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Tools for Community Self-determination

ArkLaTex Region
Local Farm & Food Economy
&
Strategic Recommendations

by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis)
for
Slow Food North Louisiana
January 15, 2016

A Message from the We Grow Together Leadership Team

The We Grow Together! Leadership Team is excited to introduce to the ArkLaTex community a major step forward in our effort to grow a healthy, sustainable food system that meets the nutritional needs of all of our citizens, is profitable to farmers and producers, stimulates our economy, and creates opportunities for greater health and well-being for all of us.

The *ArkLaTex Region Local Farm & Food Economy and Strategic Recommendations* report written by Ken Meter, Food System Analyst and President of Crossroads Resource Center, provides important information about our regional Food System. Mr. Meter has 45 years' experience working in urban and rural communities. He has assisted over 110 communities in 40 states gain clear perspectives and goals for the health and sustainability of their food systems, and given them a sound foundation for successful action steps toward those goals. The following report includes important data, interviews, and recommendations for our region.

Our team would like to highlight the importance of the following document by briefly describing where this report fits in the timeline of our own community's movement toward a Healthy Regional Food System. The seeds of this initiative are rooted in *Great Expectations: The Shreveport-Caddo Vision for 2030*, which was adopted in 2010. That comprehensive master plan includes two food-related goals:

> *1. Locally produced foodstuffs are available for local consumption in a variety of outlets.*
> *2. All residents have reasonable access to healthy, affordable food in close geographic proximity and are well-informed about nutrition.*

Grace Peterson, with the LSU AgCenter, and Angie White, with Slow Food North Louisiana, were active members of the Community Advisory Group for the comprehensive master plan during all stages of its development. Dr. Peterson and Ms. White were instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of food system related goals in the final master plan document. In 2010, based on a systems approach to healthy community, Dr. Peterson convened a group of concerned citizens to draft a detailed plan to move our community toward those goals. The EatWell-LiveLocal taskforce researched existing food system components and worked to formulate the We Grow Together! Food System Master Plan which was adopted in 2014 by local government. The taskforce also initiated the We Grow Together! campaign with a dedicated group of diverse stakeholders all focused on the vision of a Healthy Regional Food System for the ArkLaTex. The We Grow Together! collaborators include representatives from higher education, local government, local business, and non-profit organizations.

In 2015, Slow Food North Louisiana received grant funding from the Community Foundation of North Louisiana to hire Ken Meter to assist our community in charting a clear path toward a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable Food System that will benefit all of our residents and future generations. The following report gives important information and suggestions that will guide our steps toward that ultimate goal. We hope you are as excited and inspired as we are to grow a Healthy Regional Food System for the ArkLaTex!

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Just Dinner
by Harrice


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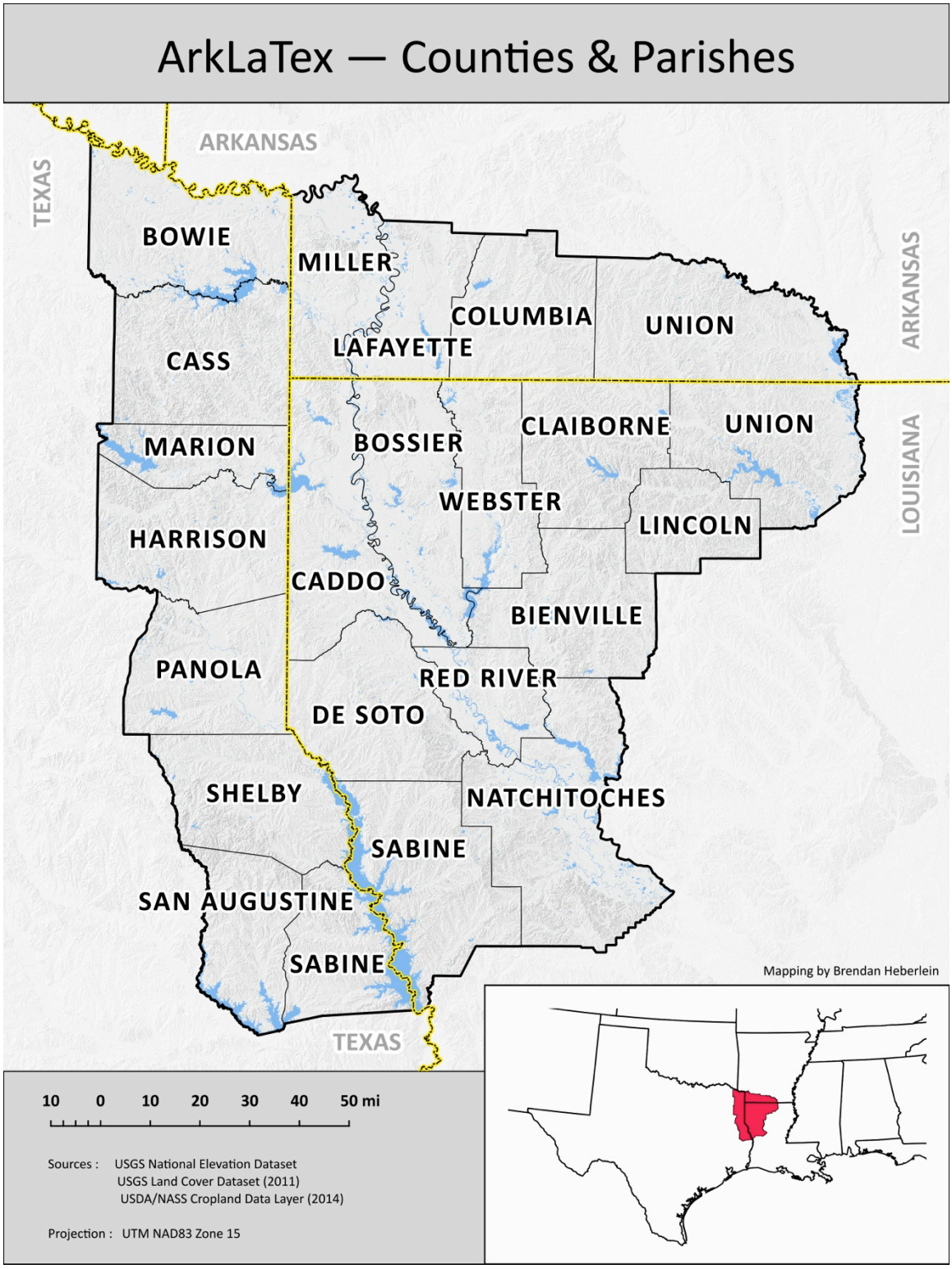
MEXICO


ILLINOIS CENTRAL
FREIGHT STATION



(Arkansas, Louisiana, & Texas)

Covers: Columbia, Lafayette, Miller, & Union Counties in Arkansas;
Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches,
Red River, Sabine, & Webster Parishes in Louisiana;
Bowie, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Panola, Sabine, San Augustine, & Shelby Counties in Texas

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Executive Summary

ArkLaTex has several key assets that will foster the strengthening of local food systems in the region:

1. The **ArkLaTex region is blessed with ample water and soil** to support a vibrant agriculture. Pastures abound throughout the region, and the Red River valley sustains diverse crops. The climate is conducive to growing a wide variety of foods.

2. **Emerging farmers have taken immense risks and have invested considerable money in launching farm operations** that are dedicated to meeting local demand for food.

3. **Shreveport has considerable farmland within city limits** and in nearby peri-urban areas.

4. **Local food leaders in Shreveport appear to have developed a solid core of trust with each other**; this is the key element for ensuring resilient leadership amidst rapidly changing conditions. One leader described the city as "a rural environment in an urban context." This proximity to the land and to farmers should make it easier for local food initiatives to flourish in the ArkLaTex region.

5. Local food leaders in Shreveport have **framed an effective vision** for constructing new local food systems. This leadership **spans a diverse variety of neighborhoods, income levels, cultural backgrounds, and aspirations.** Its cohesion in bringing diverse players to work collaboratively will be a critical asset.

6. **This leadership group holds a solid understanding** that what motivates the growth of local foods is a profound dedication to building social and commercial connections among ArkLaTex local food practitioners.

7. The **vibrancy of the Shreveport Farmers Market** has helped raise the visibility of local farms, food processors, and food purveyors, and creates a vital space for social connection for the entire ArkLaTex region.

8. **Several chefs that source food locally help raise the visibility of local foods** by placing farmers names on their menus, listing them at the restaurant, and through special events and other steps that bring farmers into more direct contact to consumers.

This assessment of the farm and food economy of the ArkLaTex region used a combination of quantitative data collection, interviews with key food system leaders, and qualitative analysis to ascertain current conditions with respect to local foods in the region.

Our key conclusions are:
1. Demand for local food far outpaces the supply. It will be critical to grow new growers at a rapid pace.

2. The commodities grown by ArkLaTex farmers (poultry and eggs, cattle, corn, soybeans, cotton, and wheat) are essential items economically, but do not satisfy this demand for locally produced food because they are largely raw materials for industrial processing.

3. Prevailing farm and food infrastructure supports commodity farmers technically, but this established industry is not highly rewarding to rural communities. Average net income for all farmers in the ArkLaTex region is only $6,150 per farm. This does not appear to be sufficient to sustain commodity agriculture over the long term; even larger growers are exploring ways of diversifying their operations.

4. The region's farmers earned $66 million less in net cash income in 2013 than they earned in 1969, once dollars are adjusted for inflation.

5. ArkLaTex consumers spend an estimated $2.2 billion each year purchasing food that is sourced outside the region.

6. ArkLaTex farmers sell $2.1 million of food products directly from their farm to household consumers.

7. Most of the farmers we interviewed who are farming for local consumers had to rely on family wealth in order to start their farms; it is extremely difficult for someone with limited savings to build up a sustainable farm operation.

We recommend the following short-term actions:
1. The ArkLaTex region should embark upon an "**Eat Five, Buy Five**" campaign as other regions have done. The message of this campaign would be that ArkLaTex consumers should eat five fruits or vegetables each day for better health outcomes, and purchase $5 of food each week from farmers in the region. If each of the region's residents purchased this much food each week, farmers would earn $303 million of farm income — roughly one-third of what farmers currently earn.

2. The region must **commit itself to growing new farmers**. Raising vegetables poses the fewest obstacles to entry, yet raising livestock may bring greater income. Incubator programs where new farmers can be trained will be critical. Each should have the proper washing, packing, and storage facilities required for small farmers to prepare food safely for market. Land should also be available nearby for graduates of farm training programs to establish their own farm businesses in ways that allow them to remain in contact with, and mentor, new trainees.

3. **Culturally engaged food, health, and lifestyle education in inner-city neighborhoods is also critical**; existing programs should be expanded and, if needed, strengthened. Connecting farmers directly with consumers, and ensuring that urban dwellers know farming skills, will do the most to build the foundation for a local farm and food economy for the future.

4. The ArkLaTex region should invest in high tunnels, greenhouses, and other structures that will **extend the season** for fresh produce.

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana seems poised and eager to take on several of these short-term actions.

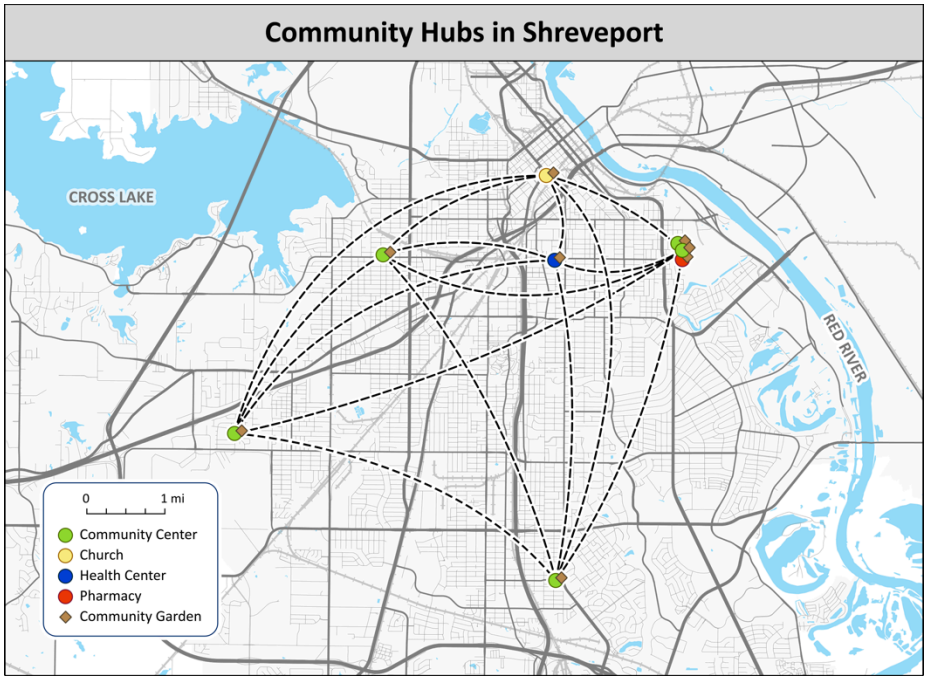
We further recommend the following long-term actions:

1. The City and Parishes should **develop a registry of all farmable lands within urban boundaries**, placing priority on protecting those with the best soils, access to water, and strategic location for local food production. This registry should (a) document soil quality and suitability to agriculture; (b) assign significant acreage for food production inside and near the city; and (c) develop infrastructure that supports urban agriculture in the region.

2. Schools in the region should pursue targeted farm-to-school opportunities. It would seem that sweet potatoes is the first thing to try in Shreveport, but as Nate Lynn pointed out, this requires considerable labor at the farm, and additional labor at the school for preparation. In general, school purchases are likely to require additional funding so that farmers receive an adequate payment for their products, though some farms may be willing to supply surplus items at low cost.

3. City and Parish/County governments should place a high priority on expanding local foods infrastructure, including facilities at the farm level as well as near population centers, with transportation routes that economically distribute food where it is needed. These investments should be designed to create efficiencies in local foods trade.

4. Efforts to **compost organic wastes into fertility for local farms** should be expanded.



Interviews with ArkLaTex Food Leaders

Matt and Jerica Cadman

Farmers, Shady Grove Ranch
Jefferson, Texas (Marion County)

Atop a remote, gently rolling field in East Texas, Matt and Jerica Cadman have settled comfortably into a one-story home with their three children, Shevi, Axl, and Tevka. Equipment scattered over the lawn shows that this is a working farm. The couple guides us indoors to a comfortable set of chairs and brings out hot tea.

The farm, Matt explains, raises a diverse variety of livestock, including grass-fed beef, pastured pork, free-range chickens that lay eggs, turkeys, sheep and goats. Each type of animal is raised to suit the preferences of the farm's customers — and each one also holds a unique niche in grazing the farm's pastures, and providing nutrients to fertilize those same fields. Often the animals are led into fields sequentially so that the forage remaining after one herd or flock leaves will serve as suitable food for the incoming group. For example, chickens are often called upon to harvest bugs that would otherwise serve as an annoyance to the larger livestock, and goats will gnaw at sturdy foliage that cattle and pigs scorn. All told, the farm has 185 acres; the couple runs another 180-acre farm 10 miles away.

Yet, surprisingly, Matt begins our interview by speaking about his health. He and Jerica have literally started to farm because they sought healthier food for their family, and could not locate the foods they need at the store. Now, having built up their farm business, they are in position to sell these same foods to others, and to share their knowledge with their customers.

"I developed ulcerative colitis in college," Matt begins. "I was in the hospital for 12 days, and then it took me six months to recover. All told, it was a $70,000 experience. I did not want to do that again." So Matt started researching better ways to eat, finally learning about a nutrient-dense diet promoted by the Weston A. Price Foundation. This diet features eating (a) pasture-raised meats, (b) greater reliance on natural products in their original state, such as raw milk and fresh vegetables and fruits, (c) fermented vegetables, and (d) favors the consumption of fats. The Foundation also emphasized the importance of obtaining adequate Vitamins A and D — which would be present in pasture-raised meats.

His infectious smile broadening, Matt adds, "I have not taken a drug for five years now." Yet this success came at a cost. The couple had to travel to one farm to buy one food, and to another farm to purchase another. "We literally needed to go to a different farm for each item we purchased," he adds. At one point, "We said to each other, why not raise all of these foods in one place?"

After one year of learning basic farming techniques, the couple was able to enlist the assistance of Matt's father to invest in this farm, where they moved in 2010. Their parents joined them to live close by. Jerica points out that both of them studied engineering, so the practical planning was relatively straightforward. At one time they had developed a huge spreadsheet showing their projected costs and revenues. As they were refining these numbers, Matt says, making plans for a farmstead, "My father called me one night. It was like divine intervention. He had been thinking about buying a piece of land. Did we want to go in with him?" The couple leapt at the chance to combine their vision and energy with his parents' investment.

After settling in to the new land, pasturing some livestock to build its fertility, and slowly building a herd, the couple experimented with different ways of marketing their products. The approach they take today is that customers pre-order each meat item by e-mail, after the couple sends out a newsletter announcing what is available. The buyer deposits the sale price into the farm bank account about one week before the delivery. Then Jerica and Matt have each animal processed at a USDA custom shop, which allows them to sell custom cuts through any retail store. The couple delivers each customer's order, sometimes to a specified delivery stop, or possibly to a farmers market in Shreveport, Longview, Tyler, Marshall, Jacksonville, or Jefferson. They have 50 customers on their mailing list, and meet new customers on market days.

Demand has been immense. "Things are changing so fast, we have no idea where we are going," Matt says with a chuckle. But the couple knows they are not at full capacity, and they hope to sell more meats in the future.

Along the way, Matt and Jerica had to negotiate with some of their suppliers to get the quality they require, and to create closer business partnerships. For example, they came to

like working with one custom meat processing plant, and gradually became their biggest customer. That gave them leverage to suggest some changes in how their meats were cut. "We had to train them to do the butchering for us," he says, in ways that would help the farm get the most value from its meats.

It helped that the plant was close to them because this is the only USDA-inspected processing plant for 350 miles — so the Cadmans and the shop owners realized they needed both businesses to thrive. As the Cadmans increased the volume of processing services they required, the butcher shop was able to afford to purchase new equipment, such as a vacuum-sealing machine, that allowed the firm to attain higher quality for all of their customers. While the farm couple must drive their livestock 70 miles to the plant for slaughter and processing, "they deliver the meat back to us when it is ready."

Close collaboration such as this, Matt points out, grows by paying close attention to building relationships of trust. They invest the same care with their other business partners. "You have to raise issues when they come up, otherwise the connection goes away."

Yet the Cadmans also feel a bit limited in their market reach because they realize that many of their customers really do not have the time to fix a proper meal. "People don't have the time or the inclination to cook," Jerica laments. "I don't know how much influence I can have with people in their kitchen." The antidote she offers may seem like a contradiction for a farmer: she hopes people will learn to raise their own food.

"I don't like the idea of everybody purchasing the food they eat," she continues. "In many cases, it is too expensive. For example, we cook a lot of bone broth (simmering meat bones in a soup kettle for hours on end to pull nutrients and minerals into the broth; the Cadmans consider this a key part of their diet). We can do that more cheaply since it is our own meat." If the couple were to sell that as a value-added product, "it may be hard for people to afford. We get a lot of sticker shock when people learn what our prices are." Her conclusion: folks should raise their own food and cook their own broth. She would be happy to teach others what she does. "I enjoy teaching."

Newt Lynn

Farmer, Lynn Plantation
Cavett, Louisiana (Caddo Parish)

Settled onto an expanse of flat Louisiana farmland, Lynn Plantation conveys a strong sense of place and history. Two older houses are visible from the highway, and a historical marker points out that the plantation was founded just over a century ago by James Wiley Lynn. He had purchased this land from James Richard Cavett, who had built a home on this site in 1878.

Yet the bustle on Lynn Plantation evokes a very contemporary vibe. No longer limited to cotton production, the farm sports huge bins of watermelons and cushaw melons. Mesh bags overflowing with purple hull peas, that are destined for delivery to Brookshire's Grocery in Shreveport, stand on shipping palettes. Newt Lynn, the latest Lynn to manage

the property, has taken bold steps to diversify his farm. Raising vegetables was the path he chose for diversification.

Lynn begins by explaining that the plantation now contains 3,000 acres, 99% of which is planted to row crops and cotton. Yet that one percent of land is of critical interest to him: here he is experimenting with new crops and trying to tap new markets.

"I don't have a positive outlook on row crops," Lynn advises. "I am looking for new products where I don't have to deal with commodity exchanges." He notes that the price of cotton in the 1950s was $1 per pound (About $7 in current dollars), and now it is 66 cents. After trying these new produce items, he adds with a cautious smile, "I feel more rewarded. And I am enjoying the farming more." Still, he continues to raise row crops and cotton because he has the knowledge and the equipment to do so, and it helps pay for the costs of his farm.

"Produce is really a side issue for me right now," Lynn continues. And it has not been a good year. "It's been an off year for everybody," he adds, due to heavy rains early in the season that forced people to replant, often several times, to no avail. Yet at last, the beans and melons grew.

Several years ago, Lynn continues, "I started with about 2 acres of purple hull peas. I opened a u-pick operation. Then I went to 30 to 40 acres. Now I grow butter beans, purple hull peas, pinto beans, and crowder peas, along with the melons and sweet potatoes. We sell

through brokers (also known as "peddlers" or "truck farmers") who come by the farm to pick up the produce and re-sell it to grocers, roughly in the region bordered by Natchitoches, Tyler, Texarkana, and Spring Hill. Things worked out so well I went to 90 acres of produce. Now I harvest 10,000 to 15,000 pounds of sweet potatoes per acre on 30 acres, and I harvest 12,000 melons from 16 acres." Lynn has learned about new sales outlets from his trade partners. "It was one of the peddlers who suggested I grow melons, since only one other farm in the area grows them at any scale."

Yet the distribution business is changing, too. "At one time, I had a direct line to the grocers." Now, he says, he does "very little" direct sales to retail stores. Over time, as he met peddlers at roadside stands, he discovered they would convey his produce to the grocers for him. "The peddlers will re-sell anything." Yet he also considers peddlers to be a dying culture, as the government becomes more intent on regulating safety, so more concerned about proper storage and hauling. Nor does Lynn see himself relying solely on the grocery trade. "I don't have enough product to depend on the groceries."

All this means that as Lynn considers the future of his farm, he is looking more and more to selling direct to household consumers, and select restaurants. While he would love to sell to local schools, and considers sweet potatoes to be the easiest product to sell there, he adds, "Sweet potatoes are an insanely manual crop. You have to have the labor." While he does have a core of capable Latino field workers, the labor issue gives him pause.

As crop prices fell in 2014-2015, Lynn says he is seeing more of his row-cropping neighbors consider alternatives. "A lot of farmers are very curious about what I do now," he adds. But most of them are set up to grow row crops. They have the proper equipment for what they grow now, but not for produce. They're not looking to get a lot bigger than they are."

Always open to a new challenge, Lynn holds a small plot of land aside each year so he can experiment with some new crop. "Every year I try a new heirloom variety," he says. This year it was Charleston Gray melons. "They're a great melon when ripe."

Evan McCommon

Farmer, Mahaffey Farms
Princeton, Louisiana (Bossier Parish)

The afternoon sun breaks open afternoon clouds, and the lush pastures of Mahaffey Farms glisten an intense green. Nestled into a rural area not far from Shreveport, the farm is neatly kept, with a sizeable trailer parked in front of an outbuilding, and solar collectors on the roof of the house. Evan McCommon energetically receives his visitors, urging them to the kitchen table. We've come to learn about his heritage livestock herds, but he focuses first on the trees he has been planting.

McCommon is pursuing an integrated style of agriculture known as Restoration Agriculture, which considers trees the essential soil builders, and strives to create permanent landscape features that channel stormwater and permanently produce food. For McCommon, that means planting hazelnuts to draw nutrients from the deep topsoil, pecan trees to provide

shade for pastures, and mulberry, fig, and sawtooth oak to create a diverse canopy. He certainly has kept open fields for pasture, and for raising produce, but tree planting is central to his long-term plan.

Mahaffey Farms is 200 acres in size, and McCommon tends an additional 250 acres nearby. He raises several heritage varieties of cattle, including Spanish Colonial, Pineywoods, Corriente, and Longhorn, on grass pastures using an intensive grazing technique called "mob grazing," in which the animals are moved frequently to delve into fresh pasture. To extend market reach, McCommon also partners with two other ranches in Bossier Parish, who follow the same protocols in raising their livestock, so McCommon can re-sell their meats and offer quality that is consistent with his own. All the cattle are entirely grass-fed, with no grain supplements even in the final months.

He also pastures several heritage varieties of hogs, including Red Wattle (at times crossed with Tamworth and Hampshire breeds), Blue Butts, and Pineywoods. Still, he regards these as transitional species. "I didn't intend to grow hogs, but they help disturb the soil so I can build the Savannah here into a more productive system." He currently feeds these hogs some grain, but in the future intends to move to purely grass-fed.

McCommon also raises chickens outdoors, housing them in mobile barns where they can take shelter and lay eggs. As the mobile units are moved across the field, the birds graze, dropping manure on the pastures as they move. For his chickens, McCommon purchases Texas-grown organic grain that is certified GMO-free (containing no genetically modified

material). These purchases make him "the largest buyer of certified organic grain in the South." He pauses, then adds, "That's sad. The only certified facility in the South is Coyote Creek in Elgin, Texas. It's five hours away." He expects to spend more than $70,000 on feed alone this year. Still, that is a relatively small purchasing rate in the larger grain trade, so he would love to join with other growers to purchase and mill organic feed together. "Once you start buying 20 tons or more, the price drops."

Once his animals reach maturity, they are processed at a state-certified plant in Calhoun, Louisiana, in fairly small shipments of 6-8 animals at a time. The meat delivered to local restaurants, to local buyers clubs, and sold at the farmers market. He says he has about 2,000 customers on his mailing list, and considers this a manageable size. "Small is manageable for me emotionally," he says, adding that as he expands sales, he will let the land dictate when he is large enough. "The land needs to make the decision of how wide my market is." He adds that he will not expand to a point where he finds he is degrading the soil.

He has considered selling meat to Whole Foods stores, but found himself holding back because "the store does not carry its money locally." This promised to involve delays in payment that he could not sustain.

Already turning out bratwurst made of his pork, McCommon is now exploring other value-added products such as bone broth, prosciutto, and southern smoked meats that he hopes to season without nitrates.

McCommon also devotes five acres to vegetable production. He sells these at the farmers market and direct from the farm. As he works toward certifying his land as organic, he is searching for a source of organic plant sets. In the future, he aims to install a hoophouse (a plastic-covered season extension space similar to a greenhouse) to boost his production. He is considering offering home delivery for this produce, but adds that he relies on the farmers market environment: "It is a place where anyone can enter the market. The market creates a cultural exchange, and it is a space where people can negotiate their needs mutually." He is pleased to bring his quality heritage meats and produce into that mix.

Craig Smith

Potential Meat Processor and Farmer for Smith Family Farm
Doyline, Louisiana (Webster Parish)

Craig Smith looks over his small feedlot southeast of Shreveport with a warm smile. The cattle move deliberately through the pen, taking little notice. A testy turkey hovers nervously close to the nearest fence, as if on guard duty.

The lot has 72 head of cattle which Smith buys young and feeds for a year, selling them as mature animals for sale under a private label. When they are ready, he ships them to a processing plant six hours away in Eunice, Louisiana. While he finds the processing quality "mostly good," it is not at the level he would like to achieve. Moreover, he has long wished to have a processor closer to his farm.

Attending a meeting covering local food concerns not too long ago, Smith learned that other meat producers felt that the ArkLaTex region needed additional meat slaughter and processing options. Others felt they were driving too far to get to existing plants, and the quality of the work was not always what they needed.

Smith says he thought it over and realized he was in a position to offer that very service. His mother, who lives next door, had access to some oil money she was willing to devote to the enterprise, and Smith felt ready to take on this immense challenge: designing, building, and operating a slaughter and packing plant that could handle cattle, hogs, sheep, and goats.

In this vision, Smith sees himself setting up a production protocol for farmers to follow, so the quality of the meats would be consistently of a high quality, suitable for branding as a quality product. In addition to selling state-certified meats, he would produce sausages, smoked and cured meats, and have the equipment needed to package and wrap the finished products.

Smith says he has worked with a contractor to draw up plans for the facility, and has compiled cost estimates for the construction and operation of the plant. The state department of agriculture has been supportive, offering technical assistance. He is looking for property where he can build a state-of-the-art mid-sized facility, within about 15 minutes from his farm. It would be designed to handle a maximum of 5,000 head of cattle per year, but would run at one-fifth that capacity in its first year. Fats would be rendered, and a 40-foot-long heated composter would break down usable scraps into compost for nearby farms.

Smith plans to have a retail store on site where local residents can purchase meats processed at the plant. He expects to hire about six employees, and says he has found some skilled workers who are interested in joining the effort. After the business proves itself, Smith hopes to attain USDA certification so the meats could be sold across state lines. He also hopes to expand into separate distribution business that can deliver to regional buyers.

He estimates that the total investment will be $1.2 to $1.5 million, and hopes to obtain loans from several sources to help finance the project. In the end, he intends to have a two-story facility with a commercial kitchen and 4,000 square feet of educational space.

It is indeed a bold dream. It remains to be seen if all will fall into place, and if so, how thoroughly ArkLaTex farmers and consumers will support the business.

Shreveport Chefs & Food Buyers

Jason Brady — Owner, Wine Country Bistro
Gabriel Balderas — Chef and caterer, El Cabo Verde
Anthony Felan — Executive Chef, Wine Country Bistro
Hardette Harris — Chef & caterer
Eddie Marusarz — Executive Chef, Petroleum Club
Craig Parker — Protein Manager, Sysco East Texas (Longview)

It is early morning at Wine Country Bistro in Shreveport, a quiet time of day at a normally bustling restaurant. A gaggle of chefs and food buyers have gathered to sit around a cluster of tables on the front porch of the bistro, where they discuss the joys and perils of sourcing food locally. The tone is jovial — this group of people obviously knows each other well. There is a solid sense of ease at the table.

Chefs play a strong role in making local food more visible. They help shape consumer preferences, raise the visibility of local farms by naming specific growers on their menus, and often stand as symbols of food activity in the broader community. Similarly, food buyers both respond to and shape consumer interest. By making certain products available at a wholesale price, buyers help select what will be widely available. As they respond to changing consumer tastes, they also reflect back to growers what the market will bear.

Gabriel Balderas, esteemed by his colleagues for the visionary approaches he has taken toward food preparation, quickly identifies the key ingredient in local food sourcing: "You have to have commitment." One has to build strong connections to local farmers, to know the qualities of their products, and the seasonalities of what they produce. New menu items or businesses might emerge as farmer and chef sit together to identify new opportunities. For his part, Balderas is now working with Mahaffey Farms to produce bone broth from their grass-fed cattle, as well as their chickens. Balderas is also rendering lard from Mahaffey hogs. He adds, "in its pure form, rendered lard is healthier than olive oil."

Many chefs, lacking this drive for building patient relationships and close connections, may simply find it easier to order food delivered by the distributor's truck. Yet local farms are not

at a place where this is commercially viable, the chefs point out. Brady adds, "We have five to six farmers in this region who are really good. And the trade at the farmers market is strong. Cash is really flowing. Shoppers are standing shoulder to shoulder there." Brady enjoys the quality of local produce. "It is certainly competitive with the products that come from California."

To reduce its costs for essential vegetables, Wine Country has now purchased and runs its own farm. "We don't know what we are doing yet, but we're learning," Brady says. "We can grow all of the tomatoes, onions, and herbs we need. But we don't yet have a good supply of okra or eggplant."

Brady also says he has met obstacles when he attempted to source protein from local farms. "There are not sufficient storage facilities. The burdens of inspection have become larger. A big point of contention is that there is no local meat processing plant."

Craig Parker adds that from Sysco's standpoint, "If you want to buy locally and you purchase a quarter or a half of an animal, you are tying up freezer space." Not everyone has those facilities. He hastens to add that it is "not an issue of volume. We can fill any size order." Currently Sysco offers a line of Texas meats they consider local, because Sysco has facilities in that state. Yet he adds that this farm, Stroop Farm, ships its cattle to Reno, Nevada, for processing then back to Texas for storage until they are sold.

Balderas adds that no one grows enough food locally to supply local markets. "There is no way you can supply from local farms now. You have to be able to source on a weekly basis. There is not yet that consistency of supply." Both he and Anthony love to feature meats from Mahaffey Farms, but there are times the farm cannot fill their orders.

Eddie Marusarz looks forward to that day. For him, "ease of purchase" is important. He can order from a major distributor and with a single phone call, hundreds of items are delivered to his restaurant.

Parker adds that he is limited in his ability to purchase certain meats because many farms lack product liability insurance. He suggests that this may be something the broader community might wish to underwrite.

Several chefs also agreed that Shreveport is currently in a setting where education is of critical importance if more foods are to be sourced locally. Certainly, this means fostering more skilled farmers who will devote themselves to the strenuous work of meeting local markets. These chefs say they would be happy to work with emerging farmers to show them what they need. Marusarz adds that he would be pleased to share his recipes with farmers so they can show their customers how a featured chef uses their products.

Yet go Balderas, the "biggest challenge is to educate the public about how to utilize the whole animal." There are nutritious items that are routinely thrown away. He views his new bone broth and rendered lard products as facilitating that education. His hope is that the new Whole Foods store will place these new products of his in front of Shreveport consumers.

City and Parish officials

Shreveport and Caddo Parish

Adam Bailey — Special Projects, Metropolitan Planning Commission
Paula Hickman – Executive Director, Community Foundation of North Louisiana
Candace Higginbotham — Department of Housing & Urban Development, Shreveport, and Project Manager, Choice Neighborhoods
Shalon Lewis — Community Center Manager, Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation,
Bonnie Moore — Director, Community Development Department, City of Shreveport
Shelly Ragle — Director, Shreveport Public Assembly & Recreation (SPAR), City of Shreveport
Nick Robberson — Superintendent, Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation
Mark Sweeney — Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning Commission
Jack Vaughan — Architect and Planning Consultant, Office of Community Development, Shreveport

In a conference room in the city government building, a large group of public agency staff and civic leaders have gathered to consider the public role in local foods. Their conversation demonstrates a close knowledge of local foods issues, as they recount their experiences with one initiative after another. All agree that strengthening local foods is a critical issue. There is

no single path that will get them there, they understand. This will be accomplished by taking very discrete steps forward.

Jack Vaughan sets a strong tone by pointing out that Shreveport has the unique quality of being "a rural environment in an urban context." By this he means that the ways people get along are still very close to those of rural Louisiana, and there is considerable open land, yet the city has very urban challenges as well, along with the commercial and social opportunities created by having a population of nearly 200,000 people.

This combination of "rural" and "urban" qualities has helped Shreveport set itself on a systematic approach to social issues it encounters, and these civic leaders have helped guide that approach. For years, research concluded that education was the number one challenge in the city. Yet lately, a new issue has emerged that holds an even higher priority: health. Among the conditions that alerted these officials to the need to tend to health concerns are the rising obesity rates (see page 47), increasing incidence of chronic illness, and obstacles to access to health care. These leaders view increasing residents' access to healthy foods as a way of mitigating each of these concerns.

Many of those in the room are gardeners themselves, and enjoy the joining with energetic shoppers at the farmers market. Many are making changes in their own eating patterns. As Shelly Ragle noted, small steps such as these often lead to larger impacts. "Several people have come out of the farmers market to run their own full-time food businesses."

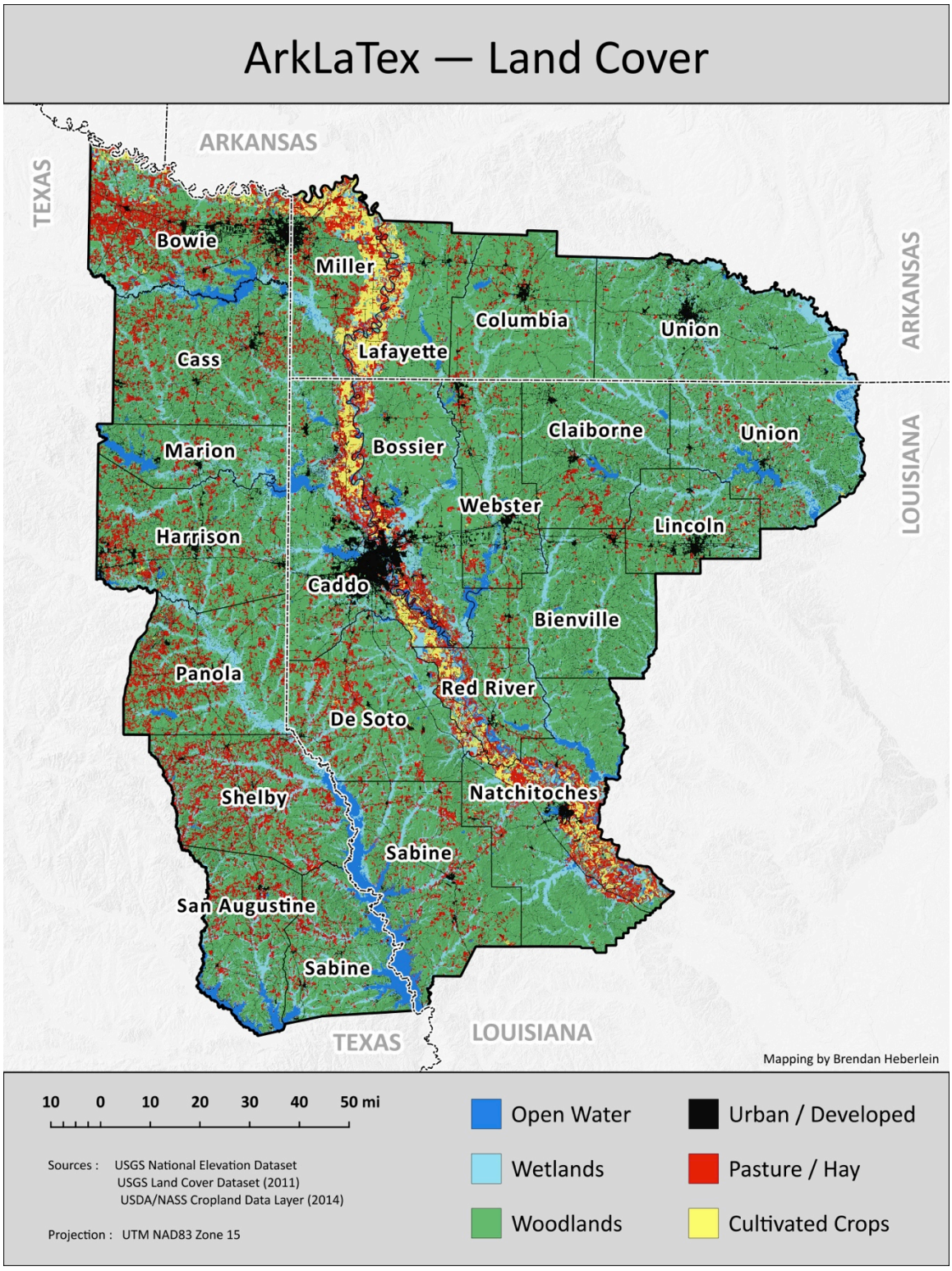
The City took concerns such as these to a policy level by commissioning a grocery market analysis. The study found there was a significant gap in access between lower and higher income residents. Priority has now been placed on opening up farmers markets in Allendale and MLK. Dollar Value and CVS are both looking at adding fresh food to their stores, as well. Yet the lack of land available for proper ingress and egress limits the opportunity for larger grocers to operate in, for example, Allendale.

The group has also launched a conversation with the grocers already doing business in the city, namely Kroger and Brookshire's, to encourage them to feature healthy and local foods. Brookshire's has created a local food display in some of their stores, possibly positioning themselves as a new Whole Foods store is being planned.

Mark Sweeney adds that he is not totally persuaded that the Shreveport market is ready to support a Whole Foods store, but adds that the firm has researched the local market and believes there are enough farmers in the region to supply the grocery with the local food items it seeks.

The City has also investigated the possibility of creating a commercial composting business, but found that the financials do not pencil out at this time. The cost of operation was more than the market could bear, the report concluded.

One participant in the meeting adds, that the City and County need to step up to create specific incentives for local food trade. Yet he laments, "We don't do that well here with our incentive packages."


ArkLaTex — Land Cover
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
Bowie
Miller
Columbia
Union
Cass
Lafayette
Claiborne
Union
Marion
Bossier
Webster
Lincoln
Harrison
Caddo
Bienville
Panola
Red River
De Soto
Shelby
Natchitoches
Sabine
San Augustine
Sabine
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
Mapping by Brendan Heberlein
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
Sources : USGS National Elevation Dataset
USGS Land Cover Dataset (2011)
USDA/NASS Cropland Data Layer (2014)
Projection : UTM NAD83 Zone 15
Open Water
Urban / Developed
Wetlands
Pasture / Hay
Woodlands
Cultivated Crops

Patrick Colyer

Northwest Regional Director, LSU AgCenter
(Bossier Parish)

On the flat, rich soil that spreads to the southeast of Shreveport, across the Red River in Bossier Parish, the Louisiana State University Red River Research Station is well positioned to connect to farmers in a large region. Its legacy of supporting cotton, corn, and soybean production is clear as one drives past the expansive fields. Yet this station is also the birthplace of the Red River tomato, a specially branded variety that LSU has encouraged local farmers to grow.

Colyer explains that the experiment station works with farms across Louisiana. In addition to the row crops named above, it holds expertise in cattle production for the ranches scattered across its service area. Extension agents also address dairy and poultry production, as well as forestry.

Colyer begins by warning that "Farmland is disappearing as fast as you can say it." Northern Bossier parish, he adds, "was once all farmland." Now it is the site of massive suburban development. "There have been no appreciable efforts to preserve farmland in the region," he laments.

Ironically, one industry that some view as a threat to farmland may in fact have just the opposite effect, he adds. "The oil industry may create opportunity for farm owners, because if they have oil income they don't need to sell the land."

Yet very few college graduates hold agricultural skills any more, and despite the fact that the ArkLaTex Agriculture Council has placed a priority on farmer training, and that LSU Extension is in a position to train emerging farmers, there have been few new farms that were launched because of such training, he adds. One agent began to develop an urban agriculture training program, he continues, but soon retired — so the effort never went past the planning stage.

He adds that resolving the farmland issue is a classic chicken-or-the-egg dilemma: it is impossible to have more growers unless there is a stronger market for local food, and one cannot build a stronger consumer market without farmers who produce the food.

Even branding the Red River tomatoes turned out to be a mixed success. Originated in 1991, the program continues but has remained fairly limited in scope. "We started out with six growers. They formed into something a bit like a co-op, and sold tomatoes to Albertsons and Kroger. Yet it was a great deal of work for the farmers. It turns out to be a 24/7 job. You have to check the plants daily, and harvest every two days. They were selling five pounds for $12, and just breaking even." Sales topped 65,000 pounds in 2007, but interest among the growers has waned since then.

While the tomato is still sold retail out of the office, but not to grocery stores, LSU focuses its efforts more on educational efforts to help growers perfect greenhouse tomato techniques, and experiments with even newer varieties that might further boost production.

Martha Marak

Executive Director, Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana
Shreveport

Director of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana, Martha Marak wants to play a larger role in the region's efforts to build a local food system. The Food Bank covers the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River, and Webster. It holds a commanding presence in the region, serving more than 95,000 people who live below the poverty level, and delivering to some 130 sites across its service area.

Marak begins the conversation by pointing out that with this reach, "We're the largest food distributor in the region." She adds that food bank staff are certified in food safety and experienced in operating under strict guidelines, and handle eight million pounds of food each year that are valued at $12 million retail. They are looking for a way they can contribute to local food networks. "We're open to anything," she adds. Staff are familiar with procuring food from a wide variety of sources, including local farmers. The food bank already owns five refrigerated trucks of varied sizes. They have already launched a composting and gardening effort at their headquarters. They currently sell some arugula and greens to several local restaurants.

The food bank is also in the middle of planning for a new building on a ten-acre plot of land just south of their current warehouse. They see that as a chance to play a larger role in the region's food planning. The new facility will have larger warehouse and cooler capacity, as well as a processing kitchen. This may allow the food bank to play a larger role.

As the one organization that delivers food products to the region's lowest-income residents, the food bank may also be the most likely force ensuring that their constituents are included in the food system of Northwest Louisiana's future.

Sheila Hamaker

Owner, Sunshine Foods
Shreveport-Bossier

As one of the early pioneers in bringing organic foods to the Shreveport market, Sheila Hamaker casts her eye over the store she built from the ground up — Sunshine Foods. Nestled into a new north Bossier shopping center, this bright and attractive store is one of two outlets she has founded over four decades of dedication to sourcing the healthiest possible foods for Shreveport consumers.

Her business originated when she sought a way to obtain organic produce for HIV patients. At the time, there were no sources for organic food in the Shreveport region. "Somebody always has to be the first," she says.

By now the industry has matured to the point that she sources foods from two major warehouse firms, one being UNFI in Alexandria, and the second a Sysco partner in Texas. While she has attempted to source produce from local farms, she says she found the supply quite "inconsistent." She adds, though, that to do this successfully requires building bonds of trust. "You have to know your farmers."

Hamaker has found it easiest to source meats locally, because livestock farms have been launched since she started her enterprise. Frozen meats raised by local farms such as Mahaffey Farms are relatively shelf-stable, and also carry a high value. She adds that the store used to carry meats from Shady Grove farms, but their meat processor is no longer USDA-certified, so she cannot sell their meats at the store. Costco is another source she can use for organic meats. To encourage her customers to purchase from local farms, she invited farmers to bring their products to the store for sampling and meeting their clientele.

Still, after four decades of selling organic products, Hamaker finds herself wondering, "is farming a dying industry?" Yet in the next breath she offers a glimpse of a far brighter vision for the future. "I envision a incorporating a farmers market into our Saturday mornings at the store."

Higher Education Public Health Program Leaders

Shreveport

Dennis Wissing, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Louisiana State University School of Allied Health Professions
Janice Sneed, Vice Chancellor, Southern University at Shreveport
Lucinda Murray, Occupational Therapy Program Director, Louisiana State University School of Allied Health Professions
Mary Hawkins, Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology and Health Science, Louisiana State University in Shreveport
Emmanuel Clottey — Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology and Health Science, Louisiana State University in Shreveport

Diverse public health professionals have also worked doggedly to build capacity among low-income residents in Shreveport. One group of savvy practitioners met at the Louisiana State University Medical Complex to reflect on the progress that has been made to date. Certainly, this work is critical to the future of the community, promising improved health outcomes and reduced inequality. Yet this work does not always attract civic attention, since it involves taking small steps forward amid exceptionally difficult odds. Those gathered today exude a strong optimism that their work will bear fruit over time.

The conversation was searching and comprehensive. Difficult issues were addressed with considerable depth and grace. Perhaps the most solid record of the meeting is simply an outline of the grassroots work that this group of dedicated professionals has undertaken.

Janice Sneed is the Vice Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport, where she has partnered with the city to increase access to healthy food in the MLK neighborhood near the campus. This initiative now plans to construct a grocery store and farmers market on a vacant property in the neighborhood. Sited in a central location, the markets are intended to be a gathering point that will bring people together for more effective collaboration in the future. Leaders also hope to install a small commercial kitchen and business incubator on the site, where residents can learn food preparation skills, test out a potential commercial product, and learn how to better fashion an emerging business.

LSU occupational therapist Lucinda Murray teaches a community-based-practice course for students who engage with lower-income neighborhoods. She also works with a priest at the Church of the Holy Cross, which serves meals to homeless people downtown. Student volunteers cleared land near the church to create a community garden with 10 plots where residents of the church's Hope House could grow food. They have had three successful harvests to date. Interest in growing food is high, because the neighborhood has no grocery stores.

Mary Hawkins, a public health professor at LSUS, hosts community health fairs in low-income communities. Here people can obtain information about living healthier lifestyles,

and devoting more time to walking and biking. The fairs are staffed by volunteers. Each dedicates 10 hours of community service to the effort. "We have a workforce," she adds, "but there is a surprising lack of resources there" for those who seek fresh foods. The neighborhood urgently needs a grocery store, she adds.

The Associate Dean of LSU Health Shreveport, Dennis Wissing, maintains a community practice by managing a free pharmacy clinic run by the MLK Health Center. While patients wait for prescriptions to be filled, they are encouraged to select free, fresh food to take home. This food has been delivered by Shreveport Green [see page 30]. The clinic has donated $43,000 of free pharmaceuticals to date, and Wissing says his indicator of the strong interest the community holds in the clinic is that 96% of its customers have returned for further care. He says this amounts to the largest return on investment that any project he has undertaken in Shreveport has gained.

Emmanuel Clottey described teaching an introductory course in public health to incoming students with the theme, "food is medicine." He adds that "75% of health is eating healthy food, having clean water and air, and getting enough sleep." Through community assessments, his team has identified homes where children live, where special attention might be warranted. They work with residents to help them locate sources of healthy foods, and to encourage corner stores to carry more healthy food options. Clottey also offers guidance in eating that is informed by his perspective of growing up as a farmer in Africa. In his homeland, he adds, food is interwoven into the culture. As these stories take root in local culture, positive behaviors are encouraged, and tradition is established. "Food has a history there. Part of eating is story telling." One of Clottey's passions is to show Shreveport residents how in Africa, one could eat well without spending a great deal of money. He prepares simple meals that are inexpensive to make, and challenges his charges to incorporate these foods, and their own stories, into their lives.

The Fuller Center

Lee Jeter, Executive Director
Katie Weir, Board Member
Kevin Turner, Market Manager
Shreveport

The intrepid folks at Fuller Ministries are not only walking the talk, but they have also dived into the nitty gritty work of rehabilitating a former Italian grocery store near downtown Shreveport. Their mission is to refurbish this building into a small-scale grocery that will serve the communities of Allendale and Lakeside.

Their decision to renovate the grocery store was made after they analyzed responses to a 2009 community survey they sent to residents of the two communities. Forty-four new homes had been built, and residents pointed to clear priorities for services they needed: a laundromat, and a grocery store. Further, respondents said, having one more liquor store in the neighborhood would *not* be beneficial.

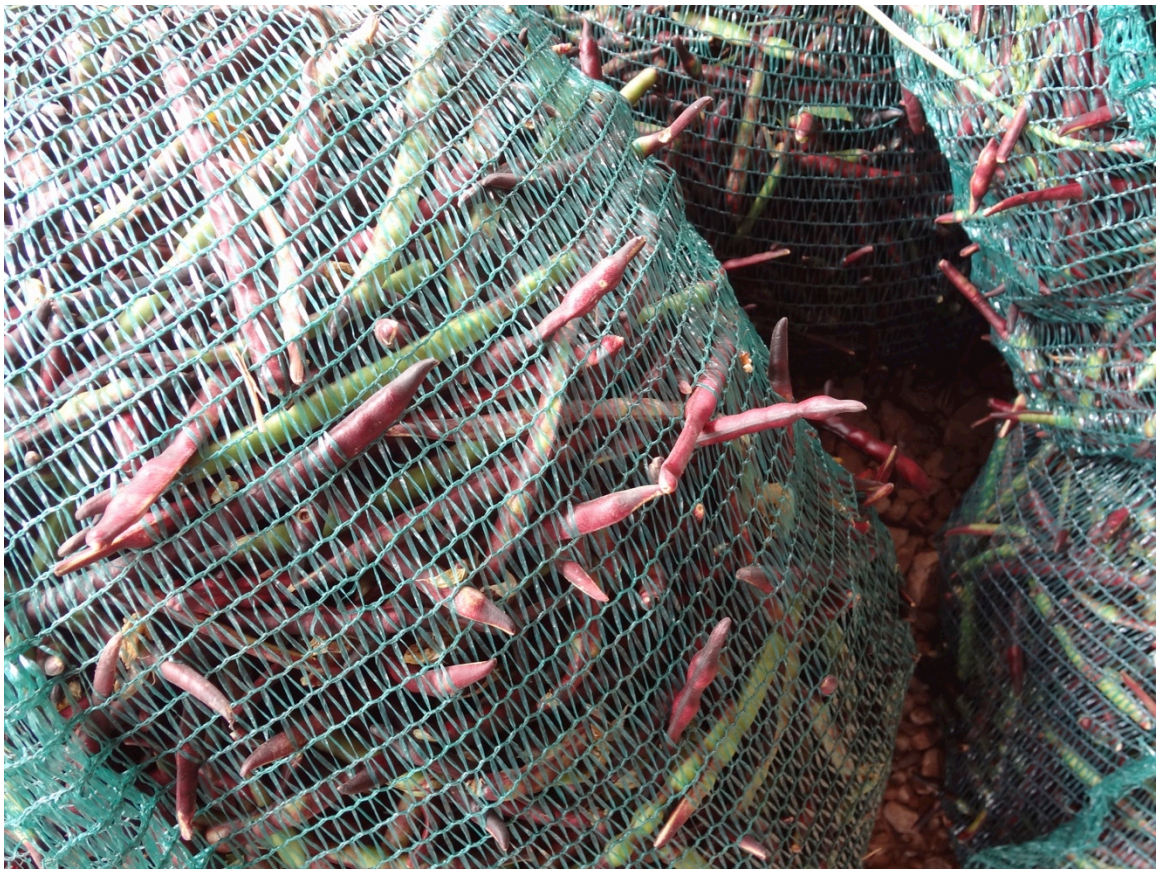
Over time, the Ministries acquired the beleaguered structure, intending to bring it back to life as the grocery the community envisioned. Staff learned a great deal while managing the construction, consulting with city officials on code requirements and health regulations, and learning about building materials. Retail experts helped them frame a vision for a building that would contain a deli counter as well as the grocery sales area. Market researchers showed them that their retail catchment area was about 5,000 people who lived in Allentown and Lakeside, but also residents of downtown lofts who also had no convenient place to purchase groceries nearby. Factory workers from a nearby plant are also considered part of their market. The business plan is ambitious, calling for the store to be self-sustaining on sales within 18 months of opening.

Such a combination of low-income and more prosperous shoppers has worked well in other urban areas, says Michael Porter and the Institute for a Competitive Inner City. Yet Fuller Ministries is in the rugged phase of learning whether that will play out in practice in Shreveport. Their mission was made more stringent because they committed themselves to raising all of the money without recourse to public funds. When this analyst visited, the gas had just been turned on. Schematic diagrams and images of the proposed renovation were arrayed around the Ministries offices. The store was still searching for vendors who would supply foods to a small urban store, and they were calculating the markup they would require to pay for their operations. Staff was excited, and knew they were jumping, with a great deal of fortitude, into the unknown. By November, the store was stocked and nearly ready to open.

Deborah Harris

Food service director, Caddo Parish Public School District
Shreveport

With 61 schools and three satellite facilities, the Caddo Public School District serves food to more than 41,000 students on a daily basis during the school year, spending $7 million buying the food required to do so. Quite naturally, many Shreveport food leaders consider this purchasing power and ask what role the school district could play in supporting local farmers. Deborah Harris graciously offered to walk us through the complexities of that challenge.



Harris points out that each school in her system has a food preparation area, so they have some facilities that allow them fresh preparation for their meal programs. However, she adds, many of those spaces are "tiny," so this is a discrete capacity. Moreover, staffing is limited, with some schools having as little as one part-time staff person to prepare food. Larger districts, of course have more staff because more students participate in meal programs. "Preparation is a challenge," she concludes.

Yet another challenge is the bidding system. Most foods are bid six months ahead of time, meaning the menu is determined and quantities calculated far in advance of preparing each meal. These six-month bids, which include packaged produce items such as pre-washed and

bagged shredded lettuce, are currently supplied by Reinhart Foodservice, a Wisconsin firm with an office in Shreveport. Reinhart has already formed collaborations with community food projects in both Wisconsin and Vermont, but the path to such collaborations in Shreveport depends on getting more small farms into production, and building a place where they can aggregate and process products to suit school demand, or identifying larger growers and processors who can supply considerable quantity from their own operations.

Fortunately, the school has a second bidding process that is more friendly to participation by local farmers. That is the produce bidding process, which involves a weekly bid for fresh produce items. The only major produce provider in the region, Harris adds, is Santa Maria Produce, also based in Shreveport. It is possible Santa Maria would be an outlet for local farmers who wish to reach this school market.

Harris finds both firms easy to work with, and says, "We've never had any difficulty getting the items we have requested." Three schools (Barrett, Cherokee Park, and Queensboro) have adopted a fresh fruits and vegetable program that is based on a teacher-written curriculum, where each school buys a diverse set of fresh produce for use in school lunches and to raise student awareness about the value of fresh foods. Harris feels the program has been valuable.

Harris does feature foods that could be sourced from ArkLaTex farms. One supplier ships them a sweet potato patty that has been processed commercially, and the schools also feature a sweet potato delight pie. Yet for a local farm or firm to source those processed products it would have to come under the six-month bid process, she says.

So far her efforts to source food from local farms have not yielded immense results. "We don't have any farmers with a supply large enough to supply me," she cautions. "I also have to look at food safety. We have to buy from a farm that has product liability insurance."

Harris' suggestion was that to establish a stronger foothold for local farmers it might be interesting to explore selling a single product to the school district. This would allow all parties to work together on a relatively simple project, leading to more involved projects after the basic steps have been taken and experience has been gained.

Shreveport Green

Donna Curtis
Stephanie Hansen
Shreveport

In a low-slung brick building settled into a grassy lawn on Southern Avenue, the nonprofit organization Shreveport Green tends to a wide variety of environmental concerns, including litter prevention, tree planting, beautification, waste reduction, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

It was this latter pursuit that led researchers to the Shreveport Green office to learn about their emerging effort to ensure access to healthy food in low-income communities — their

Mobile Market. Stocked with fresh vegetables from two local farms, the Market is a small van that shuttles to several community locations, offering very low prices to low-income customers.

Director Donna Curtis explained that the initiative was launched with the assistance of the Grayson Foundation, which allows for both garden development and the operation of the mobile van. Typically, Shreveport Green purchases its produce from seven area farms, but primarily relies upon Jason Anderson's farm in Coushatta. "He has everything we need in fairly large quantities," Curtis adds. However, she continues, they keep in close contact with all other growers, ever alert to their needs and opportunities that might be created. She works diligently with each of them to keep communications open, so such opportunities can be tapped. "We know our farmers," Curtis says.

On a typical load, they will pay $200 to purchase produce from Anderson, and re-sell this to low-income residents for a total of $100 to $150. The difference is subsidized. The project then parks the van in strategic locations where it is visible to residents who are invited to come by to shop. One of the best-selling items is purple-hulled peas, but the Market also sells tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis and yellow squash, okra, eggplant, melons and other produce. Each shipment consists of about seven bushels of produce that are taken two or three times each week to mobile market sites during the season.

Shreveport Green finds the interest to be strong. "We advertise through word of mouth, and we have as many customers as we can handle right now," says Curtis. Prior to launching the

market, the organization commissioned a study to learn what the demand would be. "We knew people wanted it before we got underway," Curtis adds. "We learned there are a number of people who would not go to the farmers market downtown." The most likely customers are older residents and young families. At each site, staff offer cooking demonstrations, hand out simple recipes, and try to converse with each shopper. This is not simply a commercial transaction. "We want it to be a learning experience for them."

Responding to consumer interest, Shreveport Green is now expanding into new arenas. "We want to move toward offering pre-set meals in a bag" so that customers can easily purchase all the ingredients they need for a meal in one step. The group is also forming a partnership with the MLK pharmacy and clinic (See page 25). "They pay us to come to their site. We set out bags, and their customers can fill their bags for free. We get 20-30 patients each clinic day."

The next challenge they have set for themselves is to grow food to sell through the Mobile Market. This program is run in partnership with Centenary College. They envision installing hoophouses over four garden beds, tilling another 20 outdoor beds, planting a small orchard and tending a composting area. Collaborating with the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana, they hope to grow food to place into backpacks for delivery to students to take home. The food bank already allows them to store food in their coolers before it is routed to the Mobile Market customers.

Curtis says there are two major obstacles to growth of the program, despite the high interest they have elicited. One is "people — it takes a lot of work to plan each event and to measure the outcomes." Not surprisingly, her second main concern is obtaining funding.

Noma Fowler-Sandlin

Market Manager, Shreveport Farmers Market

Several people interviewed for this study mentioned how vibrant the Shreveport Farmers Market was – as a place to buy fresh food and crafts, as well as a community gathering space. Catching Noma Fowler-Sandlin was not easy, since she was moving through the stalls at a rapid pace, connecting with her growers. At last, however, she stood still long enough that she could pass along some basic facts about how the market works.

"We have about 140 farmers who sell here, all told, who farm within a 100-mile radius of our market." Which ones are here on a given Saturday depends a great deal on the season, as different crops become available. Today, in late August, several meat farmers took their accustomed stalls, but many of the produce growers simply stayed home because they were between growing seasons. "On a typical Saturday, we have 30-50 growers." She considers it one of the largest farmers' markets in the state of Louisiana, and she maintains a waiting list of farmers who would like to rent space.

Supplementing these farm stalls are dozens of booths where people sell prepared foods (Southern, Mexican, and Filipino included), pickles, sponge cake, barbeque sauce, salad dressings, as well has handmade soaps and diverse crafts. Live music wafts in from the end

of an older brick warehouse along the southern edge of the market. The venerable building sports a sign, "Illinois Central Freight Station." Animated conversations set the tone. Kids run impatiently through the grounds.

Fowler-Sandlin is pleased to see the children stir up a commotion. "We've got to get their interest while they are young. If we don't, we can't grow new farmers." Among the new farms in the area, she adds, is a hydroponic vegetable farm and an urban sprout farm.

Shreveport has had a farmers market downtown operating continuously since 1986. It is now on a site just a few blocks away from the site of a former indoor market building, built of ornate brickwork in 1908. At its current location in Festival Plaza, the market boasts of having 12,000 visitors on opening day each season.

While may some consider direct sales from farmers to consumers to be a relatively minor economic matter, research shows otherwise. A 2009 Economic Impact Study conducted by the Center for Business and Economic Research at Louisiana State University at Shreveport concluded that the market makes a strong impact on downtown Shreveport. In that year, shoppers purchased $972,000 of food from market stalls, for an average of $25 per visitor, but continued to shop in the broader community, spending a total of $572,000 in other stores — a total of $1.5 million of direct revenue from market shopper visits. This in turn generated another $1.1 million of activity elsewhere in the city that year, the study said.

Wayne Salley

Flowing Hills Dairy
Belmont, Louisiana (Sabine Parish)

Leaning against the rear left side of his delivery truck, Wayne Salley wears a royal blue t-shirt with the words "Flowing Hills Dairy" embroidered in script above his heart. He is selling milk on this Saturday at the Shreveport Farmers Market, and happy to indulge his visitor by answering a few questions.

He begins by recounting the demise of the dairy industry in Louisiana. "At one time, we had 1,800 dairies in this state. Now we are down to 100." The fortunes of his family's farm mirror that history, but have also turned a more positive corner.

The Belmont, Louisiana farm, owned by Wayne's parents Clayton and Brenda Salley, began as a dairy in 1979. The family weathered several downturns in the industry; milk prices fell even as costs rose, so many neighboring farmers sold their cows and left the business. Finally, in 2008, during the economic downturn, the Salleys stopped selling milk to commercial accounts. Financially, it just did not pencil out.

But the couple kept milking a few cows, selling direct to consumers at a nearby farmers market. Interest was high, and they began thinking about ways to fill their neighbor's needs for milk. It dawned on them that they might make more money by bottling their own milk

and selling it directly to household consumers, rather than selling through the commodity stream.

Their intention was to stay small, but an explosion at a nearby creamery created a larger opportunity than they anticipated. They were able to purchase the former creamery's pasteurizer and bring it to their own farm. The catch was that the mechanism can process 600 gallons of milk at a time. This meant the Salleys would be milking cows on a larger scale than they had intended, to keep the machine occupied at an optimal rate.

Now the couple offers a creamline milk (that is, not homogenized) because the couple considers that a healthier product. They sell whole milk, chocolate milk, low-fat milk, and skim milk as well as butter produced by their mixed herd of about 100 Holstein, Brown Swiss, and Jersey cows. They use a low-temperature pasteurization process to retain more of the nutrients. "We get to about 145-150 degrees for 30 minutes and then we immediately cool it back down. From the time we start our process, our pasteurization, we try to have it back cooled down and ready to bottle within two hours," Salley told Louisiana Department of Agriculture reporter Avery Davidson in 2014.

"I never intended for [the business] to grow like it has, but I've been well blessed," Salley adds. His indicator that this would be a fruitful path was that he saw his customers return for repeat business. "Our customers came back with their ice chests, wanting more milk after two or three weeks," Salley says. "I knew then that it was going to be OK."

The dairy sells at select stores and at five farmers markets each week in Shreveport and Alexandria, including the downtown market.

Rebecca Krefft

Delta Delivery
Shreveport

Also visiting the market that Saturday was Rebecca Krefft, who was waiting for several customers to arrive to pick up food boxes they had ordered from Delta Delivery. The firm was launched just a little while after a prior distributor had ceased to operate. "We're following in the tracks of A Good Egg," Krefft notes. They carried great products, she adds, but she feels they were too rigid with their business model. "They basically told people, this is what you will get from us. We want to start with what the consumer asks, and to give people what they want."

Krefft is still proving out that model. "This is certainly the hardest thing I have ever done." While she admits to being "a worker bee" who wants to keep moving all of the time, there are times when the press of work to be done becomes a bit overwhelming. The business kicked into full gear in 2013 after oil prices fell, and customers who were short of money were looking for fresh foods. "That is when we started to get serious," she says.

Delta Delivery carries a wide variety of products, including fresh produce, meats, shrimp, citrus, and avocados that are grown within 300 miles of the market, ordered on line, sorted

into orders, and delivered directly to the door of the customer. At the request of several members, she has added low-carb and paleo [also called "ancestral" foods that have been minimally processed like the foods our ancestors ate] options. It is a great deal to juggle. "I am just treading water until I figure it all out," she chuckles. Customers pay from $27 to $47 for each weekly share, which allows farmers to get a fair share of the sale. Several people have asked her if she is interested in reaching for larger food markets. "I am not looking for wholesale," she cautions. It would seem this business is plenty to juggle for now.

Key Assets of the ArkLaTex Region

While no complete view of the ArkLaTex could possibly be gained in a matter of a few days of interviewing farmers, chefs, educators, health practitioners, food banks, food distributors, city and county staff, and other key stakeholders, excellent cooperation from local food leaders allowed researchers to gain important insights.

Several key assets became apparent during this brief exposure.

1. The **ArkLaTex region is blessed with ample water and soil** to support a vibrant agriculture. Pastures abound throughout the region, and the Red River valley sustains diverse crops. The climate is conducive to growing a wide variety of foods.

2. **Emerging farmers have taken immense risks and have invested considerable money in launching farm operations** that are dedicated to meeting local demand for food.

3. **Shreveport has considerable farmland within city limits** and in nearby peri-urban areas.

4. **Local food leaders in Shreveport appear to have developed a solid core of trust with each other**; this is the key element for ensuring resilient leadership amidst rapidly changing conditions. One leader described the city as "a rural environment in an urban context." This proximity to the land and to farmers should make it easier for local food initiatives to flourish in the ArkLaTex region.

5. Local food leaders in Shreveport have **framed an effective vision** for constructing new local food systems. This leadership **spans a diverse variety of neighborhoods, income levels, cultural backgrounds, and aspirations.** Its cohesion in bringing diverse players to work collaboratively will be a critical asset.

6. **This leadership group holds a solid understanding** that what motivates the growth of local foods is a profound dedication to building social and commercial connections among ArkLaTex local food practitioners.

7. The **vibrancy of the Shreveport Farmers Market** has helped raise the visibility of local farms, food processors, and food purveyors, and creates a vital space for social connection for the entire ArkLaTex region.

8. **Several chefs that source food locally help raise the visibility of local foods** by placing farmers names on their menus, listing them at the restaurant, and through special events and other steps that bring farmers into more direct contact to consumers.

Research conclusions

1. Demand for local food far outpaces the supply. It will be critical to grow new growers at a rapid pace.

2. The commodities grown by ArkLaTex farmers (poultry and eggs, cattle, corn, soybeans, cotton, and wheat) are essential items economically, but do not satisfy this demand for locally produced food because they are largely raw materials for industrial processing.

3. Prevailing farm and food infrastructure supports commodity farmers technically, but this established industry is not highly rewarding to rural communities. Average net income for all farmers in the ArkLaTex region is only $6,150 per farm. This does not appear to be sufficient to sustain commodity agriculture over the long term; even larger growers are exploring ways of diversifying their operations.

4. The region's farmers earned $66 million less in net cash income in 2013 than they earned in 1969, once dollars are adjusted for inflation.

5. ArkLaTex consumers spend an estimated $2.2 billion each year purchasing food that is sourced outside the region.

6. ArkLaTex farmers sell $2.1 million of food products directly from their farm to household consumers.

7. Most of the farmers we interviewed who are farming for local consumers had to rely on family wealth in order to start their farms; it is extremely difficult for someone with limited savings to build up a sustainable farm operation.

Essential insights

1. The availability of locally produced food in the ArkLaTex Region is **limited primarily by a lack of producers**. This is caused by several factors:

- The economics of farming have placed farmers at a disadvantage for decades, draining wealth out of the region.
- Cash crop farmers have intensified production to a level that is difficult to sustain, especially for the next generation of farmers who will have difficulty paying for the costs of starting a farm that uses advanced technology and requires vast land tracts.
- Livestock farmers have seen margins dwindle so much, in the face of higher concentration of the packing and marketing industries, that it is no longer worthwhile to raise livestock or milk cows on a small or medium-sized farm if one is selling into a commodity market.
- Incentives to produce commodities for national and global distribution have interfered with farmers' interest in meeting local food markets.

- For many years, youth were not attracted to farming as a career, due to its isolation, long hours, unpredictable schedules, and safety risks.
- U.S. farm suppliers have typically developed equipment suited to farming large tracts of cash grains, not suitable for produce or fruit production.
- Prevailing market infrastructure supports long-distance shipment of foods that do not spoil rapidly. Shipment of local foods, produce especially, will need to build new infrastructure that supports shipment, storage, and sale of fresh foods at shorter distances.
- Competing sources of income, such as professional jobs, investment income, and oil revenue, have limited interest in farming.
- Local consumers accepted for a long time the concept that foods should be grown in distant places, even in farm country.

2. **Those who have entered the occupation of farming for local markets** are driven by a sense of mission (to serve local markets while addressing wider social and health needs of local residents, and often to protect the environment), not just a business mentality. Most importantly, they **have been able to draw upon stored wealth** in order to launch new farm operations in conditions that are not ideal.

- This is an indication that conventional farming cannot regenerate itself by producing a core group of new farmers; entry costs are too high.
- Capital has come from parents, extended family members, oil wealth, investors, and other sources, but farming itself is not a reliable way to build wealth as a beginning farmer.
- Those who have inherited farms may face a lower cost structure because they do not carry land purchase or leasing costs. However, this wealth was typically gained in an earlier era of farming. It would be difficult to accumulate today.

3. **Many newcomers have taken a recent interest in farming**, but many lack access to land or capital, and many are new to farming so they could use opportunities to build new skills.

- If the ArkLaTex Region wants agriculture to flourish in the future, it will need to create ongoing training opportunities so emerging farmers are continuously developing the skills to farm.
- Training will not be sufficient in itself; emerging farmers will need access to land and capital if they are to launch careers as farmers running their own operations.
- Incubator farms and training programs must be supplemented with access to land that is permanently set aside for farming food for local markets.
- Similarly, the region will require ongoing training in value-added processing both at the farm level and commercially, so that local producers can gain more value from their production.
- Emerging farmers will also require access to on-farm infrastructure for storing, cooling, freezing, packing and shipping food, as well as access to distributors who convey food to local markets, and willing buyers.

- This entire network of local trade relationships must essentially be built from the ground up. Indeed, many of the new farmers have succeeded precisely because they built inexpensive and original on-farm methods for farming, storing food, and marketing.
- Several of the emerging farmers in the region have made significant departures from conventional farming practices for the sake of their family health. Many eat foods that are not widely available in mainstream channels, and can prepare these foods inexpensively because they raise the foods they eat. Some are eager to share what they have learned with others. The significance of this action should not be underestimated: one young couple decided to *start a farm* so they could obtain healthy food.

4. **Produce farmers who wish to sell locally to commercial markets will require access to distribution firms** such as Delta Delivery that can convey fresh produce to local retail and wholesale outlets.

- The **Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana** has also expressed an interest in assisting with local food distribution. This is a natural opportunity to explore, because the food bank (a) knows low-income clients who require better access to healthy foods; (b) has extensive experience in handling food safely; (c) owns coolers, freezers, and warehouse capacity; (d) owns trucks and is experienced in the logistics of moving food; and (e) represents tens of millions of dollars of investment the Shreveport community has already made in creating a local food system.
- Creating efficient local food distribution will be a significant challenge; if commercial distributors are willing to assist this enterprise this may reduce costs. Yet the existing commercial system successfully conveys food long distances and may have little experience in creating local efficiencies. Working with existing firms is desirable as long as they are committed to the mission of building a localized food system.
- Local efficiencies can be created if the distribution network runs on renewable energy produced in the region itself.
- At this time, the ArkLaTex region is not ready for building a formal "**food hub**," because there is not enough production for local markets to cover the operational costs of such a business without significant philanthropic support. It is more important at this stage to build a "**food web**:" social and commercial connections among emerging food businesses that strengthen local food trade incrementally, intensify the practice of respectful and mutual collaboration among local food partners, and prepare the foundation for later efforts to sell at a larger scale. Once these smaller steps are taken over time, it will become more clear when specific facilities such as an aggregation center, processing enterprise, formal distribution networks, or other opportunities should be implemented.

5. Early efforts to **recycle food scraps and other organic waste into fertile compost** for application to local farms could play a key role in making farming more sustainable. The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is now setting up a composting operation.

6. **Consumer education has taken root, especially in low-income neighborhoods.**

- Staff at several institutions and organizations have built extensive experience in community efforts to introduce healthier foods into people's diets; this work should be extended. There appear to be educators who can bring an African perspective into eating well at low cost to low-income communities; this should be extended.
- Several farmers offered to be part of these educational efforts so people can learn how to prepare relatively inexpensive, seasonal foods that can be produced in the region. Farmers, too, are often expert at eating at low cost.
- Several chefs also expressed strong interest in aiding these efforts.

7. **Local foods initiatives must also be supported by public policy.**

- Since local foods practitioners are swimming upstream against powerful economic currents that suggest that community-based food trade is impractical given the prevailing economic institutions, it will require sustained support from public policy.
- This should include: (a) creating effective incentives for local food production; (b) investing in physical infrastructure (storage and warehousing, for example) and knowledge systems that support local food trade; (c) zoning and land use policies that protect farmland; (d) effective planning and coordination of local foods initiatives; (e) targeted food production and educational initiatives in low-income communities; and (f) other capacities yet to be defined by local foods leaders.
- For those emerging farmers without wealth of their own, City and County programs should invest in new farm operations, especially for urban agriculturalists who have limited alternative means of support, and offer incentives for those who produce for local markets.
- Just as the global oil industry depends on farm-level infrastructure (for example, small individual pumps with storage tanks that hold crude oil until there is enough to pick up a load), creating a strong local food system will require infrastructure investments at the farm, locale, and regional levels appropriate to the scale of operations at each level.

8. **Engaging students while they are young is critical to ensuring there will be enough farmers, and healthy food consumers, in the future.**

- Although farmers selling to local schools appears to be an interesting approach for increasing local food trade, experience in other regions has shown that the victories are often quite discreet.
- The basic mismatch is that schools, while they purchase a great deal of food during the year, typically do not have much money to spend because their price per meal is so low. Moreover, they tend to purchase food during the farmers' off-season.
- On the farmers' side, those larger farms with plenty of production (and there are few such farms in the ArkLaTex region) tend to have established customers who pay more than schools. Smaller farms often cannot supply enough to satisfy school needs, and typically require higher prices, especially when starting up an enterprise.
- Many school districts in other regions have found that taking one product and making a pilot run with that product can work well. One school district in a western

state purchases butternut squash that have been peeled, diced, parboiled, and then frozen in vacuum-wrapped bags at a commercial kitchen, so the school cooks can simply empty the bag into a cooking pot to heat before serving. Others have successfully stored and cooked sweet potatoes. Some schools are working with hydroponic growers who can provide fresh greens year round from hoophouses.

Strategic recommendations for the ArkLaTex region:

Short-term actions:

1. The ArkLaTex region should embark upon an "**Eat Five, Buy Five**" campaign as other regions have done. The message of this campaign would be that ArkLaTex consumers should eat five fruits or vegetables each day for better health outcomes, and purchase $5 of food each week from farmers in the region. If each of the region's residents purchased this much food each week, farmers would earn $303 million of farm income — roughly one-third of what farmers currently earn. For an example of such a campaign, see "Making Small Farms into Big Business," available at http://www.crcworks.org/scfood.pdf.

2. The region must **commit itself to growing new farmers**. Raising vegetables poses the fewest obstacles to entry, yet raising livestock may bring greater income. Incubator programs where new farmers can be trained will be critical. Each should have the proper washing, packing, and storage facilities required for small farmers to prepare food safely for market. Land should also be available nearby for graduates of farm training programs to establish their own farm businesses in ways that allow them to remain in contact with, and mentor, new trainees.

3. **Culturally engaged food, health, and lifestyle education in inner-city neighborhoods is also critical**; existing programs should be expanded and, if needed, strengthened. Connecting farmers directly with consumers, and ensuring that urban dwellers know farming skills, will do the most to build the foundation for a local farm and food economy for the future.

4. The ArkLaTex region should invest in high tunnels, greenhouses, and other structures that will **extend the season** for fresh produce.

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana seems poised and eager to take on several of these short-term actions.

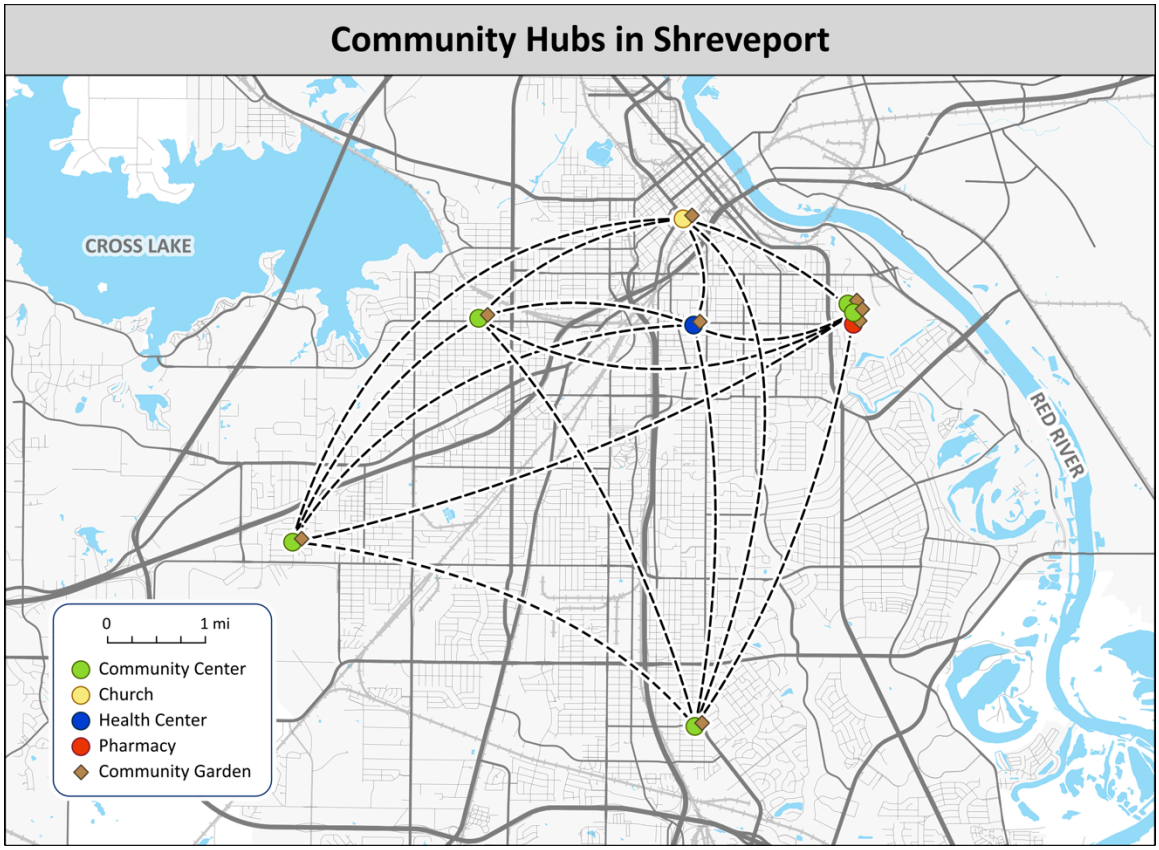
Long-term actions:

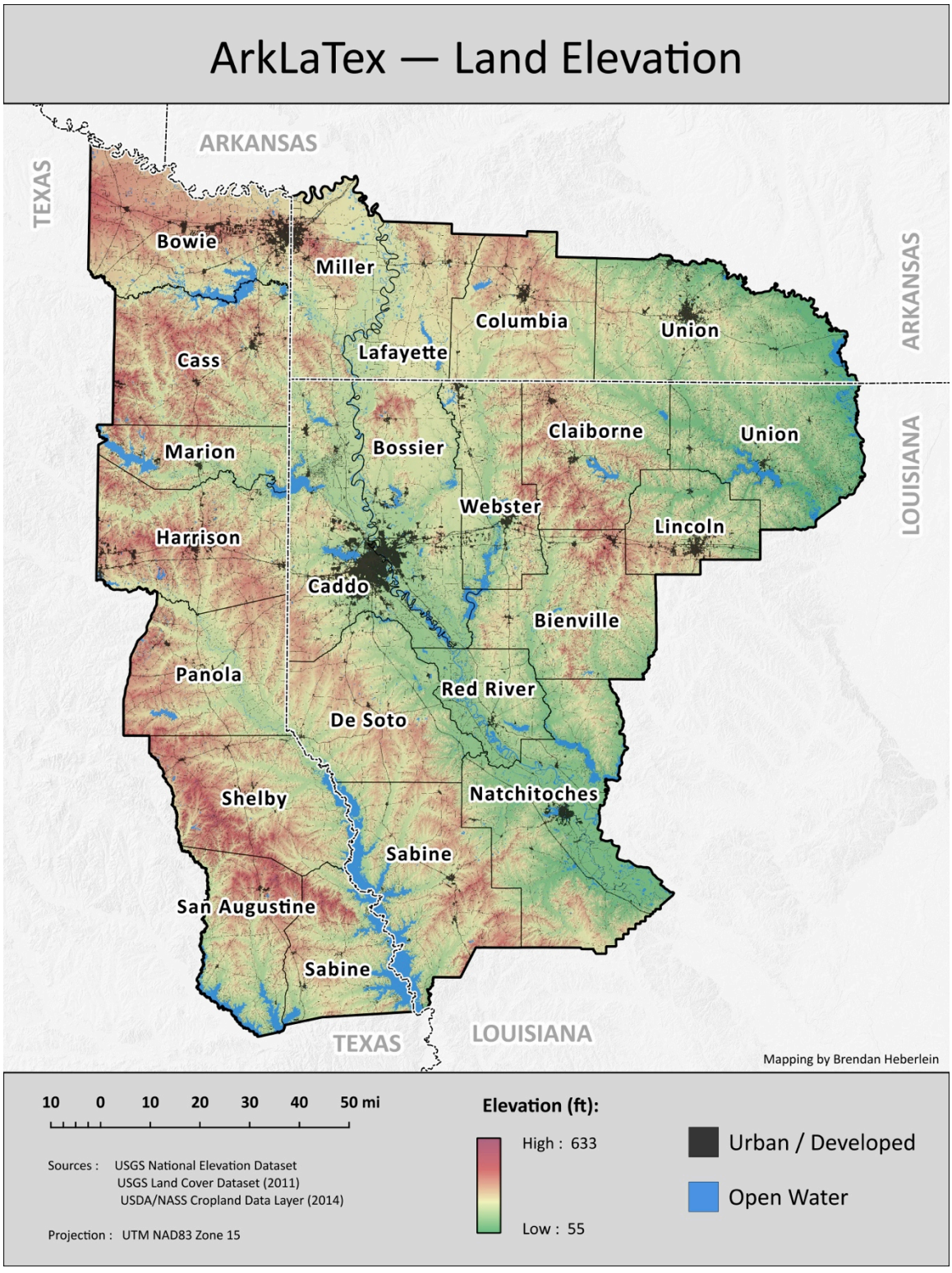
1. The City and County should **develop a registry of all farmable lands within urban boundaries**, placing priority on protecting those with the best soils, access to water, and strategic location for local food production. This registry should (a) document soil quality and suitability to agriculture; (b) assign significant acreage for food production inside and near the city; and (c) develop infrastructure that supports urban agriculture in the region.

2. Schools in the region should pursue targeted farm-to-school opportunities. It would seem that sweet potatoes is the first thing to try in Shreveport, but as Newt Lynn pointed out, this requires considerable labor at the farm, and additional labor at the school for preparation. In general, school purchases are likely to require additional funding so that farmers receive an adequate payment for their products, though some farms may be willing to supply surplus items at low cost.

3. City and County governments should place a high priority on expanding local foods infrastructure, including facilities at the farm level as well as near population centers, with transportation routes that economically distribute food where it is needed. These investments should be designed to create efficiencies in local foods trade.

4. Efforts to **compost organic wastes into fertility for local farms** should be expanded.




ArkLaTex — Land Elevation
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
Bowie
Miller
Columbia
Union
Lafayette
Cass
Claiborne
Union
Bossier
Marion
Webster
Lincoln
Harrison
Caddo
Bienville
Panola
Red River
De Soto
Natchitoches
Shelby
Sabine
San Augustine
Sabine
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
Mapping by Brendan Heberlein
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
Sources : USGS National Elevation Dataset
USGS Land Cover Dataset (2011)
USDA/NASS Cropland Data Layer (2014)
Projection : UTM NAD83 Zone 15
Elevation (ft):
High : 633
Low : 55
Urban / Developed
Open Water

Crossroads Resource Center

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Tools for Community Self-determination

Appendix: ArkLaTex Farm & Food Economy

(Arkansas, Louisiana, & Texas)

by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis)[1]
for

Slow Food North Louisiana
November 6, 2015

Covers: Columbia, Lafayette, Miller, & Union Counties in Arkansas;
Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches,
Red River, Sabine, & Webster Parishes in Louisiana;
Bowie, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Panola, Sabine, San Augustine, & Shelby Counties in Texas

ArkLaTex Region Region (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2013)
982,026 residents receive $39 billion of income annually. Personal income increased 160% from 1969 to 2013, after dollars were adjusted for inflation. The largest source of personal income is transfer payments (from government programs such as pensions), at $8.6 billion. The next most important income source is capital income (from interest, rent or dividends), at $7.4 billion. Government jobs rank third, with $5 billion. Health care professions bring in $2.7 billion of personal income. Manufacturing jobs produce $2.6 billion of personal income. Mining accounts for $2.3 billion of income. Note that income from public sources makes up 35% of all personal income in the region.

Income earned from transfer payments includes $2.7 billion of retirement and disability insurance benefits; $3.9 billion of medical benefits; $1 billion of income maintenance benefits; $105 million of unemployment insurance; and $381 million of veterans' benefits.

Government income includes $875 million of income earned by federal workers and $3.5 billion earned by state and local government workers. Military personnel earn $641 million of personal income.

Although population has increased 24% since 1969, there has been only limited public planning to assure a secure and stable food supply.

[1] Considerable research assistance provided by Nick Wojciak.

Issues affecting low-income residents of the ArkLaTex region:
Over 377,000 of the region's residents (40%) earn less than 185% of federal poverty guidelines. At this level of income, children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch at school. These lower-income residents spend $790 million each year buying food, including $191 million of SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and additional WIC coupons. The region's 12,517 farmers receive an annual combined total of $72 million in subsidies (25-year average, 1989-2013), mostly to raise crops such as corn, wheat, rice, or soybeans that are sold as commodities, not to feed local residents. *Data from Federal Census of 2008-2012, Bureau of Labor Statistics, & Bureau of Economic Analysis.*

11% percent of the region's households (over 127,000 residents) earn less than $10,000 per year. *Source: Federal Census of 2008-2012.*

5% percent of the ArkLaTex Region's households (over 6,500 residents) earn less than $10,000 per year. *Source: Federal Census of 2009-2013.*

16.3% of Shreveport-Bossier City residents are uninsured as of 2013, placing the metro area at the second-lowest rank among peer communities [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 35; data from U.S. Census Bureau].

4.1% of Shreveport-Bossier City children under 18 are uninsured as of 2013. This low rate is attributed to the community's LaCHIP program [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 35; data from U.S. Census Bureau].

The main group of residents that is uninsured is adults 18 to 64 years of age, with 22.5% of Shreveport-Bossier City residents in this age group lacking insurance even though they are employed as of 2013. This is the highest ratio of employed uninsured residents among Shreveport's peer communities. This rate is attributed to Louisiana's decision to reject expansion of Medicaid benefits [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 36; data from U.S. Census Bureau].

Food-related health conditions:

The Gallup company states that less than half (46%) of Shreveport-Bossier City residents exercise frequently as of 2012-2013. This is the second-lowest rate among its peer communities [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 37; data from Gallup Interactive].

Just over half (54%) of Shreveport-Bossier City metro area residents eat fruits and vegetables frequently. This once again places the region at the second-owest ranking among its peer communities [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 38; data from Gallup Interactive].

One in every four residents of the Shreveport-Bossier City metro area smoke, placing it at the third-highest rate among its peer communities [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 38; data from Gallup Interactive].

31% of Shreveport-Bossier City metro area residents are obese, placing the region as the third-highest among its peer communities [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 39; data from Gallup Interactive].

Shreveport-Bossier City metro area residents report an overall index of well-being at 63%, third-lowest among its peer communities [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 41; data from Gallup Interactive].

Overall, the 2015 Community Counts report concludes, "Over the last decade there has not been much positive movement in terms of health indicators in the Shreveport-Bossier metro area" [*Source: Norris and Norris* p. 42].

Source: Norris, Dave N. & Norris, Amanda M. (2015). "2015 Community Counts." Community Foundation of North Louisiana, February.

11% of residents in each of the three states have been diagnosed with diabetes as of 2013. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.* Medical costs for treating diabetes and related conditions in the three states are estimated at $24.8 billion. (Arkansas: $2.4 billion; Lousiana: $4.2 billion; Texas: $18.2 billion). *Source: American Diabetes Association.*

67% of Louisiana residents were overweight (34%) or obese (33%) in 2013. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

The region's farms (Agricultural Census, 2012)
Agriculture Census data for 2012 were released May 2, 2014

The Census of Agriculture defines a "farm" as "an operation that produces, or would normally produce and sell, $1,000 or more of agricultural products per year."

Land:

- 12,517 farms.
- The ArkLaTex region had 42 fewer farms in 2012 than in 2007.
- 429 (3%) of these are 1,000 acres or more in size.
- 4,603 (37%) farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average farm size is 205 acres.
- The region has 2.6 million acres of land in farms.
- The ArkLaTex region holds 555,000 acres of harvested cropland.
- At least 66,000 of these acres are irrigated. *Note that data for irrigated acreage in Claiborne and Webster parishes were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- Average value of land and buildings per farm was $507,000.

Sales:
With the exception of foods sold directly to consumers (see below), farmers typically sell commodities to wholesalers, brokers or manufacturers that require further processing or handling to become consumer items. The word "commodities" is used in this report to mean the crops and livestock sold by farmers through these wholesale channels. The term "products" encompasses commodity sales, direct sales, and any other sales.

- The region's farmers sold $1.7 billion of crops and livestock in 2012.
- Farm product sales increased by 15% from 2007 to 2012.
- $213 million of crops were sold.
- $1.4 billion of livestock and products were sold.
- 8,393 (67%) of the region's farms sold less than $10,000 of products in 2012.
- Total sales from these small farms were at least $20 million, more than 1% of the region's farm product sales. *Note that data for sales from small farms in Bienville, Columbia, Lafayette, and Union parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total, and percentage, are incomplete.*
- 1,119 (9%) of the region's farms sold more than $100,000 of products.
- Total sales from these larger farms were at least $1.5 billion, more than 93% of the region's farm product sales. *Note that data for sales from larger farms in Columbia, Union, Marion, and Sabine counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total, and percentage, are incomplete.*
- 67% of the region's farms (8,327 of 12,517) reported net losses in 2012.
- 1,419 (11%) of ArkLaTex region's farmers collected a combined total of $15 million of federal subsidies in 2012.

Top farm products of ArkLaTex region (2012).
*Note: * denotes sales data has been suppressed.*

Product	**$ Millions**
Poultry and eggs	*1,196
Cattle and calves	*179
Corn	*67
Soybeans	*36
Forage Crops (hay, etc.)	*35
Cotton	*15
Wheat	*14
Vegetables	*7

Production Expenses:

- Feed purchases were the largest single expense for the ArkLaTex region farmers in 2012, totaling $725 million (52% of production expenses).
- Livestock and poultry purchases ranked as the second largest single expense, at $234 million (17%).
- Depreciation expenses totaled $82 million (6%).
- Repairs, supplies, and maintenece costs were $54 million (4%).
- Hired farm labor cost ArkLaTex farmers $53 million (4%).
- Gasoline, fuels and oil purchases were $45 million (3%).
- Fertilizer, lime and soil conditioners cost at least $38 million (3%). *Note that data for fertilizer, lime, and soil conditioner expenses in Marion and Sabine counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total, and percentage, are incomplete.*
- Interest expenses were $34 million (2%).
- Utlities cost farmers $28 million (2%).
- Customwork and custom hauling costs totaled at least $24 million (2%). *Note that data for customwork and custom hauling costs in Bienville Parish and Marion County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total, and percentage, are incomplete.*
- Rental costs for land and buildings were at least $23 million (2%). *Note that data for rental costs in Bienville Parish were suppresseed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total, and percentage, are incomplete.*
- Property taxes cost farmers $21 million (2%).

Cattle & Dairy:

- 7,413 farms hold an inventory of 447,000 cattle.
- 245,000 cattle were sold by farmers in 2012 for total sales of at least $179 million. *Note that data for sales of cattle in Bienville, Caddo, and Marion parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total, and percentage, are incomplete.*
- 6,649 farms raise beef cows.
- 36 farms raise milk cows.
- 14 farms produced corn for silage.
- 5,500 farms produced 711,000 tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 347,000 acres.
- 3,546 farms sold at least $35 million of forage. *Note that data for sales of forage crops in Natchitoches, Columbia, and Marion parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

Other Livestock & Animal Products:

- 258 farms hold an inventory of at least 2,215 hogs and pigs. *Note that data for inventroy of hogs and pigs in Webster, Lafayette, and Miller parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 128 farms sold at least 3,045 hogs and pigs in 2012. *Note that data for sales of hogs and pigs in Lafayette and Marion counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 180 farms hold an inventory of at least 2,299 sheep and lambs. *Note that data for inventory of sheep and lambs in Claiborne Parish and Lafayette County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 390 farms sold at least $424,000 worth of sheep, goats, and lambs in 2012. *Note that data for sales of sheep, goats, and lambs in Bienville, Caddo, Red River, Webster, Miller, Harrison, and San Augustine parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 987 farms hold an inventory of at least 1.9 million laying hens. *Note that data for inventory of laying hens in Claiborne, De Soto, Natchitoches, Sabine, and San Augustine parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 542 farms raise at least 351 million broiler chickens. *Note that data for inventory of broiler chickens in Bossier, De Soto, Webster, Harrison, and Marion parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 26 farms engage in aquaculture.
- 828 farms raise horses and ponies.

Grains, Oil Seeds, & Edible Beans:

- 183 farms produced at least $126 million of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans. *Note that data for sales of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans in Bienville Parish and Harrison County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 121 farms produced at least 9.9 million bushels of corn on over 71,000 acres, worth more than $67 million. *Note that data for bushels of corn in Bienville, De Soto, Harrison, and Shelby parishes/counties, data for acreage of corn in Bienville, Claiborne, De Soto, Harrison, and Shelby parishes/counties, and data for sales of corn in Bienville, De Soto, Harrison, Panola, Sabine, and Shelby parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*
- 109 farms produced at least 2.6 million bushels of soybeans on over 68,000 acres, worth more than $36 million. *Note that data for bushels and acreage of soybeans in Claiborne, Cass, Harrison, and Shelby parishes/counties, and data for sales of soybeans in Claiborne, De Soto, Lincoln, Cass, and Shelby parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*

- 92 farms produced at least 2 million bushels of wheat on over 46,000 acres, worth more than $14 million. *Note that data for bushels and acreage of wheat in Claiborne, Cass, Harrison, and Panola parishes/counties, and data for sales of wheat in Claiborne, Natchitoches, Cass, Harrison, and Panola parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*

Vegetables & Melons (some farmers state that Ag Census data does not fully represent vegetable production):

- 204 farms worked at least 2,264 acres to produce vegetables, worth at least $7.3 million. *Note that data for acreage of vegetables in Columbia, Harrison, and Marion counties and data for sales of vegetables in 10 of 22 counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality so these totals are incomplete.*
- This represents a 30-farm decrease in vegetable farms since 2007.
- 54 farms raised potatoes.

Fruits (some farmers state that Ag Census data does not fully represent fruit production):

- 343 farms in the region hold at least 18,000 acres of orchards. *Note that data for acreage of orchards in Columbia County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 253 farms sold at least $5.3 million of fruits, nuts, and berries. *Note that data for sales of fruits, nuts, and berries in 11 of 22 parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

Nursery & Greenhouse Plants:

- 108 farms sold at least $5.2 million worth of ornamentals in 2012. *Note that data for sales of ornamentals in 11 of 22 parishes/counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- This represents a 5-farm decrease in ornamental farms since 2007.
- 15 farms sold Christmas trees.

Direct & Organic Sales:

- 472 farms sell at least $2.1 million of food products directly to consumers. *Note that data for direct sales in Marion County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- This amounts to at least 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.
- Bossier County leads the region in direct sales, with $319,000.
- There were no certified organic farms in the region.
- 3 farms were in transition to organic production.

- 24 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 640 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 105 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 81 farms had on-farm packing facilities.

Conservation Practices:

- 1,746 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 29 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 75 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

Other Crops:

- 37 farms produced 289,000 bushels of oats on 4,507 acres.

Operations by Legal Status for Tax Purposes in the ArkLaTex Region
(Census of Agriculture, 2012)
** Denotes that data has been suppressed.*

	Farms	**Acres**
Family or individual	11,382	*1,805,030
Partnership	635	*340,597
Corporation (family held)	367	*196,849
Corporation (other than family held)	49	*13,615
Other – cooperative, estate or trust, institutional, etc.	84	*5,935
Totals	12,517	*2,362,026

County and State Highlights

State of Arkansas highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 45,071 farms, 9% less than in 2007.
- Arkansas has 14 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $9.775 billion of products in 2012.
- $4.8 billion (49%) of these sales were crops.
- $4.94 billion (51%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 16,631 farms (37%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres acres, with 11,947 (27%) farms.
- 3,255 farms (7%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 13,865 farms (31%) are 50 acres or less.
- 25,220 farms (56%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 7,506 farms (17%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Arkansas ranks 1st in the United States for acreage of rice, with 1.3 million.
- The state ranks 3rd in the country for acreage of cotton, with 586,000.
- Arkansas ranks third in the country for inventory of broilers, with 170 million.
- The state ranks third in the country for inventory of turkeys, with 8.8 million.
- Arkansas ranks 3rd in the United States for sales of poultry and eggs, with $4 billion.
- The state ranks fourth in the country for sales of cotton, with $446 million.
- Arkansas ranks sixth in the United States for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, with 6.7 million.
- The state ranks ninth in the country for aquaculture sales, with $67 million.
- Arkansas ranks 10th in the country for sales of grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas, with $4.2 billion.
- The state ranks 10th in the United States for inventory of laying hens, with 13 million.
- 1,391 farms sell $6.4 million of food products directly to consumers. This is a 16% decrease of number of farms (1,657 in 2007) selling direct, and a 22% decrease in direct sales since 2007 sales of $8.2 million.
- Direct sales were 0.07% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled $37 million.
- 32 farms farm organically.
- 115 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 2,199 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 289 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 135 farms had on-farm packing facilities.

- 7,143 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 47 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 79 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

Columbia County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 278 farms, 9% less than in 2007.
- Columbia County has 46,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $42 million of products in 2012.
- $5 million (12%) of these sales were crops.
- $36.6 million (88%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 123 farms (44%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 73 (26%) farms.
- 2 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 79 farms (28%) are less than 50 acres.
- 171 farms (62%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 32 farms (12%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Columbia County ranks 1st in Arkansas for acreage of nursery stock crops, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 2nd in the state for sales of ornamentals, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 8 farms sold $6,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 6-farm decrease, and a 90% decrease in direct sales since 2007 sales of $59,000.
- Direct sales were 0.01% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Lafayette County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 263 farms, 16% less than in 2007.
- Lafayette County has 115,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $128 million of products in 2012.
- $32 million (25%) of these sales were crops.
- $96 million (75%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 95 farms (36%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres, with 63 (24%) farms.
- 33 farms (13%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 47 farms (18%) are less than 50 acres.
- 102 farms (39%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.

- 100 farms (38%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Lafayette County ranks 3rd in Arkansas for inventory of bee colonies, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 5th in the state for aquaculture sales, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 8th in the state for sales of cattle, with $25 million.
- 6 farms sold $132,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 1-farm increase, and a 53% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $86,000.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Miller County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 525 farms, 13% less than in 2007.
- Miller County has 164,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $45.5 million of products in 2012.
- $24.5 million (54%) of these sales were crops.
- $21 million (46%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 177 farms (34%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 174 (33%) farms.
- 34 farms (6%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 187 farms (36%) are less than 50 acres.
- 319 farms (61%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 44 farms (8%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Miller County ranks 4th in Arkansas for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, with $1.1 million.
- The county ranks 10th in the state for acreage wheat, with 19,000.
- 22 farms sold $69,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 9-farm decrease, and a 25% decrease in direct sales, from 2007 sales of $92,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Union County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 280 farms, 21% less than in 2007.
- Union County has 43,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $28 million of products in 2012.
- $569,000 (2%) of these sales were crops.
- $27.4 million (98%) of these sales were livestock.

- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 128 farms (46%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 84 (30%) farms.
- 6 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 96 farms (34%) are less than 50 acres.
- 206 farms (74%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 18 farms (6%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Union County ranks 8th in Arkansas for acreage of green southern peas, with 19.
- 19 farms sold $48,000 of food directly to consumers. There was no change in farms selling direct since 2007, and a 6% decrease in direct sales since 2007 sales of $51,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

State of Louisiana highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 28,093 farms, 7% less than in 2007.
- Louisiana has 7.9 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $3.8 billion of products in 2012.
- $2.78 billion (73%) of these sales were crops.
- $1.03 billion (27%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 9,309 farms (33%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 8,723 (31%) farms.
- 1,926 farms (7%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 12,276 farms (44%) are less than 50 acres.
- 18,824 farms (67%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 3,288 farms (12%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Louisiana ranks 2nd in the country for acreage of sugarcane, with 399,000.
- The state ranks 3rd in the country for aquaculture sales, with $123 million.
- Louisiana ranks 3rd in the country for acreage of rice, with 395,000.
- The state ranks 9th in the country for sales of forage crops (hay, etc.) with $635 million.
- 1,276 farms sold $7.5 million of food directly to consumers. There was no change in the number of farms selling direct since 2007, and a 19% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $9.2 million.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.
- Note also that direct sales from farmers to household consumers far surpass the value of the 14th-ranking product, hogs and pigs.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled $42 million.
- 15 farms farm organically.
- 97 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 1,484 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 479 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 228 farms had on-farm packing facilities.
- 3,874 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 37 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 126 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

Bienville Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 233 farms, 20% more than in 2007.
- Bienville Parish has 56,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $34.5 million of products in 2012.

- $1.9 million (5%) of these sales were crops.
- $32.6 million (95%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 89 farms (38%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 61 (26%) farms.
- 10 farms (4%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 77 farms (33%) are less than 50 acres.
- 161 farms (69%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 19 farms (8%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Bienville Parish ranks 1st in Lousiana for inventory of roosters, with 20,000.
- The parish ranks 3rd in the state for acreage of watermelon, with 57.
- Bienville Parish ranks 3rd in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 189,000.
- The parish ranks sixth in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with $30 million.
- Bienville Parish ranks 7th in the state for sales of livestock and poultry, with $33 million.
- The parish ranks 7th in Louisiana for inventory of broilers, with 646,000.
- 11 farms sold $65,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 1-farm increase over 2007, and a 16% decrease in direct sales since 2007 sales of $77,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Bossier Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 472 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Bossier Parish has 81,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $17.7 million of products in 2012.
- $10.8 million (61%) of these sales were crops.
- $6.9 million (39%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 166 farms (35%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 122 (26%) farms.
- 14 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 240 farms (51%) are less than 50 acres.
- 344 farms (73%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 32 farms (7%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Bossier Parish ranks 4th in Lousiana for inventory of horses and ponies, with 2,710.
- The parish ranks 4th in the state for inventory of bee colonies, with 1,110.
- Bossier Parish ranks 8th in the state for sales of horses and ponies, with $566,000.
- The parish ranks 9th in Louisiana for inventory of goats, with 542.
- Bossier Parish ranks 10th in the state for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, with $641,000.

- 35 farms sold $319,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 9-farm increase over 2007, and a 79% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $178,000.
- Direct sales were 1.8% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

Caddo Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 614 farms, 2% less than in 2007.
- Caddo Parish has 140,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $50.6 million of products in 2012.
- $42.3 million (84%) of these sales were crops.
- $8.3 million (16%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 250 farms (41%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 149 acres, with 150 (24%) farms.
- 33 farms (5%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 334 farms (54%) are less than 50 acres.
- 440 farms (72%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 47 farms (8%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Caddo Parish ranks 1st in Louisiana for sales of sheep and goat products, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The parish ranks 4th in the state for inventory of goats, with 831.
- Caddo Parish ranks 7th in the state for acreage of cotton (upland cotton), with 12,000.
- The parish ranks 7th in Louisiana for inventory of bee colonies, with 438.
- Caddo Parish ranks seventh in the state for sales of cotton, with $11 million.
- The parish ranks 8th in the state for sales of fruit, tree nuts, and berries, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Caddo Parish ranks ninth in the state for acreage of corn, with 20,000.
- The parish ranks 9th in the state for sales of ornamentals, with 1.4 million.
- 40 farms sold $305,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 2 farm increase over 2007, and a 21% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $252,000.
- Direct sales were 0.6% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

Claiborne Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 295 farms, 23% more than in 2007.
- Claiborne Parish has 57,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $71 million of products in 2012.

- $1.94 million (3%) of these sales were crops.
- $69.3 million (97%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 112 farms (38%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 87 (29%) farms.
- 9 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 96 farms (33%) are less than 50 acres.
- 194 farms (66%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 52 farms (18%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Claiborne Parish ranks 2nd in the state for sales of Christmas trees and woody crops, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The parish ranks 2nd in the state for inventory of pullets, with 240,000.
- Claiborne Parish ranks fifth in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with $64 million.
- The parish ranks fifth in Louisiana for acreage of woody crops, with 260.
- Claiborne Parish ranks 5th in the state for inventory of broilers, with 2.8 million.
- The parish ranks 8th in the state for inventory of roosters, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Claiborne Parish ranks 9th in the state for inventory of laying hens, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 10 farms sold $21,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 3-farm decrease since 2007, and a 17% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $18,000.
- Direct sales were 0.03% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

DeSoto Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 669 farms, 8% more than in 2007.
- De Soto Parish has 164,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $17.7 million of products in 2012.
- $4.46 million (25%) of these sales were crops.
- $13.22 million (75%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 244 farms (36%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 179 (27%) farms.
- 25 farms (4%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 255 farms (38%) are less than 50 acres.
- 480 farms (72%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 25 farms (4%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.

- De Soto Parish ranks 2nd in the state for acreage of forage crops, with 24,000.
- The parish ranks 3rd in the state for inventory of mules, burros, and donkeys, with 317.
- The parish ranks fifth in the state for sales of milk, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- De Soto Parish ranks 5th in the state for inventory of roosters, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The parish ranks 8th in the state for inventory of horses and ponies, with 2,028.
- De Soto Parish ranks ninth in Louisiana for inventory of cattle, with 28,000.
- 31 farms sold $73,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 5-farm decrease since 2007, and a 6% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $78,000.
- Direct sales were 0.4% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

Lincoln Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 346 farms, 8% more than in 2007.
- Lincoln Parish has 56,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $101.7 million of products in 2012.
- $1.47 million (1%) of these sales were crops.
- $100.23 million (99%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 142 farms (41%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 105 (30%) farms.
- 3 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 115 farms (33%) are less than 50 acres.
- 215 farms (62%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 63 farms (18%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Lincoln Parish ranks 1st in the state for acreage of peaches, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The parish ranks 2nd in the state for livestock and poultry sales, with $100 million.
- Lincoln Parish ranks 2nd in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with $96 million.
- The parish ranks second in the state for inventory of broilers, with 5.2 million.
- Lincoln Parish ranks third in Louisiana for inventory of pullets, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The Parish ranks third in the state for inventory of roosters, with 10,000.
- 20 farms sold $233,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 3-farm increase over 2007.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Natchitoches Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 630 farms, 10% more than in 2007.
- Natchitoches Parish has 201,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $129 million of products in 2012.
- $30 million (23%) of these sales were crops.
- $99 million (77%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 227 farms (36%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 169 (27%) farms.
- 47 farms (7%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 201 farms (32%) are less than 50 acres.
- 377 farms (60%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 87 farms (14%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Natchitoches Parish ranks 1st in Louisiana for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The parish ranks 1st in the state for acreage of forage crops, with 28,000.
- Natchitoches Parish ranks 2nd in the state for sales of cattle, with $16 million.
- The parish ranks 3rd in the state for livestock and poultry sales, with $99 million.
- Natchitoches Parish ranks fourth in the state for inventory of broilers, with 2.9 million
- The parish ranks 4th in the state for inventory of cattle, with 36,000.
- Natchitoches Parish ranks fourth in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with $81 million.
- The parish ranks 9th in the state for inventory of horses and ponies, with 1,789.
- 35 farms sold $228,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 106% increase in the number of farms selling direct (17 in 2007), and a 40% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $381,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Red River Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 252 farms, 1 more farm than in 2007.
- Red River Parish has 135,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $38.6 million of products in 2012.
- $12.9 million (33%) of these sales were crops.
- $25.7 million (67%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 64 farms (25%) in this category.

- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 60 (24%) farms.
- 34 farms (13%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 83 farms (33%) are less than 50 acres.
- 148 farms (59%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 39 farms (15%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Red River Parish ranks 1st in Louisiana for sales of cattle, with $23 million.
- The parish ranks 1st in the state for sales of horses and ponies, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Red River Parish ranks 3rd in the state for inventory of cattle, with 36,000.
- The parish ranks 4th in the state for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Red River Parish ranks 10th in the state for livestock and poultry sales, with $26 million.
- The Parish ranks tenth in Louisiana for inventory of bee colonies, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 8 farms sold $51,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 2-farm decrease since 2007, and a 7% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $55,000.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Sabine Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 392 farms, 7% more than in 2007.
- Sabine Parish has 52,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $142 million of products in 2012.
- $1.26 million (1%) of these sales were crops.
- $141 million (99%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 165 farms (42%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 127 (32%) farms.
- 4 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 147 farms (38%) are less than 50 acres.
- 244 farms (62%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 55 farms (14%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Sabine Parish ranks 1st in the state for livestock and poultry sales, with $141 million.
- The parish ranks 1st in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with $133 million.
- Sabine Parish ranks first in the state for inventory of broilers, with 6.3 million.
- The parish ranks 1st in the state for inventory of pullets, with 295,000.
- Sabine Parish ranks second in the state for sales of hogs and pigs, with $52,000.

- The parish ranks third in the state for acreage of mustard greens, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Sabine Parish ranks 4th in the state for sales of milk, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The parish ranks 5th in Louisiana for sales of agricultural products, with $142 million.
- Sabine Parish ranks sixth in the state for acreage of woody crops, with 240.
- The parish ranks seventh in the state for sales of woody crops, with $68,000.
- Sabine Parish ranks 10th in the state for inventory of roosters, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 12 farms sold $23,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 5-farm decrease since 2007, and a 64% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $64,000.
- Direct sales were 0.02% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Webster Parish highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

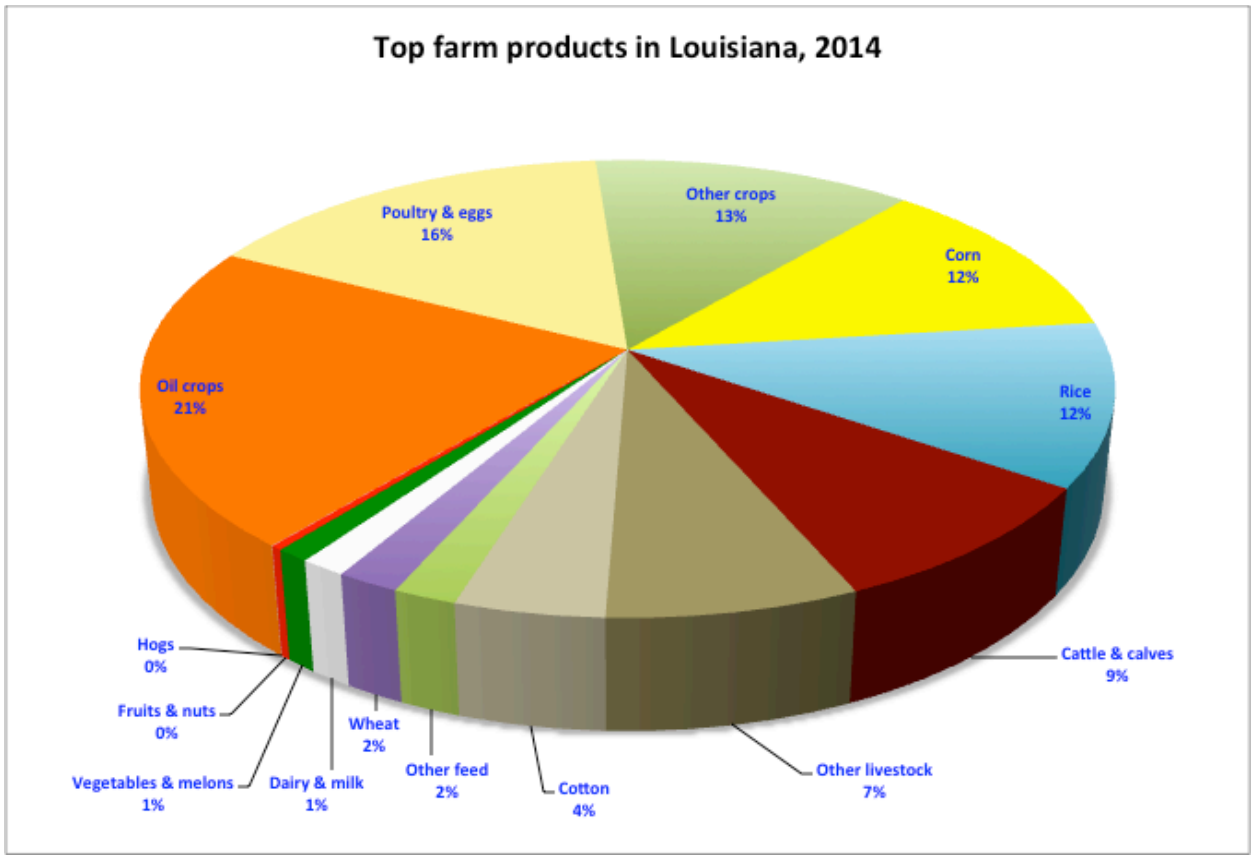
- 447 farms, 4% more than in 2007.
- Webster Parish has 52,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $10 million of products in 2012.
- $1.74 million (17%) of these sales were crops.
- $8.3 million (83%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 182 farms (41%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 155 (35%) farms.
- 4 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 181 farms (40%) are less than 50 acres.
- 326 farms (73%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 10 farms (2%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Webster Parish ranks second in Louisiana for inventory of roosters, with 11,000.
- The parish ranks fourth in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 98,000.
- Webster Parish ranks sixth in the state for inventory of horses and ponies, with 2,172.
- 16 farms sold $45,000 of food directly to consumers. This is an 8-farm decrease since 2007, and a 6% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $48,000.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

Louisiana's top farm products in 2014 (Economic Research Service)
The data in the table and pie chart below are for Louisiana as a whole. See chart on next page.

	$ millions
Oil crops	855
Poultry & eggs	648
Miscellaneous crops	498
Corn	470
Rice	461
Cattle & calves	355
Other livestock	286
Cotton	170
Other feed	72
Wheat	72
Dairy & milk	52
Vegetables & melons	39
Fruits & nuts	13
Hogs & pigs	1

Note also that at $7.5 million, direct sales from farmers to household consumers far surpass the value of the 14th-ranking product, hogs and pigs.

Lousiana's top farm products in 2014 (Economic Research Service)
See table on previous page



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

State of Texas highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 248,809 farms, 1% more than in 2007.
- Texas has 130 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $25.4 billion of products in 2012.
- $7.4 billion (29%) of these sales were crops.
- $18 billion (71%) of these sales was livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 73,868 farms (30%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 72,856 (29%) farms.
- 21,949 farms (9%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 93,681 farms (38%) are less than 50 acres.
- 175,880 farms (70%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 17,489 farms (7%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Texas ranks 1st in the country for livestock and poultry sales, with $18 billion.
- The state ranks first in the country for sales of cotton, with $1.6 billion.
- Texas ranks 1st in the country for sales of cattle, with $13 billion.
- The state ranks first in the country for sales of sheep, goats, and their products, with $122 million.
- Texas ranks first in the country for acreage of forage crops, with 5.1 million.
- The state ranks first in the country for acreage of cotton, with 3.8 million.
- The state ranks first in the United States for inventory of cattle, with 11 million.
- Texas ranks third in the country for sales of agricultural products, with $25 billion.
- The state ranks third in the country for sales of ornamentals, with $1 billion.
- Texas ranks 3rd in the country for sales of forage crops, with $958 million.
- The state ranks 3rd in the country for sales of horses and ponies, with $149 million.
- The state ranks fifth in the United States for acreage of wheat, with 3 million.
- Texas ranks 5th in the country for inventory of laying hens, with 21 million.
- The state ranks sixth in the country for sales of poultry and eggs, with $2.6 billion.
- Texas ranks 6th in the country for sales of milk, with $1.7 billion.
- The state ranks sixth in the country for inventory of broilers, with 107 million.
- Texas ranks seventh in the country for aquaculture sales, with $82 million.
- The state ranks 7th in the country for iventory of pullets, with 6 million.
- Texas ranks eighth in the United States for sales of crops, with $7.4 billion.
- The state ranks 8th in the country for sales of vegetables, with $475 million.
- Texas ranks eighth in the United States for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, with $252 million.

- 7,954 farms sold $28 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 8% decrease in the number of farms selling direct (8,619 in 2007), and a 28% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $38.7 million.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled $475 million.
- 188 farms farm organically.
- 590 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 11,544 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 2,927 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 1,949 farms had on-farm packing facilities.
- 41,401 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 199 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 1,795 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

Bowie County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 1,618 farms, 1% more than in 2007.
- Bowie County has 273,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $66 million of products in 2012.
- $14 million (21%) of these sales were crops.
- $52 million (79%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 588 farms (36%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 541 (33%) farms.
- 47 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 719 farms (44%) are less than 50 acres.
- 1,143 farms (71%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 88 farms (5%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Bowie County ranks fourth in the state for acreage of pecans, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 7th in the state for acreage of soybeans, with 5,655.
- 45 farms sold $220,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 5-farm increase over 2007, and a 16% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $190,000.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, the same as the national average of 0.3%.

Cass County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 1,024 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Cass County has 168,000 acres of land in farms.

- Farmers sold $67.6 million of products in 2012.
- $5.3 million (8%) of these sales were crops.
- $62.3 million (92%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 466 farms (46%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 269 (26%) farms.
- 20 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 303 farms (30%) are less than 50 acres.
- 744 farms (73%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 52 farms (5%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Cass County ranks 7th in the state for inventory of broilers, with 3.7 million.
- 34 farms sold $98,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 29% decrease in the number of farms selling direct (48 in 2007), and a 15% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $85,000.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Harrison County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 1,298 farms, 8% more than in 2007.
- Harrison County has 200,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $19 million of products in 2012.
- $5 million (26%) of these sales were crops.
- $14 million (74%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 453 farms (35%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 442 (34%) farms.
- 27 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 563 farms (43%) are less than 50 acres.
- 993 farms (77%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 25 farms (2%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Harrison County ranks third in the state for acreage of woody crops, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The state ranks third in Texas for acreage of christmas trees, with 183.
- 59 farms sold $86,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 26% increase in the number of farms selling direct (47 in 2007), and a 6% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $81,000.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

Marion County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 247 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Marion County has 40,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $3.35 million of products in 2012.
- $553,000 (17%) of these sales were crops.
- $2.8 million (83%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 93 farms (38%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 54 (22%) farms.
- 9 farms (4%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 86 farms (35%) are less than 50 acres.
- 206 farms (83%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 2 farms (1%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- 3 farms sold food directly to consumers. This is 8 farms fewer than in 2007. *Data for direct sales in 2012 were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

Panola County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 1,079 farms, 4% more than in 2007.
- Panola County has 227,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $93.3 million of products in 2012.
- $5.6 million (6%) of these sales were crops.
- $87.7 million (94%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 381 farms (35%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 311 (29%) farms.
- 38 farms (4%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 373 farms (35%) are less than 50 acres.
- 707 farms (66%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 63 farms (6%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Panola County ranks first in Texas for acreage of berries, with 270.
- The county ranks first in the state for acreage of blueberries, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Panola County ranks sixth in the state for inventory of broilers, with 3.8 million.
- The county ranks 8th in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with $74 million.
- 28 farms sold $36,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 3-farm increase over 2007, and an 88% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $302,000.
- Direct sales were 0.04% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Sabine County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 201 farms, 10% less than in 2007.
- Sabine County has 29,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $14.7 million of products in 2012.
- $566,000 (4%) of these sales were crops.
- $14.2 million (96%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 78 farms (39%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 60 (30%) farms.
- 2 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 73 farms (36%) are less than 50 acres.
- 138 farms (69%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 6 farms (3%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Sabine County ranks 7th in Texas for inventory of bee colonies, with 6,408.
- 3 farms sold $1,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 3-farm decrease since 2007, and a 75% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $4,000.
- Direct sales were 0.01% of farm product sales, far less than the national average of 0.3%.

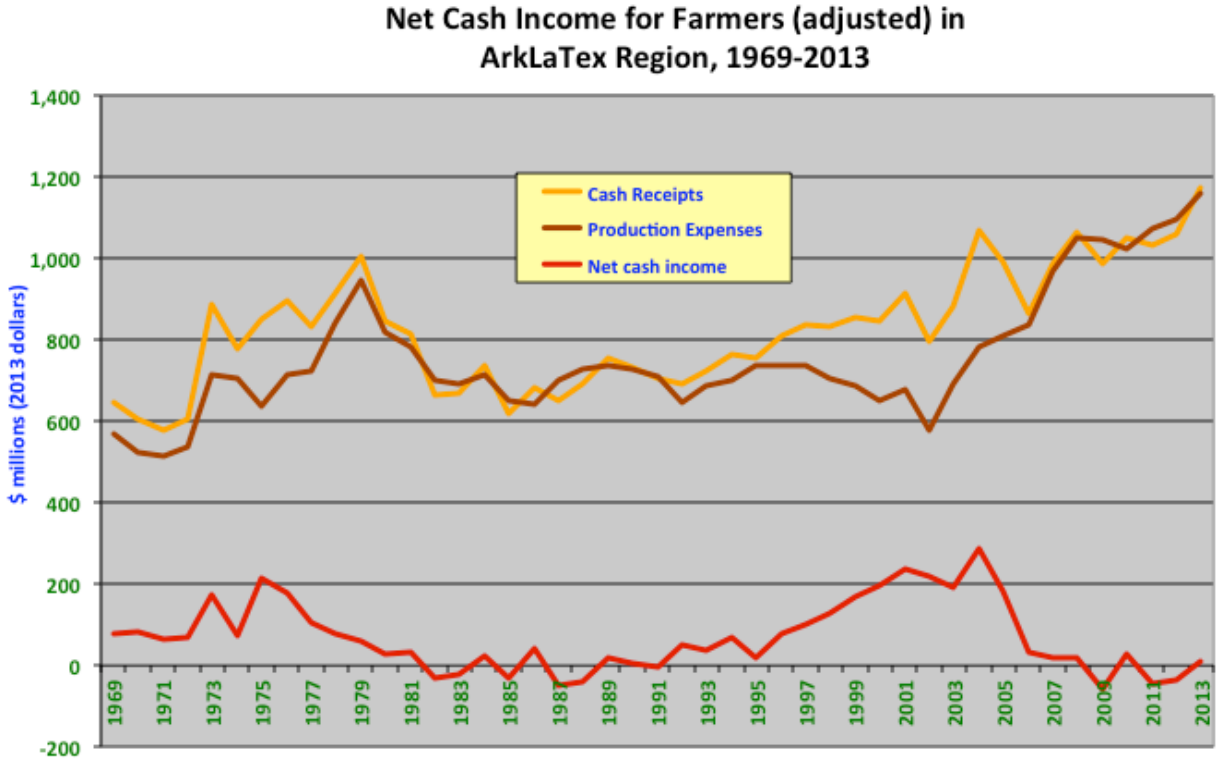
San Augustine County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 305 farms, 12% less than in 2007.
- San Augustine County has 73,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $63.2 million of products in 2012.
- $1.24 million (2%) of these sales were crops.
- $61.97 million (98%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 126 farms (41%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres, with 78 (26%) farms.
- 9 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 71 farms (23%) are less than 50 acres.
- 175 farms (57%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 34 farms (11%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- San Augustine County ranks sixth in Texas for inventory of roosters, with 25,000.
- The county ranks 10th in the state for inventory of broilers, with 3.4 million.
- 7 farms sold $14,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 1-farm increase over 2007, and a 27% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of $11,000.
- Direct sales were 0.02% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Shelby County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 1,048 farms, 7% less than in 2007.
- Shelby County has 197,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold $473 million of products in 2012.
- $9.7 million (2%) of these sales were crops.
- $465 million (98%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 473 farms (45%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 226 (22%) farms.
- 19 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 277 farms (26%) are less than 50 acres.
- 560 farms (53%) sold less than $10,000 in farm products.
- 226 farms (22%) sold more than $100,000 in farm products.
- Shelby County ranks first in Texas for sales of poultry and eggs, with $449 million.
- The county ranks first in the state for inventory of broilers, with 23 million.
- Shelby County ranks 1st in the state for inventory of roosters, with 147,000.
- The county ranks second in the state for inventory of pullets, with 923,000.
- Shelby County ranks fifth in Texas for acreage of watermelons, with 1,124.
- The county ranks 5th in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 1.1 million.
- 20 farms sold $46,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 10-farm decrease, and a 57% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of $108,000.
- Direct sales were 0.01% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (BEA):
12,517 ArkLaTex region farmers sell $887 million of food commodities per year (1989-2013 average), spending $810 million to raise them, for an average gain of $77 million each year. This is an average net cash income of $6,150 per farm. *Note that these sales figures compiled by the BEA may differ from cash receipts recorded by the USDA Census of Agriculture (above).* However, it should be noted that most of the net income was earned during the years 1995-2006; more recent years have resulted in low or negative net cash income. This decline in net income occurred despite the fact that sales of both crops and livestock rose during the years 2007-2013; this was offset by rising production costs.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Overall, farm producers earned a gain of $1.9 billion by selling crops and livestock over the years 1989 to 2013. Still, farm production costs exceeded cash receipts for 4 years of that 25-year period. Moreover, 67% of the region's farms reported that they lost money in 2012 (Ag Census), and ArkLaTex region farmers and ranchers earned $66 million less by selling commodities in 2013 than they earned in 1969 (in 2013 dollars).

Farmers and ranchers earn another $85 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, and rental income (25-year average for 1989-2013). Federal farm support payments are almost as important source of net income than commodity production, averaging $72 million per year for the region for the same years.

The region's consumers:

See also information covering low-income food consumption and food-related health conditions, page 1-2 above.

ArkLaTex region consumers spend $2.4 billion buying food each year, including $1.4 billion for home use. Most of this food is produced outside the region, so ArkLaTex consumers spend about $2.2 billion per year buying food sourced elsewhere. Only $2.1 million of food products (0.2% of farm cash receipts and 0.1% of the region's consumer market) are sold by farmers directly to household consumers.

Farm and food economy summary:

Farmers earn $77 million each year producing food commodities, and spend $600 million buying inputs sourced outside of the region. Even when farmers make money, these input purchases result in substantial losses to the region as a whole. Overall, farm production creates a loss of $500 million to the region.

Meanwhile, consumers spend $2.2 billion buying food from outside. Thus, total loss to the region is $2.7 billion of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to three times the value of all food commodities raised in the region.

Household Consumer Markets

ArkLaTex Region: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
ArkLaTex Region residents purchase $2.4 billion of food each year, including $1.4 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 335
Fruits & vegetables	262
Cereals and bakery products	188
Dairy products	140
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	498

If each of the region's residents purchased $5 of food each week directly from farmers in the region, this would generate $255 million of farm income for the region — roughly one-third of what farmers currently earn.

Columbia County, Arkansas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Columbia County residents purchase $59 million of food each year, including $35 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 8
Fruits & vegetables	6
Cereals and bakery products	5
Dairy products	3
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	12

Lafayette County, Arkansas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Lafayette County residents purchase $18 million of food each year, including $11 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 2
Fruits & vegetables	2
Cereals and bakery products	1
Dairy products	1
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	4

Miller County, Arkansas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Miller County residents purchase $107 million of food each year, including $63 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 15
Fruits & vegetables	12
Cereals and bakery products	8
Dairy products	6
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	22

Union County, Arkansas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Union County residents purchase $100 million of food each year, including $59 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 14
Fruits & vegetables	11
Cereals and bakery products	8
Dairy products	6
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	21

Bienville Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Bienville Parish residents purchase $34 million of food each year, including $20 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 5
Fruits & vegetables	4
Cereals and bakery products	3
Dairy products	2
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	7

Bossier Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Bossier Parish residents purchase $304x million of food each year, including $179 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 42
Fruits & vegetables	33
Cereals and bakery products	24
Dairy products	18
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	63

Caddo Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Caddo Parish residents purchase $626 million of food each year, including $369 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 87
Fruits & vegetables	68
Cereals and bakery products	49
Dairy products	36
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	129

Claiborne Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
ClaiborneParish residents purchase $41 million of food each year, including $24 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 6
Fruits & vegetables	4
Cereals and bakery products	3
Dairy products	2
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	8

DeSoto Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
DeSoto Parish residents purchase $66 million of food each year, including $39 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 9
Fruits & vegetables	7
Cereals and bakery products	5
Dairy products	4
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	14

Lincoln Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Lincoln Parish residents purchase $116 million of food each year, including $69 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 16
Fruits & vegetables	13
Cereals and bakery products	9
Dairy products	7
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	24

Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Natchitoches Parish residents purchase $96 million of food each year, including $57 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 13
Fruits & vegetables	10
Cereals and bakery products	7
Dairy products	6
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	20

Red River Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Red River Parish residents purchase $22 million of food each year, including $13 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 3
Fruits & vegetables	2
Cereals and bakery products	2
Dairy products	1
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	5

Sabine Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Sabine Parish residents purchase $60 million of food each year, including $35 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 8
Fruits & vegetables	6
Cereals and bakery products	5
Dairy products	3
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	12

Webster Parish, Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Webster Parish residents purchase $100 million of food each year, including $59 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 14
Fruits & vegetables	11
Cereals and bakery products	8
Dairy products	6
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	21

Bowie County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Bowie County residents purchase $230 million of food each year, including $136 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 32
Fruits & vegetables	25
Cereals and bakery products	18
Dairy products	13
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	47

Cass County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Cass County residents purchase $74 million of food each year, including $44 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 10
Fruits & vegetables	8
Cereals and bakery products	6
Dairy products	4
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	15

Harrison County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Harrison County residents purchase $164 million of food each year, including $97 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 23
Fruits & vegetables	18
Cereals and bakery products	13
Dairy products	10
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	34

Marion County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Marion County residents purchase $25 million of food each year, including $15 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 3
Fruits & vegetables	3
Cereals and bakery products	2
Dairy products	1
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	5

Panola County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Panola County residents purchase $59 million of food each year, including $35 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 8
Fruits & vegetables	6
Cereals and bakery products	5
Dairy products	3
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	12

Sabine County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Sabine County residents purchase $25 million of food each year, including $15 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 4
Fruits & vegetables	3
Cereals and bakery products	2
Dairy products	1
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	5

San Augustine County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
San Augustine County residents purchase $22 million of food each year, including $13 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

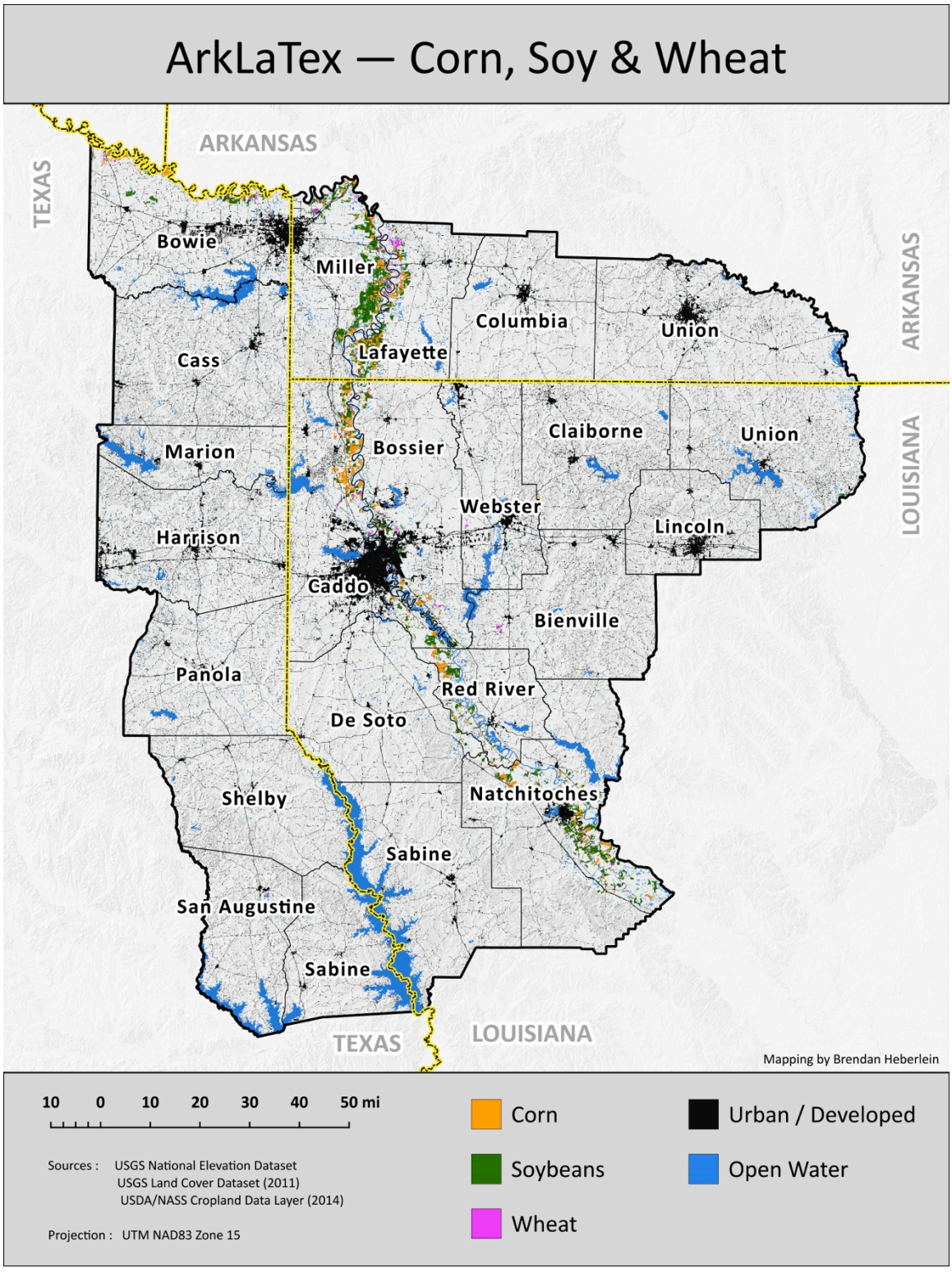
	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 3
Fruits & vegetables	2
Cereals and bakery products	2
Dairy products	1
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	4

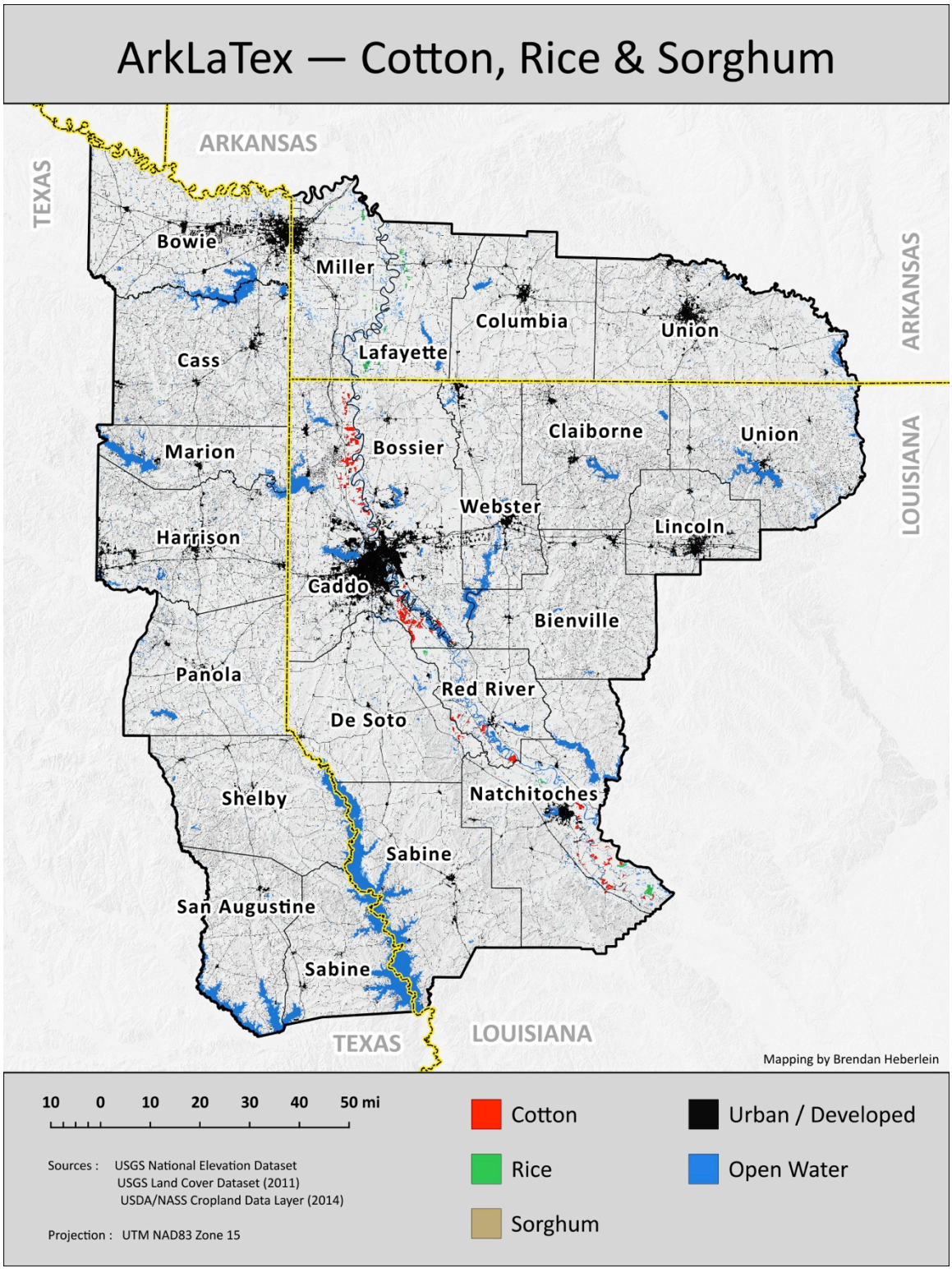
Shelby County, Texas: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Shelby County residents purchase $63 million of food each year, including $37 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

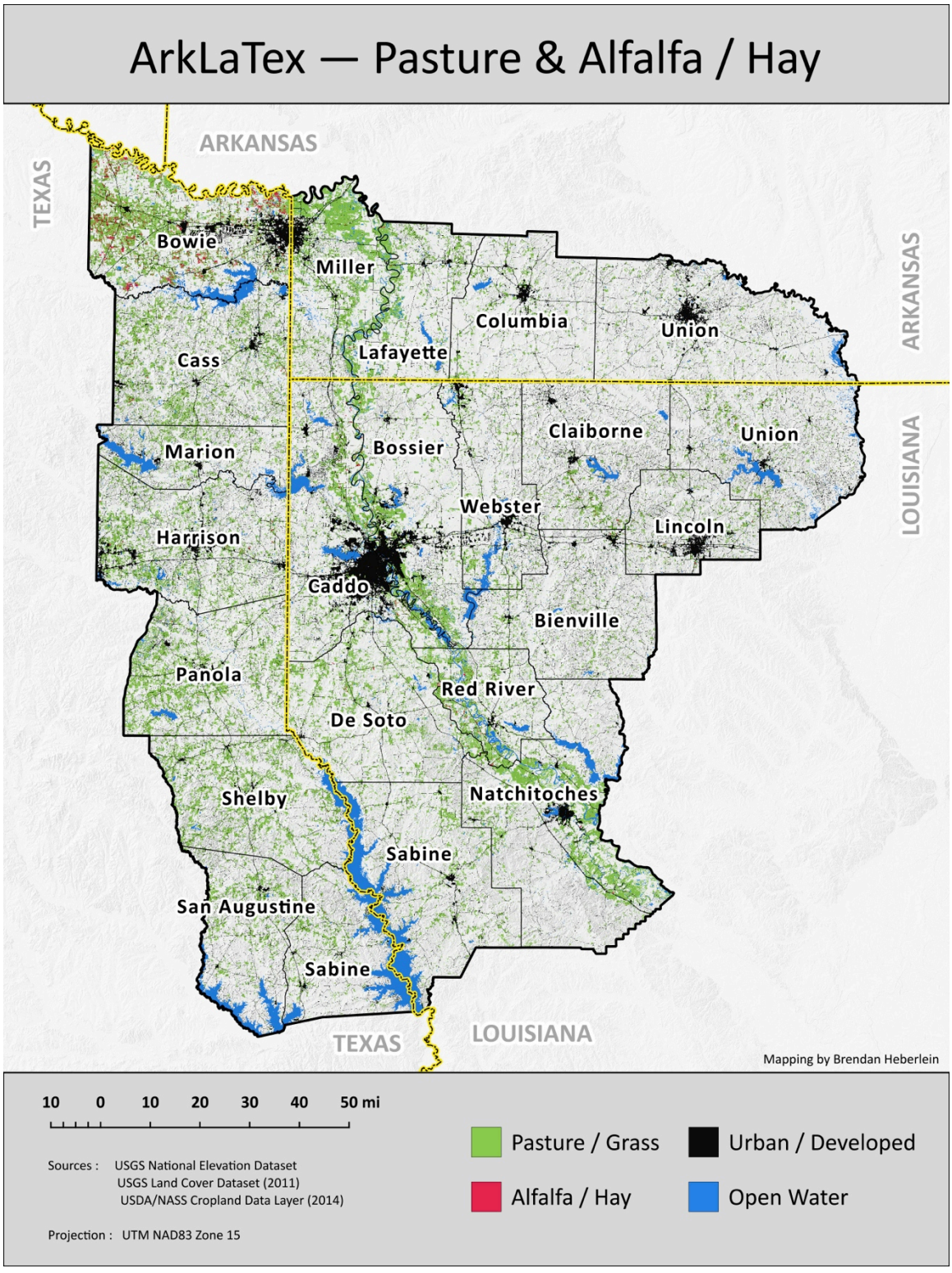
	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 9
Fruits & vegetables	7
Cereals and bakery products	5
Dairy products	4
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	13

State of Louisiana: markets for food eaten at home (2013):
Louisiana residents purchase $11.3 billion of food each year, including $6.7 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 1,580
Fruits & vegetables	1,236
Cereals and bakery products	886
Dairy products	659
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	2,346


ArkLaTex — Corn, Soy & Wheat
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
Bowie
Miller
Columbia
Union
Cass
Lafayette
Claiborne
Union
Marion
Bossier
Webster
Lincoln
Harrison
Caddo
Bienville
Panola
Red River
De Soto
Natchitoches
Shelby
Sabine
San Augustine
Sabine
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
Mapping by Brendan Heberlein
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
Sources : USGS National Elevation Dataset
USGS Land Cover Dataset (2011)
USDA/NASS Cropland Data Layer (2014)
Projection : UTM NAD83 Zone 15
Corn
Soybeans
Wheat
Urban / Developed
Open Water


ArkLaTex — Cotton, Rice & Sorghum
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
Bowie
Miller
Columbia
Union
Cass
Lafayette
Claiborne
Union
Marion
Bossier
Webster
Lincoln
Harrison
Caddo
Bienville
Panola
Red River
De Soto
Natchitoches
Shelby
Sabine
San Augustine
Sabine
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
Mapping by Brendan Heberlein
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
Sources : USGS National Elevation Dataset
USGS Land Cover Dataset (2011)
USDA/NASS Cropland Data Layer (2014)
Projection : UTM NAD83 Zone 15
Cotton
Rice
Sorghum
Urban / Developed
Open Water


ArkLaTex — Pasture & Alfalfa / Hay
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
Bowie
Miller
Columbia
Union
Cass
Lafayette
Claiborne
Union
Marion
Bossier
Webster
Lincoln
Harrison
Caddo
Bienville
Panola
Red River
De Soto
Shelby
Natchitoches
Sabine
San Augustine
Sabine
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
Mapping by Brendan Heberlein
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
Sources : USGS National Elevation Dataset
USGS Land Cover Dataset (2011)
USDA/NASS Cropland Data Layer (2014)
Projection : UTM NAD83 Zone 15
Pasture / Grass
Urban / Developed
Alfalfa / Hay
Open Water

Key data sources:

Bureau of Economic Analysis data on farm production balance
http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis/

Food consumption estimates from Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey
http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm

U.S. Census of Agriculture
http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/

USDA/Economic Research Service food consumption data:
http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/

USDA/ Economic Research Service farm income data:
http://ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/finfidmu.htm

For more information:

To see results from *Finding Food in Farm Country* studies in other regions of the U.S.: http://www.crcworks.org/?submit=fffc

To read the original *Finding Food in Farm Country* study from Southeast Minnesota (written for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation): http://www.crcworks.org/ff.pdf

For further information: http://www.crcworks.org/

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