

## Member Survey 2007

### Results

Results describe number of times each option was chosen, followed by a sampling of comments scribbled in the margins and an impression of the results. We had 225 surveys returned; some customers chose to respond to only some of the questions which has been noted where relevant. Comments related to specific staff members or Board members have not been included in these results. When referring to our customers, we have chosen to use the inclusive pro-noun “we,” as many of our survey respondents are staff members and consistent customers also. As this undertaking was clearly not one of scientific proportions, the results do leave themselves open to a wide-variety of conclusions in some cases.

**Question:** Of all your weekly food shopping what portion do you purchase at the Co-op?

- Just a few items: 46
- About 25%: 49
- About 50%: 53
- About 75%: 37
- About 90%: 25
- I don't shop elsewhere: 14

- **Impressions:** Two-thirds of respondents purchase 50% or less of our weekly food at the Co-op. One third of respondents purchase 50% or more of our weekly food at the Co-op.

**Question:** At what other stores do you often or sometimes shop for groceries? What percentage of your weekly food shopping do you do at each? (Customers were asked to fill in the names of stores and percentages themselves).

- Hannaford 0-20%: 58
- Hannaford 21-40%: 42
- Hannaford 41-60%: 41
- Hannaford 61-80%: 31
- Hannaford 81-100%: 21
- Toziers 0-25%: 14
- Farmer's Markets: 0-40%: 13
- Other Co-ops: 0-25%: 8
- Shaw's: 20-35%: 8
- Toziers 25-50%: 7
- Walmart 0-50%: 5
- Buying Clubs: 0-50%: 5

Other responses without significant percentages assigned to them included Market Basket, French and Brawn, Uncle Dean's, Natural Living Center, Brooks General Store, and Fresh Off the Farm. People also cited personal gardens and root centers as a source of food.

- **Comments:** “Uncle Dean's often offers prices less than wholesale.” “Hannaford 50% but not in the health food section.” “Fresh off the Farm: about 20%. It is cheaper than the Co-op and I would shop there more often if it was closer.”

- **Impressions:** When we look at these results in conjunction with the previous question, it looks like most of our customers do most of their non-Co-op shopping at Hannafords. We were surprised to see that the Natural Living Center, Chase's, and Whole Foods/Wild Oates didn't appear in any significant percentage.

**Question:** What are the main reasons you shop at the store where you spent the largest percentage of your grocery dollars? (please check all that apply.)

- Quality/Freshness: 120
- Price/Affordability: 73
- Co-operatively Organized: 102
- Friendly Staff: 88
- Staff Knowledge of Product: 128
- Product Selection: 55
- Convenience: 88
- Selection/Variety: 102
- Location: 99
- Hours of Operation: 61
- Efficiency of Check Out: 33
- Cleanliness of Store: 77
- Support of a local business: 74
- Other: “Has cokes, cat litter, natural lite beer.” 19 customers cited something similar.

“Room to push a cart around.” 5 customers cited something similar. “Organics!” 15 similar responses.

● **Comments:** “Beauty, integrity, local, fair to staff, educational, good for children, less packaging, whole foods, deli, supports community.” “Employee charge (I'm poor.)” “Laziness.” “I love the Co-op.” “A lot of things there I use.” “Lack of competition.” “I'm a member.” “Right pricing on items.” “Smallness of store.” “Interaction with progressive community.” “The Cafe.” “Local sourcing.” “Community center.” “Hannaford always has what I need. The Co-op is often out.” “Can't get items anywhere else and sense of community.”

● **Impressions:** Respondents value quality and freshness, selection and variety, a knowledgeable staff, and a Co-op business model the most in the store where they are spending most of their food dollars. The factors that are least considered in choice of where to purchase groceries are hours of operation, product selection, and efficiency of checkout. It is clear from the respondents who spend most of their food dollars here that we are valued because we are a local business with a strong community vibe.

**Question:** Please tell us what departments at the Co-op you regularly shop and why (check all that apply). (The original question didn't give Local as an option. I added this column into the results because a significant number of customers offered this as a primary reason for shopping our departments.)

| <i>Department</i>   | <i>Overall Selection</i> | <i>Not Available Elsewhere</i> | <i>Quality/Freshness</i> | <i>Local</i> |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Produce             | 93                       | 73                             | 121                      | 11           |
| Grocery             | 77                       | 63                             | 36                       | 1            |
| Bulk                | 99                       | 100                            | 62                       | 1            |
| Frozen              | 42                       | 36                             | 23                       |              |
| Dairy               | 65                       | 66                             | 56                       | 3            |
| Health and Beauty   | 71                       | 67                             | 32                       |              |
| Beer and Wine       | 69                       | 37                             | 17                       |              |
| Bread               | 61                       | 49                             | 64                       | 2            |
| Deli                | 47                       | 45                             | 51                       | 1            |
| Meat and Cheese     | 60                       | 52                             | 74                       | 5            |
| General Merchandise | 42                       | 36                             | 11                       | 1            |

Other reasons suggested by the customers included convenience of the Meat and Cheese dept, prices in the frozen and HABA departments, knowledge of Beer and Wine staff, lack of packaging in Bulk, prefer to buy at the Co-op, and meat is offered by weight.

● **Comments:** “I've noticed that the quality of freshness in the Produce department is inconsistent lately.”

- **Impressions:** The Produce and Bulk sections seem to serve as the hook that bring people into the store, as they are the departments that people shop the most frequently. People shop the Produce department for the quality and freshness of the products offered there; the same with Meat and Cheese. The Bulk section gets shopped because we offer products that are not available elsewhere as well as a variety. Grocery distinguishes itself as a department that offers good overall selection. The Dairy attracts shoppers for all three reasons, and HABA seems to meet a need for having the cure that ails you no matter what your complaint.

**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5 (five being the best), how would you rate the customer service in the Deli/Cafe?

- 1: 6
- 2: 17
- 3: 47
- 4: 80
- 5: 50
- Don't use: 23

- **Comments:** "It's improving." "The quality of service is inconsistent." "Service can be slow. You need more people during Sunday brunch."

- **Impressions:** Happily, about two-thirds of respondents feel that the customer service in the deli rates a 4 or a 5.

**Question:** In the Deli/Cafe, which of the following areas do you feel could use improvement? (check all that apply)

- Hot Sandwiches: 13
- Salads: 19
- Breakfast Pastries: 17
- Brunch Items: 6
- Grab-n-go: 41
- Vegetarian/Vegan Offerings: 31
- Cold Sandwiches: 22
- Salads from the Salad Case: 33
- Snacks: 15
- Bulk Olives,Cheeses, Meats: 33
- Coffee: 25
- Other (suggested by customers): Soups-4, Entrees-1, Specials-1, Dessert-1, Service-3, Long lines-1, Prices-1
- Don't use: 14

- **Comments:** "Great coffee!" "Coffee could be stronger." "Breakfast offerings are inconsistent." "Make more salad case offerings available in the Grab-n-go." "Nice selection." "No offerings for folks with dairy/wheat/sugar allergies or intolerances." "Can you get organic donuts?" "No improvements needed." "Offer carrot sticks as another option besides chips."

- **Impressions:** Our brunch offerings and continue to delight our weekend crowd, as does our daily offering of hot sandwiches. Our Grab-and-go cooler doesn't appear to be as accessible or interesting as we would like it to be. The deli as a whole could improve its vegetarian offerings; however, the comments on this front were unclear as to whether more quantity of offerings or better quality of offerings is desired. Cheeses and Meats are also an area we could improve, presumably by offering more sliced deli meats and cheeses as noted from other comments.

**Question:** To what extent do the following factors influence your decision to buy a product? Please circle the number that best describes its importance to you, with 1=most important and 6=least important.

|                        | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
|------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Appearance             | 45  | 45 | 44 | 16 | 16 | 8  |
| Fair-Trade             | 67  | 63 | 24 | 13 | 13 | 7  |
| GMO-free               | 114 | 33 | 21 | 3  | 5  | 8  |
| Locally Grown          | 142 | 47 | 5  | 7  | 3  | 6  |
| Price                  | 45  | 45 | 55 | 36 | 9  | 4  |
| Taste/Flavor           | 124 | 61 | 9  | 2  | 2  | 7  |
| Vegan                  | 14  | 8  | 11 | 19 | 18 | 37 |
| Anti-biotic Free       | 123 | 30 | 12 | 8  | 8  | 7  |
| Gourmet                | 16  | 11 | 23 | 27 | 21 | 37 |
| Trusted Brand Name     | 17  | 35 | 46 | 31 | 21 | 16 |
| Independently Owned    | 39  | 73 | 37 | 13 | 15 | 6  |
| Healthfulness          | 126 | 57 | 5  | 6  | 4  | 4  |
| Organically Grown      | 123 | 52 | 12 | 8  | 4  | 5  |
| Sustainably Packaged   | 73  | 49 | 28 | 17 | 15 | 6  |
| Vegetarian             | 30  | 15 | 24 | 13 | 13 | 36 |
| Free of food allergens | 46  | 38 | 20 | 10 | 12 | 30 |
| Growth Hormone Free    | 137 | 35 | 11 | 2  | 3  | 6  |
| Kid-Friendly Food      | 15  | 10 | 11 | 7  | 7  | 38 |

Other options suggested included “politically liberal company” and “percentage of sales to charity.”

- **Comments:** None suggested.
- **Impressions:** We have caught on to the larger national trend of valuing locally sourced products above all else, with organically grown coming in lower on the priority list. Surprisingly, the second highest selection priority seems to be the presence or, lack thereof, of growth hormones when making product selections. GMO and anti-biotic free are important considerations for us all, as is the overall healthfulness of the product. It doesn't appear that the majority of us are looking to find kid-friendly food, trusted brand names, or gourmet offerings on our shelves. Surprisingly, it doesn't look like the majority of our survey respondents are vegetarians or vegans. Not surprisingly, it appears that we are well-educated about issues surrounding food safety and food integrity, and that the consideration of the health effects, both good and bad, of our products is a strong factor driving us all to shop here.

**Question:** Which statement describes the kind of shopper you consider yourself?

- *I am very health conscious. I buy almost all organic when possible. I am pretty familiar with a variety of health foods and alternative brands. I like the bulk section.* 129 responses
- *I am interested in buying more healthy foods and learning more. I buy some organic foods, but think twice about price first. I am experimenting with various health foods that are new and alternative brands.* 82 responses
- *I'm not very concerned with the health aspect that much.* 2 responses
- 5 respondents felt that the first two options described their shopping identity best.
- **Comments:** “I prefer organic to save the planet, not myself.” 2 similar responses. “I am health conscious but think twice about price.” 2 similar responses. “I don't like the wording of this question, it's judgmental.” One customer suggested that her shopping habits would be better described by changing the word “organic” to “local.”
- **Impressions:** The high number of respondents looking to learn more about health foods was a surprising and encouraging result. The results suggest that the Co-op is meeting an already established need for health food in our community, but also providing options (and presumably educational opportunities) for customers transitioning into eating more organically and healthfully.

**Question:** What are the top two reasons that you do not shop at the Co-op more often? (Respondents were asked to fill in the blanks) We created categories for responses to this question to make it easier to interpret the results.

- 93 respondents cited reasons related to pricing.
- 52 respondents cited reasons related to location
- 51 respondents cited reasons related to product selection
- 5 respondents cited reasons related to staff concerns.

● **Comments:** “Lower prices would help me quite a bit. I shop as inexpensively as possible but still spend a large amount on food.” “Some staff members are not helpful or competent.” “I live too far away.” “Frequent out of stocks.” “My kids have poor taste buds.” “More local fish/dairy/produce/cheese etc.”

● **Impressions:** We need to open some satellite stores! Suggested locations include Camden, Milo, Hermon, and West Gardiner. Not surprisingly, the largest barrier to more frequent shopping at the Co-op is its impact on our wallets. Maybe we should do some more educating about our pricing structure and the difficulties that come with dealing with vendors big and small when you are a community-owned organization.

**Question:** How would you rate the Co-op in the following areas? Please circle the number that best describes your feelings about each category with 1=excellent and 6=needs improvement.

|                     | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
|---------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Cleanliness         | 36  | 58 | 55 | 41 | 12 | 9  |
| Friendly Staff      | 87  | 88 | 17 | 9  | 7  | 4  |
| Efficient Staff     | 58  | 70 | 45 | 26 | 9  | 2  |
| Layout              | 33  | 57 | 57 | 33 | 18 | 4  |
| Speedy Check Out    | 39  | 64 | 58 | 28 | 17 | 5  |
| Product Quality     | 89  | 86 | 21 | 6  | 7  | 2  |
| Atmosphere          | 104 | 63 | 22 | 12 | 2  | 6  |
| Knowledgeable Staff | 93  | 70 | 33 | 5  | 5  | 3  |
| Helpful Staff       | 100 | 72 | 23 | 8  | 4  | 3  |
| Accurate Check Out  | 85  | 72 | 22 | 9  | 11 | 6  |
| Pricing             | 27  | 41 | 64 | 35 | 26 | 11 |
| Product Variety     | 52  | 60 | 53 | 17 | 14 | 8  |

- **Comments:** None offered
- **Impressions:** Again, not surprisingly, it is in the realm of pricing where changes will have the biggest impact on customer satisfaction, followed by an improved layout, better store cleanliness and a speedier checkout. Our staff has always felt as though it offers friendly and helpful service and it looks like our respondents feel the same way. We can take pride in the fact that our funky and homey atmosphere continues to be valued in our community.

**Question:** What is your overall impression of our staffing levels? Please check one.

- Excessive: 9 respondents selected this option
- Adequate: 190 respondents selected this option
- Inadequate: 5 respondents selected this option
- Much improved: 1 respondent offered this option

- **Comments:** None offered
- **Impressions:** Good news!

**Question:** When you have provided feedback/input at the Co-op:

- How would you rate the response you received (1=excellent, 6=needs improvement)
  - 1: 47
  - 2: 33
  - 3: 21
  - 4: 10
  - 5: 4
  - 6: 8
  
- How would you rate the ease of giving your input?
  - 1: 58
  - 2: 33
  - 3: 20
  - 4: 9
  - 5: 7
  - 6: 3
  
- How would you rate the staff's openness to your concern?
  - 1: 58
  - 2: 44
  - 3: 11
  - 4: 9
  - 5: 3
  - 6: 6
  
- **Comments:** None offered
- **Impressions:** It appears that the forums we have in place for soliciting member feedback meet the needs of the membership. It also appears that the process for soliciting membership feedback is satisfactory, but with room for improvement.

**Question:** What other products would you like to see offered, if any?

- The results of this question are difficult to present as a large variety of responses were offered. 119 respondents didn't offer any suggestions. Responses that were echoed by more than one individual include "better emphasis on local products," "freshly sliced deli meats," "freshly squeezed juices," "Sliced breads," "Local and organic meats and fish," "more local produce" and "more consistently available produce."
- **Impressions:** Again, we are all wanting to support our local farmers and vendors as much as possible. A better inventory of "sliced" items would go a long way.

**Question:** How useful are the following modes of communication for informing you about what is happening at the Co-op?

|                              | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Bi-Monthly Member Newsletter | 58 | 38 | 16 | 15 | 21 | 8  |
| E-mail Announcements         | 35 | 9  | 15 | 10 | 12 | 19 |
| Print Media (news ads)       | 12 | 11 | 17 | 23 | 19 | 36 |
| Co-op Bulletin Board         | 41 | 38 | 26 | 23 | 18 | 13 |

|                            | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Posters at other locations | 11 | 15 | 11 | 17 | 29 | 33 |
| Word of Mouth              | 30 | 25 | 26 | 28 | 16 | 22 |
| In-store signs             | 75 | 62 | 22 | 9  | 5  | 6  |
| Website                    | 8  | 9  | 8  | 21 | 14 | 29 |
| Radio (WERU)               | 21 | 15 | 22 | 17 | 21 | 23 |
| Board Committees           | 2  | 4  | 11 | 14 | 22 | 46 |
| Annual Report              | 19 | 28 | 21 | 15 | 12 | 27 |

Other: Staff mentions-2 responses, receipt at check out-3 mentions, bathroom mirror-2 mentions

- **Comments:** “The one's I marked are the one's I notice, probably all are good and having such variety allows most to be informed.” “There is a website?” “I don't ever receive the member newsletter.”
- **Impressions:** Surprisingly, it is the media that we generate from within the store that seems to be the best way to get the word out, such as in-store signage followed by the member newsletter and then the Co-op bulletin board. Perhaps we should consider returning to the system where member newsletters get mailed out instead of just making them available in the store or electronically.

**Question:** Which of the following news topic do you value as a Co-op member? (Please check all that apply)

- Grocery Store Specials: 149
- New Products: 106
- Financial Info: 51
- Educational Events: 114
- Board Director's News: 54
- Health and Nutrition Info: 134
- Recipes: 84
- Community Outreach: 75
- Sustainable Agriculture: 138
- General Manager's Newsletter: 59
- Other suggestions offered: Staffing updates, GE Free news, Political and corporate news that affects health, local food sources, news about organics, local farmers.

- **Comments:** None offered
- **Impressions:** Looks like operational info about the Co-op is not so interesting as a whole. We prefer to know about what is happening out in our community and our world and how that news is going to make an impact on us as individuals and as a community. Sounds like we also need to beef our newsletter up a little bit with what is happening in the larger world of agriculture and with breaking nutrition news.

**Question:** To what extent do you feel you know (with 1=very much and 6= not at all)

- Who is on the Board of Directors:
  - 1: 10
  - 2: 12
  - 3: 17
  - 4: 33
  - 5: 37
  - 6: 91
- The Board's role and function:
  - 1: 15
  - 2: 19
  - 3: 27
  - 4: 43
  - 5: 33
  - 6: 65

● Where and when the Board meets:

- 1: 16
- 2: 27
- 3: 25
- 4: 25
- 5: 26
- 6: 86

● **Comments:** “This is our fault, not the Board's.” “But heck, I was on the Board!” “Sorry, I'm so busy and like most, I just trust it's a great board and they are doing a great job.” “My own fault, I could easily find this out if I wanted to.”

● **Impressions:** It doesn't appear that we get high marks for Board visibility. But we are impressed, based on the comments, that our members have a strong sense of self-responsibility (yeah Co-op values!) and recognize that we are all responsible on some level to participate in the Co-op by trying to stay informed.

**Question:** How effectively do you feel that we are meeting our mission? How could we be more effective?

● Again, this is a question that is difficult to report on, so we will summarize general themes. Most respondents feel that we are very effective in meeting our mission or that we are continuing to improve on our abilities to do so. Consistent strategies suggested for being more effective include increasing our inventory of local products, lowering our prices, keeping a more consistent inventory of products to prevent out of stocks, reducing our packaging, and implementing a worker-member program.

● **Comments:** “We know of no other co-op that is as good and welcoming. We love you!” “Continue to develop educational offerings.” “While it could be a full time job, I think the Co-op could improve on researching food sources, checking authenticity of organic and GMO products and integrity of 'organic' companies, especially with changing federal regulations on what is 'organic.’” “More involvement in food politics.”

● **Impressions:** We are proud that our mission is coming through in all of our work and we can continue to improve by working to make prices more reasonable and to be more of an educational resource.

**Question:** Are you aware that we are community-owned?

- Yes: 218 responses
- No: 2 responses
- Unsure: 5 responses

**Question:** What does that mean to you?

“That the Co-op is locally controlled and not part of a multi-national corporation” “It means that as consumers we can have a real influence on the store we shop at.” “Keeps money local.” “We're all in it together.” “You keep taking a ‘poll tax’ in order for ‘members’ to be allowed to vote, saying it's a one-time charge for lifetime membership then you lose the money, change the rules, and ask for more.” “Simpler, localer, more responsible food availability.” “Local control to support local people.” “Being a member means a small financial commitment.” “That you should be more receptive to community needs: I have asked for vegan food for years.” “We are reinvesting in ourselves and our health.”

**Question:** Are you familiar with the Co-operative Principles that govern our business?

- Yes: 75 responses
- No: 36 responses
- Sort of: (offered as a response) 30 responses
- No response 76 responses

● **Comments:** None offered

● **Impressions:** We're not doing enough to make this information accessible and/or apparent to the membership and prospective membership.

**Question:** Please check any of the following reasons you became a member of the Belfast Co-op.

- Support of Co-ops in General: 151
- Support of the Belfast Co-op: 193
- Business Ownership: 29
- Special Order Discount: 44
- Voting Privileges: 27
- Customer Service: 42
- Support of a Local Business: 170
- Bulk Foods: 149
- Special Diet Foods: 36
- Organic Produce: 173
- Unique Product Offerings: 103
- Organically grown/raised foods: 168
- Support Local Growers/Vendors: 194
- Member Advantage Pricing: 109
- Other responses offered: Feels good-1, Local meats-1, Fair-trade-1, Social Mecca-3, Friendly atmosphere-1, Great coffee-1, Support sustainable practices-3, Senior discount-3, HABA offerings-1, Volunteering for discounts-2, Patronage refund-2, Health-1, Alternative to Hannaford-1, Part of Employee Benefits Package-2, Build community-1, gourmet items-1, Check cashing privileges-1
- **Comments:** “After I joined, and as a result of my membership, I learned more about organic and local foods and began to consume them regularly.”
- **Impressions:** It again appears that the Produce and the Bulk departments are the hooks that bring new customers into our stores. It is again confirmed that our members are highly interested in supporting local growers, vendors, and businesses. Seems that the financial benefits of membership (MAP pricing) are more important than the civic benefits as business ownership and voting privileges are not high on the list. Maybe we should be doing more to develop our customer service skills as great customer service is something we as a staff feel is an important benefit to Co-op membership.

**Question:** Which statement best describes your experience of becoming a new owner:

- *Easy and informative-the benefits and responsibilities are clearly explained:* 87 responses
- *Easy but not informative:* 57 responses
- *Difficult and disorganized:* 8 responses
- One didn't know; many responded that they have been long time members and didn't remember.
- **Comments:** none offered.
- **Impressions:** Looks like the process is easy. The low number of responses leads us to believe that our membership materials and front-end membership pitch could be re-worked a little bit for clarity and emphasis on benefits.

**Question:** How important to you are the following aspects common to all co-operatives? (1=very important, 6= not important at all)

|                                   | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 | 6 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|---|---|
| Democratic Control                | 91  | 40 | 22 | 14 | 6 | 5 |
| Local Control of Profits          | 120 | 31 | 16 | 7  | 3 | 3 |
| Collaboration with Other Co-ops   | 65  | 37 | 35 | 26 | 8 | 4 |
| The Co-op Principles              | 99  | 30 | 21 | 13 | 5 | 5 |
| Support of Community              | 136 | 43 | 5  | 5  | 3 | 3 |
| Fair Treatment of Workers         | 135 | 26 | 9  | 7  | 0 | 6 |
| Profits Returned to Owners        | 96  | 45 | 28 | 14 | 4 | 2 |
| Community Education               | 99  | 37 | 27 | 8  | 7 | 3 |
| Service Driven Business Structure | 108 | 38 | 15 | 9  | 5 | 2 |
| You Own it!                       | 97  | 26 | 28 | 16 | 6 | 4 |

- **Comments:** “The Co-op should be run as a business: profit and serve.”
- **Impressions:** Support for our community and local economy are again of high priority to our membership, along with fair treatment of workers and community education. The way this question was worded leads us to believe that our membership does, in fact, have a good idea of what the Co-op Principles are that govern our business, and that we value them as a guiding business structure. There aren't any co-operative aspects that are not of strong importance to our membership.

**Question:** To what extent do you agree that the Co-op is: (1=strongly agree, 6=strongly disagree)

|   | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 | 6 |
|---|-----|----|----|----|---|---|
| An important part of the community            | 184 | 20 | 4  | 5  | 1 | 1 |
| Responsive to member input                    | 73  | 70 | 25 | 12 | 4 | 3 |
| Environmentally responsible                   | 104 | 60 | 25 | 6  | 2 | 4 |
| A good place to socialize                     | 123 | 41 | 22 | 6  | 6 | 3 |
| Adapts to changes when it needs to            | 65  | 54 | 38 | 20 | 3 | 3 |
| Will still exist in Belfast 25 years from now | 136 | 47 | 15 | 4  | 1 | 1 |
| A place where everyone feels welcome          | 117 | 47 | 17 | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| A fun place to shop                           | 134 | 34 | 26 | 9  | 2 | 2 |

- **Comments:** “My understanding is that the Co-op does not recycle to the extent it could.” “We hope it is responsive to change!” “Poor people aren't comfortable here: it's a very class homogeneous place.” “I don't know if we are responsive to member feedback.” “Your staff has been nasty over the year; just recently improving.” “Forget socializing, do the job.” “Everyone probably doesn't feel welcome: the old 'from here, from away' split.” “I haven't heard about Co-op sustainability efforts; I presume you use energy efficient appliances.” “Shopping is not fun for us, but it is OK at the Co-op.” “You have a perception in the community of being over-priced.”
- **Impressions:** Still getting high marks for community involvement. Based on the comments offered, we could be doing more for the community by making it a more welcoming environment for a low-income demographic. While we haven't made it a point to educate our customers about the steps we are taking towards sustainability, the membership trusts that, presumably as a result of our co-operative identity, we have sustainable business and operations practices. We can work on being more responsive to member input and do more educating about what we are doing to adapt to changes in our local, national, and global communities.

**Question:** Please choose which of the following statements most accurately describes your preference.

- *It is more important that our Co-op commit to using environmentally sound practices even if it means that prices of certain products may go up.* 178 responses
- *It is more important to sell products at low prices than it is to support environmental sustainability.* 7 responses
- Suggested addition: *Both, or find a balance:* 22 responses
- **Comments:** None offered
- **Impressions:** Our customers do have some idea that sustainability, sadly, comes with a cost, and it appears that it is a cost we are willing to pay for if it becomes necessary to raise our prices in order to green-up our business.

**Question:** What phrase or word best describes what you like most about the Co-op?

- Responses that echoed throughout the survey include “Community,” “Socially and environmentally responsible,” “Homey,” “People like me,” “Organic,” “Healthy,” “Atmosphere,” and “Friendly.”
- **Impressions:** Our survey respondents could have written our mission statement! We are proud to be recognized for providing these goods and services!

**Question:** What one change or improvement would most likely encourage you to shop more at the Co-op?

- Repeated responses include better pricing, more variety and selection, improved cleanliness, better lighting, more fresh fish, more local products, improved consistency of availability of products, volunteering opportunities, and more educational opportunities. Here are some others: “cappuccino and aspirin,” “climate failure,” “join national co-op for purchasing efficiency,” and “a free mini-van and gas.”
- **Impressions:** Pricing remains one of the major concerns that the membership would like to see addressed. Many of the other changes could be accomplished with just a little bit of tightening up to operations and some smart budgeting.

**Question:** Do you have any concerns that this survey did not address?

- Repeated responses include the length of the survey, concerns about packaging, concerns about employee morale, and a need for more identification of local goods.
- **Impressions:** Many of these concerns are issues that the staff shares, and the good news is that we are working on improving the signage to better alert us to local products and continually working to improve morale amongst staff members. The packaging concern seems like a big issue to handle, and one member suggested that we lobby manufacturers to switch over to #2 plastic for more recyclability. This survey was also very long for those of us who worked on its compilation and we can all be rest assured that the next one will be shorter.

**Question:** Are there ways you would like to be a more active participant in the Belfast Co-op?

- Only one response was consistently offered: volunteer!
- **Impressions:** The membership committee is currently working to update our worker-member program to both meet the store's operational needs and the membership's desire for more participation.