Vegetable Consumption and Food Waste Trends of Common Ground Garden CSA Members in Central Minnesota

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Background

• Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the US has increased in popularity to over 4000 programs. (Local Harvest, 2017)

• Nutrient-dense produce consumption increases with CSA participation, including in low-resource communities. (Uribe et al, 2012)

• 30-40% of the US food supply is wasted each year. (USDA, 2017)

Study Design

• Sought and received IRB approval from CSB/SJU
• Recruitment of Common Ground Garden CSA members via email and flyers
• Participants (n = 36, 19 half vegetable shares) completed four online surveys over a total of eight weeks regarding vegetable consumption and waste from CSA shares
• Participants completed a beginning and end-of-season survey to assess demographics, anthropometric measurements, and perceived food waste habits
• Survey data was analyzed using SAS v9.0.

Results

Table 1. Vegetable Consumption (High vs. Low)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>July 14 (n = 19)</th>
<th>July 28 (n = 17)</th>
<th>August 11 (n = 14)</th>
<th>August 25 (n = 19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Consumed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumber</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Pepper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Least Consumed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese cabbage</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potato leaves</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Comparison of vegetable consumption over the four shares surveyed. Most shares had 5-6 different vegetable options.

Acknowledgements

• The authors would like to thank Kate Ritger, director of the Common Ground Garden. Funding for this project was provided by the Undergraduate Research Fund at CSB/SJU.

Conclusion

• Income, education, and BMI had no significant impact.
• Overall, food waste among Common Ground CSA members was lower than the national average.
• Average percentage of vegetables not consumed over four shares was 36% ± 16% (Mean ± SD).
• Average food waste was 12.5% ± 6% (Mean ± SD) over four shares.
• No trends in vegetable consumption or food waste from this study, possibly due to limited sample size.
• Demographic data aligns with existing research.