

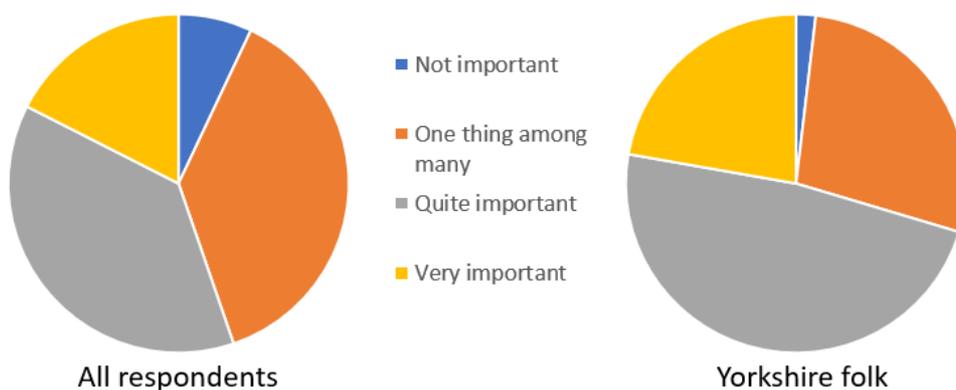
Where in the world part 4: **What's in a name?**

We're all familiar with the use of locales to identify the provenance of food, whether countries (Irish Stew), regions (Cornish Pasty) or towns (Bakewell Puddings). There is some fragility in this, though, as the Bakewell example attests. Most people will be more familiar with the 'Bakewell tart' sold in packs of 6 in round aluminium foils than with the traditional pudding, which is a very different foodstuff. Cheese has one of the most significant uses of local names – think Parmesan, Gruyere and Stilton – and these can denote much about primary agriculture as well as where and how the finished product is made.

Tradition is obviously a major factor in the strength of geographic association; Scotland is famous for whisky, salmon and shortbread. How far does the essence of a place extend beyond traditional products, and what about categories where the value of provenance might already be tied up in other branding? How might Scottish bacon be viewed against Danish bacon? And, in the same vein, how 'authentic' do consumers think Somerset Brie is when compared to the French original? Yorkshire has its own examples such as Pontefract Cakes, Wensleydale cheese and, of course, Yorkshire Puddings, but how much of the essence of 'Yorkshire-ness' is embodied in these in the way that consumers relate to them, and how far can Yorkshire-ness extend? To provide at least a partial answer to this question, grasp business development has conducted some consumer research. The full findings will be published on grasp.org.uk and via their social channels, but a few of the highlights are included here ...

Perhaps inevitably, respondents from Yorkshire were over-represented in the survey, as they are clearly more invested in 'Yorkshire-ness' than people from other parts of the UK, and the findings need to be viewed with that in mind. Of course, as with many other areas in the UK and beyond, identity is not necessarily a single thing. Residents of York, Sheffield, Leeds and Beverley all might well view their own part of 'Greater Yorkshire' differently from the other Ridings. And at an even more granular level, sub-regions might be more important than a political boundary drawn on a map. The survey gave respondents a few options for definitions of the concept of local in both geographic and economic terms.

The geographic definition, based on a mixture of distance and other measures, shows that consumers have a mixed view of what constitutes locally produced. 'Around the town where I live' seems to be too narrow a definition and was chosen by less than one in six. All of the other options ('within 20 miles', 'within 40 miles' and 'in the same county') scored much the same. Inevitably, how people feel about what 'local' means will be impacted by the specifics of their own environment, but product claims need to take into account the expectations of the market. The economic definition was also equivocal; more than 4 out of 5 respondents expected 'local' products to be made locally, 3 out of 5 expected most ingredients to be sourced locally and half expected local growing and rearing too. Half of our participants also picked local employment as being important.



The value of provenance

How that was reflected in a provenance hierarchy was also instructive. Overall, 'British' was valued above 'local' which was in turn valued above 'English', which was valued more 'from Yorkshire', even with 40% of respondents being from Yorkshire. The differences weren't huge, given the size of the sample, and might reflect a difference between people close to the land and urban dwellers. An interesting aside here, is that in recent research conducted by academics from the N8 group of research-intensive universities in the north of England (3 out of 8 of which are in Yorkshire) found that the term 'sustainably produced' was valued more even than 'British' when consumers were given enough time to think about it.

Nevertheless, and unsurprisingly, the value in 'Yorkshire-ness' is highest for Yorkshire people, which begs questions around what 'Yorkshire-ness' feels like in food and what sorts of food products are associated with the county. The terms that were most used to characterise the county were words like 'no nonsense', 'hearty' and 'traditional' which

seem to reflect the social characteristics of the region. We also observed a number of participants citing ethical reasons for their interest in locally-produced ... for Yorkshire residents: supporting their local farming & food businesses, low food miles and freshness were significant factors. So sustainability is often baked into a what could be seen as provincialism! The products, very predictably, were led by Yorkshire puddings, rhubarb and cheese (Wensleydale getting specific mentions). There is a clear opportunity for Yorkshire food businesses to leverage their Yorkshire heritage and provenance 'features' alongside a host of 'benefits' that include sustainability ... it turns out that there actually is something in a name.

[Where in the world part 1: Home-grown](#)

[Where in the world part 2: Not all miles are equal](#)

[Where in the world part 3: Not all hectares are equal](#)

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