Salsa in Kentucky

Salsa incorporates a variety of produce items and makes for an incredibly profitable product. Fresh produce can be used for processing and preserving salsa during peak vegetable production months, and the salsa can then be stored and sold throughout the colder months. In large part due to legislation passed in 2006, individuals can now produce value-added products such as salsa in their own homes, without a licensed commercial kitchen, and sell them at a farmers’ market.

In 2008, there were 395 home-based processors and 47 microprocessors with official certification in Kentucky. During that time, The University of Kentucky conducted its first KY Food Consumer Panel (KFCP), the initiation of what would become a statewide food systems initiative by 2010. The initial survey data represented more than 450 Kentucky households across the Commonwealth and grew to 1000 households by the end of 2009. This research provided invaluable insight into Kentucky’s consumer preferences for attributes connected with their food products, their shopping and consumption behaviors, and what was eventually termed as “food culture” – the familiarity with and interest in farmers’ markets, food preparation, specialty products, agritourism, restaurants, and retail venues.

According to the KY Food Consumers’ Panel, 42% of households surveyed purchase mild or medium salsa at least once per month, which indicates a very strong market in Kentucky for salsa. However, only 8% indicated the same frequency of purchasing a Kentucky Proud brand salsa. Natural and organic salsas show great potential, and are attributes to consider when developing a product.

**KENTUCKY SALSA:**

*Product Attributes Consumed At Least Once Per Month*

![Bar chart showing product attributes consumed at least once per month]

**The Kentucky Food Consumers Panel, 2008**
The most common use of salsa, according to the KFCP, is as an ingredient for a meal or snack for a party. Adults are more likely than children to eat salsa as a snack, and salsa is not a commonly used as a gift.