Increasing Viability of Small and Medium-Scale Growers

The Collegiate Market

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Project Partners

University of California, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

Community Alliance with Family Farmers

Welcome to

FARM TO COLLEGE NIGHT

Wednesday, October 25

A Festive Meal at UC Davis featuring the Diversity of Foods that are Locally Grown

Country Natural Beef

~Grass fed and grilled Flat Iron Steak with Arugula Pesto, Sweet Potatoes, Green & Yellow Wax Beans with toasted Almonds.~

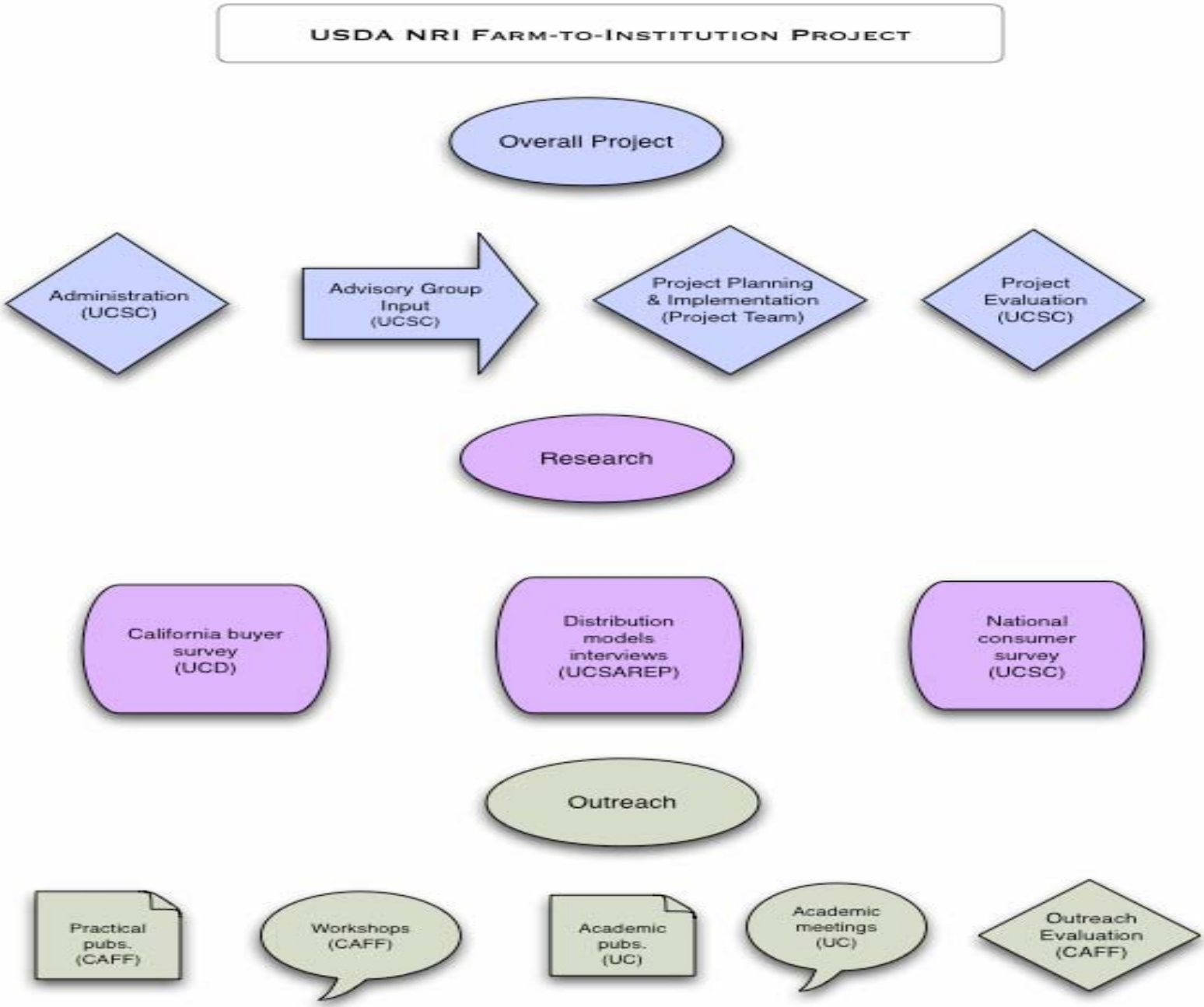
Cracked Pepper Fettuccini

~with mixed Mushrooms, caramelized Onions and Arugula tossed in Alfredo Sauce with fine Herbs~

Free-range Roasted Thyme Chicken

~served on a bed of Brussel Sprouts tossed with Apple, Turnips, Bacon & Butternut Squash~

In addition, a variety of culinary dishes featuring fresh, locally grown foods


USDA NRI Farm-to-Institution Project
Overall Project
Administration (UCSC)
Advisory Group Input (UCSC)
Project Planning & Implementation (Project Team)
Project Evaluation (UCSC)
Research
California buyer survey (UCD)
Distribution models interviews (UCSAREP)
National consumer survey (UCSC)
Outreach
Practical pubs. (CAFF)
Workshops (CAFF)
Academic pubs. (UC)
Academic meetings (UC)
Outreach Evaluation (CAFF)

The Consumer Perspective: Purpose

To analyze college student potential for support of farm-to-college efforts

- Do students want their college to provide sustainably produced food?
- What are people willing to purchase?

Identify ways to meet education needs and promote farm-to-college efforts on campus.

- How do they define ‘sustainably produced food’ and ‘local’?
- What food system topics hold the most interest?

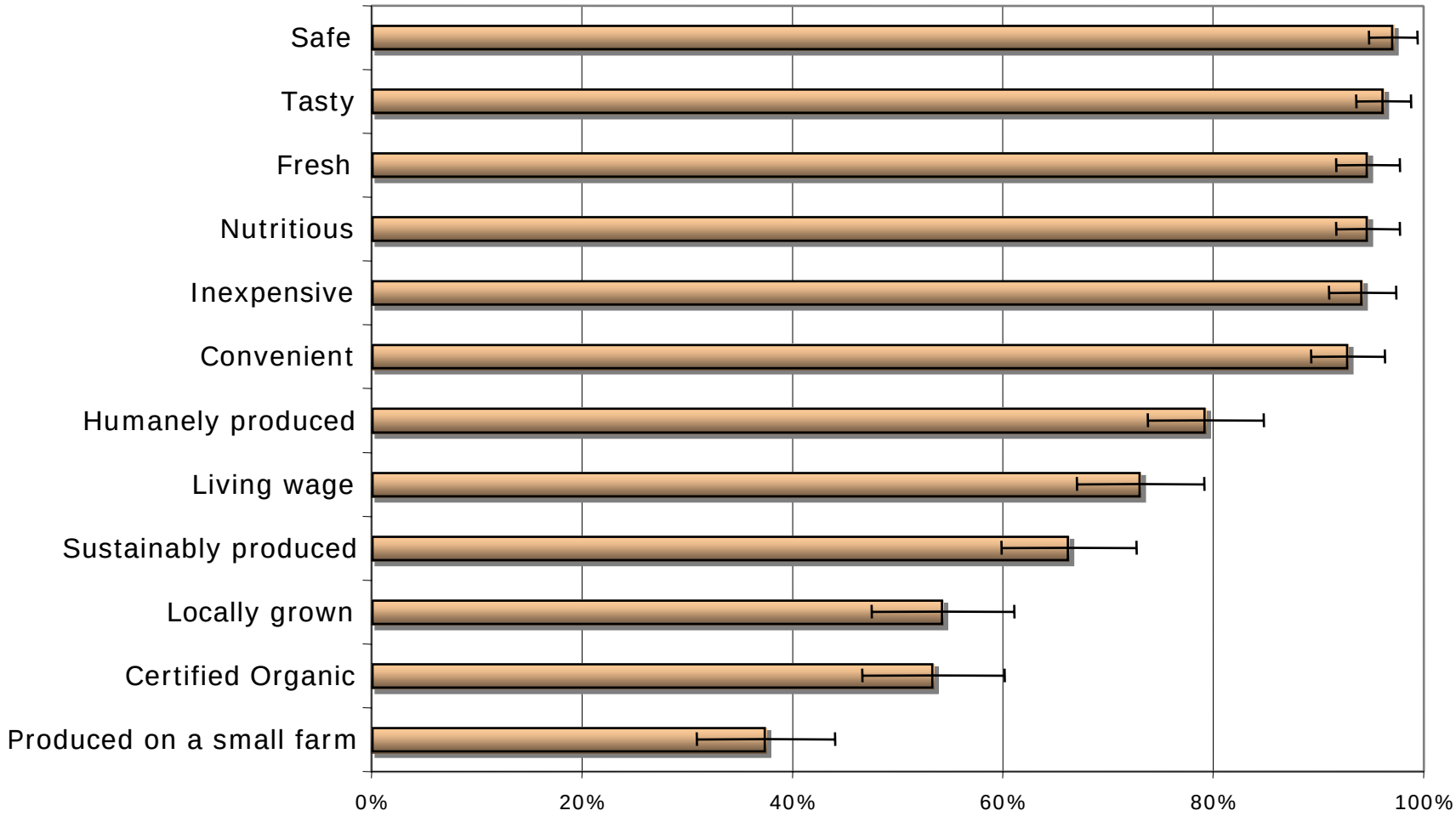
Approach

- Self-administered mail survey
- Random sample:
  - 1000 college students in U.S.
  - 1000 college students in California
- Modified Dillman method -
  - 4 contacts
  - $1 incentive
- Response Rate:
  - Approximately between 22% and 28% due to significant number of responses from non-students

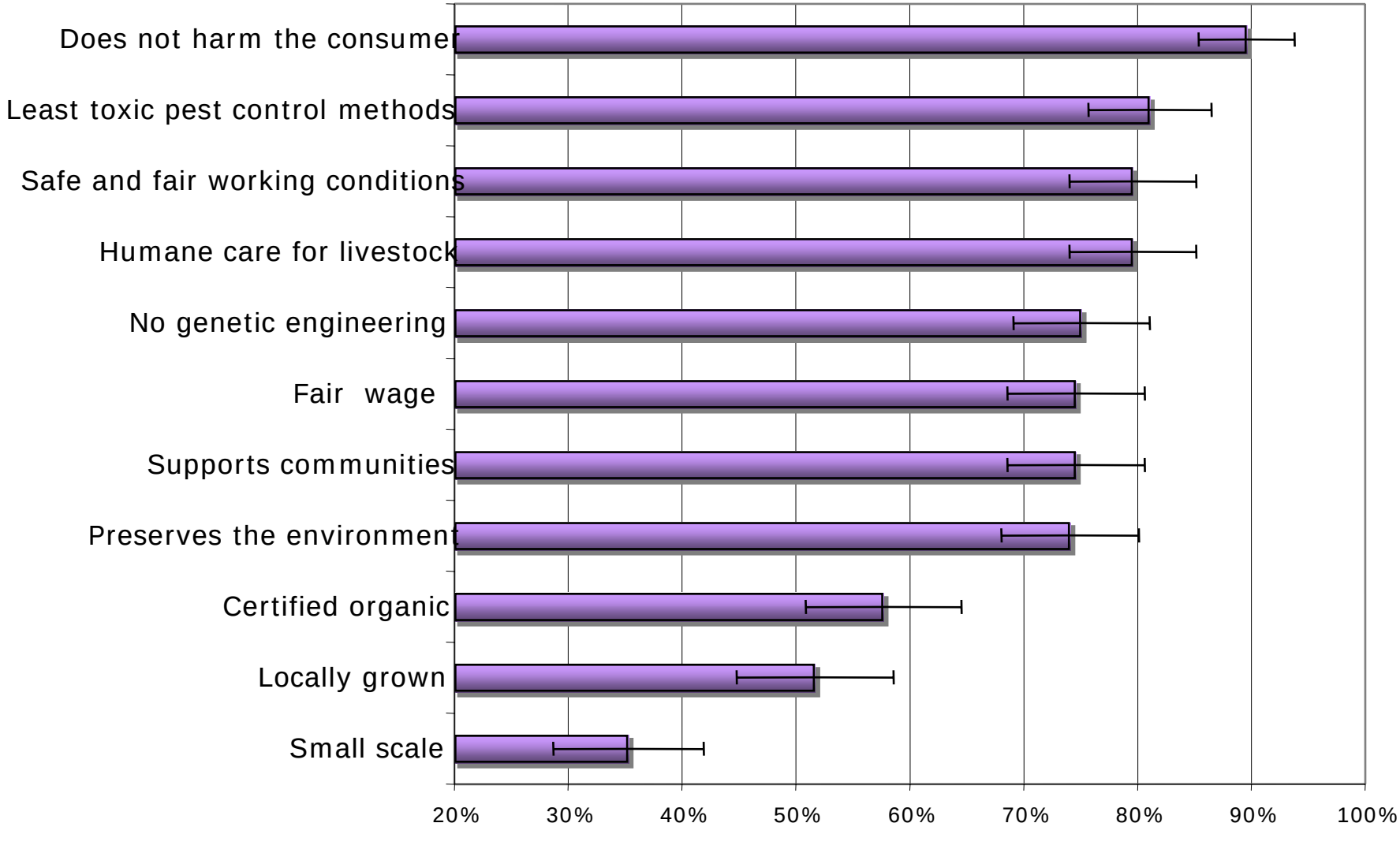
Student Characteristics

	Survey Sample	
	n	%
Meal Plan		
Yes	21	**10%**
No	181	**84%**
Don't Know	12	**6%**
Eat on Campus		
Yes	167	**77%**
No	47	**22%**
Year in School		
Freshman	23	**11%**
Sophomore	52	**24%**
Junior	55	**26%**
Senior	48	**22%**
Graduate	33	**15%**

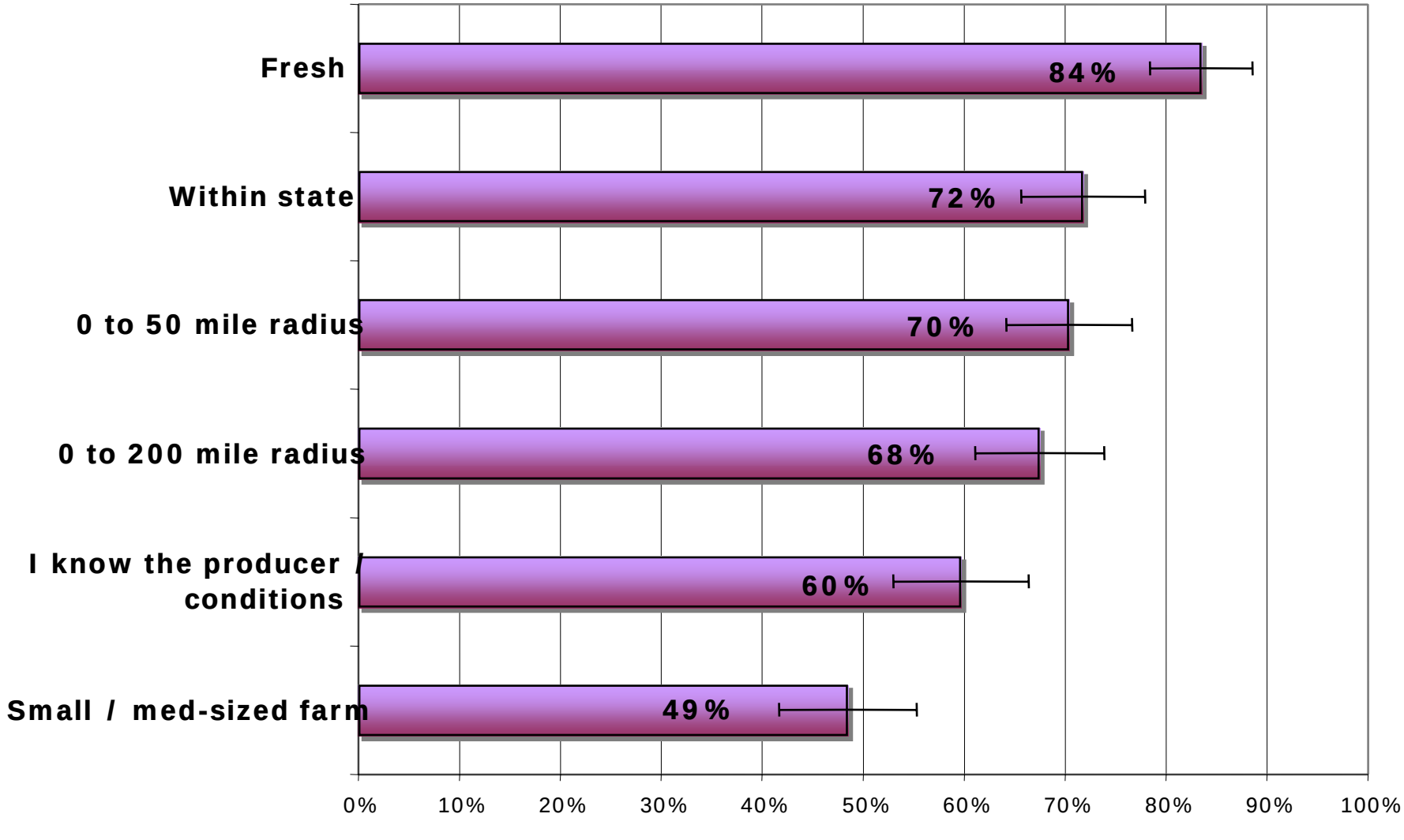
Food qualities students want their college to provide



How students define '*sustainably produced food*'



How students define ‘local’



Next Steps

- Perform weighted analysis
- Identify who is most interested in different sustainability related qualities

Collegiate Food Service Buyers
Research Purpose

- Analyze the produce buying practices and preferences of food service operations at colleges, universities and teaching hospitals in California
- Measure market potential and identify factors constraining demand for produce that is grown locally, sustainably and/or by small- and mid-scale producers

Approach

- Phone interviews with produce buyers at colleges, universities & teaching hospitals in California
  - 2 year & 4 year schools
  - Public & private
- Obtained names from NACUFS membership
- Supplemented with public listings

Transaction Costs of Buying Locally Grown Produce

- Information Costs
  - Relative ease of finding new suppliers—growers or distributors
  - Relative ease of getting information about product availability
  - Importance of year-round availability of key items that are locally grown
  - Importance of availability of locally grown precut products
  - Importance of stable prices for locally grown produce

Transaction Costs of Buying Locally Grown Produce

- **Negotiation Costs**
  - Relative ease of placing orders with vendors
  - Importance of sourcing locally grown produce from primary produce vendor
  - Importance of having broad range of locally grown produce available from a single vendor
- **Monitoring Costs**
  - Importance of reliability in receiving ordered locally grown items
  - Importance of compliance with institution's purchasing regulations & policies
  - Relative ease of resolving problem deliveries

Definitions of Sustainably Produced

- Using compost
- Keep local farmers in business, lower fuel usage, organic
- Grown in such a way that does not deplete the land
- Grown using crop rotations, protecting the environment, paying living wages, organic
- Grown to maximize shelf life

Definitions of Local

- Same county
- 30-200 mile radius
- Grown in California

PRELIMINARY Findings

- 78 completed interviews
- Mix of self-operated and contracted food service
- Most buy produce from a produce distributor, some supplement through broadliner
- Many require vendors to provide documentation of different forms of liability insurance

PRELIMINARY Findings

- Maximum volume from specialized supplier of local produce is 25%
- About 25% have local buying program while 15% are developing one
- Buy local produce from produce distributor, growers collaborative, campus farm and/or farmers' market

PRELIMINARY Findings

- “Local” & “sustainably produced” are more important criteria than organic
- When seeking a supplier for locally grown produce, stable prices and broad product selection are more important than year-round supply of key items

PRELIMINARY Findings

- Most willing to pay ~20% premium for some organic, sustainably produced or locally grown produce
  - Often limited to catering events or special student meals
  - ~33% won't pay any premium
- Highest average premiums for organic, sustainably grown and "paying living wage to farmworkers"
- Lowest average premium for "grown by small or medium sized farm"

PRELIMINARY Findings

- ~67% interested in locally produced dairy products—many already buying
- ~33% interested in locally produced meat & poultry, and shelf-stable products
- Feel need to educate students about sustainably produced & locally grown

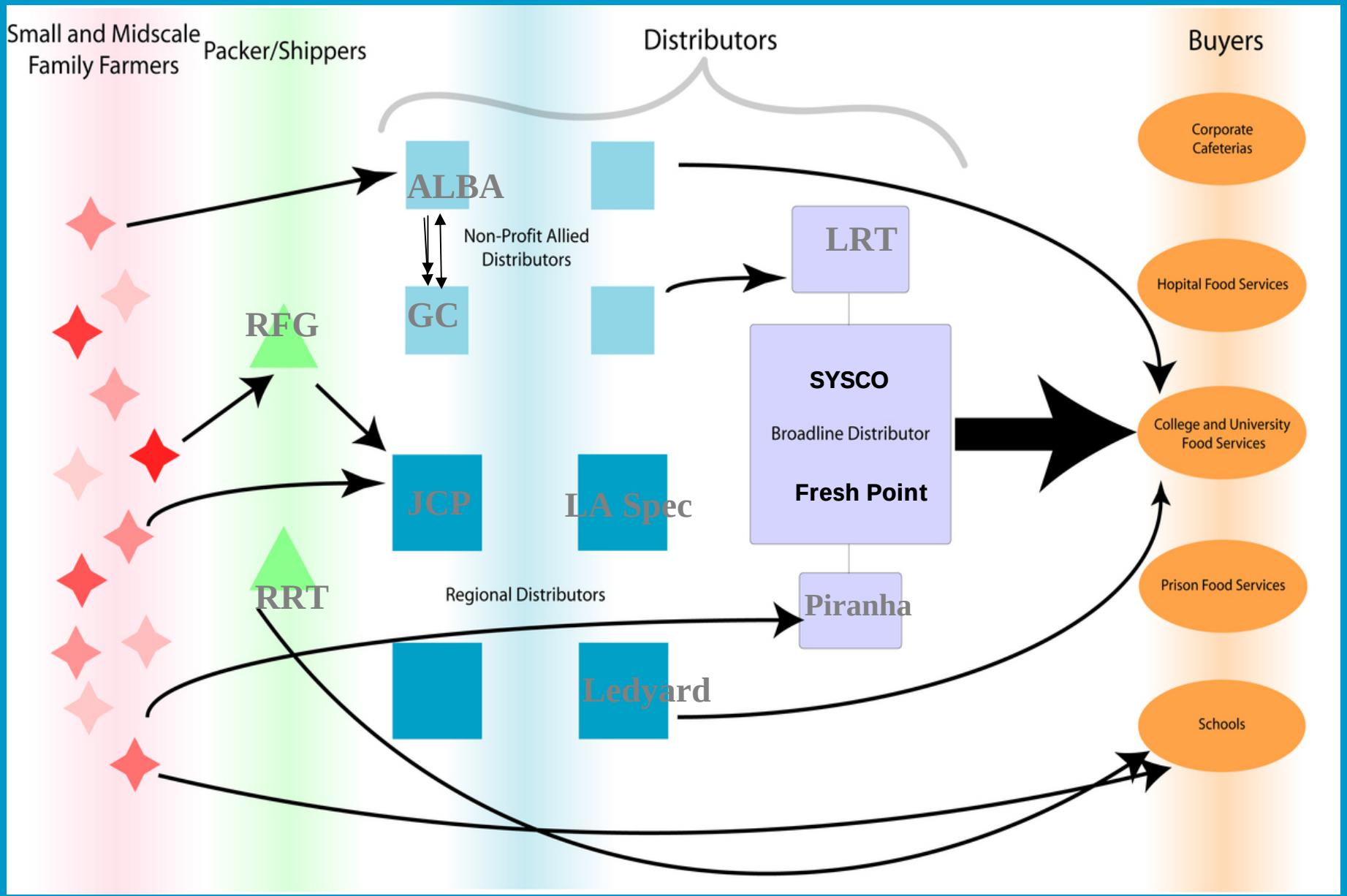
Quotable Quotes

- *“I know that I buy a lot of locally grown produce, but it isn’t labeled as local”*
- *“I need one-stop shopping, such as a small farmers cooperative”*
- *It is difficult to find cost effective ways of buying locally grown produce”*
- *“Our students don’t have much disposable income—we have to be very price conscious”*

From farmer to buyer: Distribution Systems

- Describe conventional and alternative distribution models
- Identify factors associated with successful and sustainable arrangements

Distribution Models



Preliminary Results from Buyers:

- Ave % of food budget for produce: 15%
- Ave % local purchases: 15%
- Ave $$ local purchases: $75,000/yr.

Preliminary Results from Buyers: Motivations for Change

- Mostly *not* from student demand
- Education is key
  - Professional organizations (NACUFS)
  - Farm-to-College movement
  - Employer (BAMCO)
  - Farmers, distributors

Preliminary feedback: What makes it work?

- Relationships—getting to know each other; seeing each others' work
  - "Integrity is the most important quality."
  - Partnerships are key.
- Education and two-way communication are crucial for success
  - Back and forth along the chain
- Commitment, persistence and patience—time to work out the kinks

Farmers' Sales To Colleges

- **Average < 2% of income**
- **Average ~ $6,920/year**

  Can reach $1,000/week in peak season (but not all year long)

Challenges To Growers

- So far—limited market, not a huge economic advantage
- Adjusting seasonal cycles to colleges' needs for product
- Adapting to volume and processing needs
- Distribution systems