

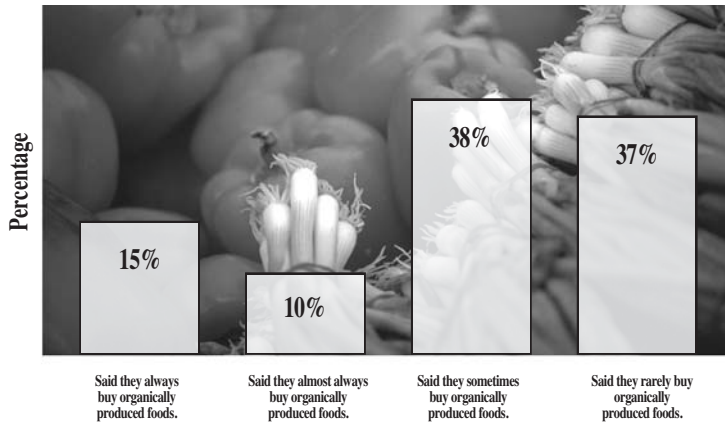


# Poll STATION

With Linda Banister

Being environmentally conscious is becoming a hot topic for politicians and the general public alike. Edmontonians are beginning to think more critically about how and where their food is produced. From organic sections in our grocery stores to the bustling Old Strathcona Farmers' Market, it is apparent that many shoppers are opting for what they consider healthier alternatives. For this month's *Poll Station*, respondents were asked about their food purchasing habits, as well as their participation in Dine Alberta

## HAVE YOU PURCHASED ORGANICALLY-GROWN FOODS?



To begin, survey participants were asked if they had ever purchased organic or low-input foods when grocery shopping. Interestingly, 60 percent reported they had, while 38 percent had not. Of those respondents that had made purchases, 15 percent made a practice of doing so always, while 10 percent did so almost always. A greater proportion stated that they sometimes purchased organic or low-input foods (38 percent), and 37 percent reported that they rarely did so.

## DO YOU BUY LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS AND IS IT IMPORTANT TO DO SO?

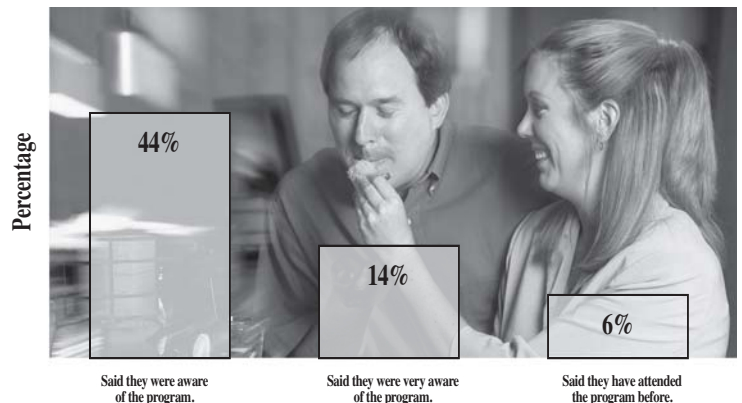


Next, participants were asked about their tendencies to buy foods that were produced locally. Eighty-six percent said they had purchased locally produced foods, whereas nine percent stated that they had never and five percent were unsure. When asked where they shopped to purchase these foods, 71 percent had bought them at the Farmers' Market; 26 percent had purchased local foods at grocery stores, and a smaller proportion (seven percent) specified that they had shopped at organic food stores.

Respondents were then asked whether or not purchasing locally grown and harvested foods was important to them. Sixty-five percent said it was of *high* importance to them while 29 percent indicated it is *very* important. It was of *moderate* importance to 14 percent, and of *low* importance to 21 percent.

Those who reported that purchasing locally was of *high* importance frequently commented that supporting local farmers, businesses or the economy was important (66 percent), that the products were more trustworthy or safe (15 percent), and that locally produced foods were fresher (14 percent). Nine percent purchase locally produced foods because they believe it reduces pollution or transportation costs. Those who reported that purchasing local foods was of *low* importance most frequently suggested that the issue doesn't cross their minds or that they don't care (57 percent), that convenience was more important to them (14 percent), that they were unable to acquire the foods they desire locally (14 percent), and that they are cost conscious (10 percent).

## ARE YOU AWARE OF DINE ALBERTA AND DID YOU PARTICIPATE?



Finally, respondents were asked about the Dine Alberta program, which takes place in September, and features more than 120 restaurants that have created menus to showcase local agricultural products. Forty-four percent were aware of the program, with 14 percent being very aware. While only six percent had attended the Dine Alberta program this year, an additional 43 percent stated that they would likely participate in the future.

For additional information on the Dine Alberta program, please visit [www.dinealberta.ca](http://www.dinealberta.ca).

The *Poll Station* surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking.

## Want a question included in the Edmontonians Poll?

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