# 2023 BC Farmers' Market Economic Impact Study PROVINCIAL REPORT

British Columbia, Canada

This project was completed by:

**BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM)**

in collaboration with:

**University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)**

Report prepared by:

**David J. Connell, PhD RPP MCIP – University of Northern BC**
**Chloe Brogan, Project Manager – BC Association of Farmers' Markets**
**Kate Poirier, Project Coordinator – BC Association of Farmers' Markets**

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## PROJECT SUPPORTERS:

## SUMMARY

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM), in collaboration with Dr. David Connell of the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), completed a large, province-wide study in 2023 to measure the economic impacts[1] of farmers markets in BC. The results of this project show that farmers markets in BC have grown over the past decade, despite unprecedented social, political, and economic challenges, including the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Quantifying the economic contributions of farmers markets encourages long-term support for local BC agriculture and food sectors, along with the thousands of farm and food businesses who sell at farmers markets across BC. Furthermore, this study demonstrates the role of farmers markets as integral low-barrier, direct sales channels for local BC producers and shoppers to connect, while showing us their essential role in local food security and food systems.

The ***2023 BC Farmers' Market Economic Impact Study*** builds upon the success of similar projects completed in 2012 and 2006, which were also led by BCAFM and Dr. David Connell. By using comparable methods, we are able to assess changes over time. This study measures market spending and spending at neighbouring local businesses, both of which contribute to the economic impact of farmers markets in BC. In total, 70 farmers market assessments were completed across the province between May and September, 2023. The provincial economic impact assessment includes both assessed and unassessed BCAFM member markets[2]. Survey results represent participating markets where an assessment was conducted by a trained research associate.

**2023 Provincial Study Highlights:**

- **Annual economic impact[3] of BCAFM member markets: $232.9 million**
    - **28% growth from 2012 to 2023**
- **4.95 million visits and 3.7 million shoppers annually**
- **Annual direct sales at BCAFM member farmers markets: $155.3 million**
    - **Average shopper spending per market visit: $42.50**
- **17% of study participants self-identified as tourists or day-trippers**
- **Shopper spending at other local, neighbouring businesses: $118.51 million**
    - **61% growth from 2012 to 2023**

[1] This study measures the economic benefits of farmers markets. The BC Association of Farmers' Markets chose to use the term "impacts" because of its common use in media communications and its greater recognition by members of the public.

[2] Using data from assessed markets, we are able to estimate the economic impact of unassessed markets by size. This allows a total estimate for the economic impact of all BCAFM member markets.

[3] This is a measure of the "ripple effect" for every dollar spent at farmers markets, including monies vendors spend on inputs for the products sold.

- **80% of study participants said that they would spend $47.17 shopping or eating at other local, neighbouring businesses in the farmers market area**
- **87% of businesses interviewed report that their neighbourhood BCAFM member farmers market has a positive effect on their business**

A summary of results is presented in Table 1 below.

For effective comparison between datasets in 2023 and 2012, results from 2012 have been adjusted to account for inflation over the past decade. The consumer price index (CPI) demonstrates a 41% increase in the cost of food purchased from stores in British Columbia between July 2012 and July 2023[4]. Taking inflation into account:

- The total direct sales at farmers markets increased by 28% between 2012 and 2023, rising from $121 million to $155 million.
- The average amount spent per customer changed from $40.58 to $42.50.

**Table 1.**

*Highlights of Results – 2012 and 2023*

| | ***2012*** | **2012[5] Adjusted** | **2023** | **% Increase** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of BCAFM member farmers markets | | 109[6] | 136 | 25% |
| Number of BCAFM market days | | 2,792 | 3,493 | 25% |
| Number of assessments completed | | 33 | 70 | 112% |
| Average number of dot survey respondents | | 9,819 | 11,489 | 17% |
| Number of shopper surveys (one-on-one) | | 291 | 373 | 28% |
| Average amount **spent per shopper** (dot survey) | *$28.81* | $40.58 | $42.50 | 5% |
| Estimated **total direct sales** | *$85.99 M* | $121.11 M | $155.28 M | 28% |
| Estimated **total economic impact** [7] | *$128.98 M* | $181.66 M | $232.92 M | 28% |
| Average amount spent per market shopper at **local, neighbouring businesses** | *$22.78* | $32.08 | $37.66 | 17% |
| Estimated **total spending at local, neighbouring businesses** | *$52.26 M* | $73.6 M | $118.51 M | 61% |

[4] Statistics Canada. (2023). *Consumer Price Index Data Visualization Tool, Food Purchased from Stores, British Columbia & Canada, July 2012 – August 2023* (Tables 18-10-0004-01, 18-10-0005-01, 18-10-0006-01, 18-10-0256-01, and 18-10-000701). https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/2018016/cpilg-ipcgl-eng.htm

[5] The actual results from 2012 have been adjusted to account for inflation in BC at 41%.

[6] The 2012 study included assessments at non-BCAFM member markets. For the purposes of this report, 2012 results have been adjusted to include only BCAFM member markets at the time. For this reason, the results presented in this report cannot be compared with reports published in 2012.

[7] The results for total economic impact are for all BCAFM member markets and are calculated using a multiplier of 1.5.

The overall growth of BCAFM's economic impact can be attributed to an increase in:

- Number of BCAFM member farmers markets
- Number of large markets with more vendors
- Number of people shopping at farmers markets
- Number of market operating days

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method used to assess individual markets in BC consists of four parts: dot survey; crowd count; shopper survey; and business survey. These are the same methods used for previous BC studies in 2012 and 2006 and are based on the Rapid Market Assessment technique developed by Oregon State University[8]. Six research associates located in different regions of the province completed on-site market assessments with the support of market employees and local volunteers.

### Dot Survey

The dot survey method engaged consumers in friendly interaction through multiple-choice questions posted in large print on paper pads at eye level. This approach has a high response rate, thereby increasing both validity and accuracy.

The colours of dot survey stickers were random, except for yellow stickers which were reserved for tourists and/or day-trippers to the market. Participants were asked: "Are you a tourist or day-tripper?". The following definitions were provided to research associates to assist in communicating with participants:

> *A tourist is someone who is doing overnight stays in the area or region. A day-tripper is someone from the area or region who made a special trip into town for the day. Special trip is not something they usually do.*

[8] Brewer, L., Lev, L., & Stephenson, G. (2008). *Tools for Rapid Market Assessments.* Oregon State University. https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/sr1088.pdf

Picture 1 is an example of a dot survey on the day of a market assessment.

**Picture 1.**

*Dot Survey Market Set-up*


There were four questions, developed by the research team, asked at all participating farmers markets. These questions are outlined in Box 1. A fifth question was developed by each participating market to collect data relevant to the local market. Market specific questions are detailed in the relevant market's final report.

**Box 1.**

*Dot Survey Questions*

1. How much have you spent, or do you plan to spend, at the market today?
2. How often do you come to this farmers market?
3. If you plan to do additional shopping or eating while in this area of town today, how much do you plan to spend?
4. When did you start shopping at this market?

### Crowd Count

During a ten-minute period of each hour a market is open, members of the assessment team and market volunteers stood at each major entry point to the market and counted people entering. The total number of attendees is estimated from these systematic counts using an established formula of multiplying the actual counts by six to determine estimated hourly attendance.

## Shopper Count

The number of shoppers on the day of assessment is adjusted according to a few factors. While we assume that 75% of the crowd count are shoppers, the final shopper count is influenced by the seasonal trend reported by market representatives. Moreover, external factors on the day of assessment (such as extreme weather or community events) may mandate adjustments in order to estimate peak shoppers.

## Shopper Surveys

At each market, a small sample of customers were asked to participate in a short interview. People were asked about where they shop, factors they consider when buying food, how long they spend at the market, and how they spend their time when at the market. Customers were also asked if they shop at other businesses on the same day that they visit the farmers market.

Given the small sample size collected at each market, only results aggregated at the provincial level are shown. The information collected from shoppers builds upon the dot survey data, providing additional insights into market customers. Together, the dot survey and the more detailed shopper surveys improve our understanding of what makes farmers markets successful and how they contribute to the local area, in terms of both economic and social impacts.

## Local Neighbouring Business Surveys

Neighbouring businesses located near assessed farmers markets were surveyed to assess the influence of the market on neighbouring businesses and to explore the nature of the relationship. Surveys were not completed at farmers markets that did not have other businesses located nearby. Given the small sample size collected at each market, only results aggregated at the provincial level are shown. The business information helps to understand the relationship between farmers markets and local, neighbouring businesses generally.

## Assessed Markets

All members of the BC Association of Farmers' Markets were invited to participate in the study for a total of 70 assessments. Each participating market received a small honorarium for their efforts. A list of markets with on-site assessments in the 2023 study is provided in Table 2 (next page).

Size categories are determined by the number of vendors at each market as follows:

- Small: 1-19 vendors
- Medium: 20-39 vendors
- Large: 40-99 vendors
- Very Large: 100+ vendors

## Tourist & Day-tripper Analysis

Tourist and day-tripper averages referenced in this report are based on markets, as opposed to shoppers. The regional averages in this report rely on the percentages of locals and tourists/day-trippers for each assessed market and markets are weighed equally. The results would differ if averages were calculated proportionate to the number of shoppers.

## Research Associates

A team of six research associates, located in different regions, were hired to conduct on-site market assessments across the province. Research associates, along with Dr. David Connell, Project Lead, the Project Manager, and Project Coordinator met in-person for training and a trial market assessment at the start of the project. Research associates were then responsible for implementing study methods consistently to the best of their ability at 70 market assessments in BC, with ongoing remote support from the study team.

## Limitations

The goal of all researchers is to be as accurate and precise as possible. Inevitably, there are trade-offs when these aims compete with other goals. In this study, the project team chose to prioritize engaging as many shoppers as possible in our five-question dot survey. This approach helped to support relations between shoppers and the farmers markets, and with over 11,000 shoppers participating in the dot survey, we gained accuracy. On the other hand, the simple questions reduced our level of precision. The quality of our results was also affected by the diversity among markets, including factors such as: size of the market, physical characteristics of the market (e.g., flow of customers), how busy the market was on the day of the assessment, and weather conditions.

Differences among our research associates also contributed to different outcomes. For example, the question “Are you a tourist or day-tripper?” was not asked consistently with all participants at all market assessments. These and other factors affected levels of participation in the dot survey and one-on-one surveys in different markets.

**Table 2.**

*List of Participating Markets*

| Market Name | Location | Size |
|---|---|---|
| Abbotsford Farm & Country Market | Abbotsford | Large |
| Ambleside Artisan Farmers Market | Ambleside | Large |
| Armstrong Farmers' Market | Armstrong | Large |
| Burnaby Artisan Farmers Market | Burnaby | Large |
| Bulkley Valley Farmers' Market | Smithers | Large |
| Cranbrook Farmer's Market | Cranbrook | Large |
| Cariboo Direct / Williams Lake Farmers' Market | Williams Lake | Large |
| Cedar Farmers Market | Cedar | Very Large |
| Clearwater Farmer's Market | Clearwater | Medium |
| Comox Valley Farmers' Market – Saturday & Fall/Winter | Courtenay | Large |
| Comox Valley Farmers' Market – Sunday | Cumberland | Small |
| Comox Valley Farmers' Market – Wednesday | Courtenay | Small |
| Coquitlam Farmers Market | Coquitlam | Large |
| Campbell River Farmers Market | Campbell River | Large |
| Creston Valley Farmer's Market | Creston | Large |
| Daajing Giids Farmers' Market | Daajing Giids | Small |
| Downtown Farmers Market | Vancouver | Large |
| Duncan Farmers' Market | Duncan | Very Large |
| False Creek Farmers Market | Vancouver | Medium |
| Fernie Mountain Market | Fernie | Medium |
| Gabriola Agricultural Co-op – Saturday Farmers Market | Gabriola Island | Large |
| Grand Forks Farmers' Market | Grand Forks | Medium |
| Haney Farmers Market | Maple Ridge | Large |
| Houston Farmer's Market | Houston | Small |
| Hazelton Farmers' Market | Hazelton | Medium |
| Island Roots Market Co-op | Nanaimo | Medium |
| Kelowna Farmers' & Crafters' Market – Downtown | Kelowna | Large |
| Kaslo Saturday Market | Kaslo | Medium |
| Kamloops Regional Farmers' Market – Saturday | Kamloops | Very Large |
| Kamloops Regional Farmers' Market – Wednesday | Kamloops | Medium |
| Kelowna Farmers' & Crafters' Market | Kelowna | Very Large |
| Kitsilano Farmers Market | Kitsilano | Large |
| Kwséltkten Farmers' and Artisan Market | Kamloops | Medium |
| Ladner Village Market | Ladner | Very Large |
| Lillooet Farmers Market | Lillooet | Small |
| Mission City Farmers Market | Mission | Medium |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mount Pleasant Famers Market | Mount Pleasant | Medium |
| Masset Market | Masset | Medium |
| Nelson Farmers Market – Saturday | Nelson | Large |
| Nelson Farmers Market – Wednesday | Nelson | Large |
| New West Farmers' Market | New West | Large |
| Spirit Square Farmers' Market | Port Alberni | Medium |
| Pemberton Farmers' Market | Pemberton | Medium |
| Port Coquitlam Farmers Market | Port Coquitlam | Medium |
| Prince George Farmers' Market | Prince George | Large |
| Pender Island Farmers' Market – Saturday | Pender Island | Large |
| Pender Island Farmers' Market – Wednesday | Pender Island | Small |
| Port Moody Farmers Market | Port Moody | Medium |
| Powell River Farmers' Market | Powell River | Large |
| Pitt Meadows Farmers Market | Pitt Meadows | Medium |
| Qualicum Beach Farmers Market | Qualicum Beach | Very Large |
| Quesnel Farmer's Market | Quesnel | Large |
| Riley Park Farmers Market - Summer & Winter | Vancouver | Large |
| Revelstoke Local Food Initiative | Revelstoke | Large |
| Revelstoke Farm and Craft Market | Revelstoke | Medium |
| South Cariboo Farmers' Market | 100 Mile House | Medium |
| Sechelt Farmers' and Artisans' Market | Sechelt | Large |
| Downtown Salmon Arm Farmers' Market | Salmon Arm | Large |
| Sooke Night Market | Sooke | Medium |
| Sooke Country Market | Sooke | Medium |
| Squamish Farmers' Market | Squamish | Large |
| Salt Spring Tuesday Farmers' Market | Ganges | Medium |
| Surrey Urban Farmers Market | Surrey | Medium |
| Skeena Valley Farmers Market | Terrace | Large |
| Tlell Farmers' Market | Tlell | Small |
| Trail's IncrEDIBLE Farmers Market | Trail | Large |
| Trout Lake Farmers Market | Vancouver | Large |
| UBC Farm Saturday Farmers' Market | Vancouver | Large |
| Vanderhoof Farmers' Market | Vanderhoof | Large |
| Valemount Farmers' Market | Valemount | Small |
| Vernon Farmers' Market | Vernon | Very Large |
| West End Farmers Market | Vancouver | Medium |
| White Rock Farmers' Market | White Rock | Large |

# ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSESSMENT

The information collected at the 70 assessment sites enables us to measure the economic impacts of all BCAFM member farmers markets. Using data from assessed markets, we can estimate figures for unassessed markets accounting for the number of vendors and operating days.

## Annual Direct Sales

The amount of money spent by farmers market shoppers (referred to as direct sales) is an effective way to measure economic impacts of a farmers market. This impact is the measure of total annual sales of a farmers market.

Annual sales are calculated as follows:

| Average Expenditure by Shopper | X | Number of Spending Shoppers per Market Day[9] | X | Number of Market Days per Year | X | Seasonal Factor[10] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

All 70 assessed farmers markets, seasonally adjusted annual direct sales: **$113.03 M**

Unassessed farmers markets, estimated annual direct sales: **$42.25 M**

**Annual Direct Sales (2023): $155.28 million**

## Multiplier Effect

Another measure of economic impacts of farmers markets is to measure the ripple effect of people spending dollars at the market: “If I spend $1 at the market then how does this dollar benefit the local economy?”. The ripple effect includes both the profit to the market vendor and the monies the vendor spent on inputs for the products sold at the market, such as: seeds, feed, tools, and ingredients.

In this study we measure revenues and account for the ripple effect using a multiplier of 1.5[11,12] to calculate the economic impact. This multiplier means that for every dollar spent at the market, another $0.50 was spent in the local economy.

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[9] The number of spending customers is 75% of the seasonally adjusted, estimated crowd count for a peak market day.

[10] The seasonal factor accounts for varying sales and crowd levels during a market season and is based on data provided by the market manager and/or long-time vendors.

[11] Hughes, D.W., Brown, C., Miller, S., & McConnell, T. (2008) Evaluating the economic impact of farmers' markets using an opportunity cost framework. *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics, 40*(1), 253-265. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-agricultural-and-applied-economics/article/abs/evaluating-the-economic-impact-of-farmers-markets-using-an-opportunity-cost-framework/E57B46247B82A049139B0FE6804234D8

[12] Otto, D., & Varner, T. (2005). Consumers, vendors, and the economic importance of Iowa farmers' markets: An economic impact survey analysis. Ames, Iowa: Leopold Centre for Sustainable Agriculture. Retrieved from: https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/entities/publication/45ba02a3-1938-464b-81f0-24f7a4bd8d02

Using a multiplier of 1.5, the annual economic impact is approximately:

**Annual Economic Impact (2023): $232.92 million**

This calculation means that BCAFM member markets contribute an estimated $232.92 million to the provincial economy each year. These monies benefit not only market vendors but also the local businesses that supply inputs used by these vendors.

### Community Impact

We can also assess the ‘spillover’ effect that BCAFM member-markets have on their neighbouring businesses. Based on dot survey results for question three, we can estimate the impact of market customers spending additional dollars at local, neighbouring businesses on the day of the market. Using the same formula for estimating sales, as above, the annual spending at neighbouring businesses is approximately:

**Annual Spending at Local Neighbouring Businesses (2023): $118.51 million**

## MARKET ASSESSMENT RESULTS

This section reviews the results of the crowd count estimates and dot surveys, as well as provincial-level results from the shopper and business surveys from assessed markets.

### Shopper Counts

The results in Chart 1 (next page) showcase the average number of shoppers attending a farmers market on an hourly basis in 2023. The number of shoppers attending a BCAFM member market is on average, 377 people per hour.

As illustrated, there is a wide variation among markets. The number of shoppers peaks at Ladner Village Market with 1,205 per hour and is lowest at the Tlell Farmers’ Market on Haida Gwaii with 24 shoppers per hour.

Chart 2 (page 11) showcases a comparison between those BCAFM member markets that were assessed in both 2012 and 2023.

## Chart 1.

*Average Number of Hourly Shoppers in Peak Season*

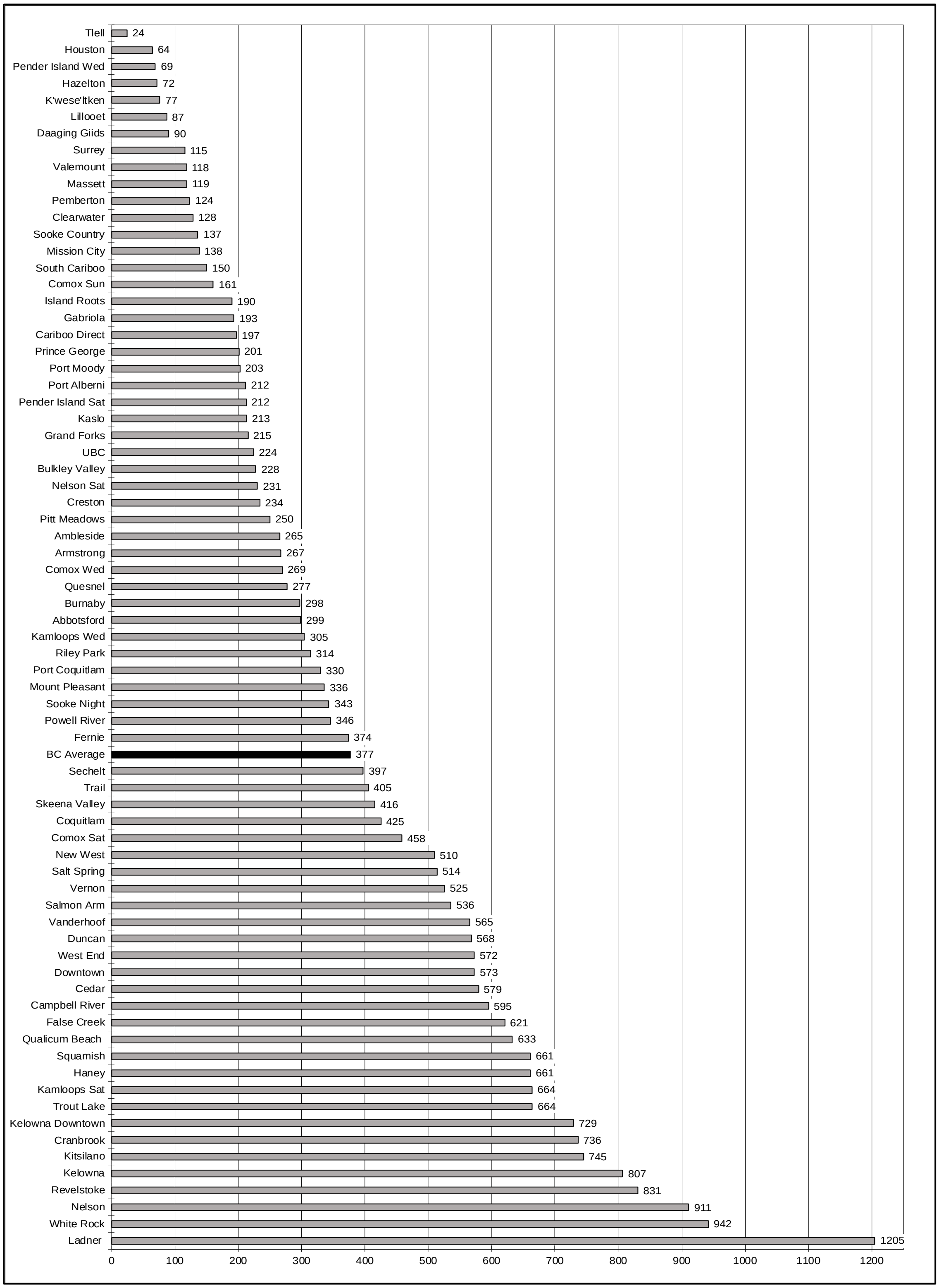
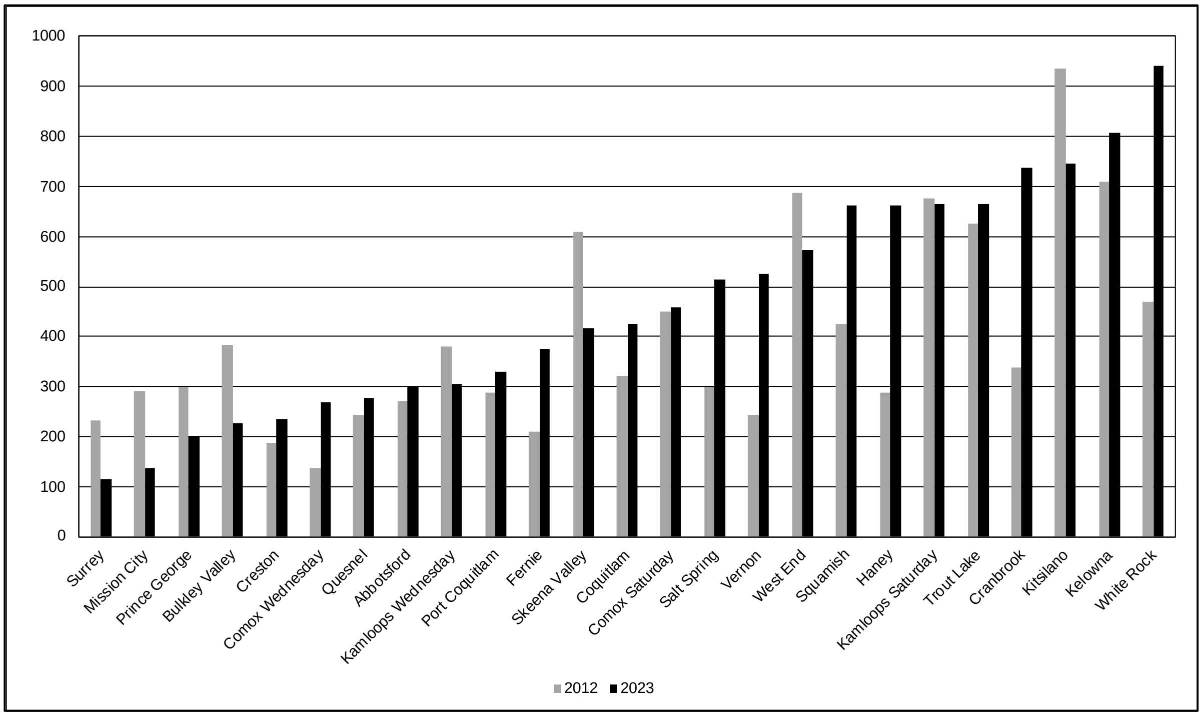


**Chart 2.**

*Average Number of Hourly Shoppers in Peak Season – Assessed 2012 & 2023*



## Dot Survey

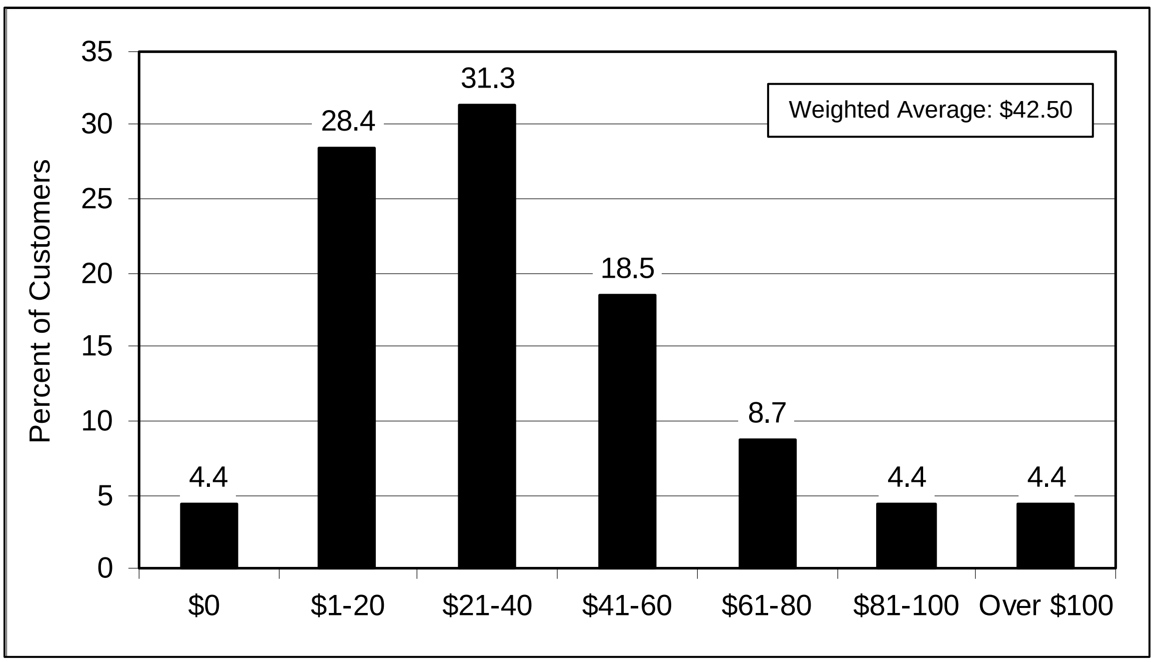
An average of 11,489 people participated in the dot surveys, which is about 8% of estimated total crowd counts for all of the market assessments.

### Question 1. How much have you spent, or do you plan to spend, at the market today?

Overall, in 2023 respondents spent an average[13] of $42.50 each on the day of assessment[14]. As shown in Chart 3, 60% of provincial respondents indicated that they would spend up to $40 on the day of the market assessment.

**Chart 3.**

*Average Market Spending – 2023 (n=11,504)*




[13] Experience Renewal Solutions, & Connell, D.J. (2009). *National Farmers' Market Impact Study.* Farmers' Markets Canada. https://www2.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/sections/david-connell/farmers-markets/nationalfarmersmarketimpactstudy2009.pdf

[14] The average spent per customer both at markets and adjacent businesses is weighted by category based on results of a national study of farmers markets completed in 2008.

As shown in Chart 4, more shoppers in 2023 are spending an amount over $40 more frequently than they did in 2012. The weighted average from 2012 has been adjusted to account for inflation.

**Chart 4.**

*Average Market Spending (2012=9,819; 2023=11,504)*

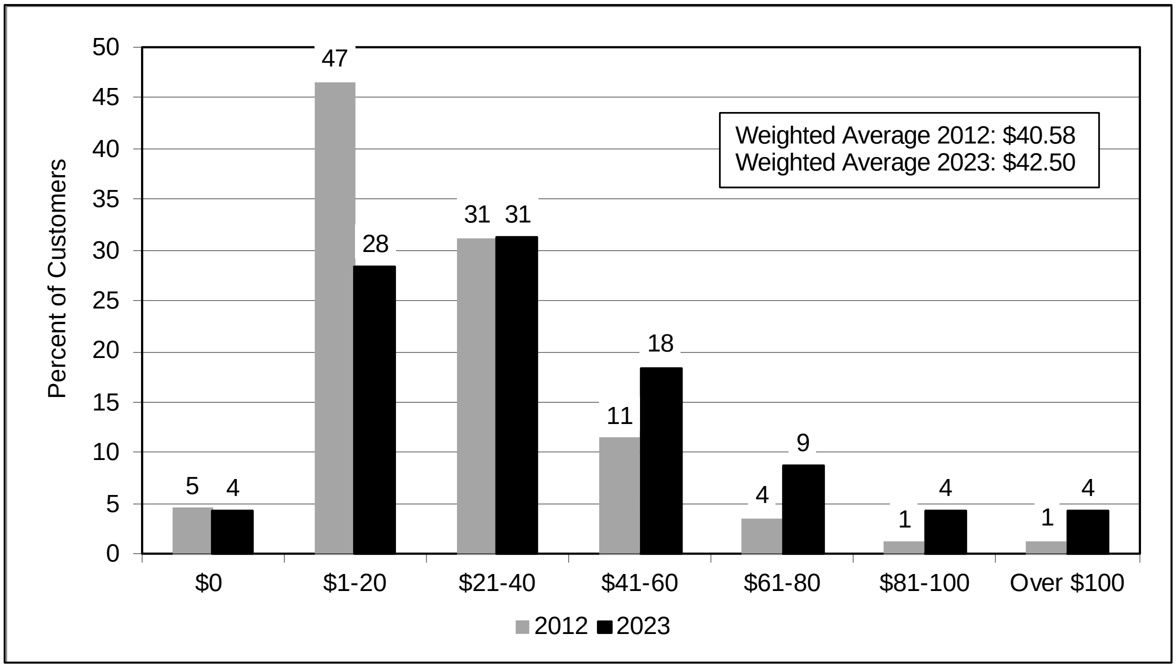


Chart 5 shows spending differences between locals and those who self-identified as tourists or day-trippers. On average, locals spend a few dollars more at their market than tourists or day-trippers do. Locals spend $43.04 and tourists spend an average of $39.29.

**Chart 5.**

*Average Market Spending – 2023 (Locals=9,849; Tourists/Day-trippers=1,655)*

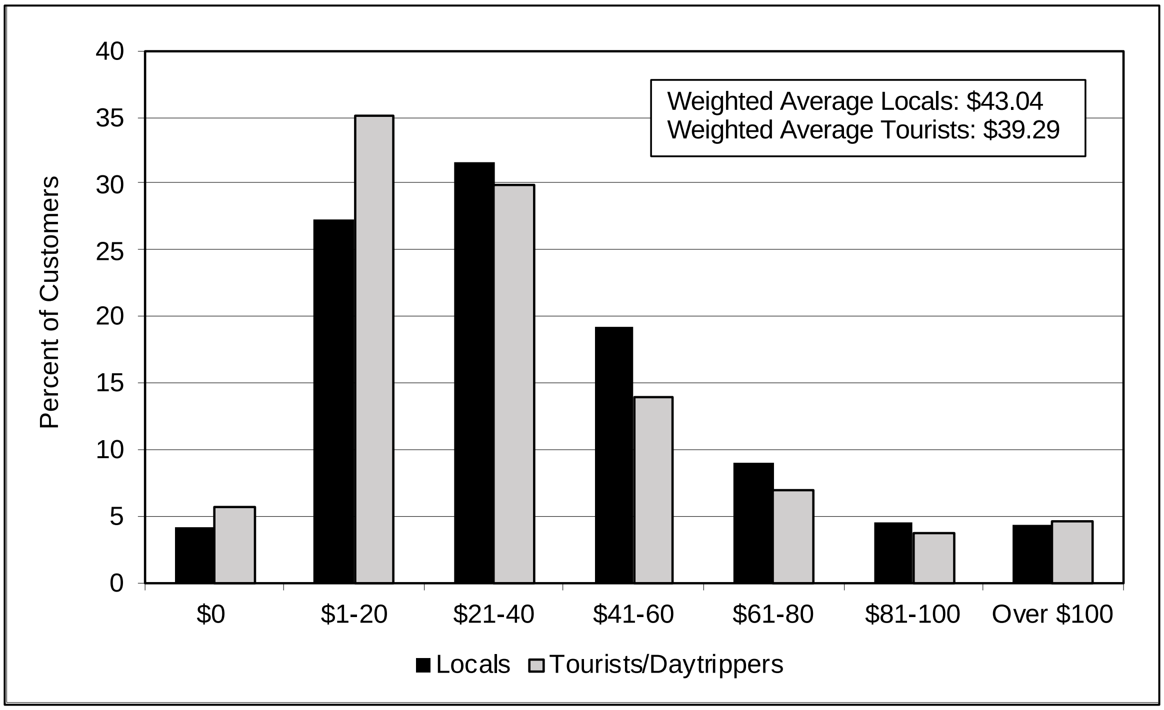
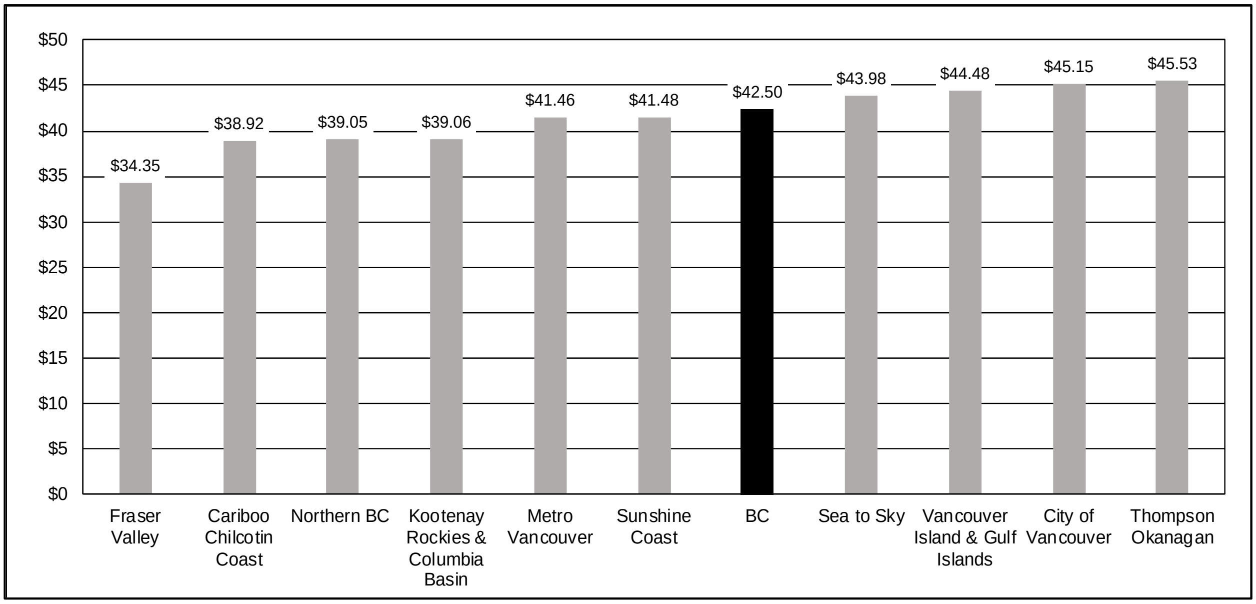


Chart 6 demonstrates the average amount spent per customer by BCAFM region. Spending ranges from $34.35 per person in the Fraser Valley to $45.53 in the Sea to Sky corridor.

***Chart 6*.**

*Average Amount Spent by Region – 2023*



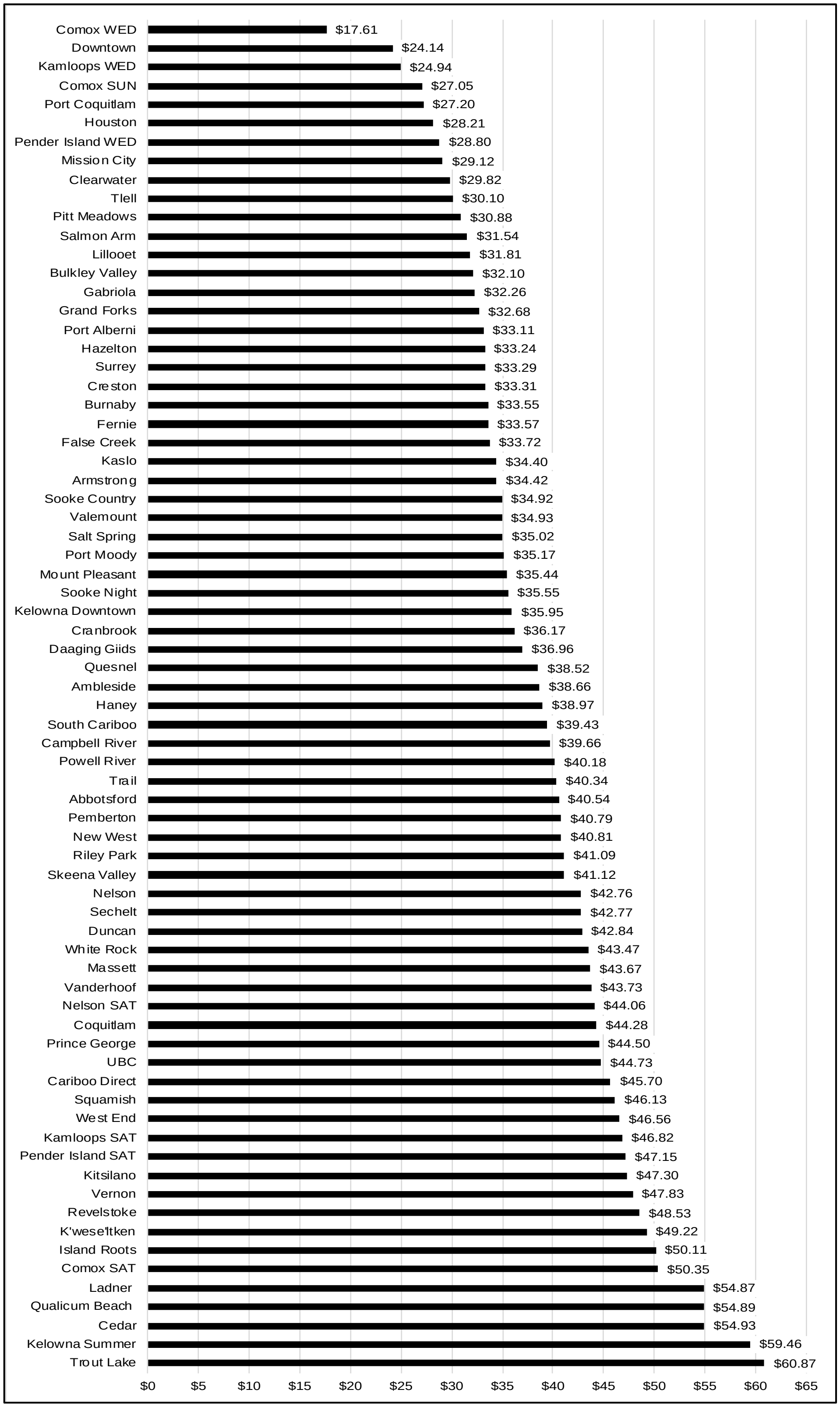

Number of markets assessed in each region:

- Fraser Valley – 2
- Northern BC – 9
- Kootenays Rockies & Columbia Basin – 10
- Metro Vancouver – 11
- Cariboo Chilcotin Coast – 4
- Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands – 15
- Thompson Okanagan – 9
- Sunshine Coast – 2
- Sea to Sky – 2

Chart 7 (next page) shows the average amount spent at all assessed markets in 2023. Spending at markets varies widely, starting with $17.61 at the Wednesday Comox Valley Farmers' Market in Courtenay. Trout Lake Farmers Market in Vancouver had the highest average spent per person on the day of their market assessment with an average of $60.87.

**Chart 7.**

*Average Amount Spent per Customer at Assessed Markets – 2023*



**Question 2. How often do you come to this farmers market?**

Chart 8 shows that nearly half (47%) of all survey participants attend a BC farmers market at least twice per month. First-time visitors made up 21% of respondents.

**Chart 8.**

*Shopper Frequency – 2023 (n=11,659)*

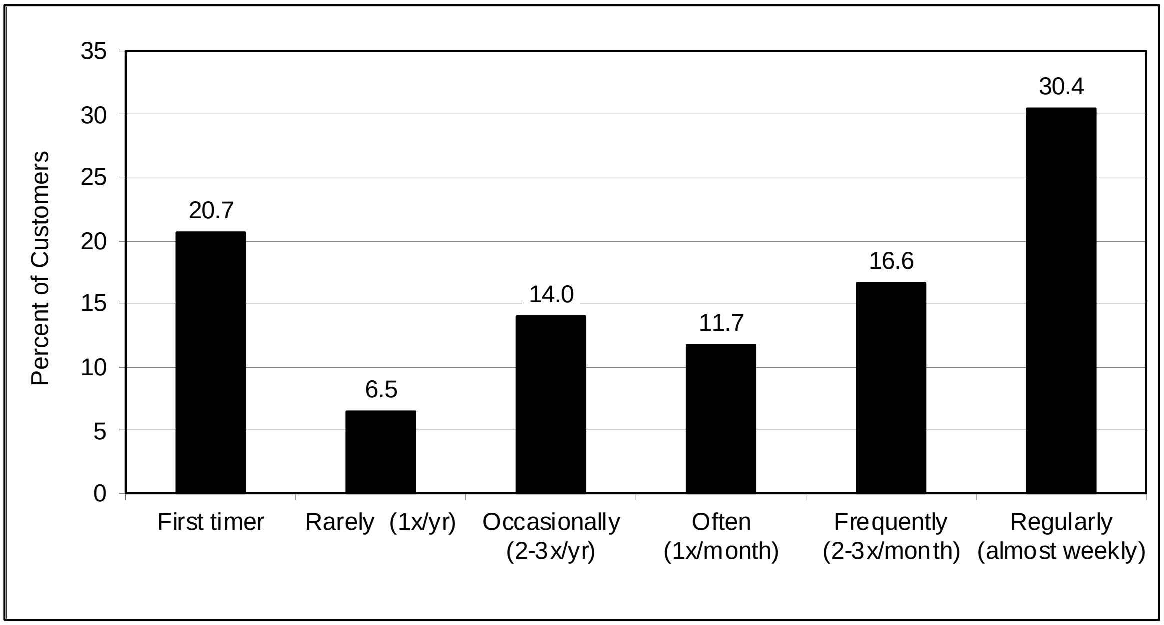



Chart 9 (next page) compares shopper frequency in 2012 to 2023. Chart 10 (next page) compares the shopping frequency of locals to tourists and day-trippers in 2023.

**Chart 9.**

*Shopper Frequency Comparison (2012=9,874; 2023=11,659)*

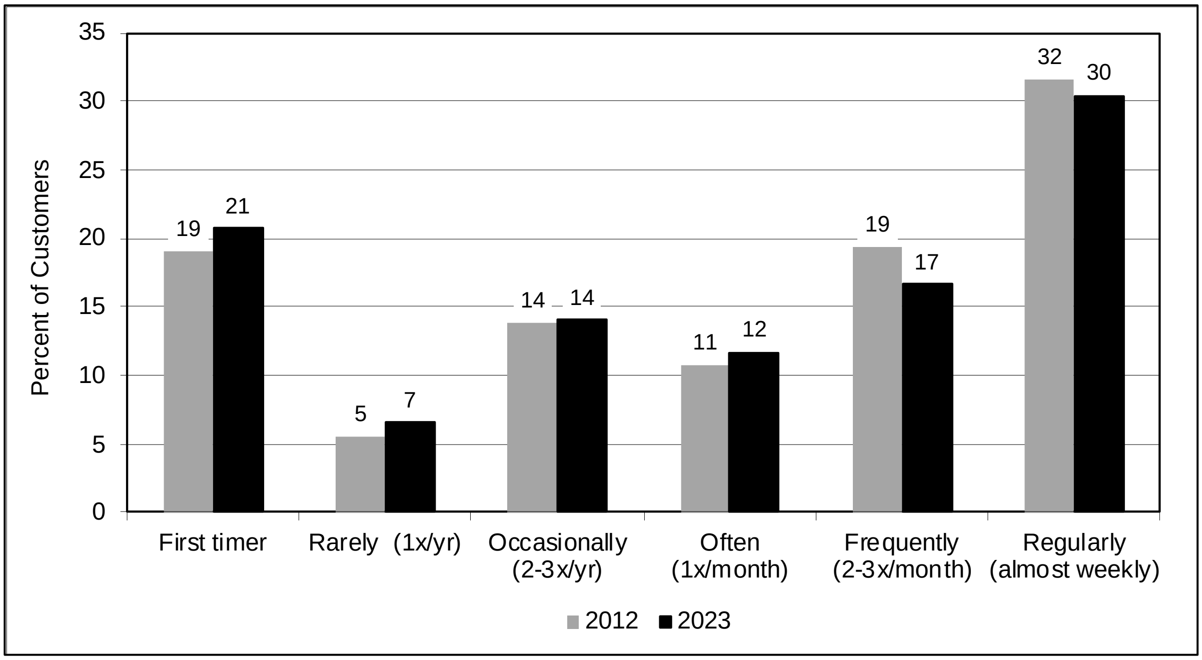
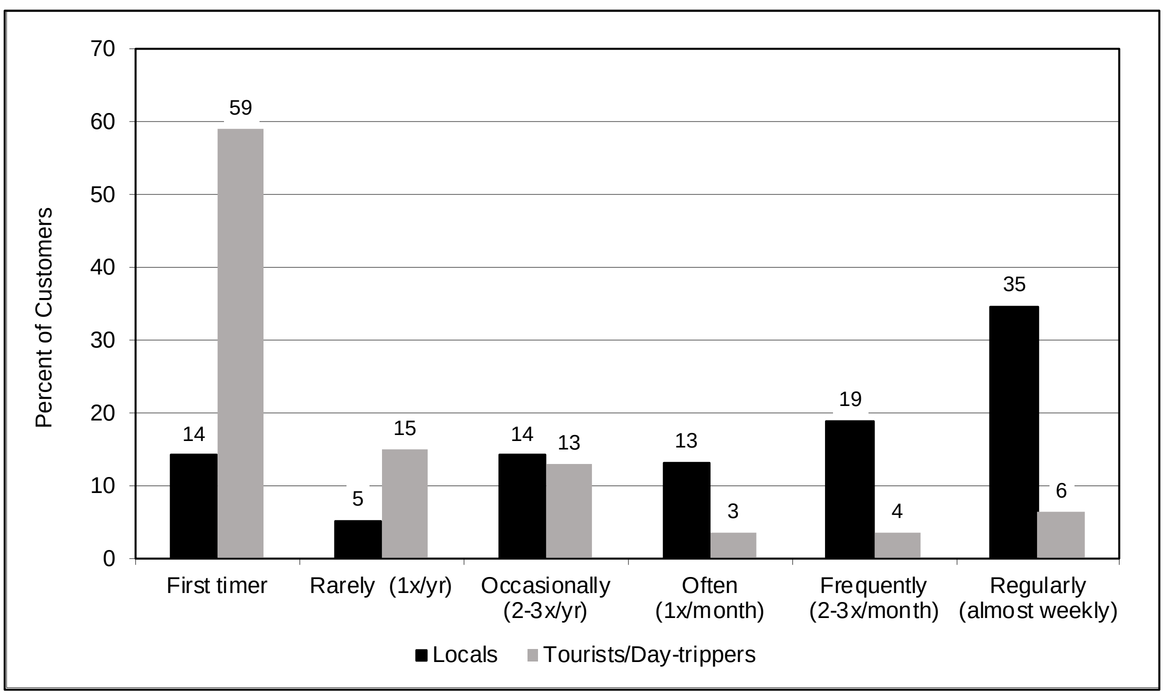



**Chart 10.**

*Shopper Frequency – 2023 (Locals=9,957; Tourists/day-trippers=1,702)*



**Question 3. If you plan to do additional shopping or eating while in this area of town today, how much do you plan to spend?**

Chart 11 shows the range of additional spending by market customers on assessment days, with 80% of respondents saying they would do additional shopping at neighbouring businesses. In 2012, 71% of study participants indicated the same.

Over half of customers surveyed (52%) said they would spend up to $40 and the average amount spent per customer at neighbouring businesses was $37.66. These results show some increase from the results of the 2012 study, where the average amount spent at neighboring businesses was $32.08 (adjusted for inflation).

**Chart 11.**

*Adjacent Business Spending – 2023 (n=11,244)*

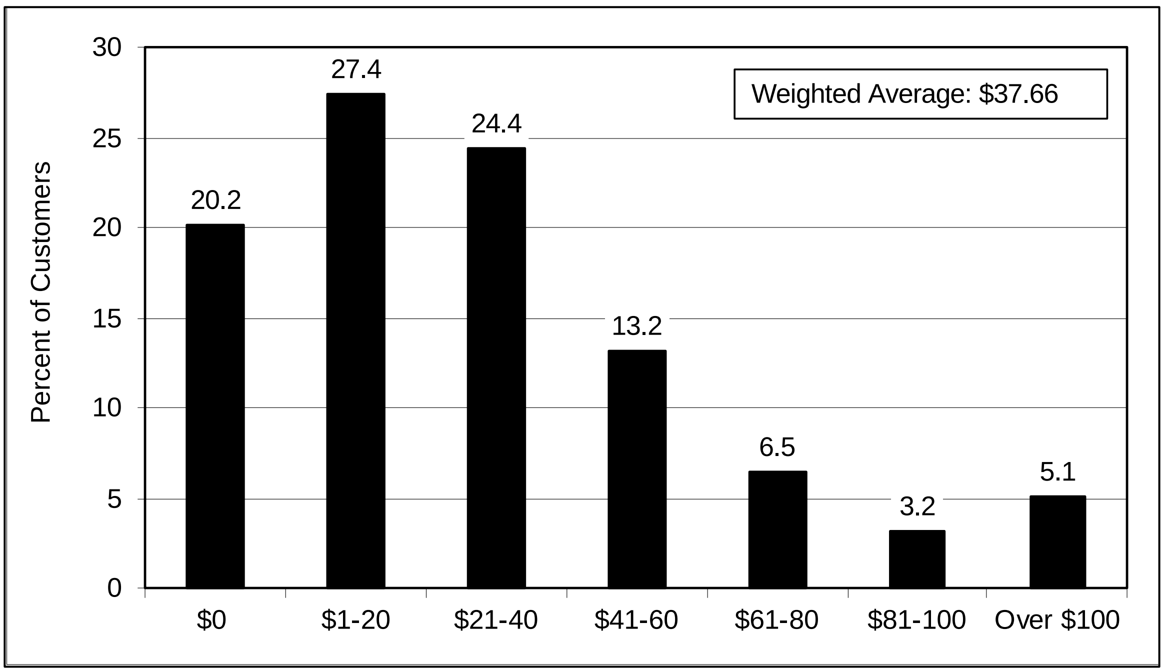



Chart 12 (next page) showcases adjacent business spending in 2012 and 2023. Not only are more people shopping at neighbouring businesses generally in 2023, people are spending over $20 more often than they did in 2012.

**Chart 12.**

*Adjacent Business Spending (2012=9,578; 2023=11,244)*

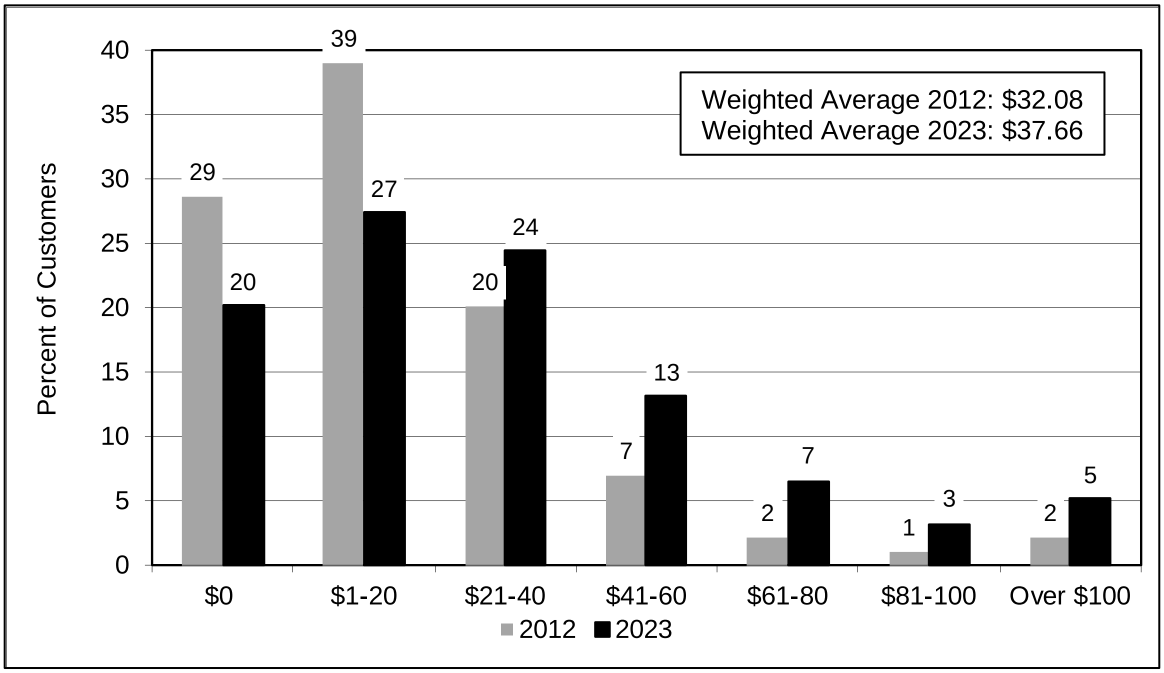
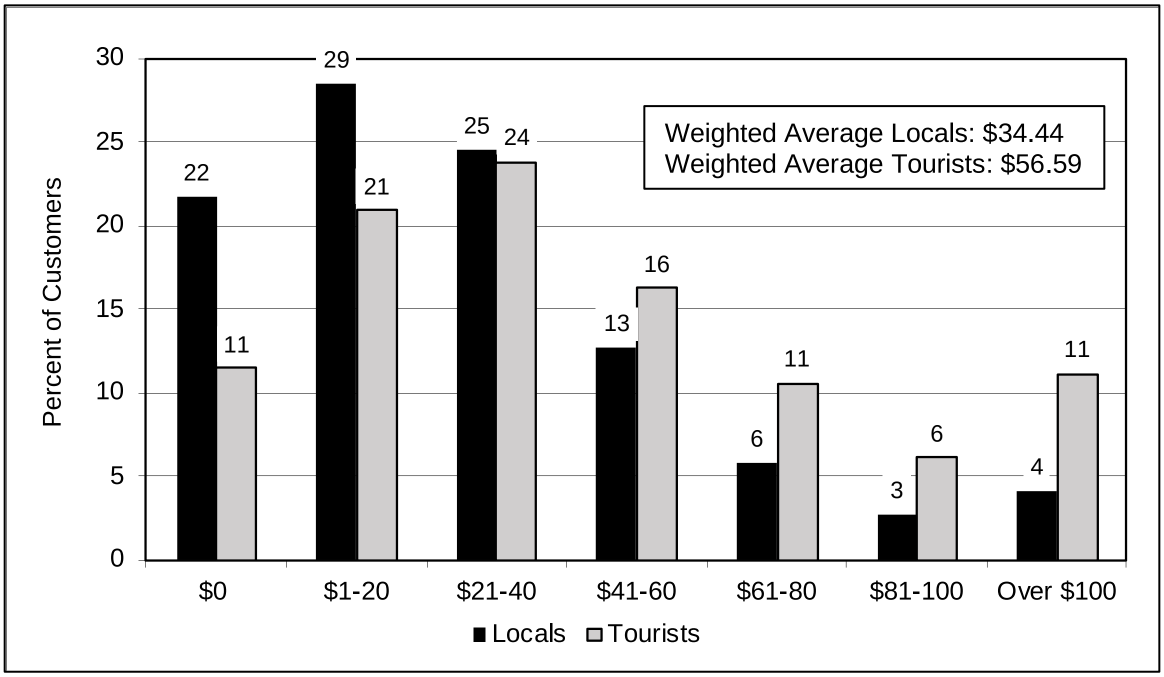



Chart 13 (next page) demonstrates different spending habits between locals and tourists or day-trippers in regard to shopping at neighbouring businesses. While 78% of locals indicated that they would shop at adjacent businesses, 89% of tourists and day-trippers also would. Tourist and day-tripper spending was significantly higher than local spending.

**Chart 13.**

*Adjacent Business Spending – 2023 (Locals=9,609; Tourists/Day-trippers=1,635)*




## Question 4. When did you start shopping at this farmers market?

Farmers markets in BC have a good proportion of long-time, loyal customers. Nearly one-quarter of all survey participants (24%) started shopping at a BCAFM member market more than 10 years ago. A further 31% of respondents have been visiting farmers markets for three to nine years. It is notable that 27% of survey respondents just started shopping at the assessed markets this year, in 2023. Charts 14 and 15 (next page) demonstrate 2023 and 2012 results respectively.

**Chart 14.**

*Market Attendance – 2023 (n=11,547)*

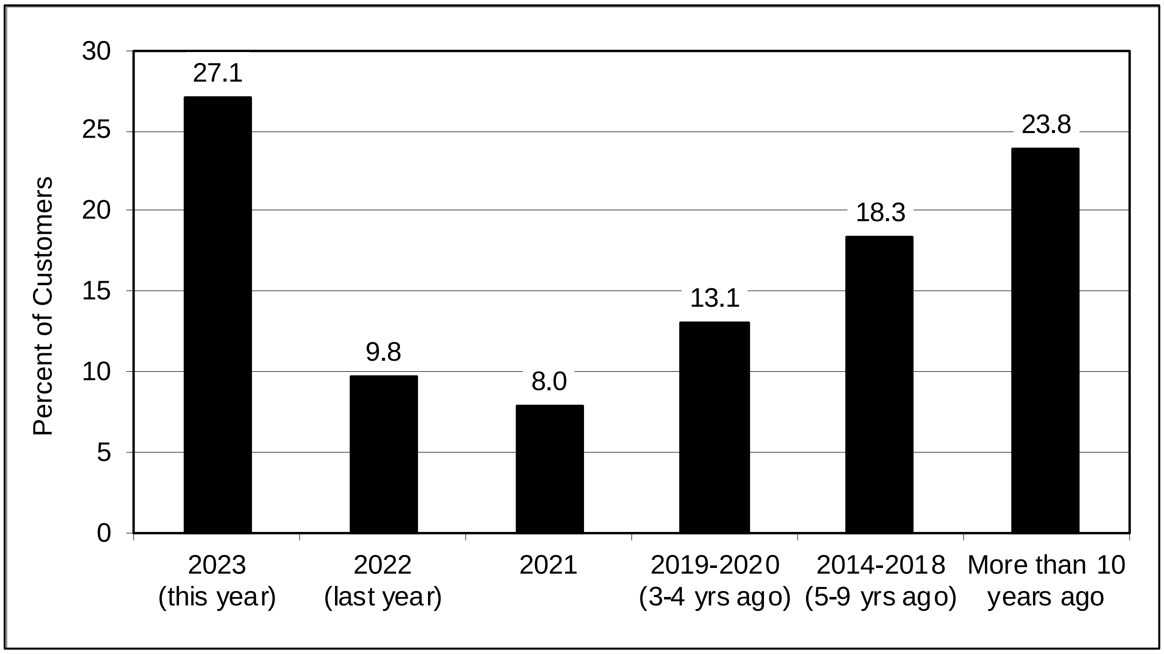
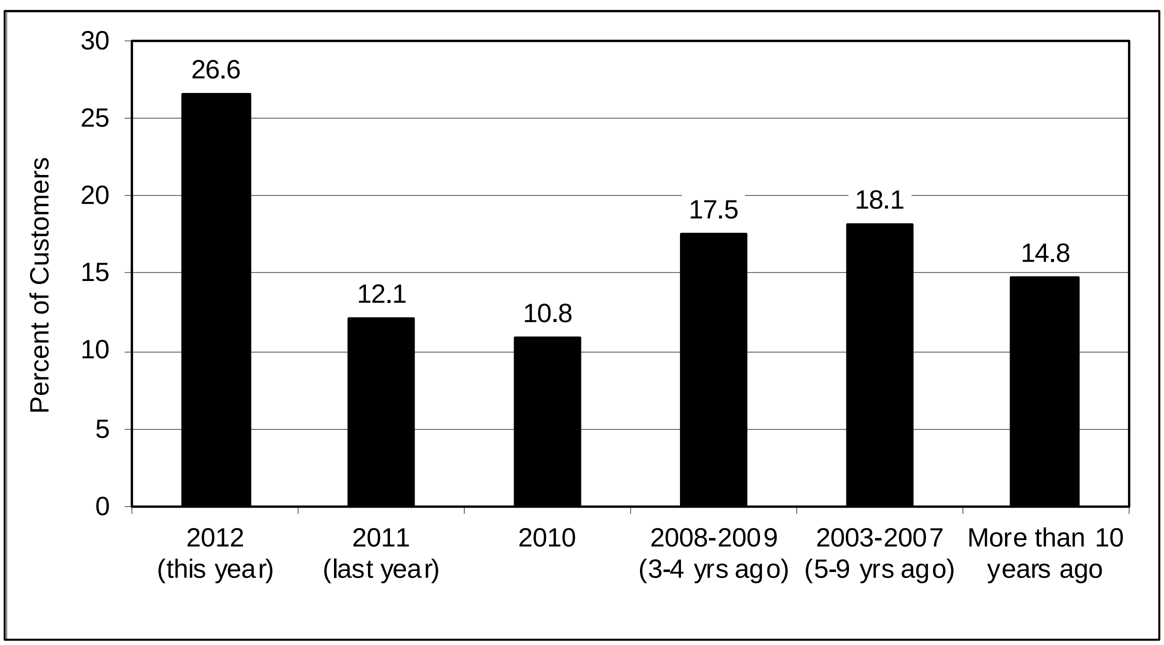



**Chart 15.**

*Market Attendance – 2012 (n=9,010)*



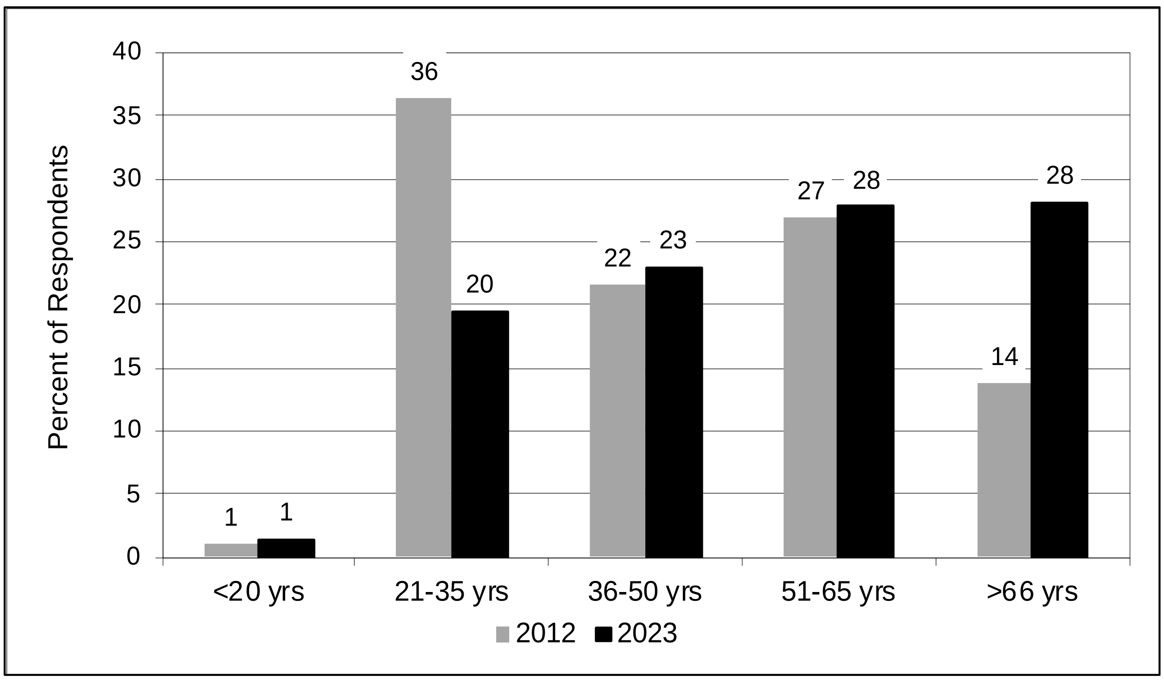
## Shopper Surveys

A total of 373 interviews were completed at 70 markets in BC. The following charts show results of all the shoppers surveyed one-on-one across the province. When interpreting the results of these surveys, it should be noted that people who support the market most frequently are also more likely to agree to an interview. The over-representation of regular shoppers is demonstrated when we compare the respondents who reported shopping almost weekly, which was 30% of the dot survey participants, compared to 43% of shopper survey participants. It should be acknowledged that the following results represent only the market shoppers we interviewed.

The results in Chart 16 show the age range of interview participants at assessed farmers market across BC in 2012 and 2023. There is a notable decline in the number of respondents ages 21-35, while respondents over 66 years old doubled in 2023.

**Chart 16.**

*Age of Respondents. (2012=274; 2023=348)*



The household income of shoppers at farmers markets in BC is shown in Chart 17. The results show that people from households with a range of incomes shop at farmers markets in BC.

**Chart 17**.

*Household Income (2023=356)*

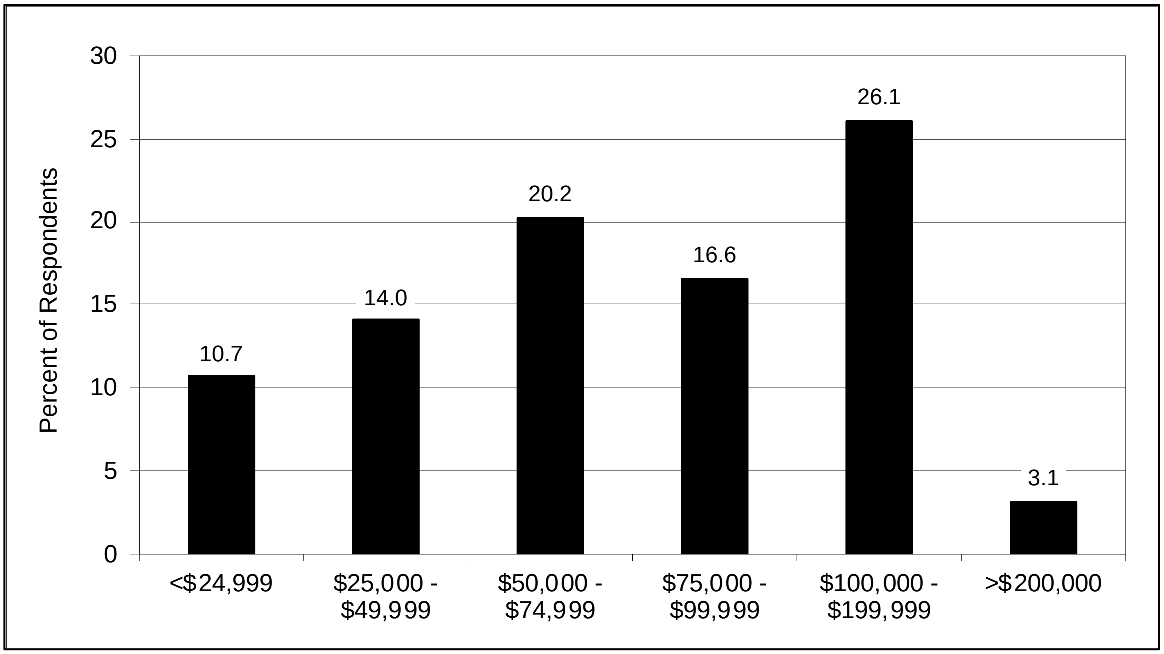
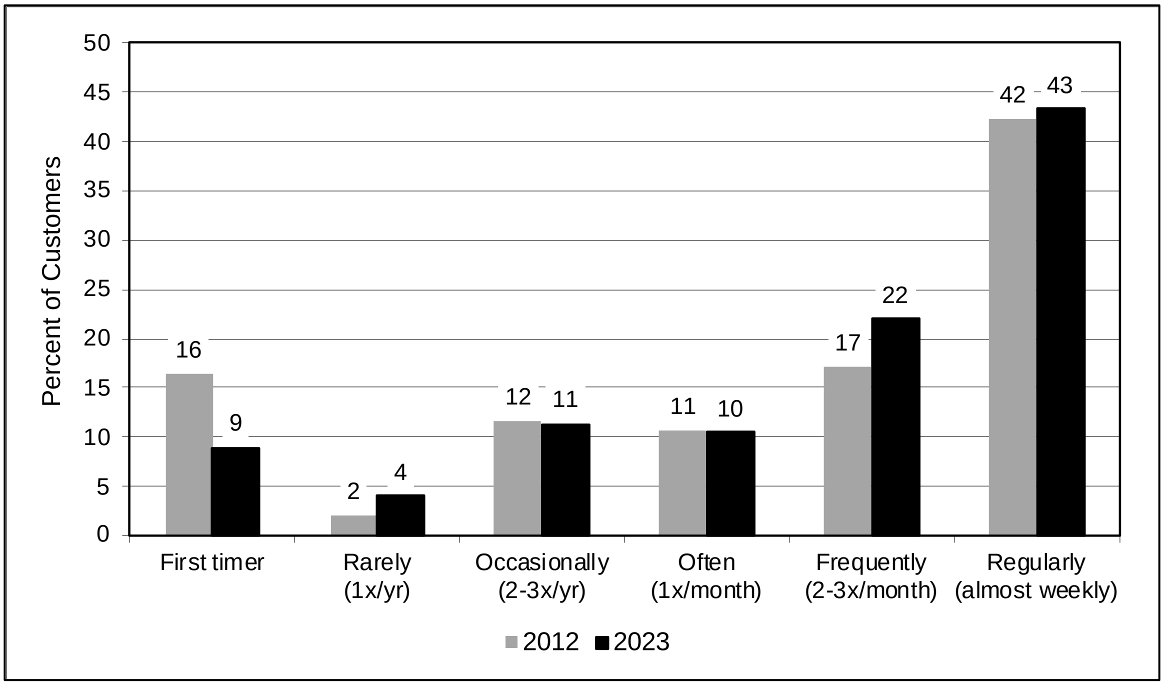


Chart 18 demonstrates the frequency of visits to farmers markets. As previously noted, the results do over-represent regular shoppers due to the nature of survey participation. The actual results are likely to reflect less frequent shopping behaviour, but are still significant.

**Chart 18.**

*Frequency of Visits to Farmers Markets (2012=291; 2023=372)*



Shoppers were asked where and how often they buy groceries at other food retail outlets during the regular outdoor market season. Chart 19 shows where people bought their food in 2012 and 2023. Notably, farmers markets have remained a consistent shopping destination, while stops at health food and warehouse, big box stores increased in 2023.

**Chart 19.**

*Where Shoppers Buy Groceries During the Outdoor Market Season (2012=289; 2023=347)*

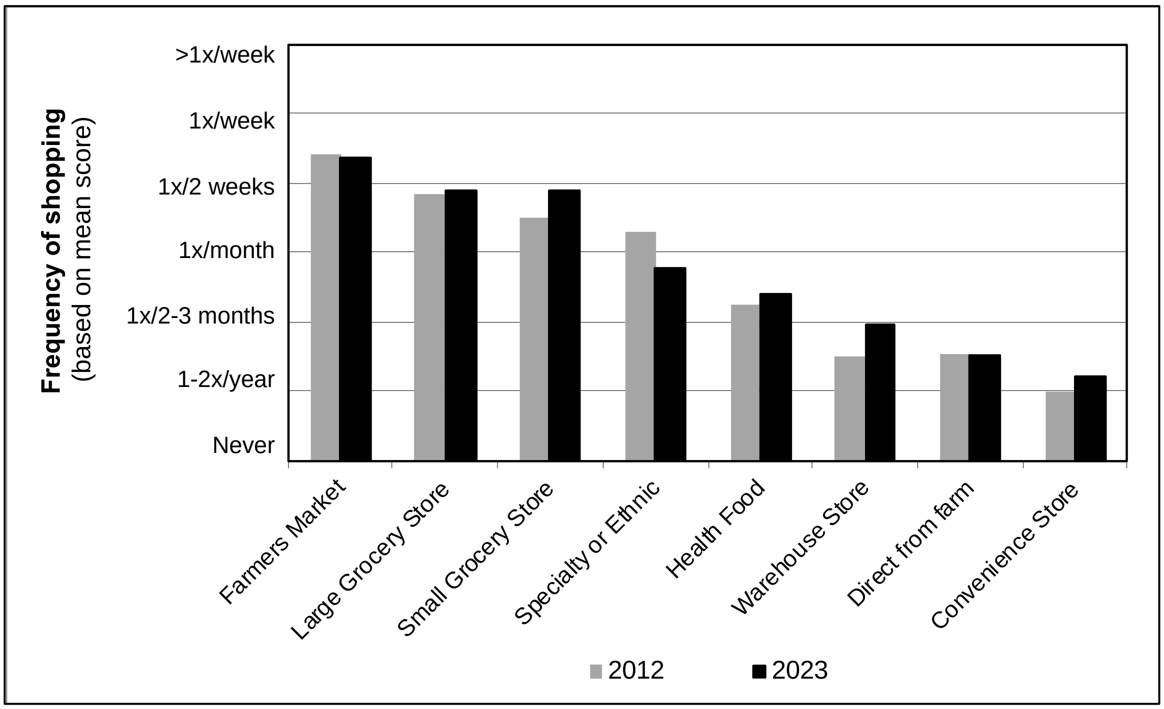
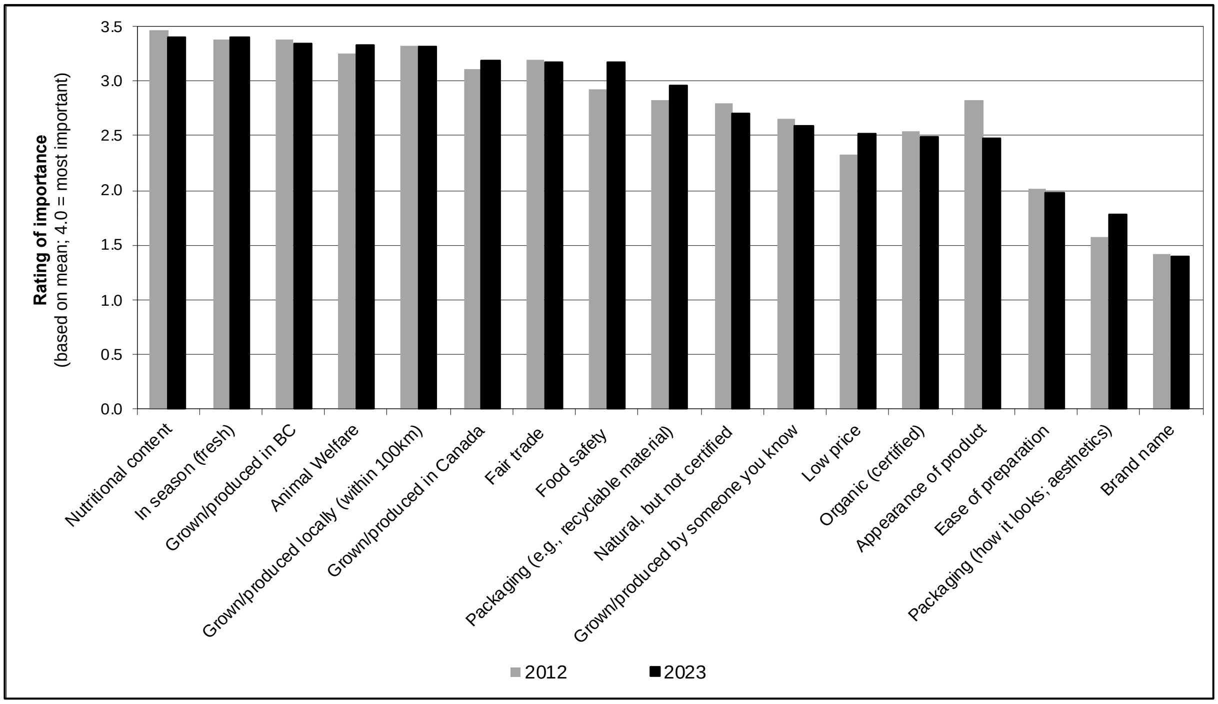


Chart 20 provides insight into shopping patterns and the factors customers consider when buying food. Generally, values have remained consistent between 2012 and 2023.

**Chart 20.**

*Factors People Consider when Buying Food (2012=286; 2023=363)*




Shoppers were asked how much time they spend at the market during their visits and whether they spend any of that time talking with vendors and/or friends (Charts 21 and 22 respectively, next page)

**Chart 21.**

*Length of Time Shoppers Spend at the Market (2012=291; 2023=370)*

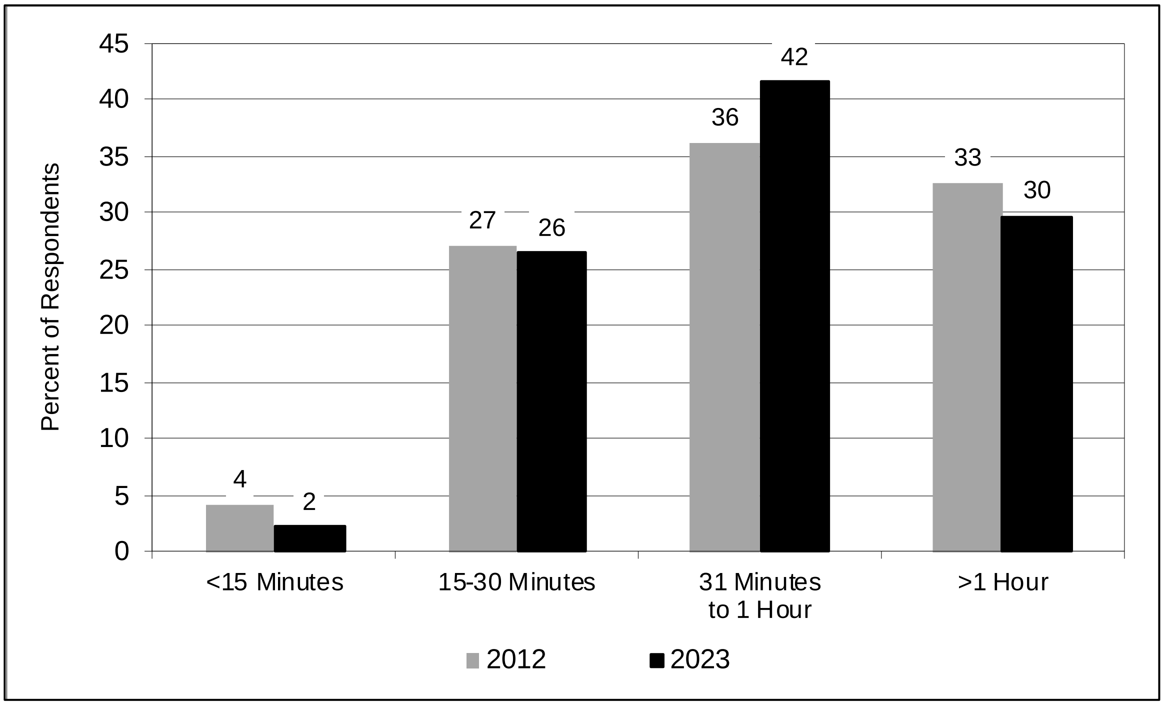
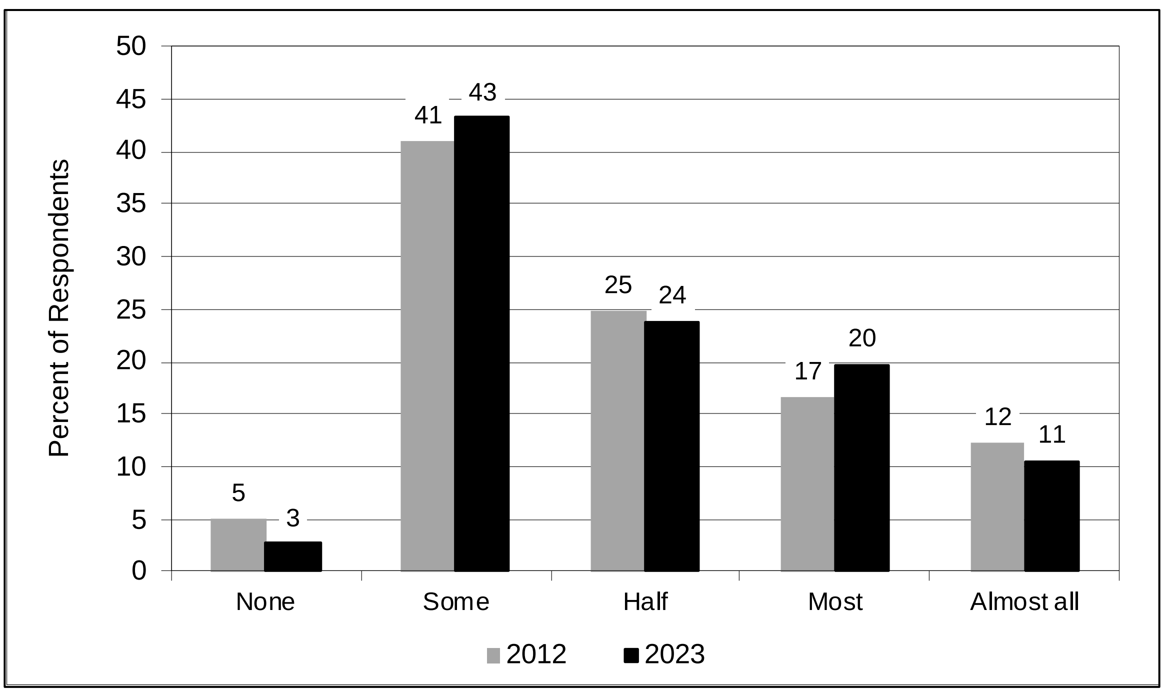



**Chart 22.**

*Time Spent Talking with Others at the Market (2012=290; 2023=370)*



The results of the above two questions are combined in Table 3 below. The shaded boxes highlight those people who spend at least half an hour at the market and at least half of that time talking with others (46%). These results are nearly the same as they were in 2012, where 45% of respondents spent at least half an hour at the market and at least half of that time socializing.

**Table 3**.

*Time Spent at the Market Socializing – 2023 (BC=370)*

| | | How time is spent | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | None | Some | Half | Most | Almost All | |
| Time spent at market | <15 min. | 1% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| | 15-30 min. | 1% | 17% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 26% |
| | 31 min. to 1 hr | 1% | 16% | **15%** | **6%** | **3%** | 42% |
| | >1 hr | 0% | 8% | **4%** | **11%** | **7%** | 30% |
| **Total** | | 3% | 43% | 24% | 20% | 11% | 100% |

Shoppers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: "*prices at farmers markets provide good value"* and *"farmers markets are too expensive".* The overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) agreed that farmers markets provide good value, with 55% of respondents disagreeing that farmers markets are too expensive.

Charts 23 and 24 (next page) showcase these results. These questions were not asked in 2012.

**Chart 23.**

*Prices at Farmers Markets Provide Good Value – 2023 (n=365)*

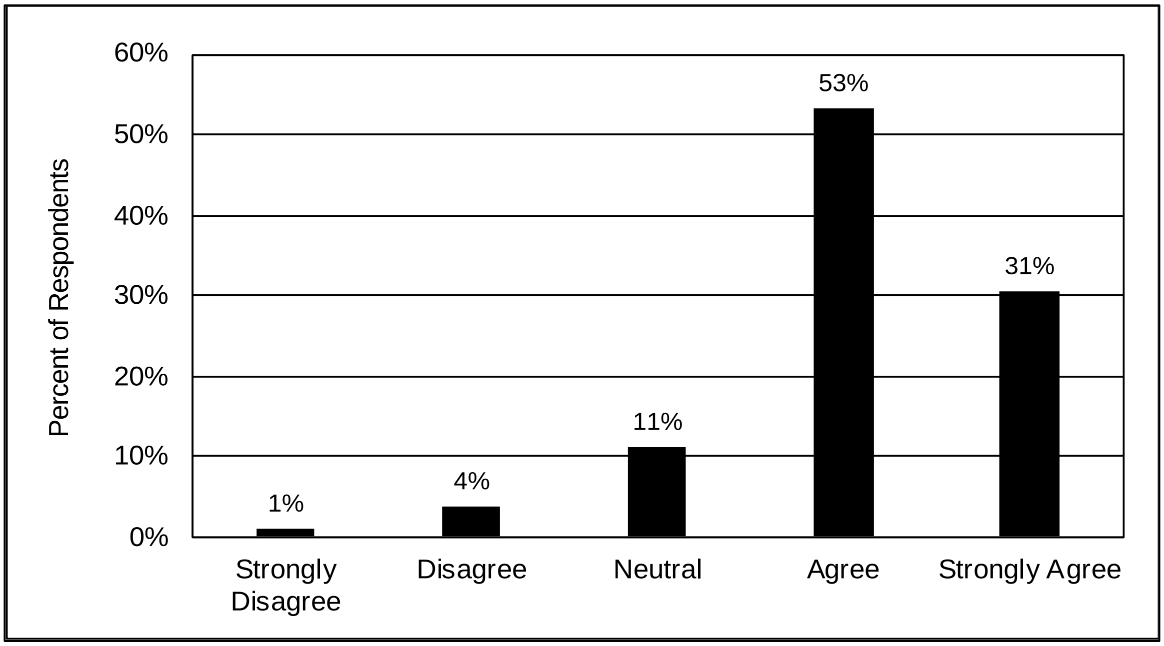
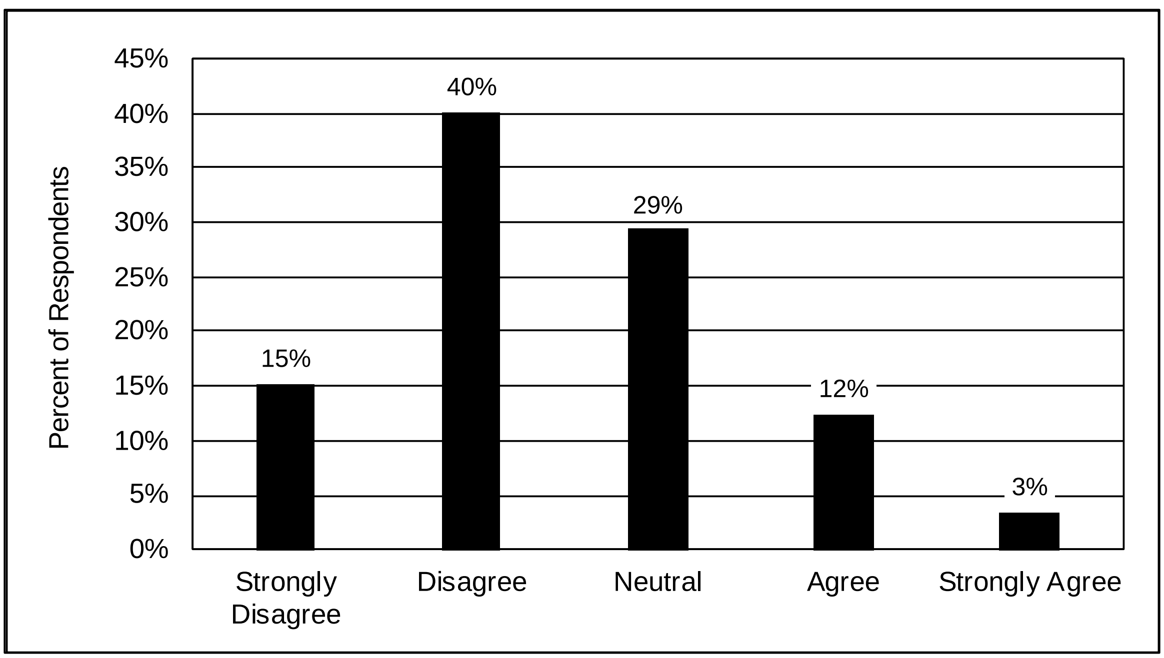



**Chart 24.**

*Farmers Markets Are Too Expensive – 2023 (n=358)*

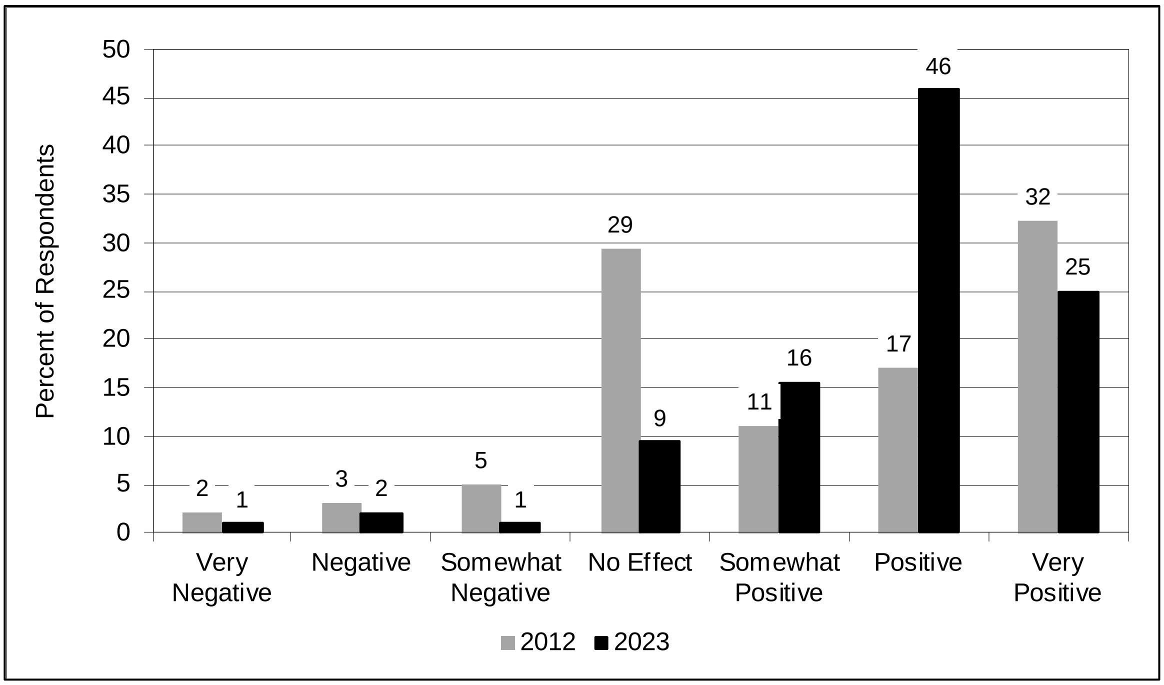


## Local Neighbouring Business Surveys

Based on the availability of businesses for interviews, proximity to the market, and whether they are open on market days, we conducted 103 surveys with neighbouring businesses. Responses from adjacent businesses were overwhelmingly positive, as evident in Chart 25. Most respondents (87%) reported that their neighbouring farmers market has had a net positive effect on their businesses. A quarter (25%) of businesses described the effect as "very positive".

**Chart 25.**

*Effect of Market on Neighboring Businesses (2012=99; 2023=103)*



### Acknowledgements

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Furthermore, the work of this project would not have been completed without a great project team. Project planning, resource commitments, and study implementation are parts of a multi-year collaboration between Dr. David Connell, Professor at UNBC, and Heather O'Hara, BCAFM Executive Director. As Project Manager, Chloe Brogan provided exceptional project management and leadership throughout, keeping everyone and everything organized and on track. As project coordinator, Kate Poirier provided invaluable assistance in coordinating market assessments, careful editing, and a brilliant eye for the storied details. In addition, the study recruited a team of Research Associates who were responsible for conducting market assessments throughout the province:

Cait Wills – Southern Interior
Caleigh Smith – Lower Mainland
Christine Bruce – Northern BC
Mandy Drescher – Southern Interior
Morgan Teske – Lower Mainland
Shelly McGunigle – Vancouver Island

Without their commitment, resourcefulness, and curiosity, the project would not have been a success. This project team was intensely passionate and worked diligently to best represent farmers markets in BC.

Finally, with the completion of this study, the BCAFM Membership and Communications team will ensure these important results and findings are shared far and wide with BCAFM members and a range of local, provincial, national and global stakeholders.