

Markets

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Palmisano claims his corn and other produce items are fresher and better than what the big supermarkets carry.

"I buy from 30 farmers within a 150-mile radius," he says. "I hand-select all my items and I taste everything before I buy it."

Palmisano's customers like his tastes.

"I've been coming here for years and I just love the place," says Ms. Hettesheimer, 62, of Madeira. "Everything is nice and fresh. There's a good variety and prices are comparable with the big stores, sometimes less."

"The fruit is fresh, it doesn't look like it was sitting on a truck all day before somebody decided to unload it," says Ms. Mullett, 30, of Eastgate. "Nine out of 10 times, things are cheaper here than in the big stores. I got this big, fresh head of lettuce for 89 cents. A smaller head can cost twice as much at a big store."

"I came in looking for some home-grown corn and I'm impressed," says Ventura, 57, of Eastgate. "I know the corn not

only looks good, it tastes good. They cook some of the corn here and let you sample it."

Don Eberwine, an Ohio State University extension agent in Butler County, says farmers' markets fulfill a need. "Quality-wise, farmers' markets get local, healthy food. Within the past few years, people have started getting that 'back to basics' philosophy and the only reason some of them (markets) are dying is because people don't think of them as a convenience. They're as popular as they ever were."

While farmers' markets are scattered throughout the Cincinnati area, they're not as plentiful as they once were. Still, farmers' markets don't lack customers, as throngs of summer shoppers illustrate, but they do lack enough old-fashioned, hard-working business people to run them.

"I put in 100 hours a week every week," says Palmisano, owner of Newtown Farm Market.

"I love what I do and I work long hours every day. But the younger generation doesn't want to do that. They want to work eight hours a day, five days a week and then, adios."