



Alaska State Fair 2011

Taste of Alaska survey results



Neither wind nor rain nor record crowds could deter the more than 1700 locals and visitors who took the Taste of Alaska Challenge at the Alaska State Fair in 2011. This second annual taste test pitted “grown here” against “flown here” fruits and vegetables. Many of the adults and kids who tried celery, radishes, carrots, strawberries, cauliflower, broccoli, tomatoes and milk tasted their first Alaska Grown produce at the Alaska Farmland Trust booth. Participants in the taste test also answered a market research survey about local food.

Results from survey (1023 responses):

Were you able to tell the difference between "grown here" or "flown here"?
 Yes: 82%
 No: 18%

Do you currently purchase local produce?
 Yes: 87%
 No: 13%

Do you know where to find locally grown produce?
 Yes: 87%
 No: 13%

Do you regularly attend farmers' markets?
 Yes: 61%
 No: 39%

Responses to “What would encourage you to buy more local produce?” from 750 comments:

Frequency	Response
268	price, cost, afford, cheap/er
142	available, availability
51	year-round, longer season
56	market
48	more in stores
41	access, accessibility
40	convenience, easy/easier/ease
21	taste
24	already do
22	variety, selection
22	information

Overall, the Alaska grown celery, cauliflower, strawberries, milk, tomatoes, broccoli, radishes, and carrots were preferred over imported products. Nearly half of the 750 responses to “What would encourage you to buy more local produce?” were price, followed by availability, accessibility, convenience, flavor, selection, requests for longer market hours, and more produce and information for customers in grocery stores.

Alaska Grown produce was described as:
 much better, better color and texture, better radish, sweeter, creamy flavor, crisper, crunchier, fresher-tasting, good mouth feel, juicier, less artificial, moister, more flavor, no bad bite, better not by looks but by taste, richer, smoother, less woody, more real, sweeter carrots, tastier, woodier, and yummy.

Outside produce was described as:
 bland, nasty aftertaste, juicier carrot, more flavor, less aroma, sharp aftertaste, spicy, hot, sweeter, more mellow, creamier, sweetgrass or clover milk flavor, tangy, tart, tasted better, texture, woody, and yummy.

Additional information about this survey and future market research is available from the Alaska Farmland Trust at 248 E. Dahlia Ave, Palmer, AK 99645 or at (907) 745-3336. This ongoing research supports farmers, farm advocates, local businesses, and government agencies that make decisions about Alaska Grown products, marketing, and policy.

We’d like to thank the many volunteers who made the 2011 State Fair fun and informative for participants and visitors. The assistance of the Alaska Division of Agriculture and Mat-Su Chapter of the Alaska Farm Bureau made the Taste of Alaska a great addition to the many fair activities that support local farmers and educate the public about agriculture in the state.