Who Buys New Jersey Peaches and Where?

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With the New Jersey peach season approaching the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council has commissioned and released a statewide poll of New Jersey registered voters on their peach purchases during the 2014 season. The survey found nearly half (47%) purchased New Jersey peaches last summer. Women (54%) were more likely than men (41%) to purchase New Jersey peaches, and buying patterns varied depending on region (south, central, northwest, northeast, and urban core). The poll, conducted by Fairleigh Dickinson's PublicMind, was designed to provide unbiased information for the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council to aid its marketing and promotional efforts. Survey questions covered the areas of purchasing venues (supermarkets, pick-your-own farms, on-farm stands and community farmers markets); in what media purchasers saw ads or editorials for New Jersey peaches; and visits to the website www.jerseypeaches.com

The largest overall percentages of Jersey peach purchasers were from south (58%) and northwest (54%); 37% were from the urban core. Purchase venues were widely diverse, with supermarkets higher in northern areas (50% in the urban core) than in southern areas (23% in the south), and on-farm purchases higher in the south (44%) than the urban core (15%). On-farm purchases were also quite strong in the northwest (42%) and central (40%). Aside from the survey, several supermarket produce buyers have reported that their customers request "Jersey-grown peaches" as soon as the peach season starts in late June.

"We were a bit surprised at the discrepancies of regional purchase practices," said Jerry Frecon, Rutgers professor emeritus, stone fruit specialist and consultant to the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council. "But the results will definitely provide guidelines for our marketing and promotional efforts going forward."

Where did poll respondents report seeing media coverage of New Jersey peaches? While only 24% of total respondents reported seeing any media coverage, the highest percentage of views overall were in newspapers or magazines, with southern New Jersey respondents reporting the highest such views (55%), followed by the northeast and northwest(both 49%). Thirty-two percent saw New Jersey peaches covered on television.

"Despite the fact that our website has received many hits (232,737 in 2014), the poll showed only two percent of respondents had visited the site in the past 12 months," continues Frecon. "We plan to make that site much more visible in the 2015 season."

Survey Methodology

The most recent survey by was conducted by telephone from September 1 through September 7, 2014 using a randomly selected sample of 801registered voters who reside in New Jersey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. These Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind interviews were conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection >is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

The New Jersey Peach Promotion Council is a non-profit voluntary organization of growers, shippers, wholesalers and associated industries dedicated to maintaining a viable peach industry in the Garden State for the purpose of preserving farmers and farmland; and providing the highest quality and best tasting fresh peaches for consumers. New Jersey is the fourth largest peach producing state in the country, with approximately 80 orchards on 5,500 acres, producing 60-66 million pounds, valued at $30-35-million. Details on support and membership are available at www.jersey peaches.com.

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