

States with more farmers' markets have more outbreaks of food poisoning

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From 1994 to 2014, the number of farmers markets throughout the country increased almost fivefold. Many consumers frequent these markets because they believe that the foods they purchase there are healthier and safer than the same items sold at supermarkets, posing less risk of food-borne illness.

Yet no one really knows whether what is sold at farmers markets is less likely to make you sick, the publicly available data on food-borne illness from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are limited: Only the location where the food was prepared is available, and even that is not always recorded.

Two colleagues and I recently assembled a data set that matched the number of cases and outbreaks of food-borne illness with the number of farmers markets in each state and in each year for 2004, 2006, and 2008 to 2013.

First, we found a positive correlation between the number of farmers markets per capita in a given state and in a given year and the number of reported outbreaks, regardless of type, of food-borne illness per capita in that state that year. Then, we found a similar positive correlation between farmers markets per capita and reported individual cases of food-borne illness per capita.

We found similar positive correlations between farmers markets per capita and outbreaks per capita of [norovirus](#), a common cause of gastroenteritis. Likewise, we found a similar positive correlation between farmers markets per capita and outbreaks per capita of [Campylobacter jejuni](#), a bacterium typically found in animal feces that is also a common cause of gastroenteritis.

Read full, original post: [Farmers Markets and Food-Borne Illness](#)