

Christmas Tree 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 33 farms and retail lots that participated across Minnesota. A total of **495** people returned surveys.

Included in this report is some customer data from 2012 - the last time Minnesota Grown conducted a similar survey of Christmas tree farm customers. 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

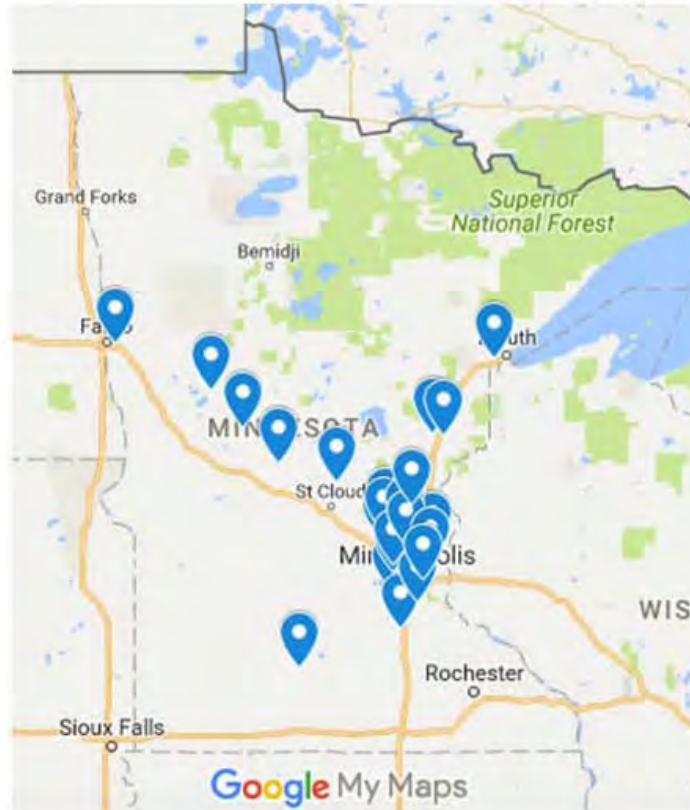
33 farms and retail lots participated

In total, we received **495 completed surveys** from farm customers.

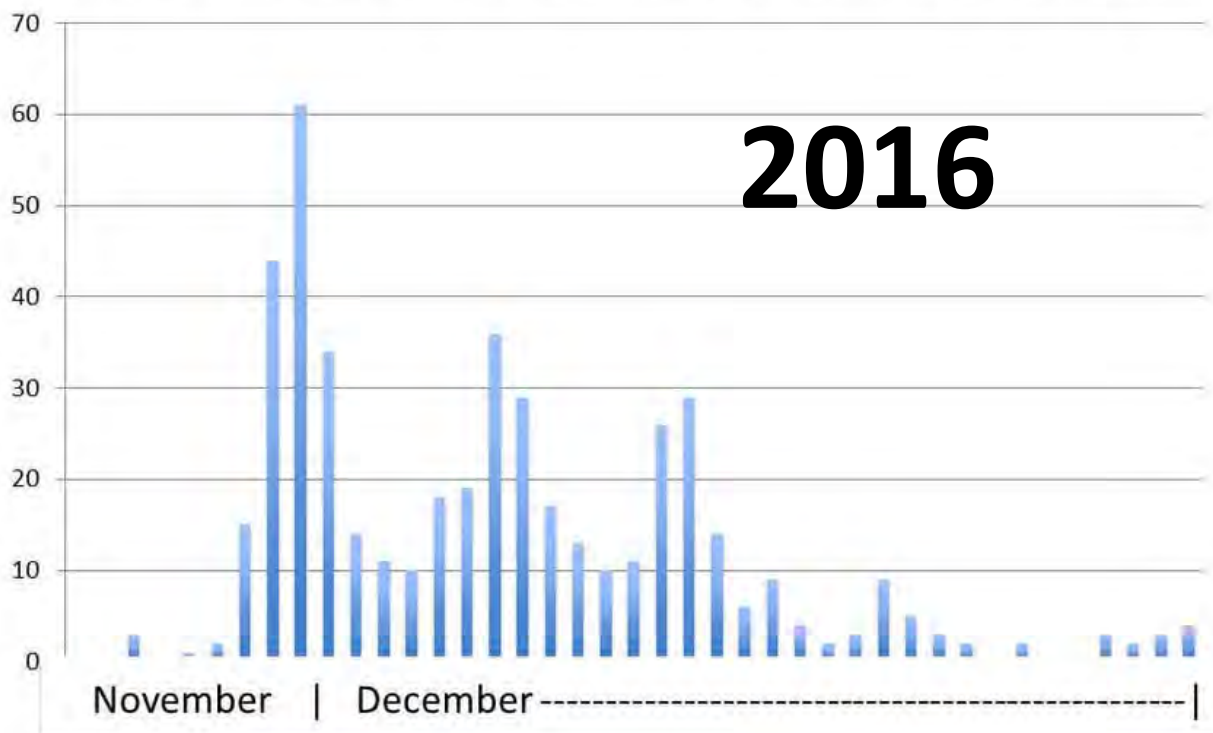


Customers received cards like the one above at checkout. They then went online and answered a series of survey questions. This report is a summary of their feedback across all farms surveyed.

Christmas Tree Farms/Lots:



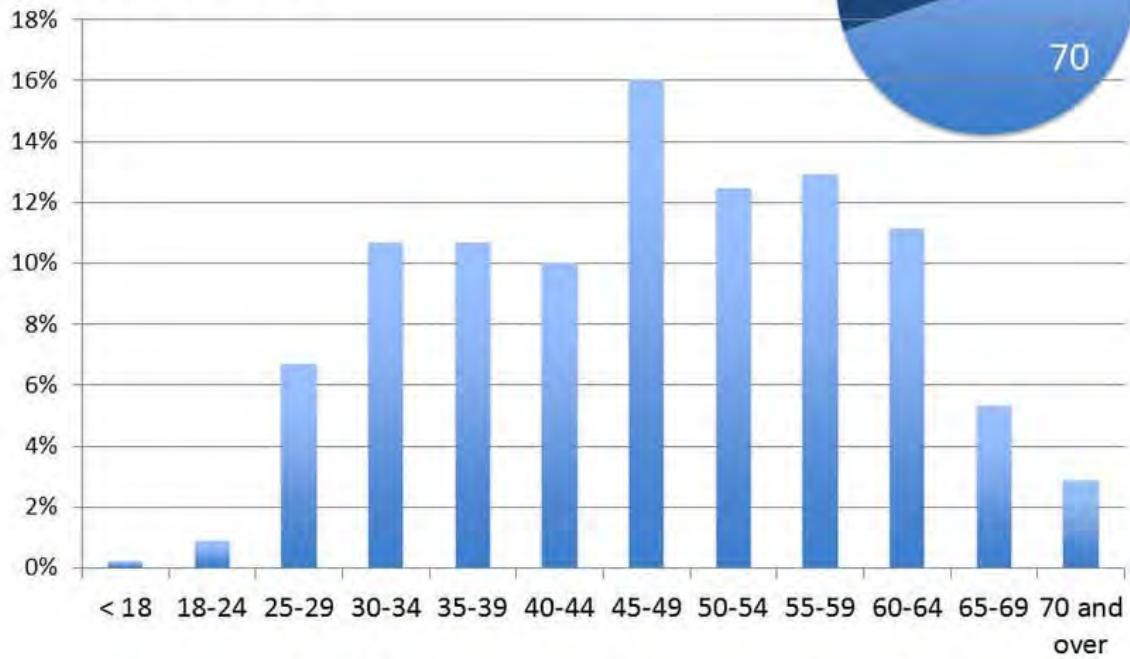
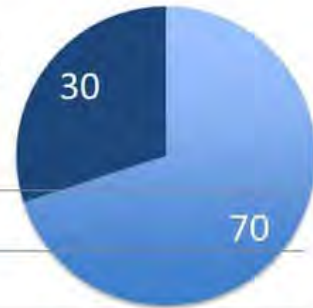
When were the surveys completed?



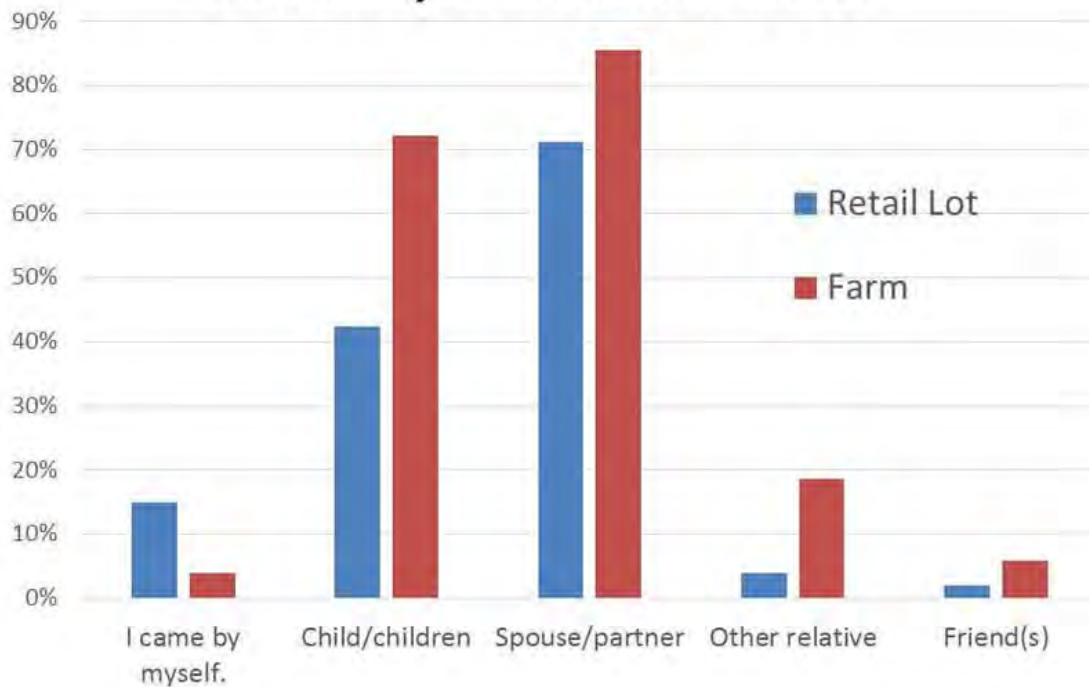
Customer Overview

Age:
Average 47.5

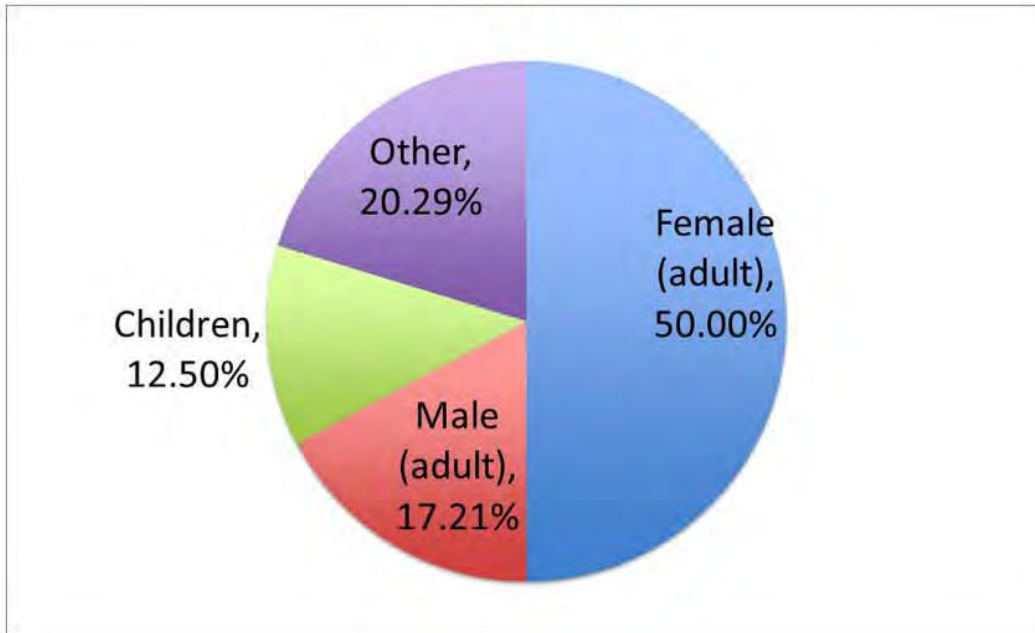
70% female



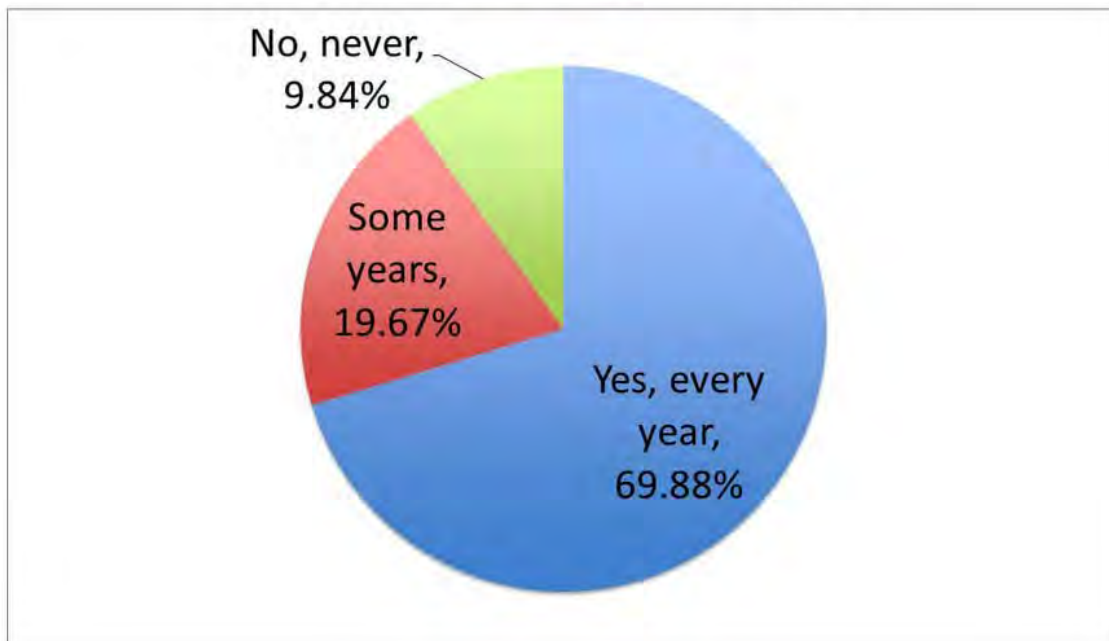
Who'd you come with?



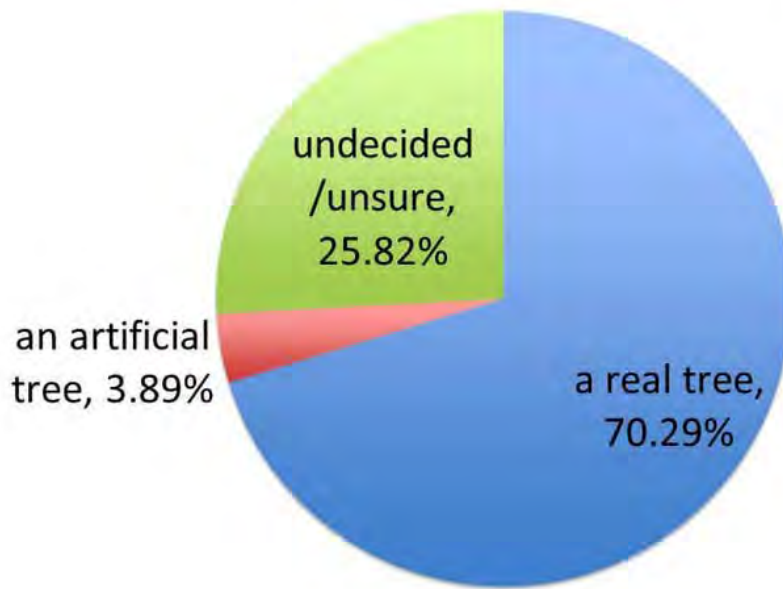
Who is responsible for choosing the tree?



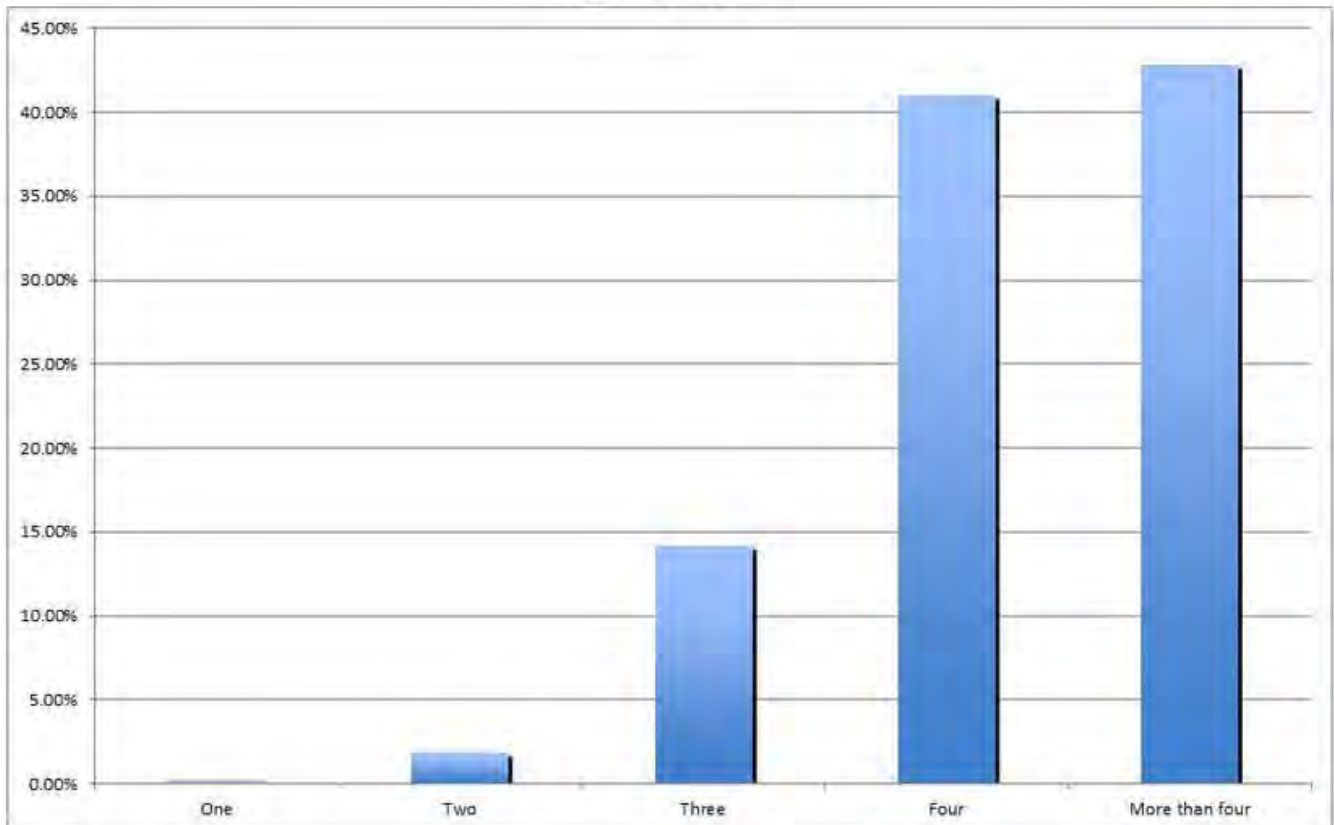
Did your family have a Christmas Tree when you were growing up?



What's more environmentally friendly?

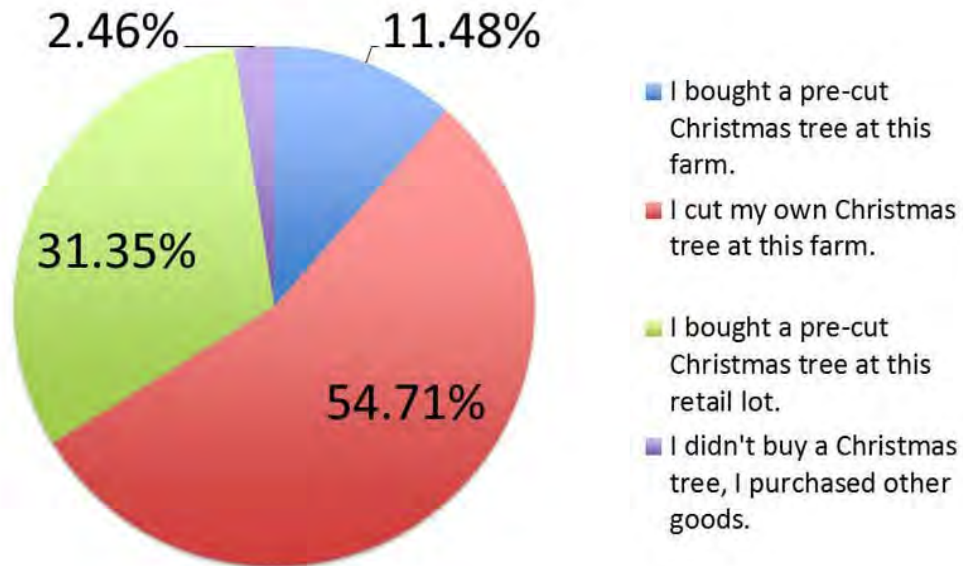


How long will you keep the tree in your home?

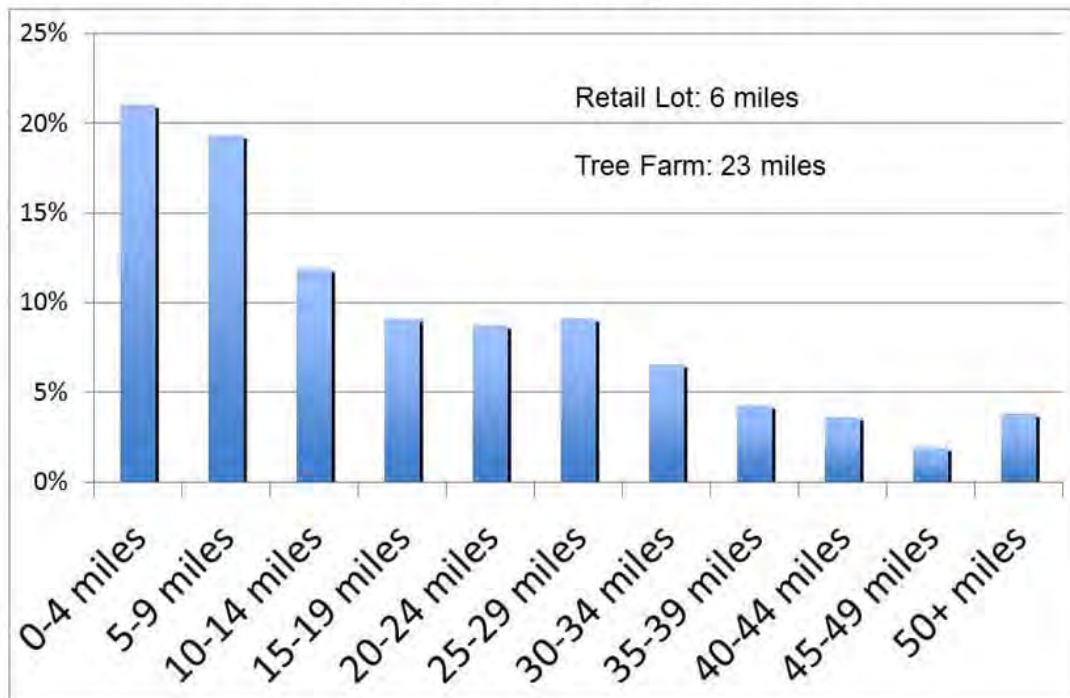


Purchasing

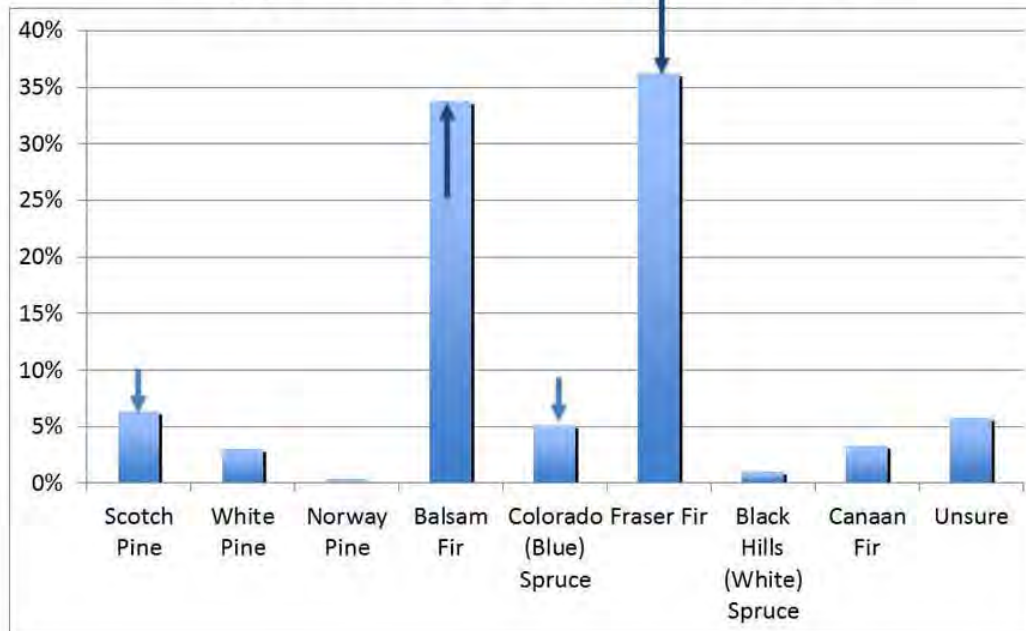
Type of Purchase



How far did they travel?

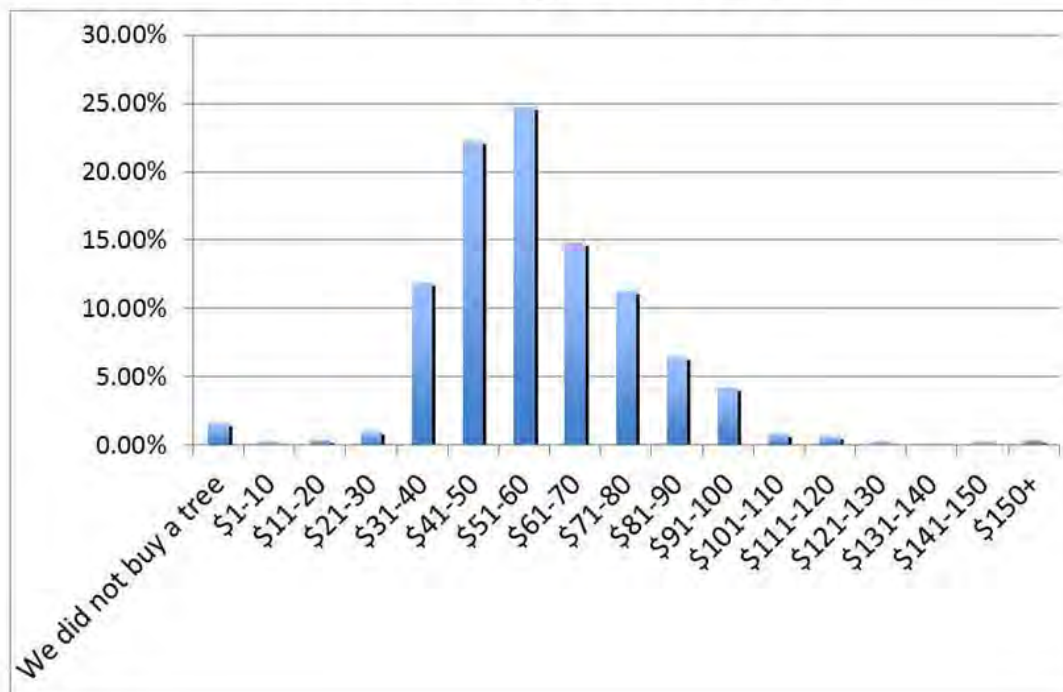


Types of Tree: Purchased



Customer Spending

Amount Spent: Tree



Spending since 2012

Average spent: tree

\$58.43 : 2016

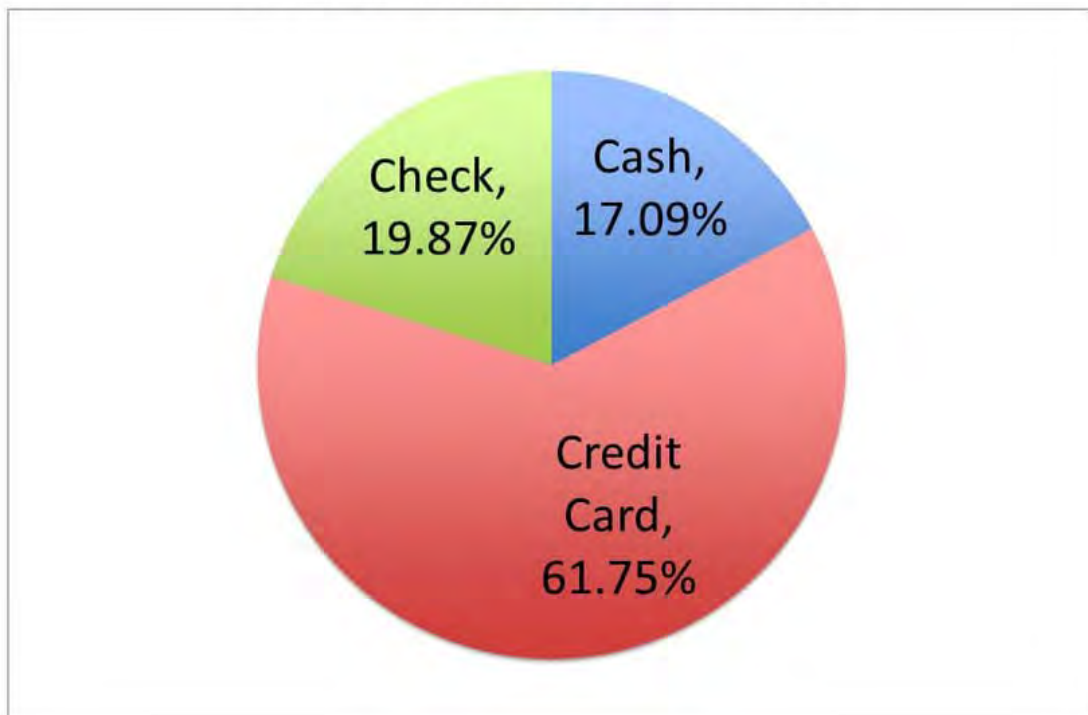
\$57.07 : 2012

Average spent: other items

\$33.13 : 2016

\$16.14 : 2012

How Customers Paid



“To me, it's not about price. The difference is so marginal, \$5-10 dollars at best? I come to this lot because the staff is amazing.

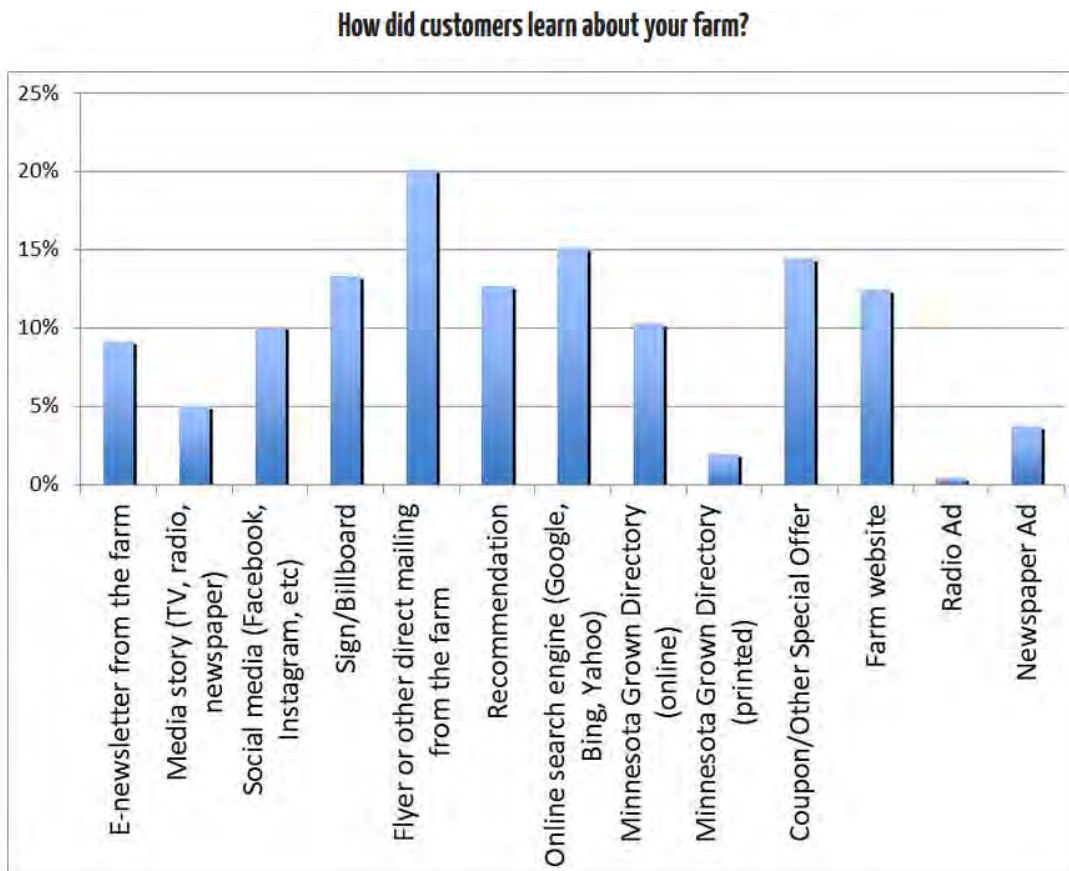
Both the years I have gone there I was immediately greeted by the staff, with a friendly "hello, how are you?" followed by a "Is there anything we can help you with?".

They are knowledgeable and friendly and quick. The cashier inside the trailer is extremely friendly. To me, I pay for a fun experience and friendly people.”

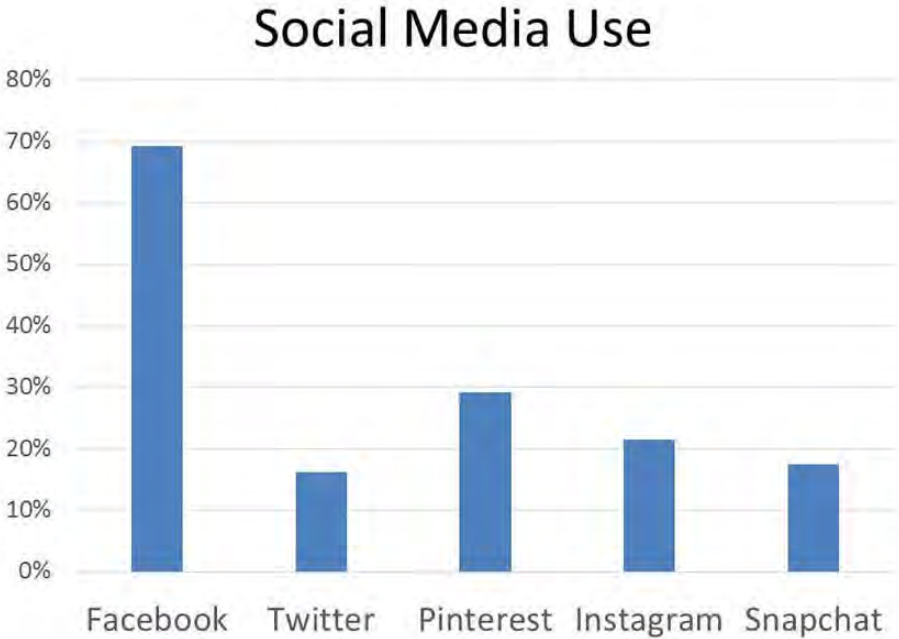
-Robin

Reaching Customers and Marketing Trends

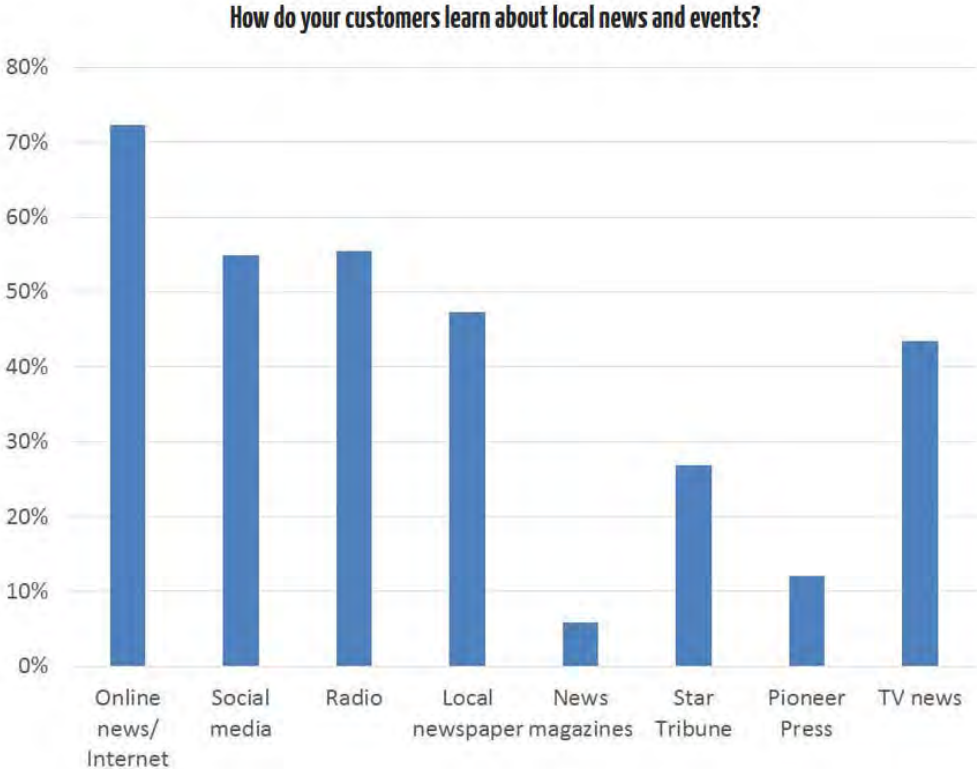
How did customers learn about your farm?



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



Method of learning about news/events



New Customers

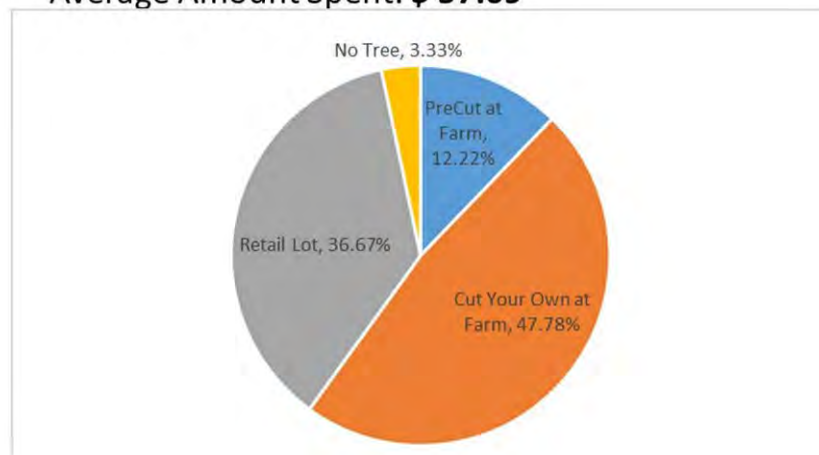
We segregated the data to look closer at customers who were brand new to the farm. We found that:

24% of Retail Lot customers are new customers.

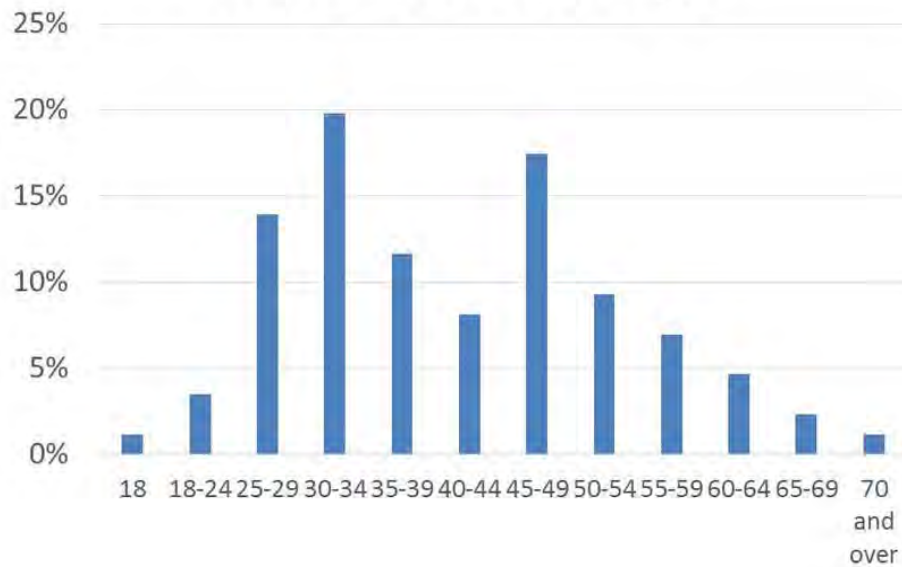
18% of Christmas Tree Farm customers are new customers.

New Customer Purchase

Average Amount Spent: \$ 57.69

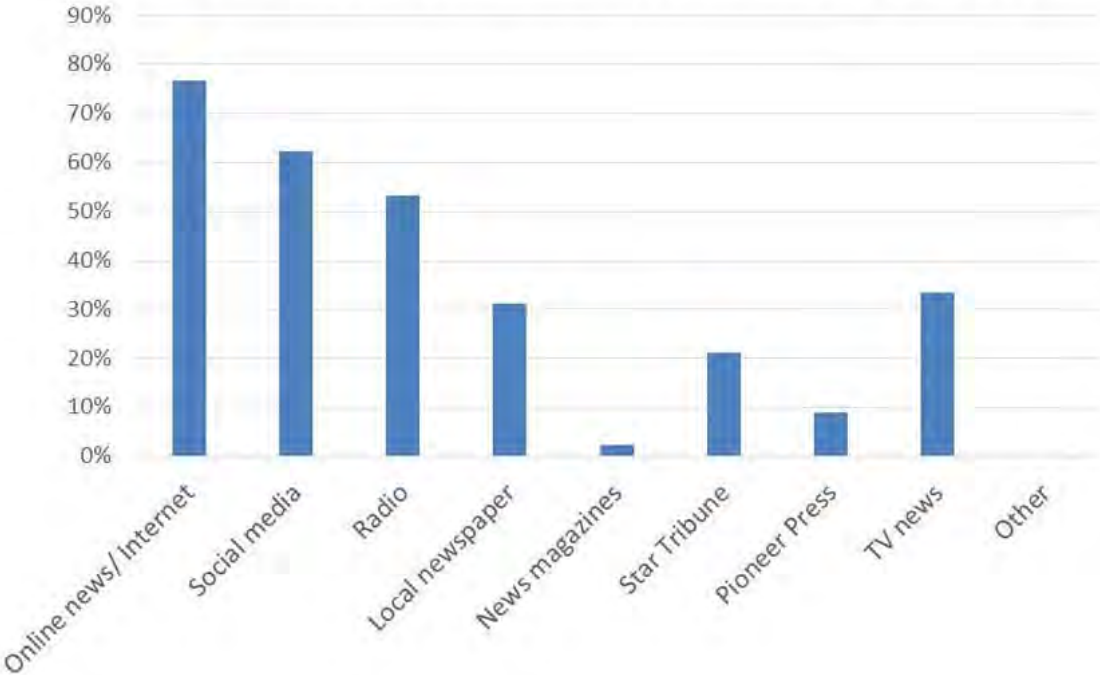


New Customers: Age



How do your new customers learn about local news and events?

New Customers – Consuming News



How do your new customers find you?

- 1. Online Search Engine (31%)
- 2. Minnesota Grown Directory (20%)
- 3. Recommendation (18%)
- 4. Sign or Billboard (18%)

New customers are talking about you!

70% will tell someone about their experience

32% are taking photos at your farm

31% posting to Facebook
9% Instagram, 8% Snapchat

85% will return next season. 😊

Presentation of Results

These results were presented at the 2016 Minnesota Christmas Tree Association Winter Meeting. Participating growers also received confidential farm reports using their customer data and comments.

After the presentation, Minnesota Grown surveyed the audience:

97% 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!

Karen Lanthier, Member Services Coordinator – Minnesota Grown
651-201-6140
karen.lanthier@state.mn.us