



# Local Foods Build Economic Recovery in North Alabama

Who's your far

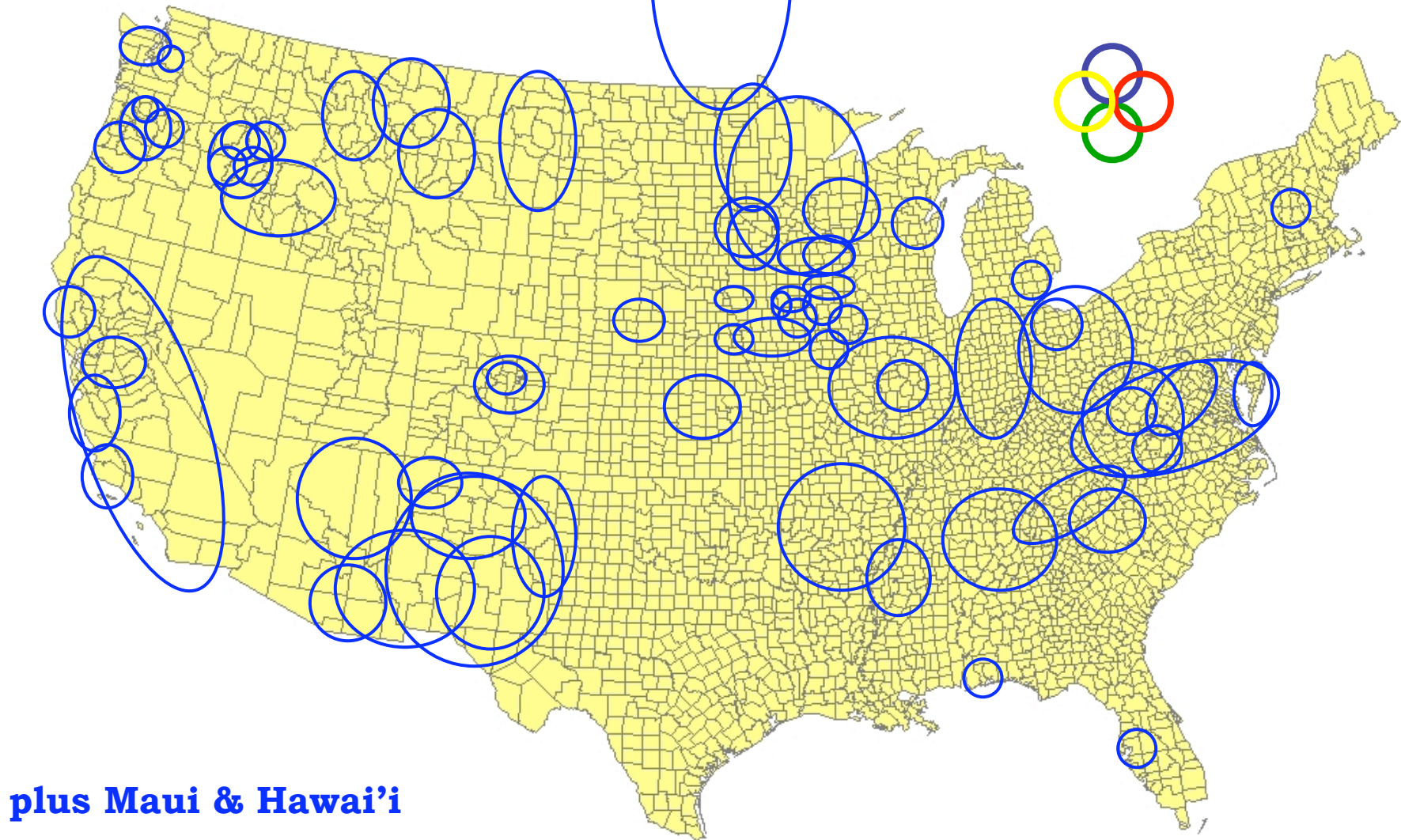
**Ken Meter**  
Crossroads  
Resource Center  
(Minneapolis)

**Food Bank of North Alabama**  
February 15-16, 2012

*Corinna, Kurt, & Jed Bench*

**photos © Ken Meter, 2011**

# “Finding Food in Farm Country” Studies



plus Maui & Hawai'i

**78 regions in 30 states & one province**



# Vision for local food economies

**Build:**

**Health**

**Wealth**

**Connection**

**Capacity**



**The current food system takes  
wealth out of our communities**





**“Local” foods may be the best path toward economic recovery**

**“Local”** is a shorthand....



**Photo: DSC**



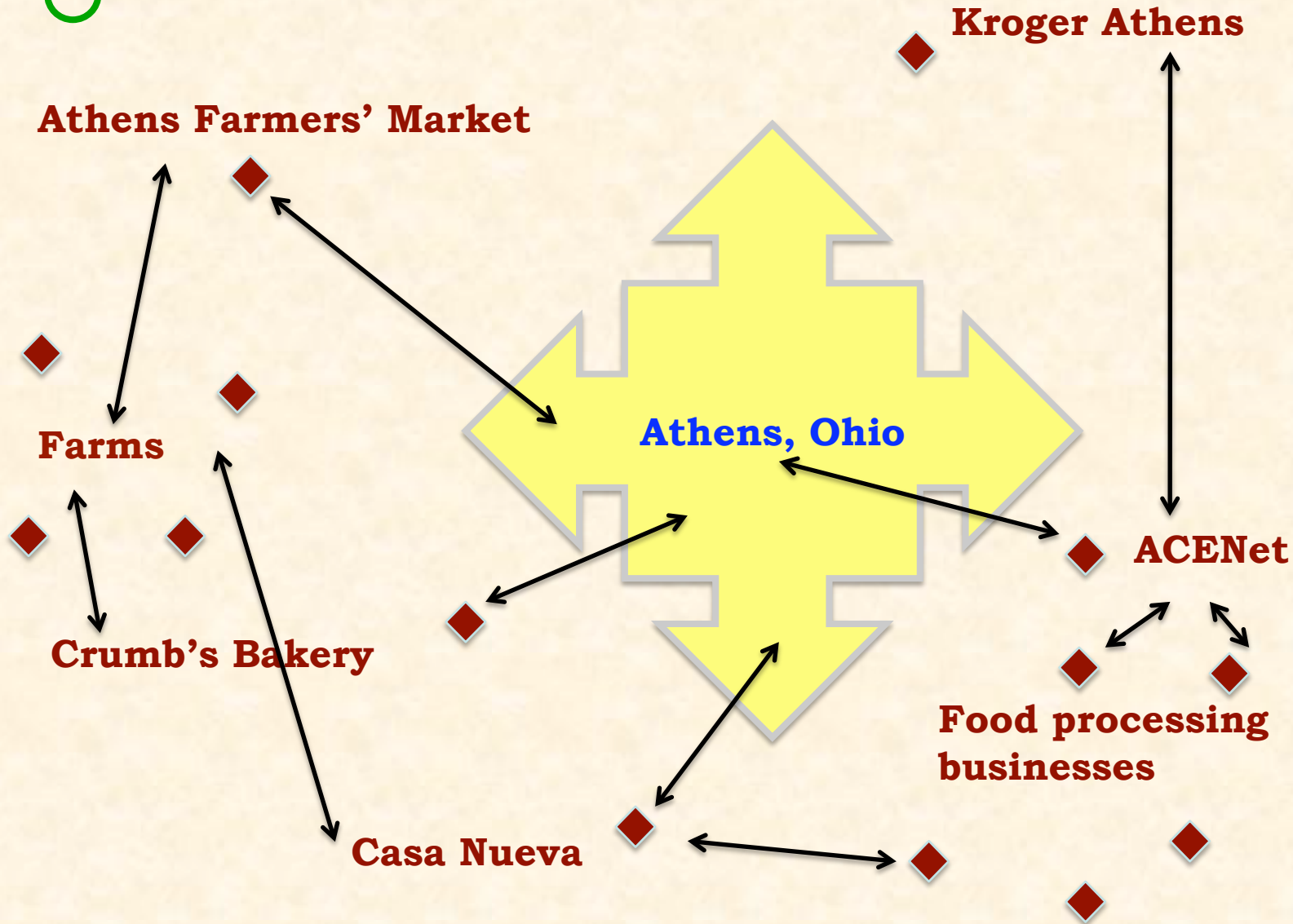
**Goal: to build  
Community-Based  
Food Systems**



**Photo: DSC**



# Business Clusters



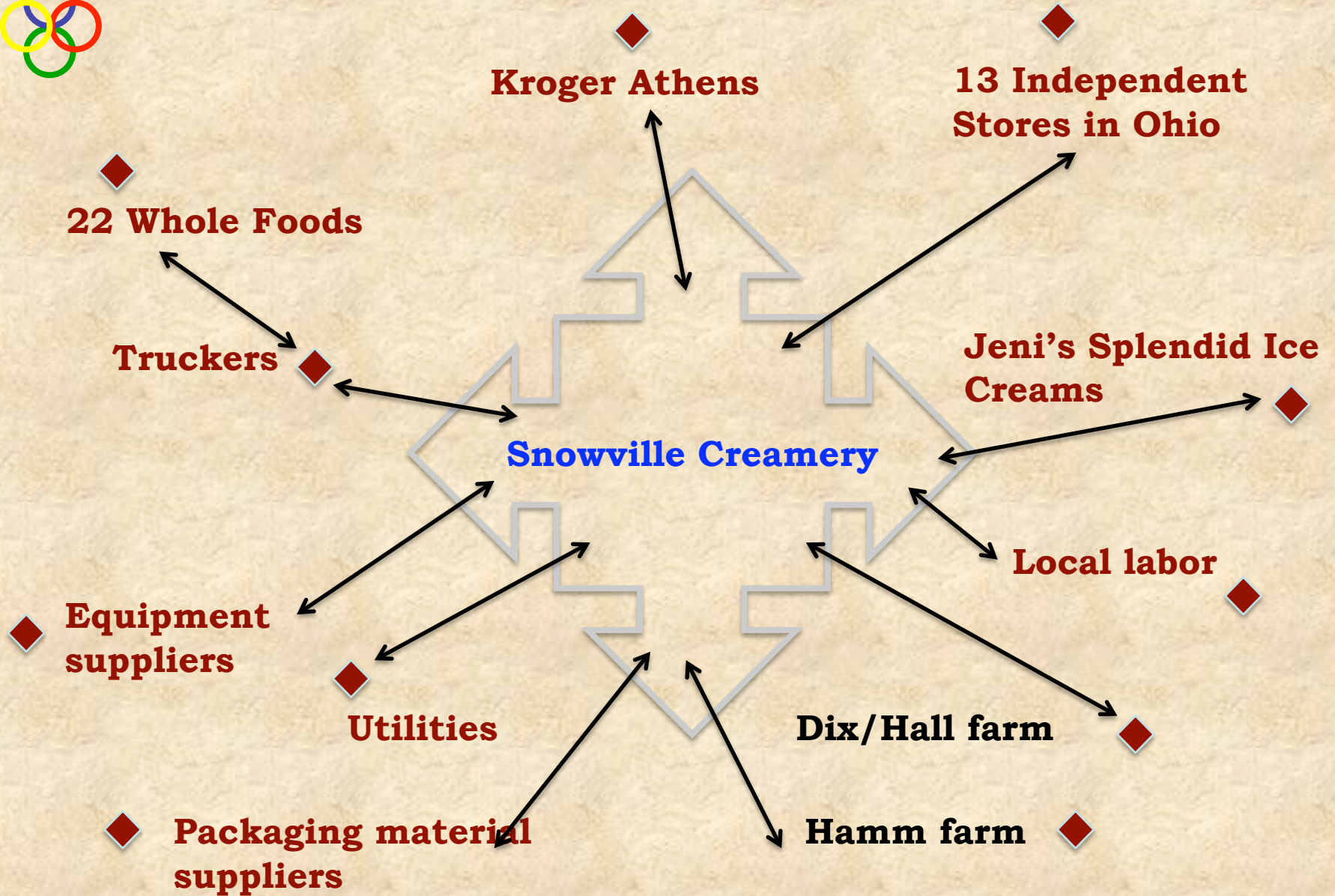




**Warren Taylor — Pomeroy, Ohio**



**Dix/Hall Farm — Pomeroy, Ohio**

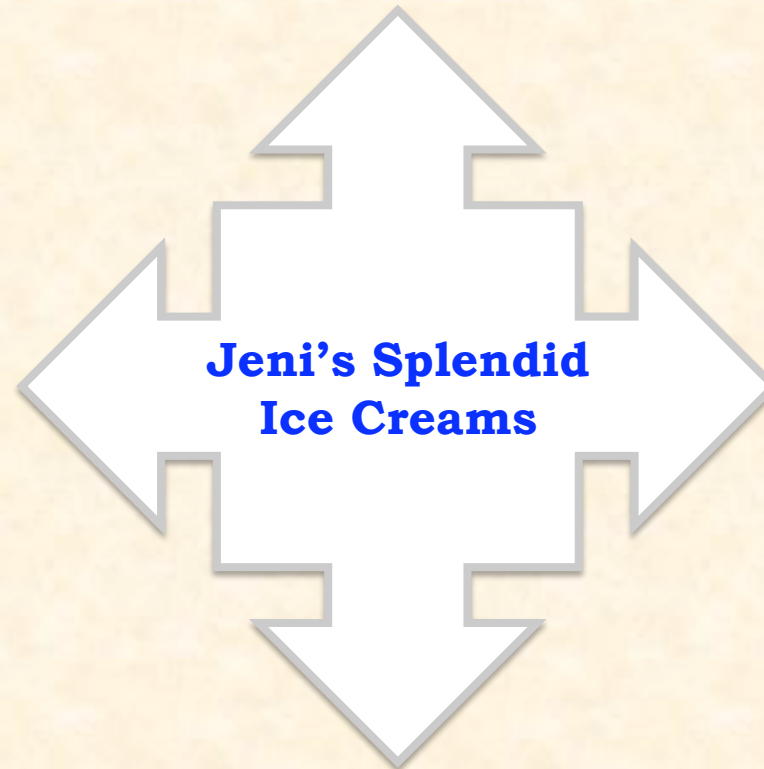




*Snowville at Paw Paw Fest*



# **Business Clusters**



**“Our growth is based on Snowville’s growth....  
We are always in communication with each other.”**

**– Jeni Britton Bauer**



*Snowville at Paw Paw Fest*



**green energy**



**electricity, fuel,  
water**

**Strawberries  
Raspberries  
Blueberries  
Peaches  
Pears  
Apricots  
Sweet Corn  
Basil  
Honey  
etc:**

**nanofiltered  
skim milk**



**Jeni's Splendid  
Ice Creams**

**Milk:  
Snowville Creamery**

**from various  
Ohio farms**



**Process own flavors  
in season**

**Local Employees**



**Employees  
buy local**



## **Next steps**

### **New collaboration:**

- **Snowville Creamery**  
brings produce & milk to Columbus
- **Columbus Food Bank**  
stores these foods at warehouse
- **The Greener Grocer**  
sells these foods in retail store

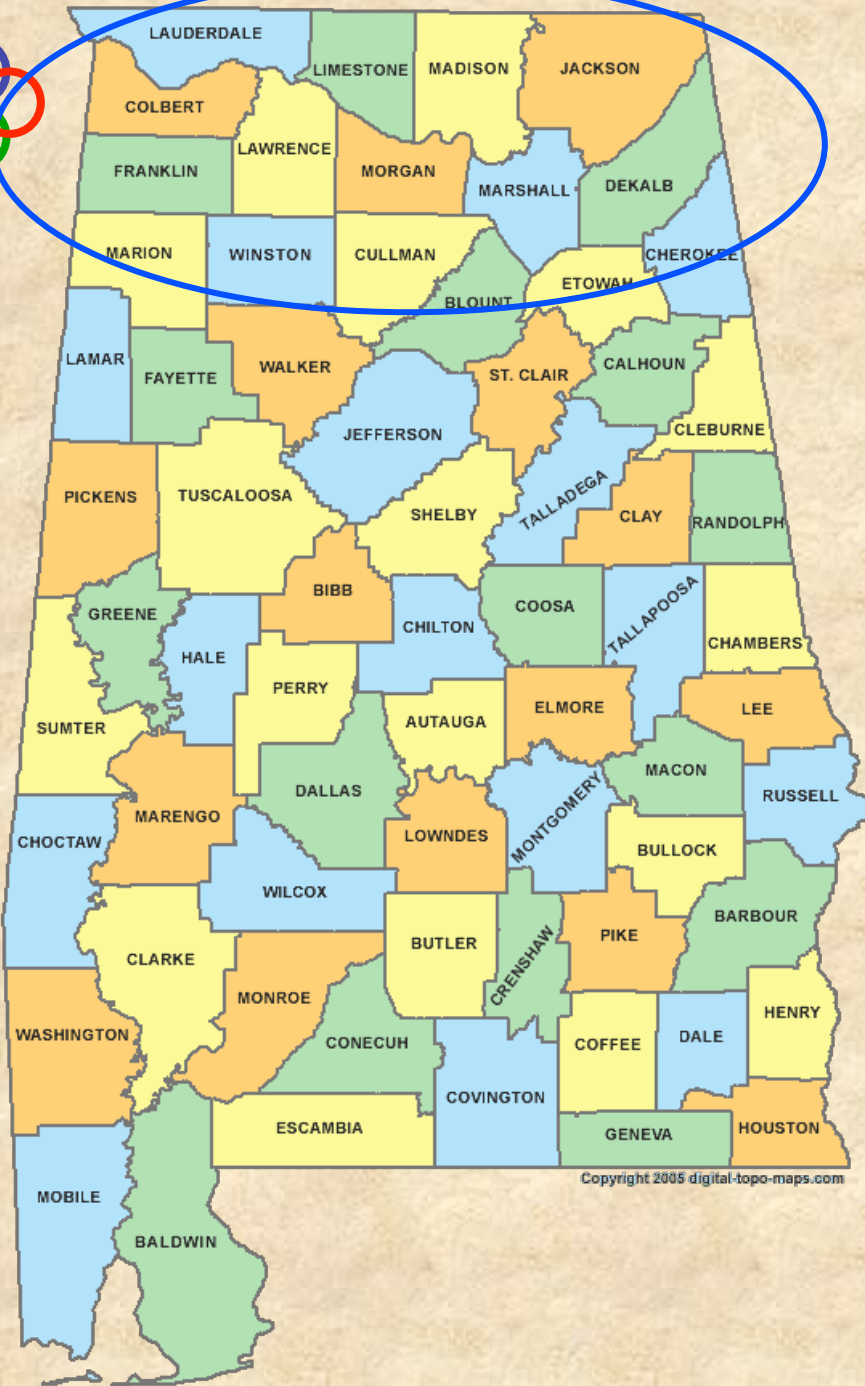




## **Next steps**

**This is viewed as a step toward  
delivering fresh food to  
low-income consumers**





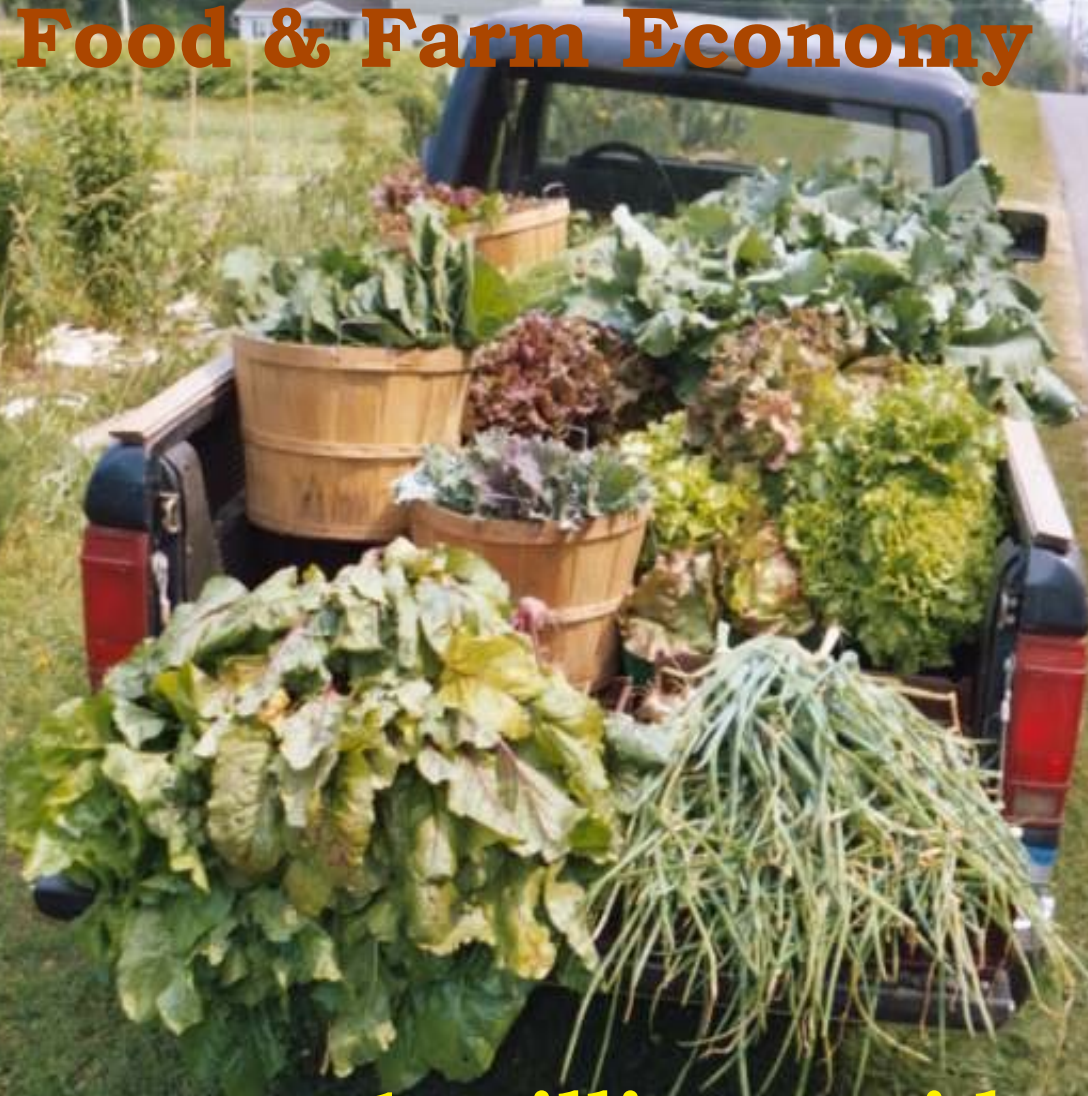
# North Alabama

## 11 Counties:

**Colbert**  
**Cullman**  
**DeKalb**  
**Franklin**  
**Jackson**  
**Lauderdale**  
**Lawrence**  
**Limestone**  
**Madison**  
**Marshall**  
**Morgan**



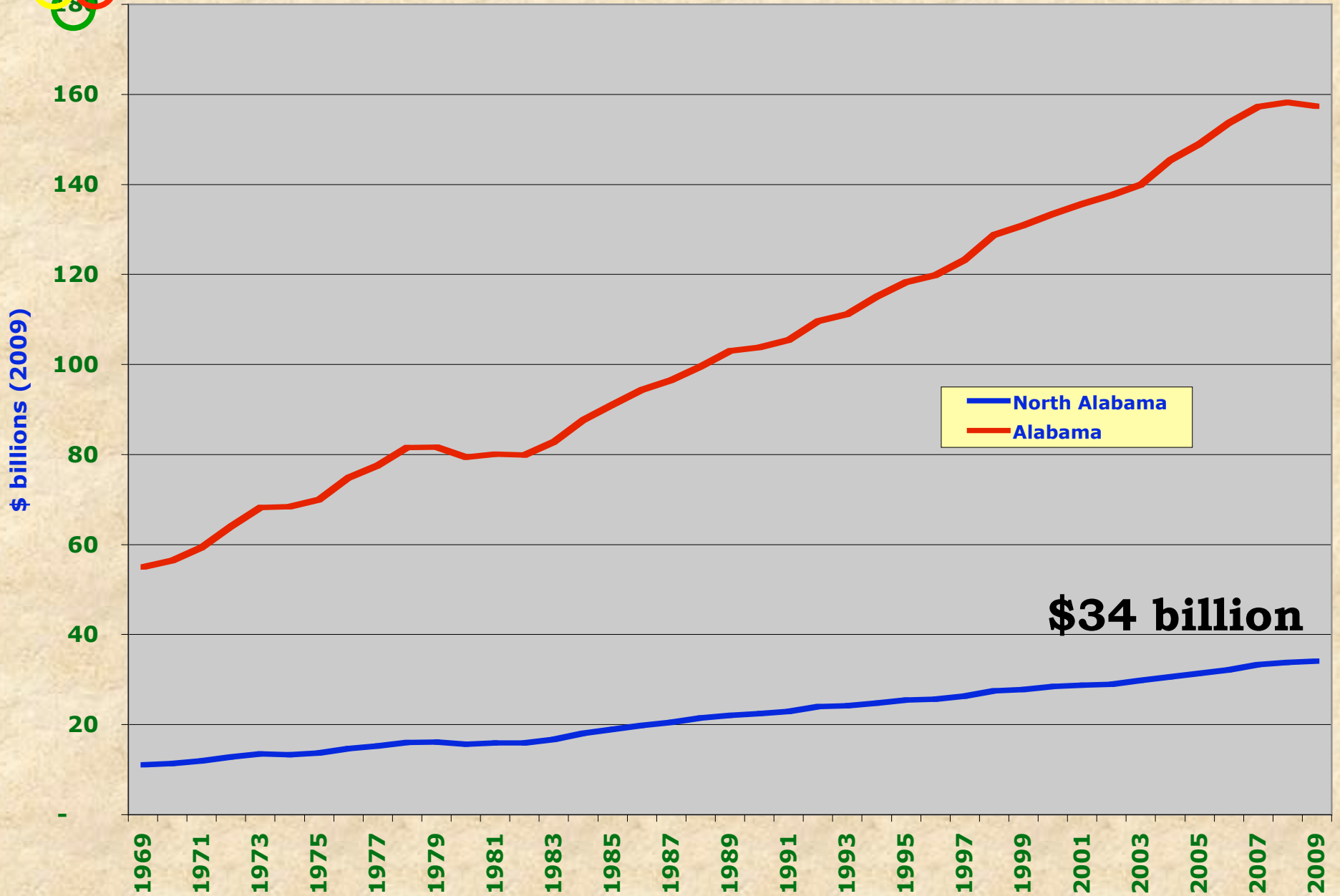
# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy



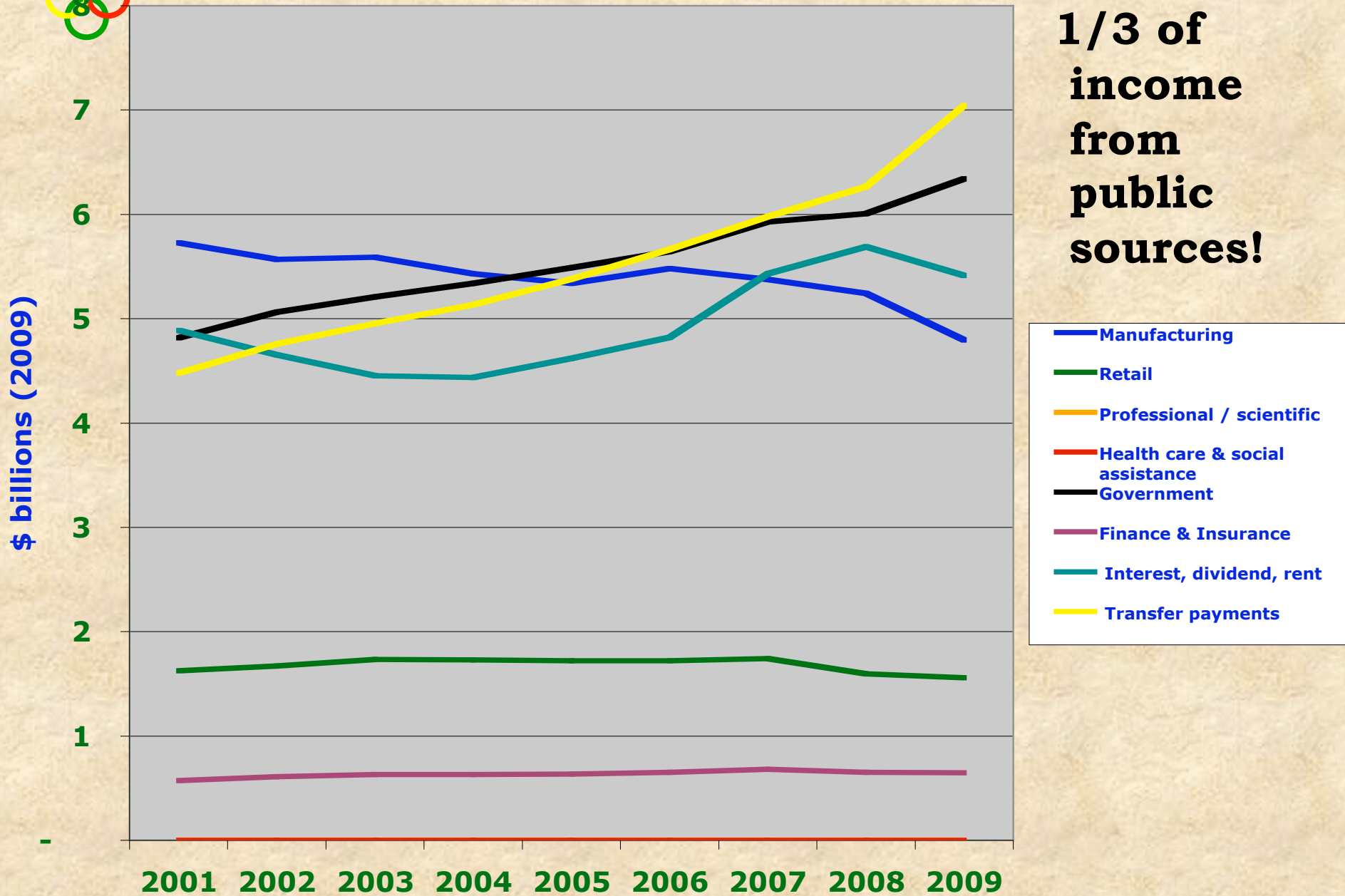
- **1 million residents**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2009 — Photo: FBNA

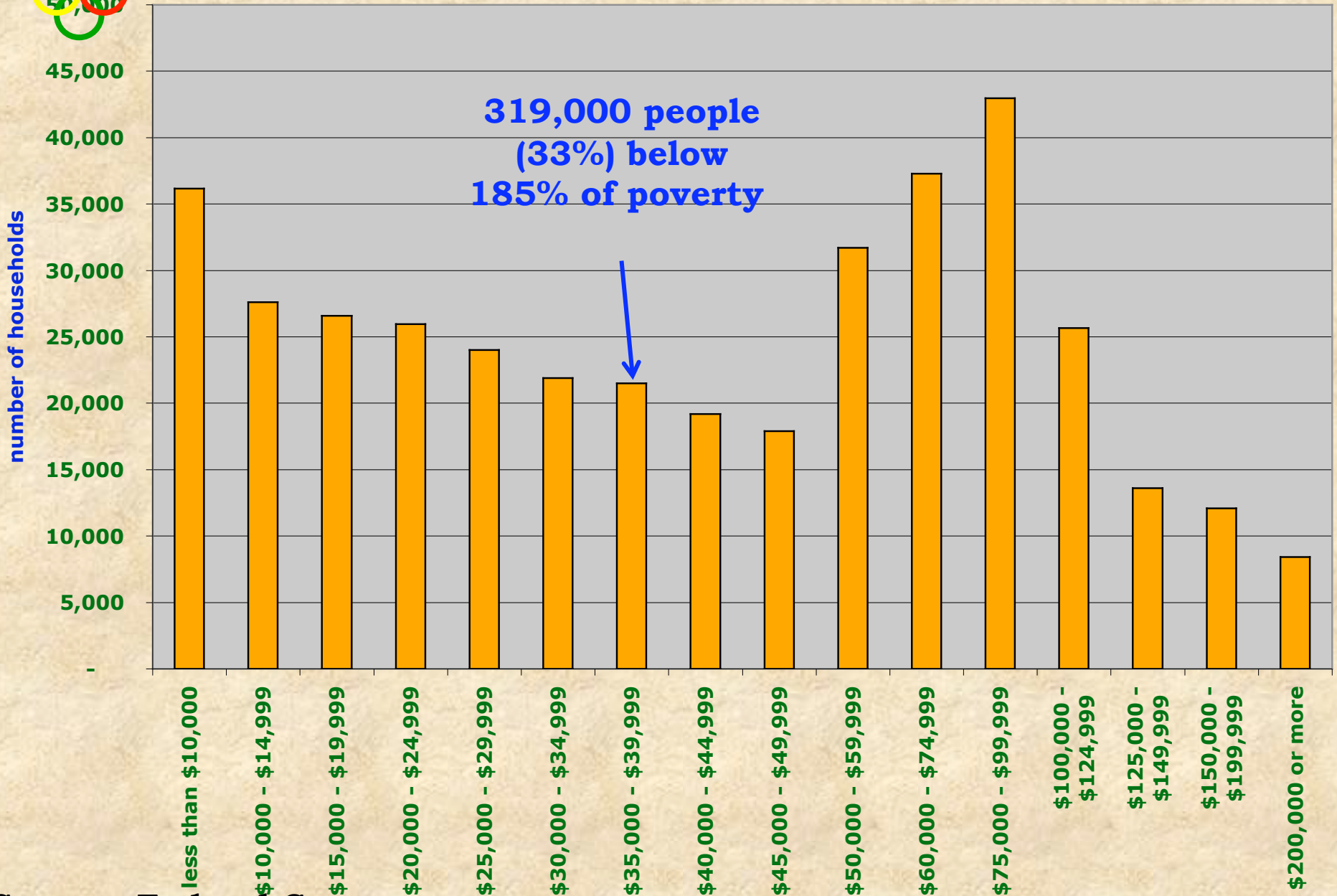
Personal income in North Alabama and the state, 1969 - 2009



# Personal income in North Alabama, 2001 - 2009



# Household income in North Alabama, 2005 - 2009



319,000 people  
(33%) below  
185% of poverty

Source: Federal Census



## **Health Conditions**

**70% of residents  
are  
overweight (37%)  
or obese (33%)**

**Rate 20 years ago: 44%**

**Ranks second in U.S.**





# Health Conditions

**13% of residents have  
diabetes**



## **Health Conditions**

**Medical costs for diabetes:**

**\$594 million (North Alabama)**

**\$4.7 billion (Alabama)**



## **Health Conditions**

**20% of residents eat minimum  
number of fruits & vegetables**



# **Health Conditions**

**30% of residents  
exercise adequately**



# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

**17,133 farms**



**Source: USDA Agriculture  
Census 2007 — Photo: FBNA**



# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

- **68% of farms sell less than \$10,000**
- **11% sell more than \$100,000**

**Source: USDA Agriculture Census 2007**



# **North Alabama Food & Farm Economy**

- **48% of farms are less than 50 acres**



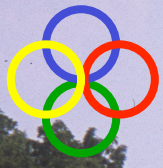
# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

	\$ millions
<b>Poultry &amp; eggs</b>	<b>1,408</b>
<b>Cattle &amp; calves**</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Corn</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Cotton &amp; cottonseed**</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Hogs &amp; pigs**</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Nursery &amp; ornamentals**</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Forage</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Soybeans</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Milk &amp; dairy**</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Vegetables, melons, &amp; potatoes**</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fruits &amp; nuts**</b>	<b>2</b>

**\*\* incomplete data**







# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

• **421 vegetable farms**

• **\$6.8 million sales**

Source: USDA Agriculture Census 2007



# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

- 191 farms with fruit & orchards
- \$1.5 million sales

Source: USDA Agriculture Census 2007



# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

**657 farms sell  
direct to consumers**

**\$2.2 million sales  
(0.1%)**

Source: Census of Agriculture 2007

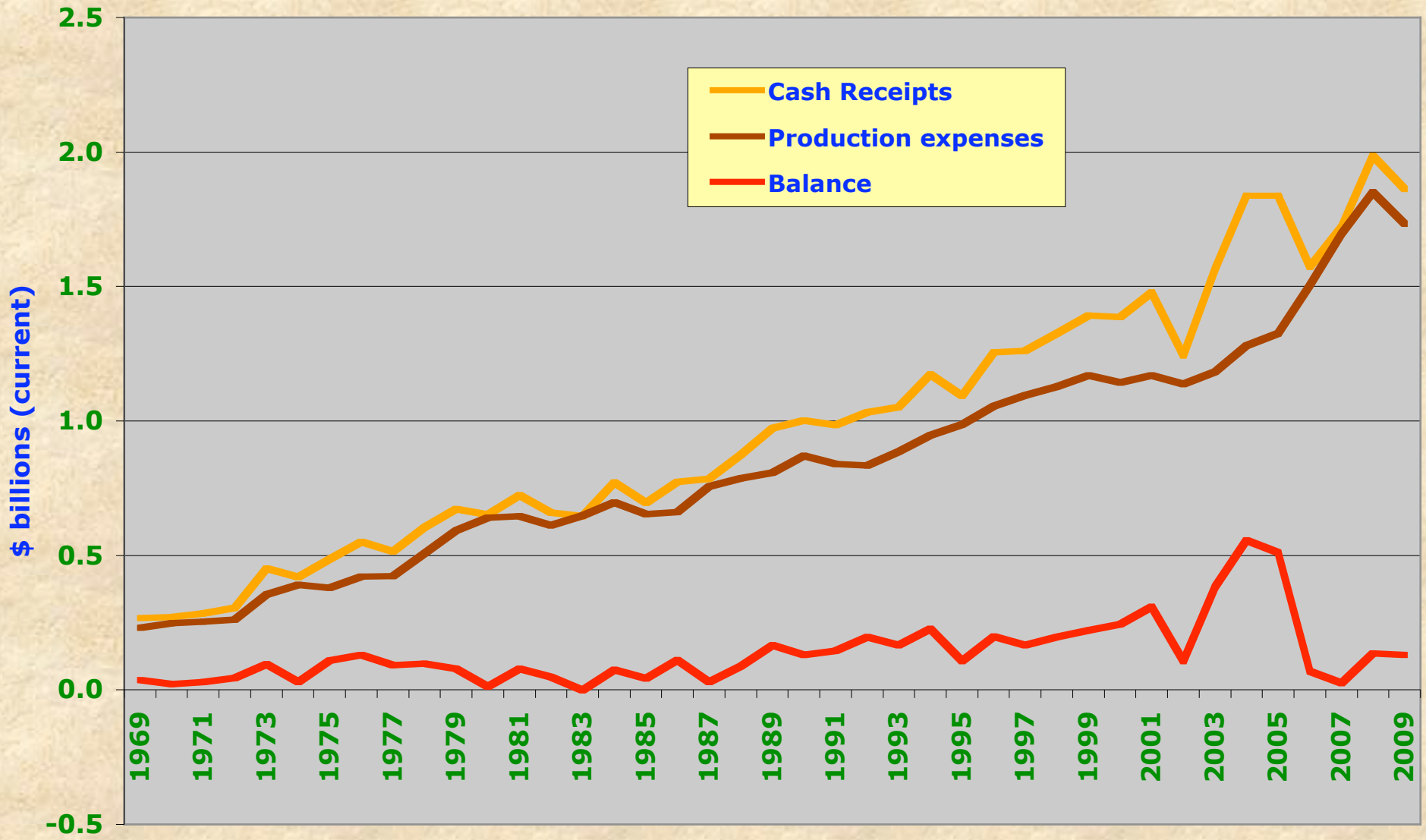


## North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

- **23 farms sell organic products**
- **\$9,000 sales**



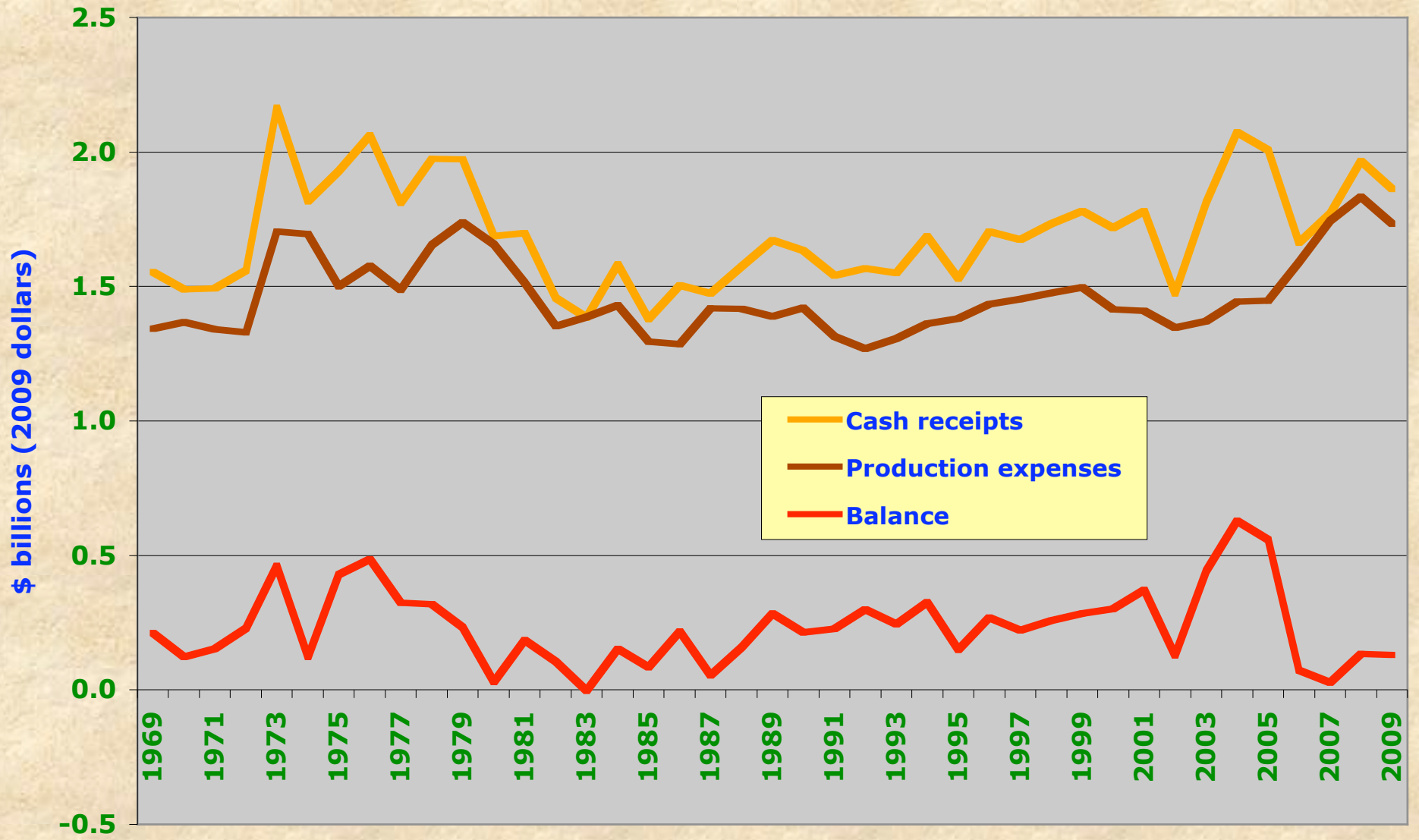
## Farm Production Balance in North Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



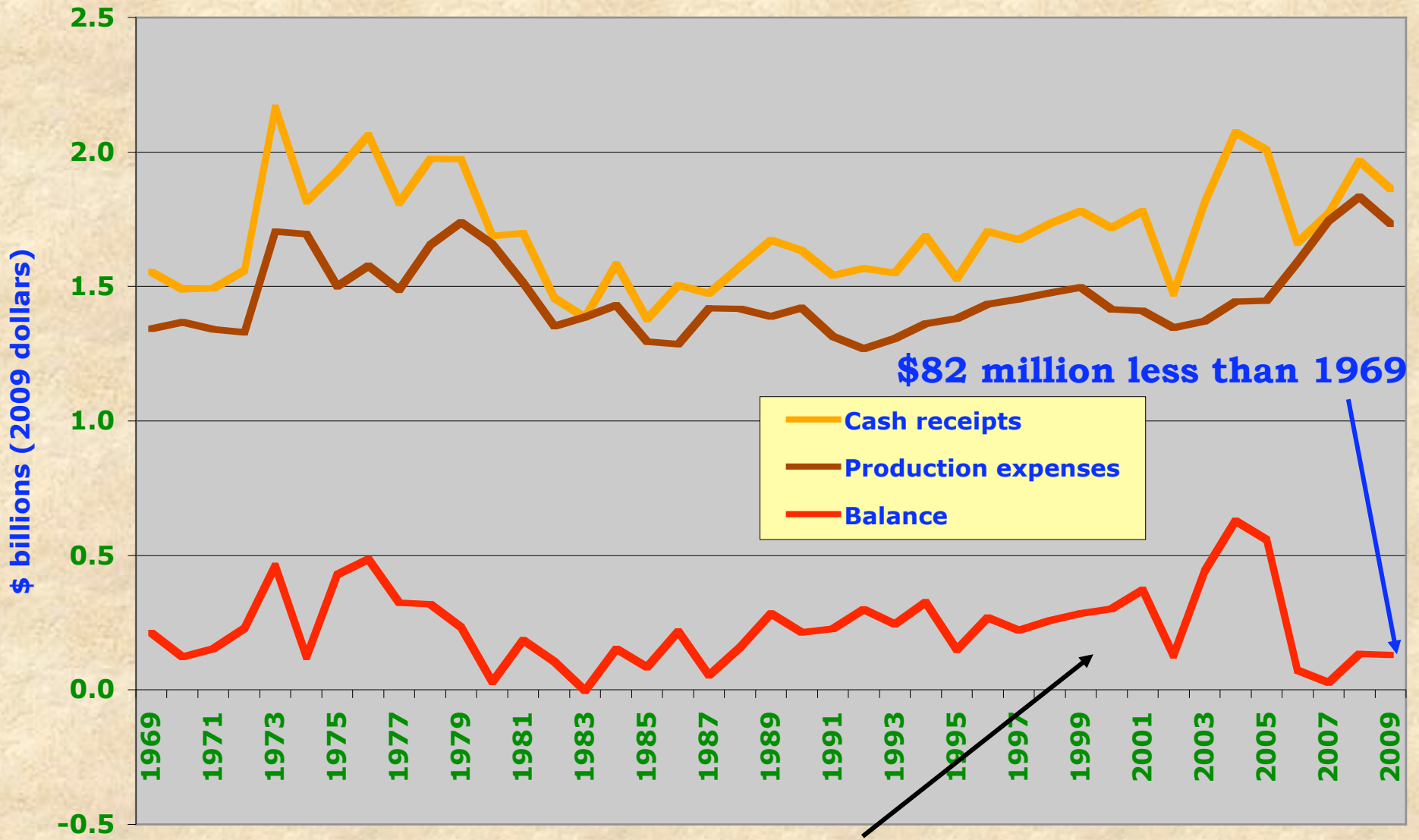
## Farm Production Balance in North Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



## Farm Production Balance in North Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

\$5.6 billion gained since 1988





## **North Alabama Food & Farm Economy**

- **Farmers produce \$1.7 billion of commodities per year**

**And...**

- **Spend \$1.4 billion to raise them**

**Gain \$267 million in production costs**

**Averages for (1988-2009)**

**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis**



# North Alabama Food & Farm Economy

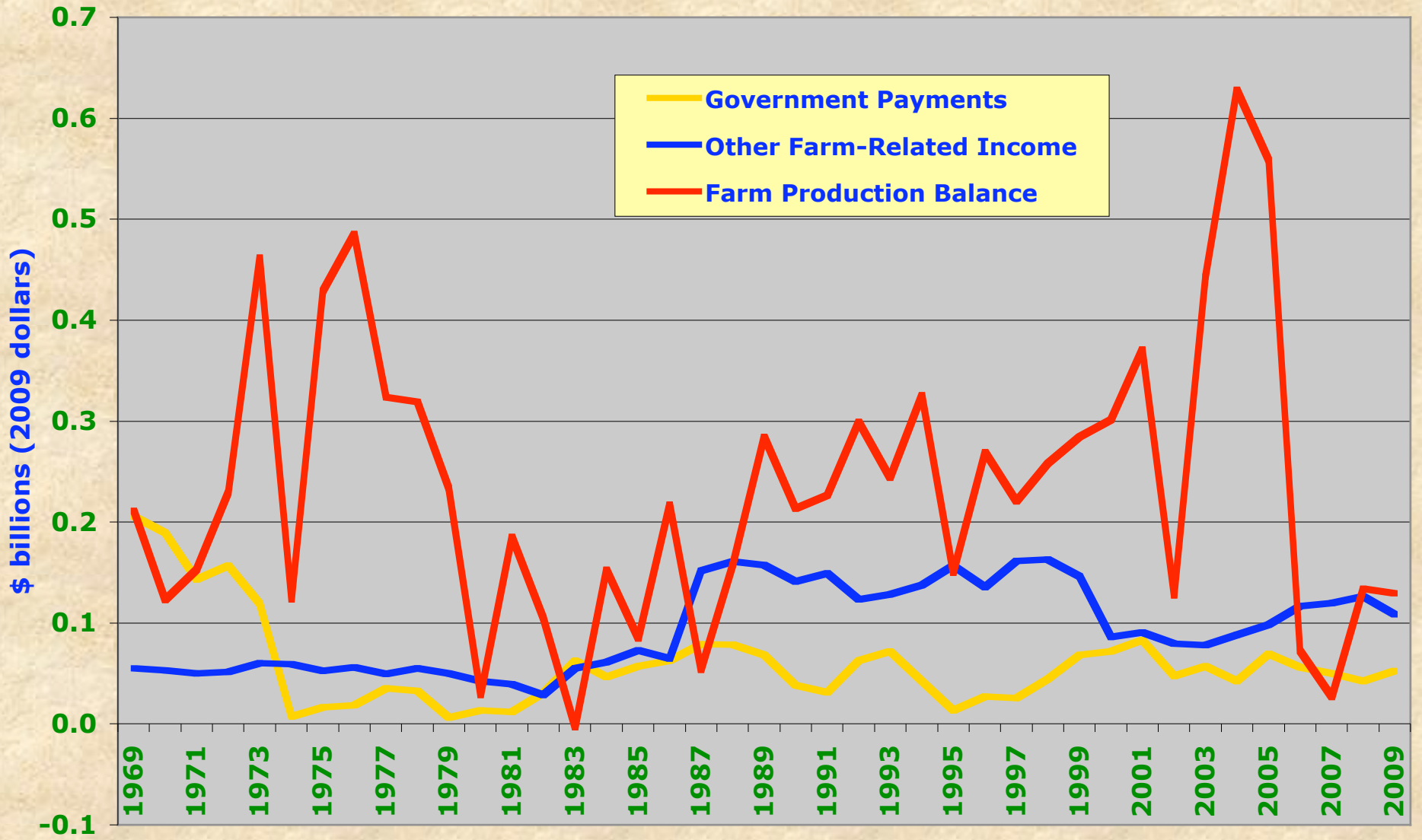
**So...**

- **Farm families earn \$126 million of other farm-related income**
- **And receive \$52 million in federal supports each year**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



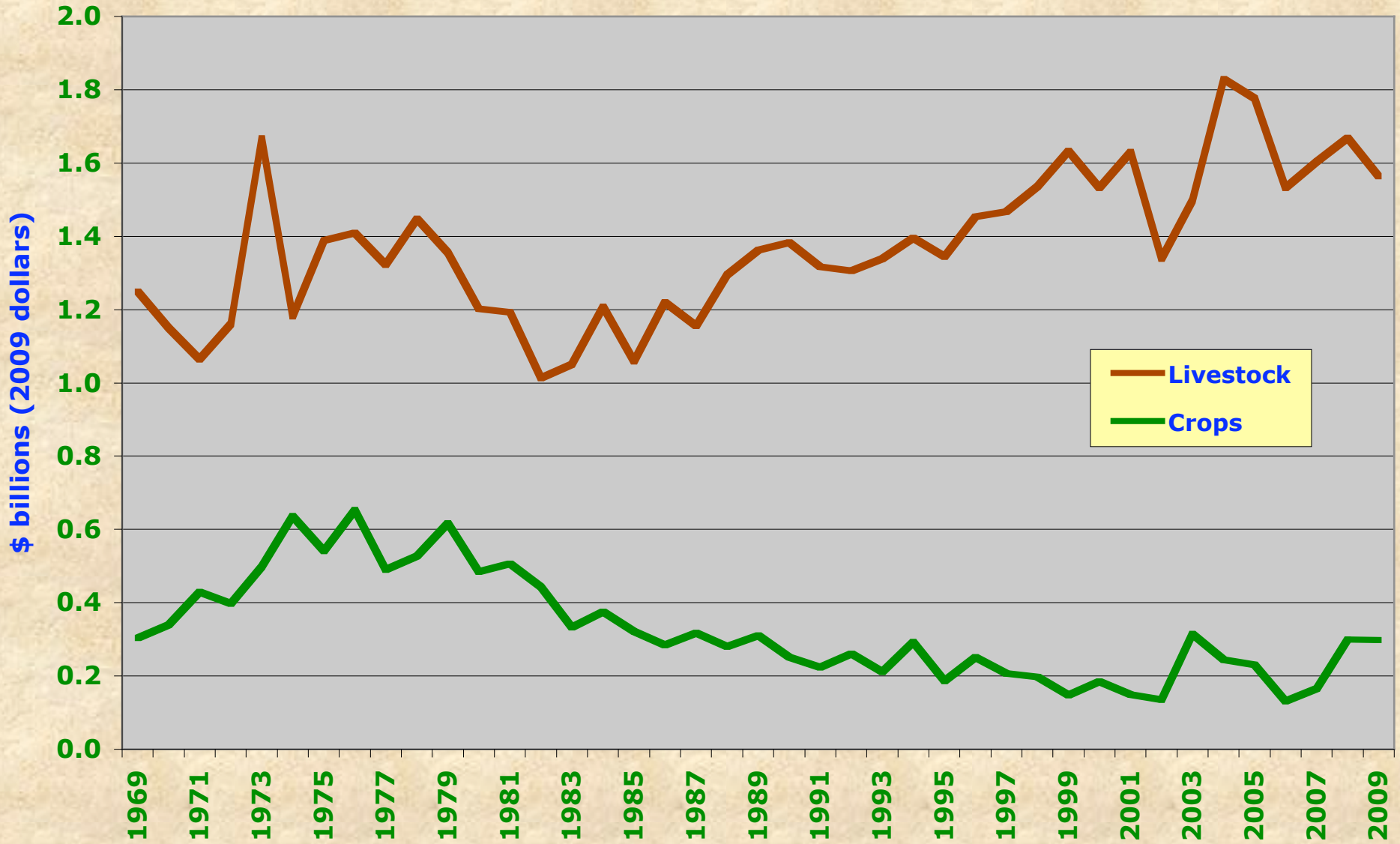
## North Alabama farm income by type, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



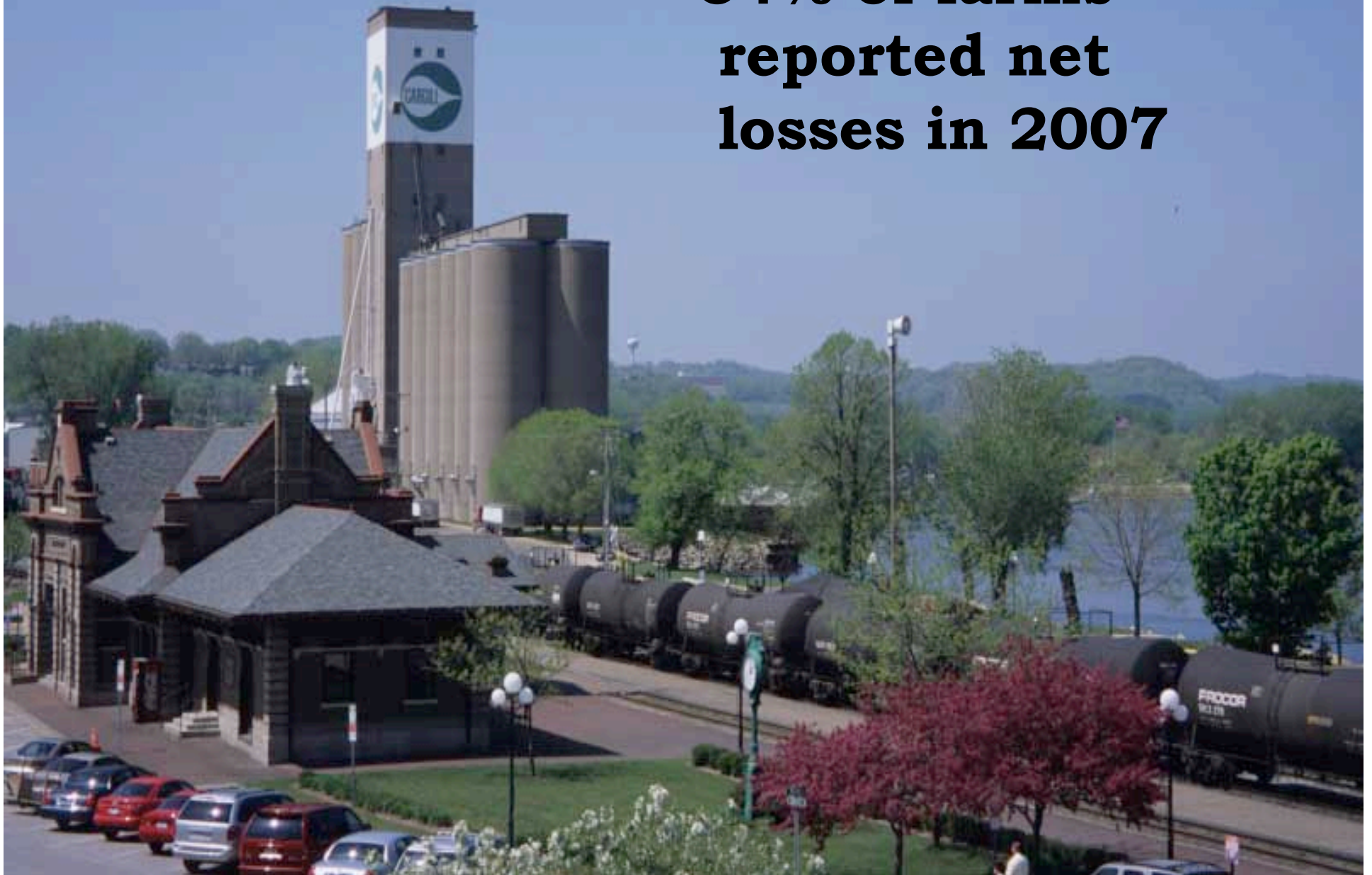
## Crop and livestock sales in North Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

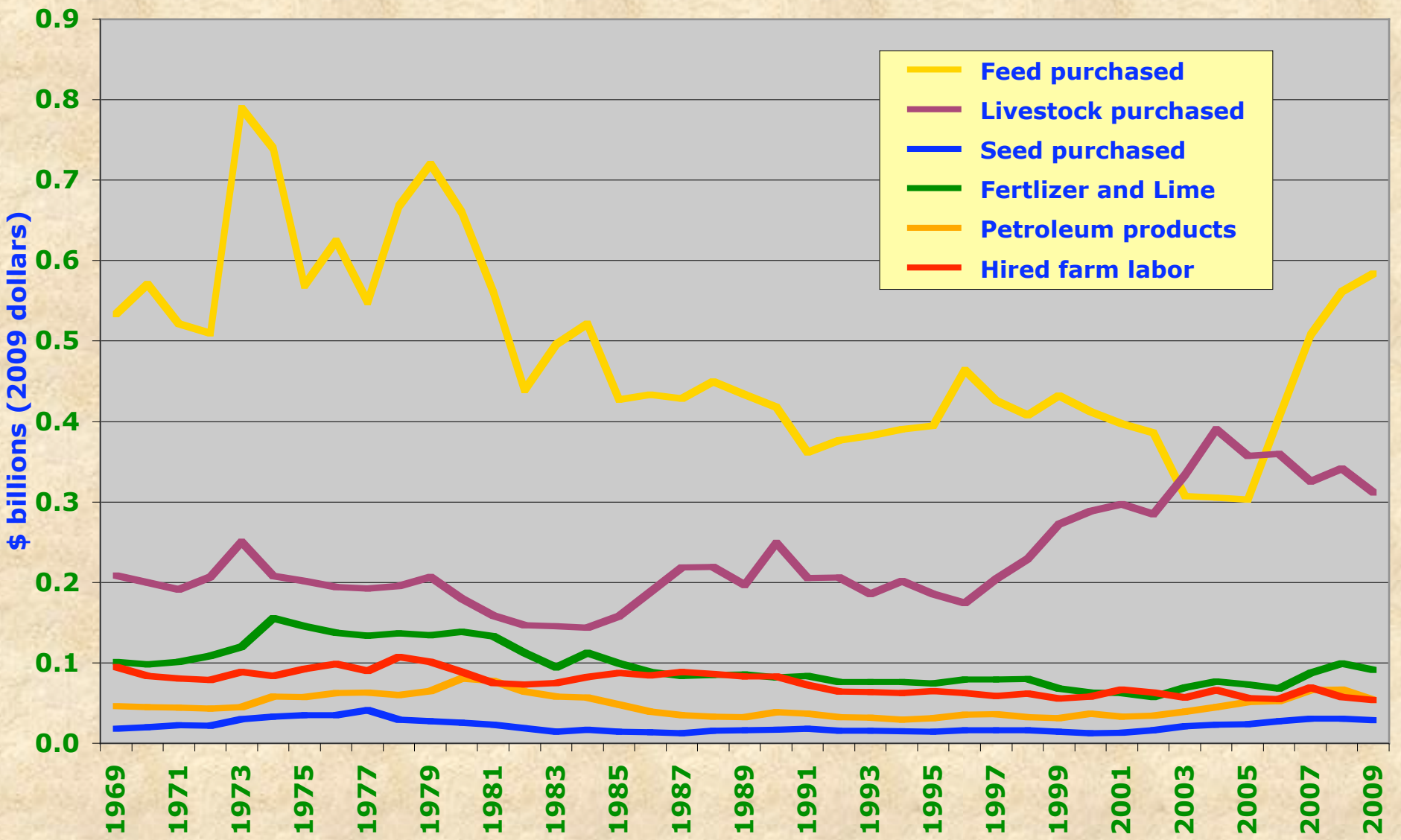


**54% of farms  
reported net  
losses in 2007**





# Farm production expenses in North Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



**\$730 million of these farm inputs  
are sourced outside the region**

**Source: Ken Meter using data from Agriculture Census 2007**



**Using local inputs  
would reduce these losses**

*Compost at Pleasantview Farm (Circleville)*





**Also a region of food consumers...**



# **Finding Food in Farm Country**

**As farmers struggle...**

- **Consumers buy \$2.4 billion of food each year**

- **\$2.2 billion from outside region**

**Source: Ken Meter using Bureau of Labor Statistics**



## Finding Food in North Alabama

### Markets for food eaten at home

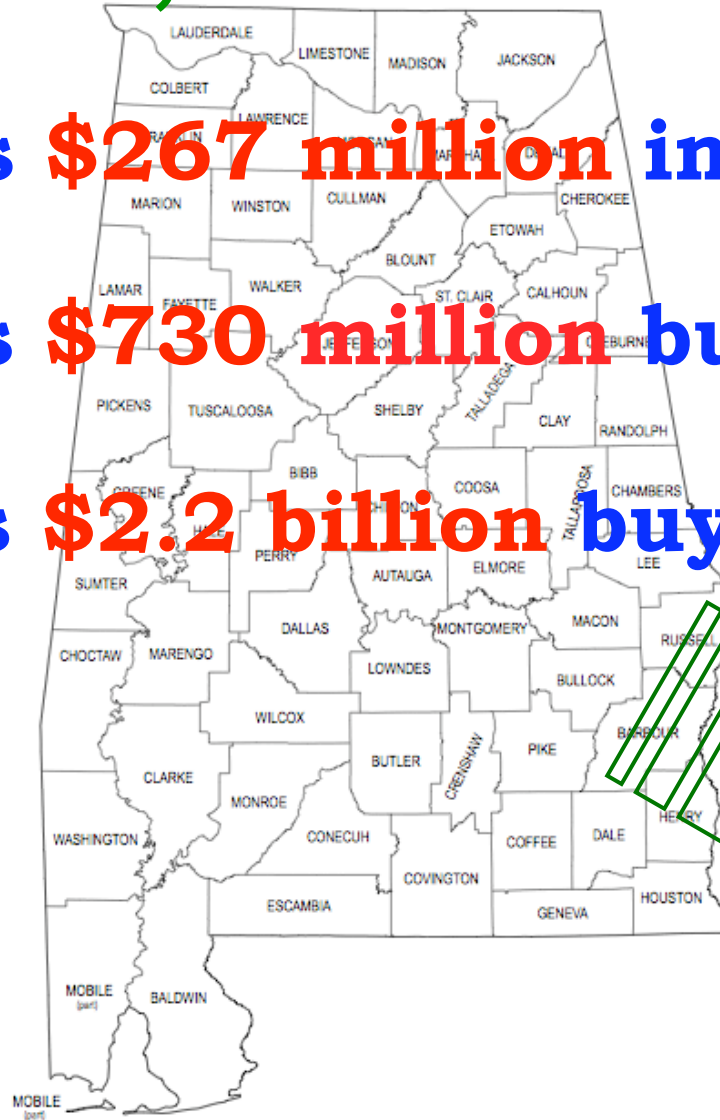
	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 341
Fruits & vegetables	239
Cereals and bakery products	151
Dairy products	193
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	508

Source: Census & BLS



## All told, North Alabama

- Gains **\$267 million** in production
- Loses **\$730 million** buying inputs
- Loses **\$2.2 billion** buying food



**Potential wealth lost each year**



## Finding Food in Farm Country

**Total loss is:**

- **\$2.6 billion each year!**
- **More than the value of all food commodities raised in region**

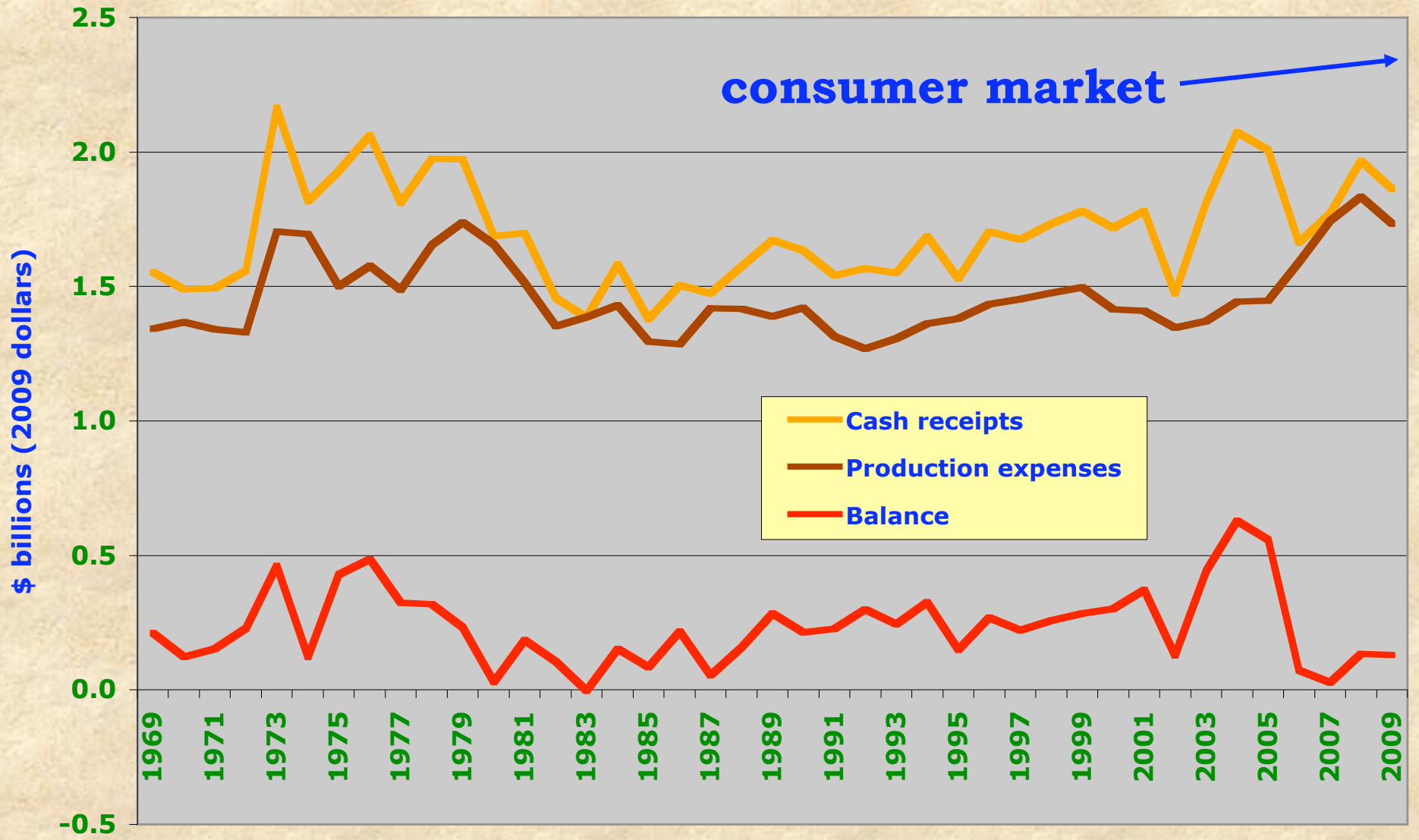


**The good news is...**

*Bench Farm*



## Current farm income compared to North Alabama consumer market



Source: BEA and BLS

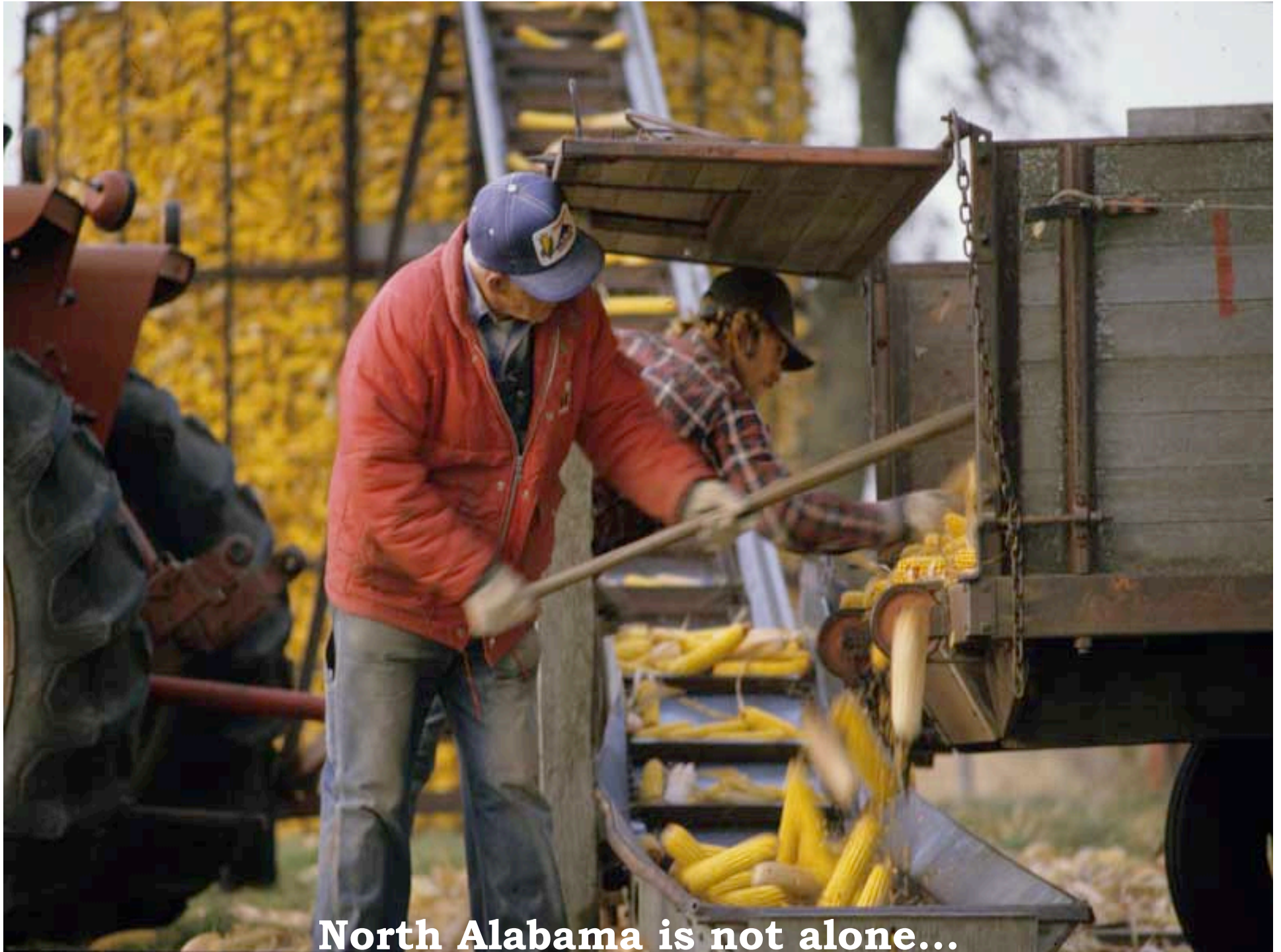


## North Alabama

If region's consumers bought **15%** of their food directly from local farms...

**...farms would earn \$214 million of new farm income**





**North Alabama is not alone...**

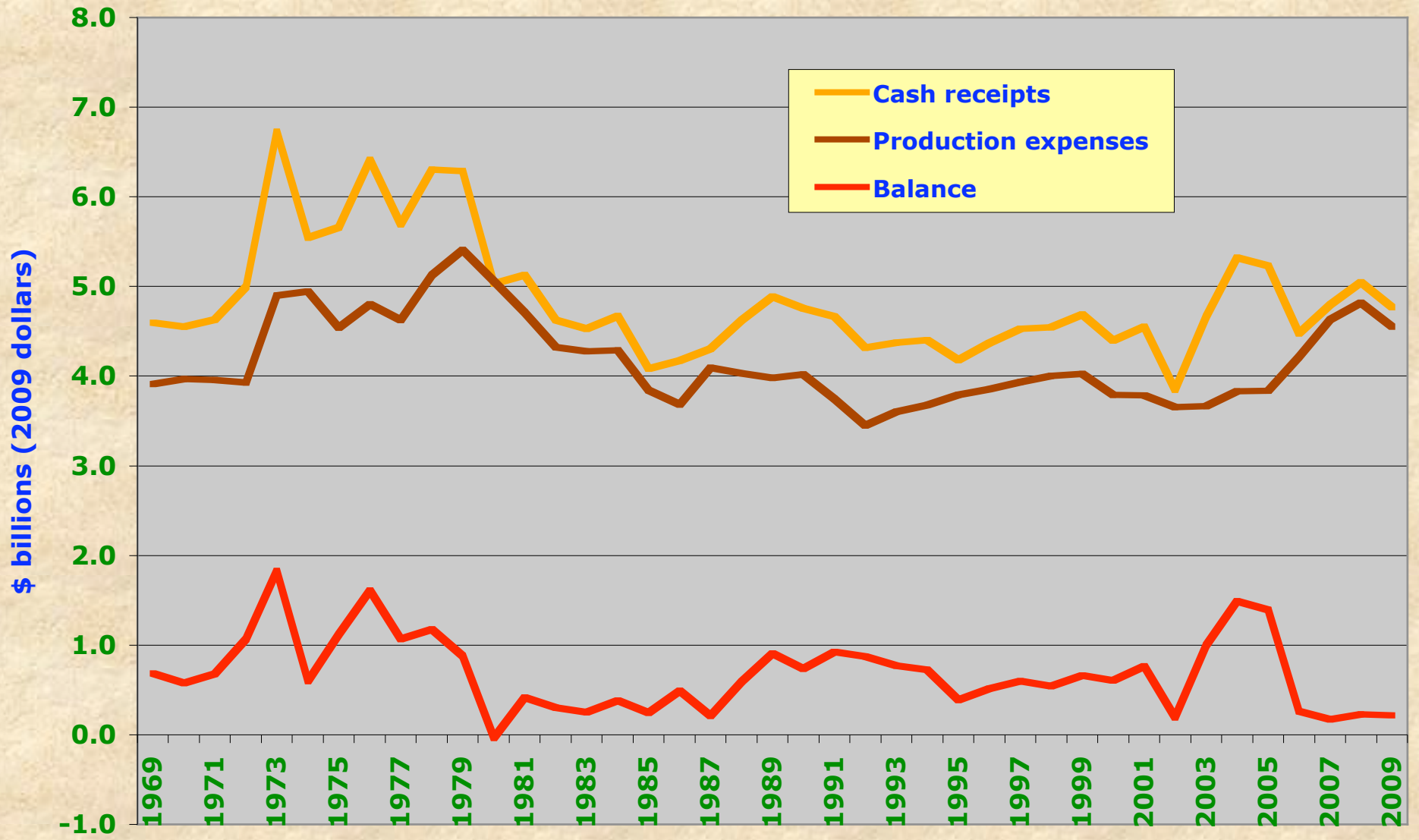


*Malabar Farm*

**Alabama Data**



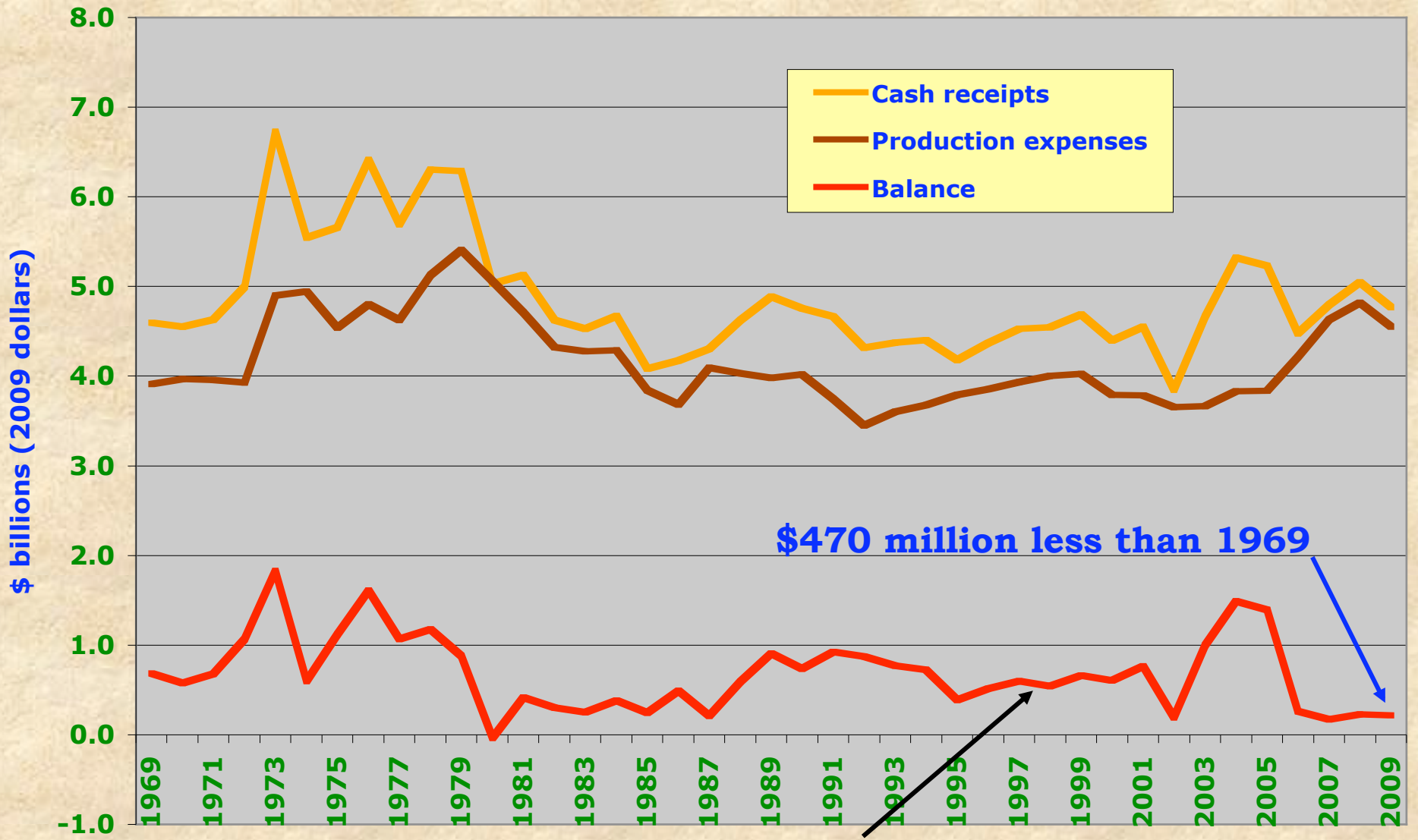
## Farm Production Balance in Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



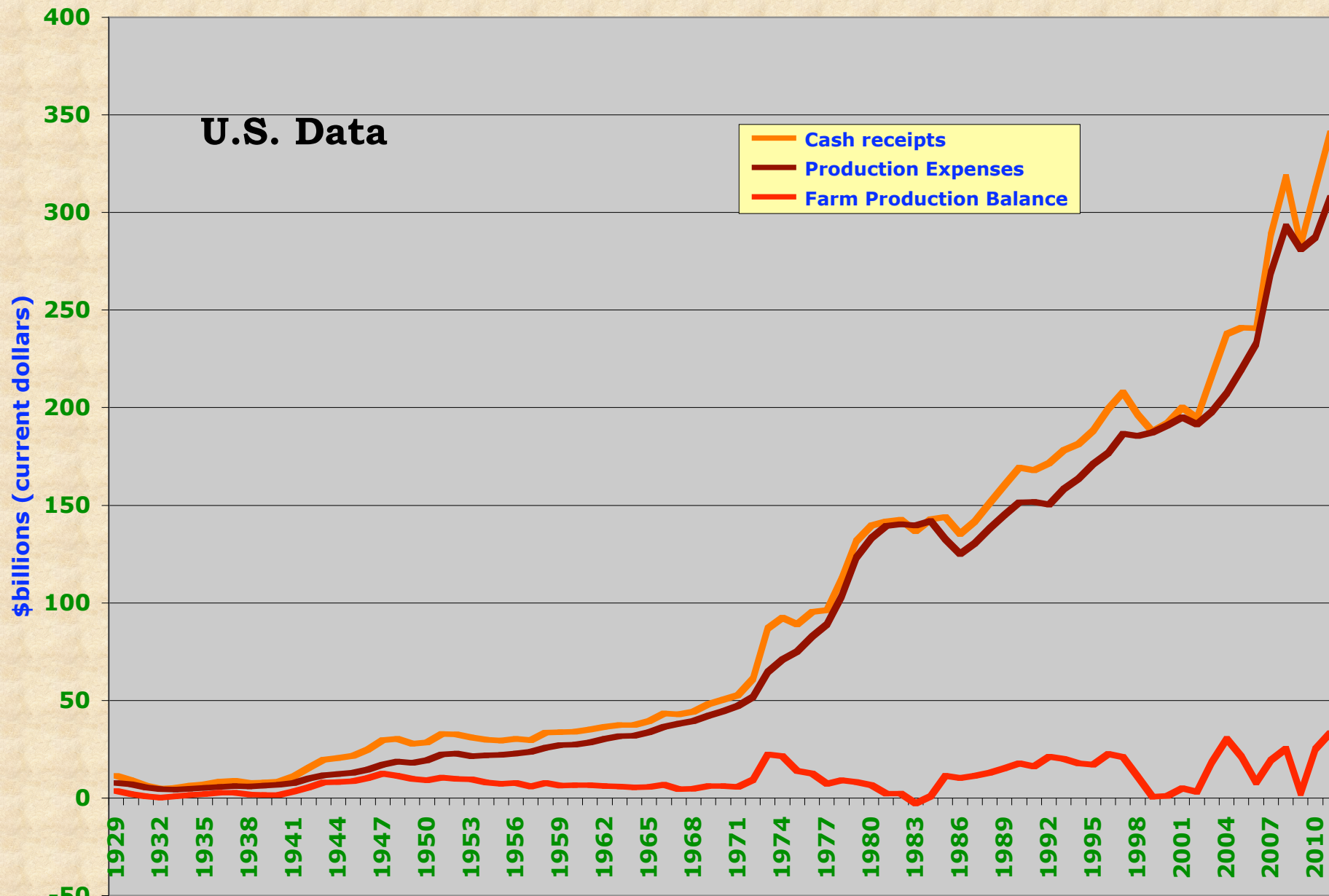
## Farm Production Balance in Alabama, 1969-2009



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

\$14 billion gained since 1988

# Farm Production Balance for U.S., 1929 - 2011



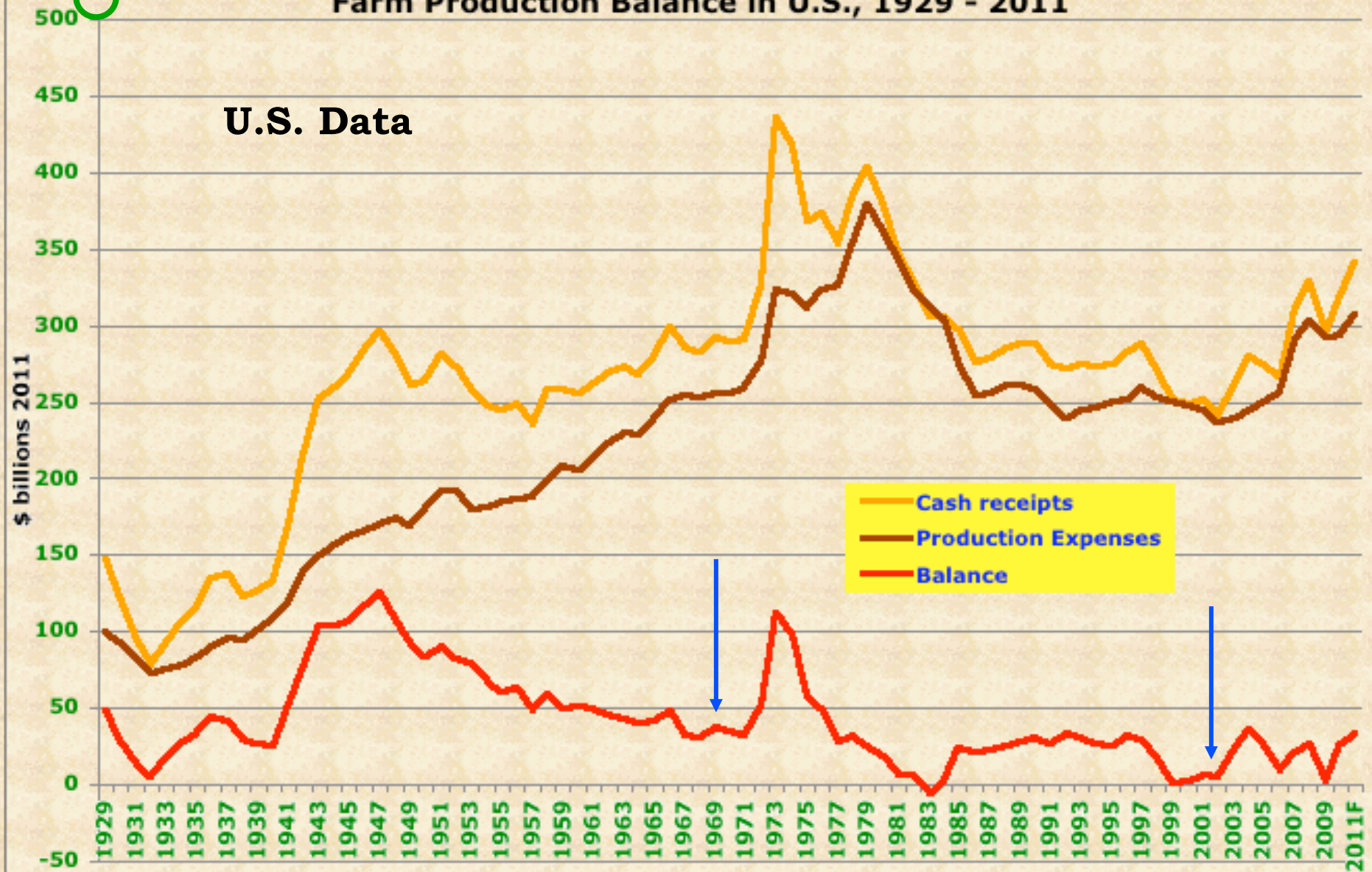
**U.S. Data**

- Cash receipts
- Production Expenses
- Farm Production Balance

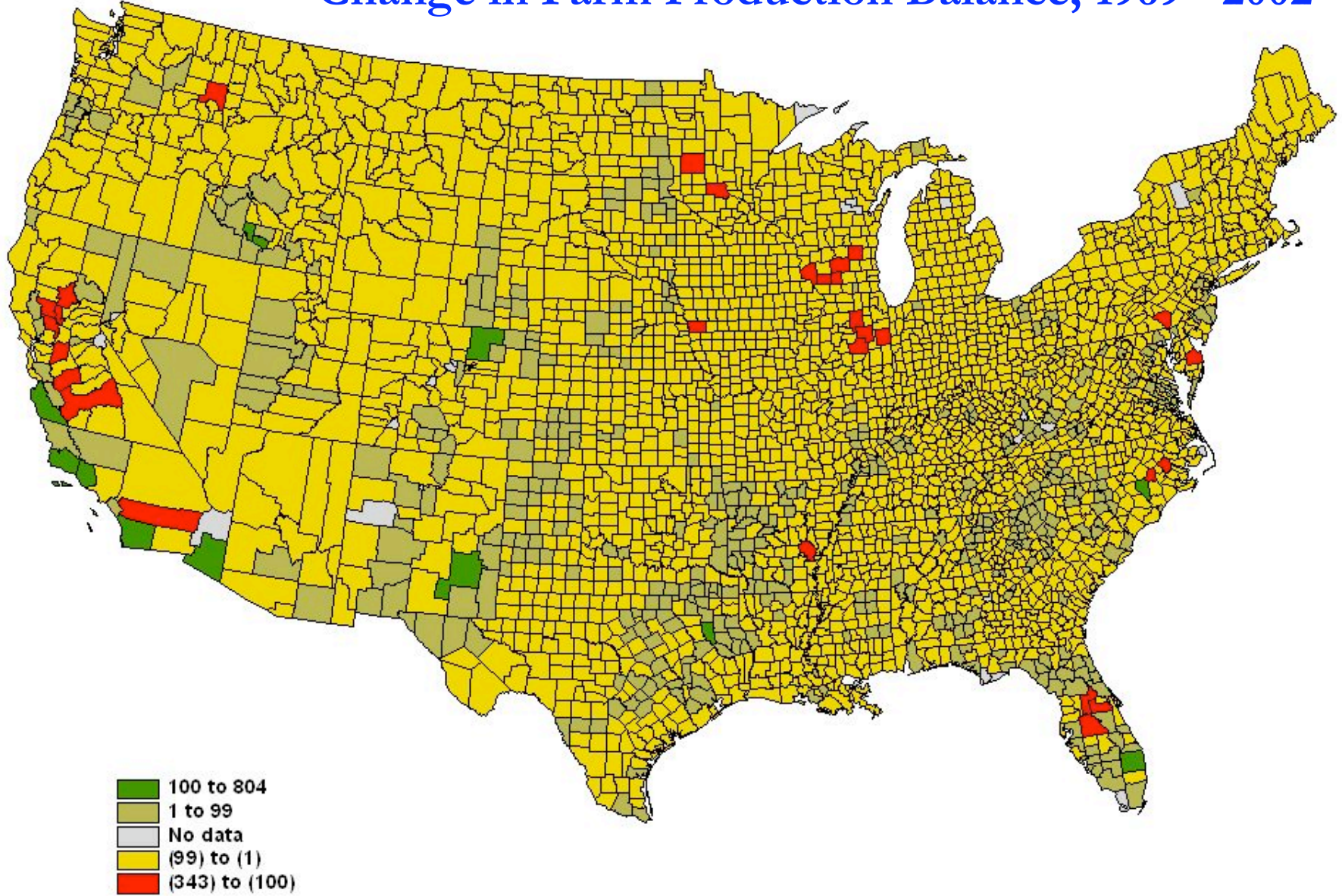


# Farm Production Balance in U.S., 1929 - 2011

U.S. Data



## Change in Farm Production Balance, 1969 - 2002

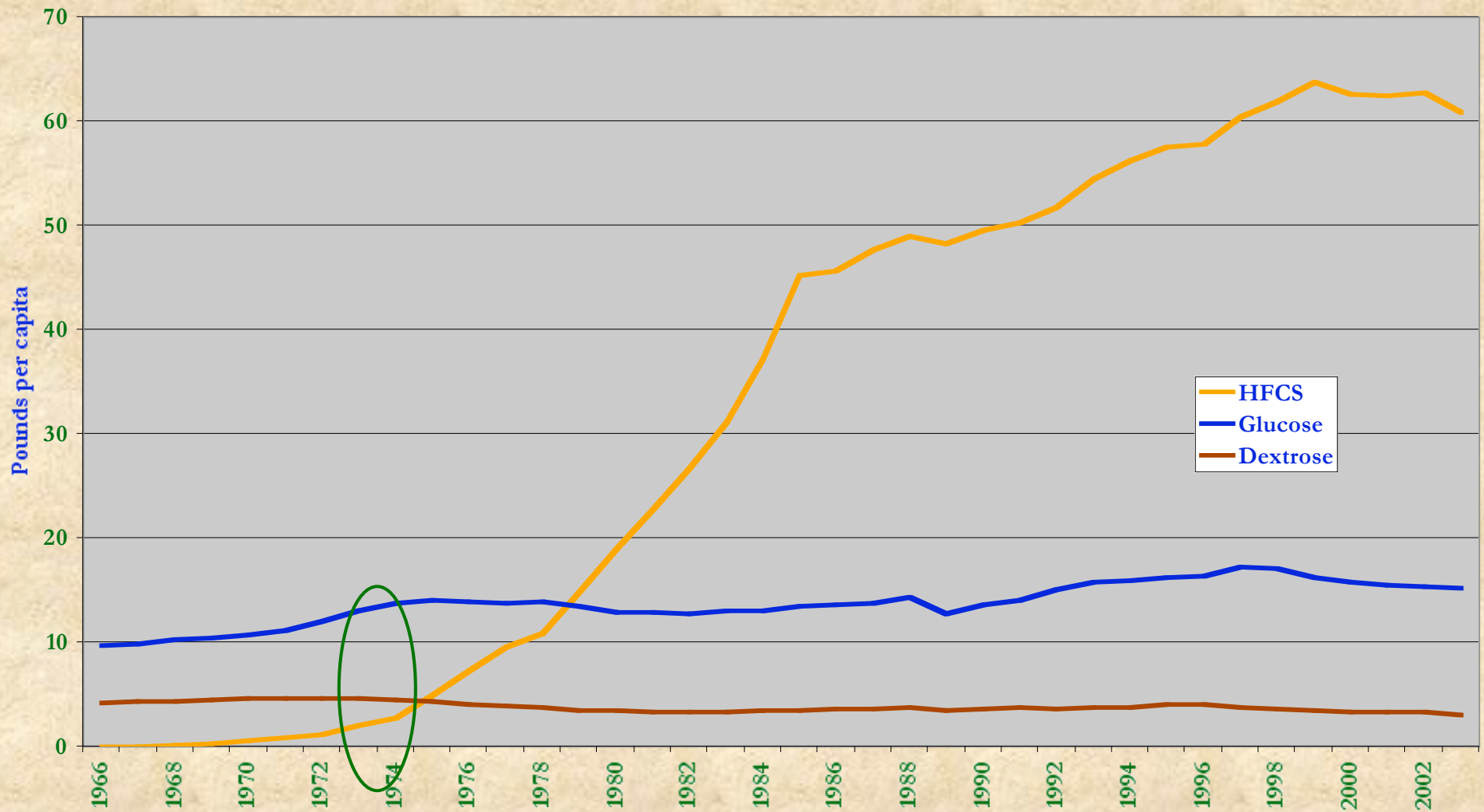


Map by Ken Meter, 2005

Source: BEA



## Corn sweeteners consumed in U.S., 1966 - 2002

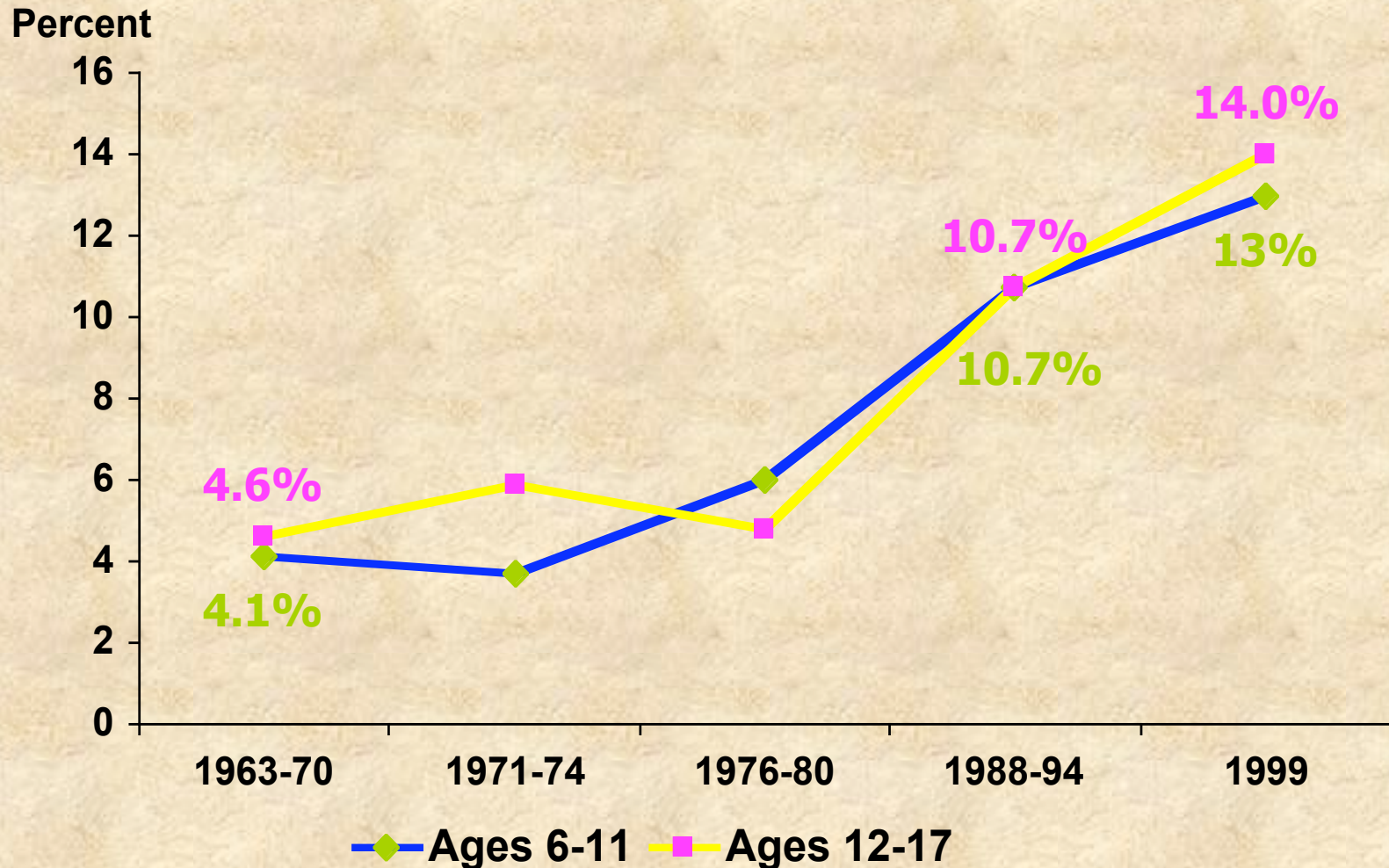


Source: USDA/ERS — chart by Ken Meter, 2006





# U.S. Youth Who are Overweight Percent by Age



≥95th percentile for BMI by age and sex, based on NHANES I reference data  
Source: Troiano RP, Flegal KM. Pediatrics 1998;101(3):497-504. NHANES 1999, National Center for Health Statistics. Chart by Melinda Hemmelgarn



**Growing Power, Milwaukee**



## Consumption out of balance

- **50% of U.S. public school students qualify for free / reduced lunch**
- **10% of households are “food insecure”**



## Health suffers

**3,000 deaths due to  
food poisoning each year in U.S.**

**Medical cost:  
\$152 billion per year**

Sources: CDC/Walters



## **Health suffers**

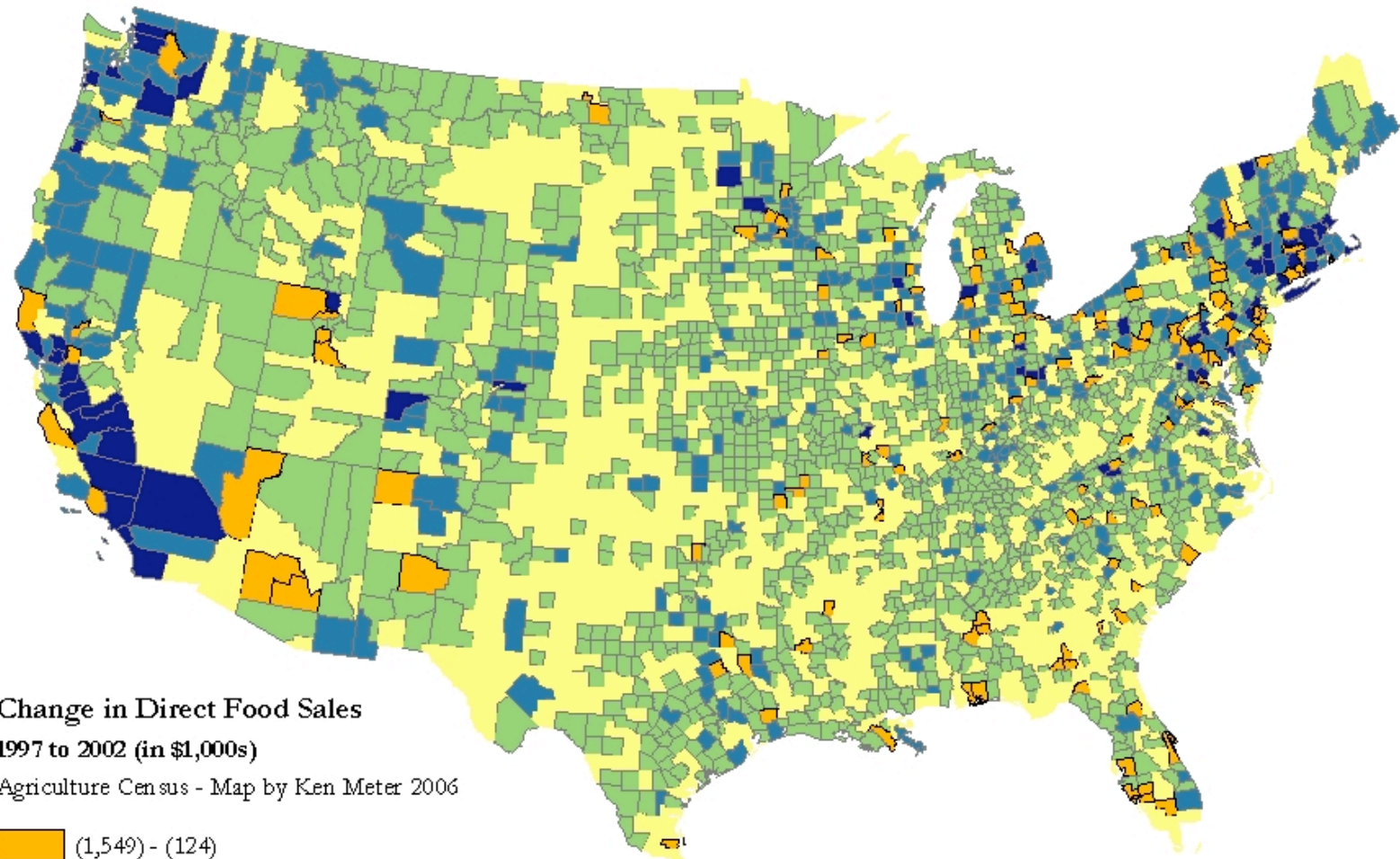
**Medical costs of obesity are \$174 billion per year —**

**Source: CDC/Walters, Harvard Public Health/Colditz**

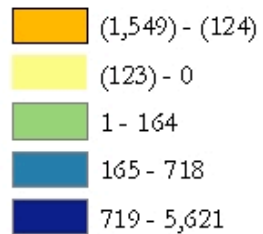




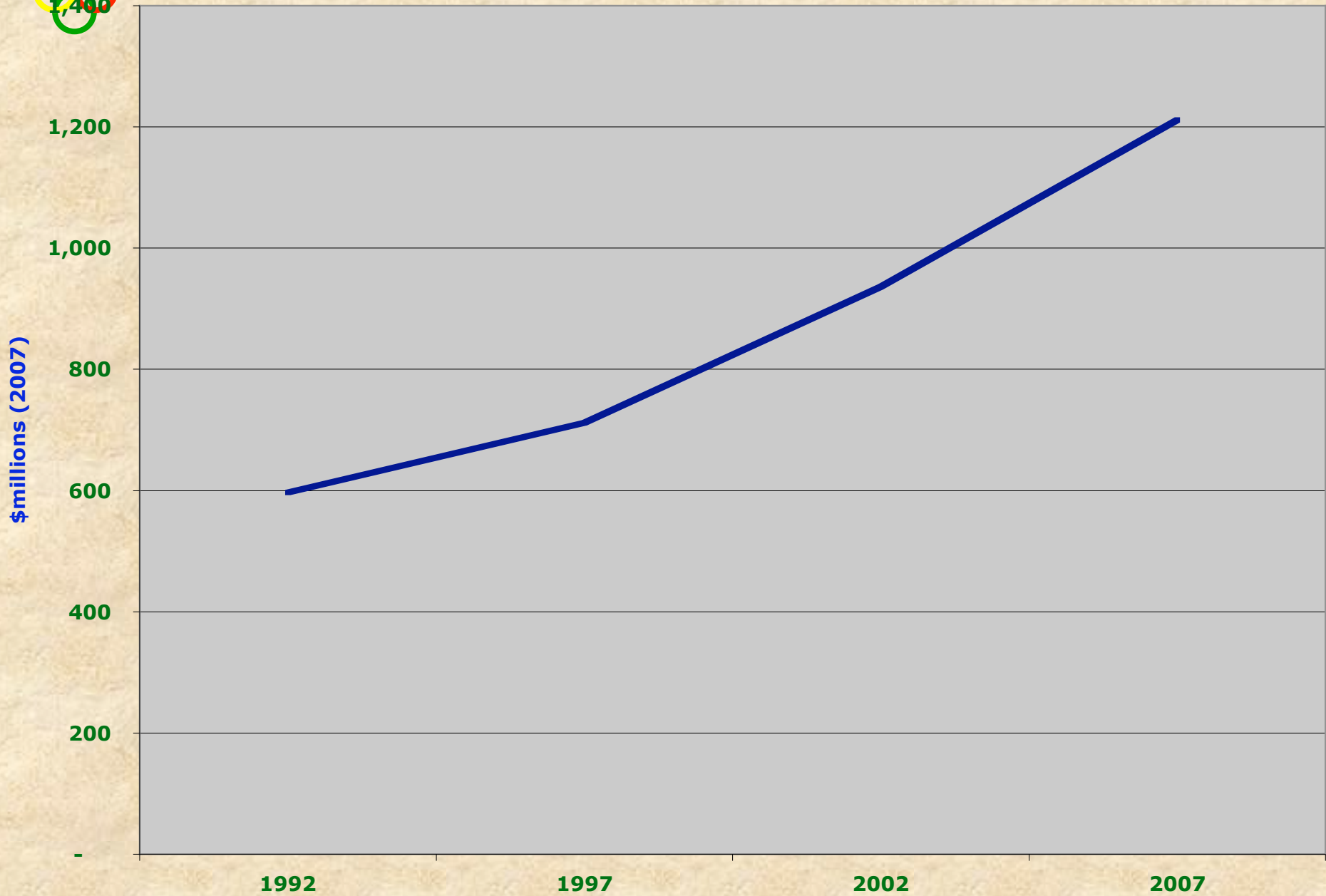
# Direct Food Sales



Change in Direct Food Sales  
1997 to 2002 (in \$1,000s)  
Agriculture Census - Map by Ken Meter 2006



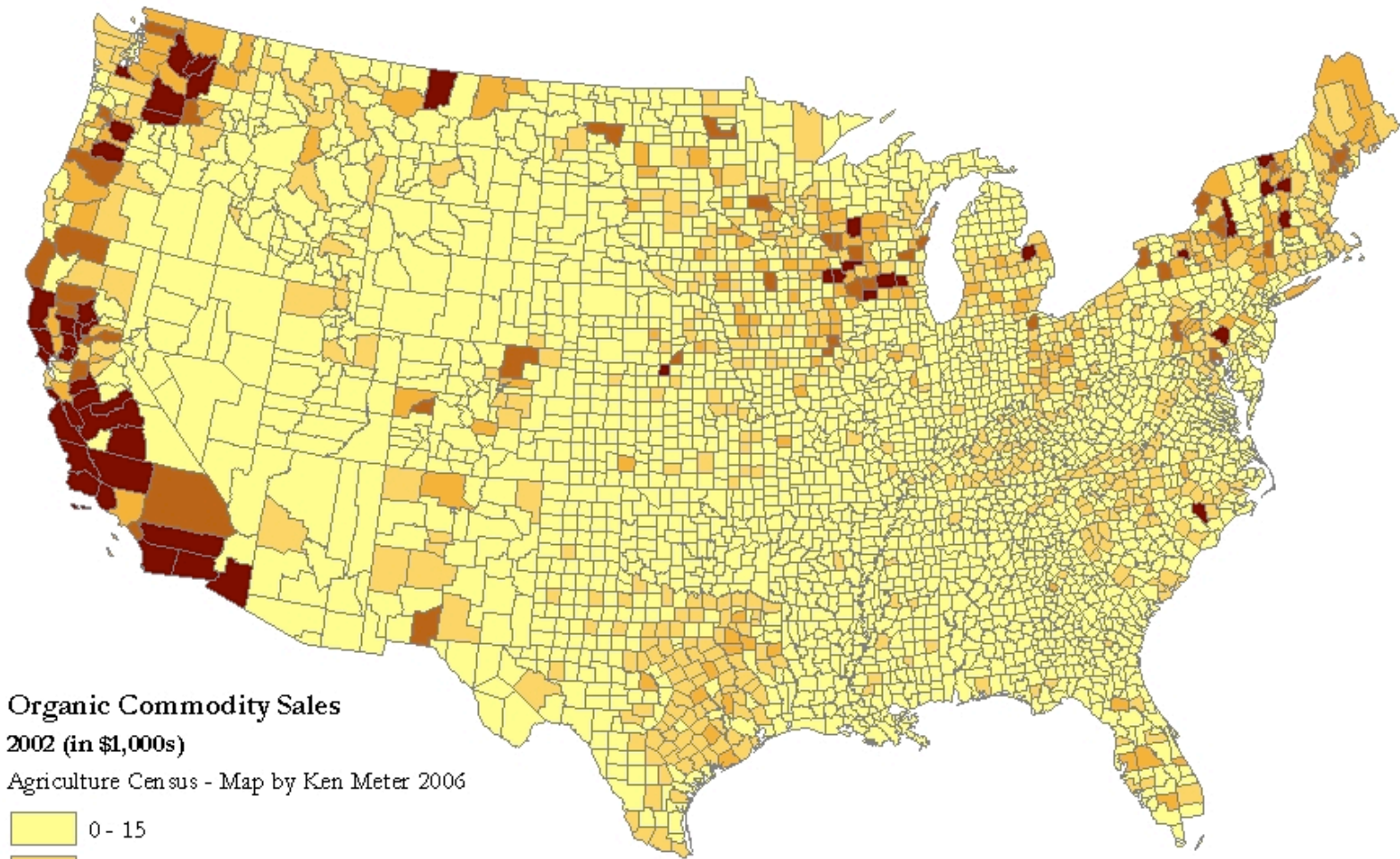
# Direct sales from farmer to consumers in U.S., 1992-2007







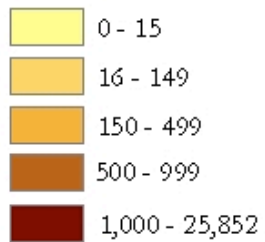
# Organic Sales



## Organic Commodity Sales

2002 (in \$1,000s)

Agriculture Census - Map by Ken Meter 2006

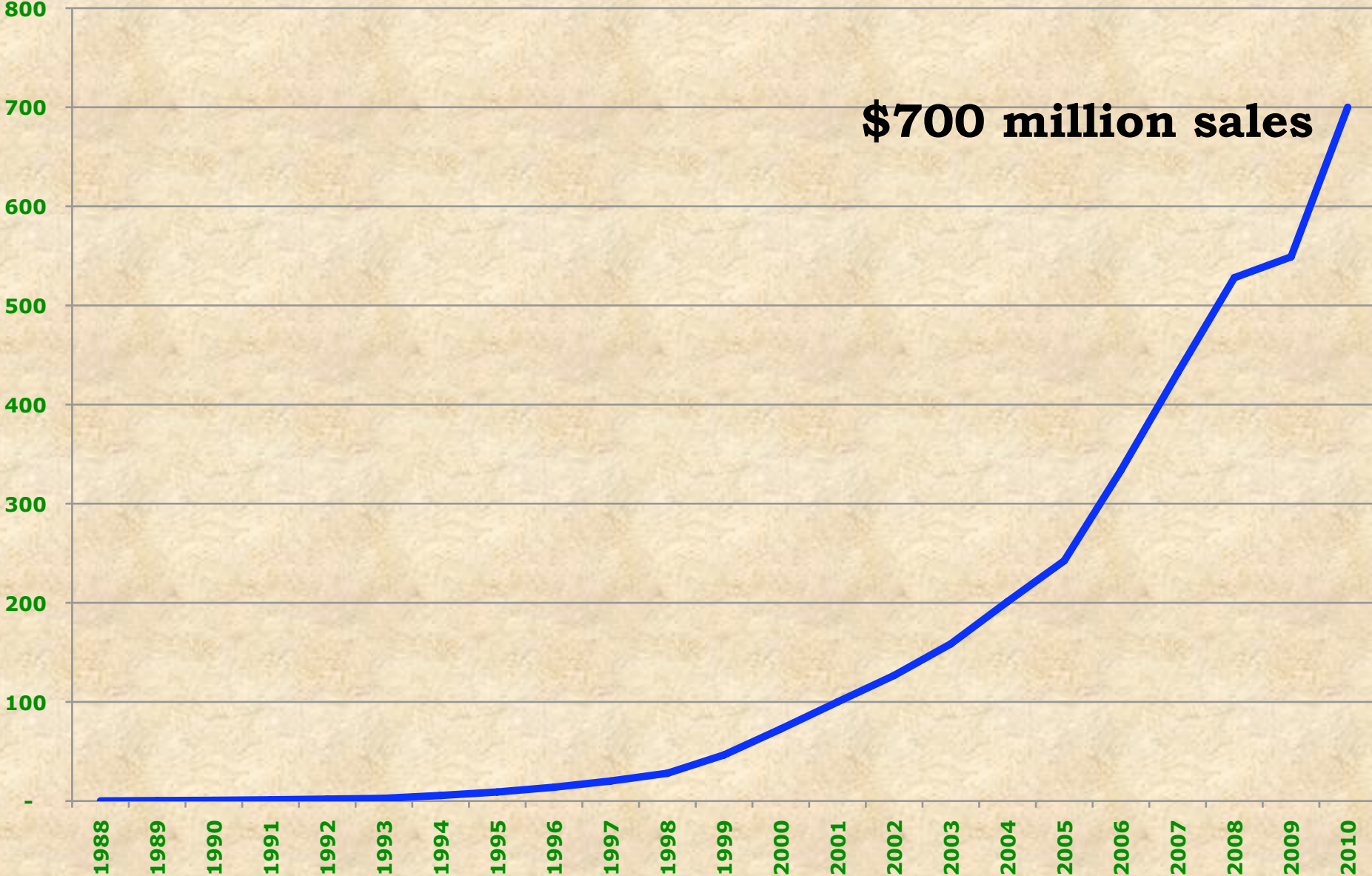




# Organic Valley

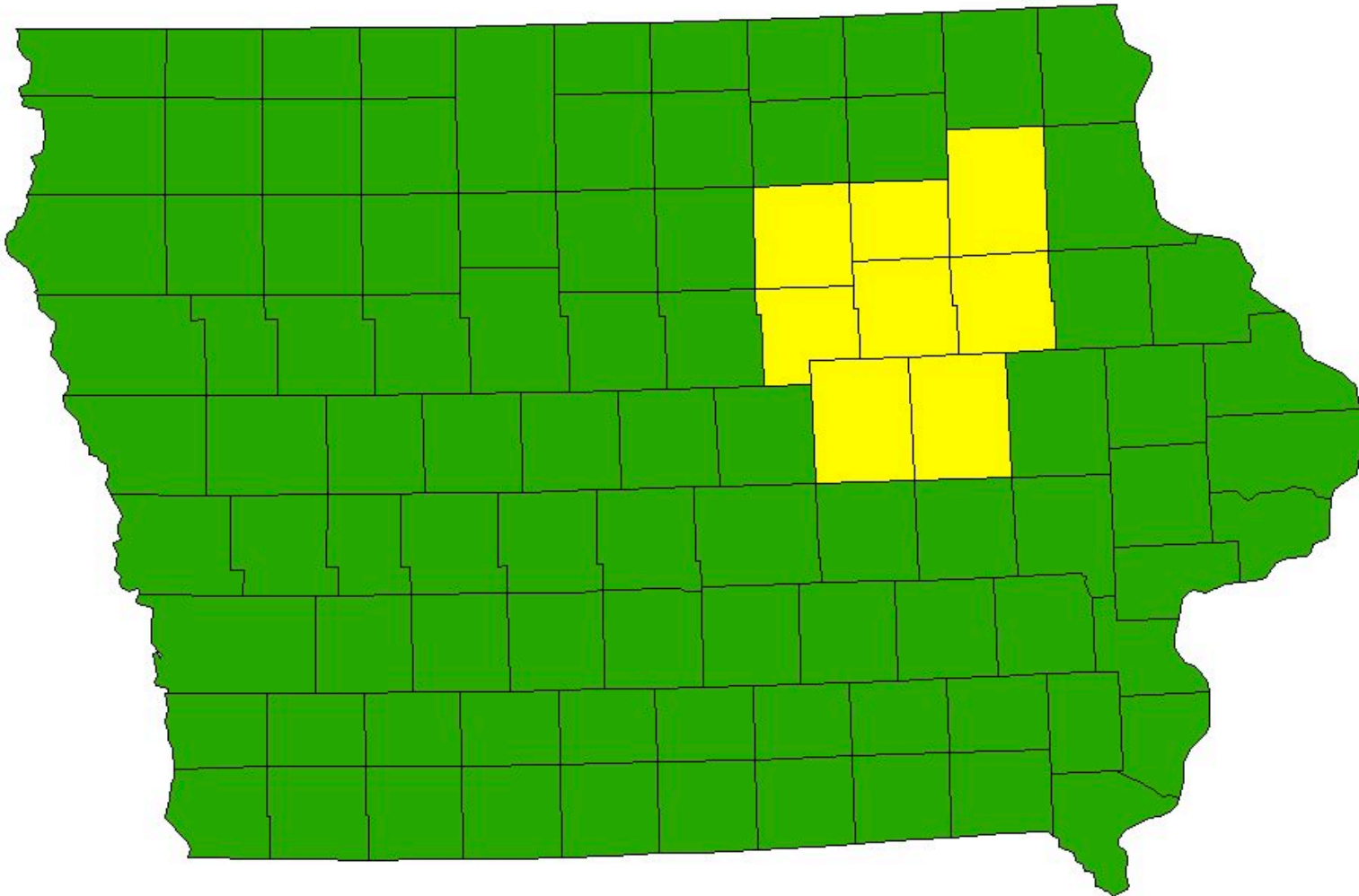


**Organic Valley sales, 1988 - 2010**





## **Black Hawk region, Iowa**





# UNI Local Food Project

**1998**

**3 institutions**

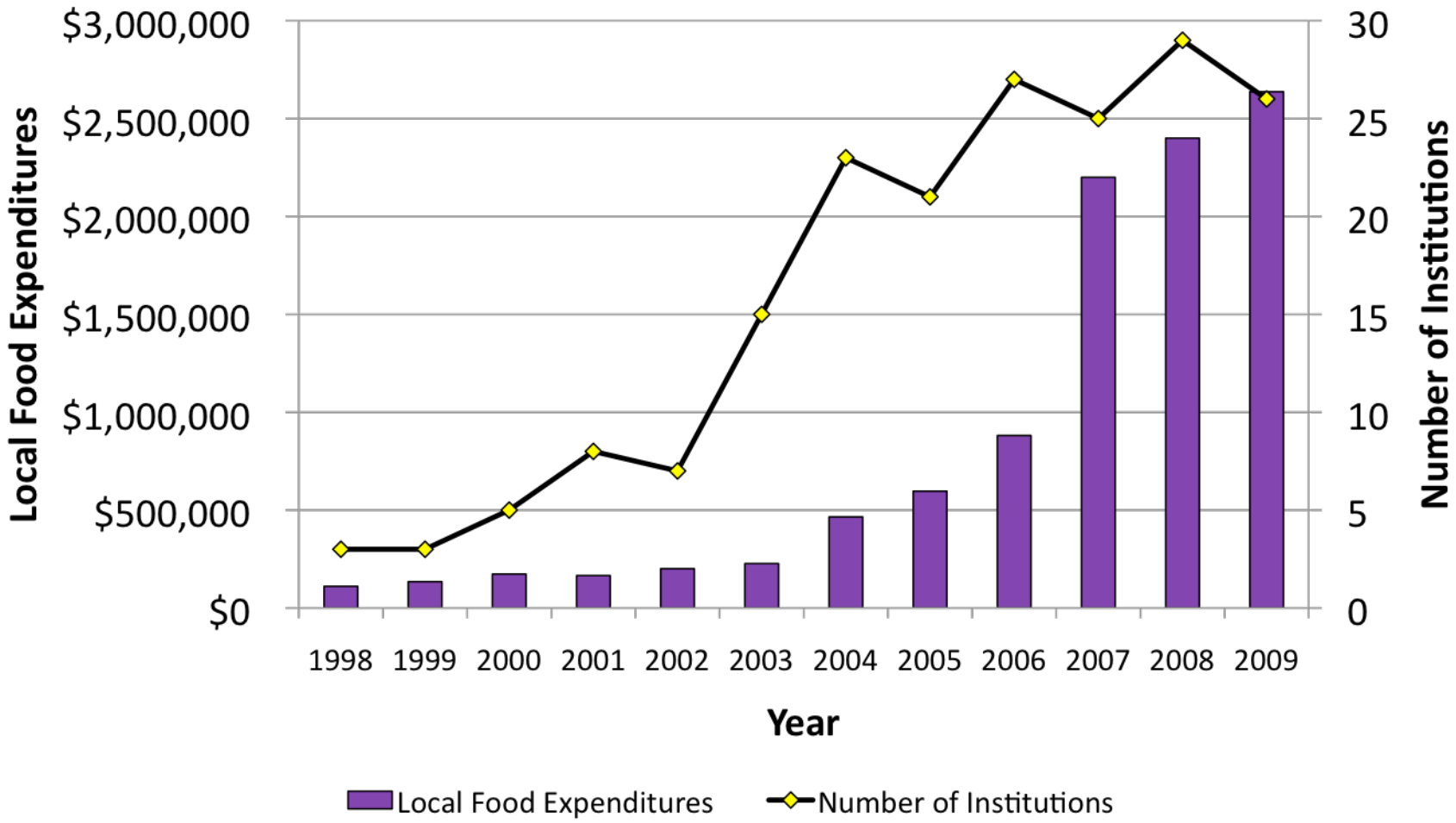
**buy \$111,000 of local foods**

**2009**

**26 buy \$2,600,000**

# Local Food Expenditures

by the participating institutions in the  
**Black Hawk County Area, Iowa 1998-2009**



Northern Iowa Food & Farm  
Partnership

## **Jobs, Fruit & Veggies, and Black Hawk County region**

**If Black Hawk region residents  
purchased locally grown fruits  
and vegetables just **3 months** out  
of the year:**

- **475 new jobs**
- **\$6.3 million in labor income  
added to local economy**

*David Swenson, ISU Economist*





**Will Allen, Growing Power, Milwaukee**



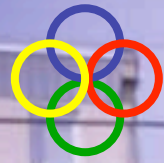




**Did you know:**  
Growing Power distributed over 2 million pounds of produce through the Market Basket program. Market Basket includes products from the Rainbow Farms Cooperative.



**Growing Power, Milwaukee**



# Greensgrow Gardens, Philadelphia





# **Greensgrow Gardens, Philadelphia**





# Greensgrow Gardens, Philadelphia





# Greensgrow Gardens, Philadelphia





## **Viroqua, Wisconsin**

- **Factory closes**
- **85 of best jobs lost**
- **Printing & packaging firm**



# Viroqua, Wisconsin







## **Viroqua, Wisconsin**

- **Economic Development Association buys building**
- **100,000 square feet**
- **Regional food processing center**

# **Viroqua Business Cluster**

**Produce  
Distributor 1**

**Produce  
Distributor 2**

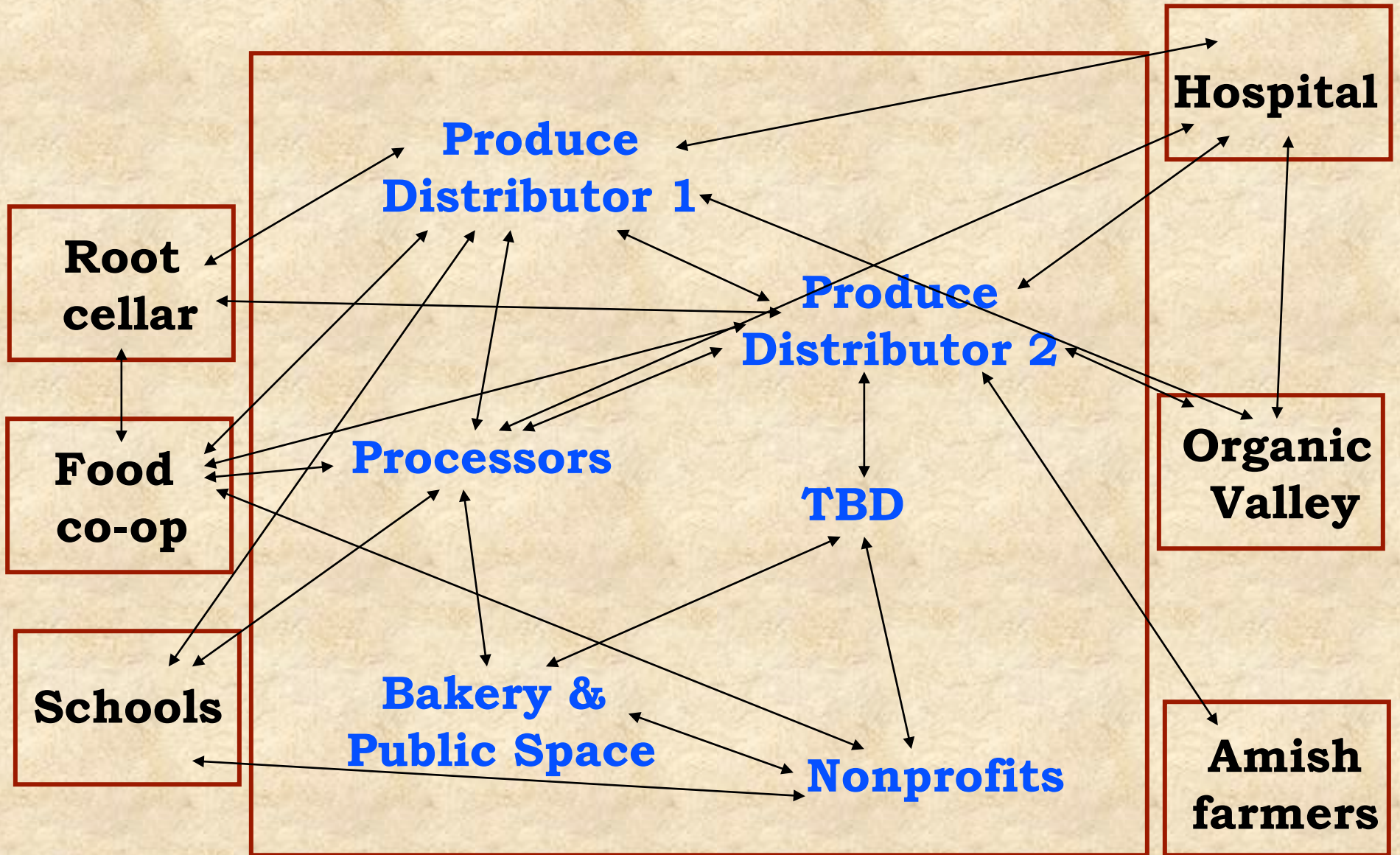
**Processors**

**TBD**

**Bakery &  
Public Space**

**Nonprofits**

# Viroqua Business Cluster





# Viroqua, Wisconsin





# **U.S. Federal Policy**

**Invest in communities  
rather than cash for  
commodities**



# Vision for local food economies

**Build:**

**Health**

**Wealth**

**Connection**

**Capacity**

# **“Finding Food in Farm Country”**

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