drove consumer interest and the overall population awareness of their business. One of the producers no longer sells at the farmers’ market but it did drive awareness and interest in their products. As such, Farmers markets’ seem to have a double impact acting as both a sales outlet and as a means of marketing a producer's product.

Producers described their geographic draw of local consumers, essentially where their major consumers are coming from. These include:

- Bayfield
- Kingsbridge
- Goderich
- Kincardine
- Exeter

In 2021, Bayfield had a population of 1,250 compared to Goderich with 7,881, however, each had three different producers that identified they had consumers from their geographic area. The smallest area specifically mentioned was Kingsbridge which is a Hamlet of the municipality of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh and serves a large cottager population throughout the year.

Most producers described their consumers based on demographic characteristics, more specifically, age. 51% (26) of producers mentioned their customers' ages. These next few points are based on producers describing the greatest buyer of their products. A total of nine producers mentioned that the customers they serve were all ages (though two mention they don’t have people underaged/teenagers buying their product). When narrowing described customers to 65+ customers, six producers mentioned they serve that particular demographic

range more⁸. If altered to 50+, the number rises to eight and if the range is changed to 30+, the number of producers who have customers in the demographic becomes sixteen producers. Only one producer mentioned that they served specifically a demographic of “20-40”, and another mentioned they served “mid-to-late twenties and older”. Although the producers that produce for the local market seem to sell more predominantly to an older population, it should be noted that Huron County is an aged population with 26% of the population 65+⁹ compared to the rest of Ontario where 16% of the population is 65+¹⁰. This seems to suggest that although many local producers identified age as a key demographic characteristic of their customers, this may simply reflect average population trends in the area. Other factors such as education, gender, affluence and values may be greater determinants on whether local consumers buy local food.

Some producers argued that affluence, such as having a disposable income matters for who is their customer base. 14% of producers mentioned that their business had a more affluent audience with “disposable income”. Most often, producers would also mention that education also played a factor with those that were more educated would also be more affluent and therefore purchase local food. As such, some concerns about

“It is based on income. Locally, you have people with a higher disposable income or health conscious that come looking for our products. It is not an age thing. We get a lot of young customers in their 20s.”

consumers' education on local food are important; And overall education attainment may also be important in inspiring local food consumption and accessibility.

Of particular mention, 16% of local producers observed that more customers were women and only one producer mentioned that they noticed an equal representation between men and women but only because their business was rapidly appealing to more women dramatically. No businesses said they have a greater amount of men purchasing their product.

14% of producers mentioned that health was a major contributor to who bought local products. Health reasons include dietary restriction, switching to a more health-conscious diet or maintaining a healthy diet, buying food for the betterment of others (ie. a spouse), or concerned with planetary health.

Most local producers, 80%, indicated that there would be a benefit to attracting new consumers. Reasons included the opportunity to grow their business, lead to financial success and spread the bounty of Huron County.

⁸ Many described this population as “seniors” and “retired” instead of a specific age range. Altering this description to 65+ was an assumption on the part of the researcher.

⁹<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0&DGUIDlist=2021A00033540&SearchText=Huron>

¹⁰<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0&DGUIDlist=2021A000235&SearchText=Ontario>

Value of Local Food Production

There are material and immaterial benefits of local food production that contribute to the strength and robustness of the Huron County local food economy.

Of 47/51 producers interviewed that produce for the local food market, their aggregated average annual gross revenue was approximately 24 million¹¹! That is 24 million going directly to supporting local producers and the local food market.

85 producers were mapped in the area and 133 were identified to have sometime recently sold to the local food market. However, this is not an exhaustive list as many producers were not located as some only sell farmgate or were harder to locate such as those in the Mennonite or Amish community in Huron County. As such, the total economic value of local likely food production is much greater in scale.

It can also be difficult to determine how much economic value of their production, producers are able to retain by selling locally as opposed to the world market. Many producers were motivated by having greater control over their own finances or wanting to sell at-cost so home-grown food would be more accessible to local consumers.

Adding to that, there are secondary benefits to local food production that cannot be directly measured. For example, local businesses in Goderich significantly benefit from the Farmers' Markets every Saturday. The hours in which the Market operates are the busiest for both retail and restaurants in downtown Goderich. And the fact that local businesses can emerge by getting their start at local Farmers' Markets.

¹¹ It should be noted that one was produced locally as a not-for-profit charity so it was raising money for charitable purposes and not profit. And many producers do not sell for the purposes of maximising their profit, instead, they are trying to be affordable and accessible to everyone in the local area.

Does the Community have an Adequate Understanding of Local Food?

When asked if local producers think consumers have an adequate understanding of local food, most producers think that the community has an adequate understanding with 36% reporting that they think there is an adequate understanding. What qualifies as “Adequate Understanding” was up to the producer to interpret,

As one producer describes, “Everyone grew up on a farm or knows a farmer. Everyone is aware of local food in the area”, implying that the proximity to such a large industry such as farming in the area makes consumers have an adequate understanding of local food.

Some producers, however, think that an “adequate understanding” has only emerged more recently. In particular, three producers attribute the consumers’ growing understanding to be the result of the disruption to the supply chain of food during the lock-down periods experienced during the COVID pandemic.

Another producer describes that even if they think the local community has an “adequate understanding” of local food, there is still a large lack of understanding.



Figure 10: Pie Chart asking if the community has an adequate understanding of local food (2023, Gateway CERH).

“The hard part is understanding maybe what it takes to get to the table. Sometimes the quality is variable because of weather and price is variable. Those things are very hard. People are expecting fruits and vegetables to be cheap, I would say. But, I would say, it is harder because growing has become more intensive but you want it to become more accessible. “

Even further, some producers think there is a large gap in understanding, they describe “they [consumers] buy meat in a store from a package and don't realise where it comes from, the life span of the animal, the person that raised it, loved it and sent it off to market. They have no clue, all they see is the price tag”.

Four producers say the depth of understanding of what it takes to provide local food varies among consumers in Huron County; some people have a good idea what it takes to make local food and get it to consumers while others have no idea.

The following producer explained how when starting to explain the value of local food, one can run into problems, because it may be interpreted as insinuating that you are better than other producers who don't sell to the local food market.

"Canada has got an incredibly safe and regulated food system, which gives the general population a really good comfort level with anything that is in a store. I think a lot of that is warranted. So the general population has a good perception that food in the store is not going to kill them, so getting people to buy food not in a store is a step up and a hurdle above that.

"It's really difficult for me to say I am producing food in as respectful a way as it can be done, as far as respectful to the neighbours with [being exposed to] a stench, to the animals themselves. The whole agricultural industry revolves around a high-intensity production system and as soon as you start doing something that provides better welfare for the animals and a lot less medications, and in that way you are implying to other people that they are doing it wrong.

So, it can be awkward for him to make bold claims or put my neck out about the attributes about what I am doing because it implies that other people are not doing as well as him or not doing what they should be doing."

Does Our community Have an Adequate Understanding of Local Food

	Yes	Growing Number of People	No	Varies	Don't Know
no.	17	14	12	4	1
%	35%	29%	25%	8.3%	2.1%

n=48

Greatest Successes and Challenges

As part of any endeavour, selling local food has success and challenges for many of the local producers in the area. When interviewed, the producers were asked to describe their greatest challenge and their greatest aspect(s) of success of their business. Often, they would list several challenges and successes instead of one core one that impacted their activities.

For example, 35% of local producers stated multiple challenges that impacted the overall operations of their business. These included labour, supply chain, regulation, competition and production challenges. In the case of one farmer, they mentioned the lack of butchers in the area, having to book a year in advance, having to educate and market a less common meat product to consumers, and having access to trained veterinarians that would see their type of animals.

Many of these producers but not all, listed marketing as one of their greatest challenges. In total 17 producers mentioned marketing, advertising or consumer reach was a challenge. Seven of which mentioned that their only challenge was reaching the consumer. Effective marketing of the producer's location to the public is important as many operate as roadside stands, on-farm retail stores or u-pick. As one producer describes, they are not on a main traffic road, so consumers need to be reached and persuaded to come out of their way to visit and buy local food.

"I can't pick up the farm and move to a more central road or into town. I have to stay where the trees are, so marketing is important for getting people out to the farm."

The second greatest singular challenge for local producers was labour with 16% of producers stating this was their only challenge, and 20% in total mentioning that there were any difficulties with labour. This included problems with time management as the sole worker, the hard work involved with production and the lack of an educated/trained workforce (ex. butchering) in Huron County.

A general discovery among the local food producers interviewed is that 57% only have one to five people involved in their business, even in peak season. Even then, many of those producers indicated that they do most of the work themselves with some stating that they do 90% of the work with a family member or spouse helping out on occasion to assist. Others mentioned friends and neighbours assisting occasionally with their production. Despite selling large quantities of food to the local market, many producers mentioned having an off-farm income or farming not being their primary source of income. One producer was discussing how "90% of families have an off farm source of income".

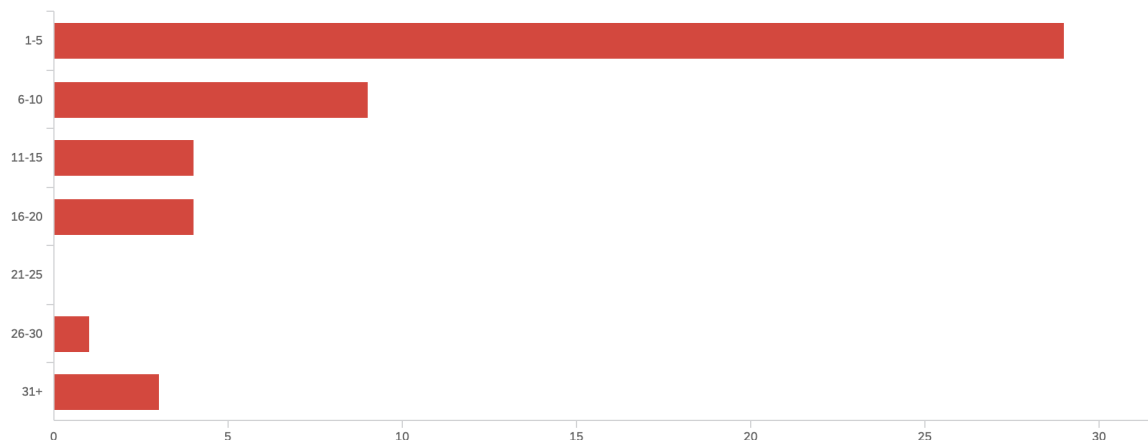


Figure 11: Number of people involved in a producer's local food business (Includes both paid and unpaid labour during peak season) (2023, Gateway CERH).

Unsurprisingly, farm work is seasonal and there is an on-season/off-season with some producers specifying that they bring in a seasonal work crew to assist with harvesting, they close down their hospitality, retail operation or farmgate stand in the winter, or they only offer maple syrup tours or U-Pick opportunities during the harvest season.

Other major challenges included supply chain and inventory challenges. Supply chain challenges ranged from being cut-off or disrupted from access vendors, to not being able to find vendors, to having difficulty sourcing supplies.

For one producer, despite producing a lot of product to sell to the market, they found themselves actively cut-off from vendors despite having long-established relationships with both food distributors, restaurants and other third-party vendors.

"Quite often, we see this quite a bit. When a business starts, they are very interested in our product because we are local producers and we have a nice product and it tastes good. After a certain amount of time that they are offering [our product], they find that - even though we provide a service, usually we offer a delivery service - they find that the larger food distributor from outside the area can compete with price. They find it necessary to cut us out a certain proportion or cut us out completely, but still use the fact that they are using our name on their menus, which is extremely frustrating.

"It's not a very fair playing field because I think that the food distributor realizes if they undercut us on price then the restaurants are going to buy from them because they buy everything else from them. And then the food distributor wins, even though it's not a realistic price for what is being produced. It is not very fair for the producers"

Inventory challenges were more specific to the producer such as having excess inventory due to COVID 19, keeping enough inventory in stock, having overstock from unwanted cuts of animals, maintaining consistent supplies, and having a short product shelf-life. Of mention, nine producers mentioned there were in some way negatively impacted by COVID 19 or it in some way disrupted their business substantially.

Of the three producers that singled out financial challenges as their greatest challenges all referred to “rising costs” or “inflation” as the driver. As one producer stated that “everything costs way too much. We don't get enough in return for what we work hard for”.

Of note, other challenges identified by local producers included:

- Weather and seasonality
- Maintaining Machinery
- Irresponsibility of producers
- Selling a premium product to the local market
- Competition (Both locally and globally)

For one producer who is leaving the market, he found it very difficult to compete with large vendors and the financial requirements to continue selling his products to the market:

“It is very hard to compete with the *Loblaws*, the *Hello Fresh*, the *Amazon*. Those are our competitors, they are 90% of the market. It is tough to compete with their scale. They are well oiled machines that know how to do stuff. It bothers me that when you walk into a grocery store for local food and it says it's from London or it's Ontario, which is local for the grocery stores. It is hard to put borders on local [food].

“I would continue farming but I am not prepared to spend the cost to maintain that infrastructure as the market has changed to high density [production] and you hire migrant workers to pick them. Put it in the coolers and it is a million dollar commitment and then you are no longer selling locally, you are doing it for corporate gain. You either need to be a great big farmer or you need to be a niche farmer to make it work.”

No. of respondents	Challenge
18	Operational Challenges
8	Labour Challenges
7	Marketing Challenges
5	Supply Chain Challenges
4	Inventory Challenges
3	Financial Challenges
4	Other
2	No Comment
51	Total Respondents
9	Negatively Impacted by COVID

Figure 12: Table of greatest challenges of local producers (2023, Gateway CERH).

When asked what aspect(s) of their business have been successful, no producer was found to provide the exact same description of success. Some identified success as founded in their various business operations, agri-tourism or marketing of their products. Others indicated that success was grounded in relationships they had developed with their consumer base, other producers in the area for collaboration, or was contained within their own sense of accomplishment, enjoyment, or experience of learning with their local food venture.

The greatest success for 25% of producers was operational success. Operational success was considered to be where multiple aspects of a producer's operations were successful but not necessarily all. Producers mentioned multiple aspects of their business operations that they found successful including the growth of the business, good production, distribution, management of inventory, and marketing to consumers. A total of 12% of producers considered everything about their business to be successful. In sum, 37% of producers found success in many of the operations aspects of their business.

In contrast to general operations being the most successful, some producers were more specific on certain operations resulting in the most success. For example, 10% of producers identified marketing as the core operational aspect that brought them success such as through advertising, radio shows, word-of-mouth communications or social media.

The next common greatest success for producers was agri-tourism. 16% of producers saying this was the most successful aspect of their business.

With some people identifying cottager groups, stops along the way, farm tours. Two producers stated that they are “destination shops” wherein they draw tourism into the area by consumers coming to buy their products. Many identified a key aspect of their success was getting repeat customers to know where they are.

Interestingly, there was a crossover between those who identified marketing challenges and those that found agri-tourism success with three producers identifying they found their greatest success with agritourism but their greatest challenge was marketing their product. There were no other great associations between success and challenges.

No. of respondents	Greatest Success
13	Operational Success
8	Agri-tourism Success
6	Everything
5	Interpersonal Success
5	Marketing Success
7	Product Success
4	Intrapersonal Success
3	No response
51	Total respondents

Figure 13: Table of greatest success by local producers in Huron County (2023, Gateway CERH).

Interpersonal success included both success in connecting with local producers and in collaborating with other local companies in the area. Some producers emphasised that it resulted in a reciprocal relationship of understanding. As one describes, customers come right up to the farm, and look at the location where things are grown and the 100% grass fed beef and chicken. "Most of these local customers come up to the farm and it doesn't take long before you form a relationship. They are more accommodating and don't demand the same convincing of having instant gratification of a grocery store because of that relationship."

Intrapersonal success of producers was mentioned by three producers. For one producer, they make a product that they are happy with; It is very important to them to have a "good feeling" and that something good is coming from what you are producing. Another appreciated the ability to have fun with his spouse making local products.

Product success was divided into two different considerations: (1) quality of products and (2) types of products. Quality of product was something 8% of producers considered the most successful aspect of their business. They would go on to describe components such as taste, flavour, and general product experience draws consumers to be interested in their product.

"The local syrup has a unique flavour. It is sort of like the wine producing regions of the world. It is very sandy here...If you are on heavy clay soil, it gives a soil aftertaste to the syrup and ours doesn't. It is just pure maple."

Three producers identified that success was found in selling certain types of products that were financially smart for their business, including adding value-added products that helped extend the life of their products, driving consumer interest and selling certain cuts of animals.

Although there are challenges to operating in a local food market, a lot of producers were able to find success in their operations, their products or their personal experience with the business. Some of these producers have offered a series of recommended resources to run a profitable business.

Resources to Run a Profitable Business

In listing some of the resources to run a profitable business, producers specified that you need (1) infrastructure, (2) educational resources (3) positive community relationships, (4) good product(s), and (4) personal resources.

Infrastructure describes the built environment and physical structures needed for the operation of a local food industry to be successful. These are components that the municipality or county can help to provide. Some examples that producers gave is:

- Highway signage (both county or municipal provided, or producer-built signage);
- Good internet access to process sells and promote business (social media);
- And access to processing capability (ie. abattoirs).

Educational resources for producers that are both starting their business or continuing their business were another component required to run a successful and profitable business by producers. For many producers, support to understand business and marketing information (ex. How to set up a website, or how to create a business plan) is important to making a business profitable and helping people enter the local food market. One producer called for a greater amount of business case studies in the Huron County resource library so they can stay up to date on recent business practices and to provide a more diverse offering of food products. Other producers call for more continuous education opportunities to understand changing regulations. For example, one producer mentioned “Food Jam” in 2021, and how that was very supportive for local producers both as a point of connection between producers and as an educational opportunity to stay more up-to-date.

Community relationships are something that has been observed throughout this report. Producers naturally build up rapport with their customer base as a result of working in such a small area, and through the majority of producers selling directly to consumers. It was suggested that by establishing positive community relationships with your consumer base, you are able to get a consistent purchasing customer base and a level of trust between the producer and consumer. Some producers start out by selling to friends, family and neighbours so that initial purchasing base so those relationships are pre-existing. Of the many producers interviewed, some do not want to be identified or have people arrive at farmgate so those community relationships extend instead to local stores or organizations (ex. Eat Local Huron) that sell their products.

The primary recommendations in regards to local products are that you strive for the highest quality of products and that you have a diversity of offering, such as multiple products, for the local market.

Personal resources refers to resources a producer must strive to attain on their own or find access to create a profitable business. These include developing distribution capabilities, start-up funds or grants, access to land, and a marketing plan. These may change depending on what area of production, but in some cases, it can start small such as developing a product to sell at a local farmers market and growing the business and customer base from there.

“Information, education and awareness. A good product that outweighs your competitor, marketing, a network of resources to move your product, good salesmanship, presentation, story, & good management.”

Gaps in Huron County's Local Food System

Producers were asked to explain “gaps” that they observe currently exist within Huron County's local food system. Some producers mentioned a singular gap while others described several gaps that they believe currently exist. Not all producers determined that there were gaps in Huron County. One producer said that he “was not aware of any” and three others did not answer the question.

The greatest gap producers identified was a general lack of knowledge by consumers on how food is produced. For example, many local maple syrup producers were astounded by how little consumers knew about where maple syrup came from or how it was created. Some producers recognized that not a lot of people know how food is made and/or produced, they only ever pick it up in the grocery store.

Differentiated from consumer knowledge, consumer awareness was another core gap, where many producers described how letting people know where they are, what food is produced locally and a general awareness of their existence is challenging.

The second greatest gap identified was the lack of retail options for local food producers. In describing this gap, producers appreciated options such as *Eat Local Huron* that have emerged and would like to see similar initiatives developed. *Eat Local Huron* was said to have mitigated some other problems such as distribution and transportation of local producers and consumers in the area. Furthermore, producers identified negative experiences with grocery stores such as grocery stores excluding the producer after years without notice or when the grocery store underwent a change of management.

Distribution and transportation were recognized gaps. Many producers referenced the geographic isolation of Huron County which makes it challenging to distribute their products throughout the entire

No. of Respondents	Identified Gaps
8	Consumer Knowledge
7	Retail Options
6	Consumer Awareness
6	Distribution
5	Transportation
5	Food Options
5	Consultation and Support
3	Meat Processing Infrastructure
3	The Whole System
7	Other
1	Don't Know
1	No
3	No response

Figure 14: Table of Farmers' Markets and Community Markets in Huron County (2023, Gateway CERH).

county. One producer describes how certain products such as honey and maple syrup weigh a lot and the cost to move the product across the County through delivery methods is infeasible for both the producer and consumer at such a small scale. Additionally, if a producer is distributing their own goods, it can take away time from doing other key activities such as making the food or being with their families. Some producers in other areas of the interview describe how they mitigate these challenges by doing bulk delivery of goods to multiple places in the same geographic region, set up a standard delivery route, or share drop-off points between producers to share distribution. However, this can still be unfeasible to those who sell in smaller quantities.

If a producer does have access to retail options, they consider that there are issues with excess food shipping in the distribution. Food produced in Huron County has to be shipped out by the producer to a central food hub in Kitchener, London or even Toronto before it makes it back to a Goderich store.

"We have had relationships with larger retail stores but they demand that a lot of their products go through their central food hub and those food hubs tend to be in the Kitchener, Cambridge, or Toronto area. So it doesn't make sense for us to sell our products in a certain way that it ships them to their central food hubs which may or may not be able to receive our food product in the way we would like to ship it. And the scale is a big issue, so they are not going to want us to deliver three boxes when they could be shipped to a Goderich store....[eventually] we were written out of the equation by the system and we didn't fit their [the store's] system.

"They [the store] were quite rude about it and quite rude to a producer who supplied them for many years. And that has been our general experience with other friends and producers who have dealt with larger retailers that they don't really care about local producers and they don't really care about Canadian products. They are just trying to fill their shelves with something that looks good and easy for them to get".

From this example, we can see a way, excess shipping can diminish some of the qualities of purchasing food locally such as the degree of freshness of the product and its that it has a smaller carbon footprint as it has a shorter distance to travel to reach the end consumer. It can also result in producers having to compete for space and price against large industrial production that also ships through those food hubs into the local Huron County area.

Another issue is transportation; the consumer/purchaser may find it difficult to travel to the local producer within Huron County. For example, one producer described how some of the older population within the county have to rely on others to transport them to buy food. There is also a lack of public transportation in Huron County, resulting in many people not being able to move between different communities without access to a vehicle where producers operate throughout Huron County.

Gaps in food options produced in Huron County were also observed by some producers, especially those that operated as third-party vendors in addition to their main operation or made value-added products. These local food gaps include:

- Specialty fruits
- Vegetables
- Butter
- Produce year-round
- Pasta and crackers

One producer described how produce made locally is not available year-round, in part, because there are a lack of storage options or processing capabilities in the area to preserve the food for longer.

There were numerous gaps in infrastructure that producers raised that needed to be addressed separately as they depended on the specific industry of the producer while some more general. For example, the general lack of sufficient meat processing infrastructure in the area was something raised by meat producers and a call for a greater amount of abattoirs to be supported in the area.

Other gaps included a lack of supporting infrastructure that would empower producers to better their business, some of which were reflected in the various challenges that producers face in producing for the local market. In particular, producers identified that there are gaps in consultation and support for their business. One producer wanted more robust “community support for accounting services, legal services and business development” to be available for local food producers.

Another producer wanted some assistance with navigating complex federal regulations and access to physical tools to complete these regulations required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for nutrition labels. They “need someone locally to help with that process. It is a very confusing process, and has no support to help with the process”. Complying to regulations for some producers seem to be more challenging and there are other potential wants of assistance with these areas that were not mentioned by producers.

Local producers see another gap in their ability at handling online sales to local consumers. What one producer wants is to have a “point person” at municipality assistance to help with promotion and marketing, website design, and mail orders. Trying to navigate who to contact and how to go about it. Some of this can be seen as a result of most producers selling direct to local consumers with limited access to retail space where someone else takes care of selling the product to consumers.

Other infrastructure gaps include the lack of a central food hub for producers, a food box option that people can purchase, and a lack of a formal donation structure for excess produce to go to others and not be wasted.

One of the larger food donation systems currently in place is the Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre which operates at large scale and can process donations by larger and smaller producers that a single community food bank would not be able to handle

Of note, one producer interpreted “gaps” in the local food system as opportunities for business ventures and encouraged entrepreneurship to use that gap.

In summary, there are numerous gaps that currently exist in Huron County’s local food system as recognized by other local producers. Both consumer knowledge and awareness are gaps within this system that make marketing and effective communication important measures to address these challenges. As discussed earlier, most producers sell directly to the consumer, this potentially is, in part, because there is a gap in retail outlets for those who sell to the local market. Adding to that, there can be gaps in transportation in local food potentially escalating costs and time for those who sell to the local market. There are some gaps of food options available in the local market. As one producer suggests, we can interpret this type of gap as an opportunity for entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure such as abattoirs for processing, consultation and support in marketing, a central food hub and a formal method for donation are areas in which some producers see a gap in the local food system. These are areas that would have a direct impact on multiple producers' operations. In contrast to these “gaps” producers identified there are barriers to local food production that will be discussed in the next section.

Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre

Established in 2008, they process large scale donations and purchases for food banks and redistribute it to smaller food banks within the local area. They have the storage area and ability to process large scale donations such as fresh produce, meat, milk and eggs that otherwise smaller food banks can't handle. In addition, they have a mobile food van that goes out to six communities every month that don't have local support set up.

There are nine local producers/organisations that are directly involved and donate large amounts of produce or money that goes towards large food purchases within the area. These include: Huron County Egg Producers, Huron County Milk Producers, Masse Fruit and Vegetables, Firmly Rooted, Veri's Produce (Exeter), Suntastic/Litmans Family Farms. Although many of these producers grow locally, they may not sell locally and just donate their excess to the produce network. Some as well, donated a standing amount and not just when they had an excess.

Biggest Barriers to Local Food Production

There are barriers that impede the ability of consumers and producers to access each other for the sale of goods. Barriers identified by local producers were far ranging and some cross-over with identified gaps in the local food system. As such, some barriers listed that crossover with gaps will not be discussed in greater detail include “capacity for distribution”, “lack of access to retailers”, “no local food hub”, and “consumer awareness or knowledge”. Unlike gaps, barriers had producers discussing financial limitations of their business and were more specific to their business.

Start-up or financial costs of running a local food production can be difficult. 16% of local producers found the initial start-up cost to be the biggest barrier for producing for the local food market. For one producer, having a local bank back out of funding their business at the last minute was one of the greatest barriers for their business to be successful. In describing this barrier several producers mentioned that they would not be able to produce for the local market without having a second job to support this business.

No. of Respondents	Barrier
13	Labour
8	Start-up/Financial Costs
6	Capacity for Distribution
5	Federal/County/Municipal Regulations
5	Lack of Access to Retailers
5	Scale of Production
3	No Local Food Hub
3	Geographic Isolation
1	Don't know
13	Other

Figure 15: Table of greatest barriers in the local food network identified by local producers (2023, Gateway CERH).

10% of producers, the biggest barriers are the regulations in the federal, county or municipal level. Some of which were more generally stated and require more research to fully determine the implications or which regulations the producers are referring to. For example, one producer was frustrated by certain federal regulations that make imported goods cheaper. Another was limited in his capacity by the fact that rules and regulations for selling from farmgate are not readily comprehensible or available. As such, he tried not to draw attention to his business for fear he was doing something wrong and not trying to grow his small sales further.

One producer in Huron County had their produce stand upended by a local By Law Complaint in Huron East Municipality this year which substantially created a barrier for them to sell to the local market. Mill Road Produce has operated a local fruit & vegetable stand in Egmondville for

eight years. In conversation, they describe that they were given leeway despite previously not complying with a bylaw as no one had complained. However, they state that someone, not from the area, made a parking complaint about the stand. This resulted in them having to move the stand which upended their business. One of the unfortunate results is that tourists/cottagers that move through the area no longer see the stand, so they don't get the same business that they once had before.

This particular story is important as many producers sell farmgate and a lot of local vendors will be lost if there are any barriers that impede their ability to make farmgate sales to consumers. Furthermore, in addressing the lack of retail options, some producers sell goods out of each other's farmgate stands such as their neighbour's stands.¹² However, finding what the regulations are for retail options on the farm or rules on farmgate sales can limit some of these solutions for producers.

This is not necessarily a solution that all producers are interested in learning more about as some see that a barrier for them is that lack of trust they have at farmgate. For their particular product, they see self-serve stands as problematic due to theft and people not following the honour system under which these stands operate.

Other barriers to selling locally that are of mention include an ageing population in the Huron County area. Older people consume less food, thus are not purchasing the same amount of produce as before. Pollution by industrial farming operations that spreads onto other producer properties. One producer had to install several new pieces of equipment such as a water filtration system for his cattle due to a large amount of e-coli and other bacteria in the water system from an industrial hog barn and chicken barn being further upstream. Other pollution he says that he cannot prevent such as overspray from other producers' fields onto some of his crops.

Labour was the greatest barrier to local food production with 26% of producers stating that they had difficulty finding good staff. However, a large barrier was not necessarily finding staff but there being infrastructure systems that supported staff such as affordable housing or public transportation so that staff could work in local food production.

¹² Municipal regulations on Farmgate Stand vary depending by municipality so they request any producer reach out directly to them

Policies/Programs

Many producers outlined that there are clear ways in which policies and programs, some of which are not currently available, that can be implemented to help support their activities and the local food economy, some of which came directly out of conversations on observed gaps, challenges or barriers to local food production.

Support for advertising and marketing, both generally and in specific ways, is the most common way in which producers wanted for there to be policy or programs.

A total of 18% of local producers wanted marketing or advertising support. While some wanted “marketing support” for their business or wanted marketing on where producers are, a few located unique programs that could be offered for support. These include (1) distinct maps/food trails of local producers in the area to draw tourism and for local consumer interest; (2) Assistance with website design, marketing and photography to better communicate their products and sell to local consumers; (3) informative videos of producers in the area so people can ‘meet’ the people that sell their local producers, and who they are supporting with their purchases.

An additional 10% of local producers wanted more promotional events or festivals for local food.

One of the local programs that currently exists to offer this support in regard to marketing and towards promotional events is “Taste of Huron”¹³. They currently offer a local food trail for producers, retailers and restaurants in the area along with running several promotional events throughout the year.

A clear emphasis by many producers is that any new policies or programs should be producer-driven. A key proposal by local producers is to initiate a “town hall”, and connect and discuss what should be done to support local food and the local food economy in Huron County.

Taste of Huron

The local food brand of the municipality of Huron County. Started by a series of culinary events in 2009, Taste of Huron initiates more contemporary culinary tourism events including Oktoberfest, Maple Mania and more.

Huron County uses the Taste of Huron brand to promote local food by maintaining a local food website as well as an application (app) that rewards consumers for purchasing local food products from the county. The criteria for inclusion on the app or website is if either (1) *you are growing, raising or producing a product within the county of Huron* or (2) *you are a restaurant or retailer featuring local items on your menu or store*. They feature 76 food and beverage producers/restaurants/retailers on the app and 63 on the website. Their culinary tourism events feature a range of 10-25 producers.

This program is administered by Huron County Economic Development and there are two staff that maintain it. The program works to make local food more accessible and visible for local community members and tourists.

¹³ <https://tasteofhuron.com>

This is an incredible opportunity but can also be difficult to initiate as one producer states, "I don't know what the right answer is but it is getting everyone in the room together for a common goal. That always seems to be a challenge with farmers and they are very independent, especially people that are starting out."

12% were unsure or didn't comment on what programs and policies can be implemented to support local food production. For one producer, he doesn't believe that policy interventions into areas such as local food production, such as subsidies are helpful.

"I am a fan of free-market enterprise and most times subsidising someone or assistance that happens to a sector or an individual distorts things... To build something through a subsidy or with assistance, monies may be put to better use and if there is a market for something, it will come through."

Conversely, more producers, however, were in favour for greater support. For example, 10% of producers were interested in a policy or program wherein there were regulations or incentives for local stores and retailers to carry local food products.

Some more general infrastructure initiatives in the area include upgrading rural areas internet connection so there is high speed internet access needed to process direct and online sales. Better support such as permanent residency options, affordable housing, welcoming events for temporary foreign workers, and for the general rural population.

One producer suggested expanding the public buses, Huron Shores transit, so that it goes into communities during the farmers markets, and to downtown Goderich instead of only having a single stop at the Walmart parking lot. Goderich is large enough that walking from Walmart to the downtown area is difficult and it can better support local businesses and producers that sell in those businesses by expanding the route.

Other policy/programs suggestions call for a more collaborative effort such as clear regulation that allow selling of other producers' products at farmgate locations, creating a mobile farm store of fresh fruits and vegetables to communities around the county that would not otherwise be reached, increasing the number of farmers markets in the county and creating a way in which large producers allow smaller producers to use their processing facilities.

Some other key recommendations include:

1. Create a directory or information hub for producers and local retailers to connect and find opportunities to sell their products
2. Help producers become registered businesses in order to enter local retail stores
3. Create a greater amount of case studies/reports of start-ups to help inspire and inform prospective sellers
4. Create workshops for producers so they can keep up with the changing regulations.

One Message Out to Local Consumers

When asked what is one message that local producers would share with local consumers, the most common response was a message urging consumers to help “support their local community”. Oftentimes, “support community” meant support of the community members who produce local food. Some producers wanted consumers to reflect further on how they made their purchases and to be aware of the people behind the local food production.

"Think about the faces that are behind the things you buy. If you are at the Farmers' Market and you pick up a head of lettuce. It is not just like a head of lettuce from a grocery store. There is a family behind it. There are kids running through the fields, there is mom pulling out her hair looking for her keys". .

One of the producers interviewed who is transitioning away from selling to the local market, provided a different perspective. He explained that consumers should: “buy your food in your backyard before you buy it at the grocery store. Support the people in your community. Once we are gone, we are not coming back, so it is hard to quantify that.” Two other local producers echoed that sentiment that the producers are only here so long as the community supports them. From this we can determine that potentially accessibility of local food is partially generated by efforts on the consumers and needs continuous support.

Another way in which the producer emphasised the message “support your community”, “We are on your side” and “we are doing this for the people not for the money. We care about our fellow people and want to provide a healthy service to the community.” They repositioned “support your community” as the producers are supporting the consumers so, the producers appreciate support in return. This further emphasises an equal partnership of support between consumers and producers.

As seen by these examples, many consumers had many different messages that overlapped. One producer summed up the most common messages in one statement as “Buy Local, support your neighbours. Come try it!” A common phrase was that consumers should “try” the food or “don’t be afraid” to try the product. The assumption that consumers will find something they enjoy by trying the different products that Huron County has to offer.

14% of local producers emphasised that there were essential qualities of local food that made it more attractive such as the “freshness”, the “greater nutrition”, the “quality” of local products. Some producers stated that consumers, upon trying the food in Huron County, would discover these qualities in the products.

In the interviews, different producers did acknowledge that their product may not appeal to every consumer. They also noted that at a smaller scale, seasonality of ingredients and of harvest place a bigger role so quality and quantity can fluctuate, so some producers asked for patience and understanding from local consumers. One producer saw a meme and commented the following:

“You know, how many times does McDonalds get your order wrong and you still continue to go back to McDonalds. And [when] there is a small business that makes one mistake, or you're not happy once and you completely shut down that small business; You stop going. As small businesses, we have to work extra hard to keep people's business and they might be like there was one thing I didn't like and won't put the effort into it again. Or they will be like: ‘That just wasn't for me’. My hope is that even if you try one farmer and that farmer isn't for you, you can try another farmer and maybe they are for you”.

Other consumers took a broader understanding of the message that should be communicated about the local food market to consumers. They stated that there are overall environmental benefits to local food production that need to be considered by consumers. As one producer describes:

“Supply chains fail and [they] have an environmental cost! When you ship strawberries from California you aren't looking at wear and tear of vehicles and emissions, the closer you eat to home the safer it is for you and the environment. If you can't access local food you are at risk of going hungry, especially during hard times such as COVID. There is a benefit of fresher ingredients for the consumers, and an overall benefit by reducing the amount of pollution we generate through our consumption. The context of COVID provided an example of when supply chains fail, and that a lack of local food options can put you at “risk of going hungry”.

Of interest, some messages were diverse and reflected the current state of the consumers or a general broad message they wanted to communicate. This included:

- “Come buy my lettuce! (“I have so much lettuce right now. It has come on with the heat and this is one of the challenges of seasonality, you might have a glut of something”)
- “We are producing and providing home-type food.”
- “#Let'sFeedEachOther. There is so much food going in the garbage and being wasted. So much food insecurity, when there's no need for it. Expand your palate. Don't be afraid to try something once. It's okay to try new things.”
- “It should be broadcasted better that Huron County is one of Ontario agriculture powerhouses. Why would you buy stuff from the states or from Mexico's strawberries when Huron County alone is the second county in Ontario for agriculture. Clearly, we know what we are doing. The farmers in Huron County are some of the best.”

Producers talked about forms of communicating this message such as in-person events, word of mouth marketing, radio advertising, videos about the local farmers, maps and other print media such as “the Rural Voice”.

Consumers of Local Food in Huron County

General Survey Results

In phase two of the project we distributed a survey to consumers to get their perspective on the local food sector. Below we have attached our questions used from the survey and their data in the form of bar graphs. Each graph presented is a summary of the data collection from approximately 160 consumer respondents.

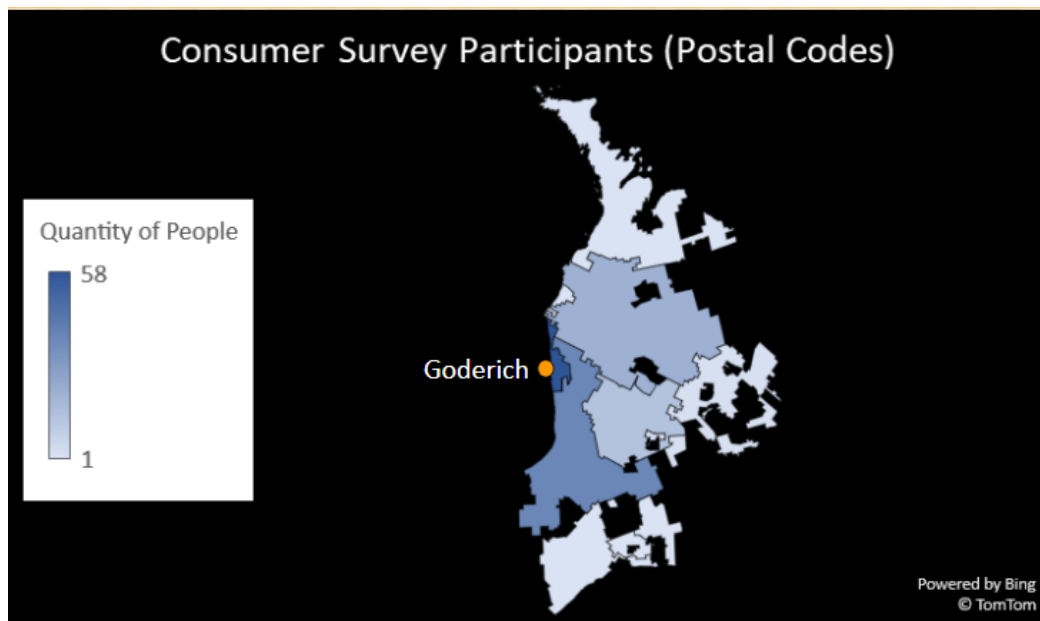


Figure 16: *Consumer Survey Participants (Postal Codes) Heat Map.* (2023, Gateway CERH).

The image above represents the consumer survey respondents and where they are from. In the survey they were asked to disclose their postal codes so we could see where the participants are from. Most of the consumer survey responses were in the Goderich area (58) with the next highest areas being around the Goderich area. Our survey respondents indicated that they were from all across Southwestern Ontario including Tobermory, Waterloo and London.

Survey Respondents: How old are you?

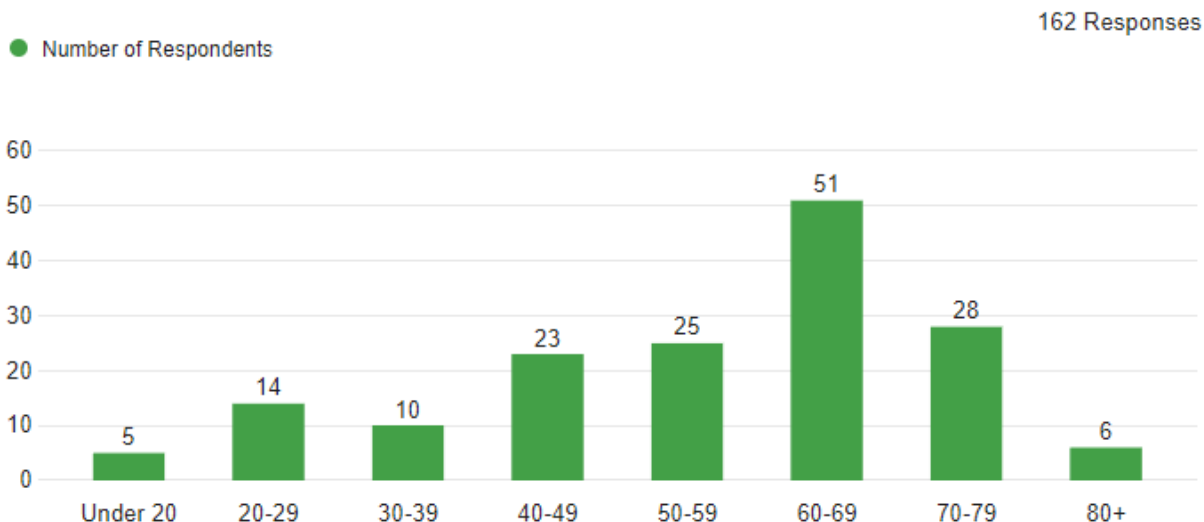


Figure 17: Survey Respondents: How old are you? (2023, Gateway CERH).

The graph above represents the age of the survey respondents. As you can see above the most selected age category was from ages 60-69 with 51 respondents. Therefore, approximately 31% of respondents are within the ages of 60-69 years old. There is a wide spread of different age categories with most being over the age of 50 years old.

Survey Respondents: What is your gender identity?

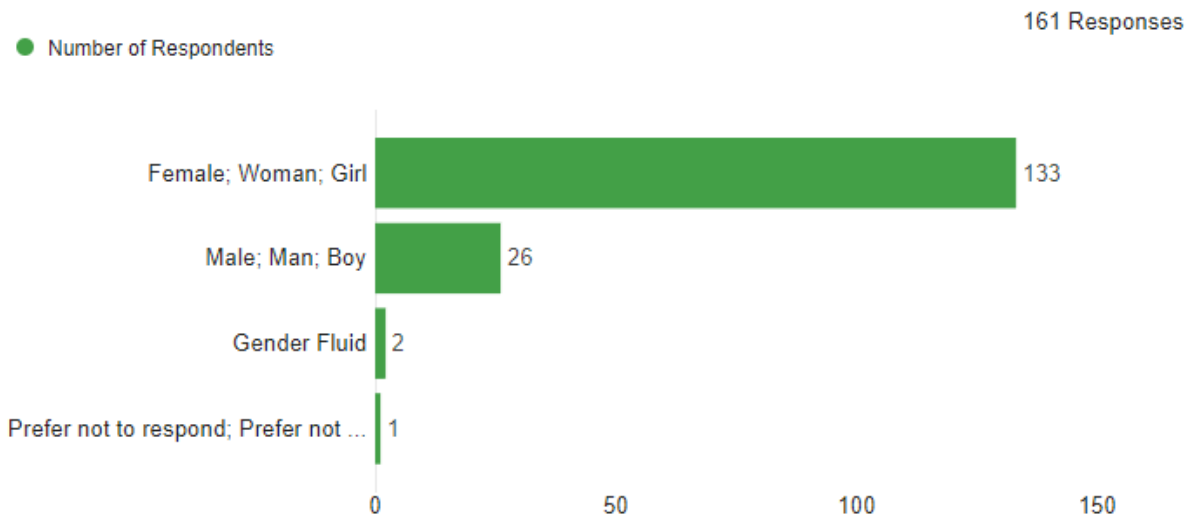


Figure 18: Survey Respondents: What is your gender identity? (2023, Gateway CERH).

The graph above represents the survey respondents' gender identity. However, we decided not to include the other headings that received no responses. Other categories that received no responses were: Non-binary, Questioning: Exploring, Two-Spirit, and Gender identity not listed (please specify). The majority of recipients identified as female (82.6%), while 16.1% identified as male and the remaining percentage split between gender fluid and prefer not to respond.

Survey Respondents: What range do your current household earning fall within?

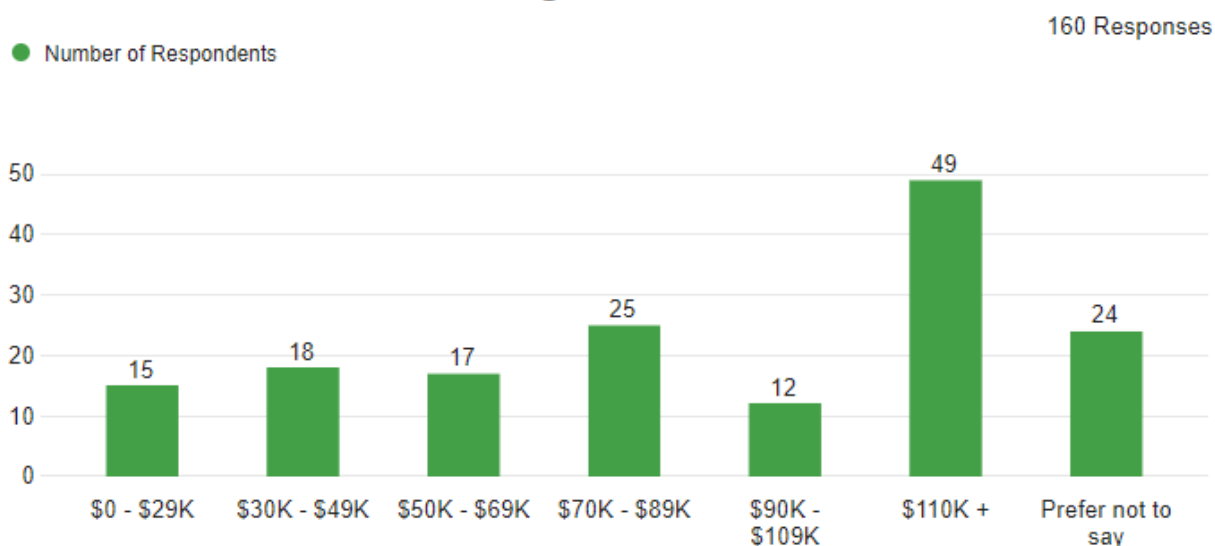


Figure 19: Survey Respondents: What range do your current household earnings fall within?(2023, Gateway CERH). The graph above represents the results from the question about total household income. The highest recorded category was \$110K + with approximately 31% of respondents identifying here. The remaining categories were all relatively close in terms of respondents who identified under their category with the lowest one having 12 respondents and the highest having 25 respondents. According to the data about 47% of people identified as making less than \$90K.

Survey Respondents: What is your current civil status?

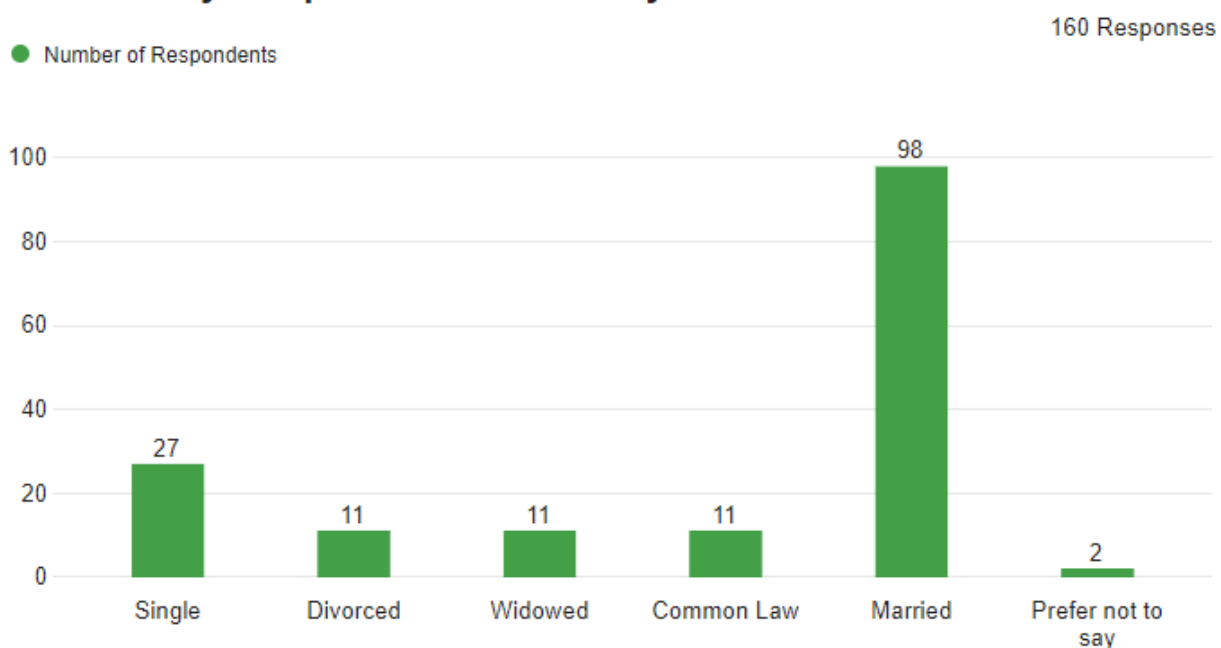


Figure 20: Survey Respondents: What is your current civil status? (2023, Gateway CERH).

The graph above represents the civil status of the survey respondents to gain a better understanding of the demographic participating in the survey. The majority of responses were of married individuals (approximately 61%) with the next highest being single (approximately 16%).

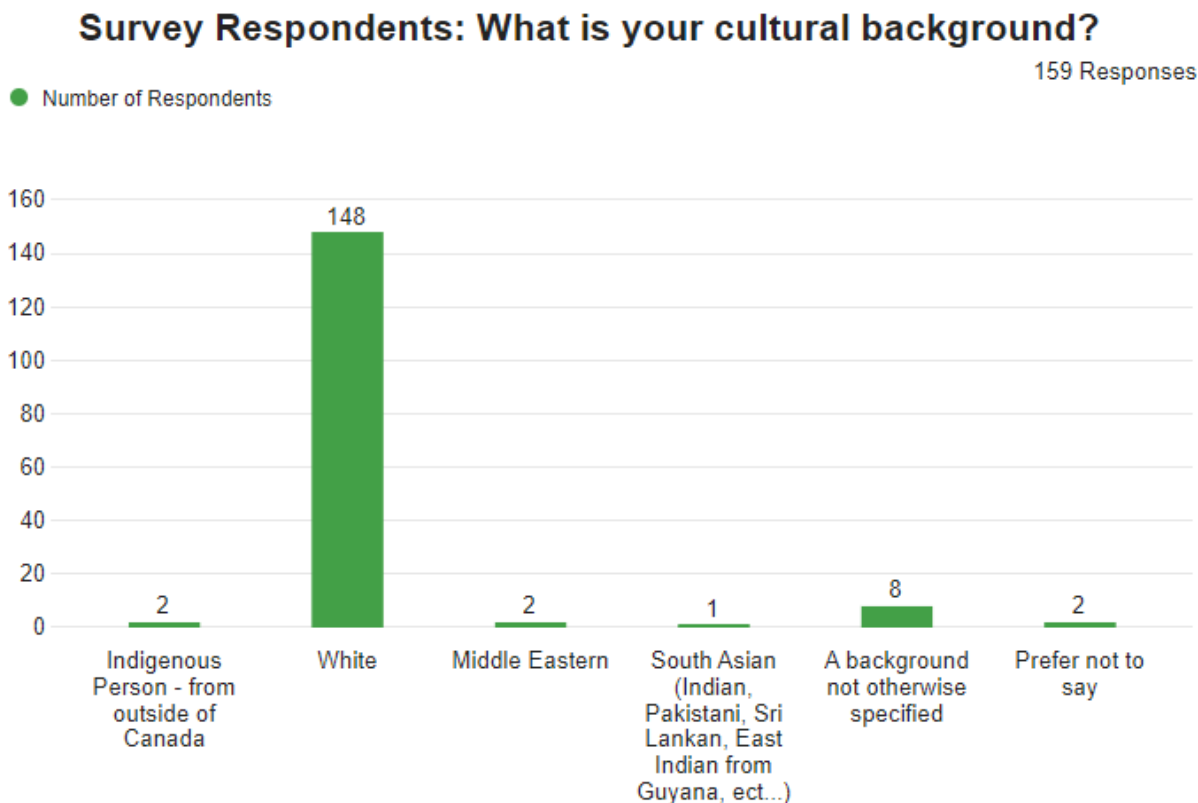


Figure 21: Survey Respondents: What is your cultural background? (2023, Gateway CERH).

The results in the bar graph above demonstrate that the majority of respondents identify as white being an overwhelming 93%. Other cultural backgrounds are listed however, some were removed from the graph because their response count was 0. These categories consisted of Indigenous Person, Latin American, Black, Filipino, Central Asian, East Asian, Southeast Asian, and West Asian.

Survey Respondents: How many dependents do you have?

158 Responses

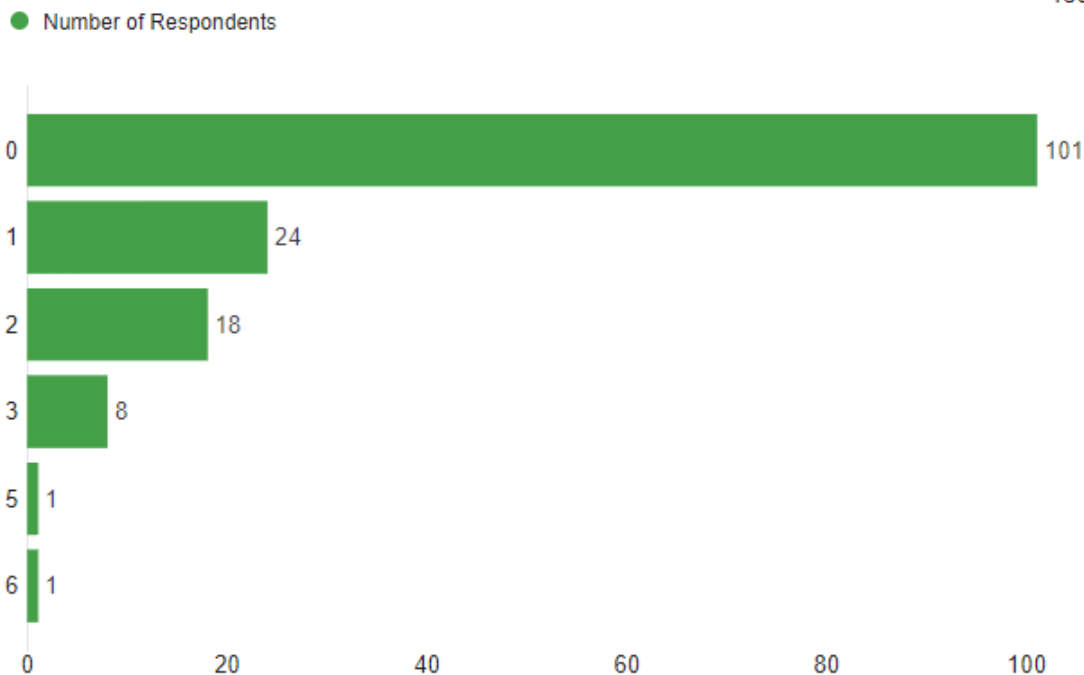


Figure 22: *How many dependents do you have?* (2023, Gateway CERH).

The bar chart above represents the findings from the survey question about the number of dependents the survey responses have. The majority in this case was having no dependents (approximately 64%). The rest of the participants mostly identified with having either 1 (approximately 15%) or 2 (approximately 11%) dependents. We removed the 7+ dependent category from the bar chart since there were zero responses for it from the survey.

How often people purchase Local Food

123 Responses

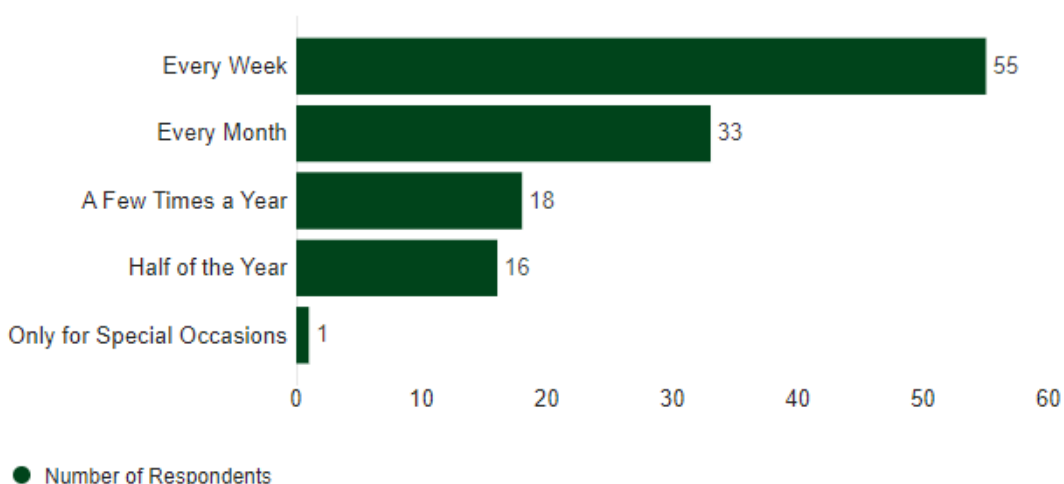


Figure 23: *How often do people purchase local food.* (2023, Gateway CERH).

The graph above represents how many of the survey respondents purchase local food. About 45% of survey respondents stated they buy local food everyday and about 27% buy it every month. Overall, we can determine that many of the survey demographic purchases local food at least once a month.

The results from the survey indicated a demographic profile of who consumed local food products. The emerging demographic profile consisted of individuals aged 60-69 (31% of respondents), identified as female (83% of respondents), white (93% of respondents) and are married (61% of respondents) with 0 dependents (64% of respondents). The majority also had a household income of over \$110,000 (31% of respondents) and were quite active in the purchasing of local food weekly (44% of respondents).

The consumer survey results demonstrated that there were several barriers that impacted the local food. The largest barrier to consumers was identified as the cost (18% of participants) of local food products; followed by the time (13% of participants) and distance (12% of participants) it takes to travel to a multitude of producers. Other barriers that were common in Huron County were the consumer being unaware of where local food is available (12% of participants) and that there are seemingly limited options available when it comes to local food (16% of participants). See the bar graph below for a more detailed outline of all of the barriers acknowledged and their respondent scores.

Barriers to Purchasing Local Food

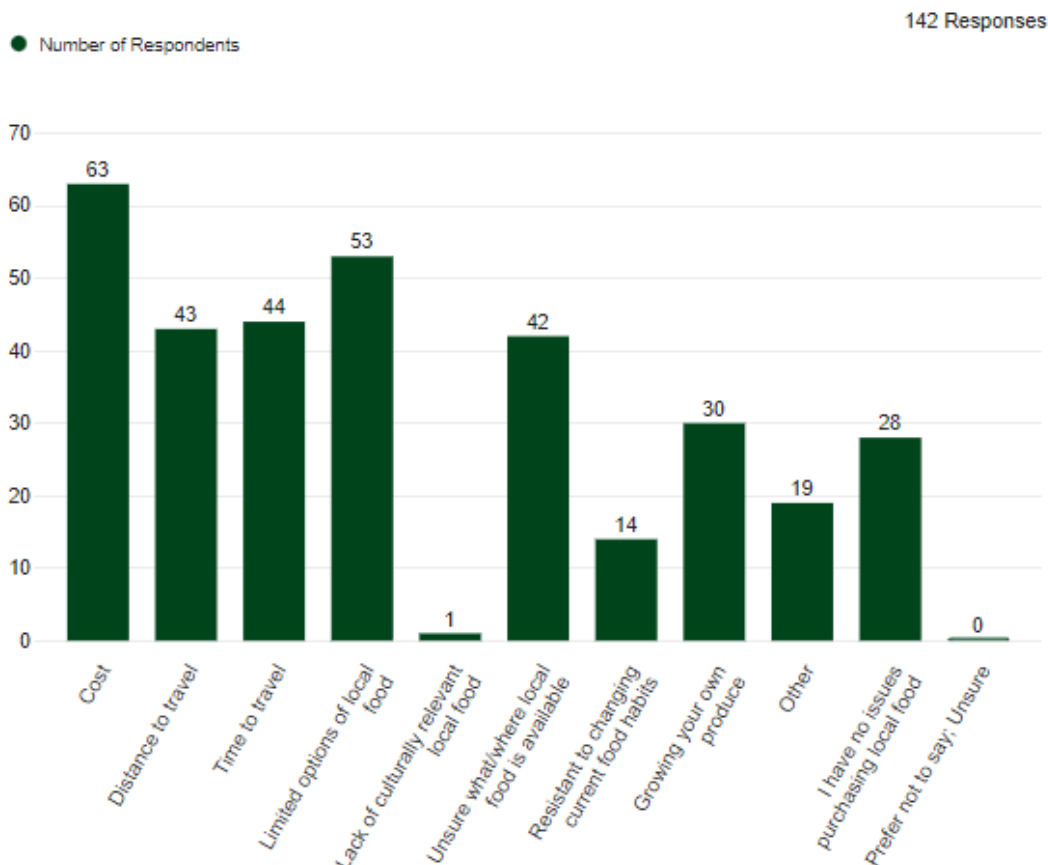


Figure 24: Barriers to purchasing local food. (2023, Gateway CERH).

To gain a better perspective of the local food landscape participants in the survey were asked where they purchased their local food from. The largest group of the respondents stated that they purchase their local food from the farmers' markets (36%) and directly from producers (30%). Other sources included purchasing from third party sellers such as *Eat Local Huron* and other secondary retailers including grocery stores and markets. One thing to note is that according to the respondents on average their total grocery spending going towards buying locally produced food was approximately 35% with some respondents reporting numbers as high as 91% and as low as 1%. Therefore, this begged the question: *Do you believe local food could provide a full balanced supply of food for yourself/family?* According to the survey results 60% of people believed that yes it could while 20% stated that no it could not and about 20% were unsure. These numbers ultimately give us a better picture of how impactful local food is to the average consumer and how much of their purchases incorporate local food.

Next, the survey asked questions about accessing local food services to gain better insight into the demographic of respondents and to see how local food can impact local food services. According to respondents only 3% (approximately) have accessed food services in the past year. Of this 3%, half of the participants stated that the food they accessed incorporated local

food while the other half stated they were unsure. Again, of this 3%, all of them believe that using local food within these food services would be a significant benefit.

This survey also included questions regarding learning more about local food which can see if consumers want to be more informed on local food practices within Huron County. As the chart represents below it is obvious that respondents would be very open to learning more about local food. With approximately 83% saying yes they would while an additional $\approx 16\%$ maybe interested in learning more. According to the respondents, many of them care a great deal about how local food benefits the economy, how local food is good for the environment, how local food is good for their health, how local food is of high quality and how local food has an inviting atmosphere.

Answer	Percentage (%)	Number of Respondents
Yes	82.86%	116
No	1.43%	2
Maybe	15.71%	22
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>140</i>

Figure 25: "Would you be open to learning about local food?" Survey results

The survey participants provided insight into additional areas that the consumer survey itself left out. One challenge that was brought up was the seasonal nature of local produce, which can limit the variety available throughout the year. Because of this consumers themselves may be hesitant to purchase local food in large amounts because they have a limited understanding of preserving the food to use in months where it is not in season. Also, respondents in the survey wanted to ensure we highlighted the benefits of supporting local food producers. This includes things such as how local food can have a good impact on health, be more environmentally friendly, and support the local economy.

Stories from Local Consumers

These next are a series of stories from the local survey about local consumers who have answered the survey.

Anne's Story

Anne is a 70–79-year-old woman who lives in a small community of around 1,000 people in Huron County. She is widowed and she is a low-income senior who does not purchase local food. She finds it difficult to drive the distance to local producers and/or retailers and finds that there are limited adoptions for local food. She does not think that local food is overpriced. However, it is not in her budget to purchase local food. She states that “I am a low income senior, who has been displaced from my apartment due to Reno-eviction. My rent has more than doubled since June 1 [2023]. It is now between 2/3 and 3/4 of my monthly income. I anticipate that accessing healthy food is going to become an issue given the small amount of money I have to live on once my rent is paid.”

As indicated, the cost of local food is a huge barrier to increasing local food accessibility as basic needs such as shelter take precedence to buying more local food options. Not only that, but Anne stated that having “healthy food” may no longer be an option because of the gross rise in the cost of living for her.

Lauren's Story

Lauren is a 50-59 year old woman who lives in the Goderich area. She is married and has two dependents. Her household earnings amount to \$110K or greater. Unlike Anne's story, Lauren does not see cost as a barrier to purchasing local food or finding local food as overpriced.

Lauren is an avid purchaser of local food, buying it every week from places such as the local butcher shop. She believes that one of the greatest benefits of buying local food is that it contributes to the local economy, closely followed by it providing greater nutrition and a balanced diet. However, she is unsure of where local food can be located or purchased. For her, timing of some of the local food offerings restrict her access to the market. She states that “Farmer's markets are only on certain days and times and I can't always get there. It would be great if there was an everyday place to buy produce or an area in local groceries for specific local items, for instance Shanahan's Butcher has local meat products from Metzgers and Hayters. If we could have Basics or Zehrs have a specific area for local vegetables and fruits would be great.”

Lauren is someone who is willing to contribute to the local economy and buy local food. As she suggests, places where local food can be purchased every day of the week can make the difference between whether or not Lauren purchases local food. Cost is not a barrier so increasing access to local food in retail locations or knowledge of the already available locations makes a difference.

Ben's Story

Ben is a single 40-49 year old man who lives in the Goderich area. He earns approximately \$30K-\$49K a year and has no dependents. He only purchases local food half the year from farmer's markets or directly from local producers. The environmentally friendly aspect of local food, meaning there are less greenhouse gas emissions from food transportation is the most important benefit for him from purchasing local food. But he does find a barrier to travel the distance directly to local producers or retailers to buy local food and finds that there are limited options of local food in his experience.

Although Ben doesn't believe in local food being able to provide a full-balanced supply of food for himself, it is unsure on whether it is the lack of knowledge on where he can supply himself with local food or his resistance to changing his current food habits that contribute to his belief. Ben adds that education on food plays a key part in building a good society. "As well, school should be teaching food, healthy eating, cooking and life skills, building, trades, handyman, fixing things, etc... much more. Food is most important. As a 90's student it was really not encouraged. It should be mandatory. There are too many distractions, paper shufflers, pencil pushers nowadays. Real skills are critical to a good prosperous society and life."

He believes more food education should be inserted in the classroom, he touches on how cooking is an important life skill and how food is really important and during his education "it was not really encouraged". He suggests that education on how to cook local food should be re-introduce or more promoted in classrooms.

Mary's Story

Mary is a female 70-79 resident of the Goderich area, widowed and her household earnings fall between 0-\$29K. She buys local food in the area every month, primarily from grocery stores. The most important benefit of local food for her is the connection with where her food is grown/raised. The biggest barriers for her purchasing local food are cost and that she has trouble walking.

Mary "can't do the farmers market anymore because of disability to walk & found when I could do it was very expensive". Her local food options became inaccessible due to changing levels of ability to walk around the Square in Goderich where the Goderich Farmers' Market takes place. The added barrier of the cost of local food makes it even more inaccessible. As such, there is an indication that many people who previously did buy local food may have life changes that reduce their access to that market such as through disability.

Conclusion

The G.R.E.A.T. Local Food project determined the scope and accessibility of local food in Huron County from inquiries into both the producers and consumers' perspectives of local food in Huron County. There are some limitations to the research that will be discussed in greater detail below. Resources and recommendations were generated based on both discussions with those two parties and further inquiries into third-parties and stakeholders.

Findings demonstrate that there is a great wealth of local food in Huron County with a wide array of products which would not be found in urban areas. There are gaps within this system of local food. Some of the resources generated below attempt to address some of these gaps to increase local food accessibility but several cannot be solved without partnership between the County of Huron, local producers, consumers and other stakeholders.

Producers

Producer interviews discovered that for 47% of local producers growing up in Huron County and on a farm significantly influenced their decision to sell for the local market. 25% of the total producers wanted to have a positive impact on their community. These findings demonstrate that local producers invested in increasing accessibility of local food, and are open to making positive changes in how they sell local food.

For those that have found success in selling to the local food market, value-added products are one way in which they are able to secure control, profit and find a market for their products. As well, selling a diverse range of products across different categories was quite common. The estimated direct value of local food production was 24 million from 47 producers as their average annual gross revenue in the past year. It is theoretically much greater as 133 producers were identified that sold to the local market, and many more of which were potentially not located but sell to the local market.

Most local producers sell directly to the consumers (farmgate, in-person farmers markets, freezer trade, and farmshare) and consider it their most successful method of sales ranging from 18%-100% among producers. Selling directly is always a significant portion if a producer sells locally. One of the reasons they find success is because they are unable to compete with competitors' prices such as food distributors, or they can't find access to local retail stores or grocery stores. This also creates a challenge for producers that do not want to sell directly to consumers. They only sell through retail stores or third party distributors to the local market. It is only more recently that online farmers markets have emerged that enable this as a possibility including Eat Local Huron, Bayfield Farmers Market and Blyth Farmers Market. In-person farmers markets also play an important role as they can act as an incubator for local business and are a way for producers to promote their business.

There are gaps and barriers in infrastructure that prevent greater growth for local producers such as poor internet, lack of road signage, and production facilities (eg. abattoirs). Other

producers found difficulties with marketing their product, finding access to grants, and finding access to grants. A more in-depth list can be found in our recommendations section below.

Financial constraints were abundant for producers in selling to the local market. These constraints restricted access for producers to invest and expand their businesses. This is evident in their reportings of their annual gross revenue where the majority of producers fall between \$0-50,000 which is significantly lower and on top of that more specifically, these individuals were closer to \$20,000 gross which is well below the Canadian average of around \$54,000 in 2021 (Statistics Canada, May 2, 2023). Other factors such as labour shortages have drastically impacted local producers ability to function and maintain their production and distribution of products. Access to food hubs or directories of local producers/retailers/distributors to share between the groups were also areas of interest both as a barrier and a gap of local food production that local producers wanted changes to take place. Gateway CERH is concerned about the longevity of local food. We believe that funding should be allocated to help these local producers in the area. Please see the recommendations below for our full opinions and specific thoughts.

One major idea, that producers stated, that can help to combat some of these issues would be to educate and inform consumers. Only 36% of local producers found that consumers had an adequate understanding of local food. And even that understanding for some, did not translate into the consumers being well-educated on how much time and effort goes into local food production.

Referring back to the consumer survey, approximately 83% of respondents stated that they would be open to learning more about local food while approximately 16% said they would maybe be interested. Producers need to ensure that they are continuously educating local consumers and ensuring to describe the benefits of their products versus commercial brands to attract more consumers. With this increased revenue stream this can hopefully ensure the survival and thriving of these local producers and allow them to overcome some of the financial stressors they have identified through the interviews. Awareness and education can be a way that local organizations such as Gateway CERH can help promote local producers and products to people even outside of the county.

That is not to say all local food production is financially constrained or an unsuccessful endeavour. Local food production is very successful for some producers both in terms of agri-tourism and on product quality. Producers also find success with developing strong relationships with their consumer base which allow more flexibility and understanding with distributing their products. However, increasing accessibility of local products can be difficult. Many producers and local businesses benefit from cottager traffic and tourism success that move through Huron County and purchase their products. Some producers consider themselves “destination” shops wherein consumers from Toronto with higher disposable income bulk purchase their higher priced products. This does not necessarily translate into the local food being marketed or accessible for consumers who live in the area year-round.

On the other hand, some producers make active efforts to promote food accessibility through donating excess product or a set amount to Huron County Food Bank Distribution Network, developing accessible community fridges in the area (Eat Local Huron), and creating accessible means of distribution for producers and consumers through online farmers markets. Other efforts in the area by producers include selling products at cost of production, and sharing distribution networks with other producers to move products.

Consumers

Within the consumer survey itself there was a prevalent majority demographic present based on the responses. Below in Table 2 is a comparison of our data and the Statistics Canada 2016 Census data ([link here](#)). Our demographic profile of respondents were mostly identified as white, ages 60-69, married, zero dependents, female and with a collective household income of over \$110,000 (highlighted below in Table 2). Obviously looking at this data we can see that the results could be skewed in terms of more privileged and retired individuals with the means to afford local food and have the free time to prepare it. As you can see below the percentage of people in the census versus our collection of data is very different. This is due to our lack of sample size and other limiting factors that evidently favour those of our most prominent demographic.

	Number of Consumer Respondents in our Consumer Survey	of Consumer Survey Respondents as a Percentage (rounded)	Statistics Canada 2016 Census (Huron County)	2016 Census Data as a Percentage (rounded)
Age				
Under 20	5	3.1%	13555	22.9%
20-29	14	8.6%	6370	10.7%
30-39	10	6.2%	5895	9.9%
40-49	23	14.2%	6190	10.4%
50-59	25	15.4%	9145	15.4%
60-69	51	31.5%	9330	15.7%
70-79	28	17.3%	5540	9.3%
80+	6	3.7%	3455	5.8%

Population

Men	26	16.0%	29360	49.5%
Women	133	82.1%	29940	50.5%
Other	3	1.9%	NA	NA

Civil Status

Married	98	61.3%	26810	54.4%
Common Law	11	6.9%	4185	8.5%
Divorced	11	6.9%	2525	5.1%
Widowed	11	6.9%	3540	7.2%
Single	27	16.9%	18310	37.1%

Dependents

0 dependents	101	63.9%	8645	50.6%
1 dependent	24	15.2%	3300	19.3%
2 dependent	18	11.4%	3130	18.3%
3 or more dependents	15	9.5%	2025	11.8%

Median Household Income

Prefer not to say	24	15.0%	NA	NA
\$0-\$29K	15	9.4%	17,195	35.9%
\$30K-\$49K	18	11.3%	7,715	1.6%
\$50K-\$69K	17	10.6%	4,365	0.9%
\$70K-\$89K	25	15.6%	2,255	0.5%
\$90K-\$109K	12	7.5%	<u>*90K-99K = 970</u>	0.2%
\$110K +	49	30.6%	<u>*100K + = 1790</u>	0.4%

Cultural Background

Indigenous Person (In Canada)	0	0.0%	<u>*Included in non-visible minority classification</u>	NA
Indigenous Person (From Outside of Canada)	2	1.2%	<u>*Included in non-visible minority classification</u>	NA
Latin American	0	0.0%	75	0.1%
Black	0	0.0%	160	0.3%
White	148	90.8%	<u>56,965</u> <u>*(includes indigenous)</u>	98.5%
Filipino	0	0.0%	55	0.1%
Middle Eastern	2	1.2%	45	0.1%
Central Asian	0	0.0%		0.0%
East Asian	0	0.0%	165	0.3%
South Asian	1	0.6%	140	0.2%
Southeast Asian	0	0.0%	165	0.3%
West Asian	0	0.0%	10	0.0%
Background not specified	8	4.9%	NA	NA
Prefer not to say	2	1.2%	NA	NA

Table 2: Comparing the demographic from the consumer survey to the Statistics Canada 2016 Census (above).

As noted in the results section earlier there are barriers for consumers who purchase local food. The four prominent barriers are high costs of local food, travel distance, time commitment and a lack of options in terms of local food. Obviously, to create a more efficient local food landscape we need to share our created resources and recommendations to reduce the impact of these barriers. Below in the recommendations section where we outline numerous ways that we believe these barriers can be avoided or at the very least reduced.

The consumer survey clearly identified that farmers' markets were the most utilised source of local food purchases followed closely by purchasing directly from local producers themselves. This means that a vast array of respondents are actively going to the farmers' markets during

the week and purchasing their goods when all producers are in one location. Also, noted from the data was on average the respondents purchases of local food accounted for approximately 35% of their total grocery bill. This means that over a third of groceries are purchased as local food and that over a third of people do their main purchasing at the local farmers' markets. This only demonstrates the need for consumers to be active in these markets and to further promote the markets, not only so consumers can have easy access to their food but that producers can benefit financially.

One other challenge discussed in the additional thought section of the survey was the seasonality of products and the lack of choice throughout the entire year when it comes to local food. One easy work around of this is to simply buy in bulk and freeze or store for the winter months. Obviously not everyone will have access to the space or resources needed to do this. However, there are new freezing programs being offered at third party retailers such as *Eat Local Huron* to ensure that food is available year round. Recommendations and knowledge resources to help with these issues are outlined below in the recommendations section.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the major points to address about the conducting of these surveys is again to look at the bias present within the data. What we know is that the majority of respondents were of more privileged prestige in the local community and therefore, gave a skewed opinion about their local food knowledge, purchasing habits, food services access and overall thoughts. Because of this it is important to include this as a limitation to our project. However, we tried to distribute this survey to other individuals who identified as lower socio-economic status by handing out hard copies at food services centres and promoting the survey in public libraries. For a more encompassing survey we must expand the reach and engage those with different groups who participated in order to get policy, resources and facts that are representative of the entire Huron County population.

The consumer survey results were impeded on significant data collection from the lower socio-economic status populations present in Huron County. Only about 3% of respondents had accessed food services in the last year. This may have skewed the data to favour those of a more financially well off point of view versus a more food insecure population. Because of this bias present within the findings it is something to keep in mind when determining future needs for the local food landscape in Huron County because it comes from the majority of perspectives from more financially secure members within the population.

For example, none of the survey respondents indicated that they had foraged or grew their own food in a home garden as a way to supplement their grocery budget. Growing food in a garden may not be considered a necessary part of obtaining food for those more affluent and may be considered a 'hobby' instead of a necessity. This means that potential programs to address food insecurity and promote local food such as the Huron County Seed Library may be overlooked¹⁴.

¹⁴ See appendix to learn more about the Huron County Seed Library

Other limitations from the consumer survey included having the survey itself online because those who do not have access to technology were not able to complete it. Although we did hand out some hard copies to the McKay Centre in Goderich that was only a handful of participants. The survey itself was written in English as well and therefore, may have been a barrier for those who primarily speak another language other than English. Lastly, because Gateway CERH is located in Goderich, Ontario it makes sense that our survey was conducted mostly by individuals from the Goderich area. For reference refer to the heat map in the results section. However, this does not paint a full encompassing view of the county because we are limiting the majority of responses from one concentrated area. Our advertising and resources could have been used to create a larger spread of survey respondents from across the county.

There were some limitations in initially conducted interviews. The biggest limitation was that during COVID-19 it was very hard for producers to do interviews with the Gateway CERH team and it was impossible to do in person ones. Although some did online Zoom calls, many producers just did not complete the interview all together. This limited our data collection over the first year of the project. Another barrier for interviewing producers was the fact that interviews themselves were conducted during the summer months when Gateway CERH has summer research students to run the project. Summer months are the busiest months for local producers because it is their 'on' season where they must grow, harvest and sell their food. Lastly, we were unable to get many mennonites/Amish community members active in our producer interviews because of the technology barrier and lack of knowledge of where they are at. In contacting organizations such as the Huron-Bruce Produce Auction, we were able to talk with community members that do not use or have phones and were able to include several, including the Auction on our Local Food Map. We were able to secure a few but a larger interview pool would have just been better in terms of data collection and assessing needs in Huron County.

Recommendations & Resources

Addressing the barriers from our data and findings

From both our consumer surveys and producer interviews there were several barriers listed that need to be addressed. From the consumer survey the major barriers outlined were the cost of local food, the time and travel it takes to visit local producers and limited food options. To overcome cost we have been developing a project proposal for a farmers' market coupon system to benefit our local residents who are more food insecure and cannot afford local food. This project would also benefit local producers by ensuring they sell more products and benefit the local economy. Here is the template for the project we would like to look more into coming out of the province of British Columbia ([link here](#)). As for the time, travel, and limited food option barriers we believe that promoting the local farmers' markets would help with all of these issues. By promoting the markets people would be more informed about where they could get their local products. By attending a farmers' market you can eliminate the time and travel commitments

from local consumers and they can see the great diversity of products that these markets have for sale.

From the producer interviews some of the barriers included overcoming the cost of their products, financial constraints and shortages impacted by COVID-19. One solution to aid in these problem areas was to ensure that the consumer base in Huron County is well educated about local food and the local food sector. Below are some educational tools and information to inform local consumers on when it comes to the local food sector. The hope is that with this wealth of knowledge they will be more confident spending the money on local food and to participate much more in the local food sector.

Some general calls to action emerged throughout the report including:

1. Generate a directory or information hub for producers and local retailers to connect and find opportunities to sell their products
2. Help producers become registered businesses in order to enter local retail stores
3. Create a greater amount of case studies/reports of start-up of local producers to help inspire and inform prospective sellers
4. Host workshops for producers so they can keep up with the changing regulations.
5. Develop educational resources for local consumers to raise awareness and understanding

Education for Producers

One issue addressed in our findings was that local producers had a hard time with marketing and reaching a broader audience, as well as distribution. Below we have outlined some places within Huron County that aid in and develop marketing and distribution resources.

- ❖ **Huron Economic Development:** Does various sessions throughout the year and helps small businesses have greater online offerings through digital mainstreet to have someone help them with that support. [Link here](#)
- ❖ **Taste of Huron:** Is another source of marketing. They will promote your local business on their website along with a space on their interactive map and a small blurb about what you do/who you are! [Link here](#)
- ❖ **Stops Along the Way:** *Stops Along the Way* is a tourism organisation that also promotes local food. You can connect and market with them. They develop a digital version of your business that you can have at your stand/local business or it can be spread throughout the county on their website. They seek to support agri-tourism and other community tourism in Huron County. [Link here](#)
- ❖ **Farmers' Markets:** Many producers use farmers' markets to help build up a dedicated consumer base and work from there. We will discuss farmers' markets in more detail further down in the recommendations/resources section.
 - Contact Goderich BIA: bia@goderich.ca
 - Contact Exeter BIA: info@exeterbia.com
 - Contact Huron County Farmers Markets: [Link Here](#)
- ❖ **Farm Fresh Ontario:** *Farm Fresh Ontario* is an association that was developed to bring farmers together. The organisation itself promotes direct sales from its member farms which includes things like markets that take place on farms, you pick events and they work to promote change to better the farming industry. [Link here](#)
- ❖ **Farm Tours:** Farms tours are another way to generate income and sell more products as a local producer. Promoting your own farm tour or partnering with organisations (such as Taste of Huron) can be an effective and informative way to promote your business! Getting to have the opportunity to educate the general public on your business and products is a great advantage to improving the local food landscape within Huron County.
- ❖ **Eat Local Huron:** Is an Online Farmers Market that offers promotional support of their website where a producer can host their production offerings. [Link here](#)

Opportunities to Distribute Food Include

- ❖ **Huron-Bruce Produce Auction:** Buy or sell in any capacity as a local vendor. They sell from any vendor within a 75 Km radius of Lucknow at 733 Kairshea Ave. Holyrood ON.
- ❖ **Blyth and Bayfield Farmers Market:** Blyth and Bayfield farmers' market sell online on the OpenFoodNetwork and deliver within a 20 km radius of their respective communities. Reach out directly to learn more: bayfieldfarmersmarket@gmail.com.
- ❖ **Eat Local Huron:** Is an Online Farmers Market that also is a distributor of local food in the area and delivers anywhere in Huron County. [Link here](#)

Education for Consumers



COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

WHEN: SPRING, SUMMER, FALL
EGGS & SEASONAL PRODUCE

CSA - Community members subscribe to a local farm for a weekly (or monthly) bulk delivery of produce delivered to a pick-up location. (Pay online for your produce)

STRENGTHS

- Supports local farmers through the growing season
- Distributes bulk delivery of fresh produce to a close pick-up location
- Offers diverse and seasonal produce

LIMITATIONS

- Potential inaccessibility of delivery location
- Potential lack of knowledge or confidence (by the consumer) to cook or prepare the food
- Limited seasonality of farm share
- No choice in what the producer grows

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
FIRMLY ROOTED



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FARMGATE: U-PICK FARMS

WHEN: SUMMER, FALL
**BERRIES, ORCHARDS &
SEASONAL PRODUCE**

Farms where consumers come and pick, harvest or choose their own food. This is an experiential & social activity at a farm.

STRENGTHS OF U-PICKS

- Open to families and people of all ages (sometimes even pets!)
- Large social activity and agri-tourism experience
- Choose the amount of harvest you want
- Less labour-intensive for producer to harvest

LIMITATIONS OF U-PICKS

- Location of farm stand may not be easily accessible
- Limited seasonality
- Activity may not be accessible for all ability levels (although most u-pick farms also have farm stores on-site)
- Potential lack of knowledge about what is ripe enough to pick

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**BAYFIELD BERRY FARM,
& BLAKE'S APPLE
ORCHARD**

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FARMGATE: FARM TOURS

WHEN: SPRING, SUMMER, FALL
**ALL LOCAL FOOD
PRODUCTS**

Farm tours are where you go to a producer's farm or to multiple producers' farms & learn about their farming operations.

STRENGTHS OF FARM TOURS

- Open to everyone (and planned in advance not spontaneous)
- Large social activity and agri-tourism experience
- Educational experience and have a large access to local food offerings
- Meet the producers who make food in area for the community

LIMITATIONS OF FARM TOURS

- Location of farm may not be easily accessible
- Producer operations are not available often for tour due to seasonal or operational constraints

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**EAT LOCAL HURON -
FARM CRAWL, &
TASTE OF HURON -
OKTOBERFEST**

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WHEN: YEAR-ROUND
LOCAL MEAT:
LAMB, BEEF & PORK

FARMGATE: FREEZER TRADE

Freezer trade is the sale of meat in bulk quantities (by direct delivery or pick-up). The meat is all-frozen & enough to fill your freezer, hence the name, freezer trade.

STRENGTHS OF FREEZER TRADE

- Buy in bulk to have meat available year-round
- Multiple different cuts of meat for different dishes
- Helps support local food producers
- Flexibility on delivery dates/times

LIMITATIONS OF FREEZER TRADE

- Potential problems co-ordinating delivery and transportation
- Lack of space in recipients freezer
- Cost-prohibitive for some to bulk-buy

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**MEETING PLACE
 ORGANIC FARM, &
 GRAZING MEADOWS**

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Online

WHEN: YEAR-ROUND
**ALL TYPES OF LOCAL
 FOOD PRODUCTS**

VIRTUAL FARMERS' MARKET

Virtual farmers' markets are online sites where consumers can purchase local food products & delivered directly to the consumers.

STRENGTHS

- Weekly accessible delivery to your door
- More affordable for some seasonal local food products (ex. corn)
- Diverse and greater selection than some in-person farmers' markets
- Shop at one place for everything

LIMITATIONS

- Geographic limitations of delivery routes
- Seasonality of produce and other product offerings
- Delivered week-by-week
- Potentially cost-prohibitive

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**EAT LOCAL HURON, &
 BLYTH & BAYFIELD
 FARMERS' MARKET**

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WHEN: MAY-OCTOBER
**ALL TYPES OF LOCAL
 FOOD PRODUCTS**

IN-PERSON: FARMERS' MARKET

Farmers' markets are locations where groups of farmers and artisans set up stands in a central location to sell their products. (Make sure to bring cash!)

STRENGTHS

- Range of local food products and artisans in one place
- Experiential and social activity
- Less distance for a direct sale from producers to the consumers
- Interact and meet with farmers who grow and raise local food

LIMITATIONS

- Seasonality of produce and market operations
- Only operational during certain days and times
- Inconsistent vendor attendance
- Potentially cost-prohibitive

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**GODERICH, EXETER,
 DUNGANNON,
 BLYTH & BAYFIELD**

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WHEN: SEASONAL
**ALL TYPES OF LOCAL
 FOOD PRODUCTS**

VIRTUAL: WEBSITE ORDERS

Some producers have a webpage (eg. Facebook) or a website where products can be directly ordered & arranged to pick up or drop off to the consumer.

STRENGTHS

- A good range of products sold are seasonal or have a longer shelf life (ex. honey, coffee, maple syrup)
- Flexibility for small or large orders
- Ease of finding local producers that may be hidden

LIMITATIONS

- Seasonality of produce
- Difficulty arranging pick-up/drop off
- Webpage or website for some producers may be inactive or a standing page for marketing exposure
- Potentially cost-prohibitive

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**COASTAL COFFEE
 ROBINSON MAPLE
 PRODUCTS**

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HURON-BRUCE PRODUCE AUCTION

WHEN: YEAR-ROUND/SEASONAL
**ALL TYPES OF LOCAL
FOOD PRODUCTS**

The Huron-Bruce Produce Auction is a live, public consignment auction where any member of the public or organization can bid on produce.

STRENGTHS

- Produce is freshly brought in from growers within a 75 km radius of Lucknow.
- Bulk buy products in ½ bushel & full bushel, pallets and field bins.
- Supports local growers within the area
- Competitive prices to wholesalers

LIMITATIONS

- Seasonality of produce and certain times when the market takes place.
- Individual consumers can bid but it is intended for organisations or business use
- Payment must be made in cash or by approved cheque

LOCAL EXAMPLE(S):
**HURON-BRUCE
PRODUCE AUCTION**

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**WHEN: YEAR-ROUND
SEEDS**

HURON COUNTY SEED LIBRARY

As one of initiatives of Huron County Libraries, they offer a seed library where community members receive free seeds to use to plant a garden.

STRENGTHS

- Lower the cost for entry into gardening
- Gain knowledge by borrowing books at the library at the same time
- Available at any of the 12 library branches in Huron County from a central seed storage in the Exeter Library Branch

LIMITATIONS

- Only a small selection of seed offerings
- Must be a Huron County Library member
- Time delay in receiving seeds

**ACCESSIBLE AT:
ANY LIBRARY BRANCH
IN HURON COUNTY**

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www.gatewayruralhealth.ca





Please return all orders to: hcfbdcbarry@hay.net

<i>Delivery - wk of: August 7th</i>		Food Bank or Agency Name & Location	
FOR HCFBDC's USE:		Please enter qty req'd	
Check id (✓)	Qty. Loaded	Product Description	# of Cases/Boxes # of Pieces
Dry Food and Other Items			
		Diced Tomatoes(12per case)	
		Beans in Tomato Sauce (12 per case)	
		Pasta Sauce (12 per case)	
		Pasta (12 pkgs per case)	
		Cereal (8 per case)	
		Rice (1 lb bag) (order by the pc)	
		Wow Butter (16gr-175 per box-sgle serve)	
		Adult Dog Food (2kg bag)	
Hygiene and Household			
		Natural Concepts Sanitizing Gel w/pump (946 ml - 4 per case)	
		Face Masks (50 per box)	
		Face Masks Kids (50 per box for ages 4 - 12)	
		Ladies razors (6 pkgs of 4)	
Limited		Infant diapers - Medium (4 pkgs of 40 per box)	
		Infant diapers - Large (4 pkgs of 32 per box)	
		Protective underwear XL (14 per pkg)	
		Condoms (13 per pkg)	
		TOTAL	0 0

FOR HCFBDC's USE:		Please enter qty req'd	
Check id (✓)	Qty. Loaded	Product Description	# of Cases/Boxes # of Pieces
Cooler Items			
		Milk (4 - 4L bags per case)	
		Eggs (15 doz per box)	
		Feta (by the pc)	
Produce (Fresh)			
		Potatoes (10 lb bags)	
		Variety of fresh vegetables (box)	
		Sweet Potatoes (10 lb bags)	
		Green Beans (1/2 bushel)	
FROZEN			
		Ice Cream (various by the pc)	
		Bread - variety (box)	
		Pizza Crusts (2 pkgs of 10 per box)	
		Flakey Bread Dough (280 per box)	
		Frozen diced onions (500grx12per box)	
		Beet Veggie Noodles (350 gr x 12 per box)	
		Plant Based Pepperoni (5lb per case)	
Meat			
		Various meat (order by the box)	
		TOTAL	0 0

Weights _____

Skid Weight _____

