

# Utah Farmers Market Consumer Preferences for Local Cut Flowers

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## Introduction

Cut flower production in Utah is a rapidly growing industry. The number of cut flower farms in Utah increased from approximately 20 farms in 2018 to over 200 in 2023. As of 2023, approximately 40 acres were devoted to cut flower production in Utah (Langford et al., 2023). According to a study evaluating the economic impact of the cut flower industry on Utah’s economy (Ward & Stock, 2022), the average revenue per acre in cut flower production was \$64,000, demonstrating that cut flower production is potentially a very profitable business option on urban and small farms.

Farmers markets have been a popular outlet for locally grown foods and other products over the last several decades as consumer interest in purchasing directly from growers at direct-to-consumer markets has grown. Consumers seek fresh, high-quality, local products, as well as seasonal and unique options (Gumirakiza et al., 2015; Bosworth et al., 2015). Hence, direct-to-consumer markets offer a unique opportunity for local cut flower growers to market their products, but there is little information available on consumer preferences for local cut flowers at farmers markets. As growers look to expand their businesses, market information will be vital to their planning and long-term sustainability.



In this fact sheet, we review the results of a 2024 study examining consumer preferences for local cut flowers at Utah farmers markets. Study data were collected in person via Qualtrics at six farmers markets across northern Utah, with 51 total responses. We discuss farmers market consumer purchasing preferences, familiarity with labeling programs, and preferred flower colors and varieties. Additionally, the factors influencing consumer decisions when purchasing cut flowers and the product information they rely on are discussed.

Overall, the information in this fact sheet will assist cut flower growers in making informed decisions regarding production methods and marketing strategies.

## Results Overview

### Participant Demographics

Table 1 provides an overview of the study participant demographics. Just over 75% of the participants were married, and 93% were women. About 59% indicated an average of two to three people in the household, and 55% indicated they did not have children under 18 living in their household. Many (59%) indicated they were employed full-time, with about 24% employed part-time or homemakers. Almost 45% of participants were aged 18–34 years, 28% 35–54 years, and 27% were 55 and older. Around 93% had at least some college education, and 66% had completed a bachelor’s degree or higher. The majority (69%) reported an annual household income before taxes of \$50,000 and above, with around 55% reporting an income of \$90,000 and above.

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Category	Sample (%)
Gender	Male	6.90%
	Female	93.16%
Age	18–34 years	44.83%
	35–54 years	27.59%

Characteristic	Category	Sample (%)
55–64 years	24.14%	
65 years and over	3.45%	
Household income (2023 annual)	\$0 to \$29,999	17.24%
\$30,000 to \$59,999	17.24%	
\$60,000 to \$89,999	10.34%	
\$90,000 or more	55.17%	
Marital status	Single	20.00%
Married	76.67%	
Other	3.33%	
Children in household	Yes	44.83%
Education level	Less than a high school degree	3.45%
High school degree or GED	3.45%	
Associate degree/some college or trade school	27.59%	
Bachelor's degree	44.83%	
Graduate degree or higher	20.69%	
Employment status	Unemployed/student/retired	17.24%
Employed part-time/homemaker	24.13%	
Employed full-time	58.62%	

### Cut Flower Purchases and Preferences

Participants were asked how often they purchase flower products. Approximately 84% indicated purchasing cut flower products (in bunches, bouquets, or arrangements) at least several times a year (see Table 2). Almost 52% of participants indicated they bought potted house plants once a year or less, and 68% bought bedding plants several times a year or more. When questioned about their reasons for purchasing cut flowers, 84% of participants indicated they purchased flowers once a year or less for an anniversary, and 61% indicated they purchased flowers several times a year or more as a show of affection, with about 6% purchasing cut flowers weekly for this reason. About 65% of participants purchased cut flowers several times a year or more to decorate their home.

Table 2. Cut Flower Purchases

Question	Category	Sample (%)	
How often do you purchase the following flower products?	Cut flowers	Never	0%
		Once a year or less	16.13%
		Several times a year	45.16%
		Monthly	25.81%
		Weekly	12.90%
Potted plants	Potted plants	Never	9.68%
		Once a year or less	41.94%
		Several times a year	29.03%
		Monthly	19.35%
		Weekly	0%
Bedding plants	Bedding plants	Never	19.35%
		Once a year or less	12.90%

Question	Category	Sample (%)
Several times a year		51.61%
Monthly		9.68%
Weekly		6.45%

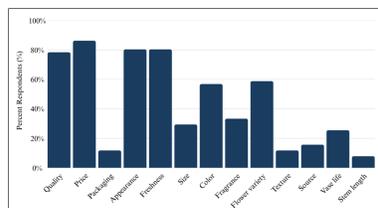


Figure 2. Preferred Flower Varieties



Note. Variety name size indicates higher preference among study participants.

Study participants indicated that they spend a minimum of \$9.75 and a maximum of \$151 on each flower purchase, while the average amount spent per purchase was \$46.00. When asked about the cut flower characteristics important to them, more than 83% indicated that quality, price, appearance, and freshness were most important (see Figure 1). Participants were less concerned with packaging, origin, texture, stem length, and vase life when purchasing cut flowers.

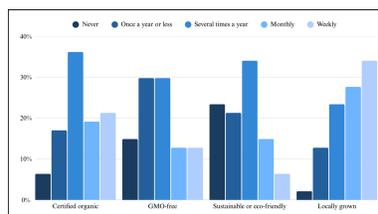
### Familiarity and Preferences for Specialty Labeled Products

Participants were asked to indicate which cut flower colors they preferred. The top color was purple, followed by salmon/peach, and white/cream and pink tied for third. However, when asked which color scheme they preferred in an arrangement, the top choices were tied between muted/pastel/light tones (such as light pink, ivory, lavender, apricot/peach, sage, etc.) and uniquely themed flowers, such as wildflowers. The cut flower varieties most preferred included peonies, dahlias, and sunflowers (see Figure 2).

Survey participants were asked to describe their normal purchasing habits related to products with several specified specialty labels. Around 76% of participants indicated they purchased products with the certified organic label at least several times a year. Close to half, or 46%, purchased products with a GMO-free label once a year or less. In response to sustainable or eco-friendly labels, 54% of participants indicated purchasing products with these labels several times a year. Finally, 85% of participants indicated they buy products labeled locally grown several times a year (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Specialty Labeled Product Purchases

Figure 1. Cut Flower Characteristics Important in Purchase Decision



When asked to indicate their level of familiarity with cut flower certification and labeling programs, only 6% of participants indicated they were not at all familiar with the certified organic label, whereas 100% of participants

were familiar with locally grown labels. Around 4% of participants were not familiar with the GMO-free label. Half of the participants were unfamiliar with the Rainforest Alliance Certified label, and just above 41% were unfamiliar with the Fairtrade International label. When asked to indicate the importance of labels in their purchasing decisions, the most important label to participants was locally grown or sourced, followed by pesticide-free and sustainable. This suggests that consumers are more likely to purchase floral products that align with their values (locally sourced, pesticide-free, sustainable). Local flower producers and retailers can enhance market appeal to consumers by using these labels in their marketing strategies.

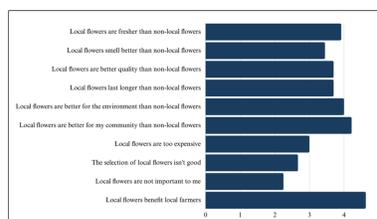
### Attitudes Toward Locally Grown Flowers

Study participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements on a scale of 1 to 5 (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Figure 4 shows they most agreed with the statements “Local flowers benefit local farmers” and “Local flowers are better for my community.” In response to the statement “Local flowers are better quality than non-local flowers,” only 5% disagreed. About 74% of participants agreed with the statements “Local flowers are better for the environment” and “Local flowers are fresher than non-local flowers.” The results indicate there is strong support for locally sourced flowers. Study participants see the advantages of local cut flowers in terms of quality, environmental benefits, and community support.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, cut flower farms in Utah are on the rise, and farmers are looking at current market trends for direction in their crop choices. Farmers market consumers clearly want to support products that align with their purchasing habits and preferences. When buying cut flowers, many consumers view local cut flowers as higher quality, more environmentally friendly, and beneficial to their communities. Farmers market consumers prioritize flower quality, price, appearance, and freshness when purchasing cut flower products. This information provided here enables cut flower growers to tailor their efforts with consumer needs and preferences, giving them a competitive edge and allowing them to meet market demands more effectively.

**Figure 4.** Attitudes Toward Locally Grown Flowers (Means, Scale 1–5)



Note. Mean results on a scale of 1 to 5 (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*)

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