



**Transfarmation<sup>®</sup>**

**Shreveport-Bossier City, Louisiana  
Market Analysis**





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## Market Analysis: Shreveport-Bossier City, Louisiana

In August 2024, Transformation™ contacted 44 prospective buyers in or near Shreveport and Bossier City, Louisiana, to determine whether they purchased produce from local farmers, their requirements for produce vendors, and the crops that interested them.

This report outlines the process of contacting prospective buyers, discusses the sectors surveyed and the response rate by sector, and lists products of interest in the region for future consideration.



## Methodology

We gathered contacts through online resources, including chamber of commerce membership directories and web searches such as “farm-to-table Shreveport” and “Shreveport caterers.” Outreach focused primarily on local businesses likely to use specialty mushrooms or other fresh produce. We made contact through email, Facebook messenger, website contact forms, or telephone.

On August 1, most businesses received an initial email asking them to respond to seven questions. Businesses for which an email address could not be found were contacted via direct message on their Facebook pages or through their websites’ contact forms. None of the businesses responded. Follow-up emails reminding contacts to complete the survey were sent to some businesses between August 7 and 13 and again on August 20. Once more, we received no responses. Businesses were called directly between August 12 and 29. This tactic yielded 17 survey completions and one partial completion and was ultimately the only way businesses provided the requested information. We received responses from Shreveport, Bossier City, Haughton, and Doyline.

## Response Rate by Sector

We surveyed six sectors for this report, and their response rates are as follows:

- Caterers – 83% (five of six)
- Distributors – 100% (one of one)
- Farm stores – 100% (two of two)
- Farmers markets – 29% (two of seven)
- Restaurants – 24% (six of 25)
- Retailers – 67% (two of three)

The overall response rate was 41%.

## Survey Results

The two responding retailers and one of the farm stores said they did not carry produce.

Four businesses source produce from a local distributor that does purchase some local produce, though the contacts were unsure whether they were buying local produce.

Four businesses stated they did not source local produce for reasons such as these:

- Convenience, cost, and variety distributors offer
- Belief that farmers in the area would be unable to supply the quantity needed
- Notion that distributors provide fresher produce
- Lack of relationships with farmers in the area

Requirements for supplying produce to a business or market vary.

- Four businesses stated that they had no requirements of produce vendors.
- The distributor we spoke with prefers vendors to carry liability insurance, but this is not an enforced requirement. They said their biggest issue with local farms is packaging. Local farmers are not typically in compliance with requirements for country-of-origin labeling or for accurately printed labels on each box that indicate its contents.
- One farmers market requires a farm visit, liability insurance, and that all vendors follow local cottage-food laws.

Farm-to-sale distance requirements vary among respondents as well.

- The distributor does not have a defined distance requirement but noted that schools receiving federal funding for sourcing local food may have specific requirements.
- One restaurant said they preferred to source as locally as possible and aimed for produce to come from within 100 miles.
- One farm store sources from within Louisiana.
- One farmers market is open to vendors within 150 miles.
- One caterer has no distance requirement, and another sources from within 100 miles.

Local specialty mushrooms were of interest to three respondents, though one stated it would depend on the cost.

Local cut or edible flowers were of interest to four respondents.

Some crops or value-added products are oversupplied at the Shreveport Farmers' Market:

- Peaches
- Peppers
- Salsa
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Yellow squash
- Zucchini



One restaurant said, “I don’t know if [farmers] know who we are and what we sell, and we don’t know who they are.”



Buyers mentioned some crops that they would like to source locally but currently cannot source affordably in the quantity or of the quality needed:

Asparagus	Radishes
Avocados	Salad greens
Bell peppers	<b>Strawberries</b>
Broccoli	Sugar cane
Button or cremini mushrooms	Sweet potato leaves
Cassava leaves	Sweet potatoes
Cauliflower	<b>Tomatoes</b>
<b>Corn*</b>	Watermelon
Green beans	<b>White potatoes</b>
Muscadine grapes	Yellow squash
<b>Onions</b>	Zucchini
Purple hulled peas	

\*Bold indicates that more than one respondent mentioned the type of produce.

## Key Takeaways

- If you are interested in becoming a farmers-market vendor, be sure to pay attention to application open and close dates each year. The Shreveport market stated that they begin accepting applications in January and continue throughout the market season. Application periods at other markets may vary.
- Even if a buyer is not interested in the product offered, asking them which crops they are currently unable to procure locally may be helpful. This can inform farmers' decisions about the kinds of crops to grow in the future if production expands.
- Direct outreach is much more effective than mass outreach. Whether by telephone or in person, contacting buyers directly helps build a relationship and increase your likelihood of understanding a buyer's needs so you can be more successful in your sales efforts.
- Three respondents stated that they either didn't know any local farmers or didn't know of any who could meet their needs. Being purposeful about building relationships with local businesses in this area could be key, as these businesses seem unlikely to seek out local produce vendors.

