

Pork Checkoff studies niche pork buying patterns

By Ann Bagel Storck on 11/13/2008

In order to better understand the potential of niche pork, the Pork Checkoff recently funded a study to determine the factors that influence consumer decisions to buy niche food products, the National Pork Board announced.

The Pork Checkoff's research found that about two-thirds (63 percent) of consumers typically buy niche food products at a conventional grocery store, about half (53 percent) buy them at a farmers market or food coop, 37 percent buy directly from local farmers, and another third (33 percent) buy them at a specialty food store.

More than half (53 percent) of niche pork buyers say they buy that product at a conventional grocery store. Another one-third (33 percent) purchase niche pork at specialty food stores, 23 percent purchase niche pork products at a farmers market or food coop, and 20 percent buy it directly from a local farmer.

When asked how frequently they buy each type of niche food product, purchasers indicate that they buy niche fruits and vegetables on average 37 times a year (about three times a month). Niche fresh or frozen pork is on the list about 16 times a year (or a little more than once a month), according to the Pork Checkoff's study.

Healthfulness was given as the most important reason for buying niche pork by 25 percent of respondents. Other "most important" reasons included quality (14 percent) and flavor or taste (14 percent). When all mentions of reasons for purchasing niche pork products were combined, more than half of respondents cited quality, flavor or taste, freshness and healthfulness as most important.