

# Research to Impacts Map: Local Food Systems

EcoConsumer Project 2016 - 2019



Farmer-seller in the Farmer to Consumer Fair

## The majority of consumers in Latin America buy fresh fruits and vegetables in open air markets

20% of **consumers** interviewed in 4 open-air markets in 2017 had a **definition of what an ecological product was**; less than 7% were specifically searching for ecological products (mostly referred to as natural, or grown with clean water), they could not easily **identify** the ecological products in the market. The main reasons to choose products for all shoppers interviewed in the open-air markets were **price, appearance, and freshness.**

## There is a high degree of informality in open-air markets

A study on 4 open-air markets in Cochabamba, Bolivia found that only **2% of the traceable production is ecological**, and only 0.2% of it is certified. When ecological production arrives to open-air markets, most of it is **not differentiated**. Access to protected ecological markets, that are often run by NGOs for small scale farmers and cater to an upper class consumer, is limited to once or twice a week. Farmer-sellers who participate in open-air markets usually don't have a formal stand, they are forced to sell on the outskirts of the market or in an ambulatory way, risking high fines or having their products confiscated.



Victoria Sarsuri, a farmer-seller from the Feria Agroecológica de Villa Obrajes – Sacaba reports, "For over 10 years I have produced ecologically. These actions [to differentiate] will improve the promotion of ecological foods, it helps my organization a lot."



## Effective consumer messages

2018: The project funded city-wide **radio and TV spots** on the importance of ecological products.

## Differentiate production

2018: The project worked with farmer-sellers who were already present in 4 different types of open-air markets to better differentiate their ecological products using interventions like signs and aprons to help advertise that the products were ecological.



## More consumers purchase AE products

In 2019, 56% of the shoppers had a definition for an ecological product and 46% were **explicitly seeking** them. 8% said they noticed the changes attributable to the project (using signs), 13% were skeptical towards that the products were truly ecological, and 17% expressed total **trust** in ecological farmer-sellers (the rest were neutral.)



## Change market environment so it is easier and more attractive to buy agroecological

**The number of ecological stands** rose from 5 to 63 (25% of total farmer-run stands) and of those, on average, 60% of the offerings were ecological. 47% of the ecological farmers showed improved sales strategies, while 28% report that don't apply any strategy because they believe they already have loyal customers and have built a strong reputation.



## Influence market policy

Local departmental and city officials in Cochabamba, Bolivia like the Secretaría de Planificación del Gobierno Autónomo Departamental, have been inspired by the results of the project to promote ecological foods in 4 popular, open-air markets and plan to include direct commercialization mechanisms between producers and consumers and consumer awareness activities.

**Summary** The three major aims of the project are to 1) increase understanding and practice of ecological markets in an urban setting in Bolivia (Cochabamba); 2) create a cross sectoral learning platform around agroecological food systems; 3) expand the agroecological, local market in Cochabamba.

**For more information see:**  
<https://www.ccrp.org/grants/ecological-consumers-of-cochabamba/>

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