

Farm stops: Understanding a new model for local food distribution

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Abstract

Farm stops are year-round markets that support primarily local farmers and strengthen community-based circular food systems (C-B CFSs). They operate on consignment: the farm stop gives the local producers they work with 70–80% of the retail price, while taking a small percentage to maintain operations. This gives producers a higher price for their goods and flexibility with their time and product offerings, and enhances community connections. The purpose of this research is to understand how farm stops contribute to developing C-B CFSs through strengthening community connections and resilience, as C-B CFSs are local and regional food systems that emphasize a community's health and well-being while minimizing

waste and protecting shared natural resources. This project surveyed the customer base of four U.S. farm stops to gauge their perceptions of farm stops' overall support of a circular economy and of resilience within their communities. Results indicate that respondents believe that farm stops have a strong presence in the communities they serve, that they help individuals feel they are contributing to the development of C-B CFSs, and that they increase long-term community resilience by providing reliable, year-round sales outlets for local producers. This paper also serves as an introduction to a guidebook on how to develop farm stops in any locale.

Keywords

sustainable food systems, circular economy, community resilience, regional food systems, community-based circular food systems

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Introduction

Introduction to Farm Stops

Farm stops are a new, little-researched retail concept. They are brick-and-mortar, mission-driven grocery stores that are open year-round and prioritize supporting local farms by sourcing within a radius of their own definition. Farm stops are unique compared to other local food distribution models, such as farmers markets, food hubs, or co-ops, because they operate primarily on high-margin consignment. This enables farmers and producers greater capacity to control prices, own their products until sold, and generally earn more revenue than they would in a typical retail sale. While operating on consignment may have possible drawbacks for farmers, such as increased risk and competition, consignment gives farmers the opportunity to obtain the real value of their products.

For example, Argus Farm Stop in Ann Arbor, Michigan works with over 200 local farmers and producers. They give all vendors 70% of the retail price and take a 30% commission to maintain operations. This gives farmers a fairer wage year-round, saves them time and labor from participating in seasonal farmers markets, which can be costly and time-consuming (Warsaw et al., 2021), and helps them expand and maintain their operations while building stronger community connections. As of 2024, in 10 years of operation Argus Farm Stop has given over US\$26 million to local farmers and producers through its use of consignment (Argus Farm Stop, n.d.-a). While operating on consignment may pose some risk to farmers as sales are not always guaranteed, farm stops employ added revenue streams, which may reduce risk and enhance stability by providing additional sales opportunities for their products. Additional research is needed to better understand the capacity of farm stops to mitigate financial risk.

Diversified revenue streams is another defining feature of a farm stop. Streams include cafés, incubator kitchens and spaces, entrepreneurial services, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, online sales, educational classes and events, mobile markets and more. Multiple revenue streams may enhance community resilience to crisis events by generating multiple market opportunities for small

growers through value chains, instead of a singular and thus more vulnerable supply chain. As long as the farm stop does not overtax its resources, these additional revenue streams can help farm stops better meet their community needs and further support small-scale farmers, food producers, and other local businesses. For example, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic many farm stops were able to shift their sales online, utilize delivery services, aggregate CSA boxes, provide production spaces, and aggregate storage spaces for local farmers and businesses to keep up with a heightened demand for local food (Hobbs, 2020; Schmidt et al., 2020; Thilmany, Canales et al., 2020). This kept farmers in business and communities fed at a time when large-scale agricultural supply chains faltered. Farm stops can also benefit their communities by enhancing access to communal spaces, educational classes and community events. These “third places” have been shown to enhance community cohesion and quality of life within built environments (Jeffres et al., 2009; Oldenburg, 1989).

As of 2025, there are 18 known farm stops operating in 12 states, with more likely to be operating that may resemble the farm stop model. Most farm stops operate as nonprofits, co-ops, or low-profit limited liability companies (L3C). Farm stops are flexible in their business structure, as they can incorporate as either mission-driven for-profit entities such as L3Cs, or as nonprofits and cooperatives to enhance their eligibility for increased funding opportunities. While L3Cs can make a profit, they must first define their organization on the foundation of providing charitable benefits for their communities. L3Cs can only make a profit so long as they prioritize supporting their communities (Legal Information Institute, 2022). Flexible business structures allows farm stops to remain responsive to their communities’ specific needs.

Farm stops also represent a new form of civic agriculture enterprise. Civic agriculture involves methods of community-based food production that “not only meet consumer demands for fresh, safe, and locally produced foods but [also] create jobs, encourage entrepreneurship, and strengthen community identity” (Lyson, 2004, p. 2). Civic agriculture enterprises are characterized by farmers markets, community and school gardens, CSA pro-

grams, grower or member-owned co-operatives, community kitchens, and small-scale local on- and off-farm processors (Lyson, 2004).

Both traditional civic agriculture enterprises and farm stops contribute to developing a C-B CFS, a local and regional food system that emphasizes community health and well-being while minimizing waste and protecting shared natural resources (Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2023). These enterprises are foundational for the development and maintenance of C-B CFSs, which supports small-scale local farmers. These farmers are more likely to implement sustainable agricultural practices that use fewer fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions associated with food transportation, and, most important, minimize reliance on long-distance national and international supply chains (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2019; Warsaw et al., 2021). Furthermore, because these enterprises support farmers more likely to implement sustainable practices (Warsaw et al., 2021), consequent C-B CFSs may be better able to preserve natural resources (Jurgilevich et al., 2016; USDA FNS, 2023), enhance food access (Gans et al., 2018; Garrity et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2003; Leone et al., 2018; Sandström & Kummu, 2023; USDA FNS, 2023), and support overall community resilience to crisis events such as recessions and pandemics (USDA FNS, 2023).

It should be noted that farm stops bear similarities to food hubs, “businesses or organizations that manage the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand” (Barham et al., 2012, p. 4). The key differences between a farm stop and a food hub seem to be that a farm stop prioritizes high-margin consignment, and the varying scales at which food hubs operate. Farm stops are brick-and-mortar operations with a stronger emphasis on high-margin consignment and direct-to-consumer sales. Food hubs have a wide variety of operational methods, many of which focus primarily on institutional or even online sales, do not have brick-and-mortar locations, and may not prioritize food aggregation as their primary focus within a com-

munity (Bielaczyc et al., 2023). Food hubs often rely on mark-ups to drive profitability (Barham et al., 2012; Rysin & Dunning, 2016), while farm stops do not mark up their products. Some food hubs have experimented with a high-margin consignment model similar to that of a farm stop, but have faced challenges maintaining consignment due to operational scale and logistical overhead for delivery services (Feldstein & Barham, 2017). Additional research is needed to quantify the differences between farm stops and food hubs.

Historical Context for the Need for Civic Agriculture Enterprises in the U.S.

There are more than two million farms in the U.S., of which 86% are small-scale family farms that gross less than US\$350,000 annually and account for only 20% of total food production; by contrast, large-scale farms grossing over US\$1,000,000 annually account for 4% of farms, yet yield nearly 48% of total food production (Kassell, 2024). Large-scale farms typically use industrialized agricultural methods to produce raw materials for further processing, or produce large quantities of meat and dairy products (Warsaw et al., 2021). Raw materials, such as corn, soy, cotton, and other grain products, are typically processed into feed for livestock, biofuels such as ethanol, or sweeteners and preservatives found in packaged foods (Warsaw et al., 2021). The decline of small-scale family farms is also driven by increasing consolidation of retail markets and processing facilities (Held, 2023; McClain, 2022; USDA AMS, 2024), as the average farm size increases (USDA, 2017). From 2012 to 2022, U.S. farms declined 10%, totaling 1% of farms lost per year (Hodder, 2024; Lacy, 2024).

These statistics reveal a system of consolidated large-scale farms and increasing homogeneity, increasing farmers’ reliance on middle-men supply chains. Within this system, farmers on average only receive approximately 16 cents for every dollar of goods sold through wholesale or retail channels, leaving the majority of profits supporting middle-men supply chains (USDA ERS, 2025). In addition, small-scale farmers make most of their profits through direct-to-consumer sales such as farmers markets and CSA programs, which account for 7% of U.S. food purchases (Whitt et al., 2021, p. 19).

This leaves 93% of food purchased indirectly from middle-man supply chains, further contributing to the decline of small-scale farms (Whitt et al., 2021).

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in March of 2020, this homogenized system was left scrambling. While many economic sectors floundered, the agricultural sector continued operating, as it was necessary and essential. Large-scale farms experienced severe labor shortages, increased demand for fresh food, lack of viable economic outlets, and large quantities of food waste that resulted in supply chain disruptions (Clapp, 2020; Held, 2020; Hobbs, 2020; Lakhani, 2020; Lush, 2020; Poppick, 2020; Thilmany, Jablonski et al., 2020; Yaffe-Bellany & Corkery, 2020). As supermarket shelves grew empty, communities increasingly turned to local farms and other local food distribution outlets (Held, 2020; Hobbs, 2020; Thilmany, Canales et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of the homogenized food system, and heightened the urgency of exploring alternative, resilient models of local and regional systems of food distribution.

As farm stops are an up-and-coming civic agriculture enterprise, this study seeks to understand how farm stops contribute to C-B CFSs by enhancing community resilience and cohesion, and to encourage additional research on farm stop features.

Methods

Survey responses ($N = 278$) were collected in 2021 from four identical surveys distributed to four farm stop locations: Argus Farm Stop in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Local Roots Market and Café in Wooster, Ohio, Random Harvest in Craryville, New York, and Boone Street Market in Jonesborough, Tennessee. The purpose of the survey was to measure three main constructs: (1) the reasons people visit farm stops, (2) attitudes about farm stops, and

(3) the perceived importance of the operational features of farm stops. Additional informal interviews were conducted with the managers of two other farm stop locations not surveyed: The Wild Ramp in Huntington, West Virginia and Acorn Farmer's Market and Café in Manchester, Michigan (Figure 1). These interviews aided in understanding the operational features of each farm stop (Table 1).

Farm Stop Selection and Profiles

The six farm stop locations were chosen because they have been in operation for the longest duration relative to other existing farm stops, are in different geographic regions, and have varied business structures. Following are brief profiles of the six farm stops. Key features of each location are summarized in Table 1.

Local Roots Market and Café (Wooster, Ohio)

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Figure 1. Farm Stop Locations

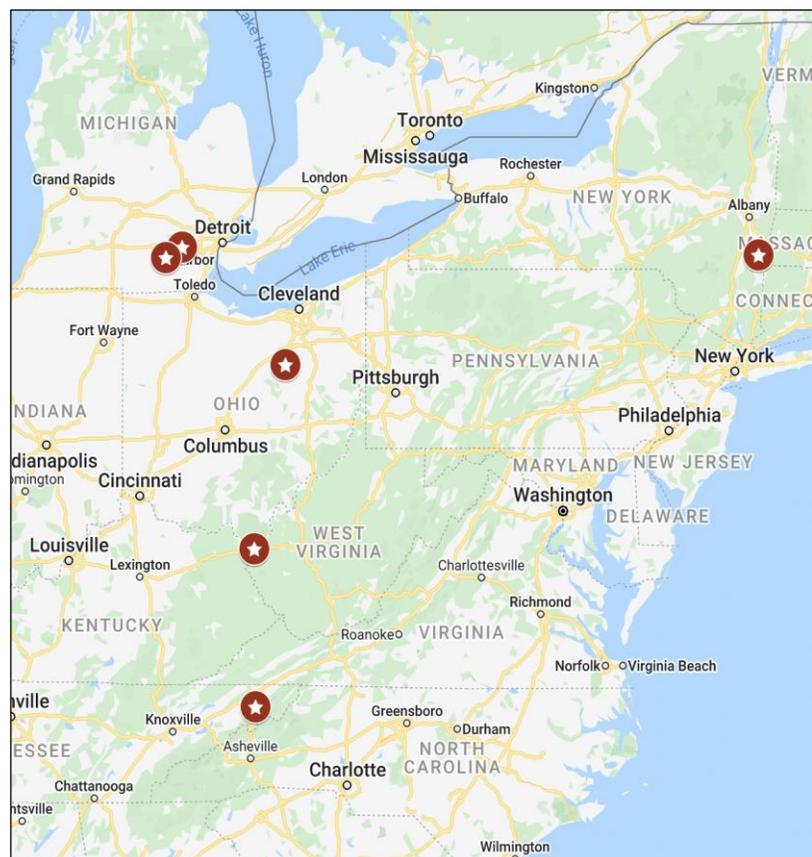


Table 1. Farm Stops Included in This Study

Farm Stop	Business Structure	Location ^a	Diversified Revenue	Founding Date	Consignment Ratios (%)
Acorn Farmer's Market and Café	Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a board of directors	Manchester, Michigan (pop. 4,732)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café • Outdoor farmers market • Educational classes 	2019	75/25
Argus Farm Stop	Low-profit limited liability corporation (L3C)	Ann Arbor, Michigan (pop. 119,980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café • Subscription service food boxes • Educational classes • Community events • Trainings 	2014	70/30
Boone Street Market	Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a board of directors	Jonesborough, Tennessee (pop. 5,611)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café • Grants • Community events • Commercial kitchen 	2014	75/25
Local Roots Market and Café	Member-owned cooperative with a board of directors	Wooster, Ohio (pop. 26,394)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café • Commercial kitchen • Incubator kitchen • Outdoor farmers market • Merchandise • Community events • Subscription service food boxes 	2009	82% for produce, baked goods and milk. 75% for shelf-stable goods and dairy. 70% for artisanal goods and gifts.
Random Harvest	Worker-owned cooperative	Craryville, New York (pop. 5,630)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café • Community events • Educational classes • Incubator kitchen + community space • Commercial kitchen 	2018	75/25
The Wild Ramp	Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a board of directors	Huntington, West Virginia (pop. 45,110)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial kitchen • Incubator kitchen • Mobile market • Community events • Educational classes • Outdoor farmer's market 	2012	80/20

^a Population data: USDA, 2019.

oldest known farm stop. Founded as a member-owned co-operative in 2009, Local Roots is a year-round market open seven days a week. They work with over 150 local producers, and offer a three-tiered commission system depending on the types of products sold. Producers who make highly perishable products, such as produce, baked goods, and milk receive 82% of the retail price. Producers who make shelf-stable food such as frozen foods, eggs, dairy (with over seven-day shelf life), jams, syrups, grains, granolas, pet treats, and artisan goods such as candles, cards, soaps, lotions and cleaning products receive 75% of the retail price. Producers who create non-consumable artisanal products such as pottery, jewelry, fiber arts, wood products, books, and baskets receive 70% of the retail price. As a member-owned co-operative, all producers are required to purchase a US\$50 annual membership.

Local Roots also has a rentable commercial kitchen available for other local businesses, a weekly food box subscription service, and recently launched FoodSphere: the Entrepreneurial Center at Local Roots to provide further business and development support to small farmers and food producers in the community. They collaborate with students from The College of Wooster to educate others about their model and local food systems.

According to the 2017 U.S. Census, Wooster, Ohio, is a semi-urban city with a population of 26,394 and a median household income of US\$47,944. The average resident age is 37 (USDA, 2019).

Argus Farm Stop (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

Argus Farm Stop was founded in 2014 as a L3C. It is a year-round market open seven days a week that works with over 200 local producers. All producers receive 70% of the retail price. They have three locations in Ann Arbor, some having cafés and taverns, and serve ready-made meals from local restaurants and food producers. They offer community events at each location, and collaborate with students at the University of Michigan to educate others about their model. They offer weekly Produce Box subscriptions, educational classes, and

consulting services for those interested in starting a farm stop in their own community.

Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a city of approximately 119,980 people, with a median household income level of US\$65,745. The average age of residents is 27 (USDA, 2019).

Random Harvest (Craryville, New York)

Random Harvest is a worker-owned and operated co-operative founded in 2018. It is a year-round market open six days a week that works with over 100 local producers. All producers receive 75% of the retail price.¹ Random Harvest has a café, a rentable commercial kitchen and events space, educational classes, and community events.

While not the oldest farm stop, Random Harvest was chosen to participate due to its varied demographics compared to the other farm stops in this study. Craryville, New York, is a rural town with a population of 5,630. The median household income is US\$59,343 and the average age of residents is 44 (USDA, 2019).

The Wild Ramp (Huntington, West Virginia)

The Wild Ramp is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an 11-member board of directors founded in 2012. They operate year-round, seven days a week, and work with over 100 local producers. All producers get 80% of the retail price. They also have a commercial kitchen that produces ready-made meals and value-added products, educational programs for producers and consumers, and host yearly community festivals.

Huntington, West Virginia, is a semi-urban city with a population of 45,110, and a median household income of US\$31,162. The average age of residents is 35 (USDA, 2019).

Boone Street Market (Jonesborough, Tennessee)

Run by a 501(c)(3) non-profit, Jonesborough Locally Grown, Boone Street Market (BSM) is a year-round market open six days a week. BSM was developed in 2014, works with over 150 local producers, and gives them 75% of the retail price. They have a commercial kitchen where they produce ready-made meals and value-added products,

¹ Since the completion of this study, Random Harvest no longer operates on consignment due to operational challenges.

they host community events and educational classes, and have an online store.

Jonesborough, Tennessee, has a population of 5,611 and a median household income of US\$56,550. The average age of residents is 45 (USDA, 2019).

Acorn Farmer's Market and Café (Manchester, Michigan)²

Acorn Farmer's Market and Café is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Manchester, Michigan and founded in 2019. It is a year-round market open seven days a week that works with over 75 producers, and gives them 75% of the retail price. They have a café, and offer educational programming and community events for producers.

Manchester, Michigan, is a town with a population of 4,732 and a medium household income of 59,453. The average age of residents is 47 (USDA, 2019).

Survey Methodology

This study used a convenience sampling approach. Surveys were distributed online via Qualtrics ($N = 278$). Participants accessed surveys using QR codes or links embedded in farm stop e-newsletters and social media posts, or via posters placed around each store. The survey consisted of 30 questions in four question categories: Food Purchasing, Community Values, Accessibility, and Demographics. It should be noted that convenience sampling draws on a small subset of individuals who have the time and technology available to complete the survey, who use English as a first language, and who regularly frequent farm stops. This method of sampling did not provide insight into the full scope of each community's perspective on farm stops. Additionally, it should be noted that certain questions within the survey may have been leading, and that future iterations of this research would require stronger and more comprehensive survey development.

Food Purchasing questions refer to whether farm stops may influence purchasing decisions. Community Values questions refer to whether

farm stops may add additional value to communities. Accessibility questions refer to whether respondents felt that farm stops are accessible via personal or public transportation, and are enhancing resilience and food access. Demographics questions asked respondents about their race and ethnicity, annual income, age, education level, and size of their household. Optional demographic questions were used in descriptive statistical analysis, and as controls for a series of linear stepwise regressions.

Descriptive statistics were performed for the questions in Table 2, as well as for the demographics in Table 3. Data was analyzed across all four farm stop sites. A factor analysis was used to determine common themes, or "constructs," of how respondents perceive the value of farm stops in their communities. Constructs were extracted from a total of three question banks in the survey (Appendix, Table A1). All question banks used a 5-point Likert rating scale. Constructs were extracted using principal component analysis, Varimax rotation, and Kaiser normalization in SPSS Statistics software. Factor analysis was based on item loadings of at least .45, Eigenvalues greater than 1.0, and alpha coefficients of at least .70. Items loading on more than one factor above the .45 level were excluded. This analysis deduced three constructs, each made up of nine statistically relevant categories defined in Table 4.

The nine factor analysis categories were then used to determine patterns in the data through a total of nine stepwise linear regressions using stem questions from the survey (Appendix, Table A2). Results from the nine stepwise linear regressions were organized in four major themes: Economics, Resilience, Community, and Advocacy.

Results

Results are organized according to descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and stepwise linear regressions.

Descriptive Statistics

While the average respondent purchases 25% of their monthly groceries at farm stops, the majority

² Since the completion of this study in 2021, Acorn Farmer's Market and Café has closed due to operational challenges.

of respondents stated that they would be willing to pay more for groceries at a farm stop and that farm stops have a strong presence in their community. While respondents spend an average of 15–30 minutes during a visit to a farm stop, almost all respondents stated they enjoy spending time at farm stops. Almost all respondents felt they were helping to grow a local food economy³, and that farm stops increase the long-term resilience of their neighborhood to crisis events. This is supported by a majority of respondents stating that they felt that farm stops provided an essential service during the height of the COVID-19 lockdowns. Notably, 30% of respondents did not feel that farm stops enhance food access options to ensure all populations could shop there. This aligns with the demographic statistics, which highlight that the majority of respondents are older, wealthier, highly educated, and live in smaller households. The lack of diversity in demographics may be a result of the convenience sampling methodology.

It should again be noted that certain questions within the survey may have been leading, which may have affected the outcome received. Future iterations of this research would require stronger and more comprehensive survey development to confirm and expand on these findings.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis generated three distinct constructs: Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops, Attitudes about Farm Stops, and Importance of Operational Features. These analyses extracted two categories that informed Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops, four categories that informed Attitudes about Farm Stops, and three categories that informed Importance of Operational Features. Each construct is expanded below, and summarized in Table 5.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Stem Question, N = 278	% of responses
How willing are you to pay more for your food at a place like [site name]?	
Willing	82
Unwilling	8
Neutral opinion	10
Do you feel that [site name] has a strong presence in the Ann Arbor community?	
Yes	91
No	7
Neutral opinion	2
Do you enjoy spending time at [site name]?	
Yes	90
No	5
Neutral opinion	5
On average, approximately how much time do you spend during one visit to [site name]?	
5–30 minutes	89
31–45 minutes	9
46–60+ minutes	2
Do you feel you are helping to grow a local food economy by purchasing food at [site name]?	
Yes	95
No	3
Neutral opinion	2
Do you believe this form of food distribution increases the long-term resilience of the neighborhood to crisis events (ex. economic downturns, Covid-19, climate-related disasters)?	
Yes	92
No	5
Neutral opinion	2
To what extent do you agree with the following statement: [site name] provided an essential service to the community during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic lock-downs.	
Agree	76
Disagree	10
Neutral opinion	14
To what extent do you agree with the following statement: [site name] offers additional food access options to ensure all populations can shop there.	
Agree	57
Disagree	30
Neutral opinion	13

³ Local food economy is defined according to the USDA *Local and regional food systems resource guide* (2023, p. 3).

Table 3. Demographics

Stem Question, N = 278	% of responses
What is your age?	
18–39	27
40–49	12
50–60+	61
What is your total household income? [US\$]	
Less than \$25k	\$
\$25k–\$74k	27
\$75k–\$125k	23
\$126k–\$150k+	29
Prefer not to answer	16
What is your highest level of education?	
Up to high school, no diploma	0
High school graduate or equivalent	0
Some college credit, no degree	9
Associate degree or equivalent	3
Bachelor degree	30
Advanced degree (ex., Master’s, PhD)	56
Other	2
How many people live in your household?	
1–4 people	86
5–9 people	14
9–10+ people	0

Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops

Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops contains two statistically independent categories, Provisioning (Mean = 2.65) and Events (Mean = 1.68), which represent the main reasons why respondents visit farm stops. Provisioning included four questionnaire items in descending order of endorsement by the survey respondents: Purchase groceries, Support local farmers and producers, Purchase to-go meals, and Visit the café. Events included two questionnaire items in descending order of endorsement: Participate in community events, and Participate in educational events. Provisioning is the more highly endorsed reason for visiting farm stops.

Attitudes about Farm Stops

Attitudes about Farm Stops contains four statistically independent categories that comprise respondent attitudes about physical and social attributes of farm stops: Support of local foods (Mean = 4.81), Positive Facility (Mean = 4.57), Support for local businesses (Mean = 4.45) and Good selection (Mean = 4.13). The Support of Local Foods category includes three questionnaire items in order of descending endorsement: Sup-

Table 4. Factor Analysis Constructs and Categories

Constructs and Corresponding Categories ^a	Definition of Categories
<i>Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops</i>	
Provisioning	Whether respondents felt farm stops support the majority of their household needs.
Events	Whether respondents felt farm stops engage with the community.
<i>Attitudes about Farm Stops</i>	
Support of local foods	Whether respondents felt that farm stops support a local food system, or C-B CFS.
Positive facility	Whether respondents felt that farm stops created a positive and supportive shopping experience with passionate and supportive staff.
Support for local businesses	Whether respondents felt that farm stops support local businesses.
Good selection	Whether respondents felt that farm stops offer a wide selection of products.
<i>Importance of Operational Features</i>	
Supporting local food systems	How important it is to respondents that farm stops support the development, or maintenance, of local food systems, or C-B CFS.
Unique and engaging	How important it is to respondents that farm stops provide a unique shopping experience that piques their interest.
Selection of products	How important it is to respondents that farm stops have a wide variety of products available for purchase.

^a Color coding was added to aid in the interpretation of the Stepwise Linear Regressions seen in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

ports local farmers and producers, Prioritizes seasonal products, and Is transparent about where they get their products. The Positive Facility category includes four questionnaire items in order of descending endorsement: Fosters an inclusive and welcoming space, Has a warm and friendly atmosphere, Hires staff who are passionate and professional, and Is accessible and easy to navigate. The Support for Local Businesses category includes five questionnaire items in order of descending endorsement: Collaborates with local businesses, Educates consumers about local food and farmers, Makes an effort to engage with their community, Supports other local businesses, and Helps strengthen a local food economy or C-B CFS. The Good Selection category includes four questionnaire items in order of descending endorsement: Meets the majority of my household's food needs in a typical week, Offers a wide variety of products, Has products that cannot be found elsewhere, and Enhances access to fresh, high quality food.

By a small margin, Support for Local Foods is the most highly endorsed attitude about farm stops, while having a Good Selection is the least endorsed attitude (Table 5).

Importance of Operational Features

The third construct, Importance of Operational Features, contains three statistically significant categories that describe the elements of a farm stop respondents felt were most important, according to their values: Supporting local food systems (Mean = 4.21), Unique and engaging (Mean = 3.68), and Selection of products (Mean = 2.83). The Supporting local food systems category includes four questionnaire items in order of descending endorsement: Supports local farmers and producers, Is transparent about where they get their products, Prioritizes seasonal products, Educates consumers about local food and farmers. The Unique and engaging category includes six questionnaire items in order of descending

Table 5. Factor Analysis Results

Constructs and Corresponding Categories ^a	Mean	S.D.	Alpha
Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops			
Provisioning	2.65	.78	.71
Events	1.68	.82	.81
Attitudes about Farm Stops			
Support of local foods	4.81	.44	.85
Positive facility	4.57	.71	.92
Support for local businesses	4.45	.66	.84
Good selection	4.13	.80	.74
Importance of Operational Features			
Supporting local food systems	4.21	.74	.86
Unique and engaging	3.68	.85	.87
Selection of products	2.83	.96	.70

^a Color coding was added to aid in the interpretation of the Stepwise Linear Regressions seen in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

endorsement: Delivers a unique shopping experience, Supports other small businesses, Makes an effort to engage with their community, Collaborates with local businesses, Has products that cannot be found elsewhere, and Fosters an inclusive and welcoming space. The Selection of products category includes two items in order of descending endorsement: Offers a wide variety of products, and Meets a majority of my household's food needs in a typical week.

Supporting local food systems is the most important operational feature to survey respondents, and Selection of products is the least important operational feature (Table 5).

Stepwise Linear Regressions

All stepwise linear regressions were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), except for the dependent variable measuring the approximate time spent during one visit to a farm stop. To clarify interpretation of these results, all dependent variables from the stepwise linear regressions were grouped into four main themes: Economics, Resilience, Community, and Advocacy (Tables 6 and 7). The predictor variables were color coded to identify them with their associated factor analysis constructs previously presented: Reason for Visiting Farm Stops (red), Attitudes about Farm Stops (green), and Importance of Operational Features (blue) (Table 6). They are

Table 6. Predicting Attitudes Toward Farm Stops

DEPENDENT VARIABLE (organized by theme)	PREDICTOR VARIABLES (Categories in bold, shown in stepwise order)	R	Adjusted R ²	F-value	P-value
ECONOMIC THEME:					
Percentage of groceries spent at farm stops	Selection of Products Provisioning Good Selection Age Number of people in household	.64	.40	20.31	<0.001
Willingness to pay more for groceries at farm stops	Good Selection Supporting Local Food Systems Provisioning Support of Local Foods	.56	.29	16.39	<0.001
RESILIENCE THEME:					
Attitudes about farm stops providing an essential service during Covid-19 lockdowns	Provisioning Unique and Engaging	.46	.20	18.88	<0.001
Attitudes about farm stops increasing community resilience	Unique and Engaging Good Selection Level of education	.57	.31	21.47	<0.001
COMMUNITY THEME:					
Attitudes about farm stops having a strong community presence	Positive Facility Supporting Local Food Systems Support for Local Businesses	.61	.36	24.95	<0.001
Approximate time spent during one visit in farm stops	Provisioning	.24	.05	8.95	.003
Attitudes about spending time in farm stops	Positive Facility Provisioning Supporting Local Food Systems	.76	.57	63.51	<0.001
ADVOCACY THEME:					
Attitudes that farm stops are accessible to all populations	Positive Facility Good Selection	.47	.21	20.42	<0.001
Attitudes about farm stops helping others contribute to a local food economy	Good selection Unique and Engaging Positive Facility	.61	.36	27.94	<0.001

Note: Category construct colors: **Red** = Reasons for visiting Farm Stops; **Green** = Attitudes about Farm Stops; **Blue** = Importance of Operational Features

listed in Table 6 in the order they were selected by the stepwise linear regression.

Economics

Within the Economics theme, three significant categories emerged that influenced the percentage of monthly groceries purchased at farm stops (Table 6): Selection of Products, Provisioning, and Good Selection. The categories come from each of the three separate constructs of Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops, Attitudes about Farm Stops, and

Importance of Operational Features, respectively, which increases the robustness of this prediction. Age, and the number of people in respondent households, were also found to significantly impact the percentage of monthly groceries purchased at farm stops.

Willingness to pay more for groceries at farm stops was significantly supported by the categories: Good Selection, Supporting Local Food Systems, Provisioning, and Support of Local Food (Table 6). This result is also supported by categories from all

three construct groups, thus enhancing the stability of this prediction.

Resilience

Within the Resilience theme, two significant categories influenced respondents' attitudes about whether farm stops provide essential services during crisis events: Provisioning, and Unique and Engaging, which fall under the constructs of Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops and Importance of Operational Features (Table 6).

Two significant categories influenced respondents' attitudes about farm stops increasing long-term community resilience: Unique and Engaging, and Good Selection, which fall under the constructs of Attitudes about Farm Stops and Importance of Operational Features, respectively. Level of education was also found to be a significant category that influenced attitudes about whether farm stops enhance community long-term resilience.

Overall, the most significant categories of the Resilience theme were Unique and Engaging, and Provisioning.

Community

Within the Community theme, three significant categories influenced whether respondents felt farm stops had a strong presence in their community: Positive Facility, Supporting Local Food Systems, and Support for Local Businesses (Table 6). The categories come from each of the three separate constructs Attitudes about Farm Stops, Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops, and Importance of Operational Features, respectively, which increases the robustness of this prediction.

Constructs and Category Patterns

Table 7 offers a visual of the distribution of constructs across the four dependent variable themes of Economics, Resilience, Community and Advocacy. It also breaks down the various patterns that emerged from the data that support how farm stops promote both C-B CFSs and resilient communities. For example, the predictor Unique and Engaging appears twice in the Resilience theme and once in the Advocacy theme, indicating that the unique and engaging elements of farm stops may enhance community resilience.

How much time respondents spend in farm stops during one visit was not significantly supported by any of the nine categories; however, Provisioning emerged as the best fit for the statistical model. Because no statistical significance was found for this category, this regression was eliminated from further analysis.

Attitudes towards spending time in farm stops was significantly supported by the categories Positive Facility, Provisioning, and Supporting Local Food Systems. The categories come from each of the three separate constructs Attitudes about Farm Stops, Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops, and Importance of Operational Features, respectively, which increases the robustness of this prediction.

Overall, the most significant predictors of the Community theme were Positive Facility and Provisioning.

Advocacy

Within the Advocacy theme, two significant categories influenced respondent attitudes that farm stops are accessible to all populations: Positive Facility and Good Selection, which fall under the construct of Attitudes about Farm Stops (Table 6). Attitudes about whether farm stops help others to contribute to a local food economy were significantly supported by the categories Good Selection, Unique and Engaging, and Positive Facility. These categories fall under the constructs of Attitudes about Farm Stops and Importance of Operational Features.

Overall, the most significant categories of the Advocacy theme were Positive Facility and Good Selection.

Positive Facility only appears under the Community and Advocacy constructs, which suggests that there are elements of how farm stops operate, and how they foster and maintain relationships with farmers and community members, that increase feelings of cohesiveness and that strengthen the community.

Good Selection, in combination with Selection of Products, are spread throughout the dependent variable categories, which suggests that the selection offered at farm stops is an important element that farm stops should continue to pursue as it may maintain and increase community engagement.

Table 7. Matrix of Categories for Stepwise Linear Regressions

DEPENDENT VARIABLES (by theme)	PREDICTOR VARIABLES										
	Categories from factor analysis							Background variables			
	Provision- ing	Good Selection	Supporting Local Food Systems	Unique and Engaging	Positive Facility	Selection of Products	Support of Local Foods	Support for Local Businesses	Age	House- hold Size	Education Level
Economics: Percentage of groceries spent at farm stops	X	X				X			X	X	
Economics: Willingness to pay more for groceries at farm stops	X	X	X				X				
Resilience: Attitudes about farm stops providing an essential service during Covid lockdowns	X			X							
Resilience: Attitudes about farm stops increasing community resilience		X		X							X
Community: Attitudes about farm stops having a strong community presence			X		X						
Community: Attitudes about spending time in farm stops			X		X			X			
Advocacy: Attitudes that farm stops are accessible to all populations		X			X						
Advocacy: Attitudes about farm stops helping others contribute to a local food economy		X		X	X						

Note: Category construct colors: Red = Reasons for visiting Farm Stops; Green = Attitudes about Farm Stops; Blue = Importance of Operational Features.

This result may suggest that survey respondents believe farm stops should continue developing strong relationships with farmers and producers in order to increase farm stop holdings.

Other predictors only show up once among the themes, including Support for Local Businesses, and Support of Local Foods. This suggests that these particular predictors are not as significant when considering the impact of farm stops in their communities.

Discussion

Discussion is broken down according to the four main themes: Economics, Resilience, Community and Advocacy. The Community and Advocacy sections were combined into one.

Economics

Survey respondents generally thought that farm stops offered a wide variety of products, that farm stops supported local producers, and that it was important that farm stops support local producers. Results also showed that respondents are willing to pay more for groceries at these locations because they offer a wide variety of products, support local farmers and businesses, and have an inclusive and welcoming environment. These results could indicate a heightened desire from a subset of community members to support local businesses who are actively reinvesting in their communities in multiple ways, and that respondents may be aware of the ways in which farm stops do so.

As a growing method of civic agriculture, farm stops are evolving in their definition, largely by taking the form of locally owned businesses designed to use local resources sustainably, employ local residents, and produce at least enough goods and services to satisfy residents' needs. These kinds of business are described by economist Michael Shuman as LOIS businesses: locally-owned and import substituting businesses (2012). LOIS businesses are self-sufficient based on the resources available to them locally or regionally, only import additional resources when necessary, and invest in the health and vibrancy of a community. Shuman further argues that LOIS businesses perpetuate the "multiplier effect": "the more times a dollar circulates within a defined geographic area and the

faster it circulates without leaving that area, the more income, wealth and jobs it generates" (Shuman, 2012, p. 88). Thus, Shuman argues, the more LOIS businesses in a community, the stronger and more resilient it is.

Farm stops operate on consignment, giving 70–80% of every sale to producers, while also employing local residents and partnering with other local businesses. Data collected on farm stops participating in this study indicates that by operating on consignment, farm stops funnel substantial amounts of money into their local food economies via direct payments to producers. For example, Agricole, a farm stop in Chelsea, MI not included in this study, earned US\$2 million in revenue in 2024. Of that amount, they kept US\$30,000—approximately 1.5%—for their operations, likely for staffing and expenses. (Maynard, 2024). Abby Hurst, one of the four owners of Agricole stated, "I'm happy with this because none of us do this for the money." (Maynard, 2024, par. 10). At the time this study was conducted in 2021, Argus Farm Stop had reinvested US\$15 million with local producers since opening in 2014, hence supporting an important component of the local food economy (Argus Farm Stop, n.d.-b; USDA, 2023); Local Roots reinvested US\$1 million to local producers in just one year (Local Roots, 2021); Boone Street Market reinvested approximately US\$3 million to local producers since opening in 2014 (Jonesborough Locally Grown, n.d.); and in 2022 The Wild Ramp reinvested US\$484,192 to local producers (Wild Ramp, 2023, "Where we are"). These numbers indicate that U.S. farm stops in different regions have a consistent capacity and motivation to funnel revenue into their local food economies. Even with a small sample size, this trend is widespread within the data, suggesting that it may be a common practice among other farm stops not surveyed. Due to their capacity and motivation to reinvest in their communities, farm stops may encourage support from those who consistently shop there, though additional research is needed to better understand the impact of the multiplier effect in strengthening local food economies and impacting consumer choices (Benedek et al., 2020).

Respondents may also be made aware of how farm stops reinvest in their communities through

farm stop business structures, mission statements, and educational outreach. There are no expressly for-profit entities included in this study; all farm stops included are structured as non-profits, cooperatives, or L3Cs. Since the collection of this data in 2021, twelve additional farm stops have started operating across the U.S., of which none is a singularly for-profit entity (Farm Stop Conference Central, 2024). Similar to other civic agriculture enterprises, all participating farm stops also included within their mission statements their intentions to expand and strengthen their local food economy directly. For example, the Argus Farm Stop states, “Our mission is to grow our local agricultural economy” (Argus Farm Stop, n.d.-a, para. 1). The Wild Ramp has a mission to “grow and support a vibrant economy and community for local food” (Wild Ramp, 2023, “Our mission”). Random Harvest, “envisions a relational food economy where food builds bridges towards a generous, just, and nourished community” (Random Harvest, n.d.).

Farm stops also advertise their missions through their websites, yearly reports, social media platforms, and even in the stores themselves. All farm stops included in this study use social media platforms to advertise their mission and their perceived impact. They also offer a high level of transparency around their consignment ratios and sourcing, and offer education around the impact of local sourcing on the local food economy. This may inform consumers that farm stops may purposefully generate low profit margins for the sake of consistently reinvesting in their communities, and may account for respondent willingness to pay more for goods at these locations. Additional research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

Farm stops do not facilitate the transport of products they source from local growers; farmers regularly enter the stores to drop off their goods, and in some cases, set up their own displays. While this does constitute a cost for growers as it takes time to deliver their product and set up a display, consumers have opportunities to meet and talk with farmers directly as they are bringing in their goods, or as they are getting a cup of coffee. Through these interactions, consumers may have

more direct and in-depth conversations with a grower about their practices, their products, or their involvement with the farm stop and community, which may help them develop a stronger relationship with growers and their products. This opportunity is seldom found in a typical retail environment, and may also support the survey results indicating that respondents enjoyed spending time in farm stops.

While there is yet to be a comprehensive economic analysis of the financial impact of farm stops on their communities, and while the sample size presented is small, there at least is evidence in the data to support the notion that farm stops maintain their core commitments to consistently reinvest in their communities. The farm stop overt mission to support its community, combined with its educational and conversational environment, may define farm stops as LOIS businesses. As LOIS businesses, farm stops may allow consumers to learn more about, and contribute directly to, their local food system. This may account for survey respondents’ willingness to pay more for groceries, and for their emphasis on the importance of sourcing a wide variety of local products; more data is needed with a larger and more diverse sample size to assess the financial impact of farm stops on communities, and whether a farm stop influences consumer choices.

Resilience

Respondents felt that farm stops provide essential services during crisis events by meeting a portion of their household needs, and by offering a unique and engaging atmosphere. These results may indicate that because farm stops prioritize local sourcing they are better able to pivot to alternative methods of distribution to support communities when national supply chains are compromised. Farm stops may also help to ensure the long-term resilience of communities to disruptive events. This was most evident during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns.

At the height of the lockdowns, large-scale farms were faced with labor shortages, lack of transportation, and a lack of viable economic outlets as hospitals, restaurants, schools and universities closed (Molla, 2020; Yaffe-Bellany & Corkery,

2020). The total amount spent in food service locations (e.g., restaurants, schools, sports venues) fell from US\$68 billion in February, 2020 to US\$54 billion in March and US\$36 billion in April (USDA ERS, 2023). As outlets closed, many farms did not have the resources available, were tied up in corporate contracts, or were simply too big to shift to alternative sales outlets such as CSA programs, drive-thru farmers markets, or online prepaid ordering systems (Yaffe-Bellany & Corkery, 2020). Many large farms had no choice but to dump or compost hundreds of thousands of pounds of fruit and vegetables, resulting in higher prices for these commodities, high levels of food waste, and rising rates of food insecurity across the country as large-scale grocery shelves remained empty (Clapp, 2020; Lakhani, 2020; Lush, 2020; Yaffe-Bellany & Corkery, 2020).

Conversely, while smaller producers also faced financial distress, labor shortages, and food waste (Thilmany, Canales et al., 2020), their relatively smaller size and higher level of diversification ensured that these effects were not nearly as damaging (Hadavas, 2020; Thilmany, Canales et al., 2020). Smaller producers did, however, experience escalated demand and pressure for local produce because of breakdowns in national supply chains (Crampton, 2020; Danovich, 2020; Elbein, 2020; Gao, 2020; Hadavas, 2020; Held, 2020; Hobbs, 2020; Lush, 2020; Thilmany, Jablonski et al., 2020; Worstell, 2020). Heightened demand and pressure for local produce forced farm stops to quickly pivot to alternative food distribution methods by expanding their diversified revenue streams. They developed online stores, alternative delivery and pick-up systems, and subscription services. These services allowed farm stops to expand their offerings, take on more small producers, and move more goods into the community. Furthermore, while many small-scale businesses were forced to furlough a portion of their staff (Gao, 2020), farm stops engaged a steady local labor force, incorporating volunteers as well. Farm stops' ability to source locally and expand their revenue streams may serve as one reason why survey respondents felt that farm stops provided essential services during a crisis event, and thereby enhanced community resilience.

Respondents also felt that farm stops enhanced community resilience by creating a unique and engaging atmosphere. One reason may be how well farm stops are able to create a sense of place, embodying the “emotive bonds and attachments people develop or experience in particular locations and environments” (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009, abstract). Farm stops may enhance community bonds and attachments by generating a welcoming and inclusive environment where people can interact beyond simply purchasing groceries, often by taking advantage of their diversified revenue streams. For example, as farm stops were able to remain open and flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were better able to meet the rising demand for local food and to support local producers by providing additional market outlets. When asked how they felt farm stops impacted their communities, some respondents offered positive recollections of how the stores handled the pandemic. One said, “They were so present for us during the first year, it was incredible. I felt safe there, and it got us through the period when we felt we could not safely visit larger supermarkets.” Another stated, “A big help during lockdown. Safe way to buy good food.” Another said, “Most remarkable to me was that Argus was there to reliably supply groceries during the pandemic when the big Whole Foods type of stores were not.” Beyond staying open during crisis events, farm stops may enhance a sense of place through their cafés, taverns, educational classes, community events and other meeting spaces where community members can spend time with friends and family. For example, one respondent stated, “It brings neighbors together. It provides a welcoming space right in the neighborhood which livens up the area. It has made it so much easier to get local food! It is all in the store.”

While this sample size is small and does not fully represent an entire community's perspective, farm stop flexibility in generating additional revenue streams, and their ability to engage a subset of customers beyond purchasing groceries may serve as reasons why respondents felt farm stops enhance overall community resilience. Additional research with a broader and more diverse sample size is needed to confirm these results.

Community and Advocacy

Respondents felt that farm stops have a strong presence in their communities as a result of creating a positive and supportive environment, and their ability to provide respondents with a portion of their household needs. Respondents also felt that farm stops' accessibility related to their positive and supportive environment and whether they offered a wide selection of products. These results align with respondents stating they enjoy spending time at farm stops, which was tied to respondents' feelings that farm stops have a unique and engaging atmosphere.

One reason respondents feel that farm stops have a positive and supportive environment may again result from their ability to enhance a sense of place, and may also relate to the enthusiasm of their staff and their store culture.

As previously mentioned, farm stops may develop a sense of place through their diversified revenue streams, which allow consumers to engage with a farm stop beyond just purchasing groceries. Consumers may be able to connect with family and friends over a cup of coffee, participate in an educational class or community event, or chat with farmers as they drop off their goods. Developing a sense of place helps strengthen community bonds and values (Ackerman-Leist, 2013; Foote & Azaryahu, 2009), and may serve as a reason for respondents' perception that farm stops have a strong presence in their community, and for enjoying their visits to farm stops. For example, when asked about whether their lives would be impacted if these stores were to close, one respondent stated, "It would be much harder for me to find locally sourced, organic food. I would be devastated." Another said, "It would be like losing a valuable member of the community," and another stated, "I would have less access and walkability to a business that I trust with my family's health. Also I would feel as if I'd lost [my] community." Additionally, when asked about farm stops impacting their communities, one respondent stated, "It adds value to the community by offering fresh locally grown produce and supporting small farmers. It's these kinds of small businesses that create charm and demonstrate the progressive attitude of a community." A respondent stated of Boone Street Market (BSM):

BSM's mere presence highlights the local community's desire for and support of local agriculture. BSM serves as an outlet for local agriculture and creates visibility for its importance, promoting local producers. BSM's events also highlight local food and introduce it to many who might never have considered it. For others, it reaffirms their values.

A respondent said of Argus Farm Stop:

Argus means more to me than quality and convenience in values-based healthy food shopping. Argus also helped me feel at home in Ann Arbor. This city would feel less like home to me without it.

While these statements do not necessarily represent the values and perspectives of the broader community, they help to reinforce that at least a subset of the farm stops' communities have had a positive and supportive experience.

Another reason why respondents believe that farm stops cultivate a positive and supportive environment may be due to their staff culture. While not studied in this survey, staff culture may be an important variable that warrants further research on farm stop presence in communities. Staff culture has been defined as the work environment consisting of the leadership, beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions within that environment (Siu, 2014). Studies show consumer experiences improve when a store cultivates a supportive staff culture in which employees feel supported, and that allows employees to connect with the store's mission (Boyce et al., 2015). If farm stops are able to cultivate a supportive staff culture, employees may enhance customer shopping experiences, perhaps contributing further to developing a sense of place. Additional research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

It may also be worth understanding whether employees gain a sense of meaningful action by actively supporting the mission of farm stops, whether employees impart this sense of meaningful action to customers, and whether this sense further supports a farm stop providing a positive and supportive shopping experience. Meaningful action

has been defined as the “desire to be needed and to make a difference” (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2012, p. 235), inherent in all individuals to a greater or lesser extent and a main driver for how we choose to interact with our communities (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2012). If farm stops do indeed cultivate a strong staff culture, which employees are enthusiastic to work in and to support, employees may also educate consumers about the impact of their purchases, perhaps further contributing to a supportive shopping experience and sense of place. It may be worth understanding whether employees feel that by working at a farm stop they are making a difference in their community (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2003), and whether interactions with enthusiastic employees impart that same experience of meaningful action to consumers. Building the desire of consumers and employees to make a difference may support their valuing and even prioritizing regularly purchasing at least some goods at farm stops, participating in their events, or simply spending time there, which may enhance the strength of the presence a farm stop has in a community. Additional research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

While respondents felt that farm stop accessibility related to their positive and supportive environment and whether they offered a wide selection of products, it should be noted that 30% of respondents did not feel farm stops enhance food access. This may be because locally sourced products are often perceived as being more expensive than what consumers would find in traditional grocery stores (Szegedyné et al., 2020); however, recent research highlights that this perception may not be the case and local options may be less expensive (Charlebois et al., 2022; Donaher & Lynes, 2016). Additionally, survey responses only account for a small subset of each community, and only represent a specific demographic. Additional research is needed to better understand the role farm stops play in enhancing food access.

Limitations

The results of this study suggest that developing C-B CFSs is as much about enhancing local food provisioning and resilience to crisis events, as it is

about generating support for and prioritization of local food. The results suggest that farm stops may represent one method of promoting and enhancing a community’s perspective towards local foods, which may strengthen C-B CFSs. It should be noted, however, that the results of this study only represent a targeted sub-population of the communities involved, a population that may already prioritize local foods and that has the capacity and resources to prioritize purchasing local foods. This population was characterized by respondents who are older, wealthier, highly educated, and live in smaller households. Additionally, certain questions within the survey may have led respondents to answer in a particular way that may have skewed the results.

More research with a broader and more diverse sample size, and stronger and more comprehensive survey development, would be required to understand farm stops’ impact on communities, and their contributions to strengthening C-B CFSs.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The primary recommendations from this report are to encourage additional research with a broader and more comprehensive sample size on the impacts of farm stops on the communities they serve. As an up-and-coming method of local food distribution, there are many gaps in our knowledge about the impact of farm stops. This study highlights the need for additional research to better understand whether farm stop staff culture plays a role in generating a positive and supportive shopping experience, and whether in doing so consumers feel a stronger sense of meaningful action by purchasing goods at a farm stop. Other potential research topics could include the role farm stops play in enhancing food access within their communities, whether farm stops enhance relationships between farmers and consumers, and how potentially enhanced relationships between farmers and consumers may impact consumer purchasing decisions. Additional research is also needed to understand how farm stops exist in the larger context of other civic agriculture enterprises. These topics can better quantify whether farm stops do indeed strengthen C-B CFSs.

How to Start a Farm Stop: A Pattern Language for Local Food Systems

This research also supported the development of a guidebook, *How to start a farm stop: A pattern language for local food systems*. This document is a variation of a Pattern Language, established by Christopher Alexander to analyze the behavioral and psychological interactions in urban and architectural design (1977). Pattern Languages consist of a series of interrelated patterns that identify a specific challenge to an element or situation of a designed environment and suggest solutions.

This guidebook highlights some of the most essential farm stop elements, helps map out exactly how to make the store look, feel, and operate, and offers resources to help achieve a community's local food system goals. Each chapter discusses a specific element involved in developing farm stops, and suggests solutions and resources gleaned from successful iterations of existing farm stops. Chapters are organized within sections: Introduction, Getting Started, Financials, Location, Communication, and Operations. At the end of each chapter is a list of related chapters. This allows for a more fluid and interactive experience in which the reader may choose the chapters that pertain most to where they are in developing their own store. All resources are summarized at the end of the guide-

book in a Resources and References section.

For those interested in starting their own farm stop, the results of the study indicate that it is worth paying attention to the mission you develop, the variety of products you offer, the relationships you generate between producers, community members, and other local businesses, and the atmosphere your store generates. These elements go towards ensuring that the store supports your community, and that your community financially and culturally supports your presence.

A copy of the guidebook is available online.⁴

The purpose of this study was to understand how farm stops enhance community resilience, strengthen community connections, and support generating or strengthening C-B CFSs. The results suggest that farm stops may enhance local food economies and community resilience through their support of local farmers and producers, their use of diversified revenue streams, and in the ways they can generate a sense of place among participating community members. Additional research is needed to further understand the impact farm stops have on the communities they serve, and how they contribute to strengthening a C-B CFS, specifically via food access, staff culture, impacting consumer behavior, and developing relationships between producers and consumers.



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Appendix

Table A1. Stem Questions for Factor Analysis

Category	Stem Question and Rating Scale
Reasons for Visiting Farm Stops	<p>“How often do you visit [site] to”: The rating question was, “Please rate the following statements using the scale provided. Please consider your answers in terms of pre-Covid.”</p> <p>Pairwise comparison of means is significantly different at $p < 0.001$. $N = 228$</p>
Attitudes about Farm Stops	<p>“To what degree do the following statements reflect your opinions?” The 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 = <i>Strongly Disagree</i> to 5 = <i>Strongly Agree</i>.</p> <p>All pairwise comparisons of means are significantly different at $p < 0.001$. $N = 172$</p>
Importance of Operational Features	<p>“How important is it to you that [site] ... :” The 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 = <i>Not at all important</i> to 5 = <i>Extremely important</i>.</p> <p>All pairwise comparisons of means are significantly different at $p < 0.001$. $N = 217$</p>

Table A2. Survey Questions Used in Stepwise Linear Regressions

Survey Question	
Q1	What percentage of your monthly groceries do you purchase at [site name]?
Q2	How willing are you to pay more for your food at a place like [site name]?
Q3	Do you feel [site name] has a strong presence in the community?
Q4	Do you enjoy spending time at [site name]?
Q5	On average, approximately how much time do you spend at [site name]?
Q6	Do you feel you are helping to grow a local food economy by purchasing food at [site name]?
Q7	As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and increasing pressures of climate change, there is heightened concern for the resilience of local food economies. Do you believe this form of food distribution (i.e. consignment-based grocery stores) increases the long-term resilience of the neighborhood to crisis events (e.g., economic downturns, Covid-19, climate-related disasters)?
Q8	To what extent do you agree with the following statement: [site name] provided an essential service to the community during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic lock-downs.
Q9	To what extent do you agree with the following statement: [site name] offers additional food access options to ensure all populations can shop there.