Recipe Sampling and Recipe Card Distribution at Farmers’ Markets Positively Correlated with Intent to Prepare Recipes Using Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables

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Abstract

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of recipe sampling and distribution of recipe cards on purchasing habits of consumers at diverse farmers’ markets throughout Kentucky.

Study Design, Setting and Participants: Surveys were conducted at farmers’ markets across seven Kentucky counties (n=223) in collaboration with local FCS Extension agents, who provided PIUKP recipe samples and professional recipe cards.

Outcome Measures and Analysis: Twenty-two percent of the survey participants (n=223) reporting having tasted a PIUKP recipe sample prior to this sampling experience. Participants reported consuming 2.79±1.4 servings of fruits and 2.85±1.24 servings of vegetables daily. The overall quality of the sampled recipe was rated as 8.63±1.71 on a 10-point Likert scale with 10 being the “best” flavor. Recipe sampling influenced consumers’ intent to purchase produce at the farmers’ market day that day (p=0.038; p=0.001) and in the future (p=0.413; p=0.001). A positive correlation was also found between sampling (r=0.552; p=0.001) and recipe card distribution (r=0.25, p=0.0002) and intent to prepare the PIUKP recipe at home.

Conclusion and Implications: Recipe sampling at farmers’ markets provides consumers with an opportunity to learn about the health benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables, how to select and prepare produce, and suggested ‘healthy’ recipes. As well, recipe sampling at the farmers’ market was positively associated with intent to purchase fruits and vegetables. Nutrition educators have the unique opportunity to share health-promoting recipes with those in their community.

Background

‘The Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud (PIUKP) recipe development project, now in its tenth year, continues to promote purchase of fresh and seasonal locally grown fruits and vegetables. Recipes are developed by upper-level dietetics and nutrition students and tested by a trained panel and community volunteers. Recipe cards, educational materials, and samples are distributed by FCS Extension agents through community programming, farmers’ markets, and other related community activities.

Research Questions

1. Does recipe sampling of PIUKP recipes influence purchasing habits of consumers at farmers’ markets?
2. Does recipe sampling and recipe card distribution impact consumers’ intent to prepare recipes using locally grown fruits and vegetables?
3. Does past fruit and vegetable intake influence future purchase of fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets?

Methods

Research assistants from the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition conducted surveys using a convenience sample at farmers’ markets across seven Kentucky counties.

RA’s and FCS agents set up booth at 7 KY farmers’ markets during Jun – Aug 2017
FCS agents sampled Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud recipes
Invite consumers to participate in the study

Results

Survey responses analyzed for correlation using SAS 9.4, with a significance level of α = 0.05.

Conclusions and Discussion

Reiterating the importance of farmers’ markets, the use of which is strongly correlated with the consumption of fruits and vegetables, this study encourages implementation of practical promotional strategies at farmers’ markets to aid in increasing produce intake. The positive associations between sampling impression and the intent to purchase and prepare said recipes suggests that exposure to healthy recipes has potential to influence purchasing and dietary habits. As well, future programs led by nutrition educators might utilize such recipe sampling as a community intervention to improve produce intake.

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