

Farmers' trade skills: exploring the local food chain in Leeuwarden, the 2018 European Capital of Culture

Marcelo de Mansoldo, Elena Cavagnaro*  & Vanessa de Oliveira Menezes

Academy of International Hospitality Research, Stenden Hotel Management School, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

*Corresponding author email: elena.cavagnaro@stenden.com

ABSTRACT: Local food chains have received increasing attention as an alternative to the mainstream, unsustainable global food model. Farmers who directly sell their products to consumers are an essential link in local food chains. Surprisingly, research on local food chains has mostly focused on the final consumer, leaving the role of farmer–sellers largely unexplored. This study investigates the trade skills of farmers who are selling (their own) products and their knowledge of their consumers' base. It takes a qualitative approach and uses in-depth interviews with both farmer–sellers and their potential clients. Contrary to existing literature, findings suggest that farmer–sellers have an articulated understanding of local food, possess refined trade skills, and know their customer base well. In line with existing literature, the importance of networks and of learning from customers is confirmed. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: cultural tourism, direct selling, farmers' knowledge, local food chain

Introduction

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to promoting short supply chains. This growing interest reflects the consumers' demand for quality and traceability and fuels demand for local food (Aubry & Kebir, 2013). Terms such as "local food", "local food system", and "(re)localisation" are used to refer to food produced near its point of consumption, in opposition to the mainstream food system where products may travel thousands of kilometres before reaching the customer (Peters et al., 2008).

In Europe, a growing number of consumers choose local products and associate them with higher quality, healthy eating and environmentally friendly production methods (European Parliament, 2016). Other aspects commonly associated with local food are small-scale production, craftsmanship and promoting local food traditions (Adams & Adams, 2011; Coley et al., 2009; Feenstra, 1997; Granvik et al., 2017; Lang, Stanton & Qu, 2014). Some of the qualities attributed to local food, however, are debatable. For example, consuming local food results in fewer emissions from transportation, better food quality or improved animal welfare only if the whole chain is properly managed (Garnett, 2011; Morawicki & Gonzalez, 2018; Seidel & Cavagnaro, 2018). Moreover, farmers directly selling to consumers are an essential link in the local food chain. Managing direct selling, however, requires skills that farmers often lack, leading to the failure of many farmers' market initiatives (European

Commission, 2016). Considering the importance of farmer–sellers for the success of shorter food chains, it is surprising that local food literature mainly focuses on the consumers' and tourists' perspectives (see e.g. Autio et al., 2013; Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Woods, Rossi, Allen & Davis, 2017; Zepeda & Nie, 2011). When authors consider farmers, they mostly explore their production methods. The dearth of research on farmers as sellers of (their own and other farmers') products, justifies the focus of this study on farmers' trade skills. More specifically, this study's objectives are to probe the farmer–sellers' knowledge of local food in general, of the products that they sell in particular, and of their customer base.

This article is organised as follows. A brief literature review touches upon definitions of local food, farmer–sellers, consumers' motivations to buy local, and cultural tourists — a target group particularly interested in local food. Then the research method is explained and findings are presented and discussed. The conclusion ties up the research, acknowledges limitations and offers recommendations to both industry and academia.

Literature review

Although the concept of "local food" is commonly used in the literature, there is no consensus on its definition (Hein, Ibery, & Kneafsey, 2006; Lang et al., 2014). Existing definitions are usually based on the distance (i.e. miles or kilometres) between production and consumption sites with the understanding that

the distribution chain between producer and consumer should be short (e.g. Hall & Gössling, 2013; Kneafsey et al., 2013). Defining "local" geographically is attractive because of its apparent straightforwardness. However, as several articles in this special issue also show, its application in practice is not only challenging, but also leads to different proposals (Holt & Amilien, 2012). Feldmann and Hamm (2015), for example, considered a range from 10 (~16 km) to 30 miles (40.28 km) up to 100 miles (160 km) as appropriate, while Sims (2009), Kirwan and Maye (2013) and Hall and Gössling (2013) state that a distance of 30 miles (40.28 km) is the only acceptable one. Definitions of local food based on political borders face similar issues, as these come in many forms (municipality, province, region, national and supranational states) and cover areas of varying size (e.g. Hall & Gössling, 2013). To avoid the difficulties of geographical definitions, more holistic approaches have been proposed that include emotional and/or ethical dimensions such as personal relations with or within the region (Feldmann & Hamm, 2015). In this line, Feenstra (2002) states that local food is a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies, in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place. Similarly, other studies have acknowledged local food as a means to enhance the economy of the most closely located country areas, to support local producers and generate job opportunities for locals (Duram, 2011; Martinez et al., 2010; Roseland & Soots, 2007). Similarly, several studies show that local food creates opportunities for direct contact between producers and consumers (Dodds et al., 2014; Feagan & Morris, 2009; Feenstra, 1997; Hunt, 2007) and increases the chance of developing local food systems encompassing urban and rural areas (Berg & Granvik, 2009; Feenstra, 1997). Local food has also been associated (and sometimes identified) with small-scale or organic production, craftsmanship and the promotion of local food traditions. On a critical note, it should be recognised that some of the aspects associated with local food (such as small scale) do not pertain to it necessarily, since local food may also originate from large food industries (Granvik et al., 2017).

Considering the still open debate on the definition of local food, this study connects the geographical to the socio-economic perspective. Therefore, "local food" is understood here as food that which: (1) is farmed and processed in an area with a radius of 40 km from the point where it is sold; and (2) contributes to the local economy by being sold by the farmer or a seller in direct relationship with the farmer (also referred to as the farmer-seller).

Most of the existing academic articles on local food do not focus on the farmer-seller, but investigate the purchase or consumption intensions of customers with special attention to tourists (Autio et al., 2013; Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Woods, Rossi, Allen, & Davis, 2017; Zepeda & Nie, 2011). When authors consider the farmers' perspectives, they mostly explore (cooperative) farming methods (Lutz et al., 2017; Sumane et al., 2017; Sutherland et al., 2017; Veizaj et al., 2009). Consequently, little is known about farmers as sellers. This lack of research is unexpected because local food systems are characterised by relatively small farms with a commitment to sustainable production, distribution and consumption (Jarosz, 2008), including shorter distances between producers and consumers (Connell, Smithers, & Joseph, 2008).

Shorter food supply chains in which farmers play the role of sellers yield several benefits to the farmers themselves and the local community such as the creation of new jobs, new-found pride and reinforced brand identity that may boost a destinations' attractiveness for food tourists (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; United Nations ECLAC, 2015). Short supply chains offer opportunities for collaboration and create social spaces where friendships and social networking are fostered (Lapping, 2004) and social capital formed (Hinrichs, 2000). Cooperation, particularly in logistics, has been found to be essential for farmers wishing to set up local food supply systems (Anderson et al., 2014; Schermer, 2015). Finally, becoming a seller represents for farmers an attractive opportunity for capturing a higher share of added value and for ensuring a more stable income (Gale, 1997). Local food systems are consequently regarded as a more sustainable alternative to globalised food systems (Hall & Gössling, 2013; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Morgan, Marsden, & Murdoch, 2006).

Yet, the increasing standardisation of agricultural knowledge can limit farmers' freedom to become sellers. In general, farmers feel that their knowledge about their own environment, their experience-based expertise and practical skills are not appreciated, ultimately undermining the sustainability of their agricultural practices (Darnhofer & Strauss, 2015). This issue is compounded when producers become sellers. In fact, farmer-sellers need to perform simultaneously the role of a marketing agent, a distributor and a consumer relations expert (European Commission, 2016). It is often difficult for farmers to develop the knowledge and skills needed to perform these roles effectively. Moreover, farmers are limited in their ability to approach local consumers by a lack of access to production or post-production technology, limited market information on pricing and alternative market outlets, and lack of skills in negotiating and bargaining (Kahan, 2013). Lack of information on prices and quality standards may also lead to problems regarding inefficient packaging and labelling (Sumane et al., 2017). When seeking new knowledge, farmers tend to rely on self-education, experimentation and the experiences of their peers (Sumane et al., 2017). Traditional farmers' knowledge, such as the one possessed by farmers dealing with special quality foods and small-scale farming, is considered a source of inspiration. Consumers are also an important source of knowledge and innovation for farmers. It has been found that a direct link to consumers stimulates farmers to better explain their concerns and values, to rethink their habits of working, selling, labelling and to design new products and services (Bourdin et al., 2015; Darnhofer & Strauss, 2015). To sum up: while the traditional products' reputation and farmers' knowledge of their environment may become a powerful vehicle in communicating with consumers (De Roest & Ferrari, 2015), the lack of formal education and trade skills may constrain farmers' ability to sell directly to consumers (European Commission, 2016).

As briefly touched upon above, personal interaction is important for consumers to develop trust in farmers and to better value their products (Sage, 2003). Moreover, the interaction may leave unique memories for the buyer (Sinnreich, 2007). Knowing local food products is essential in forming a positive attitude towards them and in stimulating purchase (Zepeda & Deal, 2009; Sirieix, Delanchy, Remaud, Zepeda, & Gurvey, 2013). Conversely, not knowing where and when local food is sold is a major barrier for consumers willingly to purchase it (Starr et al., 2003). Indeed, unlike grocery chain stores, farmers' markets generally open for

limited times and days. Arguably, customers' lack of knowledge about the benefits of local products and where to find them increases the need for farmers to develop marketing skills and reach out to their potential consumers.

To properly market their produce, farmers need to know why people buy local. Although a growing number of studies have increased our knowledge about motivational factors for choosing locally, consensus is far from being reached. Fields (2002), for example, names four motivational factors: physical; cultural; interpersonal; and other motivators. Yet, other researchers propose up to nine (sub-) factors: exciting experience; escape from routine; health concerns; learning about new cultures; authentic experience; togetherness; prestige; sensory appeal; and physical needs (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). Table 1 shows that these factors fall broadly into the two overarching categories of *symbolic* and *obligatory* motivational factors individuated by Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) and Sengel et al. (2015). Food consumption bears *symbolic* significance because it is a way to encounter and experience other gastronomic traditions and cultures. Simultaneously, food provides essential nutrients and therefore eating is an *obligatory* activity (Richards, 2002). Adding to symbolic and obligatory factors, Zepeda and Deal (2009) observed that contextual factors (price and availability) greatly impact on the actual purchase behaviour. These are therefore included in Table 1.

Symbolic and obligatory factors are not absolutely separated but are interconnected. In the context of this study, it is important to note that the contact between farmer and consumer allows the latter to ask questions about how the food was produced such as whether pesticides were used — aspects that may fall under *obligatory*.

Previous studies have identified in cultural tourists a group that could be particularly interested in buying local because they are attracted by food's symbolic function (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2015). Cultural tourists are indeed not only attracted by cultural products of the past, but also by contemporary culture including gastronomy and food (Mousavi et al., 2016). According to the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (2006), cultural tourism comprises all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions outside their normal place of residence. Following this definition, nearly every journey either contains some cultural elements or at least may potentially contain them (Mikos, 2008). Yet, if every tourist could be qualified as a (potential) cultural tourist, the concept loses explanatory power. Consequently, efforts have been done to categorise cultural tourism considering the importance of culture, as a motivator, to the traveller (McKercher & Du Gros, 2002; Stebbins, 1996). The main distinction lies between "specialised" and "general" cultural tourists. General cultural tourists only causally or

incidentally open themselves to the local culture. Specialised cultural tourists are further characterised as purposeful, sightseeing and serendipitous (McKercher & Du Gros, 2002; Stebbins, 1996). While they differ in the depth of the sought experience, general (GCT) and specialised (SCT) cultural tourists may both become interested in local food. For some tourists to know and experience other culture's food becomes the main motive for the trip. These so-called food tourists visit various gastronomic facilities, meet chefs, go sightseeing where food is produced, and buy food items to take home as souvenirs (Sims, 2009). Contact with farmer-sellers yields benefits to (cultural) tourists by opening them up to the opportunity to develop a stronger sense of place and to form new relationships (Brain, 2012; Darolt, 2012; Scarabelot & Schneider, 2012). In a similar line, the literature suggests that food and destinations are mutually beneficial because food adds value to destinations by culturally displaying them (Miele, 2006; Sanchez & Guzman, 2012; Timothy & Ron, 2013), while destinations make food a better tourism product (Fields, 2002). Yet, critics contend that local cultures are profoundly changed when exposed to tourism. For example, "local dishes" are adapted to the palate of foreign guests, so that the local food culture and tradition could be lost instead of strengthened (Vergahen, 2012).

Research method

Considering the lack of knowledge on farmer-sellers, this study aims to shed some light on the farmers in their role as sellers, particularly on their understanding of "local", trade skills, and knowledge of their customer base. As the study wishes to uncover the farmer-sellers' perspective, it takes a qualitative approach. Interviews were held with farmer-sellers and (potential) customers in Leeuwarden (Friesland, the Netherlands). Friesland was chosen because of its strong traditions. It is the only Dutch province with its own language (Frisian) and its culture is based on social collaboration. Thanks to these unique features, Leeuwarden, the capital city of Friesland, was given the title of 2018 European Capital of Culture.

Data were gathered between May 2017 and July 2017 at four sites: Zaailand, a central square in Leeuwarden where a farmers' market is held on Fridays; the Old Prison food markets; the Friesian Museum; and the Railway Station. The Zaailand and Old Prison markets are a form of short supply chain, i.e. as described above, a supply chain where the distance between producers and consumers is minimised. (Kebir & Torre, 2013). The other two locations are spots where potential local food buyers, i.e. (cultural) tourists, could be found. Twenty-seven respondents were reached; out of which seven were local food producers and sellers (in short: FS), and twenty were tourists visiting the city

TABLE 1: Motivational factors and contextual factors

Symbolic	Obligatory	Contextual factors
Learn local culture	Health concerns	Price
Exciting experience	Physical needs	Availability
Authenticity	Farmers' working conditions	
Prestige	Queries about food production	
Togetherness	Animal welfare	
Support local economy and community		
Environmental friendliness		

Source: Developed by the authors on the basis of Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009), Mak, Lumbers, Eves and Chan (2012) and Sengel et al. (2015)

of Leeuwarden, later categorised as General Cultural Tourists (in short: GCT) and Specialised Cultural Tourism (in short: SCT).

After general questions about their profession, farmer-sellers were asked about their own definition of local food and about the customers' perception of their local products. Tourists were questioned about their definition of local food, their general interest in it and whether they actually looked for local food while travelling. Following a suggestion from previous research (McKercher & Du Gros, 2002; Stebbins, 1996), both general and specialised cultural tourists were approached for this study. The discriminant question was whether they come to the city of Leeuwarden to visit a museum, attend the theatre, or one of the activities related to Leeuwarden-Friesland being the 2018 European Capital of Culture, or for other reasons.

Interviews were held in English. While, generally speaking, (Dutch) people are supposed to have a fair command of English, the fact that respondents were not approached in their native language may explain why several tourists declined to be interviewed ($n = 50$ refusals, out of $N = 70$ approached). On the other hand, all ($N = 7$) seller-producers approached showed high level of enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the interview. Although theoretical saturation was reached for both target groups, one of the research limitations is the small sample size. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed following a content analysis approach (Boeije, 2014; Harding, 2013). The data were presented based on the in-depth interviews and the analysis made by pairing the empirical data with the theory.

On average, interviews lasted 15 minutes with seller-producers and five minutes with tourists. Information that could be used to identify respondents has been eliminated in the transcripts.

Main findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses the main themes emerging from the analysis. It touches first on the farmer-sellers, and then on the tourists.

Farmer-sellers

The farmer-sellers approached dealt in dairy products, bread, liquor, sausages and typical local treats. Out of the farmer-sellers, six were male and one female, with an estimated age range of 25 to 55 years old. Almost all of the sellers interviewed ($n = 5$) answered the question about what makes food local by mentioning distance in kilometres, as the following quotes exemplify:

Local is about 40 to 50 kilometres' radius. (FS2, 9 June 2017, line 17)

Here we draw a line; 40 kilometres around Leeuwarden... the farm can be 40 kilometres' radius away from here... (FS5, 16 June 2017, line 23)

All interviewees both sell their own and other farmers' products. A common theme is that they have created partnerships and networks even with what they consider to be their competitors, as the quotes below exemplify.

At first, they [farmers] used to see each other as competitors, but afterwards they embraced each other, and they said: "How can we work together?" ... That's the sight of this whole process. (FS6, 16 June 2017, lines 64-66)

They [competitors] are partners...working together. (FS7, 16 June 2017, lines 95-97)

This finding confirms Lapping's (2004) consideration that local food creates a social space where community, friendships and social networking are fostered. It also supports literature suggesting that partnerships positively affect both the farmer and the businesses surrounding the farmer (European Commission, 2016). All sellers interviewed also stressed that establishing partnerships and assuring other farmers' cooperation are preconditions to sell to consumers.

Other farmers raise vegetables for me, I tell them how to do...we all work together...that's the whole point. (FS3, 9 June 2017, lines 100-108)

We use honey [from one farmer], we use meat [from other farmer], everything comes from the region, and we are always looking for some kind of collaboration. (FS7, 16 June 2017, lines 42-45)

The quotes above not only support the positive role of selling locally on the socio-economic conditions of a community (Connell, Smithers & Joseph, 2008; Jarosz, 2008), but also show how communities self-organise around local food systems. This finding supports the notion that farmers consider their colleagues to be reputable experts, particularly when they are dealing with special quality foods (Sumane et al., 2017; Sutherland et al., 2017). All sellers were indeed fully aware of the high quality of their products and proud that most or all of them are handmade using local ingredients, with great care and respect towards people and the planet. Here are two illustrative quotes:

Good the way it is [tradition], with less additives... expect no better than local, cause when it's local it's good...we use ingredients from around the city [Leeuwarden] from the farmers...everything comes from the region [Friesland]. (FS7, 16 June 2017, lines 33-44)
[It is healthier]...because I don't use any chemicals. (FS3, 9 June 2017, line 78)

These quotes also align with previous studies stating that small farmers tend to produce without the use of chemicals (Grubinger, 2004; Lyson, 2004).

One of the questions in the interview aimed at uncovering the original motivation of the sellers and producers to start with their business ($N = 7$). Answers centred on family history and family connections, as the following quotes exemplify:

My parents and I have a farm, always selling to local people...that's what my parents did, that their parents did and...I took over the farm from my elders, 26 years ago...it's a family thing. (FS2, 9 June 2017, lines 7-13)

My companion and I started with this company two years ago, we started the business...bringing local food to our family and friends... (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 3-6)

This result agrees with Martinez et al. (2010), Jarosz (2008) and Granvik et al. (2017) who found that local food businesses are often small family-owned businesses, sustaining traditional production methods. In fact, interviewees could describe in detail how their products are made. Moreover, interviewees were quite passionate about the creation of innovative, exclusive and more sustainable products, as the quote below shows:

It's unique. I make special cheeses with less water, usually cheeses have 50 per cent water and that is too much. This cheese doesn't have 50 per cent water so it

has more fat, that means more flavour, more taste and they are really good. (FS4, 10 June 2017, lines 54-57)

When reading the quotes above, the term "craftsmanship" comes to mind. Craftsmanship is the capacity to coherently integrate and co-ordinate a range of practices. It entails detailed knowledge of the most appropriate techniques and the use of dedicated or locally available instruments and labour practices (Baars & de Vries, 1999).

Regarding market knowledge, it was interesting to find that all seller-producers were very knowledgeable about their best-selling local products. Moreover, they show a lot of care and attention towards their customers. For example, several sellers know customers by their first names, and vice versa. Special attention is given to their products in order to please different sorts of palates, with buyers being able to make comments and provide feedback, ask for modifications or even full customisation of the product. While this finding contradicts studies that insist on the lack of knowledge of farmers about their (possible) customer base, it supports the notion that farmers learn from their customers (Bourdin et al., 2015; Darnhofer & Strauss, 2015). The quotes below exemplify the relation with customers and the reasons why customers come back.

They come back because they want to be part of it, we make a relation...that's very important (FS1, 9 June 2017, lines 80, 81)

Tourists come here and they buy lots of cheese, we have a talk, check about the time they are having, building some kind of relationship, its really nice...they come back, we wish them back, it's not about selling cheese, it's about selling a story. (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 63-69)

The quotes above support De Roest and Ferrari's intuition (2015) that the products' reputation and history become part of the production system and a powerful vehicle in the communication with consumers. Moreover, they confirm the finding from previous research that buying food directly from producers enables consumers to interact with and quiz them about their product (Dodds et al., 2014; Feagan & Morris, 2009). Along the same lines, Sinnreich (2007) found that the relationship-building between consumer and producer provides a unique experience to the consumer because someone who fully understands the product can explain it to her. Literature also suggests that one of the biggest benefits for consumers in supporting local is a deeper insight into food stories and a stronger sense of place (Martinez et al., 2010). Our findings strengthen this suggestion, as the quotes below show.

They want to buy food from farmers that they could look in the eyes, that is trustworthy...farmers can have a connection with people...farmers come together and talk with each other. (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 145, 148)

Customers are looking for special products, special things, they come with questions that only the farmer [sellers] knows. (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 104-107)

Sometimes they ask themselves [what they want], we let them [customers] taste our best kinds [of cheese] and then they take it...most of the times I ask about which kind of situation is it...with friends, with a lady... then we know exactly what cheeses to offer. (FS4, 10 June 2017, lines 76-78, 84, 85)

Summing up the results so far, the major themes mentioned by the seller-producers were:

- Importance of partnerships with other farmers and producers

- Family-business pride
- Proud of their own and others' experience-based knowledge
- Customers' satisfaction at heart: aware of customers' buying motives
- Aware of the importance of building a relationship with the customer

Tourists as local food buyer

Among all tourists interviewed, 12 were classified as specialised cultural tourists (SCT) and 8 were classified as general cultural tourists (GCT). Of the tourists interviewed ($N = 20$), a majority were female ($n = 13$), with an age range of 21 to 75 years old. All tourists (SCT: $N = 12$, and GCT: $N = 8$) were asked about what drives them to purchase local food, especially when travelling to a different city. Tourists from both groups mentioned "taste" as being their main reason for purchasing local food, as the quotes below illustrate.

If it tastes good... (GCT1, 8 July 2017, line 23)

Just for the taste, just to get an idea of what it tastes like. (SCT5, 8 July 2017, lines 24-25)

Because the taste is good...the taste is better. (GCT12, 15 July 2017, lines 18, 20)

The importance of taste is unsurprising and is widely supported by the existing literature (see e.g. Duram, 2011; Martinez et al., 2010; Roseland & Soots, 2007). As the quotes below show, another set of motives, mentioned exclusively by specialised cultural tourists (SCT7; SCT6; SCT11; SCT16; SCT17; SCT19; SCT20), dovetails with the description of local food as being unique and traditional: experimentation, curiosity, and being part of the local community.

I always look for local food products while travelling, and buy a recipe book, it's about trying new things, you have to do that. (SCT17, 15 July 2017, lines 21, 23)

I am curious, the food is part of the country and when you visit a country, you want to visit all of it, so you want to experience, the food, the people, the culture, everything. (SCT7, 8 July 2017, lines 14-16)

Just to feel like you are part of the community and to try different tastes, to be part of the culture. (SCT19, 15 July 2017, lines 14, 15)

Seeking experiences is central to the definition of cultural tourism (Richards, 2007). The quotes above suggest that food is an integral part of this experience. Uniqueness can also be interpreted in terms of exclusivity. Tasting something exclusive is an important motivator for both general and specialised cultural tourists as the quotes below testify.

Because it's interesting, something that I can't buy in my own city...so that's what inspires me when I am somewhere else. (GCT10, 8 July 2017, lines 16-21)

Because local products usually are the best, it's typical from the area, it's unique. (SCT14, 15 July, lines 24-28)

The quotes above support Sanchez and Guzman's (2012) statement that regardless of whether or not food is tourists' main reason to visit a destination, it provides pleasure and helps to create agreeable memories. It moreover points to a way to interest general cultural tourists in local food, i.e. underlining not only its uniqueness, but also its exclusivity. Specialised cultural tourists mention a last, specific motive for choosing local food and that is supporting the local economy (Du Rand & Heath, 2006).

...to benefit the local farmers and local economy. (SCT3, 8 July 2017, lines 21, 25)

Finally, it is relevant to note that three general cultural tourists (GCT4, 8, 9) plainly answered that they were not interested in local food products. As one of them puts it:

Never purchased a local food product. (GCT4, 8 July 2017, line 8, 10)

There is, therefore, a defined category of cultural tourists for which food never exceeds the function to provide for biological needs (Fields, 2002; Frochot, 2003). However, our findings generally show that tourists appreciate local food due to its particular taste, authenticity and exclusivity. Summing up, Table 2 contrasts the major themes mentioned by specialised and general cultural tourists related to their willingness to try local food products.

Conclusions

Local food literature mainly focuses on customers and tourists (e.g., Autio et al., 2013; Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Woods, Rossi, Allen, & Davis, 2017; Zepeda & Nie, 2011). When authors consider the farmers' perspectives, they mostly explore their farming methods. Yet, in a local food system, farmers are often also sellers of their own and other farmers' products. The literature suggest that becoming a seller is a daunting challenge for farmers because they lack the knowledge and skills needed to directly sell to customers. This study aimed at probing this statement in the context of the Dutch region of Friesland. In contrast with the main opinion of previous studies, it was found that farmers who sell directly to customers have good knowledge of all aspects of their business and of their client base. All farmer-sellers ($N = 7$) in this study have a loyal customer base, and have built strong relationships with their clients. Additionally, tourists receive special attention from the interviewed farmer-sellers. Since tourists are not acquainted with local products, the sellers introduce all their special local products to them, telling stories, giving samples and detailed explanations. Moreover, findings suggest that farmer-sellers not only master traditional methods and recipes, but also develop marketing strategies to have innovative products exclusively for their customers. In line with the literature, it has been found that local food systems are characterised by relatively small farms with a commitment to sustainable production, distribution and consumption (Connell, Smithers & Joseph, 2008; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Jarosz, 2008). Moreover, it has also been confirmed that farmer-sellers recognise the importance of partnerships with other farmers. This forms a solid basis for further stimulating local agriculture and creating jobs for the local community (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; United Nations ECLAC, 2015). To highlight local food contribution to the socio-economic welfare of Friesland, future impact studies are recommended.

The consumers' data, which in this study was provided by tourists visiting Leeuwarden, shows that local food still catches the interest of a dedicated niche. In line with the literature, dedicated cultural tourists were found to be interested in local

food (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2015; Sengel et al., 2015). However, our study also found that some cultural tourists are not interested. To keep this customer base and enlarge it for other tourist segments, information is key because consumers need to know about the advantages of local food before they develop a positive intention to purchase it (Zepeda & Deal, 2009; Zepeda & Gurviez, 2013). One advantage that speaks to all prospective consumers is the exclusivity of local food. Therefore, it is recommended that a general campaign promoting the uniqueness and exclusivity of local Frisian food be designed and deployed.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, respondents were approached in English which resulted in several refusals to participate from tourists. Further research should contact respondents in their mother tongue. Concerning sellers, an analysis of the farmer-sellers' productivity and profitability was beyond the scope of this paper, so we advise future researchers to investigate these issues. Finally, farmers who are not sellers were not approached. Future research should also include this group.

References

- Adams, D. C., & Adams, A. E. (2011). De-placing local at the farmers' market: Consumer conceptions of local foods, *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 26(2), 74–100.
- Aubry, D., & Kebir, L. (2013). Shortening food supply chains: A means for maintaining agriculture close to urban areas? The case of the French metropolitan area of Paris. *Food Policy*, 41, 85–93.
- Autio, M., Collins, R., Wahlen, S., & Anttila, M. (2013). Consuming nostalgia? The appreciation of authenticity in local food production. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37(5), 564–568.
- Anderson, C., Brushett, L., Gray, T., & Renting, H. (2014). Working together to build cooperative food systems. *Journal of Agricultural, Food Systems and Community Development*. Coventry University, Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience.
- Baars, T. & De Vries, A. (1999). *The Farmer as Experiential Scientist; Guide for Learning in Farming Practices*. Doetinchem: Elsevier.
- Berg, P. G., & Granvik, M. (2009). Starplanning of the fractal cityland. In P. G. Berg (ed.), *Timeless CityLand - Building the Sustainable Human Habitat* (pp. 69–84). Uppsala: Landscape Architecture Unit, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Uppsala, Sweden; Baltic University Programme, Uppsala University.
- Boeije, H. (2014). *Analysis in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Bourdin, D., Ruon, S., & Siegenthaler, M. (2015). Systems in a Swiss agglomeration: The example of Bern (Switzerland). RETHINK Case Study Report. Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas.
- Brain, R. (2012). *The Local Food Movement: Definitions, Benefits, and Resources*. Logan: Utah State University.
- Cetin, G., & Bilgihan, A. (2015). Components of cultural tourists' experiences in destinations. *Current Issues in Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2014.994559>
- Coley, D., Howard, M., & Winter, M. (2009). *Local Food, Food Miles and Carbon Emissions: A Comparison of Farm Shop and Mass Distribution approaches*. Centre for Energy and the Environment, University of Exeter.
- Connell, D., Smithers, J., & Joseph, A. (2008). Farmers' markets and the "good food" value chain: A preliminary study. *Local Environment*, 13(3), 169–185.
- Darnhofer, I. & Strauss, A. (2015). *Organic Farming and Resilience. Rethink Case Study Report*. Vienna: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Economics.
- Darolt, M. (2012). *Ecological connection: new relationships between farmers and consumers*. Londrina: IAPAR.
- De Roest, K., & Ferrari, P. (2015). *Extensive Pig Production Systems, Italy, Rethink Case Study Report*. Reggio Emilia: Fondazione Studies and Research (FSRC/CRPA).

TABLE 2: Cultural and non-cultural tourists buyers main themes

Specialised cultural tourists	General cultural tourists
Taste	Taste
Local support	Something unique
Be part of the community	Not interested in local food
Curiosity	

- Dodds, R., Holmes, M., Arunsopha, V., Chin, N., Le, T., Maung, S., & Shum, M. (2014). Consumer choice and farmers' markets. *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Ethics* 27, 397-416.
- Duram, L. (2011). *Encyclopedia of Organic, Sustainable and Local Food*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press.
- Du Rand, G. E., & Heath, E. (2006). Towards a framework for food tourism as an element of destination marketing. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(3), 206-234.
- European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (Atlas). (2006). Marketing of tourism experiences. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*, 1(3), 1-4.
- European Commission. (2016). *Short food supply chains* [online]. <<https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/consumer-trust/certification-and-confidence/short-supply-chain.en>>
- European Parliament. (2016). The European Parliament's Environmental Statement for 2016 pursuant to Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), repealing Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 and Commission Decisions 2001/681/EC and 2006/193/EC. Adopted by the Steering Committee for Environmental Management on September 2017.
- Feagan, R. B. & Morris, D. (2009). Consumer quest for embeddedness: A case study of the Brantford Farmers' Market. *International Journal Consumer Studies*, 33, 235-243.
- Feenstra, G. W. (1997). Local food systems and sustainable communities. *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, 12(1), 28-36.
- Feenstra, G. (2002). Creating space for sustainable food systems: Lessons from the field. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 19, 99-106.
- Feldmann, C., & Hamm, U. (2015). Consumers' perceptions and preferences for local food: A review. *Food Quality and Preference*, 40, 152-164.
- Fields, K. (2002). Demand for the gastronomy tourism product: Motivational factors. In Hjalager, A. M., & Richards, G. (eds), *Tourism and Gastronomy* (pp. 37-50). London: Routledge.
- Frochot, I. (2003). An analysis of regional positioning and its associated food images in French Tourism regional brochures. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 14(3), 77-96.
- Gale, F. (1997). Direct farm marketing as a rural development tool. *Rural Development Perspectives*, 12(2), 19-25.
- Garnett, T. (2011). Where are the best opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the food system (including the food chain). University of Surrey: Food Climate Research Network.
- Granvik, M., Joosse, S., & Hunt, A. (2017). Confusion and misunderstanding - Interpretations and definitions of local food. Uppsala: Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
- Grubinger, V. (2004). Why buy local: 10 reasons to buy local food. Reprinted from with an Ear to the Ground. *Northeast Region SARE*. <http://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/ourmarkets/whylocal>.
- Hall, C. M. & Gössling, S. (2013). *Sustainable culinary systems: Local foods, innovation, tourism and hospitality*. New York: Routledge.
- Harding, J. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis from start to finish*. London: Sage Publication.
- Hein, J. R., Ilbery, B., & Kneafsey, M. (2006). Distribution of local food activity in England and Wales: an index of food re-localization. *Regional Studies*, 40, 289-301.
- Hinrichs, C. (2000). Embeddedness and local food systems: Notes on two types of direct agricultural market. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16, 295-303.
- Holt, G., & Amilien, V. (2012). Introduction: from local food to localised food. *Anthropology of Food*. Oslo: National Institute for Consumption Research.
- Hunt, A. R. (2007). Consumer interactions and influences on farmers' market vendors. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 22, 54-66.
- Ilbery, B., & Maye, D. (2005). Alternative (shorter) food supply chains and specialist livestock products in the Scottish and English border. *Environment and Planning*, 37(5), 823-844.
- Jarosz, L. (2008). The city in the country: growing alternative food networks in metropolitan areas. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24, 231-244.
- Kahan, D. (2013). The role of the farm management specialist. Rome: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.
- Kebir, L., & Torre, A. (2013). Geographical proximity and new short supply food chains. In L. Lazzertti (ed.), *Creative Industries and Innovation in Europe, Concepts, Measures, and Comparative. Case Studies*, (p. 328). New York: Routledge.
- Kim, G., Eves, A., & Scarles, C. (2009). Building a model of local food consumption on trips and holidays: A grounded theory approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28, 423-431.
- Kirwan, J. & Maye, D. (2013). Food security framings within the UK and the integration of local food systems. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 29, 91-100.
- Kneafsey, M., Venn, L., Schmutz, U., Balázs, B., Trenchard, L., Eyden-Wood, T., Bos, E., Sutton, G., & Blacket, M. (2013). *Short food supply chains and local food systems in the EU. A state of play of their socio-economic characteristics*. Brussels: EU Commission.
- Lang, M., Stanton, J., & Qu, Y. (2014). Consumers' evolving definition and expectations on local foods. *British Food Journal*, 116(11), 1808-1820.
- Lapping, M. (2004). Toward the recovery of the local in the globalising food system: the role of alternative agricultural and food models in the US. *Ethics, place and environment*, 7(3), 141-150.
- Lutz, J., Smetschka, B., & Grima, N. (2017). *Farmer cooperation as a means for creating local food systems - potentials and challenges*. Vienna.
- Lyson, T. (2004). *Civic agriculture: reconnecting farm, food and community*. Medford: Tufts University Press.
- Mak, A., Lumbers, M., & Eves, A. (2011). Globalization and food consumption in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), 171-196.
- Mak, A. H. N., Lumbers, M., Eves, A., & Chan, R. (2012). Factors influencing tourist food consumption. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 928-936
- Martinez, S., Hand, M., Da Pra, M., Pollack, S., Ralston, K., Smith, T., Vogel, S., Clark, S., Lohr, L., Low, S., & Newman, C. (2010). *Local food systems: Concepts, impacts, and issues*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.
- McKercher, B., & Du Gros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism: the partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. New York: Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Miele, M. (2006). Consumption culture: the case of food. In P. Cloke, T. Marsden, & P. Mooney (eds), *The Handbook of Rural Studies* (pp. 344-454). London: Sage.
- Mikos, A. (2008). *Cultural tourism - concerning the definition*. Poznań: GWSHM Milenium, Turystyka Kulturowa.
- Morawicki, R. & Gonzalez, D. (2018). Food sustainability in the context of human behavior. Nutrition and food sciences. *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, 91(2), 191-196.
- Morgan, K., Marsden, T., & Murdoch, J. (2006). Worlds of food: place, power and provenance in the food chain. *Economic Geography*, 83(2), 215-216.
- Mousavi, S., Doratli, N., Mousavi, S. N., & Moradiahari, F. (2016). Defining cultural tourism. In *International Conference on Civil, Architecture and Sustainable Development*, 1-2 December, London, (pp. 70-75). London: DRCAAE.
- Peters, C., Bills, N., Wilkins, J., & Fick, G. (2008). Foodshed analysis and its relevance to sustainability. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 24(1), 1-7.
- Richards, G. (2002). Gastronomy: An essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption. *Tourism and Gastronomy*, 11, 2-20.
- Richards G. (2007). *Cultural tourism. Global and local perspectives*. New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Roseland, M. & Soots, L. (2007) Strengthening local economies. In L. Starke (ed.), *State of the World: Our Urban Future* (pp. 152-171). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Sage, C. (2003). Social embeddedness and relations of regard: alternative 'good food' networks in south-west Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19, 47-60.
- Sanchez, M. & Guzman, T. (2012). Gastronomy as a tourism resource: profile of the culinary tourist. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 15(3), 229-245.

- Scarabelot, M. & Schneider, S. (2012). As cadeias agroalimentares curtas e desenvolvimento local: Um estudo de caso do município de Nova Veneza, SC. *Revista Faz Ciência*, 15 (20), 101-130.
- Schermer, M. (2015). From "food from nowhere" to "food from here": changing producer-consumer relations in Austria. *Agriculture Human Values*, 32, 121-132.
- Seidel, S., & Cavagnaro, E. (2018). Purchasing local as vehicle for sustainable development – for improved hospitality experiences. In E. Cavagnaro (ed.), *Sustainable Value Creation in Hospitality: Guests on Earth* (pp. 147-168). Oxford: Goodfellow.
- Sengel, T., Karagoz, A., Cetin, G., & Dincer, F. (2015). Tourists Approach to Local Food. World Conference on Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. *Faculty of Economics, Tourism Management*. Istanbul University, Turkey.
- Sims, R. (2009). Food, Place and Authenticity: Local food and the Sustainable tourism experience. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(3), 321-336.
- Sinnreich, H. (2007). Baluty Market. A Study of a Food Space. *Food, Culture & Society*, 10 (1), 73-84.
- Sirieux, L, Delanchy, M, Remaud, H, Zepeda, L, & Gurveyez, P. (2013). Consumers' perceptions of individual and combined sustainable food labels: A UK pilot investigation. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37, 143-151.
- Starr, A., Card, A. Benepe, C., Auld, G., Lamm, D., Smith, K., & Wilken, K. (2003). Sustaining local agriculture: Barriers and opportunities to direct marketing between farms and restaurants in Colorado. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 20, 301-321.
- Stebbins, R. A. (1996). Cultural tourism as serious leisure. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(4), 948-950.
- Sumane, S., Kunda, I., Knickel, K., Strauss, A., Tisenkopfs, T., Rios, I., Rivera, M., Chebach, T., & Ashkenazy, A. (2017). Local and farmers' knowledge matters! How integrating informal and formal knowledge enhances sustainable and resilient agriculture. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 59, 232-241.
- Sutherland, L., Madureira, L., Dirimanova, V., Malgorzata, B., Kania, J., Vinohradnik, K., Creaney, R., Duckett, D., Koehnen, T., & Knierim, A. (2017). New knowledge networks of small-scale farmers in Europe's periphery. *Land Use Policy*, 63, 428-439.
- Timothy, D. J., & Ron, A. S. (2013). Heritage cuisines, regional identity and sustainable tourism. In C. M. Hall & S. Gössling (eds), *Sustainable culinary systems: Local foods, innovation, and tourism & hospitality* (pp. 275-290). London: Routledge.
- United Nations ECLAC. (2015). Short food supply chain as an alternative for promoting family agriculture. FAO-IICA Bulletin [online]. <http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/37745/S1500087_en.pdf?jsessionid=9408A963B6155E4F4F44F1B8BFB21B76?sequence=1>
- Veizaj, E., Sallaku, E., & Canco, I. (2009). The cooperation between farmers and strict marketing agricultural management. *Management Agricol*, 11 (2), 97-102.
- Vergahen, M. (2012). You are what you eat: on how identities influence food practices and how food culture influences identities in Sosua, Dominican Republic. Master's thesis on Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Utrecht. The Netherlands.
- Woods, F., Rossi, J., Allen, J., & Davis, A. F. (2017). CSA Shareholder food lifestyle behaviors: a comparison across consumer groups. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 34(4), 855-869.
- Zepeda, L., & Deal, D. (2009). Organic and local food consumer behavior: alphabet theory. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33(6), 697-705.
- Zepeda, L., & Nie, C. (2011). *Lifestyle segmentation of US food shoppers to examine organic and Local Food*. *Appetite*, 5(1), 28-37.