RURAL YAMHILL COUNTY:
The prospect of access to fruits and vegetables

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The Local Food Environment

The local **food** environment plays a role in residents' ability to purchase food that is:

- affordable
- healthy
- nutritious

In a **food desert**, an area devoid of a supermarket, access to healthy **food** is limited.

Walker, Keane, & Burke, 2010; Furey et al., 2001
HEALTHY FOOD IS LIMITED

- 5 A’s of Access:
  - Accessibility
  - Affordability
  - Availability
  - Accommodation
  - Acceptability

Penchansky & Thomas, 1981
LIMITED ACCESS: WHAT’S THE ISSUE?

Limited access → Poor Diet → Greater risk of obesity and heart disease

Inequitable health outcomes based on location of residence
What about Rural Yamhill County?
**Learning Objectives:**

- In which convenience and corner stores is produce being offered within rural towns?
- What are store owners’ attitudes and perceived barriers to community strategies to improving access of produce?
METHODS

- Survey’s, interviews, observation
  - Oregon Food Bank: Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey
  - Healthy Corner Store Network Survey (adapted)

- 24 eligible stores

- Called and set up appointments where possible

- Dropped in for those with no numbers or who did not answer
**RESULTS**

- 15 interviews were conducted with a total of 19 stores observed (63% response rate)
  - Convenience stores with produce: 3/13 - 23%
  - Corner Stores with produce: 6/6 - 100%
  - Stores further than 10 miles: 5/6 – 83%
  - Stores further than 8 miles: 6/10 – 60%
  - Stores further than 5 miles: 6/12 – 50%
RESULTS

CORNER STORES WITH PRODUCE

CONVENIENCE STORES WITH PRODUCE
RESULTS

- Comments about produce from store owners and consumers in stores further than 10 miles:
  - Poor price/quality – would rather drive the distance (consumer)
  - Residents travel to the main cities for the majority of their grocery needs (manager and consumer)
  - Does not understand why people travel (manager)
  - Youth use energy drinks to get their daily intake of vitamins (manager)
  - This town has a culture of going to the corner store for “ice cream, soda, and chips” (manager)
RESULTS

Comments about perceptions towards change:
- Providing produce is expensive
- Culture of ice cream, soda, chips
- You don’t go to a convenience store for produce- that’s not the market
- Farm stand just up the road during the summer
- Not enough space for produce
- Low profit margins
- Not enough time to make this happen
- Won’t collaborate with competition
RESULTS
CONCLUSIONS

- Some produce may be accessible, that is physically located, in rural areas of Yamhill County via local corner stores
  - Not affordable, acceptable, nor available
  - Accommodation was not measured

- Store owners/managers open to community strategies to improve access
IMPLICATIONS

- Room to improve both access AND culture

- Further research - consumer perceptions/attitudes; shopping habits; price/quality comparisons

- Some strategies that Public Health has come up with to date may be applicable to Yamhill County
THANK YOU!!!

REFERENCES

PUBLIC HEALTH’S RESPONSE

Strategies to addressing poor access
- Infrastructure changes/makeovers
- Connecting local producers with stores
- Improving nutritional profile of current foods (e.g. baked instead of fried chips)
- Social marketing tactics to promote the healthier options available
- Zoning regulations
- Collaborative purchasing agreements
- Food hubs