

## ABSTRACT

THESIS: Identification and Comparison of Differences in the Behaviors, Attitudes, Awareness, and Motivating Factors that Influence People to Shop at Farmers' Markets and Purchase USDA Certified Organic Food in Two Geographic Regions: Corvallis, Oregon and Muncie, Indiana

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Farmers' markets have become increasingly popular locations for purchasing organically grown foods. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify if there were differences that existed in the behaviors, attitudes, awareness, and motivating factors that influenced people to shop at farmers' markets and purchase USDA certified organic food in two geographic regions: Corvallis, Oregon and Muncie, Indiana. A survey was administered to consumers who shopped at the Minnetrista Farmers' Market (MFM) and the Corvallis-Albany Farmers' Market (CAFM) in the summer of 2012 to measure the shoppers' purchasing perceptions. A comparison of responses between regions was analyzed. Results of the study may provide insight about consumer's purchasing attitudes and behaviors regarding USDA certified organic products. Specific areas of interest in this study include consumer values towards supporting local farmers and consuming USDA certified organic food. Understanding of national, state and local policies between residents of Corvallis, Oregon and Muncie, Indiana will be explored.