

Our Acadiana Food System 2016

FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM THE USDA, LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM

Building Community Food Systems in Southwest Louisiana

ACADIANA FOOD ALLIANCE | ACADIA PARISH, EVANGELINE PARISH, IBERIA PARISH, JEFFERSON DAVIS PARISH, LAFAYETTE PARISH, ST LANDRY PARISH, ST MARTIN PARISH, ST MARY PARISH, VERMILLION PARISH

Executive Summary

In some ways the interactions between farmers and buyers in Acadiana can be likened to an exercise in cross-cultural communication, where both parties are speaking clearly yet somehow their meanings get lost. Buyers say they wish there was more local food available to buy, while farmers say the demand and financial support isn't there to expand their supply. We also see there are not many intermediary food businesses in the region, who could help smooth the peaks and troughs of production and demand, and facilitate better communication and distribution. By examining the local food system in and around Lafayette, we are able to glimpse the varied factors that shape the production and availability of produce from area farmers. This report helps to shed some light on those factors and suggests a few key action areas that, with some support, can hopefully promote a flourishing local food economy for southwest Louisiana.

Acknowledgements

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Use of This Report

The Acadiana Food Alliance would like to encourage the use of this report to advance the local food economy of our Acadiana region. Reproduction in whole or part is permitted, but we ask that each instance give due acknowledgment and credit to the Acadiana Food Alliance and cite this report.

Significant Findings

Our community is poised and ready to support the local food economy, but faces several challenges to effectively meet the demand for fresh local produce on a regular basis. Although currently the “Farm to Table” concept is popular in Acadiana and we see regular locally-sourced, chef prepared meals presented as special events, only a few restaurants advertise as farm-to-table establishments. In reality, these establishments offer only about 10-30% locally-sourced ingredients, although one restaurant boasts its menu is almost 90% regionally or locally sourced. Greater supply with more regular consistency throughout the growing season would allow restaurants and other buyers to increase their locally-sourced menu options.

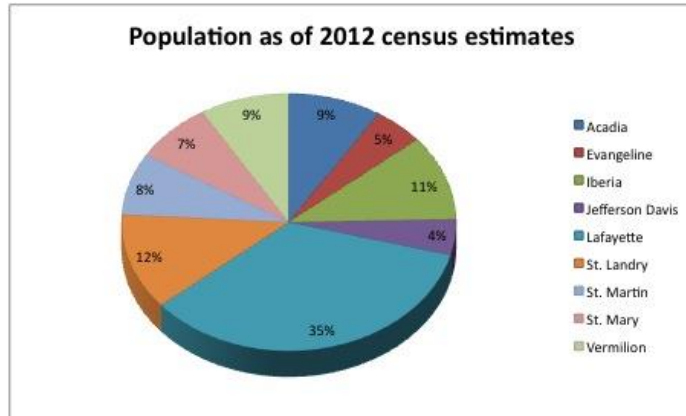
As hinted above, we found that demand far outstrips the supply of local produce in our region, but at the same time our farmers struggle with high financial risk and low profits. Some of this difference may be due to perception and lack of communication. When farmers view the financial reality of preparing a new field, putting extra crop in the ground and growing it to harvest, they may tend to regard the risk as too high. Additionally, agreements between farmers and buyers (restaurants in particular) has in the past been through impromptu sales at the back door or perhaps hand-shake deals for larger sales of produce. Several of the farmers we spoke with had suffered losses from miscommunication or deals that fell through after the crop was harvested. It’s important to note, however, that most buyers we spoke to identified lack of supply as the primary reason they do not currently purchase more local produce, providing a countervailing view and pointing to the importance of clear communication and formalized agreements.

Farm incomes need to be boosted for farming to be viable. Most of the farmers we surveyed operated small or very small produce farms of less than 5 acres. Moreover, when asked about expansion, many replied that labor costs are too high to grow the size of their farming operation (even when land was already available) and a similar number indicated that lack of demand or earning potential held them back. Farming in south Louisiana is financially challenging for the farmers we spoke with, whose income per acre is much lower compared to the state average for vegetables, and whole-farm income is such that most farmers must have additional income/employment. This indicates a double challenge, to increase overall sales and do so either with enough efficiency to maintain outside employment or with a big enough boost to become the primary income.

Our survey results indicate farmers and buyers both struggle with the distribution aspect of our local food system, some of it logistical and some informational. Buyers (restaurants, retailers, processors) in particular reported that the time spent purchasing and coordinating individually with farmers becomes a barrier to increased purchases. Other issues of access were raised as well, such as lack of knowledge of who to buy from or what is available, inconvenience, lack of produce diversity and simple lack of volume. Currently most local farmers sell directly at farmers markets, which is time-consuming and requires lengthy time away from the farm and its daily maintenance. However, the few farmers who reported selling to buyers outside of farmers markets indicate the time requirements of both regular and irregular delivery schedules, and coordinating with buyers, is a significant burden to their business.

Based on the 2012 USDA Agriculture Census, our 9-parish region constitutes 6.7% of the state’s population, just over 4% of its small farms (49 acres or smaller), and an impressive 23% of CSAs offered throughout the state. These numbers suggest that the Acadiana region is moving towards more local food production, however, our survey results demonstrate that this growth cannot meet demand

without new farmers and producers. According to the US Food Market Estimator (Published by the [Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture](#) at Iowa State University), the region could potentially produce 37% of the state’s annual vegetable production needs and currently, Acadiana consumes about 6.5% of the state’s vegetable production. Clearly, there is room for growth.



Recommendations

We identified four needs through our survey, to support a healthy, efficient and flourishing local food system in our Acadiana area.

1. Aggregation service to provide single point of sales
2. Increased farm acreage and continuous production
3. Grower-buyer liaison and contract negotiation
4. Support for certification process and requirements

Aggregation

A single point of distribution to retail and wholesale buyers would decrease the time/effort/cost to buyers as well as decrease farmers expenses on distribution and sales, and decrease complexity for all parties. An aggregation service could thereby facilitate better reliability of product, increased supply and increased demand. For chefs and restaurants, it could make menu planning simplified by offering diversity of produce at a single point of purchase.

An added benefit could be provided to farmers if such an enterprise offered storage or enhanced processing and preparation of produce for market (ie, washing, bagging, sorting, value adding), although these services could be offered separately as well.

Production

Increasing farm incomes is a tremendous need in Acadiana, which could be achieved through increased production and extending that production throughout the year. Supply appears to be much less than demand in our region, and is currently very asymmetrical through the year. All the buyers we interviewed indicated they would buy more locally sourced produce if it was available. Collectively our respondents estimated they would spend as much as \$300,000/year on local food purchases, which represents only a subsample of the potential buyers in Acadiana. Currently, the supply of fresh, local produce is concentrated in the summer months, which indicates that farmland is underutilized. We recommend production should be extended throughout the year, and overall acreage increased. By extending the season, farmers may be able to double their income/acre, making farming more profitable. This, however, would still meet only a fraction of this demand (we estimate the need for 100 additional acres, farmed year-round, just to meet this known demand) and therefore we encourage both more acres to be put under production, and new farmers to go into business.

Grower-Buyer Liaisons

Increasing farmer's sales and increasing the quantity of local foods available through restaurants and other businesses requires several intermediate steps. These relationships may need to be facilitated through a liaison or some type of network or organization. We recommend two specific actions, development and use of contracts between farmers and buyers, and communication among farmers and with buyers to reduce excessive or redundant production (relative to local demand). Contracts will set clear expectations for both farmers and buyers, provide stable supply and demand, and should result in increased sales and supply. Communication among farmers could produce a network of support and reduce the potential for overwhelming the market. For example, when one farmer has a contract to provide tomatoes, but suffers a temporary crop failure, a partner farm may be able to step up and fill the gap until the crop has recovered. Or, if a restaurant has contracts for a particular crop supply, again let us use tomatoes as the example, then other farmers looking to sell to the restaurant will know they should grow a different crop, perhaps zucchini or okra.

Certifications

Although overwhelmingly our respondents (buyers and farmers) indicated that certifications were not important to their operations, rather than indicating an absence of need, this points to the contrary, a need for support. Aside from legally required health codes, several types of optional certifications may be appropriate, starting with food safety. GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification is typically required for farms with large wholesale contracts or for food manufacturing and is increasingly the national standard for food safety. Audits are expensive (\$90+/hour) and complex, requiring extensive documentation and detailed procedures to be in place on the farm. Even when not required, following the GAP practices is beneficial and recommended, to ensure healthy produce and minimize risk of foodborne illness. Small farmers in our region may need support to pay for the audit costs and to complete the planning and potential farm modifications required to meet the standards. Two additional types of certifications were mentioned by some of our survey respondents, of the marketing and consumer confidence type. Both the farmers and buyers we surveyed tend to support Organic practices, but neither groups feel the national Organic Certification is practical, due to high costs and low customer demand. Certified Naturally Grown is one alternative mentioned, and there are other similar certification options available as well, that provide assurance to consumers that farms are protecting the environment through their farming practices. Food businesses could benefit as well, through options such as the Green Restaurant Certification (one of our respondents already participates), or one of the Louisiana state, "Certified Louisiana", "Certified Cajun", or "Certified Creole" labels (indicating the product was sourced/produced in the state).

National Context

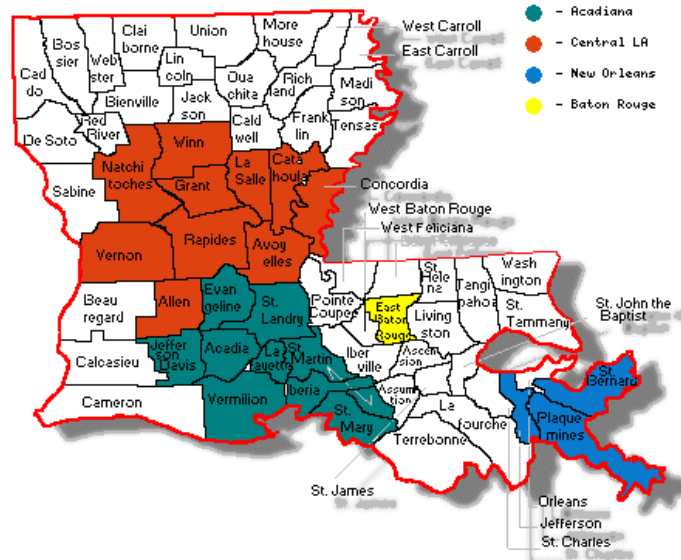
Nationally, the local food movement is a \$6.1 billion industry, with 50,000 farmers and ranchers with local retail sales, and 150,000 farmers and ranchers enjoying direct sales to local consumers. Currently, there are 8,669 farmers markets listed in USDA's National Farmers Market Directory, a 2.3 percent increase from 2015. While direct-to-consumer sales of local produce comprise less than 1% of national agricultural products consumed by Americans, the US Census of Agriculture demonstrates that demand is far outpacing supply. These sales are growing most rapidly in areas where climate and topography favor fruit and vegetable production, proximity to farmers markets and local farms, and access to

transportation infrastructure. Small family farms comprise 88% of US farms, on 45% of US farmland and raking in 20% of agricultural sales. These smaller operations make up 58% of direct-to-consumer sales and 17% of organic sales across the nation. In 2012, a full 25% of farmers were new to farming, having established operations within the last 10 years. New trends that maximize profits for small farmers include agri-tourism programs and recreational services, and 33,000 farms have incorporated these activities in their farming operations. Moreover, value-added commodities, like jams, jellies and preserves, meat jerky, wine and cider, and flower arrangements, are being implemented at a fast pace, with almost 100,000 farms, or 4.5% of farms nationally, using these value added products to increase sales.

State Context

According to the Louisiana State University Ag Center 2015 “Year in Review”, vegetable farming in Louisiana “continues to be incredibly diverse” in 2014 with 33 crops grown by 3,400+ producers, valued at \$76.1 million dollars. Value-adding activities contributed an additional \$102.7 million dollars to farmer incomes, more than doubling the crop value. The report indicates that most of the vegetable crops produced are direct-marketed through the 140 farmers markets operating around the state. Our nine parish region produced nearly \$8 million of vegetable crops in 2014, however three of these parishes recorded zero or nearly zero income from vegetables.

Parish	(Million \$s)
Acadia	\$0.6
Evangeline	\$1
Iberia	\$3.2
Jefferson Davis	\$0
Lafayette	\$1
St Landry	\$1.5
St Martin	\$0.6
St Mary	\$0
Vermillion	\$0.07



Source: diymaps.net (c)

(LSU Ag Center 2015 “Year in Review”)

Local food organizations around Louisiana include the Central Louisiana Economic Development Agency (CLEDA) 9-parish region adjacent to the Acadiana Food Alliance, the Red Stick Farmers Market system operated by BREADA (Big River Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance), and several

organizations serving the Greater New Orleans area including Market Umbrella (Farmers Markets), Holly Grove Market (Market and Food Hub) and Dryades Public Market (Grocery and Food Hub). Farmers markets and small-scale producers exist throughout the state, indeed, recent Google searches yielded 44 farmers markets statewide, serving 69% of Louisiana's 64 parishes.

The Central Louisiana Local Foods Initiative is an adjacent nine-parish region in central Louisiana with parallel goals and objectives as the Acadiana Food Alliance, with similar demographics in a more rural setting. In February 2013, it published its findings from a food systems assessment that mirror our findings from this project. Significantly, the study concluded that a centralized "Food Hub" was not a viable business enterprise at the time, due primarily to lack of production but also to lack of demand. There is greater regional awareness of local food production in the Central Louisiana region, perhaps because it hosts 20% of Louisiana's farmland, most of which are family farms rather than corporate operations. However, the Acadiana region is home to almost twice Central Louisiana's population, with more urban spaces. There are also greater direct sales from farmers to consumers in the Acadiana region than in the Central Louisiana area surveyed.

The New Orleans area has seen several food hub efforts, not all successful but great examples to learn from. Oldest is Hollygrove Market, founded in 2008 and site of the 2013 release of a major new USDA report on food hubs. Hollygrove buys produce direct from farmers within the region and distributes it through its market and through subscription sales of market boxes, filled weekly with available local produce. They have gone through several organization and management changes over the years, starting as a nonprofit, shifting to a private enterprise and currently operating as a community development corporation. Recently, the Dryades Public Market opened, billing itself as a unique community grocery and food hub. They are arising from the ashes of an ambitious (expensive) food hub effort named Jack and Jake's, which did not quite launch, despite efforts starting in 2010. Market Umbrella is a very successful farmer's market organization started in 1995, now operating four markets around the city, accepting EBT/SNAP benefits and serving as a direct-to-consumer outlet for 75 farmers from 3 states.

As the local food movement takes hold nationally, new legislative initiatives are making their way through state and local government channels, particularly those addressing farm-to-school programs, agritourism regulations and insurance requirements, and urban farming initiatives. In June 2016, Louisiana Act 404 was passed, requiring the state board of education and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to develop and implement a Farm to School program. What this entails and who will be a part of that process remains to be seen. It is an amazing opportunity for local producers to work with schools and recruit schools as customers but needs an organization monitoring its development and implementation and seeking out local producers.

The state of Louisiana adopted a cottage food law in 2013, and amended it the following year, defining "low-risk foods" and expanding to include more foods as well as more regulations. Under this law, value-added farm products are more easily created and sold. Sales are restricted to \$20,000 or less annually, and includes home-baked items in non-licensed kitchens, as well as fresh produce and eggs, syrups and honey, jams and jellies, pickles and preserves, and other dry mixes like spices and granola. Regulations cover sanitation, safety and storage, refrigeration, food-handling procedures and labeling. It does exclude items with fish protein or animal muscle, restricts producers to one-person operations and effectively places liability on the purchaser rather than the producer. Vendors must apply for both a Louisiana General Sales Tax Certificate and a local sales tax certificate from the taxing authority where products will be sold. State sales tax is not required but local sales tax may need to be collected. Direct

sales may be made from the home (if zoning stipulations are met), events, food stands, mail orders, farmers markets, and online, but not in retail stores or restaurants.

Weather is always a concern for farmers, and recent storms and flooding have had a significant negative impact on production. What this means for the growth of the local food movement and the cultivation of new farmers, for which our surveys showed there is an overwhelming need, remains to be seen. LSU AgCenter estimates “agricultural losses from this month’s flooding will total at least \$110 million” mostly in soybean, corn and sugarcane crops. The impact on the small farmer is even more significant. One local farmer says he lost 99% of his crops. USDA disaster relief usually caters to large-scale farms, but regional organizations do attempt to assist the smaller farmers in the area. BREADA established a “Louisiana Small Farm Survival Fund” in the wake of the 2005 hurricanes that devastated a large portion of Louisiana’s rural and coastal communities, areas that historically supplemented income and personal consumption with backyard gardens. How climate change will continue to affect our region is an important part of local food planning, and is a factor we can no longer ignore.

Acadiana Food Alliance

The Acadiana Food Alliance (AFA), located in Lafayette, Louisiana, believes the Acadiana community has a great vision for how local food can enrich the vibrant region of Southwest Louisiana. The increasing demand for fresh, healthy produce has been reflected on area restaurant menus, popularized by prominent local chefs, and is evidenced by regularly sold-out booths at farmers markets.

In February, 2014 the Acadiana Food Alliance began when small farmers, community leaders, local officials, non-profit organizations, restaurateurs and food industry professionals came together to map, understand and strengthen the area food economy. This convergence of efforts, particularly the participation of local government and economic development agencies, represents a watershed moment for the development of a place-based food economy in the greater Acadiana area. The strength of the Acadiana Food Alliance and potential for growth in our region was validated by the award of **Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance** from the US EPA (in partnership with USDA, US HUD, & US DOT). Our community came together in March, 2015 with the technical assistance team to plan and prioritize the development of our local food system, documented in our Strategic Implementation Action Plan. We decided upon five goals that were most important and achievable, one of which closely aligns with this study:

Goal 5: Establish Acadiana as Louisiana’s Local Food Storage & Distribution Hub

In our Strategic Implementation Action Plan, the Acadiana Food Alliance set additional goals that will be supported by the successful development of intermediate food enterprises. Goal Three supports the establishment of farm-to-school programs, and their success will partially depend on the ability to get farm produce to the schools in large enough quantities to be useful. Both aggregating and processing will be required, but currently neither are available. Goal Four aims to support new farmers, to increase the production capacity for local food in the region. These new farmers need viable outlets for their product, to give them the confidence and financial security to launch a farm business.

Survey Results

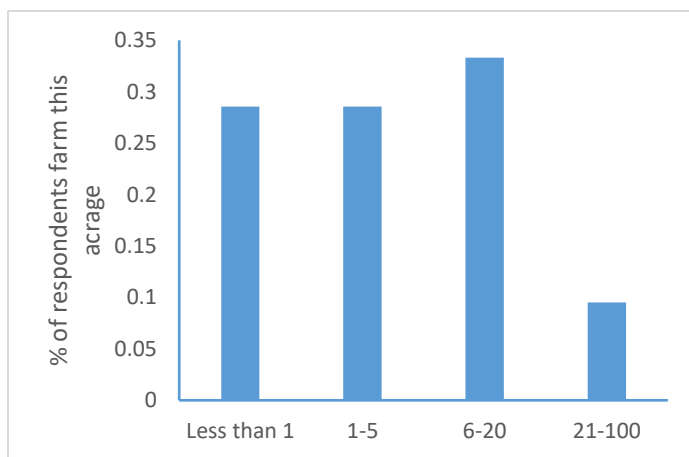
Three surveys were conducted, targeting farmers, buyers, and producers/distributors (See Appendix). These questions were designed to examine capacity for demand, distribution, processing and production; identify barriers; provide context for needs of the community and to support the business; and to review processing capacity, as well as current economic viability and future growth. Respondents included 21 farmers, 8 buyers (primarily restaurants) and 3 processors/distributors. We feel the representation of local produce farmers is quite good and included a majority of the farms in our core area of Acadiana, surrounding the city of Lafayette. While 3 processors/distributors is not a large sample size, we did not find there to be very many of these businesses in the region, perhaps 10-20 (depending on if some of the value-added processors who sell exclusively at farmers markets are counted here or as a “buyer”). The 8 buyers surveyed were mostly restaurants, but included a few grocery/cafe establishments. This is only a very small subset of potential buyers in our region; according to the USDA ERS Food Environment Atlas (2012 data), our 9 parish region has 800+ full service restaurants and nearly 200 grocery stores, plus numerous more institutional food servers such as hospital or school cafeterias. We targeted our survey to those few enterprises we know to be particularly interested in local food, but even a small amount of additional local food purchasing from this deep pool of demand would be a huge positive impact on the local food economy.

Primary needs (discussed in Recommendations section)

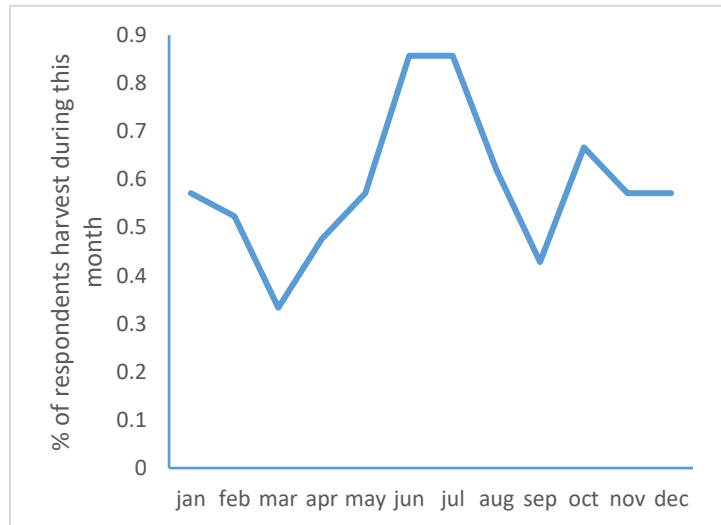
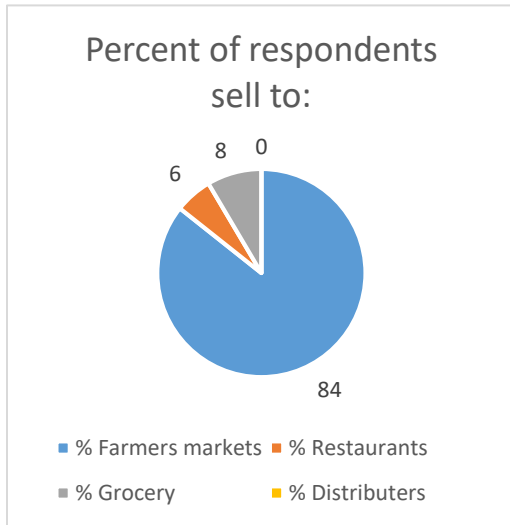
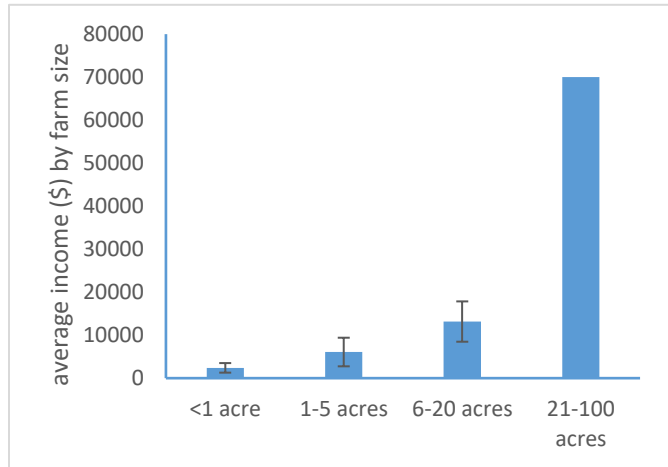
1. Aggregation service to provide single point of sales
2. Increased farm acreage and continuous production
3. Grower-buyer liaison and contract negotiation
4. Support for certification process and requirements

Digging In

Our surveys showed that nearly 60% of our respondents farms do not exceed 5 acres (see chart, “% respondents farm this acreage”), and earned up to but typically substantially less than \$10,000 annually (see chart, “Average income by farm size”). This suggests the farms may benefit from increasing in size, although the 1/3rd of our respondents farming 6-20 acres still made an average of only \$15,000/year. The largest farms, 21-100 acres in size, appear to be financially viable. It is important to note that these results need additional validation due to low sample size and the coarse estimations asked of respondents. Nonetheless, these numbers show it is very difficult for farmers in our area, particularly with small-farm operations, to earn a living. For context, though, according to the 2014 LSU Ag Summary Data, vegetable farms throughout the state grew on 8,246 acres and earned \$76 million, which averages to \$9,000/acre. Farmers in our area are earning \$500-\$2,000/acre, which indicates there is tremendous opportunity for income growth.



Two factors emerged from our research which may shed a little light on opportunities to grow farm profits. Only 6% of our farmer respondents sell to restaurants. A similar dynamic exists with other institutional buyers, only 8% of respondents sell to grocery stores (see chart, “Percent of respondents sell to”). Additionally, 40% of farmers in our area are not harvesting during the 6 month Fall to Spring period (see graph, “% respondents harvest during this month”). Both these results indicate opportunities lost. Commercial buyers such as restaurants and grocery stores can provide a strong and steady demand for produce, and can become a long-term business relationship between farmer and buyer. Louisiana’s climate produces a relatively mild winter framed by good Fall and Spring growing conditions. Many farmers can and do grow during these seasons, and many consider it the preferred growing time, lacking the weed and insect pressures of summer.



Of the 11 buyers we surveyed, 9 indicated that access to local food was a barrier to increased purchases (see table below). Access challenges include knowing who/where to buy from, time-consuming delivery and inconvenience, finding supply of preferred produce, and quantity of available supply. Several buyers encouraged a network or collaboration among local growers to reduce redundancy in their products, so that they are able to purchase from more farmers in the area. Others indicated that it is not financially viable to buy (or to buy very much) locally because it is more expensive. Reliability is a concern as well; unpredictable supply limits what buyers can purchase and is often known only on a week to week basis. This in turn limits overall purchases of local food, because corporate buyers must

Barrier to Increased Purchases of Local Food	# of Respondents (out of 11)
Access	9
Expense	3

otherwise order from their distributors a week or more in advance. Seasonal menus are therefore very difficult to maintain.

Conversely, farmers found it difficult to sell directly to restaurants because of the investment of time to develop a relationship and communications with each restaurant and the delivery times required, all of which takes them away from the work in their fields (and may not be a strength of the farmer).

Among our respondents, certifications were minimally acquired and minimally in demand. Most farmers feel the Certified Organic process is difficult to achieve and time consuming to maintain, which reflects the fact that none of the farmers we interviewed are certified. Several, however, do minimize or eliminate the use of non-organic practices. Of these farmers a few have considered pursuing an alternative, Certified Naturally Grown, but to date none have followed through. GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification is important in the near future due to recent USDA policy changes, and several farmers suggested they would need training and/or financial support to meet and maintain these national food safety standards. Overall, farmers relied on their direct relationships with their customers to educate them on their farming practices and assure them of the safety or sustainability of their produce. From the buyer perspective, certifications was not a concern. They, too placed more importance on direct relationships and buying local than on national certifications, although at least one respondent is already a Certified Green Restaurant and is a proponent of the system and its value.

Expanding supply seems viable in light of the demand expressed from buyers, but there are several real and perceived barriers. When asked what limits the expansion of their farm and sales, 7 of the 21 farmer respondents indicated lack of demand, 8 said finding or paying for labor was a limiting factor and 9 said they were not interested in expansion (see table below). Many of the farmers were not interested in expanding capacity because of their age or health, or because they deemed growing a hobby, rather than a regular source of income. Labor was one of the critical factors, either the cost was too high, or skilled workers were not

available. However, financial reasons appear to rule the roost - most respondents indicating labor as a limiting factor also indicated they could not afford the labor required to expand, those mentioning lack of demand indicate they would lose money due to low sales, and a few mentioned lack of financing to pay for expensive expansion costs (for equipment, inputs or farm infrastructure).

Barriers to expanded production	# of Respondents (out of 21)
Limited Demand/Financing	7
Labor Expense/Skill	8
Interest, due to Age/Health	9

Brand development and marketing for direct, retail and wholesale distribution are a necessary component of bringing produce to market, but most farmers lack the knowledge, skills and time to develop these strategies in-house. A food aggregation and distribution service may address some of these needs but more effort may be needed to reach a more regional, or even statewide, customer base. In Vermilion/Iberia parishes, the development of the “Delcambre Direct” smartphone application (and subsequent other local port offshoots) provide shrimpers and fishermen a way to announce their catch before they reach the port with their fresh harvest, ensuring maximum potential sales. A similar system may work for local farmers, if a farmer/producer network can be effectively established and nurtured.

Anecdotes and Conversations

Recent conversations with a cattle producer in Iberia Parish revealed the challenges of distribution to grocery stores and the importance of standard contracts with clearly defined deliverables so that the farmer does not overproduce when demand is low. This is also an opportunity to prevent the opposite, where a farmer may under produce when demand is in fact high. These contracts should be both easy to understand and legally binding to protect both seller and buyer, and applies to all types of farming operations.

Managers of farmers markets in the region expressed the need for more farmers and agreed that more and better education would make a difference. Some towns knew there were many backyard farmers who were not quite willing to make the leap into growing for profit, despite the benefits of supplementing their income and reducing their personal food costs. Other communities combat racial stigmas associated with farming.

A food hub is currently in development in Lafayette and will feature both incubator and commissary kitchens. This facility is still in development, but expects to be operational by January 2017. The FDA-certified incubator kitchen will be available on an hourly basis for the production and packaging of wholesale items. It has attached to it a fulfillment center that allows for storage of products, raw materials and equipment. The food hub also offers brand development, marketing, packaging and labeling assistance, and order fulfillment. The commissary kitchen is designed for caterers, food trucks and virtual kitchens. This service is especially important for food trucks, required by state law to have a registered commissary space. The food hub offers this service in addition to secure parking, water fill and dump, warehouse and refrigerated space for storage as well as a direct conduit to locally produced ingredients.

Vegetables grown in Acadiana, as identified by respondents			
basil	cucumbers	kiln-dried sweet potatoes	potatoes
beans	dill	kumquat	primarily cut flowers
beets	edible flowers	lettuce	radish
bell peppers	eggplant	mizuna	satsumas and navel
broccoli	garlic	mushrooms	sorrell
cabbage	grapefruit	mustard	spinach
carrots	herbs	okra	squash
cauliflower	hibiscus roselle	onions	sweet potato
cayenne pepper	honey	organic fruits	tomatoes
citrus	hot peppers	parsley	turnips
collards	irish potatoes	pecans	watermelon
corn	kale	peppers	

Appendix

I. Survey Questions

Farmer survey questions:

1. What is the name of your farm and where is it located?
2. What are the primary crops produced on your farm?
3. What percentage of your harvest is sold at farmers market/direct sales; grocery stores; restaurants/institutions; distributors?
4. What on-farm processing to you do, post-harvest? (washing, bundling, grading/sorting, bagging, etc.)
5. How do you get your product from farm to buyer?
6. What certifications do you or your farm have?
7. What certifications would you like to have?
8. How many acres to you have under production in an average year?
9. How many additional acres could you put under production, if you decided to?
10. Why have you not already increased your production acreage to the maximum you have available?
11. Relatively speaking, how big is your harvest each month, in an average year?
12. After harvesting your crop, do you have long-term or short-term storage available on you farm? Off farm? Please describe: capacity and type of storage.
13. What is the average annual income from your farm? Does this sustain your farm & family?
14. What do you need, to increase your capacity to grow and sell?

Buyer survey questions:

1. What is the name of your business and where is it located?
2. What are the primary activities of your business?
3. Have your customers expressed interest in buying local fruits/vegetables from you?
4. Do you currently meet your customer's demands for local food?
5. How much do you spend on buying local food annually?
6. What, if any, additional dollars would you be willing to spend on local food annually?
7. Why have you not already increased the amount of locally food you buy?
8. What local fruits or vegetables are you currently buying?
9. What additional local fruits or vegetables would you like to buy?
10. What are the barriers to you buying more local foods?
11. What significant local, state or federal requirements or certifications do you follow?
12. How important are farmer/farm certifications to your purchasing decisions?
13. What pre-purchase processing do you expect to be done?
14. What long-term or short-term storage do you have for fresh or processed fruits/vegetables (fresh and value added products)?
15. What post -purchase processing of local foods is performed on-site?

Distributor/Producer survey questions:

1. What is the name of your business and where is it located?
2. What are the primary activities of your business?
3. Have your customers expressed interest in buying local fruits/vegetables from you?

4. Do you currently meet your customer's demands for local food?
5. How much do you spend on buying local food annually?
6. What, if any, additional dollars would you be willing to spend on local food annually?
7. Why have you not already increased the amount of locally food you buy?
8. What are the barriers to you processing or distributing more local foods?
9. What local fruits or vegetables are you currently buying?
10. What additional local fruits or vegetables would you like to buy?
11. What are the fruit/vegetable distribution options you offer? (pick-up and/or deliver)
12. What are the fruit/vegetable processing options you offer?
13. What are the packaging options you offer?
14. What significant local, state or federal requirements or certifications do you follow?
15. What pre-purchase processing do you expect to be done?
16. What long-term or short-term storage do you have for fresh or processed fruits/vegetables (fresh and value added products)?