

Berry Customer Research Results



2016



Funding thanks: USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant

Project Background

This research project was conducted by the Minnesota Grown program at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in 2016. Customers were surveyed about their experiences and opinions after visiting 30 berry farms across Minnesota. A total of **1136** people returned surveys.

Included in this report is some berry customer data from 2012 - the last time Minnesota Grown conducted a survey of customers similar to this survey. The 2012 results provide some interesting insights into trends in around variety preferences, credit card usage, and the importance of social media tools like Facebook and Pinterest.

This customer research is funded through a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant.

The Basics

30 farms participated (Approximately **30%** of all berry farms in MN Grown)

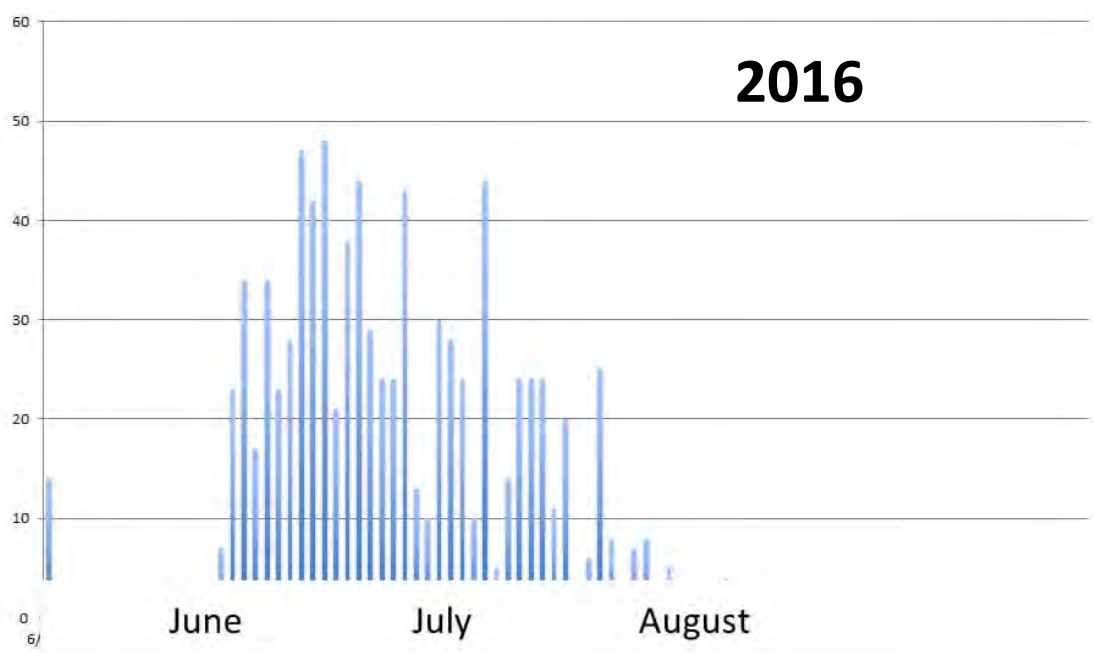
In total, we received **1136 completed surveys** from farm customers.



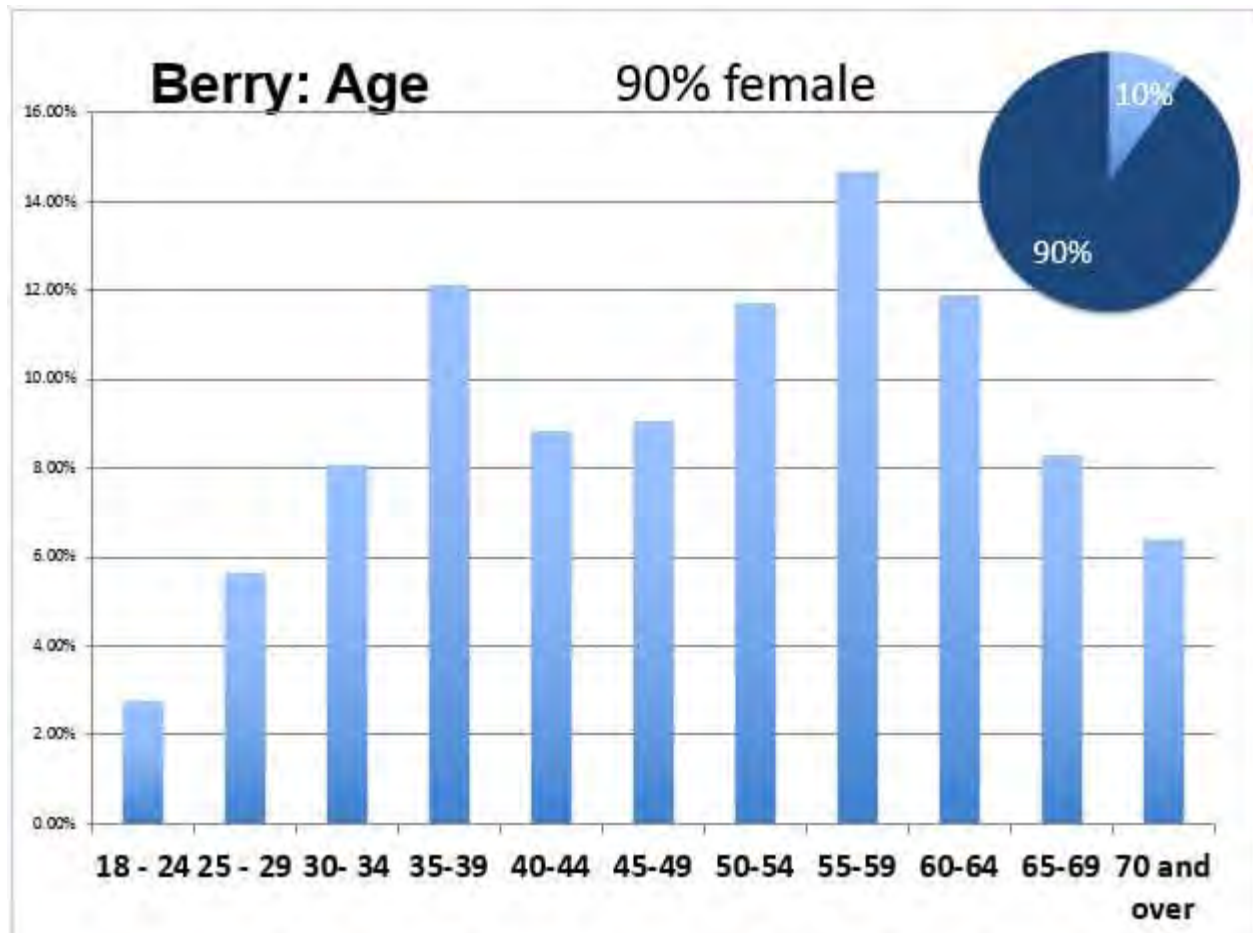
Customers received cards like the one above at checkout. They then went online and answered a series of survey questions. This report is a summary of their feedback across all farms surveyed.



When were berry surveys completed?

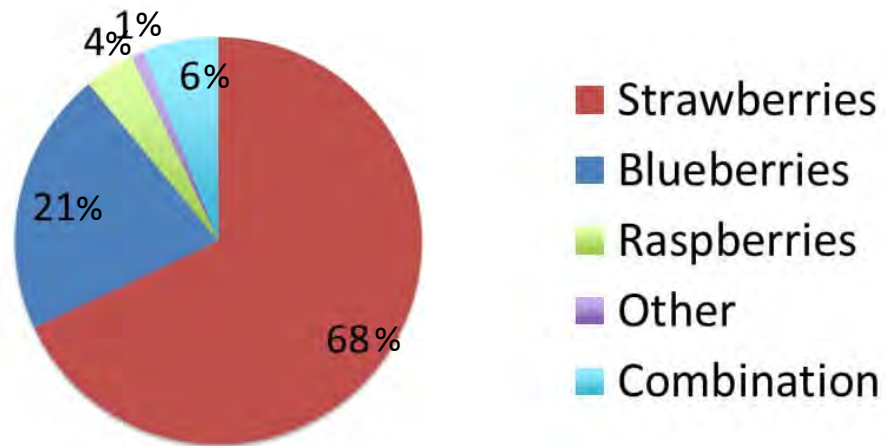


Customer Demographic Overview

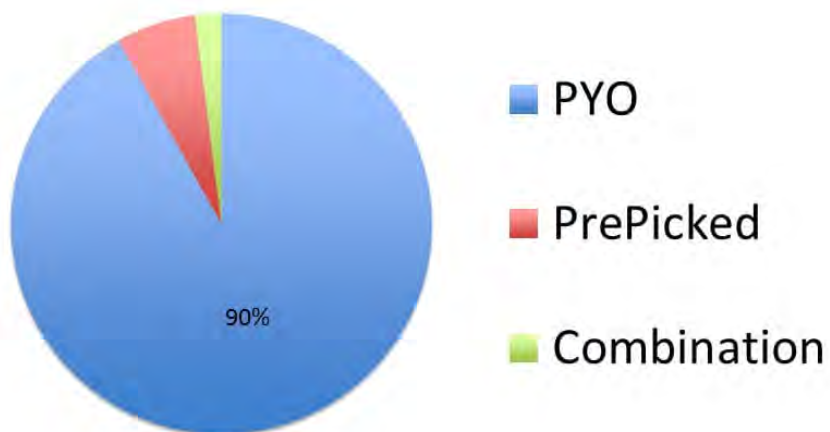


Berry Purchasing

Berry Type



Berry Purchase Type:



*Why have you chosen to buy **Minnesota** berries?*

1. Quality of berries
2. Flavor
2. Supporting local business
4. The experience
5. Price

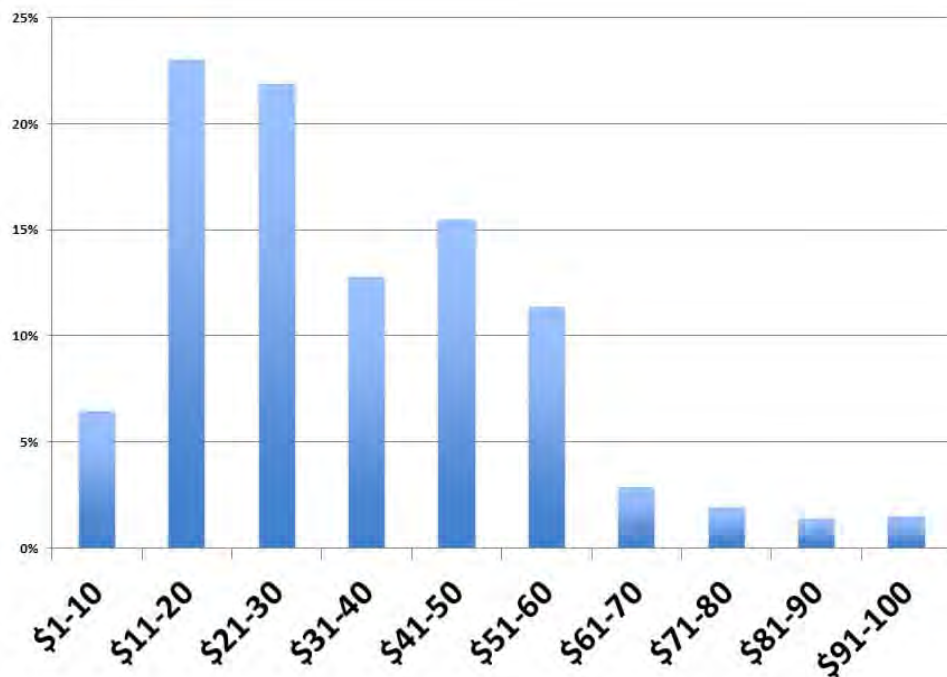


*Why have you chosen **this** farm?*

1. Quality of fruit
2. Location
3. Friendliness of staff

Price: least important category

Customer Spending



Amount Spent

Average: **\$32.20**

Blueberry: \$25.63

Raspberry: \$29.13

Strawberry: \$34.51

2012 Purchase Comparison

Average spent: Berries

2012: **\$28.86**

2016: **\$32.20**

= 8% increase

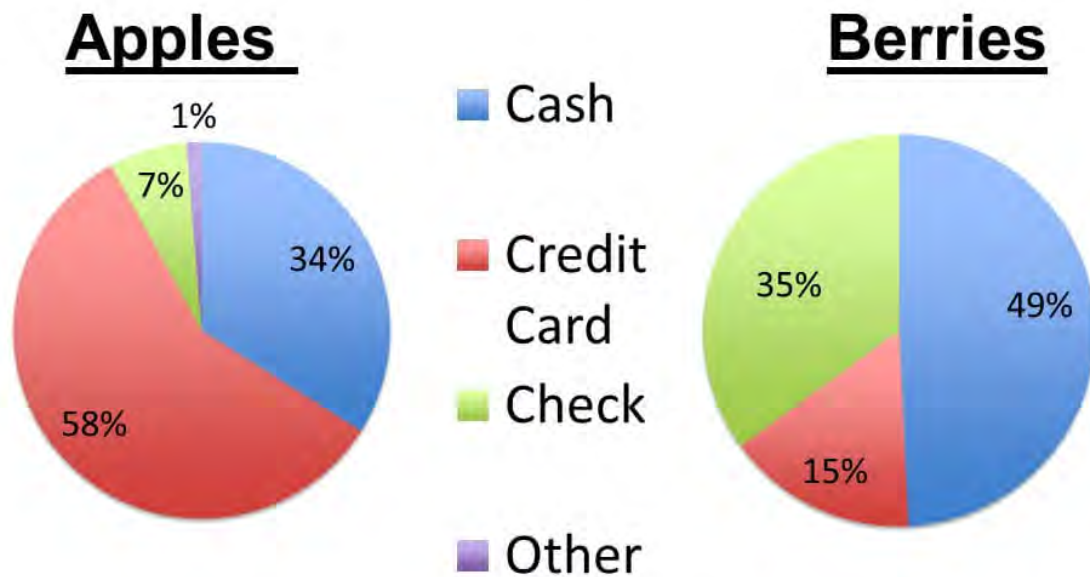
Average spent: Apples

2012: **\$21.56**

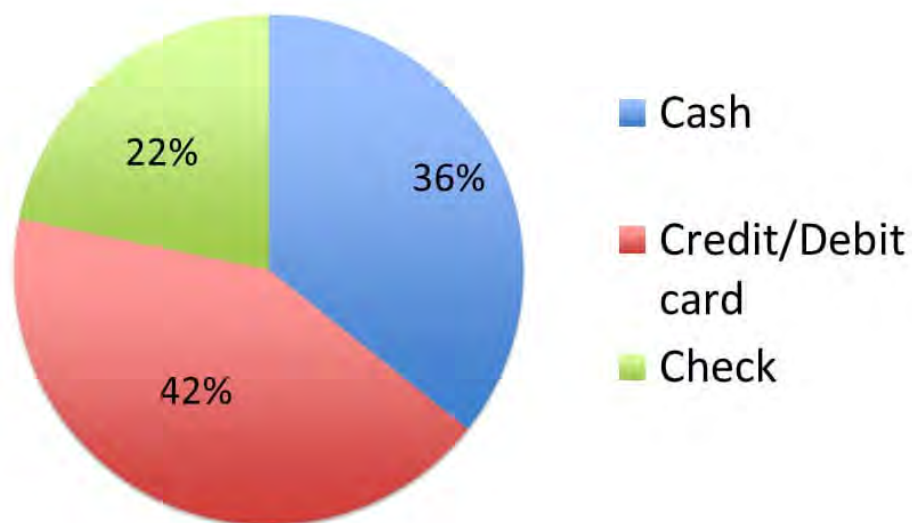
2016: **\$25.19**

= 17% increase

How Customers Paid



How Customers Want to Pay



Room for Growth:

Want to Pay with Credit: **42%**

Actually Pay with Credit: **16%**

"Wish I could use my credit card, I had to turn around and go home to come back!" - Paula

How can you bring credit card sales to your farm?

"My suggestion on improvement is to be more credit card friendly." – Jack

"This farm is amazing! The only thing would I would change would be the ability to pay with a credit card." -
Danielle

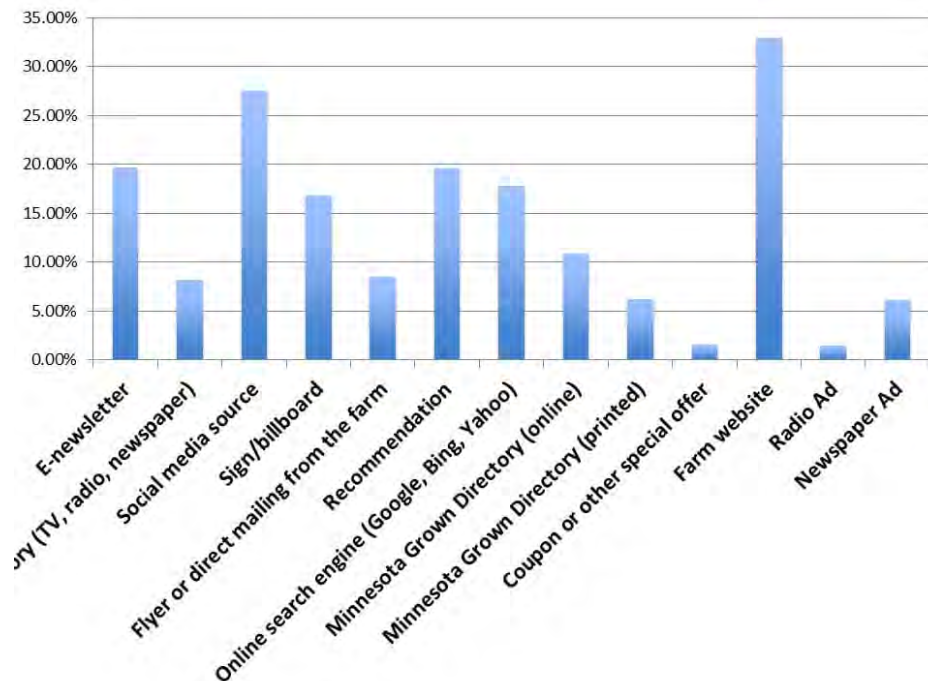
Common options for on-site credit card sales:

Square: <https://squareup.com/>

PayPal Triangle: <https://www.paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/credit-card-reader>

Reaching Customers and Marketing Trends

How did customers learn about your farm?



Areas of Growth:

Social Media:

7% in 2012

32% in 2016

Online Search Engine

Farm Website

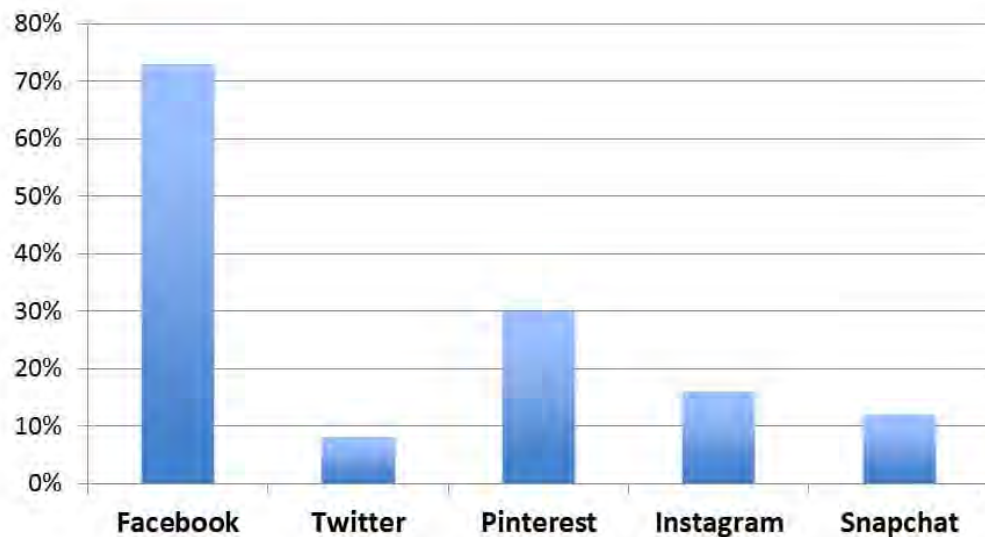
Digital Recommendations

*"I heard about this farm on Facebook
from a friend."*

- Jane

Social Media Use by “Regular Users” (those who used the following websites more than a few times every week)

Social Media Use

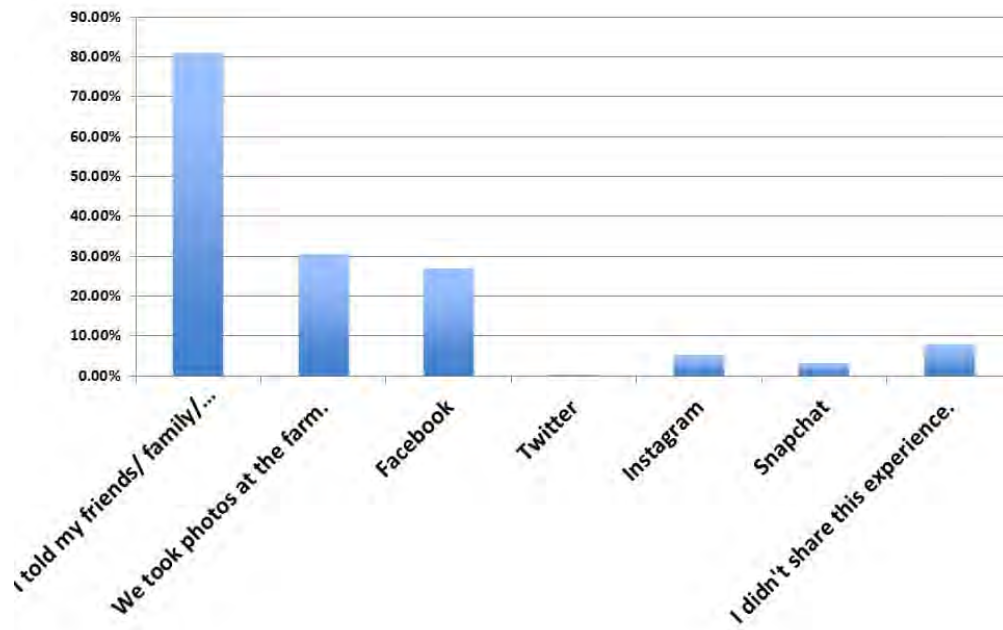


Smart phones

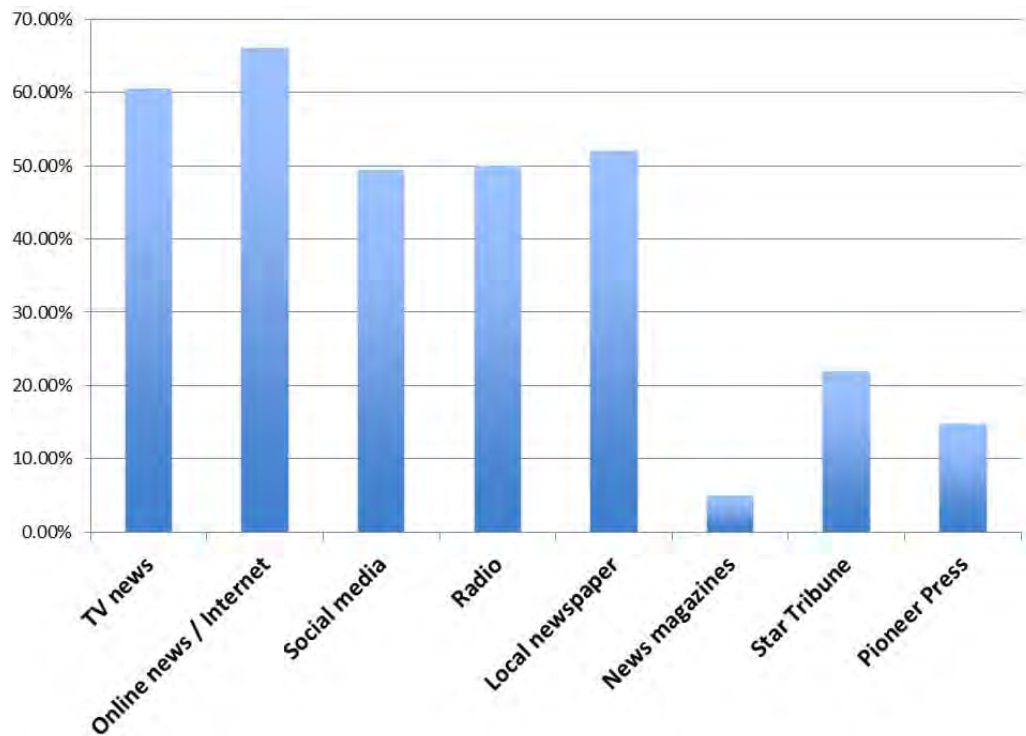
84% of survey respondents own
a **smart phone**

2012: **39%**

"Did you share your experience at this farm with others? If so, how?"



How do your customers learn about local news and events?



New Customers

A closer at customers surveyed who were brand new to the farm

18% of customers have never been to a berry patch before.

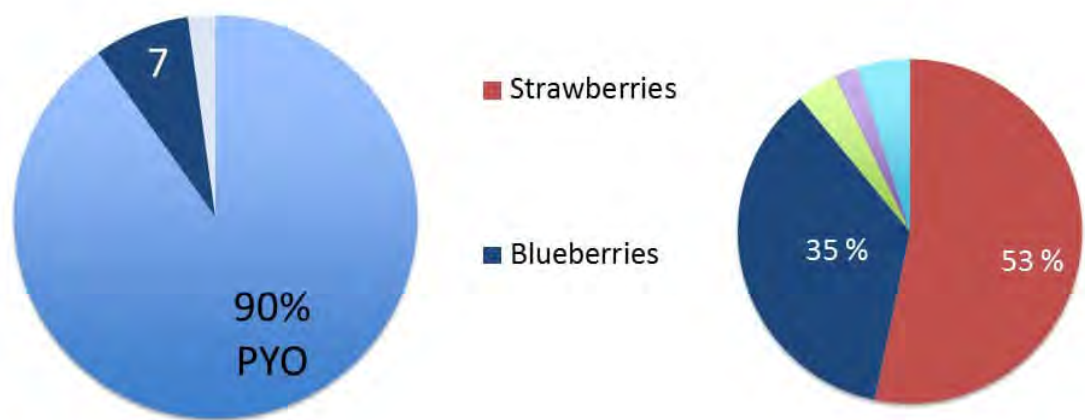
Strawberry	Blueberry	Raspberry
15%	28%	18%

35% of customers are new to your farm.

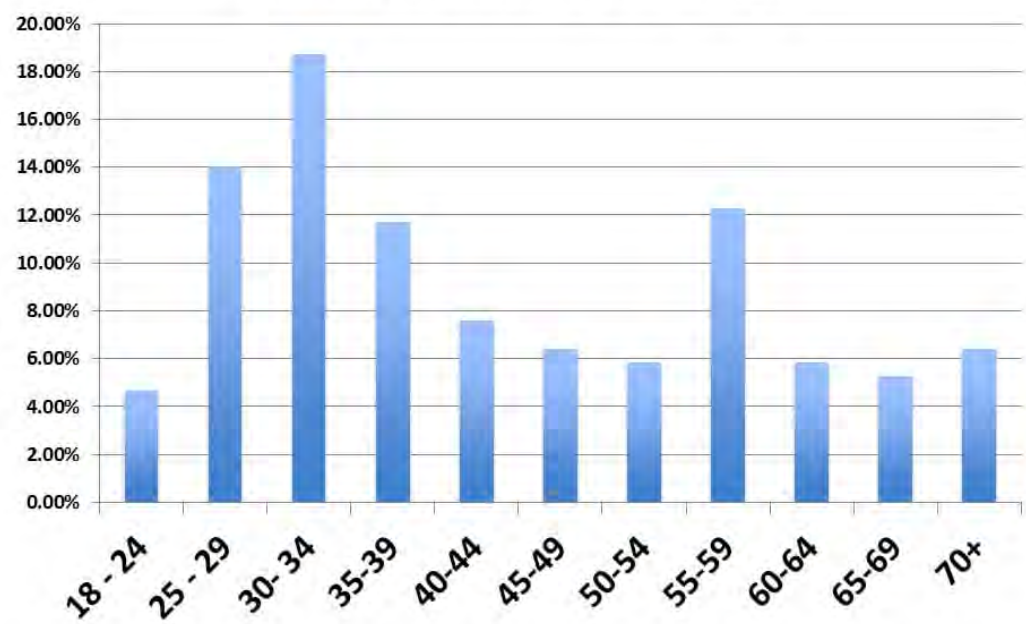
Strawberry	Blueberry	Raspberry
27%	41%	33%

New Customer Purchase

Average Amount Spent: \$ 25.00



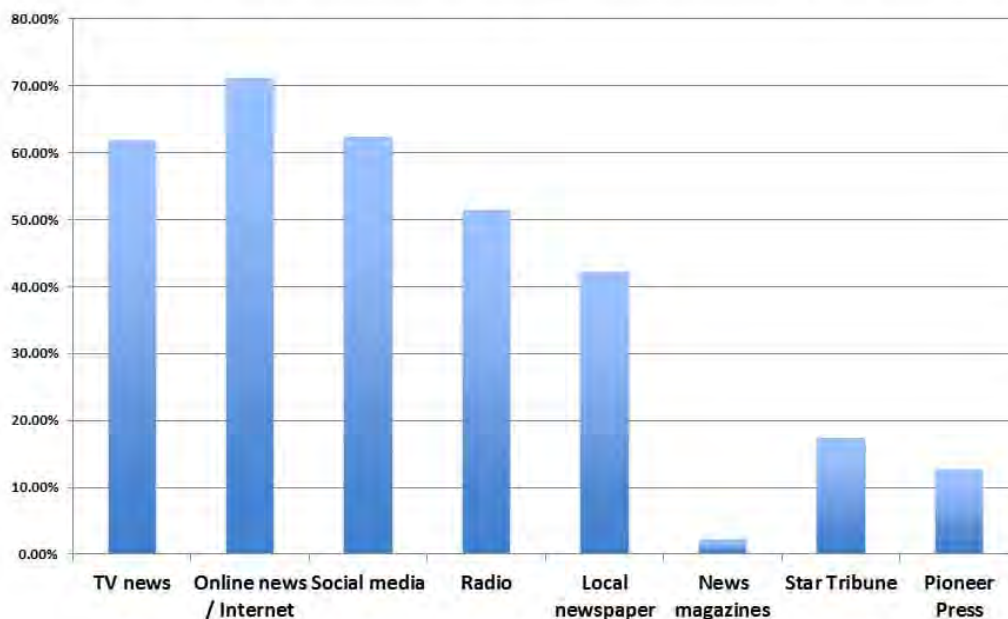
New Customers: Age



How do your new customers find you?

1. Recommendation **40%**
2. Social Media **28%**
3. Online Search Engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing) **27%**
4. Farm Website **25%**
5. Minnesota Grown **15%**

New Customers – Consuming News



New customers are talking about you!

85% will tell someone about their experience

44% are taking photos at your farm

34% posting to Facebook

7% Instagram, 5% Snapchat

Presentation of Results

These results were presented at the 2016 Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association conference in Saint Cloud, MN. Participating growers also received confidential farm reports built from their customer data and comments.

After the presentation, Minnesota Grown surveyed the audience:

93% of growers indicated they would make changes to their marketing strategies based on the information presented as a result of this research.

100% of growers indicated they would like to continue this research in another 4-5 years. Minnesota Grown intends to do so.

Please contact us with any questions about this report!

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