

Target groups and customer satisfaction in farmer-to-consumer direct marketing

Achim Spiller, Anke Zühlsdorf and Matthias Mellin

Paper prepared for presentation at the IAMA conference Parma 2007

Contact author

Dr. Achim Spiller, Professor, Georg August University Goettingen, Department of Agricultural Economics und Rural Development, Food Marketing, Platz der Goettinger Sieben 5, 37073 Goettingen, e-mail: a.spiller@agr.uni-goettingen.de, phone: +49 (0)551 39-2399, fax: +49 (0)551 39- 12122.

Dr. Anke Zühlsdorf, Marketing consultant, Zühlsdorf and Partner, 37083 Goettingen, e-mail: azuehls@gwdg.de, phone: +49 (0)551 3708086, fax: +49 (0)551 3708086

Matthias Mellin, M.Sc., Research assistant, Department of Agricultural Economics und Rural Development, Food Marketing, Platz der Goettinger Sieben 5, 37073 Goettingen, e-mail: m.mellin@agr.uni-goettingen.de, phone: +49 (0)551 39-9897, fax: +49 (0)551 39- 12122.

Target groups and customer satisfaction in farmer-to-consumer direct marketing

Executive Summary

Farmers' direct marketing of food is a widely neglected branch of modern agribusiness marketing. It is certainly a niche market but plays a distinctive role for establishing high quality markets in the food business. The importance of direct marketing for high quality farm products has increased during the past few years. However, on farm outlets are in lively competition with other store formats, such as supermarkets and organic stores, which have developed their own assortment of regional and high quality products. In Germany, most supermarkets have entered the organic marketing segment in the last few years, introducing new articles positioned very near traditional farm produce.

This paper analyses the impact of customer satisfaction and its driving forces for farmer-to-consumer direct marketing and is based on a customer survey in 33 organic and conventional on-farm stores in Germany. Altogether, 1,537 customers were questioned in various German regions. The results emphasize the role of store atmosphere and customer service as the main influencing factors on customer satisfaction. Consumers who are satisfied with their farm outlet perceive a unique store design characterized by a special interior and an outstanding product presentation. In contrast to the retail industry, farm outlets are not standardized but stamped with the owner's personality. Store atmosphere as well as individual service must reflect the farmer's unique approach. In addition to identify the main determinants of customer satisfaction, the study demonstrates the significance customer satisfaction has for stable relationships and long-term business success. Customer satisfaction is closely connected to word-of-mouth communication as the main marketing tool for farm outlets.

Target groups and customer satisfaction in farmer-to-consumer direct marketing

Abstract

The importance of direct marketing for high quality farm products has increased during the past few years. This paper analyses the impact of customer satisfaction and its driving forces for farmer-to-consumer direct marketing and is based on a customer survey in 33 organic and conventional on-farm stores in Germany. The results emphasize the role of store atmosphere and customer service as the main influencing factors on customer satisfaction.

Key Words: Direct Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Authenticity, Service Quality, Farm Products

Target groups and customer satisfaction in farmer-to-consumer direct marketing

Direct marketing

Farmers' direct marketing of food is a widely neglected branch of modern agribusiness marketing. It is certainly a niche market but plays a distinctive role for establishing high quality markets in the food business. Farmer-to-consumer marketing is of growing importance, not only in providing many farmers with greater net returns but also in retaining food traditions (Kambara/Shelley 2002). The direct contact between farmers and consumers enables both sides to boost special qualities, like traditional agricultural products, organic food, denomination of origin, etc. Consumer studies have revealed that purchasing at farms is typically connected with high involvement in nutrition and a more sophisticated food consumption style (Lüth 2005). In many cases, direct marketing is also combined with farm tourism and regional developing strategies. Typically it is a small-farm strategy (Govindasamy et al. 1998). All in all, direct marketing by farmers is part of a quality oriented food culture.

The following paper discusses the marketing challenge faced by farmers working as producers as well as retailers. There are several types of farmer-to-consumer direct marketing, for example, pick-your-own (PYO) farms, roadside stands, home delivery services, e-commerce, weekly farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture programs (Thilmany et al. 2006; Baer/Brown 2006). This paper focuses on direct farm markets, outlets located at farms and selling their own produce, which constitute a growing segment, especially in Germany (Recke/Wirthgen 2004).

Only a few studies have dealt specifically with direct farm marketing by on-farm outlets; most consumer surveys examine customer preferences and willingness to pay (Govindasamy/Nayga 1996, Govindasamy et al. 1998b, Henneberry/Agustini 2004, Recke et al. 2004.). Customers are characterized as well educated, female, upper middle class and middle-aged. They expect high quality fresh produce; some also want to support local farms and businesses (Recke et al. 2004). On the basis of econometric analysis, Gandee et al. (2003) expose high per capita income, higher education (especially professional degrees) and farm

agglomeration effects (percentage of land in farming) as determinants of an increase in direct farm marketing sales.

Besides simple checklists (for instance, Cottingham et al. 1994, Wirthgen/Maurer 2000), the perspective of farmers as retailers has rarely been analyzed. Kambara/Shelley (2002) reveal that a lack of affordable labor and capital in small farms is the most important obstacle to more success. Uva (2002) shows that word of mouth and newspaper advertising are the most relevant marketing tools. Farmers should use different marketing channels as well, but opportunities to enhance the business are often restricted by a lack of marketing knowledge.

For a family farm business with high costs, low-price strategies are not suitable. In a premium market it is important to act customer-oriented (Grunert et al. 1996). Thus, customer satisfaction is a necessary condition for success. Farmers typically sell to a small group of customers, most of them regular buyers. This close, personal contact with the customers provides a chance to build up sustainable loyalty. But often farmers have difficulties defining their own position in competition and analyzing their own strengths and weaknesses realistically.

In the retail industry customer satisfaction surveys are a standard tool for fulfilling this requirement. Nevertheless, the importance of customer satisfaction in the field of direct marketing is not investigated in the marketing or agribusiness literature. Most small farmers do not use professional marketing tools. Therefore, the following paper tries to adopt a highly developed management approach for farmers working as retailers in direct selling.

Objectives

Customer satisfaction studies have been included in the standard repertoire of marketing for approximately 20 years (Parasuraman et al. 1988). In the service sectors, especially the food retail industry, the high relevance of service quality for business success is recognized and examined by periodical studies, like the American or the European Customer Satisfaction survey (Fornell et al. 1996; Juhl et al. 2002). The literature frequently documents the effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty (Bion 1993; Keaveney 1995; Bloemer/de Ruyter 1998). Different methods of measurement have been used. One commonly used method, for example, is Silent Shopping, which is the hidden observation of sales staff by test persons.

Among subjective procedures, complaint management and the explicit measurement of customer satisfaction through surveys play the largest role (Schütze 1992).

Currently, the professional use of customer satisfaction research is limited to the global players in food retailing. The high price for a professional satisfaction survey deters most small enterprises. As far as we know, there are only a few independent food retailers who use market research to evaluate customer satisfaction. To our best knowledge, for direct farm marketing no published satisfaction survey exists.

This is problematic, considering the relevance of personal relationships for small farm outlets with high costs. Because of cost disadvantages, small shops can only survive by achieving high service standards. The withdrawal of small retailers from the food business, for example, butcheries or specialized cheese or fish shops, demonstrates that family-owned independent firms show substantial deficits in customer orientation.

This paper presents the methodology and results of a customer satisfaction survey for on-farm stores in Germany. Sixty thousand agricultural enterprises in Germany sell their products without middlemen; among them are approximately 14,000 professionally managed enterprises. For these farmers, who represent 3.68 % of all agricultural enterprises in Germany (approximately 380.000 enterprises), direct marketing is the main channel of distribution. The business volume in this market is about €3–3.5 billion. In the past few years, direct farm marketing has developed as a growth market (Recke/Wirthgen 2004).

The same trends can also be observed in other countries. For example, Thilmany/Watson describe direct marketing as an increasing segment in the US market. In 2002, 116,733 farms (of 2.1 million) were involved in direct marketing, representing 5.5 % of all farms (Thilmany/Watson 2004, p. 19). For a typical farm, the revenue from direct sales is very small; however, the segment is growing fast (Roth 1999). The greatest share of these farms can be found in Oregon (15.9 %) and Washington (12.6 %), where they are supported by strong institutions and involved consumers. An important element in this segment is the growing number of farmers' markets, with over 3,100 markets in the US, an increase of 79 % from 1994 to 2002 (Thilmany/Watson 2004, p. 22).

Farmer-to-consumer direct marketing is in lively competition with other store formats, such as supermarkets and organic stores, which have developed their own assortment of regional and high quality products. In Germany, most supermarkets have entered the organic

marketing segment in the last few years, introducing new articles positioned very near traditional farm produce (Bolten et al. 2006). Today small-scale producers using direct markets are able to protect their market shares but the competition is getting stronger, e. g. in the organic market with more international supply (Grow/Greene 2007). Thus, farms should also improve their assortment and service quality. Nevertheless, little is known about the problems of farmers working as retailers. An objective of the following analysis is therefore to determine the parameters of customer satisfaction and to investigate how the various factors contribute to customer loyalty.

Literature and study design

The following survey represents an application of the seminal multi-item scale (SERVQUAL) developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) for standardized surveys of service quality. SERVQUAL refers conceptually to an ex post evaluation of the perceived service elements. It is differentiated from attitude research by the actual purchase experience of the customers; thus, it builds on a comparison of customer expectations (conceptions of an ideal store) with customer experience of a specific retailer.

There are a growing number of academic studies on customer satisfaction. In a recent publication, Szymanski/Henard (2001) conduct a meta-analysis. They reveal that, in general, fairness and disconfirmation are strongly related to customer satisfaction. Among the outcomes, the most relevant are preventing negative word of mouth communication and repeat purchasing. The findings in different surveys are, however, mixed. Customer satisfaction studies in food retailing are reported, for example, by Gail/Scott (1995), Bell et al. (1997), Hackl et al. (2000) and Juhl et al. (2002). The latter analysed the relationship between customer loyalty, supermarket type and ownership structure based on the results of the European customer satisfaction study and Danish results, especially.

In a recent publication, Gómez et al. (2004) describe a comprehensive survey, measuring the links between store attributes, customer satisfaction, and sales performance with data from 250 stores. They show three main antecedents to customer satisfaction in food retailing: customer service, quality of different products and value for money. Customer service is the most important determinant of overall satisfaction for US supermarkets.

Numerous studies have specified relationships between satisfaction and positive indirect outcomes such as customer loyalty, positive word of mouth communication, and repurchase intentions. Surveys which integrate direct economic benefits are rarer. Customer satisfaction should cause profitability (Anderson et al. 1994; Berhardt et al. 2000). Homburg et al. (2005) reveal the existence of a strong, positive impact of customer satisfaction on the willingness to pay. Most empirical investigations on customer satisfaction in the food retailing industry do not address the impact of satisfaction on business performance. An important exception is the work of Gómez et al. (2004), who measured the relationship between satisfaction and sales performance with data from about 250 supermarkets from a publicly held company in the Eastern US. A regression analysis demonstrates that satisfaction explains about 13 % of sales performance.

To our best knowledge, for farmer-to-consumer direct marketing no customer satisfaction surveys have been published. Therefore we used the standard framework of satisfaction measurement and adopt it to the special business environment of small farm outlets and food retailing with a high degree of credence qualities.

Our questionnaire consists of 13 question blocks in which 53 items are considered. The first question deals with overall customer satisfaction, followed by statements about the unique selling proposition and the respective store attributes quality of products, service quality, location, store atmosphere, etc. In most cases, the scale is a five-box Likert scale, ranging from -2 to +2. Some rating scales are also used.

Altogether, 1,537 customers were questioned in 33 on-farm stores in various German regions. Ten of the farms produce organic foods, and 23 sell conventional products. The average annual sales volume is about €130,500 (range €9,800-696,000). The number of employees lies between 0.5 and 11. Successful enterprises have a sales volume per square meter over €5,000/m² (mean=€3,183/m²). The stores which participated in the study were selected by us from a database and their willingness to support the survey. Therefore, they are not representative for all farm outlets. However, the sample represents a broad spectrum of differently sized farms and different locations.

The survey took place in the outlets with self-administered questionnaires. Answering the self administered questionnaire takes approximately 10 minutes. The clients could answer the questionnaire either at the store or at home. The completed questionnaires were collected in a box in order to keep the answers anonymous.

Target groups of farmers' direct marketing

For direct marketing, knowledge about customer characteristics is necessary. There is a considerable literature analyzing consumer demographics for farmers' markets (Govindasamy/Nayga 1996, Kezis et al. 1998). Typical consumers at farm outlets are well educated, female, upper middle class and middle-aged.

The results of our sample confirm these trends, demonstrating a really outstanding target group for direct farm marketing. In comparison with the German population as a whole, customers of direct farm marketing are characterized by higher education and income. Nearly half the buyers are family households. In comparison with conventional farms, producers of organic food have a more attractive target group with a higher income and better education. Conventional farms reach older customers with a mean of 51 years compared with organic stores (43 years).

Table 1. Customer profile

Characteristics	Organic farms (n=11)	Conventional farms (n=22)
Average age	43 years	51 years
Share of customers with a net income of more than €3,000/month	25 %	20 %
Share of customers with higher education	65 %	41 %
Share of regular customers (\geq once per week)	68 %	57 %
Share of customers in the neighborhood (< 5km)	42 %	46 %
Share of male customers	23 %	31 %
Share of customers with children in the household	49 %	40 %
Share of single households	13 %	9 %

Customer satisfaction: Status quo and determinants

The main objective of the following section is to evaluate the status quo and the determinants of customer satisfaction for buying at an on-farm store. Generally, the degree of customer satisfaction is quite high (see Table 2). The mean of customer satisfaction on a scale from -2 (very dissatisfied) to 2 (very satisfied) is 1.66 for all stores involved; the best farm shop receives an average score of 1.88. 69 % are very satisfied, 29 % satisfied, and only 2 % are not convinced.

Table 2. Customer satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Customer satisfaction	1.66	0.537	1.18	1.88

Scale from - 2 (very dissatisfied) to + 2 (very satisfied)

In the next step, a factor analysis (using principal component analysis) was conducted to gain an overview of the various aspects and determinants of customer satisfaction. Besides overall satisfaction, four further questions were integrated in the factor customer satisfaction, which explain 59 % of the variance (KMO = 0.77; Alpha = 0.75).

Table 3. Factor analysis customer satisfaction

Factors	Factor loadings
This is one of the best farm outlets I have ever seen.*	0.82
I feel very comfortable in this store.*	0.79
How satisfied are you with our performance? **	0.74
Shopping on this farm is an enjoyable experience **	0.72

*Scale from - 2 (totally disagree) to + 2 (totally agree); **scale from - 2 (very dissatisfied) to + 2 (very satisfied)

KMO = 0.77; CA = 0.75; explained variance = 59 %

The determinants of customer satisfaction are revealed via various Likert and rating scales. After some minor corrections for double loading, a second factor analysis produced five factors. All five are reliable, showing Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7.

Table 4. Factor analysis determinants of customer satisfaction

Factor	Factor loadings
Evaluation of product quality (KMO = 0.81; CA = 0.75; explained variance = 0.51 %)	
Quality of our products**	.759
Freshness of the products**	.757
Taste of the products**	.698
Cleanliness and hygienic standard in the store**	.696
Advice is especially competent.*	.654
Evaluation of the staff (KMO = 0.85; CA = 0.86; explained variance = 64 %)	
Competence of the staff**	.826
Friendliness of the staff**	.823
Cleanliness of the staff**	.814
Helpfulness of the staff**	.810
Advice and service**	.730
Evaluation of the store atmosphere (KMO = 0.67; CA = 0.74; explained variance = 66 %)	
Interior decoration of the store**	.851
Product presentation**	.831
Atmosphere in the store**	.755
Evaluation of the assortment (KMO = 0.71; CA = 0.71; explained variance = 54 %)	
Promotion activities**	.769
Product information**	.738

Well-priced**	.721
Variety**	.716
Evaluation of the site (KMO = 0.73; CA = 0.71; explained variance = 54 %)	
Location**	.749
Parking places**	.734
Sign posting**	.730
Exterior decoration **	.727

*Scale from - 2 (totally disagree) to + 2 (totally agree); **scale from - 2 (very dissatisfied) to + 2 (very satisfied)

One main objective of the study was to reveal the driving forces determining customer satisfaction via regression analysis (OLS). The results demonstrate the important role played by store atmosphere in the farm outlet, which is determined by the store interior and the presentation of the assortment. The model explains 65 % of the total customer satisfaction. Consumers who are satisfied with their farm outlet perceive a unique store design characterized by a special interior and an outstanding product presentation.

Similarly important is customer service, that is, the competence and service orientation of the staff. Specialized stores like farm outlets live on the ability to build up personal relationships with consumers.

Table 5. Regression model to explain customer satisfaction

Independent variables	Beta	t
Factor store atmosphere	.27	6.95***
Factor staff (customer service)	.22	6.05***
Factor product quality	.17	4.22***
Trust in the farmer (single question)	.15	5.02***
Factor assortment	.13	4.00***
Facilities for children (single question)	.11	4.65***

Depending variable: Factor customer satisfaction

Adj. R² = 0.650; F = 173.91***; *** p ≤ .001

Customers expect to find exceptional products on a farm; therefore, the quality of the articles – especially taste and freshness – is a necessary condition for customer satisfaction. Consumers expect traditional handcraft and special ingredients. Farmers should communicate process qualities and the freshness of the articles.

In most cases farm products receive a certain price premium. However, customers are not able to supervise the origin of the products (credence goods). Against this information asymmetry, trust in the farmer is an important determinant of successful direct marketing. In Germany, consumer protection agencies often report types of mislabeling at farmers markets. For example, some farmers sell conventional eggs as free-range products. Direct marketing is

not free from opportunistic behavior. Thus, farmers should try to signal honest activities and high-quality products through transparency.

Customers use four criteria to evaluate the farmers' assortment: promotion activities, price, information and a wide choice of products. All in all, price is not as relevant as it is for supermarkets. Consumers who prefer farm outlets typically know that prices have to be higher than in large-scale stores. However, some promotion activities and lower prices for sensitive products with high price elasticity can support store image. The variety of articles available is also a significant variable and mirrors the trend towards broader assortments in German farm outlets. Comprehensive information about product quality and origin is necessary to highlight the difference between farm produce and articles in supermarkets.

During our farm visits, we often detected insufficient opportunities for children. Despite the fact that more than 40 % of all customers are families with younger children, only a few farms present special facilities for children, like petting zoos or playgrounds. For families, buying at a farm is often a special event, providing an opportunity to acquaint children with rural life and nature.

Surprisingly, site criteria, parking places and store appearance do not have a significant influence in the regression analysis. Probably these criteria are important variables for non-customers but not for the regular buyers we interviewed.

In addition to identify the main determinants of customer satisfaction, the study demonstrates the significance customer satisfaction has for stable relationships and long-term business success. Customer satisfaction is closely connected to word-of-mouth communication as the main marketing tool for farm outlets (Uva 2002) and shopping frequency as an indicator of customer loyalty (Bion 1993; Fornell et al. 1996). Satisfied customers often recommend the farm to other consumers. Nonetheless, the correlation between satisfaction and buying frequency is rather low. One explanation for this is that some farms attract mainly tourists as customers, and tourists do not have the opportunity to buy on a regular basis.

Table 6. Correlation between satisfaction and customer relationship

	Customer satisfaction (factor)	Word of mouth communication	Shopping frequency
Customer satisfaction (factor)	1	.34***	.14***
Word of mouth communication	.34***	1	.37***

Shopping frequency	.14***	.37***	1
--------------------	--------	--------	---

*** = $p \leq 0.001$

Conclusion and limitations

The survey has indicated that the target group of direct farm marketing presents a good opportunity for selling high quality food. Consumers on farms are characterized by high income and an above-average education level. From other food consumer surveys, it is known that these customers are willing to pay more for special high-quality products (Lüth 2005). Therefore direct selling can be a starting point for developing a new food culture in Germany beyond the dominant discount stores.

The results provide insights into the determinants of customer satisfaction in a small business environment. Farmer-to-consumer direct marketing is a discrete business segment with its own factors of success. For successful direct marketing, it is crucial to offer an outstanding shopping atmosphere for customers. Under this condition customers are willing to spend more money for agricultural goods. Most of the clients are highly involved in nutrition. By buying farm products they fulfill their longing for an alternative to the standardized qualities in supermarkets. Farmer-to-consumer direct marketing has to respond to these expectations and the store atmosphere should demonstrate a responsible handling of food.

The second most important point is competent service provided by helpful and friendly staff. Employees need additional information about special products and characteristics. Therefore, regular training in customer orientation and product knowledge are important for employees in on-farm stores. Finally, the survey proves the economic importance of customer satisfaction, which is closely connected to word-of-mouth communication. In our project, all the farms involved received a detailed benchmark report allowing them to improve their service quality.

In contrast to the retail industry, farm outlets are not standardized but stamped with the owner's personality. Store atmosphere as well as individual service must reflect the farmer's unique approach. In many cases, the store manager is female. She should create a special atmosphere that offers a positive alternative to the often cold, sterile design of modern supermarkets. The results of the survey demonstrate that most farmers are quite successful in establishing differentiating store interiors. Nevertheless, there is obvious room for

improvement. Farmers are in lively competition with new store formats, such as organic supermarkets and conventional supermarkets that have developed their own organic and regional product lines.

All in all, the results demonstrate the role of design but also myth, symbols, and stories. Thus, for further research the concept of authenticity can be seen as a keyword which incorporates different aspects of atmosphere, service, knowledge, and personal relationship. The fundamental idea of authenticity is that context matters. Time, place, and persons are important to be defined as being original. Therefore authenticity is always due to tradition. Possible important dimensions of authenticity are history, regional identity, heritage, originality, integrity, uniqueness, credibility, commitment, and intrinsic motivation (Datamonitor 2006; Lunardo/Guerinet 2007). Marketing for small and medium sized firms like farm outlets should try to develop a conceptual framework to analyze authenticity cues. Authenticity is not an objective fact but is socially constructed and connected with customer's perceptions (Muñoz et al. 2006). Our survey reveals the importance of authenticity but is not able to measure all relevant dimensions.

Another limitation of our survey is the sample size. The survey was quite comprehensive concerning the number of consumers involved, but the number of stores was limited due to the ongoing status of the research project. Another limitation resulted from the interview situation. Self-administered questionnaires allow only a small number of questions. In particular, the integration of attitude and food-related lifestyle items would yield more opportunities to cluster the respondents.

References

- Anderson, E. W., Fornell, C. and Lehmann, D. R. (1994), "Customer Satisfaction, Market Share, and Profitability: Findings from Sweden", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58, No. 3, pp. 53-66
- Baer, A. G., Brown, C. (2006), Adoption of E-Marketing by Direct Market Farms in the Northeastern U. S., selected paper prepared for presentation at the American Annual Meeting, Long Beach, California, July 23-26, 2006.
- Bell, J., Gilbert, D. and Lockwood, A. (1997), "Service quality in food retailing operations: a critical incident analysis", *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 405-423.
- Berhardt, K. L., Donthu, N. and Kennett, P. A. (2000), "A Longitudinal Analysis of Satisfaction and Profitability", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 47, pp. 161-171
- Bion, H. (1993), "Satisfaction and Loyalty to Suppliers within the Grocery Trade", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 27, No. 7, pp. 21-38.

- Bloemer, J. and K. de Ruyter (1998), "On the relationship between Store Image, Store Satisfaction, and Store Loyalty", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 32, pp. 499-513.
- Bolten, J., Kennerknecht, R., Spiller, A. (2006), "Perspectives of Small Retailers in the Organic Market: Customer Satisfaction and Customer Enthusiasm", contributed paper for the 98th EAAE Conference: Marketing Dynamics within the Global Trading System, Chania, Crete, Greece, 29 June – 02 July, 2006.
- Cottingham, J., Hofland, J., Lenon, J., Roper, T., Techtmann, C. (1994), "Direct Marketing of Farm Produce and Home Goods", University of Wisconsin, http://www.savorwisconsin.com/_datamaint/uploads/educinfo/a3602.pdf.
- Datamonitor (2006), "Authenticity in Food & Drinks: New Insights Into Consumers' Attitudes & Behaviors", Report DMCM 4582.
- Fornell, C., Johnson, M.D., Anderson, E.W., Cha, J., Bryant, B.E. (1996), "The American Customer Satisfaction Index: Nature, Purpose and Findings", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 60, No. 4, pp. 7-18.
- Gail, T., Scott, L. (1995), "Waiting time delays and customer satisfaction in supermarkets", *Journal of Service Marketing*, Vol. 9, No. 5, pp. 10-19.
- Gandee, J. E., Brown, C., D'Souza, G. (2003), "The Role of Spatial and Demographic Characteristics in Direct Farm Marketing: An Econometric Approach", paper prepared for presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, July 27-30, 2003.
- Gomez, M. I., McLaughlin, E. W., and Wittink, D. R. (2004), "Customer satisfaction and retail sales performance: an empirical investigation", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 80, pp. 265-278.
- Govindasamy, R., Nayga, R. M. Jr. (1996), "Characteristics of Farmer-To-Consumer Direct Market Customers: An Overview", in: *Journal of Extension*, Vol. 34, No. 4, <http://www.joe.org/joe/1996august/rb1.html>.
- Govindasamy, R., Zurbruggen, M., Italia, J., Adelaya, A., Nitzsche, P., VanVranken, R. (1998), "Farmers Markets: Producers Characteristics and Status of their Business", New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, http://www.cook.rutgers.edu/~agecon/PUB/FM_PR.PDF.
- Govindasamy, R., Zurbruggen, M., Italia, J., Adelaya, A., Nitzsche, P., VanVranken, R. (1998b), "Farmers Markets: Consumer Trends, Preferences and Characteristics", New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, <http://agmarketing.extension.psu.edu/ComFarmMkt/PDFs/FarmMktConsTrends.pdf>.
- Grow, S., Greene, C. (2007), "Impact of international organic markets on small U.S. producers", paper presented at the 105th EAAE seminar "International marketing and international trade of quality food products" in Bologna, http://www.bean-quorum.net/EAAE/pdf/EAAE105_Paper058.pdf
- Grunert, K. G., Hartvig, Larsen, H., Madsen, T. K., Baadsgaard, A. (1996), "Market orientation in food and agriculture", Norwell.
- Hackl, P., Scharitzer, D., Zuba, R. (2000), "Customer Satisfaction in the Austrian food retail market", *Total Quality Management*, Vol. 11, No. 7, pp. 999-1006.
- Henneberry, S. R., Agustini, H. N. (2004): "An Analysis of Oklahoma Direct Marketing Outlets: Case Study of Produce Farmers' Markets", selected paper prepared for presentation at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association Annual, Tulsa, Oklahoma, February 18, 2004.
- Homburg, C., Koschate, N., Hoyer, W. D. (2005), "Do Satisfied Customers Really Pay More? A Study of the Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Willingness to Pay", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69, No. 2, pp. 84-96.

- Juhl, J., Kristensen, K. and Ostergaard, P. (2002), "Customer satisfaction in European food retailing", *Journal of retailing and customer services*, Vol. 9, No. 6, pp. 327-334.
- Kambara, K. M., Shelley, C. L. (2002), "The California Agricultural Direct Marketing Study", California Institute for Rural Studies, <http://www.cirsinc.org/CAgriculturalDirectMarketingStudy.pdf>.
- Keaveney, M. S. (1995), "Customer Switching Behavior in Service Industries: An Exploratory Study", *Journal of Marketing*, 59, pp. 71-82.
- Kezis, A.S., Gwebu, T., Peavey, S., Cheng, H. T. (1998), "A study of consumers at a small farmers' market in Maine: results from a 1995 survey", *Journal of Food Distribution Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 91-99.
- Lüth, M. (2005), "Zielgruppensegmente und Positionierungsstrategien für das Marketing von Premium-Lebensmitteln", Dissertation Universität Göttingen 2005.
- Lunardo, R., Guerinet, R. (2007), "The influence of label on wine consumption: its effect on young consumers' perception of authenticity and purchasing behavior", paper presented at the 105th EAAE seminar "International marketing and international trade of quality food products" in Bologna, http://www.bean-quorum.net/EAAE/pdf/EAAE105_Paper019.pdf.
- Muñoz, C. L., Wood, N. T., Solomon, M. R. (2006), "Real or blarney? A cross-cultural investigation of the perceived authenticity of Irish pubs", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 222-234.
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L.L. and Zeithaml, V.A. (1988), "Servqual: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Customer Perceptions of Service Quality", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 64, No. 1, pp. 12-40.
- Recke, G., Wirthgen, B. (2004), "Marktvolumen und Perspektiven der Direktvermarktung", in: Recke, G., Wirthgen, B., Zenner, S. (Hrsg.) (2004), „Situation und Perspektiven der Direktvermarktung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland“, Kassel, pp. 1-136.
- Recke, G., Wirthgen, B., Zenner, S. (Hrsg.) (2004), "Situation und Perspektiven der Direktvermarktung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", Kassel.
- Roth, M. (1999), "Overview of Farm Direct Marketing Industry Trends", *Agricultural Outlook Forum 1999*, February 22, 1999.
- Schütze, R. (1992), „Kundenzufriedenheit: After-Sales-Marketing auf industriellen Märkten“, Gabler-Verlag, Wiesbaden.
- Simon, H., Homburg, C. (1997), "Kundenzufriedenheit", Gabler-Verlag, Wiesbaden.
- Szymanski, D. M. and Henard, D. H. (2001), "Customer Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Evidence", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 16-35.
- Thilmany, D., Keeling Bond, J., Bond, C. A. (2006), "Direct Marketing of Fresh Produce: Understanding Consumer Interest in Product and Process-Based Attributes", selected paper prepared for presentation at the American Annual Meeting, Long Beach, California, July 23-26, 2006.
- Thilmany, D., Watson, P. (2004), "The Increasing Role of Direct Marketing and Farmers Markets for Western US Producers", *Western Economics Forum*, April 2004, pp. 19-25.
- Uva, W. L. (2002), "An Analysis of Vegetable Farms' Direct Marketing Activities in New York State", Cornell University, <http://aem.cornell.edu/research/researchpdf/rb0203.pdf>.
- Wirthgen, B., Maurer, O. (2000), „Direktvermarktung“, Ulmer, Stuttgart.