



NYC Food: A \$20 Billion Market

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Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

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New York is the kind of city where hyperbole is sometime reality. The NY Times [reported](#) this figure of \$20 Billion in an article on the opening of Trader Joe's at 14th Street near Union Square. What an incredible figure. Think of the buying power NYC could exert on the rural areas of America simply by choosing to buy different types of food.

The article also underscored how important Union Square has been in changing NYC's food landscape. Union Square has become a mecca of fresh food for not just its surrounding residents, but for the whole city given all of its convenient transportation linkages. The Union Square greenmarket has been a major catalyst in making this happen. Chefs from all over the city get key seasonal, fresh ingredients from the greenmarket. Everyday people were able to start cooking like the pros with all sorts of unique items never found in supermarkets.

This shows that greenmarkets can raise the level of competition for fresh local and organic foods in local areas. Union Square is a wonderful example of how a greenmarket can serve as a catalyst for economic revitalization in both the urban areas that host them and the neighboring rural farm land that need access to local markets.

I think 86th Street Between Fifth Avenue and East End could become a new mecca of food for the Upper East Side. There is a lot of space available right now between Lex and 2nd Avenue that could support a Trader Joe's, Whole Foods and there is good space on both ends to support good greenmarkets.

Instead, people have been using services like Fresh Direct, which delivers fresh food by truck to local residents. While I am frustrated by the double parked trucks and the pollution they make doing their deliveries, they have increased the level of competition for fresh food options which I applaud.

When asked about Trader Joe's coming to NYC,

Mr. Braddock of FreshDirect said that considering the size of the grocery market in the New York area, he was willing to welcome his company's newest challenger.

"It's a \$20 billion market," Mr. Braddock said. "There's a lot of room for people to maneuver."

It certainly is a lot of buying power. If even a small fraction of this could be shifted from the large agri-businesses and redirected to local upstate farmers, we could not only get better food, we could reinvigorate the upstate farming economy. Ultimately this will help create a system less dependent on long distance, fossil fuel intensive food logistics.



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