

Farmers' markets location determinants: An empirical analysis in New England

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ABSTRACT of presentation held on **5 December 2013, room C82, 12.30 – 13.30 hrs., Leeuwenborch, Wageningen**

The continued growth and success of farmers markets (FMs) across the US leads one to question whether this outlet can help reduce limited food access via farmers directly meeting consumer needs. To date, however, few analyses have assessed the economic forces determining their existence. Using an Industrial Organization framework, we provide a zip-code level empirical evaluation of socio-economic, structural, and competitive features that impact the likelihood of an FM in a given area. Results suggest that market size, education level, presence of children in a household and income support program participation are demand characteristics that lend to the establishment of FMs; more than income per se. We also find that increased farming activities and reduced farm size increase the likelihood of observing a FM. While FMs are more likely to collocate in areas where there is a larger presence of grocery stores, the existence of more established traditional distribution channels (i.e. fruits and vegetables wholesaling) decreases the probability of observing FMs. As not every community can support an FM, the results of this research can help regional planners and policy makers better understand what factors may be most restrictive for FMs and what investments may help foster their development.



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