State-Sponsored Agriculture Promotion Programs: Growing Brands

by

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Abstract

As a matter of public policy, many states promote local agricultural products to consumers through a state-sponsored agriculture promotion program. These programs seek to increase consumer awareness of and demand for in-state products, and developing an umbrella brand for promotion is key to this mission. The purpose of this research is to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands. Drawing on branding and advertising literature, certain programmatic inputs and strategies were identified as important to brand building and became the basis for a categories conceptual framework. The categories in the framework are program budget, advertising platforms, market segmentation, and brand image.

Survey research and content analysis of program websites or webpages were used to investigate these categories. The survey was distributed to 38 state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs and returned by 12, a 31.6% response rate. Findings show that programs have modest budgets with which to generate brand awareness. Traditional and point-of-purchase advertising are highly utilized advertising platforms, and a majority of programs participate in social media. Programs are soliciting market research to target specific segments of the consumer market, and many programs are managing multiple brands. The implications of these findings and areas for future research are also discussed.

About the Author

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Chapter I. Introduction

Consumers have a wide variety of commodities available at their fingertips, and with this variety comes commodity advertising. Private brands and joint ventures, trade associations, and producer checkoff programs fund commodity advertisements; checkoff programs are responsible for such well-known campaigns as "Got Milk?" and "Beef. It's What's for Dinner." The focus of commodity advertising, as with all advertising, is to provide product information to consumers and influence consumer purchasing decisions.

State governments also participate in the commodity advertising landscape through state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs (Forker & Ward, 1993). These programs promote a state's agricultural products under an umbrella brand to increase consumer awareness of and demand for state products (Patterson, 2006). As seen in Table 1.1, compiled by Onken and Bernard (2010), every state has operated a program.[1] The oldest programs were founded in the 1980s, while about half of states' programs have a more recent launch in the 2000s. All program names include the state name, and many incorporate the words "grown" or "fresh." The state name appeals to consumers' loyalties, and "fresh" hits upon a key selling point of local products, which travel shorter distances to retail.

State-sponsored Agriculture Promotion Framework

The framework for a state-sponsored agriculture promotion program is relatively simple. A state authorizes an entity to create and manage a program that expends a mix of public and private dollars to raise consumer awareness of the state's agricultural products. The entity develops a certification mark (also called a trademark, brand, or logo) for use in statewide

[1] Onken and Bernard's original table (2010) included a fourth column indicating the percentage of a manufactured or processed product that must be sourced in-state for program participation.

Table 1.1 State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs

State	Primary Program Name or Slogan	Year Founded
Alabama	Buy Alabama's Best	2004
Alaska	Alaska Grown	1985
Arizona	Arizona Grown	1993
Arkansas	Arkansas Grown	2002
California	CA Grown – Be Californian. Buy California Grown	2002
Colorado	Colorado Proud	1991
Connecticut	Connecticut Grown – The Local Flavor	1986
Delaware	Grown Fresh with Care in Delaware	2007
Florida	Fresh from Florida	1990
Georgia	Georgia Grown	2001
Hawaii	Hawai'i Seal of Quality	2006
Idaho	Idaho Preferred	2002
Illinois	Illinois Product	1987
Indiana	Premium Indiana Forest Products	2006
Iowa	Choose Iowa	2008
Kansas	Simply Kansas	2008
Kentucky	Kentucky Proud	1990
Louisiana	Certified Product of Louisiana	2001
Maine	Get Real. Get Maine!	2001
Maryland	Maryland's Best	2002
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Grown…and Fresher!	n/a
Michigan	Select Michigan Fresh Great Lakes – Great Tastes	2003
Minnesota	Minnesota Grown – Fresh From Your Neighbor	1988
Mississippi	Make Mine Mississippi	1999
Missouri	AgriMissouri	1985
Montana	Montana Department of Agriculture Certified Organic	2007
Nebraska	Nebraska Our Best To You	2006
Nevada	Nevada Grown	2002
New Hampshire	New Hampshire's Own	2004
New Jersey	Jersey Fresh	1983
New Mexico	New Mexico Taste the Tradition	2000
New York	Pride of New York – Our Pride Inside	1996
North Carolina	Goodness Grows in North Carolina	1985
North Dakota	Pride of Dakota – North Dakota Originals	1985
Ohio	Ohio Proud – Made in Ohio	1993
Oklahoma	Made in Oklahoma	1991
Oregon	Brand Oregon	2004
Pennsylvania	PA Preferred – Registered Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture	2004
Rhode Island	Farm Fresh Rhode Island	2004
South Carolina	Certified South Carolina	2007
South Dakota	South Dakota Flavor!	2002
Tennessee	Tennessee Farm Fresh	2008
Texas	Go Texan	1999
Utah	Utah's Own	2002
Vermont	Vermont Seal of Quality	1980
Virginia	Virginia's Finest	1989
Washington	From the Heart of Washington – Our Farms to Your Table	2001
West Virginia	West Virginia Grown	1987
Wisconsin	Something Special from Wisconsin	1983
Wyoming	Wyoming First – Made in Wyoming	n/a

Source: Onken and Bernard 2010, 25

advertising efforts. The entity also approves companies to use the mark on products and in advertising materials to identify products grown or sourced in-state. State regulations generally require a product to be grown, processed, or manufactured within the state, or some combination of those three aspects, in order to carry the state's trademark (Onken & Bernard, 2010). After a company joins the state's program, it may also enjoy additional member benefits such as listings in print and online product guides, consultations with staff on individual advertising plans, and consultations on expanding into international markets. Participating companies benefit from access to an established promotion program, and states realize a return on investment from increased demand and the goodwill that these programs generate among farmers and associated constituencies (Halloran & Martin, 1989).

While state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs share a common goal and framework, programs vary across states. They have different administrative structures and funding sources, engage in different promotion activities, and may or may not impose product quality standards. Still, each program endeavors to create a brand that consumers recognize, like, and choose to purchase repeatedly. One well-known program is that run by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, whose recent rebranding efforts around *Got to Be NC* earned it the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials' 2015 Marketing Excellence Award. *Got to Be NC* was previously used as part of the long-running *Goodness Grows in North Carolina* program; the year-long relaunch of the catchy phrase included retail promotions, sponsorships, social media, and traditional advertising. A television commercial with the tagline, "Grown. Raised. Caught. Made. Got to Be NC." aired, and a Pinterest page featuring recipes made with North Carolina agricultural products was launched (NC DACS, 2015). In addition, retail stores in the Ingles Market, Lowes Foods, and Piggly Wiggly chains across North Carolina showcased North Carolina blueberries, strawberries, and sweet potatoes. These in-store promotions were developed in partnership with respective state-level commodity associations and included samplings, special signage, and recipe tear sheets in produce sections (NC DACS, 2015). *Got to Be NC* also sponsored the Got to Be NC Competition Dining Series, an "Iron Chef" style tournament in which chefs prepare dishes with a secret North Carolina ingredient. These activities informed North Carolina consumers of agricultural products grown or processed in-state, generated familiarity for the *Got to Be NC* logo (Figure 1.1), and encouraged residents to look for North Carolina products. State departments of agriculture across the United States carry out similar activities to promote local agricultural products.

Figure 1.1. ***Got to Be NC*** **logo**

Research Purpose

While the oldest state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have existed for more than 30 years, the existing literature lacks a description of state inputs and the strategies employed across the 50 states to establish a brand in the minds of consumers (Patterson, 2006).

There are several reasons such baseline information would be useful. According to Shields and Rangarajan (2013), description breaks the big picture into component parts (p. 71). Outcomes attributable to agriculture promotion programs are the "big picture" in the literature; single-program case studies gauge consumer awareness of programs and their influence on consumer purchasing patterns.[2] Baseline information describing program inputs and strategies to

[2] See Govindasamy, Italia, & Thatch, 1998 (consumer awareness of *Jersey Fresh*); Patterson, Olofsson, Richards, & Sass, 1999 (*Arizona Grown* awareness and impact on product sales and consumer preferences); Tootelian, Liebich, & Thompson, 2007 (*California Grown* and consumer purchasing patterns).

build strong brands would inform these big picture outcomes. In addition, because states' agriculture promotion programs expend public funds and must answer to policymakers, program administrators would benefit from ready access to information about other states' programs to identify innovations or areas for improvement. Finally, a description of state programs may yield best practices and illuminate areas for further inquiry. Interestingly, agriculture promotion programs are not the only area in which states engage in the business of selling; states also actively engage in destination marketing and in business recruitment. A richer understanding of how states manage agriculture promotion programs could lead to opportunities for coordination or efficiencies in state marketing endeavors. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands.

Preview of Chapters

This applied research project is organized into five chapters. The next chapter first reviews the literature on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. Then, it uses that literature and literature from the branding and advertising fields to build a categories conceptual framework for describing the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture programs employ to build their brands. Chapter three operationalizes the conceptual framework into survey items and web analysis items and explains the methodology for the research. Chapter four reviews the results of data collection, and the fifth and final chapter provides conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Chapter II. Conceptual Framework

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs and connect this literature to concepts from the branding and advertising fields. These connections form the basis of the categories structuring the collection of data to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands.

This chapter is organized into five parts. Part one sets state programs in the larger world of government-endorsed generic commodity advertising, and part two provides historical context for the creation of these programs. Part three is an overview of the ongoing public policy debate concerning state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. Part four discusses these programs in the generic and branded advertising contexts and defines "brand" and "brand equity." Part five introduces the categories conceptual framework used to build a survey of state programs and explains each category and its elements.

Government and Generic Commodity Advertising

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs are a relatively recent addition to government-endorsed generic commodity advertising. The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (AMAA) authorized marketing orders and included provisions for the mandatory collection of monies from producers to fund generic advertising activities (Forker & Ward, 1993). Marketing orders for specific commodities, such as dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops, allow producers to self-regulate certain aspects of the markets for their commodities. Producers cooperate to maintain quality, standardize packaging, and determine the flow of products to the market. An order covers a specific commodity and area, and "its regulations are incumbent on all producers and on all handlers in the industry once approved by two-thirds of the producers in the specified area" (Kelley, 2001, p. 4). While the primary purpose of a marketing order is its market control function, the fact that the AMAA allowed for mandatory collection of funds from producers for advertising and promotion activities set precedent for future federal and state legislation.

Over time, producer groups' experience with generic advertising provided the motivation for additional legislation (Forker & Ward, 1993). *Generic advertising* is a "cooperative effort of a large group of producers (suppliers) to promote the demand for the homogeneous (similar) product" (Ward, 2006, p. 55). Generic advertising highlights common product attributes, such as the nutritional value of a specific commodity. While most commodities such as milk or beef would be bought at some level without advertising, additional purchases generated by generic advertising boost overall demand and benefit the industry as a whole (Ward, 2006).

Producer groups often funded generic advertising with voluntary producer contributions. They quickly realized, however, that there were two problems in expecting voluntary contributions. First, not all producers contributed to product promotion activities, but all potentially benefitted, i.e., the voluntary structure encouraged free-riders. Second, a reliance on voluntary contributions could still place the goal of affecting aggregate demand out of reach as the cost is generally beyond the means of a handful of producers (Ward, 2006). These problems prompted commodity groups to seek federal legislation authorizing producer checkoff programs.

Producer checkoffs levy an assessment (or fee) on all marketing of a commodity to underwrite advertising, promotion, and other market support activities (Forker & Ward, 1993, p. 80).[3] Product research supported by checkoff assessments often generates selling points used in

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[3] The term "checkoff" originated from assessments collected at the time of sale, effectively reducing a producer's check (Becker, 2008).

promotion activities. For example, the Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board, a.k.a. the Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP), recently moved to highlight milk's protein content in order to position milk as part of a healthy breakfast to get people through the day (Schultz, 2014). Product research may also investigate new production and distribution processes, as well as new product uses for market expansion purposes (Forker & Ward, 1993). Again using milk as an example, MilkPEP and the National Dairy Council have advertised studies showing that "drinking low-fat chocolate milk after a tough workout helps muscles recover and refuels the body for the next workout" (Coale, 2013). Such research has helped milk producers expand their market to athletes and adults in search of peak athletic performance (Coale, 2013).

Because checkoff programs engage in research and promotion, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which has oversight responsibilities, more aptly refers to them as National Research and Promotions Programs. Initially authorized exclusively by stand-alone legislation advanced by commodity groups, National Research and Promotions Programs may now be proposed by commodity groups and authorized by USDA.[4] Under either method, a checkoff program must be approved in a referendum by persons subject to the assessment, and affected persons retain the right to petition to terminate the program. In its oversight role, USDA appoints board members who direct the research and promotion activities of a checkoff program, and USDA reviews program budgets. Twenty-two National Research and Promotions Programs exist for commodities ranging from beef, pork, and eggs to potatoes, mushrooms, mangos, and watermelon. Cotton, sorghum, and softwood lumber also have national promotion boards.[5]

[4] The Commodity Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 1996 is the basis for USDA authorization, 7 U.S.C. § 7401, 7 U.S.C. §§ 7411-7425 (2016). For examples of federally-legislated programs see the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. §§ 2901-2918 (2016), or the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act of 1990, 7 U.S.C. §§ 6301-6311 (2016).
[5] See the USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Research and Promotion website for a listing of boards, a brief description of each, and external links, http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion.

In similar fashion, states also authorize checkoff-funded commodity promotion programs to carry out market development activities. Forker and Ward (1993) counted 261 state-level commodity promotion programs in 43 states by 1989, and by the mid-1990s, the Congressional Research Service estimated that "nine out of ten U.S. farmers were contributing to one or more of these [state or federal] efforts" (Becker, 2008, p. 2).

Through marketing orders and checkoff programs, federal and state governments established financing mechanisms for generic commodity advertising. State governments have continued to endorse generic advertising through state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. These programs generically advertise agricultural products grown, processed, or manufactured in-state, using products' local origin (the common product attribute) in promotion activities.

While state programs, marketing orders, and producer checkoffs have generic promotion in common, state programs are noticeably different. First, state programs receive public dollars. Second, state programs are an umbrella promotion vehicle for numerous commodities, whereas marketing orders and producer checkoffs generally encompass only one commodity. Producer participation in a state program is voluntary, but that is not the case for marketing orders and producer checkoffs. Fourth, state programs may have few quality control provisions, while quality control is an important function of marketing orders. And finally, while marketing orders and checkoff programs engage in product and market research, similar research is unusual among state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.[6] The next section provides additional

[6] This is not to suggest that state promotion programs have no interest in new market opportunities for state products. *GO TEXAN*, for example, includes consultation with a marketing professional as a member benefit. State departments of agriculture publish market news and facilitate opportunities in international markets, and spillover between these functions and states' promotion programs is expected.

historical context important to the development of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.

Recent Historical Context

Several factors prompted states to start agriculture promotion programs in the 1980s. At that time, policymakers faced “intense pressure…at all levels of government to assist in affecting an economic recovery in the farm sector” (Halloran & Martin, 1989, p. 67). While the 1970s had seen a boom for American agriculture, the 1980s were a different story. During the early 1970s, American agriculture ramped up production to meet increasing demand generated by the opening of the Chinese market, extensive wheat crop failures in the Soviet Union, and reduced world grain reserves brought on by drought in many developing countries (Barnett, 2000). The resulting high farm incomes, combined with government tax and agricultural policies, encouraged producers to invest in land and equipment, much of which was financed with debt capital (Barnett, 2000).

In the late 1970s, oversupply caused a downturn in commodity prices. In October 1979, when the Federal Reserve enacted policies to control inflation, interest rates began to climb, and once-rising land values eventually stalled and began to fall (Barnett, 2000). U.S. agricultural exports slowed as the dollar’s increasing value made U.S. commodities relatively more expensive on the world market, and shrinking export markets caused further decline in commodity prices. These factors reduced farm incomes and the value of farm assets, causing many producers to experience debt distress. Resulting bankruptcies took a toll on farm families, farming communities, agricultural lenders, and economic sectors that supported production agriculture.

Not surprisingly, federal and state governments were pressured to find ways to assist the agricultural sector in particular and rural economies in general (Ospina & Gunderson, 1990). Albeit seemingly small in the wake of the global forces at play, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs were seen as a way to develop markets and improve economic opportunities for farmers (Halloran & Martin, 1989; Patterson, 2006). Legislators and consumers felt like they were doing something to help their farmer constituents/neighbors, and as an added benefit, some viewed improved farmer competitiveness as a means of protecting agricultural land from urbanization (Patterson, 2006).

Along with pressure to combat a depressed agricultural sector, "new federalism" in the Reagan administration encouraged state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. "New federalism" sought a decreased federal role and a more active state role in deciding state futures (Ospina & Gunderson, 1990). As federal programs were consolidated into block grants, states had greater flexibility and opportunity to defend their farm economies (Halloran & Martin, 1989; Ospina & Gunderson, 1990). Furthermore, the 1985 Farm Bill allocated federal funds to states to stimulate export sales, and states' decisions to promote their agricultural products fit neatly within this "market-oriented" focus (Halloran & Martin, 1989). As a growing number of states established agriculture promotion programs in the 1980s, Halloran and Martin (1989) suggest that a "me, too" attitude may have taken hold, compelling states to add programs to keep up with their neighbors.

States continued to add programs in the 1990s, and 27 states established promotion programs from 2000 to 2008 (Onken & Bernard, 2010). The major force behind the growth in the early 2000s was the Emergency Agricultural Assistance Act of 2001, which sent block grant funding to states for specialty crop promotion. Specialty crops are defined in law as "'fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture'" (USDA, 2015, p. 1). By distributing approximately $160 million among states for specialty crop promotion, the federal government sought to increase the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crop agriculture and improve its long-run sustainability (Noel & Schweikhardt, 2007). Left to their own devices, states spent more than 50 percent of specialty crop block grant monies on marketing, including state-sponsored promotion programs (Noel & Schweikhardt, 2007).

Even as states established programs in the 1980s to respond to a depressed agricultural sector, debate over program effectiveness emerged. The next section examines the views of supporters and critics.

Public Policy Debate

Although certain state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have operated for more than 30 years, debate continues over this expenditure of public dollars. Supporters argue that maintaining and creating demand for agricultural products is in the public interest given agriculture's importance to states' economies. Increased demand can mean additional jobs (Forker & Ward, 1993), and with only modest general revenue funding, state brands are an inexpensive way to guard against interstate competition (Jekanowski, Williams, Daniel, & Schiek, 2000). In addition, the state support of agriculture that these programs represent has long been meaningful to farmers in an increasingly global and competitive market.[7]

Critics question program effectiveness at increasing demand and achieving a price premium for a state's agricultural producers. The research on these points is inconclusive. In an *Arizona Grown* case study, Patterson, Olofsson, Richards, and Sass (1999) found little evidence that the program's promotional efforts increased product sales. However, *Arizona Grown* was

[7] See Halloran & Martin, 1989; Jekanowski et al., 2000; Patterson, 2006.

only a few years old at the time, and low program awareness may have been a factor in this result (Patterson et al., 1999). A more recent survey of consumers in several mid-Atlantic states concluded that program awareness increases over time, with "newer programs…hav[ing] a way to go in terms of recognition" (Onken & Bernard, 2010, p. 5). That program awareness increases over time is important in the demand context because consumers must first be aware of a state's brand and understand what it means before they can choose to purchase products bearing that brand. Further support for the link between consumer awareness and the potential for increased demand was found in a 2007 study of *California Grown*. In this study, respondents who were aware of *California Grown* exhibited more favorable responses "to questions relating to attitudes, preferences for, purchase intent, and purchase action [with regard to *California Grown* products]" than those unaware of the campaign (Tootelian, Liebich, & Thompson, 2007, p. 118). Perhaps in recognition of the difficulty of isolating the effect of a state's promotion efforts on demand for agricultural products, the existing research focuses on measuring consumer awareness.

Even if state campaigns increase consumer awareness of a state's agricultural products and strengthen demand, producers may not see a corresponding price increase (Patterson, 2006). Without a price increase, producers realize little profit growth. Higher prices are earned when a product is effectively differentiated (Patterson, 2006). On the whole, however, agricultural commodities are inherently difficult to differentiate because they are largely homogeneous. In the market, they compete primarily on price and perceptible quality differences (Jekanowski et al., 2000). State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs are an attempt to differentiate agricultural products on the basis of geographic origin, similar to producer-led efforts to differentiate Washington apples and Vidalia onions (the latter are grown in only a handful of

Georgia counties). State programs brand products grown, processed, or manufactured in-state and use local production and sourcing as a selling point. If the local nature of state-branded products is perceived as a differentiable point among consumers, branded products could draw a price premium (Patterson, Burkink, Lipsey, S., Lipsey, J., Roth, & Martin, 2003).

Research has shown that consumers prefer local products and perceive local products to be fresher and of higher quality.[8] Research on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs has also found that consumers are willing to pay a price premium for locally grown produce and state-branded products, but this research does not suggest that willingness to pay translates into a higher retail price.[9]

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs also face other, broader criticisms. Particularly with regard to processed products bearing the state brand, state-sponsored programs may be accused of advertising products that the private sector could promote. In addition, if the beneficiaries of increased sales resulting from state-sponsored promotion efforts are primarily retailers, wholesalers, processors, or shippers – and not the farmer – some may label these programs corporate welfare (Halloran & Martin, 1989; Patterson et al., 1999). Others question whether the farmer/producer should continue to be the focus of today's farm policies, pointing out that the farmer/producer operates in a market in which other small businesses operate without government intervention (Caswell, 1997).

This section reviewed the debate surrounding state programs. The following section discusses state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs in the generic and branded advertising contexts.

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[8] See Jekanowski et al., 2000; Nganje, Hughner, & Lee, 2011; Patterson et al., 1999; and Patterson, 2006.
[9] See Govindasamy et al., 1998 (*Jersey Fresh*); Nganje et al., 2011 (*Arizona Grown*); and Patterson & Martinez, 2004 (*Arizona Grown*).

Generic and Branded Advertising

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs occupy a gray area between generic and branded advertising of agricultural commodities. As previously defined, *generic advertising* is a "cooperative effort of a large group of producers (suppliers) to promote the demand for the homogeneous (similar) product" (Ward, 2006, p. 55). Well-known generic commodity advertising campaigns include "Pork. The Other White Meat." and "The Incredible, Edible Egg." Each campaign educates consumers on underlying product-based attributes; an egg, for example, is a source of high-quality protein and is nutrient-dense. Both campaigns increase consumer awareness of the commodity – pork or eggs – without directing the consumer to purchase Eggland's Best or a specific cut or brand of pork. Because an agricultural commodity from one producer is difficult to differentiate from that of another, producers realize greater benefit and buying power in contributing to a cooperatively funded generic campaign, as opposed to trying to independently fund promotion activities (Forker & Ward, 1993).

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs use generic advertising in that they promote a state's agricultural products under one program. From a program perspective, it does not matter if a consumer purchases locally grown spinach or locally produced salsa; the local nature of both of these products can be generically promoted under the program.

Brand advertising enters the picture in a program's effort to persuade consumers to purchase locally grown spinach over spinach from a neighboring state. *Brand advertising* highlights "differences among product forms making up the product group" (Ward, 2006, p. 55). The name and/or symbol that states develop and license to program participants is the medium through which states identify local products. In that action, states create a *brand*, defined as "a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors" (Aaker, 1991, p. 7).

Examples of state brands used for agriculture promotion include *Arizona Grown*, *California Grown*, *Jersey Fresh*, and *GO TEXAN*. Figure 2.1 includes these brands' associated symbols.

Figure 2.1 Examples of state brands for agriculture promotion

By creating a brand and promoting it to consumers, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs begin to build brand equity. *Brand equity* might be called "reputational capital" (Swystun, 2007) and "is a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers" (Aaker, 1996, p. 7). The body of literature on brand equity approaches the subject from a number of theoretical perspectives while seeking to explain how to build, sustain, and measure brand equity.[10] In *Building Strong Brands,* David A. Aaker (1996, p.7) identifies four major asset categories (or dimensions) of brand equity: brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations. This research draws on concepts from the brand equity dimensions of brand name awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations to describe the strategies employed by state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs in their brand-building efforts.

[10] See Keller, 2002, for an overview of theoretical approaches used in the study of brand equity.

This section has discussed state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs in the generic and branded advertising contexts and has defined “brand” and “brand equity.” The next section introduces the categories used to build the survey of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.

Conceptual Framework

Descriptive research asks the “what” questions (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). In this case, what are the programmatic inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs use to build brands? This research uses a categories framework to structure the collection of information to answer this question. Categories are an analytic tool used to break the big picture into component parts (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). Existing literature provides justification for the categories and the elements within each category used for this survey research. The categories are

- **Program budget,**
- **Advertising platforms,**
- **Market segmentation, and**
- **Brand image.**

Category One: Program Budget

To develop a strong brand, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs must have financial resources – an essential operational input – to effectively carry out branding strategies. State dollars appropriated to these programs come from discretionary spending, which is limited. Texas’ budget provides a good example of the constraints on discretionary spending. During the 2014-15 biennium,[11] of $102.3 billion general revenue and general revenue-dedicated funds

[11] The Texas Legislature meets in regular session each odd-numbered year and writes a two-year budget.

appropriated, 82.7 percent was "restricted by constitutional or statutory provisions, influenced by federal law, regulations, or court decisions, or by formulas (e.g., education)" (LBB, 2014, p. 8). In other words, budget writers had full discretion over only 17 percent of the budget. Increasing spending demands in health care, K-12 education, and other areas will further limit states' discretionary spending (NASBO, 2015).

While states have some level of discretionary spending, requests for these dollars far exceed available resources. As a result, budget writers make choices between possible expenditures, and in so doing, they reflect priorities and determine what government will and will not do (Rubin, 2010). In the budget process, competing requests come from individuals, agencies or departments, other branches of government, and interest groups. Which requests are funded and which are not speaks to the relative power of these individuals and entities to influence budget outcomes (Rubin, 2010). State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs must compete for scarce resources, but the literature does not provide a clear picture of the size of program budgets, their revenue sources, or their allocations to promotion activities.

Element 1.1 Revenue

Program dollars are a key operational input into a state's brand-building efforts. Funding for state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs comes from a mix of public and private sources. Both state and federal dollars support these programs. State legislatures appropriate general revenue, and federal funds flow through various grants (Halloran & Martin, 1989). Federal block grant funding has provided a source of start-up funds for state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs and has also served to enhance existing programs (Patterson, 2006). Because state and federal dollars for promoting agriculture can vary significantly from one funding cycle to the next, programs may secure other funding sources.

Some programs collect a licensing fee from participating growers and manufacturers for use of the state's certification mark (Patterson, 2006). This licensing fee may be incorporated into a larger membership fee structure. For example, Texas' program has four membership levels; at each level, a member is authorized to use the state's certification mark, but benefits such as online or printed directory listings and consultations with marketing professionals are added with each tier of membership. Like state and federal dollars, fee-generated program revenue will vary. Because program participation is voluntary, market conditions influence the number of producers and companies choosing to take advantage of a state program. (Program participants are also budgeting!)

In addition to revenue generated from fees for licensing specifically or membership more generally, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs may also generate revenue from the sale of program merchandise. The *Jersey Fresh* online store has clothing for men, women, and children, as well as tote bags, phone cases, mugs, glasses, thermoses, and more featuring the *Jersey Fresh* logo. Other states like California and North Carolina offer a mix of clothing, caps, and aprons. These program-generated dollars commingle with public dollars to fund efforts to promote the state's agricultural products.

The existing literature on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs speaks to different sources of funding but offers few specifics regarding the size of program budgets or the relative importance of revenue sources. Survey data may also reveal contemporary trends and new funding ideas for program administrators.

Element 1.2 Allocation to promotion

The budget of a state-sponsored agriculture promotion program may cover everything from salaries and wages to office supplies and travel expenses. Funds allocated to promotion, however, most closely serve the program's purpose by delivering the message about state products to consumers. *Promotion* is an umbrella term used to capture "any technique that persuasively communicates favorable information about a seller's product to potential buyers through the broadest spectrum of communications media, including advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and so on" (Swystun, 2007, p. 99).

Promotion is key to building a brand because these communications generate brand awareness. In order for a state brand to have meaning for consumers, they must first be aware that it exists. According to Kevin Keller (1993), brand awareness has two components: *brand recognition* and *brand recall*. Consumers who can affirmatively state that they have previously seen or heard of a brand exhibit *brand recognition* (Keller, 1993). *Brand recall* goes a step further. Consumers who can recall a brand are able to generate it from memory when prompted with a product category or some other cue (Keller, 1993). Promotion in all its forms encourages both recognition and recall as consumers are repeatedly exposed to a state's brand. When agriculture promotion programs succeed in making consumers aware of their brand, the consumer can actively consider purchasing the state-branded product over an unbranded product in the retail environment.

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs must expend funds to promote their brand and ultimately fulfill the goal of expanding demand for state products. Despite the importance of promotion, existing literature does not provide perspective on the size or scope of promotion allocation across state programs.

Category Two: Advertising Platforms

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs seek to establish a recognizable brand among consumers for the benefit of the state's agricultural producers. Advertising is a key strategy employed to achieve this mission. According to John Phillip Jones (1999), "advertising's greatest single contribution to business is its ability to build brands…a successful brand will build a preference...in the minds of its users that encourages them to buy the brand repeatedly" (p. 2).

Advertising fulfills several roles in building a brand. As a type of promotion activity, it familiarizes consumers with the brand, fostering recognition, recall, and ultimately brand awareness, as previously explained. It is worth noting that while brand awareness receives a lot of research attention, recognition alone can have positive effects for a brand. Research in psychology has shown that recognition "can result in more positive feelings toward nearly anything" (Aaker, 1996, p. 10). Thus, in a product choice situation, when faced with multiple brands, consumers instinctively prefer the brand they have seen before to one that is new, giving the familiar brand an edge (Aaker, 1996). Advertising's role in helping consumers recognize, recall, and be aware of a brand makes it a vital strategy for building brand equity. (Remember that brand awareness is one dimension of Aaker's model of brand equity.)

Advertising also influences perceived quality, another dimension of brand equity. When a state (or any entity) spends heavily to advertise branded products, consumers interpret that investment as a sign of superior product quality – the general idea being that a company does not spend money to advertise a bad product. Therefore, as an extrinsic cue of product quality, advertising generates positive perceived quality for a brand (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). *Perceived quality*, as defined by Aaker (1991), "is an intangible, overall feeling about a brand" (p. 86). High perceived quality gives the consumer a reason to buy (Aaker, 1991), increasing the likelihood that state-branded products are purchased.

In addition to its contributions to brand equity, advertising provides essential information about a brand, contributes to brand image (the subject of Category Four), and reminds consumers to try a brand (White, 1999). Educating consumers about a product requires resources, time, and repeated exposure (Simonsen & Lillywhite, 2014). State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have access to different advertising platforms to generate repeat exposures to their brand. These platforms include traditional media, new media, out-of-home, and point-of-purchase materials. While the literature in some cases details the advertising efforts of a single state's program (Patterson et al., 1999), there is no information about the mix of advertising media used across state programs.

Element 2.1 Traditional media

Traditional media includes television, radio, newspaper, magazine, and other print advertising such as company or product guides. Use of traditional media is documented among national commodity promotion efforts such as those for dairy, beef, and pork. Forker and Ward (1993) observe that among national promotion programs, the message influences the medium. To convey a technical message about dairy calcium and its link to preventing osteoporosis, for example, dairy promotion focused on print advertising rather than trying to package the message into a short radio or commercial advertisement (Forker & Ward, 1993, p. 115, 136). In addition, Forker and Ward (1993) observe that commodity promotion boards with small budgets are more likely to focus on education and outreach and other public relations efforts than boards with larger budgets that have the resources to invest in television advertising (p. 135).

Recent annual reports from two well-funded national checkoff programs offer insight into the media choices of commodity promotion efforts. In its 2015 annual report, the National Pork Board highlighted new television commercials with the theme *Make it Like This!* that aired on 25 cable TV networks during the traditional summer grilling season, Memorial Day to Labor Day; the commercials reportedly generated 822 million impressions with a 35% recall for the TV ads (p.32). The National Pork Board (2015) also reported millions of ad impressions from radio, online advertising, and print, including use of 16 different publications (p. 32). The 2015 annual report of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, the governing body for the beef checkoff program, detailed the success of an all-digital promotion campaign, primarily through online advertising that drove visitors to BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com and through its growing Facebook presence (Cattlemen's Beef Board, 2015, p. 6). However, as recently as 2013, the Beef Board's annual report highlighted promotion activities in both new and traditional media with use of online platforms, radio, and print advertising in national publications (Cattlemen's Beef Board, 2013, p. 6). Given that national promotion efforts use traditional media advertising to differing degrees, and given that state programs are known to engage in traditional media[12], this element asks programs to report the use of traditional media advertising during the most recently completed state fiscal year.

Element 2.2 New media

New media includes online, social media, and mobile platforms. Unlike mass media messages that must have broad appeal, new media formats allow for targeted outreach and tailored messaging; new media can "selectively craft messages to match specific characteristics of the receiver and to make the audience member feel more connected to the brand" (Stafford & Faber, 2005, p. 352). In addition, consumers express a higher level of trust in online, new media advertising relative to traditional advertising (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014a; Wood & Burkhalter, 2014).

[12] See NC DACS, 2015 and Patterson, 2006.

Websites present an opportunity for direct advertising and communication with customers, and in the opinion of some managers, are "relatively superior [to traditional media] in communicating detailed information, triggering consumer action, and being effective in reaching a target audience" (Bhat, Bevans, & Sengupta, 2005, p. 69-70). While the website itself is a form of online advertising, banner and pop-up ads on websites also advertise to consumers. Tracking of consumer behavior on a site or in response to an advertisement generates a wealth of data and provides insight into the effectiveness of online advertising communications.

The various metrics for measuring user activity online highlight a distinguishing feature of new media: its interactive nature. Whereas traditional media communications are one-way, the new media environment is characterized by consumers' ability to control the messages received (Leckenby, 2005). Websites, banner advertisements, and pop-up ads require consumers to take some sort of action to access information. Only sufficiently interested and motivated consumers will visit a website or click on an ad and be exposed to the advertiser's communication (Menon & Soman, 2005). Much study is focused on the benefits and limitations of new media advertising and how to effectively integrate new media into a larger mix of promotion activities.

In particular, social media is the subject of much research attention. *Social media* is "a category of online media where people are talking, participating, sharing, networking, and bookmarking" (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014b, p. 2). Examples of social media include blogs; relationship networks like Facebook and Twitter (also a microblog); media-sharing sites such as Flickr, Instagram, and YouTube; and bookmarking sites like Pinterest. Social media allows brands to make personal connections with consumers at relatively low cost (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Each site also serves as a conduit for electronic word of mouth (WOM), which, like WOM offline, has the potential to influence consumer attitudes and buying decisions (Kimmel &

Kitchen, 2014a). By having an active social media presence, monitoring online WOM, and creating content consumers want to share, entities may benefit their brand (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014a).

A cursory review of programs' online presence reveals that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have varying combinations of websites and social media accounts. New media is an unexplored component of programs' advertising mix, so this element asks programs about online advertising in the most recently completed state fiscal year and uses a coding procedure to acquire a snapshot of programs' use of online, social, and mobile media.

Element 2.3 Out-of-home

Out-of-home advertising does exactly what its name suggests: it reaches consumers when they are outside the home, often when they are in transit. The Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) estimates that consumers spend, on average, 18 hours per week in a vehicle and 70 percent of their waking hours outside the home (2015). Advertising to consumers outside the home holds appeal not only for this reason but also because consumers' reading and viewing habits are scattershot, making it harder to reach them at home (Story, 2007). The OAAA divides out-of-home advertising into four categories, listed in order from largest generator of industry revenue to smallest: billboards, transit, alternative, and street furniture. Street furniture includes advertising on installations such as bus shelters and benches, bike racks, and newsstands. The alternative category catches a variety of out of home advertising, including ads in movie theaters, stadiums, and shopping malls, as well as "place-based digital networks" – screens in elevators, gas pumps, coffee shops, and elsewhere that provide news and information as well as ads.

Out-of-home advertising continues to evolve, finding new spaces on which to advertise and refining means of targeting customers. Clear Channel Outdoor, which owns billboards, recently announced plans to use cell phone data in the San Antonio area to help clients select routes along which to place billboards (Locklear, 2016). With access to location, age, gender, and income data from AT&T and other third-party data providers, billboards can be placed to target a certain type of customer. State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs are known to use billboard advertising (Patterson, 2006), so this element provides a snapshot of programs' use of this and other outdoor advertising options in the most recently completed state fiscal year.

Element 2.4 Point-of-purchase

Point-of-purchase promotional materials are "placed at the contact sales point in a retail store to attract consumer interest or call attention to a special offer" (Swystun, 2007, p. 96). Examples include price cards, shelf talkers, and in-store displays featuring the program logo. In a survey of New Jersey consumers, respondents reported most often remembering the *Jersey Fresh* logo from produce displays and television advertisements (Govindasamy, Italia, & Thatch, 1998). In an increasingly digital age, this element asks if agriculture promotion programs continue to rely on point-of-purchase materials to build brand awareness among consumers.

Category Three: Market Segmentation

This category builds off category two, reasoning that if advertising influences the brand name awareness and perceived quality dimensions of brand equity, state programs should want to maximize advertising effectiveness. Identifying target markets and tailoring advertising messages to those markets, instead of trying to appeal to all consumers, is one way to maximize the effectiveness of limited advertising dollars. *Market segmentation* breaks consumers into "smaller groups based on similar wants, needs, and buying habits" (Swystun, 2007, p. 81) Segmentation can also occur along demographic variables and along consumers' current relationships with a brand (Stockdale, 1999). This category, which doubles as an element, asks state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs if market research has identified target markets for the state brand, and if so, how those segments are defined. The literature discussed below provides support for the notion that market segmentation could be useful to state programs.

Research into consumer behavior in the produce market finds evidence of market segmentation. Demographic variables such as gender, age, race, education, and household composition are important explanatory factors behind produce spending decisions (Patterson et al., 1999). Men and women, for example, have been found to have different levels of interest in health and nutrition issues – men less, women more – and households with children also exhibit greater concern over nutrition issues (Patterson et al., 1999). In addition, households with children have been found to spend more on fruits and vegetables (Patterson et al., 1999).

Drawing on these findings, researchers of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have tested relationships between these and other variables and consumer awareness of promotion programs. In an *Arizona Grown* case study, Patterson et al. (1999, p. 189) found a significant and positive relationship between a handful of demographic characteristics and program awareness. Consumers who frequently purchased produce, were familiar with the national *5 A Day* campaign, and who were permanent residents of Arizona were more likely to be aware of *Arizona Grown*. Characteristics such as age, income, and the presence of children in the household were not found to influence consumer awareness. Govindasamy et al. (1998) tested the relationship between selected behavioral and demographic characteristics and awareness of *Jersey Fresh*. Their results found that persons who regularly shopped at farmers' markets and produce stands during the summer and persons who read food advertisements in newspapers and grocery store brochures were more likely to be aware of *Jersey Fresh*. Unexpectedly, they also found that consumers older than 50 and consumers with more than a high school degree were less likely to be aware of *Jersey Fresh*. These results suggested that *Jersey Fresh* could benefit by targeting these neglected consumer groups with its advertising messages.

Researchers have also studied the relationship between consumer demographic variables and demand for locally produced agricultural products. Jekanowski et al. (2000), in a survey of Indiana consumers, found that female consumers and consumers with higher incomes were more likely to purchase in-state products. In addition, the perceived quality of Indiana agricultural products and the length of time a consumer had resided in Indiana were also positively related to the likelihood of purchasing in-state agricultural products. These findings provide clues to successful advertising messages and strategies that a promotion program might employ. In this case, advertisements promoting the quality aspects of local foods or "emphasizing nostalgia, tradition, and the agricultural heritage of the state" might resonate most with consumers (Jekanowski et al., 2000, p. 50). In addition, "themes that appeal to female consumers, through media with large female audiences," could also maximize promotion effectiveness (Jekanowski et al., 2000, p. 49). Two studies centered on *Arizona Grown* concluded that the program could realize new market opportunities by appealing to tourists, who already favor state-focused items, and Hispanic consumers, a fast-growing market segment (Patterson et al., 2003; Patterson & Martinez, 2004).

Market segmentation makes advertising more effective. Research finds segmentation in the produce market, and case studies and consumer surveys have identified consumer demographic and behavioral variables related to program awareness and the likelihood of purchasing local products. These findings suggest that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs should utilize limited funding to target consumers who are most likely to purchase state-branded products. Whether state programs are using market research to segment the consumer market is unknown.

Category Four: Brand Image

A concept closely connected to brand equity is brand image: "brand equity and brand image are highly related terms because in building brand equity, managers attempt to influence consumer perceptions of a product (i.e., develop a positive brand image)" (Kirmani and Zeithaml, 1993, p. 143). *Brand image* is how a brand is perceived by consumers, and the associations and beliefs that consumers attach to a brand create its image (Aaker, 1996; Feldwick, 1999). Product experience (everything from the appearance of its packaging to whether the product met expectations and how it felt to use the product), media communications, the company behind a product, and the type of person who uses a product all generate associations that consumers connect to a brand.[13] Coke, for example, has strong associations with Americana and refreshment. Similarly, Wells Fargo's stagecoach associates the company with independence and reliability.

A brand's image influences consumer purchasing decisions and product experiences. As marketers have recognized since the 1950s, consumer purchasing decisions are based on more than just the purely physical or functional benefits of a product (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Consumers choose brands to express themselves; individuals might buy a luxury brand such as BMW or Louis Vuitton as an outward sign of success or choose brands like JIF or Quaker Oats because they see themselves as nurturing parents. The brand image also alters the product experience, as evidenced by product taste tests: in an unblinded taste test, consumers perceive

[13] See Aaker, 1996; Biel, 1993; and Boush & Jones, 2006 for discussion of these and other brand image components.

their favorite brands of food or beverages to taste better than competitors but exhibit different taste preferences in blinded taste tests (Boush & Jones, 2006).

Because brand image and brand equity are interrelated, organizational decisions that positively or negatively impact brand image (i.e., consumers' perceptions) also impact the overall power of the brand. The decisions that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs make with regard to trademark use, product quality, and brand extensions influence brand image.

Element 4.1 Trademark use

A trademark "identifies and distinguishes the goods or services of one party from others" (Trademark, 2016). Symbols are common trademarks, as are slogans, words, designs, and combinations of these elements. A brand's symbol plays a role in generating awareness, associations, and liking for a brand (Aaker, 1991). Allstate's "good hands," for example, lend associations of care and competency to the brand's image, while the Pillsbury Doughboy is not only likable but also an embodiment of the plump, fresh bakery products found inside Pillsbury packages. Many state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs incorporate their state's image into the brand's logo. The state's familiar shape may inspire feelings of trust or loyalty in consumers, and it communicates the local area of production (Onken & Bernard, 2010). The local designation, in turn, may call to mind other positive attributes that consumers ascribe to local foods – fresher, healthier, more flavorful – or the act of buying local, which suggests support of the area economy.

Just as the concrete elements of a symbol generate associations that consumers incorporate into a brand image, so do the contexts in which consumers encounter a brand's trademark. Context can be the actual agricultural products carrying the state's brand or the places where consumers see the trademark. In the first instance, a good example is a program that starts as a way to promote a state's fresh fruits and vegetables. Associations with freshness and good nutrition are relatively easy to attach to the brand image, as is the idea that buying local produce helps the environment by reducing vehicle miles traveled.[14] When a program incorporates new agricultural products (or has a broad base to begin with), associations may strengthen or weaken and cause shifts in consumers' perception of the brand. In 2011, *Connecticut Grown*, for example, added forest products such as lumber, firewood, mulch, and manufactured wood products to its branding program. While associations with freshness and good nutrition might weaken, the brand's environmentally conscious image could be strengthened by requiring program participants to sustainably manage their forests and by making the case that increased economic activity around forests protects that land from being converted to other uses.

The locations where consumers see a brand's trademark are another context that lend associations to the brand image. Many programs allow restaurants featuring local foods, farmers' markets and pick-your-own farms, garden centers carrying locally grown plants, and other entities to use the program trademark. These contexts may lend associations with family outings, adventure, and nature to the brand's image. Seeing the brand in these different contexts also gives *breadth* to brand awareness, a term Keller (2001) uses to refer to "the range of purchase and consumption situations in which the brand comes to mind" (p. 9). Benefits to the agricultural producer accrue if the consumer thinks to look for (and ultimately purchase) the brand in different settings.

Because the products and entities carrying a program's trademark influence its image among consumers, this element collects baseline information on what categories of agricultural products are branded by programs – grown (fruits and vegetables, horticultural products, etc.),

[14] Produce starts to lose nutrients after harvest. Locally-grown produce travels a shorter distance to the retail environment, and many programs point to this environmental benefit in their materials.

raised (aquaculture, livestock, etc.), and/or processed (dairy, meats, jams, textiles, wine, etc.)[15] – and whether any non-agricultural products may be approved to use the state brand. The inclusion of non-agricultural products could contribute to a diffuse brand image (Keller, 1993). In addition, this element collects baseline information on the entities authorized to use program trademarks.

Element 4.2 Product quality

A quality product is essential to any successful brand. Currently, quality control in state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs relies primarily on self-policing. State programs typically require that participating growers, producers, or manufacturers agree to use the state's brand only on products of the highest quality (Onken & Bernard, 2010). Monitoring for quality is a challenge for state programs given the number of potential participants and commodity categories (Onken & Bernard, 2010; Patterson, 2006). Still, researchers suggest that states add product quality standards to increase the value of the state brand for consumers.[16] It is possible that some states use established quality grading standards for certain commodity categories, but this is currently unknown. It is also possible that some states have established a process for assessing product quality, but this too is unknown.

Product quality should be important to programs. Research has found that consumers perceive the state brand on a product to be a signal of quality.[17] Patterson and Martinez (2004) write that "from a consumer perspective, origin information is often perceived as an implicit warranty of quality" (p. 9). States can negatively impact their brand image if consumers purchase state-branded products that are inferior to products from a competing state. Jekanowski et al.

[15] Onken and Bernard (2010) described state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs as requiring agricultural products to be grown, processed, or manufactured in-state, or some combination of those three aspects. Online program information often referred to grown, raised, or processed, which is why this research uses grown, raised, and processed for categories of agricultural products.
[16] See Onken & Bernard, 2010; Patterson et al., 2003; Patterson & Martinez, 2004; Patterson, 2006.
[17] See Patterson et al, 1999; Patterson & Martinez, 2004; Patterson, 2006.

(2000) found that consumers' perceived quality of Indiana agricultural products had the strongest positive effect on the likelihood of purchasing a local product. They cautioned that if a state allows the quality of branded products to fall below that of other states, the state-sponsored promotion program runs the risk of branding its products as "lower quality" (Jekanowski et al., 2000).

This element asks programs about product quality standards in rule and about trademark revocations, if any, due to inferior product quality. Open-ended questions solicit program comments on monitoring the quality of processed products and on influencing product quality in the program overall.

Element 4.3 Extensions

A number of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have developed families of brands. This practice has taken on different forms. New Jersey started *Jersey Fresh* as a promotion program for fruits and vegetables grown in New Jersey. Today, the state's program includes three additional brands: *Jersey Grown* for locally grown plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers; *Jersey Bred* for horses and 4-H market lambs; and *Jersey Seafood.* The logo for all but one brand in the family is largely similar to the *Jersey Fresh* brand, as seen in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 *Jersey Fresh* family of brands

New Jersey's additions to its *Jersey Fresh* parent brand are similar to line extensions in branding research. A *line extension* is "when the parent brand is used to brand a new product that targets a new market segment within a product category currently served by the parent brand"

(Keller, 2002, p. 162). In the *Jersey Fresh* context, the parent brand (*Jersey Fresh)* has been used to brand a new product (locally grown plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers) that targets a new market segment (consumers with an interest in horticulture) within a product category (New Jersey agricultural products) served by the parent brand.

While New Jersey's line extensions are narrowly focused on specific categories of agricultural products, other programs' line extensions encompass a greater range of products. Arkansas, for example, has *Arkansas Grown*, *Arkansas Made*, and *Homegrown by Heroes*, as seen in Figure 2.3. The brands all serve the same product category, Arkansas agricultural products, but distinguish between those grown or raised in-state such as meat, plants, vegetables, and fruit (*Arkansas Grown*), and those processed in-state like honey, jam, and furniture (*Arkansas Made*). *Homegrown by Heroes* is also a line extension of *Arkansas Grown*, still serving Arkansas agricultural products but highlighting those grown by veterans to appeal to the segment of the consumer market that makes a point of supporting veteran-owned businesses.

Figure 2.3 Arkansas' family of agricultural brands

Some state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs may also engage in brand extensions. A *brand extension* is "when the parent brand is used to enter a different product category from that currently served by the parent brand" (Keller, 2002, p. 163). *GO TEXAN*, for example, has extended its brand to certified retirement communities (Figure 2.4). As a result, *GO TEXAN* is branding not

Figure 2.4. *GO TEXAN* brands

only agricultural products, but also places, a different product category.

Brand extensions are a popular topic of branding research. Researchers have studied factors that influence extension success, concluding that "consumers need to see the proposed extension as making sense," or fitting, with the parent brand (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Another persistent question in the research is the effect of an extension on the parent brand. While there is much concern that a failed extension can hurt a parent brand, academic research has found little evidence that this is true. Only in cases where "there is a high degree of similarity or "fit" involved – e.g., in the case of a failed line extension in the same category – and when consumers experience inferior product performance directly" does an unsuccessful extension potentially damage the parent brand (Keller, 2002; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). On the question of positive feedback from an extension to the parent brand, some research has found that an extension can strengthen consumers' associations with the parent brand (Keller, 2002). Stronger associations should have positive effects for brand image and equity.

Still, branding new products, as in the case of *GO TEXAN*, changes the brand image because consumers create new associations in their minds; these new associations could "weaken feelings and beliefs consumers hold about the parent brand," a hypothesis for which Martinez and de Chernatony (2004) found some support. Given that an understanding of how brand extensions affect brand image is still developing, this element does not attempt to assess whether brand extensions such as those described above are helpful or hurtful to a state brand. Rather, this element will inventory states' brand extensions. This baseline information could prove useful as the understanding of the interplay between extension and image develops.

Conceptual Framework Summary

Drawing on concepts from advertising and branding literature, this chapter has established a categories framework for describing the inputs (program budgets) and strategies (advertising, market segmentation, and brand image decisions) that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs use to build their brands. The categories, their elements, and supporting literature are listed in Table 2.1.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs, setting state programs in the larger world of government-endorsed generic commodity advertising, providing historical context for the creation of state programs, and describing the relevant public policy debate. This chapter has also connected the literature to concepts from the branding and advertising fields. Finally, this chapter has introduced and explained the categories and elements structuring the collection of data to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs employ to build their brands. The next chapter operationalizes the conceptual framework and explains the methodologies used for data collection.

Table 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Title: State-Sponsored Agriculture Promotion Programs: Growing Brands **Purpose:** The purpose of this research is to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands.	
Category	**Supporting literature**
1. Program budget	NASBO (2015), Rubin (2010)
1.1 Revenue	Halloran & Martin (1989); Patterson (2006)
1.2 Allocation to promotion	Keller (1993); Swystun (2007)
2. Advertising platforms	Aaker (1991); Aaker (1996); Jones (1999); Patterson et al. (1999); Simonsen & Lillywhite (2014); White (1999); Yoo et al. (2000)
2.1 Traditional media	Kimmel & Kitchen (2014a); Patterson (2006); Stafford & Faber (2005); Wood & Burkhalter (2014)
2.2 New media	Bhat et al. (2005); Kaplan & Haenlein (2010); Kimmel & Kitchen (2014a); Kimmel & Kitchen (2014b); Leckenby (2005); Menon & Soman (2005)
2.3 Out-of-home	Locklear (2016); OAAA (2015); Patterson (2006); Story (2007)
2.4 Point-of-purchase	Govindasamy et al. (1998); Swystun (2007)
3. Market segmentation	Jekanowski et al. (2000); Govindasamy et al. (1998); Patterson et al. (1999); Patterson et al. (2003); Patterson & Martinez (2004); Stockdale (1999); Swystun (2007)
4. Brand image	Aaker (1996); Biel (1993); Boush & Jones (2006); Dobni & Zinkhan (1990); Feldwick (1999); Kirmani & Zeithaml (1993)
4.1 Trademark use	Aaker (1991); Keller (1993); Keller (2001); Onken & Bernard (2010)
4.2 Product quality	Jekanowski et al. (2000); Onken & Bernard (2010); Patterson et al. (1999); Patterson et al. (2003); Patterson & Martinez (2004); Patterson (2006)
4.3 Extension	Keller (2002); Keller & Lehmann (2006); Martinez & de Chernatony (2004)

Chapter III. Methodology

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used to achieve the research purpose of describing the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands. Using the literature, the previous chapter developed a categories conceptual framework of brand-building activities. This chapter operationalizes the elements of the conceptual framework into survey items, reserving a handful of potential survey items for content analysis. The strengths and weaknesses of survey research and content analysis are discussed, and the procedures used to conduct the survey and content analysis are reviewed.

Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed in chapter two "organize[d] the ideas to achieve the research purpose," linking categories and elements to relevant literature (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013, p. 86). The framework also gave structure to the survey instrument used for data collection (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). Elements of the framework became the topics covered by the questionnaire, and each survey item was linked to an element. Constructing the survey in this manner – with each item linking to an element – helped ensure that survey questions were consistent with the research purpose.

As seen in Table 3.1, Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework, the categories and elements developed in the previous chapter are carried forward and operationalized as one or more survey items. For example, "allocation to promotion" is an element in the "program budget" category. The survey item for this element asked participants to provide the percentage of a program's budget allocated to promotion in state fiscal year 2015. While this element had one survey item associated with it, other elements required more than one question to adequately cover the topic. “Product quality” in the “brand image” category, for example, had five survey items associated with it. It should also be noted that in the process of constructing questionnaire items from the conceptual framework, it became apparent that certain items could be answered through information available online. These items are still linked to elements in the framework and are noted as “web analysis” items in the operationalization table. As a result of certain exclusions for web analysis, the final survey had 25 items.

As is evident from Table 3.1, survey items were constructed in various formats. Nine items were fixed-alternative questions, asking the respondent to choose from among two or more answers (Mitchell & Jolley, 2007). These included the yes/no and multiple choice items, as well as the initial dropdown question that was used to connect survey responses to a particular state. An additional six items were partially structured for survey participants, including one ranking question and five check-all-that-apply questions. The remaining ten items were open-ended, asking participants to respond in their own words (Griffith, 2014). Two of these ten offered participants a chance to elaborate on earlier responses (items five and 25), and two were potentially skipped by the survey based on a preceding answer (items 13 through 15). One advantage of open-ended questions is that they avoid putting words in participants’ mouths, unlike items with predefined response options, which can leave participants feeling like their viewpoint is not represented (Mitchell & Jolley, 2007). Open-ended questions, however, do have drawbacks. In particular, survey participants may skip these questions because of the difficulty of generating their own responses, and answers can be challenging for the researcher to score (Mitchell & Jolley, 2007).

Table 3.1 Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Title: State-Sponsored Agriculture Promotion Programs: Growing Brands

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands.

Category	***Survey or web analysis***	**Item**
		1) Please select your state and program name: (select from dropdown list)
1. Program Budget		
1.1 Revenue	*Survey*	2) What was the total program budget for state fiscal year (SFY) 2015? (open-ended and dollar value response)
	Survey	3) Please provide a percentage breakdown of SFY 2015 revenues in the following categories: A. ___% State general revenue *(Please exclude revenue generated by the program, held by the state, and appropriated to the program.)* B. ___% Federal C. ___% Program-generated through annual participant fees D. ___% Program-generated through sale of merchandise *(Examples include clothing, glassware, tote bags, specialty license plates, etc.)* E. ___% Other Please identify the largest source of "Other" funds, if applicable: (open-ended)
	Survey	4) If SFY 2015 general revenue appropriations were zero, please explain why. (open-ended)
	Survey	5) Please include below any additional information or explanatory comments about the program budget if desired. (open-ended)
1.2 Allocation to promotion	*Survey*	6) For SFY 2015, what percentage of the program budget was allocated to promotion activities? (open-ended and percentage) *Please include advertising buys and advertising development costs, including contracts for professional services; printing costs for point-of-purchase materials and promotional materials distributed statewide; event sponsorships or booth fees at state fairs and trade shows; and website or mobile app development and maintenance costs. Please do not include salaries and wages of associated full-time equivalents or travel costs.*
2. Advertising Platforms		
2.1 Traditional media	*Survey*	7) During SFY 2015, in what forms of traditional media did the program advertise? (Check all that apply.) □ Television □ Radio □ Newspapers □ Magazines

□ Printed company or product guide
□ Did not participate in these media

2.2 New media	*Survey*	8) During SFY 2015, in what forms of online advertising did the program engage? (Check all that apply.) □ Banner advertisements □ Pop-up ads, including pop-up video ads □ Social media ads on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., including video ads □ Did not participate in these media □ Other (please specify):
	Web analysis	Program has a website with the program name as the domain name. (Yes/No)
	Web analysis	Indicate programs' participation in social media platforms. For each platform, choose yes only if the program's social media account is separate from the administrative entity's social media account. *(Choose "yes" only if the program's social media account is separate from the administrative entity's social media account. For example, Texas' GO TEXAN program tweets as @GOTEXAN. Its administrative entity tweets as @TexasDeptofAg. These social media accounts are separate from each other.)* Blog ___ Yes ___ No Facebook ___ Yes ___ No Flickr ___ Yes ___ No Google+ ___ Yes ___ No Instagram ___ Yes ___ No LinkedIn ___ Yes ___ No Pinterest ___ Yes ___ No Snapchat ___ Yes ___ No Tumblr ___ Yes ___ No Twitter ___ Yes ___ No YouTube ___ Yes ___ No Other ___ Yes ___ No Please specify: _____________
	Web analysis	Does the program have an associated mobile app? (Yes/No)
	Web analysis	If the program has a mobile app, is the app broad, covering a range of agricultural products and/or locations producing, selling, or using such agricultural products? (Yes/No)
	Web analysis	If no, identify the product category or locations that are the narrow focus of the app. (open-ended)
2.3 Out of home	*Survey*	9) During SFY 2015, in what categories of out-of-home advertising (*a.k.a. outdoor advertising*) did the program engage? (Check all that apply.)

		◻ Billboard ◻ Transit (subway and rail, airports, bus interior or exterior, taxis, etc.) ◻ Street furniture (bus shelters and benches, bicycle racks, newsstands, etc.) ◻ Alternative (movie theaters, stadiums, place-based digital networks, etc.) ◻ Did not participate in these media
2.4 Point-of-purchase	*Survey*	10) In SFY 2015, did the program distribute point-of-purchase materials to one or more retailers? (*Examples include in-store displays, signs, shelf talkers, etc*.) (Yes/No)
	Survey	11) Use of point-of-purchase materials today compared to five years ago is… (Multiple choice: more frequent / less frequent / about the same / N/A. Program has operated fewer than five years.).
	Survey	12) In your opinion, which advertising platform is most important in making consumers aware of the program trademark(s)? Please rank from most (1) to least (4) important. – Traditional media – New media (online advertising and social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.) – Out-of-home (a.k.a. outdoor) – Point-of-purchase materials
3. Market segmentation	*Survey*	13) Has market research identified specific market segments for the brand to target with its advertising messages? (Yes/No. **If no, skip to question 16.**)
	Survey	14) If yes, how is your primary market segment defined? *(Example: male, female, target age, target education level, etc.)* (open-ended)
	Survey	15) If the program has identified a secondary market segment, please define that segment here: (open-ended)
4. Brand image		
4.1 Trademark use	*Survey*	16) Does the program have a trademark(s) that it licenses to program participants? (Multiple choice: Yes - one trademark / Yes - more than one trademark / No. **If no, survey is complete.**)
	Survey	17) Considering all program trademarks, on which categories of agricultural products may licensees use a program trademark(s)? ◻ Agricultural products grown in-state *(fruits and vegetables, horticultural products, etc.)* ◻ Agricultural products raised in-state *(livestock, aquaculture, etc.)* ◻ Agricultural products processed in-state *(dairy, meats, jams, textiles, wine, etc.)*

	Survey	18) Is it possible for businesses that produce, manufacture, construct, or create non-agricultural products (ex. home accessories, jewelry, recreational equipment, etc.) to be authorized to use the program trademark? (Yes/No) 19) Please indicate other entities that may be authorized to use the programs trademark(s). Check all that apply. □ agricultural services organizations □ agritourism destinations □ commodity associations □ community supported agriculture (CSA) farms □ educational organizations □ farmers' markets □ food service operations □ garden centers □ grocers/retailers □ pick-your-own farms □ restaurants □ Other:
4.2 Product quality	*Survey*	20) Do program rules include an expectation that the program trademark(s) be used only on agricultural products of the highest quality? (Yes/No)
	Survey	21) Has the program revoked an entity's authorization to use a program trademark(s) due to inferior product quality? (Yes/No)
	Survey	22) Are commodities producers required to meet USDA or industry grading standards in order to use the program trademark(s)? (Yes/No)
	Survey	23) How does the program monitor the quality of processed agricultural products authorized to use the program trademark(s)? (open-ended)
	Survey	24) In what other ways does the program influence product quality so that consumers associate the program trademark(s) with quality products? (open-ended)
4.3 Extension	*Web analysis*	Identify additional program brands: *(Jersey Fresh, for example, has created Jersey Grown (locally grown plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers), Jersey Seafood, and Jersey Bred. Programs that have a separate brand for value-added agricultural products would also trigger a "yes" response; for example, Arkansas Grown includes Arkansas Made.)* <u>Name</u> <u>Product segment branded with this name</u>
	Survey	25) Is there any additional information you would like to share? (open-ended)

Survey Research

Descriptive research often uses survey research as the mode of data collection (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). This study describes the inputs and strategies behind the brand-building efforts of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs and used a self-administered survey instrument to gather data to construct a profile of these programs. Self-administered questionnaires have the advantage of allowing respondents to answer on their own time, but this also means that the researcher runs the risk of a low response rate. In addition, the researcher is unable to address any ambiguity that may arise during survey administration (Mitchell & Jolley, 2007). To combat these downsides, survey participants were consistently contacted. An initial email was sent to explain the research, and the survey link followed in a separate email three days later. In two subsequent weeks, brief email reminders about the survey were sent, in line with Griffith's (2014) suggested follow-up time of one week to ten days after initial contact (p. 189). In each of these communications, participants were encouraged to contact the researcher via email or phone with any questions or comments, and a handful of participants did so. (The emails sent to survey participants are included in Appendix A: Email Correspondence.)

As implied above, this was a web-based survey. Web-based surveys are relatively inexpensive to conduct, and they shorten the data collection period because participants can be contacted via email and given immediate access to the survey (Griffith, 2014). In addition, the providers of web-based survey services such as Survey Monkey, the platform used here, enable faster data analysis by immediately recording responses and aggregating data for download (Griffith, 2014). Another advantage of a web-based survey is its ability to incorporate skip logic, a functionality used in this survey to exclude certain open-ended questions (Griffith, 2014).

With any survey instrument, respondent fatigue is a concern, so steps were taken to encourage completion. Before starting the survey, participants were provided with an estimate of the time it would take to complete the survey (about 20 minutes) based on pre-tests.[18] During the survey, a progress bar at the top of each page showed participants how close they were to finishing. Limiting the number of open-ended response items is another recommendation for reducing respondent fatigue. As noted earlier, this survey had ten open-ended items. However, two of these simply solicited additional explanation or commentary, if desired, and two were behind a gatekeeper question to avoid showing participants unnecessary questions. Answers to most open-ended items were expected to be relatively brief although the budget items may have required some additional time to look up data.[19] In addition to these efforts, items were kept as short as possible to minimize the effort to read and answer (Griffith, 2014).

Survey Procedure

Administrators of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs were the survey's target population, but before they could be identified, the population of state programs needed to be set. Onken and Bernard's 2010 chart of state programs (see page two) was a starting point. Using a Google Chrome web browser, each program name was entered into the Google search engine. For most programs, this returned a program website and/or a program-specific webpage on an administrative entity's website. In a handful of cases, entering the program name from Onken and Bernard's chart pointed to a name change or a program not captured in the chart.[20] For example, Googling *Simply Kansas* as listed in the 2010 chart returned *From the Land of*

[18] Average survey completion time was 12 minutes and 10 seconds.
[19] The introductory email to participants included a heads-up on this survey item. See Appendix A: Email Correspondences.
[20] See notes for Kansas, Nevada, and Tennessee in Table 3.2, Population of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.

Kansas. The latter proved to be Kansas' original and current agriculture promotion program; it had moved to a different agency for a period of time and operated as *Simply Kansas*. In addition to using Google, administrative entities' websites were visited, which proved useful in identifying additional state programs like *Illinois…Where Fresh Is*, *Louisiana Grown*, and *Virginia Grown*. Google was also helpful in ascertaining which states no longer operate programs, discussed below. In the end, this process resulted in the population shrinking from 50 programs in 50 states to 38 programs in 37 states – Louisiana operates two programs considered administratively separate.[21] Thirteen states were excluded from the survey for reasons explained below.

First, six states no longer operate programs: Delaware, Michigan, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, and Washington. For Michigan and Vermont, Google returned articles about each program's cancellation.[22] A post about *Select Michigan* described a program that had run its course; it was successful in increasing sales, creating secure markets for program participants, and inspiring other organizations and retailers to start "buy local" initiatives – circumstances that allowed program funding to be eliminated. The *Vermont Seal of Quality* program closed in 2010 due to concerns that the program was unable to enforce product quality standards after years of staffing and budget cuts at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets. For the other four states, while no specific articles were found, neither standalone websites nor the respective agriculture agency websites returned any program information.

[21] Per phone call to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's Hammond office on February 16, 2016. *Louisiana Grown* is administered from the Hammond office.
[22] See "Select Michigan: A Program That Worked!" dated April 8, 2013, at http://capitalarealocalfirst.org/select-michigan-a-program-that-worked/ and "Agency of Agriculture discontinues 'Vermont Seal of Quality' Program" dated March 25, 2010, at http://www.vermontbiz.com/news/march/agency-agriculture-discontinues-%E2%80%9Cvermont-seal-quality%E2%80%9D-program.

An additional five states were excluded from the population based on the nature of their programs. Recall that the literature on state-sponsored agriculture promotion describes these programs as promoting all of a state's *agricultural* products under a single state brand. For state programs, this generally means promoting products grown (fruits, vegetables, nuts, flowers, trees, etc.), raised (livestock, aquaculture, etc.), and/or processed (jams, jellies, fibers, wine, etc.) in-state. This is in line with the Webster's Dictionary definition of agriculture: "the science and art of farming; work or business of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock." Arguably, if a state-sponsored promotion program includes businesses far removed from agriculture – glass makers, manufacturers of cargo lights, suppliers of first aid kits – it is less an agriculture promotion program and more a state-sponsored marketing program for local businesses. Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Wyoming were excluded on this basis.

Another two states, Indiana and Rhode Island, were excluded for unique reasons. Indiana started *Indiana Grown* in the summer of 2015. The state has a July to June fiscal year, so for questions tied to state fiscal year 2015 in the "program budget" and "advertising platforms" categories, Indiana would have no information to report.[23] For Rhode Island, Onken and Bernard (2010) identified *Farm Fresh Rhode Island*, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, as the state's agriculture promotion program. Review of the organization's website, http://www.farmfreshri.org/, suggested that it shared objectives and engaged in activities akin to those of state-sponsored programs, but the state's role was unclear. In addition, it did not appear that the organization licensed a trademark to producers. Without a trademark for producer use, building and protecting a brand is a non-issue. A phone call to *Farm Fresh Rhode Island* on February 19, 2016,

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[23] Confirmed in a phone call with an *Indiana Grown* representative on February 22, 2016.

confirmed that the organization does not have an associated trademark. Also, when asked if the organization would describe itself as "state-sponsored," the response was no.

With 13 states excluded from the survey, the total population of states is 37, and with Louisiana running two administratively separate programs, the total population of programs is 38. Table 3.2 recaps the survey population. Where a program name differs from Onken and Bernard's 2010 chart (see page two), a brief note is included.

After programs were identified, program administrator contact information was needed. Fourteen program websites named a specific contact person. For the other 24 programs, contact information was obtained by calling the marketing divisions of state departments of agriculture, explaining the research, and asking for an email address of the best contact. An introductory email was sent to program contacts on Thursday, February 18, 2016. In this email, contacts were asked to redirect the email and subsequent survey link if necessary. A second email on Monday, February 22, provided survey consent information and included the survey link. (Both emails are included in Appendix A: Email Correspondence.)

At the end of the first week, the survey was modified slightly with the addition of question five: Please include below any additional information or explanatory comments about the program budget if desired. This modification was made at the suggestion of one of the early respondents, who explained that the program's budget fluctuated substantially year over year, depending on receipt of grant funds, but there was nowhere to note this in the survey. After this revision, a reminder about the survey was sent on Wednesday, March 2, and a second and final reminder was sent the following Wednesday, March 9. This correspondence is also in Appendix A: Email Correspondence. In total, respondents had three weeks to complete the survey.

Table 3.2 Population of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs

	State	Program Name	Notes
1	Alabama	Buy Alabama's Best	
2	Alaska	Alaska Grown	
3	Arizona	Arizona Grown	
4	Arkansas	Arkansas Grown	
5	California	California Grown	
6	Colorado	Colorado Proud	
7	Connecticut	Connecticut Grown	
8	Florida	Fresh from Florida	
9	Georgia	Georgia Grown	
10	Hawaii	Hawaii Seal of Quality	
11	Idaho	Idaho Preferred	
12	Illinois	Illinois Product / Illinois…Where Fresh Is	The researcher was unable to determine if these are administratively separate.
13	Iowa	Choose Iowa	
14	Kansas	From the Land of Kansas	The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) founded *From the Land of Kansas* in 1988. The program moved to the Department of Commerce in 2005 and was rebranded as *Simply Kansas*. In 2011, the program returned to the KDA and was relaunched under its original name in 2013.
15	Kentucky	Kentucky Proud	
16	Louisiana	Certified Product of Louisiana	
17	Louisiana	Louisiana Grown	Launched in 2012.
18	Maine	Get Real. Get Maine!	
19	Maryland	Maryland's Best	
20	Massachusetts	Massachusetts Grown…and Fresher!	
21	Minnesota	Minnesota Grown	
22	Missouri	AgriMissouri	
23	Nebraska	Nebraska: Our Best to You	
24	Nevada	Buy Nevada	Launched in 2013. Email correspondence with *Nevada Grown* confirmed that *Buy Nevada* is the state-sponsored agriculture promotion program.
25	New Jersey	Jersey Fresh	
26	New Mexico	New Mexico Taste the Tradition / Grown with Tradition	The program website consistently uses both *New Mexico – Taste the Tradition* and *New Mexico – Grown with Tradition*.
27	New York	Pride of New York	
28	North Carolina	Goodness Grows in North Carolina / Got to Be NC	*Got to Be NC* is a new marketing campaign. Its logo prominently displays the words "got to be NC agriculture" while retaining the *Goodness Grows in North Carolina* trademark.
29	Ohio	Ohio Proud	

30	Oklahoma	Made in Oklahoma	
31	Pennsylvania	PA Preferred	
32	South Carolina	Certified South Carolina	
33	Tennessee	Pick Tennessee Products	Founded in 1986. *Tennessee Farm Fresh* was a cooperative initiative from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and Tennessee Farm Bureau (Velandia, Clark, Lambert, Davis, Jensen, Wszelaki, & Wilcox, 2014). Its continued existence was not confirmed.
34	Texas	GO TEXAN	
35	Utah	Utah's Own	
36	Virginia	Virginia's Finest / Virginia Grown	Seemingly separate, a phone call with a *Virginia Grown* representative on February 17, 2016, confirmed that *Virginia's Finest* and *Virginia Grown* are viewed as one agriculture promotion program.
37	West Virginia	West Virginia Grown	
38	Wisconsin	Something Special from Wisconsin	

Web Analysis Procedure and Coding Sheet

Several items in Table 3.1, Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework, are identified as "web analysis" items. These items could have been included in the survey, but in order to keep it a reasonable length and avoid asking for information available elsewhere, the items were set aside for a content analysis of program websites. *Content analysis* is "a widely used research method for objective, systematic and quantitative examination of communication content" (Kim & Kuljis, 2010. p. 369). In this study, the communication content being analyzed is the program website or the program webpage(s) on an administrative entity website.

As a research method, content analysis has the advantages of being unobtrusive – it analyzes an artifact of human communication, not an individual – and being able to handle a large quantity of data (Kim & Kuljis, 2010). In an online setting, however, ever-changing web content can make it difficult to collect reliable data (McMillan, 2000; Weare & Lin, 2000). Not only can entire sites come and go, but web page content may frequently change. This presents issues for the researcher, who may need to return to a site, and for researchers attempting to replicate a study. Downloading or archiving a site is one way to address this issue, but the literature also recommends that researchers record the date that a web site is examined and the timeframe over which analysis occurs (McMillan, 2000; Weare & Lin, 2000). This research records the date that program websites or webpages were examined for specific "web analysis" items. Websites were visited repeatedly over the course of this study, December 2015 through March 2016.

When conducting online content analysis, the literature also recommends that the researcher specify the unit of analysis as clearly as possible (McMillan, 2000; Weare & Lin, 2000). Referring to a website may be too broad, for example, when sites have a large number of pages that would not be realistically examined; Weare and Lin (2000) write that "researchers can and should employ individual pages as the recording unit whenever possible" (p. 11). In this study, the unit of analysis is a program's website – many of which had limited numbers of pages – or the program's webpage(s) on an administrative entity's website. The URL of the initial landing page for each of these units is included in Table 3.3, along with the date of access.[24] While this landing page might have been able to serve as the unit of analysis for examining social media use, links needed to be explored in order to identify additional program brands.

Coding sheet

A coding sheet was developed to organize data from program websites or webpages in a systematic fashion. Each item on the coding sheet seen in Figure 3.1, except for the final

[24] A program website and/or webpage(s) for *Pride of New York* were not found; several search results referenced a revamp of the program website, www.prideofny.com, in 2013 and 2014. The researcher believes the program is still operating given that the Division of Agricultural Development telephone directory at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets continues to list a *Pride of New York* contact and given that this contact responded to an introductory email referencing *Pride of New York* without making the researcher aware of an end to the program.

Table 3.3 URLs for program websites or webpage(s) and date of access

State	Program Name	URL	Access
Alabama	Buy Alabama's Best	http://www.buyalabamasbest.com/	5-Mar-16
Alaska	Alaska Grown	http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_AKGrown.htm	5-Mar-16
Arizona	Arizona Grown	http://arizonagrown.org/	5-Mar-16
Arkansas	Arkansas Grown	http://arkansasgrown.org/	5-Mar-16
California	California Grown	http://www.californiagrown.org/	9-Mar-16
Colorado	Colorado Proud	https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/agmarkets/colorado-proud	9-Mar-16
Connecticut	Connecticut Grown	http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=3243&q=398984	9-Mar-16
Florida	Fresh from Florida	http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Marketing-and-Development/Agriculture-Industry/Join-Fresh-From-Florida	10-Mar-16
Georgia	Georgia Grown	https://www.georgiagrown.com/	10-Mar-16
Hawaii	Hawaii Seal of Quality	http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/add/md/seals-of-quality/	10-Mar-16
Idaho	Idaho Preferred	http://idahopreferred.com/	10-Mar-16
Illinois	Illinois Product	https://www.agr.state.il.us/marketing/ilprodlogo/	10-Mar-16
	Illinois…Where Fresh Is	https://www.agr.state.il.us/wherefreshis/	10-Mar-16
Iowa	Choose Iowa	http://www.chooseiowa.com/	10-Mar-16
Kansas	From the Land of Kansas	https://fromthelandofkansas.com/	10-Mar-16
Kentucky	Kentucky Proud	http://www.kyproud.com/	10-Mar-16
Louisiana	Certified Product of Louisiana	http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/marketing-agricultural-economic-development/market-development/	10-Mar-16
Louisiana	Louisiana Grown	http://www.louisianagrown.com/	10-Mar-16
Maine	Get Real. Get Maine!	http://www.getrealmaine.com/	11-Mar-16
Maryland	Maryland's Best	http://marylandsbest.net/	11-Mar-16
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Grown…and Fresher!	http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/index.htm	11-Mar-16
Minnesota	Minnesota Grown	http://minnesotagrown.com/	11-Mar-16
Missouri	AgriMissouri	http://agrimissouri.com/	11-Mar-16
Nebraska	Nebraska: Our Best to You	http://www.ourbesttoyou.nebraska.gov/	11-Mar-16
Nevada	Buy Nevada	http://buynevada.org/	11-Mar-16
New Jersey	Jersey Fresh	http://www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov/	11-Mar-16
New Mexico	New Mexico Taste / Grown Tradition	http://www.newmexicotradition.com/	11-Mar-16
New York	Pride of New York		11-Mar-16
North Carolina	Goodness Grows in North Carolina / Got to Be NC	http://gottobenc.com/	11-Mar-16
Ohio	Ohio Proud	http://www.ohioproud.org/	11-Mar-16
Oklahoma	Made in Oklahoma	http://madeinoklahoma.net/	11-Mar-16
Pennsylvania	PA Preferred	http://www.papreferred.com/	11-Mar-16
South Carolina	Certified South Carolina	http://www.certifiedscgrown.com/	11-Mar-16
Tennessee	Pick Tennessee Products	http://www.picktnproducts.org/	11-Mar-16
Texas	GO TEXAN	http://www.gotexan.org/	11-Mar-16
Utah	Utah's Own	http://www.utahsown.org/	11-Mar-16
Virginia	Virginia's Finest	http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vafinest.com/	11-Mar-16
	Virginia Grown	http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/index.shtml	11-Mar-16
West Virginia	West Virginia Grown	http://www.agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/marketinganddevelopment/Pages/WV-Grown-Program.aspx	11-Mar-16
Wisconsin	Something Special from Wisconsin	http://www.somethingspecialwi.com/	11-Mar-16

question, is an item pulled from Table 3.1, Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework. This is also indicated by the conceptual framework elements referenced on the coding sheet, "2.2 New Media" and "4.3 Extensions." At the bottom of the sheet, there are two notes. The first explains the significance of the domain name specification in item one. The second explains the rule for marking yes or no for each social media platform. Each social media link on a program's website or webpage(s) was followed to check that the account was for the state-sponsored agriculture promotion program, not the administrative entity. It should also be noted that the researcher is aware of some programs that do have accounts on certain social media sites but do not link to those accounts from their website or webpage(s). A link from the website or webpage(s), as the unit of analysis, was a requirement to be coded "yes" for a particular social media platform.

The final question about best practices was added to the coding sheet as an opportunity to record something that might be useful for other state programs to know, even if it was outside the scope of this study.

Human Subject Protection

This project [IRB Exemption Request EXP2015M912255G] was exempted from full or expedited review by the Texas State Institutional Review Board on December 3, 2015. Research subjects were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could choose not to answer any question(s) for any reason. In addition, survey responses were anonymous.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has operationalized the conceptual framework as survey items and items for content analysis. Strengths and weaknesses of each mode of data collection were discussed, as were the procedures used to collect data. Chapter four presents the results of data collection.

Figure 3.1 Website or webpage(s) coding sheet

Program name: ____
Website URL: ____
Date: ____________________________

	Yes	No
2.2 New Media		
1. Program has a website with the program name as its domain name.		
2. Social media platforms utilized by the program:		
• Blog		
• Facebook		
• Flickr		
• Google+		
• Instagram		
• LinkedIn		
• Pinterest		
• Snapchat		
• Tumblr		
• Twitter		
• YouTube		
• Other?		
Identify the other:		
3. Does the program have an associated mobile app?		
4. <u>If the program has a mobile app</u>, is the app broad, covering a range of agricultural products and/or locations producing, selling, or using such agricultural products?		
5. <u>If the answer to number 4 is "no,"</u> identify the product category or locations that are the narrow focus of the app:		

4.3 Extension
6. Identify additional program brands:

Name	Product segment branded with this name

Is there anything from the program's website that might be considered a best practice or useful to share with other programs (as through a screen shot)?

Notes:
1. Specifying use of the program name as the domain name distinguishes programs with standalone websites from programs with a webpage(s) on the administrative entity's website.

2. "Yes" is chosen only if the program's social media account is separate from the administrative entity's social media

Chapter IV. Results

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the results of the survey and the researcher's content analysis.

Respondent Characteristics

The survey was distributed to 38 state-sponsored agriculture promotion program contacts who were asked to respond over a 19-day time period, February 22 through March 11. In the first week, six programs submitted responses. After a March 3 reminder, three more programs responded, and after another reminder on March 9, an additional three responses were received. In total, 12 programs responded, resulting in a 31.6% response rate. However, not all responses were complete. *West Virginia Grown*, for example, answered the budget questions, but skipped the remaining sections. Conversely, *Fresh from Florida* skipped most of the budget questions but answered certain questions in the remaining sections. Responses from these two programs are included where appropriate.

To give context to the agricultural environment in which respondent programs operate, Table 4.1 sorts programs' states by U.S. Census region and presents some data points of interest related to each state's agricultural industry. Massachusetts and New Jersey in the northeast are characterized by urban populations and relatively small farms. Average farm size in the western states is much larger. Among responding states, data from the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture ranks Minnesota and Ohio 5th and 13th in the nation, respectively, for total market value of agricultural products sold. It should be noted, however, that these figures do not include the extended impact of agricultural production on a state's economy; for example, the *Ohio Proud* website notes that the agricultural industry contributes more than $107 billion to the state's economy, substantially more than the market value figure reflected in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of respondent states

Respondents by U.S. Census region	Average size of farm (acres)[1]	Total market value of agricultural products sold ($1,000,000)[2]	U.S. rank, market value of agricultural products sold[2]	Percent of state's population in an urban area[3]
Northeast				
Massachusetts	67	$492	47	92.0%
New Jersey	79	$1,007	40	94.7%
South				
Florida	200	$7,702	21	91.2%
South Carolina	205	$3,040	34	66.3%
West Virginia	172	$807	41	48.7%
Midwest				
Minnesota	352	$21,280	5	73.3%
Ohio	188	$10,064	13	77.9%
West				
Colorado	927	$7,781	20	86.2%
Hawaii	160	$661	45	91.9%
Idaho	484	$7,801	19	70.6%
Nevada	1,419	$764	43	94.2%
New Mexico	1,749	$2,550	35	77.4%

[1] Data from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Quick Stats as of March 20, 2016.

[2] Data from 2012 Census of Agriculture, USDA, NASS.

[3] 2010 U.S. Census data. The Census recognizes two types of urban areas, an urban cluster of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people and an urbanized area of 50,000 or more people.

Results

The narrative below largely follows the order of the conceptual framework and operationalization. Results from each category – program budget, advertising platforms, market segmentation, and brand image – are reported using descriptive statistics.

Program budget

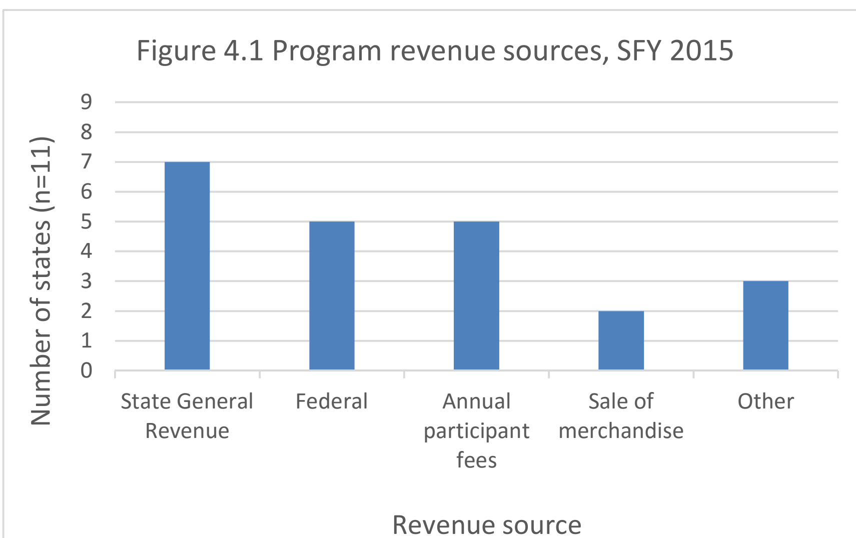
Programs reported a wide range of totals for state fiscal year (SFY) 2015 program budgets. Table 4.2 reflects budgets ranging from $10.5 million for *Fresh from Florida* to $8,000

Table 4.2 Total program budgets in SFY 2015		
Florida	$	10,500,000
South Carolina	$	3,500,000
West Virginia+	$	1,739,955
Minnesota	$	400,000
New Jersey*	$	350,000
Idaho	$	305,000
Colorado	$	280,500
Ohio	$	85,500
Hawaii	$	75,000
Nevada	$	8,000
Massachusetts	$	-
New Mexico	$	-

+Based on survey comments, this figure may include marketing activities beyond West Virginia Grown.
**New Jersey reported a marketing/ promotion budget exclusive of salaries and other administrative costs.*

for *Buy Nevada*. *Massachusetts Grown* and *New Mexico – Taste the Tradition/Grown with Tradition* (hereafter *New Mexico Tradition)* were unable to report budget figures because the programs do not have separate budgets within their respective administrative entities. However, Massachusetts noted that its program funds can fluctuate significantly year over year depending on application for and receipt of grant funds. Nevada's program began in 2013 and is entirely self-funded by member companies, which choose to participate at one of three benefit levels; as participation increases, the program budget would be expected to increase. Regardless of the size of the program budget, however, programs reported allocating a majority of their budgets to promotion activities in SFY 2015, with many dedicating more than 80% to promotion.

Programs were also asked to provide a percentage breakdown of SFY 2015 revenues in certain categories: state general revenue, federal, program-generated through annual participant fees, program-generated through sale of merchandise, and other. This data is represented in two ways below. First, Figure 4.1 shows the number of programs that



received each category of funding in SFY 2015. The population of states in Figure 4.1 is 11 because *Fresh from Florida* skipped this question. Seven of 11 programs (63.6%) received state general revenue in SFY 2015. Of the four programs that did not receive state general revenue, *Buy Nevada*, as previously noted, is self-funded, and *Colorado Proud* has never received state general revenue. *Massachusetts Grown* and *Certified South Carolina* also showed no state general revenue for SFY 2015, but it is unknown whether this is the norm or a special circumstance.

Although the survey asked for a numerical response when breaking down SFY 2015 program revenue, the survey boxes allowed for text. As a result, of five programs (45.5%) reporting federal revenue, two identified those dollars as specialty crop block grants. Programs also offered explanatory comments in the sale of merchandise category. While *Colorado Proud* and *Certified South Carolina* reported modest revenue figures – $4,100 and $5,000 respectively – *New Mexico Tradition* and *Ohio Proud* noted that they sold merchandise at cost, and *Minnesota Grown* noted that clothing, etc. is sold by a non-profit, not the agency.

In Table 4.3, programs' revenues are shown as a percentage of programs' total budgets. Seven of 12 responding programs are included in the table, and the data reflects the varied nature

Table 4.3 Revenue source as percentage of SFY 2015 program budget

	State general revenue	Federal	Annual participant fees	Sale of merchandise	Other
Colorado Proud	0%	56%	0%	1%	43%
Hawaii Seal of Quality	87%	0%	13%	0%	0%
Idaho Preferred	49%	49%	2%	0%	0%
*Jersey Fresh**	14%	86%	0%	0%	0%
New Mexico Tradition	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Buy Nevada	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
West Virginia Grown⁺	62%	38%	0%	0%	0.1%

**Jersey Fresh* reported a marketing/promotion budget exclusive of salaries and other administrative costs. Its percentages could change slightly if excluded dollars were added back to its budget.

⁺ As noted in Table 4.2, the program budget figure on which these percentages are based may include marketing activities beyond *West Virginia Grown*.

of programs' funding. *New Mexico Tradition*, *Hawaii Seal of Quality*, and *West Virginia Grown* depend on state general revenue, while federal funds are most important to *Jersey Fresh* and *Colorado Proud*. For *Idaho Preferred*, state general revenue and federal dollars are equally important. In contrast, *Buy Nevada* remains singularly dependent on program fees. A substantial percentage of the budget for *Colorado Proud* comes from "other" funds; the program identified these dollars as Colorado Department of Agriculture Ag Management Funds, which are not classified as general revenue.

Data from the other five programs could not be included in Table 4.3 for various reasons. While the researcher intended a program's revenue breakdown to sum to its 2015 budget figure, this was not the case with values reported by three programs. Confusion may have arisen from use of the term "revenue" in this survey item as program revenue in any given year may not match budgeted amounts.[25] *Fresh from Florida* did not provide a revenue breakdown, and *Massachusetts Grown* was unable to report a budget figure, as previously noted. *New Mexico Tradition*, while also unable to report a budget figure, is included in Table 4.3 because its survey response stated that all funds used are state appropriations. Given such a small data set, it would be unwise to generalize to the full population of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. However, it is notable that this data is consistent with the literature: state general revenue, federal dollars, and participant fees are important sources of funding.

Advertising platforms

The survey asked a series of questions about the advertising platforms that programs used in SFY 2015, including traditional and new media, out-of-home advertising, and

[25] The survey item was: Please provide a percentage breakdown of SFY 2015 revenues in the following categories. This item may have been better phrased as: Please breakdown the sources of funding in your SFY 2015 program budget.

distribution of point-of-purchase materials. This section reviews the results of those inquiries for the 11 responding states. West Virginia did not answer these or any remaining questions.

Traditional media

State programs widely participated in traditional media advertising as reflected in Table 4.4. Approximately 73% of programs advertised in magazines, and 63.6% engaged in television advertising. Three programs (27.3%) used radio advertisements in SFY 2015, and three also produced printed guides to state-grown companies and/or products.

Table 4.4 Programs' traditional media advertising, SFY 15

	Magazine	Television	Printed company or product guide	Radio	Newspaper
Colorado Proud		✓			
Fresh from Florida	✓	✓			
Hawaii Seal of Quality	✓		✓		
Idaho Preferred	✓	✓			
Massachusetts Grown					
Minnesota Grown		✓	✓		
Buy Nevada	✓		✓	✓	
Jersey Fresh	✓	✓		✓	
New Mexico Tradition	✓	✓			
Ohio Proud	✓				✓
Certified South Carolina	✓	✓		✓	
Totals	**8**	**7**	**3**	**3**	**1**

Looking at the mix of media used by individual programs, many paired broadcast media (radio and/or television) with print media, including *Fresh from Florida*, *Idaho Preferred*, *Minnesota Grown*, *Buy Nevada*, *Jersey Fresh*, *New Mexico Tradition*, and *Certified South Carolina* (63.6% of programs). *Hawaii Seal of Quality* and *Ohio Proud* used only print media, and *Colorado Proud* utilized only television in this snapshot of programs' use of traditional media advertising in SFY 2015.

New media

New media includes not only online advertising (a surveyed item), but also maintenance of a program website, use of social media, and the development of mobile apps. Almost all state programs responding to the survey (nine of 11) engaged in online advertising through social media ads on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as shown in Table 4.5. Many (54.5%) also used banner advertisements. Banner and pop-up ads appear on host websites, and while the content of partnering sites was not a research interest in this study, *Colorado Proud* noted that its banner ads and pop-up video ads were part of its television contract, running only on the station's website. Both *Fresh from Florida* and *Minnesota Grown* used all online advertising options listed in Table 4.5.

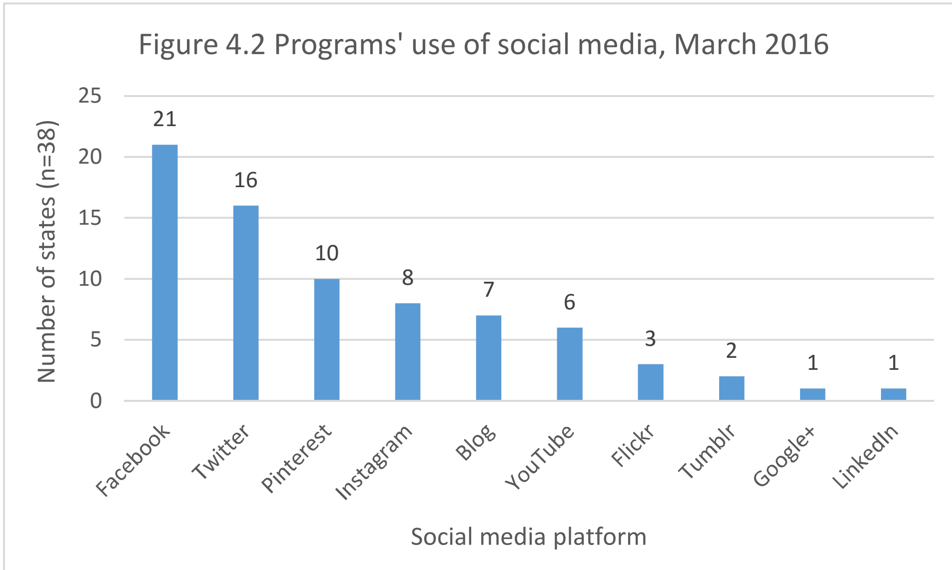
Table 4.5 Programs' online advertising, SFY 2015

During SFY 2015, in what forms of online advertising did the program engage? (Check all that apply.)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Banner advertisements	54.5%	6
Pop-up ads, including pop-up video ads	36.4%	4
Social media ads on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., including video ads	81.8%	9

The researcher's web analysis of a handful of items led to additional information about programs' new media activities. For these items – program websites, social media accounts, and mobile apps – the population of state programs broadens from the states submitting survey responses to the full population of 38 state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. Among these 38 programs, 28 (73.7%) had websites with the program name as the domain name, while nine programs had webpages on an administrative entity's website.[26] These web addresses are listed in Table 3.3 on page 52.

[26] *Pride of New York* did not have a website. See additional explanation in the footnote on page 51.

Programs have accounts on a variety of social media platforms as shown in Figure 4.2. The most popular platforms are Facebook and Twitter, used by 55.3% and 42.1% of programs, respectively. Bookmarking site Pinterest (26.3%) is next, followed by media-sharing sites Instagram (21.1%) and YouTube (15.8%). These percentages may be slightly underreported if programs have social media accounts but do not link to the accounts from their websites or program webpages; without a link, the presence of a social media account would not have been recorded.



The number of social media accounts that programs hold is also of interest, and this data is compiled in Table 4.6. As shown in the table, 13 programs (34.2%) are not on social media.[27] The median of the data set is 1.5 accounts; 19 programs have one or fewer social media accounts, and 19 programs have two or more social media accounts. *GO TEXAN* is the program with seven social media accounts, and *From the Land of Kansas* has six. The

Table 4.6 Number of social media accounts held by state programs

Number of social media accounts	Number of state programs
0	13
1	6
2	4
3	7
4	3
5	3
6	1
7	1

[27] This percentage could be over-reported. Again, programs had to link a social media account from a program website or webpage to be counted as having that account. Also note that programs had to have a social media account *separate* from their administrative entity to be counted as having a particular account.

three programs with five social media accounts are *California Grown*, *Jersey Fresh*, and *Utah's Own.*

The final new media item assessed in this study was development of mobile apps. Four programs have developed an app. *Kentucky Proud*, *Pick Tennessee Products*, and *GO TEXAN* each have an app to help consumers go local, i.e., find program members who are producing, selling, or using the states' agricultural products – everything from farmers' markets to restaurants and wineries. *Certified South Carolina's* app is named *Fresh on the Menu*, and unlike the other three apps, it is narrowly focused. *Fresh on the Menu* helps consumers find restaurants whose chefs have agreed to prepare menus that dedicate 25% of ingredients to in-season *Certified South Carolina Grown* products.

<u>Out-of-home</u>

Only three programs responding to the survey engaged in out-of-home advertising in SFY 2015: *Fresh from Florida*, *Minnesota Grown*, and *Certified South Carolina*. Each used billboard advertising, and *Fresh from Florida* also advertised in an alternative location. The remaining eight states did not utilize out-of-home advertising in SFY 2015. These results are reflected in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Programs' out-of-home advertising, SFY 2015

During SFY 2015, in what categories of out-of-home advertising (a.k.a. outdoor advertising) did the program engage? (Check all that apply.)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Billboard	27.3%	3
Transit (subway and rail, airports, bus interior or exterior, taxis, etc.)	0.0%	0
Street furniture (bus shelters and benches, bicycle racks, newsstands, etc.)	0.0%	0
Alternative (movie theaters, stadiums, place-based digital networks, etc.)	9.1%	1
Did not participate in these media	72.7%	8

Point-of-purchase

Unlike out-of-home advertising, ten of 11 programs distributed point-of-purchase materials to one or more retailers in SFY 2015. *Massachusetts Grown* did not. Interestingly, when asked about use of point-of-purchase materials today compared to five years ago, 45.5% of respondents (five of 11) thought their use was "about the same," and 45.5% thought their use was "more frequent." *Buy Nevada* chose "n/a" in response to this item given that it has operated fewer than five years.

Ranking question

The final question in the survey's advertising section asked respondents to rank the different advertising platforms from most (1) to least (4) important in making consumers aware of the program trademark(s). A pattern emerged among responses and is apparent in Table 4.8. Respondents consistently ranked traditional media as most important, point-of-purchase as second most important, new media as third, and out-of-home advertising as least important.

Table 4.8 Respondents' ranking of advertising platforms

In your opinion, which advertising platform is most important in making consumers aware of the program trademark(s)? Please rank from most (1) to least (4) important.					
Answer Options	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Rating Average**
Traditional media	**6**	3	0	2	1.82
Point-of-purchase materials	2	**5**	3	1	2.27
New media (online advertising and social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.)	2	1	**7**	1	2.64
Out-of-home (a.k.a.outdoor)	1	2	1	**7**	3.27

Respondents' ranking of the different advertising platforms aligns with the results reported above. Almost all programs engaged in traditional and point-of-purchase advertising, the two most highly ranked platforms, in SFY 2015, whereas only three utilized out-of-home-advertising, the lowest-ranked platform. When new media included in this research is considered – website/webpages, online advertising, social media, and mobile apps – all 11 responding programs were participants. In addition, the median value for social media accounts held among responding programs was two (2.0), slightly higher than the median for the entire population. Point-of-purchase advertising, meanwhile, had a slightly lower rate of participation (ten of 11 programs) but was ranked more important than new media in making consumers aware of program trademark(s). It would be interesting to know the points of differentiation, from an administrator's view, between point-of-purchase and new media advertising for state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.

Market segmentation

Seven of 11 programs (63.6%) have conducted market research and identified specific segments of the consumer market to target with advertising messages. These seven programs spanned the United States: *Hawaii Seal of Quality*, *Idaho Preferred*, and *Colorado Proud* in the west, *Minnesota Grown* in the Midwest, *Jersey Fresh* in the northeast, and *Certified South Carolina* and *Fresh from Florida* in the south. Programs uniformly identified women, of varying age ranges, as their primary markets. Table 4.9 lists the primary market segment descriptors provided by programs.

Table 4.9 Primary market segment descriptors
females, 25-54 (three programs)
females, 25-54, preferably with children at home
females, 30-65
females, 30s and older
females, 35+, who are the primary grocery shoppers for their household

The secondary markets identified by programs were less uniform. Males, ages 25-54 with children, and males, age 30 and up, were identified by two programs as their secondary markets. Two programs focus on all adults as a secondary market, albeit with different age ranges, 25-54 and 18-64. A fifth program named all residents of the state, and a sixth described its secondary market as supermarket produce managers/buyers and buyers of produce in general.

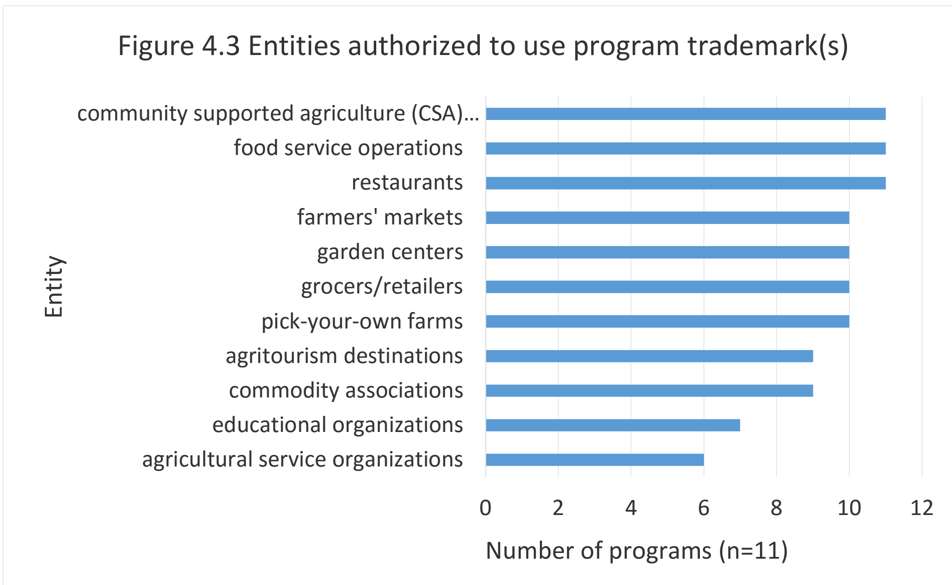
Brand image

Trademark use

Before completing the rest of the survey, programs were asked if they licensed a trademark to producers. A "no" response would have ended the survey. A "yes" response required that programs choose between "yes – one trademark" and "yes – more than one trademark." Of the 11 programs responding to this part of the survey, five (45.5%) chose one trademark, and six (54.5%) chose more than one trademark. Two programs that the researcher would classify as having more than one trademark – *Fresh from Florida* and *Hawaii Seal of Quality* – chose the "yes – one trademark" option, suggesting that the term trademark was interpreted differently. Although this small, self-reported sample is almost evenly split, in the full population of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs, the researcher arrived at 22 of 38 programs (57.9%) having one trademark and 16 of 38 (42.1%) having more than one trademark, a reversal from the sample statistics. These findings are discussed in detail on pages 70-74.

Programs determine the products and entities that are authorized to carry their trademark(s). Nine programs brand agricultural products grown, raised, or processed in-state, and two programs limit branding to grown and raised products. All programs answered in the negative when asked if it was possible for businesses that produce, manufacture, construct, or create non-agricultural products to be authorized to use a program trademark.

Beyond the actual growers and processors of agricultural products, retail entities that feature the state's agricultural products and other organizations that wish to promote eligible products are frequently authorized to use the program trademark(s). As seen in Figure 4.3, all program respondents authorize use of the program trademark(s) for community-supported agriculture farms, food service operations, and restaurants. It is also evident from Figure 4.3 that, on the whole, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs are authorizing the same types of entities to use program trademarks. Comments from state programs suggest that the list of entities in Figure 4.4 is not exhaustive. *Colorado Proud* added that schools and other institutions that incorporate Colorado ingredients into their menus may use its trademark(s), and *Buy Nevada* broadly stated that all food- and agriculture-related entities are eligible to be authorized. It is unknown how far beyond the actual growers and processors that may extend.



Product quality

Survey items 20 through 24 asked a series of questions about program regulations with regard to product quality. These questions are reproduced here:

- (Q20): Do program rules include an expectation that the program trademark(s) be used only on agricultural products of the highest quality?
- (Q21): Has the program revoked an entity's authorization to use a program trademark(s) due to inferior product quality?
- (Q22): Are commodities producers required to meet USDA or industry grading standards in order to use the program trademark(s)?

- (Q23): How does the program monitor the quality of processed agricultural products authorized to use the program trademark(s)?
- (Q24): In what other ways does the program influence product quality so that consumers associate the program trademark(s) with quality products?[28]

Based on program responses, *Hawaii Seal of Quality*, *Jersey Fresh*, and *Certified South Carolina* (30%) appear to place a greater emphasis on product quality than the other programs.[29] These three programs each answered "yes" to Q20 through Q22, affirming that program rules include an expectation of high product quality, that quality has been a factor in revoking use of the program trademark, and that commodities producers must meet USDA or industry grading standards to use the trademark(s). In response to monitoring the quality of processed agricultural products, *Jersey Fresh* stated that inspectors ensure products bearing its trademark are USDA #1 or better, and *Certified South Carolina* relies on regulatory divisions to monitor the quality of processed products. To carry Hawaii's *Seal of Quality*, companies must annually submit an application form with detailed product information, and site visits are conducted as needed to verify information.

Among the seven remaining programs – *Colorado Proud*, *Idaho Preferred*, *Massachusetts Grown*, *Minnesota Grown*, *Buy Nevada*, *New Mexico Tradition*, and *Ohio Proud* – each answered "no" to Q20 and Q21 concerning program rules and trademark revocations. However, on Q22, *Idaho Preferred*, *Buy Nevada*, and *Ohio Proud* joined Hawaii, New Jersey, and South Carolina in answering in the affirmative, so overall, six programs (60%) require commodities producers to meet USDA or industry grading standards in order to use the program

[28] Because only four programs responded to Q24, and because those responses aligned with answers to Q23, the open-ended responses for these two questions are grouped and discussed together.
[29] *Fresh from Florida* skipped these questions, so the product quality section of the survey had 10 respondents.

trademark(s), while four programs (40%) do not. This suggests that use of USDA or industry grading standards where available is an accessible means of regulating the quality of commodities carrying the program trademark(s).

In response to monitoring the quality of processed agricultural products, among the group of seven programs listed in the previous paragraph, both *Buy Nevada* and *Ohio Proud* made reference to companies holding required licenses (depending on the industry) or being in good standing with the secretary of state or department of agriculture. Beyond that, responses de-emphasized quality monitoring as a program function. *Massachusetts Grown* and *New Mexico Tradition* wrote, “Doesn’t,” and, “We do not monitor quality,” respectively, in response to how they monitor the quality of processed agricultural products authorized to use the program trademark(s). Another four programs stated that their programs were not quality-driven and emphasized the program’s function as a geographic identifier helping consumers find local foods. These programs were *Colorado Proud*, *Idaho Preferred*, *Minnesota Grown*, and *Ohio Proud.*

The response from *Minnesota Grown* was of particular interest. The program researched the possibility of a quality assured logo but found that such a program would be cost-prohibitive and that “participants would not receive enough net revenue to pay for the program.” The response went on to say that while *Minnesota Grown* may not police quality standards, the marketplace does. In similar fashion, *Ohio Proud* noted that while it is not quality-driven, its member companies and department inspectors are quick to notify the program of any misuse of the logo. These two responses suggest quality enters the picture even if the program itself does not have specific quality standards or procedures for monitoring quality.

Extensions

This item inventoried the trademarks (brands) in use by state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. Because the researcher collected data from program websites or webpages, the population is all 38 state programs. Sixteen programs (42.1%) were identified as having one or more trademarks in addition to the trademarked program name, and the median value for additional trademarks created by these programs was two (2.0).[30] Trends among these additional trademarks are discussed below.

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs generally promote agricultural products grown, raised, or processed in-state, and it is common to find a single trademark used across all categories. A handful of programs, however, have trademarks that distinguish between grown or

Table 4.10 Program trademarks for grown, raised, or processed products

	Grown / Raised Product-specific	**Processed / Made** Product-specific
Arkansas Grown	**Arkansas Grown**	**Arkansas Made**
Fresh from Florida	**Fresh from Florida** Fresh from Florida Seafood	**From Florida** From Florida Seafood
Illinois Product	**Illinois Product** Illinois…Where Fresh Is (specialty crops)	**Illinois Product**
Kentucky Proud	**Kentucky Proud** Kentucky Proud Hemp Kentucky Proud Livestock Tag	**Kentucky Proud** Kentucky Proud Popcorn - Preferred Popcorn Udderly Kentucky
Massachusetts Grown	**Massachusetts Grown**	**Massachusetts…Made with Pride**
Jersey Fresh	**Jersey Fresh** Jersey Bred/Jersey Equine Jersey Grown Jersey Seafood	**Made with Jersey Fresh**
New Mexico Tradition	**New Mexico - Grown with Tradition**	**New Mexico - Made with Tradition**
Goodness Grows in North Carolina	**Got to Be NC**[1] Freshness from North Carolina Waters	**Got to Be NC**[1]
Certified South Carolina	**Certified South Carolina Grown** Certified South Carolina Seafood	**Certified South Carolina Product**
Virginia	**Virginia Grown**	**Virginia's Finest**

[1] The *Got to Be NC* logo incorporates the *Goodness Grows in North Carolina* logo.

[30] In this count, *Fresh from Florida* and *Hawaii Seal of Quality*, which self-reported as having one trademark were counted as having more than one trademark by the researcher. See page 66.

raised agricultural products and processed or made agricultural products. As seen in Table 4.10, these include *Arkansas Grown, Fresh from Florida, Massachusetts Grown, Jersey Fresh, New Mexico Tradition, Certified South Carolina,* and the Virginia Department of Agriculture's agriculture promotion program. *Virginia's Finest* promotes specialty food and beverage companies making cheeses, soups, and sauces, for example, and *Made with Jersey Fresh* is for use by companies that make food items using *Jersey Fresh* ingredients.

Within the grown/raised and processed/made categories, programs are also creating trademarks for specific products. Seafood is popular, as seen in Table 4.10; *Fresh from Florida Seafood*, *Jersey Seafood*, *Freshness from North Carolina Waters*, and *Certified South Carolina Seafood* promote the seafood of their respective states. (The researcher listed these as product-specific trademarks within grown/raised agricultural products because aquaculture-based seafood can be included.) In the processed/made category, *Kentucky Proud* has two unique commodity-specific trademarks, *Kentucky Proud Popcorn – Preferred Popcorn* and *Udderly Kentucky*. The former is a brand of popcorn that sources its popcorn from western Kentucky farm families, and the latter is a label for milk sourced from Kentucky dairies and processed by Prairie Farms, a Kentucky-based processor. Other dairy-based businesses such as ice cream producers and frozen yogurt shops can source *Udderly Kentucky* milk and also participate in the marketing program. As seen in Figure 4.4, both of these commodity-specific trademarks feature the *Kentucky Proud* logo and utilize that logo's color scheme. Maintaining such consistency among trademarks is common among programs.

Figure 4.4 Selected *Kentucky Proud* logos

Additional program trademarks perform other functions. As seen in Table 4.11, program trademarks may serve to identify the producer, a process-based attribute of production, or a regional area of production. *Homegrown by Heroes* is a producer identifier that seven programs

Table 4.11 Additional program trademarks

	Producer Identifier	Process-based Identifier	Regional Identifier	Restaurants / Culinary Tourism	Miscellaneous
Arkansas Grown	Homegrown by Heroes				
Colorado Proud		Colorado Organic		Colorado Cuisine	
Fresh from Florida					From Florida USA (international use)
Hawaii Seal of Quality			Island Seal of Quality		Partner Seal of Quality (for entities committed to support of state's agriculture economy; not used on product offered for sale)
Illinois Product	Homegrown by Heroes				
Kentucky Proud	Homegrown by Heroes		Appalachia Proud: Mountains of Potential		
Certified Product of Louisiana	Homegrown by Heroes Certified Cajun Product of Louisiana Certified Creole Product of Louisiana				
Maryland's Best	Homegrown by Heroes				
Massachusetts Grown		Commonwealth Quality Program		Savor Massachusetts	
Jersey Fresh	Homegrown by Heroes				
Goodness Grows in North Carolina				Savor NC on the Menu	
Pennsylvania Preferred	Homegrown by Heroes				
Certified South Carolina				Fresh on the Menu	
GO TEXAN					GO TEXAN Certified Retirement Community

have combined with their respective program logos to promote agricultural products from veterans. *Homegrown by Heroes* originated with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and is now nationally administered by the Farmer Veteran Coalition. While farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and value-added producers of all branches and periods of military service may use the *Homegrown by Heroes* brand independently of a state program, the seven programs identified in Table 4.11 achieve cross-promotion through a modified *Homegrown by Heroes* brand that includes their respective logos.[31] Selected logos are shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Selected *Homegrown by Heroes* logos

Colorado Proud makes the *Colorado Organic* trademark available to producers whose operations have been certified organic under the National Organic Program by a federally-accredited certifying agent. The *Commonwealth Quality Program* also recognizes the processes used by agricultural entities by promoting those that incorporate sustainability, safety, and quality into their business practices.[32] Regional brands are used by both *Kentucky Proud* and *Hawaii Seal of Quality*; *Appalachia Proud: Mountains of Potential* is part of a larger initiative of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to encourage economic development through agriculture in eastern Kentucky.

Finally, as seen in Table 4.11, four programs have created brands specifically for restaurants and other entities that feature local products on their menus. And in the miscellaneous

[31] A handful of additional states partner in promoting the *Homegrown by Heroes* program but do not have combined logos like those in Figure 4.5.
[32] For more information, see the *Commonwealth Quality Program* website at www.thecqp.com.

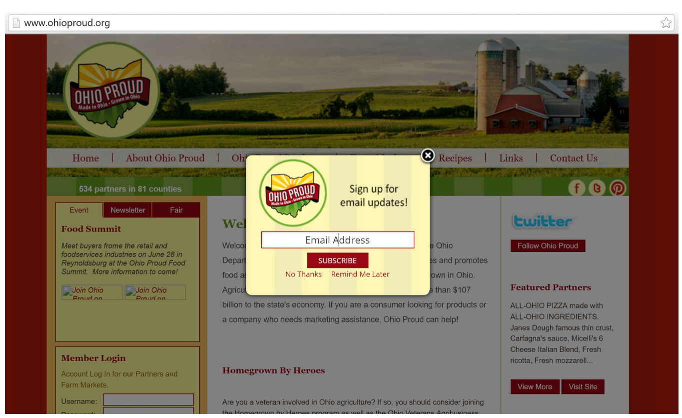
category, there are three brands that had no identifiable corresponding brands among other state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. These include Florida's *From Florida USA* for international marketing, Hawaii's *Partner Seal of Quality* for entities committed to supporting the state's agriculture economy, and Texas' *GO TEXAN Certified Retirement Community* brand for promoting communities as ideal retirement destinations.

Notable Web Features

During review of program websites and webpages for data collection purposes, the researcher noted a few unique features. These are reported below for informational purposes.

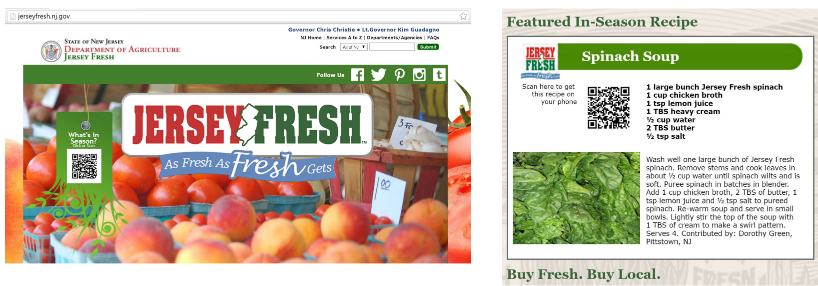
Visitors to the *Ohio Proud* website are greeted with a pop-up box that invites them to sign up for email updates, as seen in Figure 4.6. Other programs had e-newsletter sign-up buttons or links on their webpages. This research did not explore newsletter content, but presumably, the newsletter would communicate with program members or with persons interested in the state's local products. The pop-up box is a more intrusive way to give the intended audience an opportunity to sign up for the newsletter and may secure a greater number of sign-ups. Of course, some could find the pop-up off-putting, but after clicking "No Thanks," closing the browser window, opening another window, and returning to the *Ohio Proud* website, the pop-up box did not reappear.

Figure 4.6 *Ohio Proud* homepage



Jersey Fresh makes use of QR codes to enable website visitors to easily access certain information on mobile phones. The first visible QR code on the homepage offers to provide information on what is in season with a quick scan. While the free QR scanner app downloaded to the researcher's phone had difficulty loading this information, a scan of a second QR code for a featured *Jersey Fresh* recipe loaded quickly on the researcher's phone. This makes the recipe easily available for future reference in the grocery store or in the kitchen. Figure 4.7 has screenshots of both QR codes from the *Jersey Fresh* homepage.

Figure 4.7 QR codes on the *Jersey Fresh* homepage



The *Maryland's Best* website has a "My Favorite Producers" function that was also of interest. From the homepage and other areas of the site, it is possible to search for producers in the program, as seen in Figure 4.8. After choosing search criteria, the system returns a list of matching companies with contact information and brief descriptions. Figure 4.9 shows one of the listings returned by a search for blackberries. Clicking "Add to favorites" adds this orchard to a list of favorite producers that the system maps.

Figure 4.8 *Maryland's Best* producer search

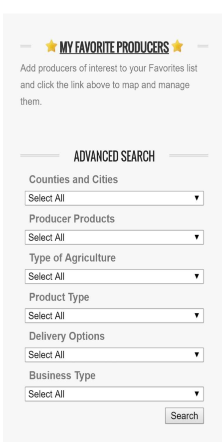
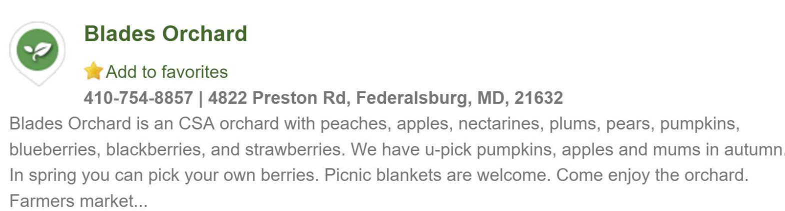
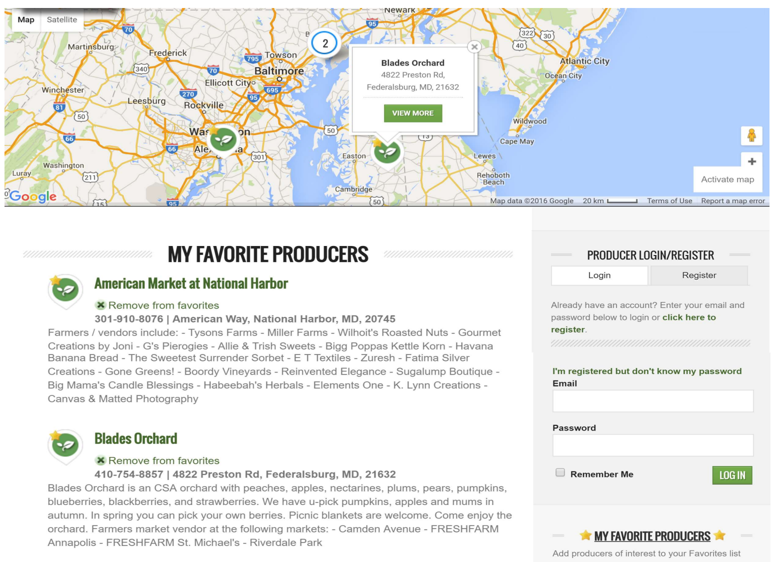


Figure 4.9 Sample *Maryland's Best* search result



As seen in Figure 4.10, Blades Orchard is in the favorites list and its location is shown on the map above. The leaf to the left marks another favorite producer, and the "2" on the map means that two more favorite producers are in that area. Clicking the "2" refocuses the map on those locations. One complicating factor of this site feature should be noted: favorite producers are saved to a browser's cookies, so if the user clears cookies, the favorites list is lost. This also means that when a user visits the website from a different computer, his/her favorites list is unavailable.

Figure 4.10 *Maryland's Best* My Favorite Producers map



Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the results of the survey and the researcher's content analysis for each category of the conceptual framework. In addition, the chapter presented three unique web features noted while exploring program websites. Chapter five discusses these results and makes a handful of program recommendations. In addition, areas for further inquiry are identified.

Chapter V. Conclusion

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the research presented in this paper and discuss findings from the research. The research purpose and framework are reviewed, and as findings are discussed, program recommendations and areas for further inquiry are identified.

Research Summary

The purpose of this research was to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the 50 states employ to build their brands. Drawing on concepts from branding and advertising literature, a categories conceptual framework was constructed to fulfill the research purpose. The first category, program budget, included programs' revenues and allocations to promotion, inputs that are the foundation of programs' efforts to make consumers aware of their brands. The second category, advertising platforms, examined programs' use of traditional media, new media, out-of-home, and point-of-purchase advertising. Advertising familiarizes consumers with a brand and can influence the perceived quality of a brand. The third category, market segmentation, reasoned that segmenting the consumer market can make limited promotion dollars more effective by targeting consumers most likely to purchase state-branded agricultural products. The final category, brand image, took into account decisions that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs make with regard to trademark use, product quality, and extensions. Each of these are sources for the associations that consumers attach to a program's brand to form an overall perception of the brand.

Category elements were operationalized as both survey items and items for web analysis. The survey was distributed to 38 state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. Over a period of three weeks, 12 programs responded (31.6%) although two were incomplete responses. The researcher visited program websites and/or webpages on an administrative entity's website to collect data on use of new media and brand extensions over a six-day period in March 2016.

Summary of Findings

Continuing with the structure of previous chapters, findings are summarized by each category within the conceptual framework.

Program budget

Based on collected data, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs have modest budgets with which to create brand awareness. Even South Carolina and Florida's multi-million dollar budgets – large in comparison to the other programs responding to this survey (see Table 4.2, p. 57) – are modest when compared to these states' fiscal 2015 general revenue resources as reported by the National Association of State Budget Officers (2015). *Certified South Carolina's* \$3.5 million budget is 0.043% of South Carolina's \$8.1 billion general fund, and *Fresh from Florida's* \$10.5 million budget is 0.034% of the state's \$30.5 billion general fund.[33] Calculations across all programs would yield similarly small percentages, yet general revenue remains an important source of funding for state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. General revenue, federal dollars, and program fees were the most common funding sources reported by programs.

Two programs, *Colorado Proud* and *Buy Nevada*, do not receive state general revenue. While the Colorado Department of Agriculture allocates government funds to *Colorado Proud* from its Agriculture Management Fund (a non-major, special revenue fund), *Buy Nevada* is

[33] These calculations treat *Certified South Carolina* and *Fresh from Florida's* SFY 2015 program dollars as general revenue only. It is likely that a portion of these dollars are not general revenue, but neither program provided a breakdown of SFY 2015 funding sources. As a result, these percentages may be slightly higher than actual.

entirely dependent on program fees. The launch of an entirely self-funded program could present an interesting case study for states not operating a program or for states that may want to reduce general revenue support. Certainly a program funded entirely by participants avoids questions about use of public funds for these programs; however, as benefits of promotion may accrue to producers not technically members of the program, there may also be free rider concerns, as described earlier in this paper. A *Buy Nevada* case study is of added interest given that a similar program called *Nevada Grown* operates within the state and has for almost a decade.

This research included sale of merchandise as a means of generating program revenue. While two programs saw minimal amounts of revenue from this activity, three programs noted that merchandise was sold at cost or handled by an entity separate from the administrative entity. This suggests that the true value of program merchandise may be the resulting consumer impressions as people unfamiliar with a state's program see its trademark on another person's item; in this context, merchandise may also generate word of mouth for a program.

Advertising platforms

No matter the funding source, programs allocate a majority of funds to promotion activities, a result not unexpected among programs seeking increased awareness of and demand for states' agricultural products. Traditional and point-of-purchase advertising remain common means of generating brand awareness, and social media advertising is also popular (discussed below). Only three programs engaged in out-of-home advertising in state fiscal year 2015, despite this platform's many available options. Reasons for programs' low engagement with out-of-home advertising are unknown. It could be that the platform is judged less suitable for programs' messaging needs, or it could be that programs are unfamiliar with options. Programs may want to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of out-of-home advertising, particularly if programs' primary market segments can be targeted through an out-of-home location.[34]

State-sponsored agriculture promotion programs engage in a lot of new media. Almost all 38 identified programs have a website and/or webpages on an administrator's website, each a form of advertising in its own right (Bhat et al., 2005). Online advertising among the 11 responding programs also included use of social media ads on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (81.8%), banner advertisements (54.5%), and pop-up ads (36.4%). Future research could explore the host websites that programs partner with for banner and pop-up ads; chosen hosts should be attractive to a program's target market (Papatla & Bhatnagar, 2005). With regard to social media ads, advertising options are continually evolving, and each social media site has different targeting capabilities and user demographics.[35] Even in this small sample size, programs recognize the utility of social media advertising for reaching consumers, and programs will want to remain abreast of options available to them.

Program presence on social media platforms is high. Of 38 state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs, 25 (65.8%) hold one or more social media accounts. As previously noted, that percentage is probably underreported since only those programs with social media accounts *linked* from a program website or webpage were included in the tally. Programs should check that their websites or webpages include visible social media links, an easy way to ensure that web content and social media platforms work together for maximum online exposure (Woodrow, 2012). To be included in the tally, a program's social media account also needed to be separate from the administrative entity's social media account. The researcher observed that an

[34] Outdoor Advertising Association of America materials (2015) state that when compared to other media, out-of-home advertising delivers impressions at much lower cost per thousand.
[35] For an overview, see Palmer, 2015.

administrative entity's account covers a broad range of content, pulling from its many programs and regulatory functions. In contrast, programs' social media accounts are free to focus solely on state products (seasonal foods, recipes, etc.), producers, member companies, and related news. While the administrative entity may promote a program's agricultural brand, exposure may be less than with a dedicated account. Nuances of brand promotion through stand-alone sites/social media accounts and administrative entity sites/social media accounts could be an area for further inquiry.

While 25 programs have one or more social media accounts, 13 (34.2%) have none. Even if these numbers are slightly underreported and over-reported, respectively, a handful of programs may not be using social media. Administrator perspective on this point could be interesting, informing literature on government's use of social media.

Other aspects of programs' social media use could be explored through further research. For example, how engaged are programs on social media? A handful of accounts appeared to be relatively neglected, with the last activity occurring weeks or months ago. For social media to contribute to brand success, it is important to be active; Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) note the importance of keeping content fresh and engaging in discussion with customers. Social media posts could also be analyzed for content and message continuity across platforms. Investigations of content could extend into the types of posts that generate the most consumer shares (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014a).

A final new media component described by this research was programs' development of mobile apps. While only four programs have an app, many others have online mapping and product search functions that could translate into a mobile platform. If a program's website is mobile-friendly, however, an app may be a redundant use of limited program resources. It would be helpful to know what features of an app make it more appealing to consumers than a mobile-friendly website, and by extension, if an app can be linked to any additional benefits accruing to producers. Recall that three programs offered broad-based apps, while one program developed an app focused on restaurants serving local foods. App content could alter considerations with regard to consumer appeal or producer benefit. The question of whether it is worthwhile for state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs to build apps could be another area for study.

Market segmentation

Survey data revealed that programs are segmenting the consumer market, which should increase advertising effectiveness and build brands' strength by appealing to those with a high likelihood of purchase (Stockdale, 1999). Seven of 11 programs (63.6%) identified females of varying age ranges as primary market segments. This is consistent with reviewed literature. Jekanowski et al.'s survey of Indiana consumers (2000), for example, found that female consumers were more likely to purchase in-state products. In addition, research has associated women with healthier food choices, and historically, women have been responsible for providing and preparing food for the family (Patterson et al., 1999; Ueland, 2007). Programs will want to be aware of marketplace or workplace trends that might alter these circumstances in the future. Ueland (2007), for example, writes that "men, especially those with higher education, are to a larger extent than previously focusing on the health aspects of food which again may reduce food choice differences between genders in this segment" (p. 326). The greater nutritional benefit of local foods is an advertising point for many state programs, so the fact that men appear to be taking greater interest in healthy foods is relevant to state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.

Brand image

Responding programs exhibited much similarity with regard to trademark use. Program trademarks are used across a wide range of related entities – everything from farmers' markets and garden centers to restaurants and food service operations. As a result, consumers are exposed to a program's trademark(s) in many different contexts. This should have positive effects for consumers' brand awareness, fostering both familiarity and the knowledge that the brand can help identify local products in various settings. These different contexts also shape the brand's image, or its perception in the minds of consumers. Encountering the brand at a restaurant one day and at a garden center the next offers distinct experiences that attach to the brand and underscore the broad nature of the agriculture promotion program in many states. New consumer surveys might be useful in understanding where consumers most often remember seeing the brand.

Program action with regard to guaranteeing the quality of branded products was of interest because product quality shapes consumer opinion of a brand. Previous research suggested that quality standards could add value to state brands and cautioned that low-quality products bearing a program's trademark(s) could have negative consequences for the brand.[36] Six of 10 respondent programs utilize established grading standards as a threshold that commodities must meet in order to carry the state's trademark(s). Beyond that, only three programs identified additional quality measures such as including an expectation of quality in program rules or making site visits. If the respondent programs are an indicator for the entire population, then the number of programs with detailed quality standards or quality monitoring processes is outnumbered by those without.

[36] See Jekanowski et al., 2000; Onken & Bernard, 2010; Patterson et al., 2003; Patterson & Martinez, 2004; Patterson, 2006.

In open-ended responses to product quality questions, a recurring theme was the program's role as an identifier of local foods, not a regulator of quality. Clearly, it is a program's prerogative to define the product attributes being certified by its trademark(s), and conveying this information to the public will be important for managing consumer expectations.

Creating a family of brands is fairly common among state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs. Just under half of the 38 identified programs have more than one trademark associated with their brand. Commodity-specific brands, particularly seafood, and producer identifiers are the most common brand extensions employed by programs. Seven states use the *Homegrown by Heroes* brand to identify in-state producers who are also veterans, and that number is likely to grow. States have also branched out in unique ways. *Appalachia Proud: Mountains of Potential* is a regional brand for eastern Kentucky. While all brands for agriculture promotion have economic development goals, *Appalachia Proud* seems a more concentrated effort as one component of a larger state plan to invest in the *Appalachia Proud* region. Both Colorado and Massachusetts have brands that highlight a process-based attribute of production – in Colorado, organic production, and in Massachusetts, sustainable and safe business practices. It is easy to imagine other states creating similar brands, particularly if producers seek new ways to differentiate their products.

The number of brands managed by state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs is likely to continue growing. Programs have many options for subdividing brands like *Fresh from Florida Seafood* within *Fresh from Florida* or extending into new contexts like *Fresh on the Menu* for restaurants within *Certified South Carolina*. An area of research that might prove fruitful would be investigations of the effect of multiple brands on consumers. While the two examples above are fairly distinguishable brands, lines between others are more blurred. Take, for instance, *Illinois Product* / *Illinois…Where Fresh Is* or *Certified Product of Louisiana* / *Louisiana Grown*. Although in the latter case the brands are administratively separate, each example pairs an original, broad-based brand with a more recent brand for specialty crops. Yet such crops – fruits and vegetables, horticulture and nursery crops, and more – could be branded under the original brand. Do consumers understand the difference? Do consumers *need* to understand the difference? Both promote in-state products, and that may be sufficient. The overarching question for further research might be – is there a point at which multiple brands lose meaning or become confusing for consumers?

Conclusion

This research sought to describe the inputs and strategies that state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs use to build brands. It has provided a snapshot of programs' budgets and participation in different advertising platforms. It has shown that programs segment the consumer market, and it has collected data on program decisions related to trademark use, product quality, and brand extensions. While results revealed much about these programs and their efforts to build successful brands, further research could prove useful. For example, based on results reported in this paper, there is wide variation in program budgets from state to state. What factors explain this variation? Is there a relationship between a program's budget and whether demand for a state's largest agricultural products is largely driven by consumers or food processors?

The existing literature on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs largely focuses on consumer awareness and programs' effectiveness at achieving increased demand and/or higher prices for producers. These questions seek to understand the economic implications of state programs for producers and remain important areas for investigation; another line of inquiry could investigate the economic implications of state programs for consumers. Some would challenge the assumption that promoting local produce is good for the consumer, particularly if local produce is more expensive than imported produce. Paul M. Patterson (2006) also raises the question of whether local produce is really "fresher, better" given that producers often choose to send higher quality products out of state. On a final note, particularly in the branding of community-supported agriculture and farmers' markets and in the operation of "buy local" pledges and co-branded farm-to-school programs, state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs are playing a role in the trend toward local foods – think urban agriculture, community gardens, farm-to-table restaurants, and state initiatives to support local and regional food systems.[37] Studying the role of state programs in supporting local food systems or building interest in agriculture through farm-to-school programs, junior chef competitions, and other activities could broaden the research on state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs.

[37] See Essex, Shinkle, & Bridges, 2015 for a discussion of legislative initiatives in local foods.

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Appendix A: Email Correspondence

Introductory Email:

Greetings!

I hope you'll be willing to share a bit of information about *[PROGRAM NAME]* in the coming days.

My name is Janiece Crenwelge, and I am a graduate student at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. To fulfill the requirements for a Masters of Public Administration, I am conducting research to learn more about the operation of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs like *[PROGRAM NAME]* across the United States. My research interest stems from a rural upbringing and general interest in Texas' *GO TEXAN* program, and I write today to introduce you to the research and request your completion of a brief corresponding survey.

The purpose of my research is to describe certain inputs and strategies employed by programs to build a brand among consumers. As such, the survey requests information about a program's budget and advertising activities, use of market research, and brand image management; the latter includes questions about use of the program's trademark(s) and incorporation of quality standards for products displaying the program trademark(s).

Next week, I'll send another email with a survey link. The survey will have just over 20 items. Most are structured as dropdown, yes/no, or check-all-that-apply question types. There are six to eight open-ended questions, depending on your response to certain items, and the question that may take longest asks you to break down your program's revenue streams.

Survey participation is voluntary. While I'll be able to link responses to your state's program, I won't be able to see who specifically completed the survey. If you choose to complete the survey, I'll ask that you do so by March 11, 2016.

I obtained your contact information from your program website or by calling your agency, **but please feel free to redirect this email and the survey**. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns at any point, I'm happy to correspond by email (jrc151@txstate.edu), or to speak by phone (512-674-5561).

Sincere thanks, in advance, for your time!

Best regards,
Janiece

Survey Consent and Survey Link Email:

Hello:

You are being asked to be part of a research project to learn more about the operation of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs across the United States. Specifically, the project focuses on certain inputs and strategies that *[PROGRAM NAME]* employs to build its brand. The research is being conducted by Janiece Crenwelge, a graduate student at Texas State University, jrc151@txstate.edu (512-674-5561).

If you agree to be part of this research, you are asked to complete a survey of approximately 25 items by Friday, March 11 (link at end of this email). It should take about 20 minutes to complete the survey.

You may choose not to answer any question(s) for any reason.

Your participation is voluntary, and there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research.

The surveys are anonymous; your name is not recorded. Surveys will be kept until June 2017 and then destroyed. Only I will have access to the surveys.

This project [IRB Exemption Request EXP2015M912255G] was exempted from full or expedited review by the Texas State Institutional Review Board on December 3, 2015. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB Chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413 – lasser@txstate.edu) and to Becky Northcut, Director, Research Integrity & Compliance (512-245-2314 – bnorthcut@txstate.edu).

Again, your participation is voluntary, and refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss. You may discontinue participation at any time.

A summary of the findings will be provided to participants upon completion of the study, if requested. To access results of the study, contact Janiece Crenwelge.

Thank you.

Please access the survey here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/stateagriculturepromotion

First reminder:

Hello!

Just a quick request that you take a few minutes to complete the survey of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs prior to Friday, March 11, 2016. I know there are many demands on your time, but the data you provide will be most useful in contributing to overall understanding of your programs. Should you have any questions or comments about the survey, please feel free to contact me via email, jrc151@txstate.edu, or by phone, 512-674-5561.

Thank you,
Janiece Crenwelge

Survey link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/stateagriculturepromotion

Second reminder:

Hi!

This is a last request that you take some time (about 15-20 minutes) to complete the survey of state-sponsored agriculture promotion programs on or before this Friday, March 11. As a reminder, you may choose not to answer any question(s) for any reason. Should you have questions or comments about the survey, please feel free to contact me via email, jrc151@txstate.edu, or by phone, 512-674-5561.

Thanks for reading this and my earlier emails!

Janiece

Survey link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/stateagriculturepromotion