PHOTOS BY HEATHER PERRY/For the Daily Titan

[Above] Z Ranch Organics' booth offers crisp greens, gleaming eggplants and crunchy asparagus for a variety of shoppers. [Left] Brie Zigler, 25, serves organic peach vendor, Ricardo Salazar, a cup of Sumatra organic coffee.

Orange County Farmers Market offers a quaint alternative

A family atmosphere, unique foods and warm vendors all come together

BY HEATHER PERRY
For the Daily Titan
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John Ford, 55, a honey vendor, was sick of hearing buzzing. He packed up his truck with his honey and headed for the Orange County Farmers Market for a charming day with his family of farmers and Orange County shoppers.

The Orange County Farmers Market in Costa Mesa attracts scores of different shoppers looking for everything from seaweed salad to edible bee pollen.

Although this is an appealing aspect, it is not the reason why the most loyal of customers keep coming back for more.

"You can buy a bag of apples at the supermarket and you might get a really good deal, but those apples could be cold-stored up to a year," said Trish Harrison, 54, a Certified Farmers Markets manager. "They might look pretty, they might be polished, they might be waxed, but you bite into them and you're like 'Ugh!' Out here, they are straight off the tree; they don't look perfect and they are not the same size, but you taste them and you think 'Wow, I would pay so much more for this.' It's the best-kept secret."

At the O.C. Farmers Market, most, if not all, of the fruits and vegetable are organic – meaning no pesticides or growth enhancers were used in the produce.

"When people say 'organic,' do [they] know what that means?" said Brie Ziegler, 25, an organic coffee vendor for Angel's Brew. "Check everything out – sample everything first, be prepared to ask questions and get to know what they are selling. Don't just buy it because it's cheaper. Buy it because it's better."

Despite its petite set-up of tents, the O.C. Farmers Market has what Harrison calls a family atmosphere and extremely accessible parking.

"That's usually the kiss of death for most farmers markets – if they don't have adequate parking. We have more than adequate parking," Harrison said. "There's so much more that a farmers market is than just fresh fruits and vegetables, too. People know each other on a first-name basis. I don't know how many people go to Vons or Ralph's and know the checkers' names."

PHOTO BY HEATHER PERRY/For the Daily Titan

The Orange County Farmer's Market in Costa Mesa attracts customers looking for a more personal experience compared to shopping at traditional supermarkets.

Chris Hannigan, 25, musician and songwriter played hits like "Hound Dog" by Elvis and songs by Green Day on his guitar for shoppers' children who danced about in euphoria.

He said he had played at coffee shops, but something about playing at the farmers market is different.

"I do this because of what the farmers market stands for," Hannigan said. "I have to support the farmers."

Coming to the O.C. Farmer's Market also ensures an education. Just ask a vendor about his or her craft, and story after story is sure to ensue.

"Each honey has a different taste because of the nectar. Some people think it is sugar when they see grains in their honey when it's actually a high percentage of glucose causing more granulation," Ford said. "You can have the bees pollinate the buckwheat flower, avocado flower or sage flower and get different flavors of honey."

> "We have competition with the supermarkets, because it's easier and seems cheaper.
>
> – Brie Zigler, *Organic coffee vendor*

Not only do the farmers have a reputation for being knowledgeable, but when people think of a farmer in this modern era, they think of how they must compete with big businesses.

"We have competition with the supermarkets because it's easier and seems cheaper [to buy from food from them]," Ziegler said. "If you come to a farmers market, you don't like businesses like Starbucks anymore because you don't like what Starbucks represents."

Although the market may have a lot of pluses, there are other aspects that dampen the fun.

"This is a small market that is not profiting me, but I have to support and protect the local farmers market," Ford said. "At least this is kind of like a day off. I can relax."

Although competition is an issue, Harrison said the customers remain loyal.

"It's a totally different subculture within a culture; farmers are by far the most honest, loyal, hard-working people you will ever want to meet," Harrison said. "I'm married to a farmer."

The farmers market in Cota Mesa is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan tax family finances

The Associated Press

The economic costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are estimated to total $1.6 trillion – roughly double the amount the White House has requested thus far, according to a new report by Democrats on Congress' Joint Economic Committee.

The report, released Tuesday, attempted to put a price tag on the two conflicts, including "hidden" costs such as interest payments on the money borrowed to pay for the wars, lost investment, the expense of long-term health care for injured veterans and the cost of oil market disruptions.

The $1.6 trillion figure, for the period from 2002 to 2008, translates into a cost of $20,900 for a family of four, the report said.

The Bush administration has requested $804 billion for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined, the report stated.

For the Iraq war only, total economic costs were estimated at $1.3 trillion for the period from 2002 to 2008. That would cost a family of four $16,500, the report said.

Future economic costs would be even greater.

The report estimated that both wars would cost $3.5 trillion between 2003 and 2017. Under that scenario, it would cost a family of four $46,400, the report said.

The report, from the committee's Democratic majority, was not vetted with Republican members.

Democratic leaders in Congress, including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., seized on the report to criticize Bush's war strategy. The White House countered that the report was politically motivated.

The report comes as the House and Senate planned to vote this week on another effort by Democrats to set a deadline for withdrawing troops from Iraq as a condition for providing another $50 billion for the war.

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ANTH306	Culture and Art	01	12-17 to 1-18	GE	10038K	Lec	TWRF	0900a-1150a	MH-657
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ANTH491	Internship in Anthropology	01	12-17 to 1-18		10071K	Supv	TBA	<<<<<<<<<<	<<<<<<<<<<