



**Transfarmation**

 **MERCY FOR ANIMALS**

**Market Analysis:  
Greater Louisville, Kentucky**



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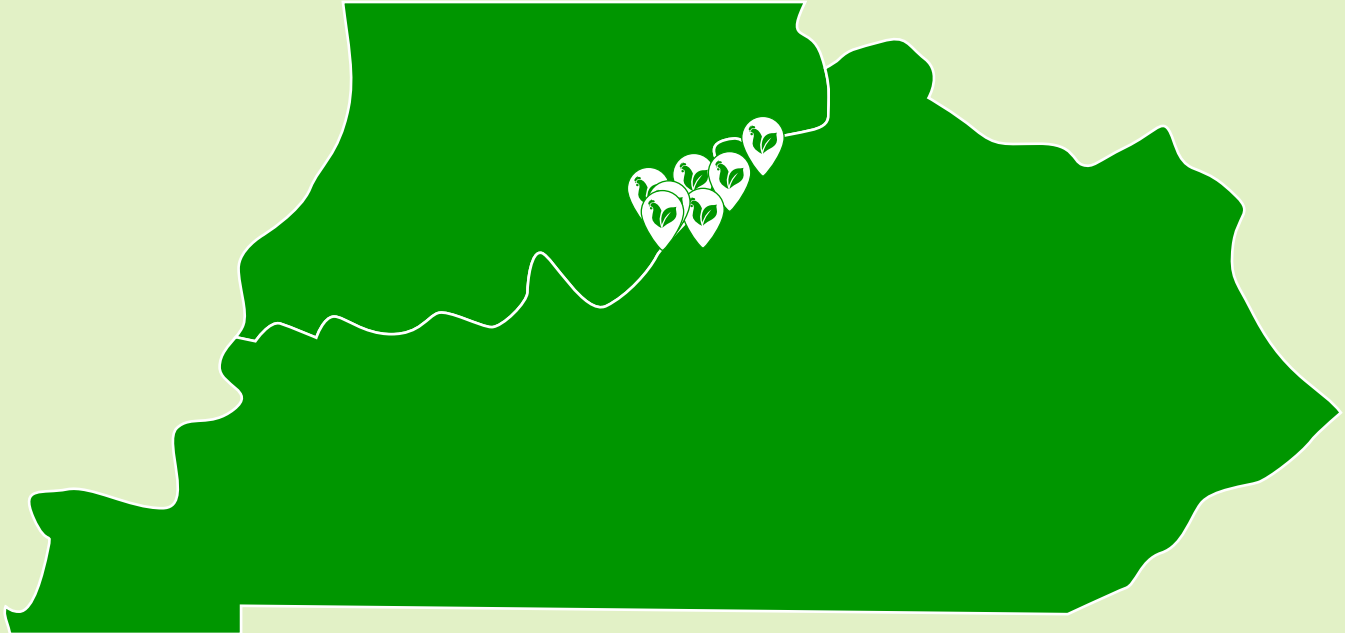
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## Market Analysis: Greater Louisville, Kentucky

In April 2024, Transformation™ contacted 60 prospective buyers in the greater Louisville area to gauge their interest in purchasing specialty mushrooms and other produce from local farmers. Our survey focused on Louisville and adjacent towns in Indiana, and we received responses from both Louisville, Kentucky, and New Albany, Indiana.

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

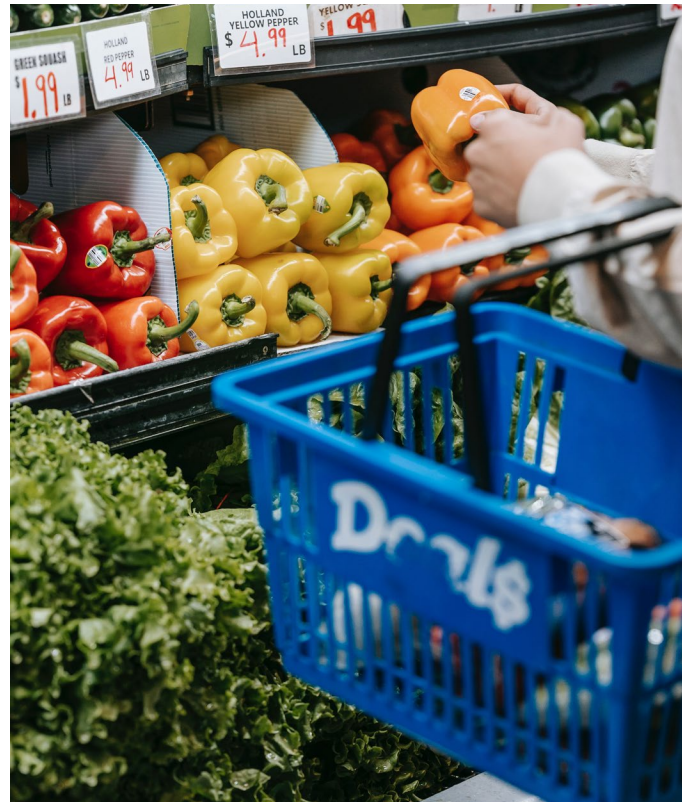
We gathered contacts through online resources, including the chamber of commerce membership directory and web searches such as “farm-to-table Louisville” and “Louisville caterers.” Outreach focused primarily on local businesses likely to use specialty mushrooms or other fresh produce. Our initial contact was on April 1 through a mass email asking recipients to complete a short survey for a chance to win a \$50 Visa gift card. We provided the survey via a link to a Google form. After the initial outreach, we eliminated one business from further contact due to undeliverable email. Of the remainder, those who had not responded received follow-up emails on April 15 and 29 reminding them to complete the survey. This outreach tactic yielded three survey completions. Businesses that were uncomfortable clicking the link had the option of calling us directly to provide their information. They could also opt out of future communication, though no businesses did.

We identified 16 businesses as more likely than the others to purchase local produce (e.g., if their websites mentioned “farm-to-table” or sourcing local ingredients). We phoned these companies on April 22 and 26, resulting in four more responses. On April 25 or 26, we sent personalized emails to those that did not respond, though this did not result in more survey completions. We saw a 25% response rate from these “high-priority” businesses, all via telephone.

## Response Rate by Sector

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

- Local grocers – 100% (two of two)
- Community-supported agriculture – 50% (one of two)
  - The responding CSA is also a food hub. Unfortunately, it is not operating this season and is therefore excluded from the survey results below.
- Caterers – 20% (one of five)
- Restaurants – 8.7% (four of 46)
  - This sector includes independent local establishments, national chains, hotel restaurants, and restaurants that also provide catering.
  - One survey respondent represented two establishments.
- Culinary programs – 0%
  - This sector includes community cooking classes and a university culinary program.



The overall response rate among relevant businesses with seemingly viable email addresses was 13.3%.

## Survey Results

Does your business purchase produce from local farms?

- Yes – 100%
- No – 0%
- Not currently, but we'd be interested in purchasing in the future – 0%

Are you interested in purchasing specialty mushrooms (oyster, shiitake, lion's mane, etc.) for your business?

- Yes – 50%
- No – 33%
- Maybe – 17%

Which certifications or requirements are needed to become a vendor for your business (e.g., GAP, organic, grown within a certain number of miles from point of sale)?

- **Kentucky Proud** preferred – 17%
- Sustainably farmed – 17%
- **GAP certification** – 17%
- Liability insurance – 17%
- Organic preferred\* – 67%
- Food safety compliance per the health department – 17%

\*Note: Businesses did not require organic certification if they had a relationship with a farmer and were able to determine that the produce was grown with organic practices or better.

Do you wish to be contacted about opportunities to purchase local produce in your area?

- Yes – 100%
- No – 0%

Which kinds of produce are you looking to source locally but are currently unable to find in the quantities you need?

Fruit	Vegetables
Berries (any)	Zucchini
Strawberries	Squash
Apples	Heirloom tomatoes
Other	<b>Peppers</b>
Mushrooms	Celery
Greens (year-round)	Onions
Frisee	Asparagus
<b>Spinach</b>	Green onions
Kale	
Salad greens	

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

## Key Takeaways

- If a company’s website doesn’t provide an email address, its Facebook page may. Look for the address on the left side of the business’s Facebook page or in the “About” section. If a website has an envelope icon, you can email the business directly by clicking the icon, or hover over it to see the email address in the bottom-left corner of your monitor.
- Direct outreach is much more effective than mass outreach. Whether by telephone, via a personalized email, or even 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.
- When surveyed by phone, businesses could elaborate more on their reasons for not being interested in purchasing local produce or specialty mushrooms. One business spoke about its close sourcing relationship with two local farms and its ability to grow much of the other produce needed itself. Such conversations can be invaluable in gaining a better understanding of customer needs in your area.
- Price was an important factor for more than one business. One mentioned that it would like to source more produce locally but hasn’t been able to find what it needed at a competitive price. Another said it would be interested in speaking to new specialty-mushroom growers if they could provide the same quality as the business’s current vendor at a lower cost.