Reviewer's report

Title: Food Access and Perceptions of the Community and Household Food Environment as Correlates of Fruit and Vegetable Intake among Rural Seniors

Version: 1 Date: 9 March 2010

Reviewer: Donna Johnson

Reviewer's report:

This paper addresses an important and understudied area. The findings will be very useful to public health planners and practitioners who seek to improve the nutritional health of rural residents, especially seniors. It advances the field.

The study has several strengths. These include the "ground truthing" of the food sources; this really advances understandings beyond the many existing published reports that use access to supermarkets as a proxy for access to fruits and vegetables. The use of multivariate analysis to explore the impact of distance to fruit and vegetable sources in the context of other factors that influence fruit and vegetable intake is also a major strength.

The relationship between educational level and fruit and vegetable intake was confusing. On page 11, the authors state that "limited education were associated with increased intake," but on page 13, they state that "gender, age and education were positively associated with intake." If it appears that limited education is indeed associated with increased fruit and vegetable intake in this population, it might be interesting to address this in the discussion.

Page by page comments:

- Consider revising the first sentence in the Sample and Study Design section. I found it difficult to follow. Consider breaking into 2 sentences.

Page 10
- Consider saying, "Many (31.6%) of respondents reported little variety of foods."
- Consider putting sentence that begins, "For many seniors there were problems with....." as the second sentence in the paragraph.

Page 14
- Consider adding "NEGATIVE perceptions" to beginning of second sentence.

Page 17
The suggestion that interventions should also focus on frozen and canned fruits and vegetables has important programatic implications. I wonder if it would be possible to support this concept a little more throughout the manuscript. Consider a sentence in the background section about the current focus on fresh fruits and vegetable in much of the existing literature with a little information about the
nutritional qualities of other forms. The discussion section then could also include a sentence reminding the reader that in the current study, the distance to fruits and vegetables was decreased when frozen and canned were included and any other studies that have looked at this issue.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.