

# SOUTH DAKOTA SPECIALTY CROP BUYER EVALUATION

South Dakota  
SPECIALTY PRODUCERS  
ASSOCIATION



This document is a summary of responses to SD Specialty Producers Association's Buyer Evaluation. Data collection is ongoing, interested buyers can submit their responses here: <https://forms.gle/1oyQ9XDjESMi5oA86>



## INTRODUCTION

This project collected responses from chefs, florists, schools, restaurants, farm stores, and other businesses and institutions across South Dakota to gain understanding related to the interest, barriers, and logistics of purchasing local specialty crops and value added products.

## UNDERSTANDING DISTRIBUTION & AGGREGATION SYSTEMS

Only **10%** of respondents stated they have sufficient understanding of local distribution regulations and aggregation systems.

A majority of respondents stated they have some level of understanding.

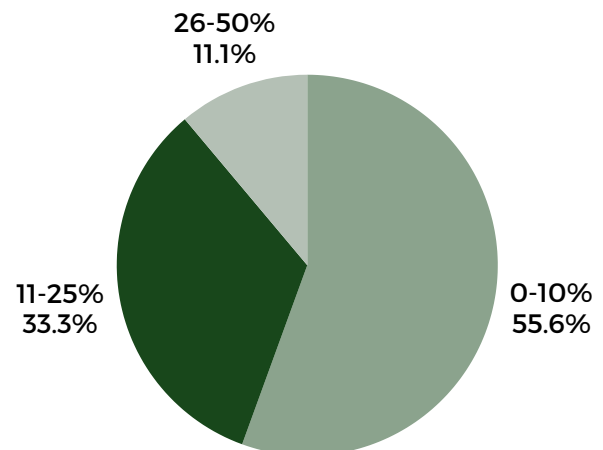
## CURRENT LOCAL FOOD BUYERS

**88%** of respondents shared that they currently purchase local specialty crops and products for their business or institution. A variety of sources were reported including wholesale distributors, direct store delivery vendors, and big box retailers.

**60%** reported buying directly from local producers, food hubs, or co-ops. Purchasing from local businesses made up between **5% and 85%** of reported food purchases.



Percentages of Total Food Budget Spent on Local Specialty Crops & Food



# INTEREST AND BARRIERS WHEN PURCHASING LOCAL SPECIALTY CROPS & PRODUCTS

All respondents stated interest in purchasing locally, but expressed they did not have a sufficient understanding of what is available from local producers.

Buyers had interest in sourcing local specialty crops including fruits, vegetables, and cut flowers. There was also interest in local meat, dairy products, grains, baked goods, bread, and prepared food.

The following were identified as **incentives** that would encourage buyers to increase the volume they purchase locally:

- Assistance with sourcing & logistics
- Increased variety of products
- Lower prices
- Educational resources and training
- Smaller minimum order quantities
- Integration with existing distributors

## BUYER REQUIREMENTS

Respondents identified requirements when purchasing local specialty crops and products including:

- Insurance
- Food safety documentation
- Comprehensive labeling
- Traceability
- Sufficient quantities
- Delivery capabilities

Specific requirements may vary depending on the product.

## BUYER PRIORITIES

When sourcing food for their businesses and institutions buyers first consider quality and freshness. Other considerations include local origin, price, variety, nutritional value, and sustainable practices.

Below are identified **challenges & barriers** to purchasing local specialty crops and products:

- Availability of desired products
- Price competitiveness
- Reliability
- Lack of knowledge about local options
- Product consistency and quality

## VOLUME, DELIVERY & TIMING

The volume of desired products varied depending on the size of each business or institution. The most common local food budget was **\$100 - \$600** per week.

A majority of buyers preferred producers to have delivery capabilities. **50%** of respondents would also use a centralized pick up location.

**66 %** of respondents desired a weekly delivery on a weekday morning.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

Despite reaching out to a large amount and variety of buyers by email, phone, and social media, only 10 responses were collected. While this project does give insight and perspective, it may not represent all buyers correctly.



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