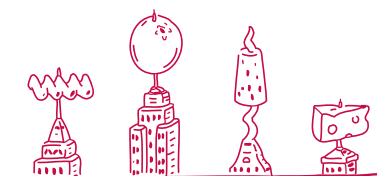


# Lewiston–Auburn Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study

March 2015

PREPARED FOR  
Grow L+A

BY  
Karp Resources  
with Crossroads Resource Center



KARP RESOURCES

## PROJECT TEAM

### Karp Resources

Founded in 1990, Karp Resources is a food business consultancy with two divisions: Our *Good Food is Good Business* division supports the healthy development, execution, and operations of food businesses and initiatives in the public and private sectors. Our services include strategic sourcing, feasibility analysis, market research, business planning, project management, and evaluation.

Our *Good People are Good Business* division builds leadership and organizational effectiveness in the food sector through talent and performance management, organizational assessment, capacity building, executive coaching, recruiting, and employee engagement services.

Karp Resources' clients include corporations, government agencies, small businesses, non-profits, and educational organizations. For more than 20 years, Karp Resources has spearheaded and has been integral to the development and execution of food businesses, policies, and partnerships in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

### Crossroads Resource Center

Crossroads Resource Center works in conjunction with communities and their allies to develop practical tools that foster community self-determination. President Ken Meter is one of the most experienced food system analysts in the U.S., integrating market analysis, business development, systems thinking, and social concerns. Meter holds 43 years of experience in inner-city and rural community capacity building. His "Finding Food in Farm Country" studies have promoted local food networks in 107 regions in 37 states and one Canadian province. Meter recently released a local foods plan for the state of Alaska. He completed a \$9.85-million plan for rural investment for the state of South Carolina, and researched the economic impacts of institutional food purchasing for the Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois Public Health Institute. As coordinator of public process for the City of Minneapolis Sustainability Initiative, he guided over 85 residents in creating a 50-year vision for the city including sustainability measures. Meter consults with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to help create a toolkit for measuring economic impacts of local food development. He served as convenor and co-chair of the Community Economic Development Committee for the former Community Food Security Coalition, and is a leader of the Closing the Hunger Gap network. Meter taught economics at the University of Minnesota, and at the Harvard Kennedy School.

### Justin Nadeau, Local Resource; Chair, Grow L+A Food Hub Task Force

Justin joined the efforts of Grow L+A in the summer of 2013 after completing his Masters in Business Management and Sustainability from Antioch University in Keene, NH. He moves forward as a food systems changemaker in an effort to empower good community food values. Justin envisions a Food Hub that connects our farmers and neighbors to feed each other and celebrate good whole nutritious food that is available to all and strengthens the wellbeing of our community, allowing each of us to live fulfilling purposeful lives. Leading a committed group of volunteers, he is continually encouraged by the resilience of his Maine neighbors. Justin works at the Lewiston Farmers Market with Mount Apatite Farm in Auburn and hopes to feed his community with his own small diversified farm one day soon. He joined the Karp Resources team as our "feet and ears on the ground,"

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

Grow L+A, a non-profit organization whose mission is to “promote a vibrant urban landscape and its creative integration into a living and sustainable Lewiston + Auburn,” was formed in 2012 with an eye towards saving and redeveloping Lewiston’s historic Bates Mill No. 5. The group’s Five-2-Farm plan for the building envisions a mixed-use facility integrating food-related businesses and activities with other commercial and industrial uses. The plan includes a regional food hub as a central component of this vision. In 2013, Grow L+A created a Food Hub Task Force (FHTF), including Grow L+A board members and other community stakeholders, to develop the food hub concept and identify key questions to be addressed by a feasibility study. In March 2014, Grow L+A issued a Request For Proposals for a Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study, and selected Karp Resources, who submitted a proposal in partnership with Crossroads Resource Center, to complete the study.

This project seeks to understand the supply and demand for local foods in the Lewiston-Auburn area, and to outline the types of activities—production, aggregation, processing, and merchandizing—that will best accommodate the current state while also defining support activities and infrastructure requirements for expansion of the local food economy.

Phase One kicked off in early September 2014, and included a visit to Lewiston-Auburn by Karp Resources (Karen Karp and Ben Kerrick) and Crossroads Resource Center (Ken Meter) in early October. Additional research, including phone interviews, review of secondary sources, and analysis of secondary data, was conducted from September through February 2015. Findings and recommendations are issued in this report, submitted March 2015.

### **Methodology**

This study incorporates extensive primary qualitative research, analysis of secondary data from sources including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, on-the-ground observations of food activities in the region, review of relevant prior studies, and reflections from key players and stakeholders in the region’s food movement and food economy. A significant portion of the primary research was conducted during a visit by the project team to the region in October 2014.

### **The Current Food Landscape in the Lewiston-Auburn Region**

The Lewiston-Auburn region’s local food economy is small but growing. In our research we found great enthusiasm for local food’s potential as an economic driver, and a number of stakeholders and organizations deeply committed to unlocking that potential for the benefit of all its community members. The primary barrier to an expanded local food economy in the Lewiston-Auburn region is limited production of regional agriculture products. Two factors dominate this assessment: farmers’ lack of access to land and capital, and a degree of lack of interest or belief that a market is there should they expand their operations. Buyers, such as institutions, restaurants, and retailers, want to increase local sourcing to meet demand for local foods expressed by their customers, but logistics, availability, and price are key concerns.

As Grow L+A, the Food Hub Task Force, and other actors in this realm work to support and advance local foods, we encourage them to give special focus and attention to these needs in the region, and



existing assets that may be leveraged to meet those needs. In particular, farmland preservation and support for new and existing producers in the region will go a long way toward building momentum for expansion of the local food economy and community.

### **Recommendations**

Although we encountered tremendous energy for local foods among those we spoke with, and observed engagement and partnerships across the area's food system, we conclude that pursuing a brick-and-mortar food hub in Bates Mill No. 5 would be premature at this time. Supply in the region is currently insufficient to fill a food hub with a year-round and diversified supply of local food. Even with sufficient supply and grants and/or subsidies, the projected economics of a physical entity are too risky to recommend at this time.

However, we see numerous opportunities for Grow L+A and the Food Hub Task Force to take an active role in supporting the local food economy. Assuming that community interest in a food hub concept and programs is sustained, this may lay the foundation for establishing a Lewiston-Auburn food hub facility in the future. We encourage Grow L+A and the Food Hub Task Force to consider and pursue the following recommendations.

#### **Recommendation: Continue to integrate with the area's local food initiatives and activities.**

##### Actions

1. Restructure the Food Hub Task Force so that it has participation of a broad cross-section of community organizations and stakeholders, including and especially those from other local agriculture and food organizations.
2. Offer Grow L+A's specific expertise in the service of the local food economy.
  - Advocate for zoning regulations conducive to agriculture and food-system facilities in Lewiston and Auburn.
  - Explore creation of agricultural zones where land is set aside for food production for the Lewiston-Auburn region, available at lease rates commensurate with the productive capacity of the land, rather than development value.
3. Assist with fundraising for food initiatives.
4. As food hub activities emerge across the region, participate, perhaps by offering to coordinate or offer a host site.
5. Maintain flexibility when considering the extent of the FHTF region.

#### **Recommendation: Build momentum and successes through collaboration.**

##### Actions

1. Create an inventory and map of the region's food infrastructure assets and needs to guide strategic partnerships.
2. Identify and take on 1-2 pilot projects involving local food distribution/processing or collaboration.
3. Establish a temporary space in downtown Lewiston as a pilot location for local food activities.
4. Create and facilitate a network of community/commercial kitchen facilities.

#### **Recommendation: Continue involvement with Bates Mill No. 5; if redevelopment moves forward, work to integrate local food activities into the mill through collaboration with its**

### **tenants and other community partners.**

#### Actions

1. Focus immediate and near-term activities on successfully advancing the redevelopment of Bates Mill No. 5.
2. Support the visioning of Bates Mill No. 5 redevelopment while exploring possibilities for a FHTF home in the mill.
3. Develop relationships and programming with other tenants as they sign on to Bates Mill No. 5.

### **In Closing**

Grow L+A has quickly emerged in its short life as a promising new and innovative organization that is contributing to revitalizing Lewiston-Auburn for a vibrant future. Through its creation of the Food Hub Task Force, it has demonstrated a keen interest in the region's local food economy, its potential growth, and its potential role in creating a more sustainable Lewiston-Auburn. To pursue these goals, we recommend that Grow L+A actively partner with other local foods initiatives to develop the potential for food hub activities both in and outside of Bates Mill No. 5. Although we conclude that the Lewiston-Auburn region is not yet ready to support a physical food hub, Grow L+A, the Food Hub Task Force, and the community's greater local food network can all take coordinated steps toward creating the conditions that would enable and support a food hub in the future.



*Parsnips await customer pickup at Crystal Springs Farm near Brunswick. Photo © Ken Meter, 2014.*

## INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Grow L+A, a non-profit organization whose mission is to “promote a vibrant urban landscape and its creative integration into a living and sustainable Lewiston + Auburn,” was formed in 2012 with an eye towards saving and redeveloping Lewiston’s historic Bates Mill No. 5. The group’s Five-2-Farm plan for the building envisions a mixed-use facility integrating food-related businesses and activities with other commercial and industrial uses. The plan includes a regional food hub as a central component of this vision. In 2013, Grow L+A created a Food Hub Task Force (FHTF), including Grow L+A board members and other community stakeholders, to develop the food hub concept and identify key questions to be addressed by a feasibility study. In March 2014, Grow L+A issued a Request For Proposals for a Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study, and selected Karp Resources, who submitted a proposal in partnership with Crossroads Resource Center, to complete the study.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE, ACTIVITIES, AND TIMELINE

With the establishment of a food hub as a desired anchor for the Bates Mill No. 5 building, this project seeks to understand the supply and demand for local foods in the Lewiston–Auburn area, and to outline the types of activities—production, aggregation, processing, and merchandizing—that will best accommodate the current state while also defining support activities and infrastructure requirements for expansion of the local food economy.

This Phase One project focuses on assessing existing supply and demand for a potential food hub, with the following specific goals and activities:

- To identify the production region and begin to assess its capacity to supply food for a Lewiston–Auburn Food Hub
  - Identify the region and suppliers that would sell into and use the food hub

- Identify sectors of demand (buyers who would use the food hub)
- Qualitative assessments of the production landscape: tours and visits with “traditional” farmers, alternative farmers (i.e., those focused on local food marketplace, and/or experimenting with new and innovative crops for the region), and immigrant farmers
- Qualitative assessments of exemplary buyers to test and understand demand – institutional, distribution and retail/restaurant buyers
- To prepare for deeper qualitative and quantitative assessment activities in Phase Two

Phase One kicked off in early September, 2014, and included a visit to Lewiston–Auburn by Karp Resources (Karen Karp and Ben Kerrick) and Crossroads Resource Center (Ken Meter) in early October. Additional research, including phone interviews, review of secondary sources, and analysis of secondary data, was conducted from September through February 2015. Findings and recommendations are issued in this report, submitted March 2015.

## METHODOLOGY

This study incorporates extensive primary qualitative research, analysis of secondary data from sources including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, on-the-ground observations of food activities in the region, review of relevant prior studies, and reflections from key players and stakeholders in the region’s food movement and food economy. In total, the project team interviewed 22 farmers, five purchasers, and 16 additional stakeholders and experts (see Appendix A for a complete listing of interviewees). These interviews were conducted in person, during the team’s visit to the region, and by telephone. Secondary data was consulted to provide an understanding of current demographic, economic, and agricultural conditions in the region, and how these conditions compare to the state of Maine. Observations, review of previous studies, especially the Lewiston Community Food Assessment, and conversations with key players and stakeholders helped to flesh out and ground-truth the analysis from our interviews and secondary data sources.

## THE FOOD HUB CONCEPT

The USDA defines a *food hub* as “a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand;”<sup>1</sup> while Merriam-Webster defines a *hub* as “a center of activity; focal point.”<sup>2</sup> Our team takes a broad approach to the food hub concept, one that can include both bricks and mortar as well as virtual functions of aggregation, distribution, and marketing, as well as processing, retail, education, information-sharing, and networking. In approaching this feasibility study, we have opted to allow the needs of the community, including its farmers, businesses, purchasers, and eaters, to shape the food hub concept that is right for Lewiston–Auburn.

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<sup>1</sup> Barham, J. et al., *Regional Food Hub Resource Guide*. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. Washington, D.C. April 2012. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/MS046.04-2012>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hub>





*Androscoggin, Oxford, and Sagadahoc counties form the study area for this report. Map by Ben Kerrick / Karp Resources, 2015.*

## THE CURRENT FOOD LANDSCAPE IN THE LEWISTON–AUBURN REGION

### THE REGION

For purposes of this study, the Lewiston–Auburn food hub region (henceforth, “Lewiston–Auburn region” or “the region”) includes Androscoggin, Oxford, and Sagadahoc counties. This is not a strict supply boundary for food hub activities in Lewiston–Auburn; however, considering the market pull of Portland to the south and Augusta to the north, these three counties are likely to form the foundation of both supply and demand for a successful food hub in Lewiston–Auburn.

Lewiston and Auburn have a combined population of 59,647 (2010 census – Lewiston: 36,592, Auburn: 23,055), second in Maine only to Portland. The Lewiston–Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area is defined as Androscoggin County, which has a population of 107,702; Oxford County has a population of 57,833 and Sagadahoc County has a population of 35,293. The total population of the three–county region (200,828) accounts for about 15% of Maine’s population. The region contains a similar proportion (15%) of Maine’s farms and 11% of the state’s farmland. All three counties experienced slight to moderate (0.2–5.6%) population growth over the preceding decade. Population projections to 2030 predict that the three–county region will see modest growth (3.2%) over the next two decades, with all of that growth driven by Androscoggin County; Oxford and

Sagadahoc counties are projected to experience slight population loss. The population of Lewiston-Auburn is projected to increase 5%, with all growth driven by Lewiston.<sup>3</sup>

## ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLY

The Lewiston-Auburn region's growers sell a combined total of \$85 million of products per year. Most of these sales are raw materials that are exported elsewhere for further processing, or are commodities raised for export to larger urban markets in the Northeast. Vegetable sales are the most important farm sector in the region, bringing in a total of at least \$8.6 million in sales in 2012 (some data have been suppressed by USDA to protect grower confidentiality). Most of these sales, at least at a commercial scale, are potatoes, although other root crops such as carrots and onions are also important. More than \$10 million of the region's sales are from the two categories of forage crops (for feeding animals) or ornamentals, neither of which are food for human consumption. Milk, cattle and calves, corn, berries, and fruit trees and nuts round out the region's top agricultural receipts, each bringing in at least \$1 million for the region's farmers.

Androscoggin County is the largest poultry- and-egg-producing county in the state of Maine; it ranks second in corn production, second in hog production, and third in fruit production. Oxford County ranks first in the state for sales of field corn, and third for the sale of vegetables. Sagadahoc County is among the top third of Maine counties for sales of both ornamentals and vegetables.

These sizeable agricultural receipts are earned on a landscape dominated by small farms: 70% of all farms (873 of 1,243 farms) in the region sell less than \$10,000 of products each year, and these farms earn only 3% of the region's sales. Only 79 farms (6%) sell more than \$100,000 of farm products, accounting for 92% of the region's sales. Two-thirds of farms in the region reported a net loss to the Census of Agriculture in 2012. Given the region's prevalence of small farms, which are especially prone to such losses, these farms could benefit from efforts to strengthen and expand direct markets.

Lewiston-Auburn consumers purchase about \$580 million of food each year for household use, but only \$4.3 million of that spending power goes to direct purchases from area farmers. Nevertheless, direct market channels in the region are well above national averages: these sales account for 5% of total farm product sales, compared to a U.S. average of 0.3%. And compared to the region's 31% of farmers who engage in direct sales, the national average is only 6%.

Our interviews and observations in the region added detail and depth to this data. Conversations with area growers and others indicated that two large-scale vegetable farmers in the region were engaged in efforts to strengthen the local food economy. We had the opportunity to visit one of these farms, which had just installed a state-of-the-art potato storage shed allowing most of the year's crop to be housed in a climate-controlled warehouse. The other large vegetable grower in the region is also reported to have considerable storage infrastructure. Each farm sells farm-identified potatoes to groceries and restaurants in the region, and sells wholesale quantities to Portland, Boston, and other regional markets. These well-established farms also have the capacity to sell to schools and other institutions that wish to source local foods. Price points are usually favorable not

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<sup>3</sup> Population projections retrieved from the State of Maine Office of Policy and Management, <http://www.maine.gov/economist/projections/index.shtml>

only because these farms are likely to already own their land outright, but also because they operate at significant scale and have established solid channels for selling their products; for them it is merely a matter of shifting some of the supply to a local buyer who places an order.

But even these very experienced growers encounter pricing and marketing challenges. They describe efforts by buyers to lower prices over time as new growers enter the market and try to undercut them. They report that some buyers are locked into contracts that do not allow them to shift to local products when in season. A group of food leaders is approaching the University of Maine system in an effort to persuade the institution to negotiate a food service contract that gives them greater flexibility to source locally, ostensibly to help a number of local farms do direct wholesale business with these institutions.

We interviewed several other growers who would welcome additional wholesale clients. Some have strong aspirations to reach these clients; others are wary because they have yet to find buyers who will pay what a starting farmer needs to cover their costs. All of these emerging growers rely primarily upon direct marketing.

While several farmers who aspire to larger markets welcomed the idea of a food hub, few farmers expressed interest in actually becoming involved in building such a business. The prevailing attitude seemed to be, “If it were built, I would be happy to use it.” Yet none of the growers we contacted, including those identified by Grow L+A, expressed interest in helping to organize or operate such a hub. Many said farm products need to be aggregated, but few have ventured far beyond direct sales because that is where the farmers are finding the most rewarding price. Most of the farms we spoke with that have established solid direct markets are content with these markets, and do not have either the interest, the time, or the land base to expand for wholesale or institutional sales. Some expressed interest in ramping up production only if they were assured of sales levels and consistency that would make it worth their efforts and investment to expand.

Smaller farms who sell directly to household customers stated that one of the reasons they engage in such sales, aside from obtaining higher prices, is the social interaction that comes from marketing their products, and the sense of connection they gain with their customer base. Building this sense of mutual self-interest—along with important factors in the commercial exchange such as trust and loyalty—is critical; local loyalties are precisely what encourage customers to pay the prices the farmers require. Yet higher prices also limit the market to those who have considerable spending power. The farmers’ market in Lewiston is a valuable outlet for some of the region’s producers, but many others gravitate to markets in the coastal communities where customers can afford to pay higher prices. Several growers expressed concern that the market for food in Lewiston itself was quite limited because of the community’s relatively low spending power.

Here, as in most other markets across New England and the country, there is a significant gap between the demand for locally grown foods and market realities for farmers. Many farmers say they are lacking access to essential resources. Although many of these are available in the region to a limited extent, it shall be noted that farmers have been disenfranchised from consumer markets for a very long time, and the prevailing local food trend, while “loud” and unequivocally present, has not shown to be consistently profitable enough for all farmers to overcome risks associated with quick expansion of their operations.





*Seynab Ali, Marian Ibrahim, and Jabril Abdi (l to r) are growers at Fresh Start Farms in Lisbon.*  
Photos © Ken Meter, 2014.

Limited resources exist in the region to help farmers grow their markets, and include:

- Available land at an affordable price
- On-farm infrastructure (washing, packing, storage, etc.)
- Aggregation infrastructure
- Storage and warehouse space
- Distribution networks that are focused on local food trade rather than exporting and importing
- Commercial kitchen space for food processing, freezing, dehydration, etc.
- Internet trading platforms to facilitate local food sales
- Beginning farmers with a commitment to raise food for wholesale markets
- Training for farmers who desire to ramp up production to wholesale levels
- Credit on terms favorable to farmers, from lenders who understand farming
- Farmers lack market power when they sell to institutional markets, Aggregating product, business clusters, cooperative ownership, supply management, and other strategies may all help build market presence.

Among those who are taking a strong interest in growing for local markets are Somali farmers who have engaged in training opportunities at Fresh Start Farms in Lisbon. These growers typically work one to 2.5 acres. Several are content with farming at this scale, while others would like to farm at a larger scale but do not have access to land or to other necessary infrastructure. A few would like their own plot of land with their own packing shed, while others are content to stay at or near Fresh Start Farms so they can take advantage of the equipment there. Two growers expressed strong interest in gaining access to a commercial kitchen. Interestingly, farmers primarily sell to Lewiston residents who are not part of the Somali community. Our interviews with Somali farmers suggest that because their fellow Somalis have limited income, Somali shoppers tend to gravitate to lower price-point supermarkets like Wal-Mart to purchase food.

Somali Bantu farmers in Falmouth (31 miles away, in Cumberland County), on the other hand, grow food primarily for their own community. But although these farmers have connections to



communities in Lewiston–Auburn, divisions between the Somali Bantu and other Somalis are likely to preclude collaboration between them.

Several regional distributors buy food when it is available from the region’s farmers and deliver within the region. Crown O’ Maine (located in North Vassalboro, Kennebec County) delivers to the region each week. Farm Fresh Connection (located in Freeport, Cumberland County) delivers to the University of Maine, Bates, and Bowdoin. Native Maine Produce (based in Westbrook, Cumberland County) also makes routine deliveries in the region. Farmers selling to these local wholesalers are very supportive of these initiatives and have generally enjoyed trading with these firms.

Farmers in Oxford County have begun forming a collaborative micro-distribution service for their products: they aggregate product among themselves and transfer these goods to Crown O’ Maine when the distributor comes to the area. They also fill the local truck for a return shipment bringing products from Crown O’ Maine to Oxford County locations.

### **ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL BUYERS**

Buyers we spoke with are clearly interested in expanding their local purchasing and offerings, and are driven to do so by their consumers. Key barriers to expanding local purchasing include inability or unwillingness to “cherry-pick,” that is, to source fresh product from multiple small producers in order to assemble a complete order; unavailability of processed product (e.g., broken-down poultry, chopped root vegetables, sauces); and price, especially for meat and fish. Food buyers source local product directly from farmers as well as from distributors, but identifying consistent supply of local product from a distributor can be a challenge.

Institutions we spoke to have great interest in increasing their purchasing of local foods, and the momentum for this is frequently driven from the top administrators or managers. Better aggregation of product from small-scale producers would improve their access to these foods, as would specific processing, such as chopped vegetables, broken-down poultry, or canned tomatoes. Unsurprisingly, price is also a key concern for institutional purchasers, who buy large quantities at wholesale prices; however, we learned of creative approaches to offsetting the “local premium,” such as a retail produce market at St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center. The institutions we spoke with currently source both directly from farmers and through distributors such as PFG–Northcenter and Native Maine.

There are a small number of high-end restaurants in Lewiston–Auburn that are committed to local sourcing. We believe this number will grow; indeed, one restaurant we spoke with was on the cusp of opening and declared local sourcing to be one of the primary food values they will be incorporating and promoting. Restaurateurs spoke of the increasing desire for local food in the community and among their customers. Restaurants’ interests are distinct from those of institutions in key ways: they have little interest in processed product, since chefs prepare all menu items from scratch. Price can be somewhat less of a concern, though it is by no means irrelevant. Restaurants sourcing locally are particularly interested in season extension of local foods (there would be high demand for local greens available in winter, for example).

We spoke with one distributor, Native Maine about their local sourcing and interest in a potential food hub<sup>4</sup>. Native Maine would be unlikely to make significant purchases from a Lewiston–Auburn food hub, as they have their own infrastructure, farther downstate, and are already purchasing directly from area farmers. However, they are explicitly committed to assisting farmers in scaling up production, so they could be a valuable partner in strengthening supply in the region (see Recommendations section). Native Maine distributes a small amount of value-added products (such as pickles), and they indicated they might have interest in purchasing such value-added products from a food hub.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The Lewiston Community Food Assessment (CFA), conducted by the Good Food Council of Lewiston–Auburn, is an in-depth exploration of the food landscape from the perspective of its community members, revealing both challenges and assets in the community. The report catalogued the extensive and varied efforts to support food security, while noting obstacles such as a high proportion of community members without a vehicle; lack of affordable, good, healthy food; lack of education and knowledge around healthy eating habits; and wide price differentials in healthy food depending on geographic location. In summary, the assessment found a compelling need in the community for greater access to affordable, healthy food for all of its members.

The CFA forms a substantial baseline for understanding community needs and the intersection of fresh and local foods toward meeting those needs. Local foods can be a lever for showcasing the common interests and needs among all residents of Lewiston–Auburn, present and future, and the building of this direct, relationship-based supply chain is seen as one way to increase the acceptance and behavior change among consumers for better nutrition.

Lewiston–Auburn residents feel that the community is on the cusp of growth and renewal. Despite having faced quite significant economic challenges over recent decades, and the past several years particularly, multiple interviewees spoke of the new energy for urbanism and community, noting that young professionals are now moving back to the area. There is also a sense that the local food movement has had—and is having—a role to play in re-invigorating the community. Interviewees spoke of the significant purchasing power in the community (with the second largest population in Maine, and major institutional players), and feel that Lewiston–Auburn has the potential—and need—for meaningful integration and expansion around local foods at all socio-economic levels. The community has significant assets in this realm (e.g. St. Mary’s Nutrition Center, culinary programs at Lewiston Regional Technical Center and Central Maine Community College, strong programs executed by the Good Shepherd Food Bank, and collaborative aggregation/distribution by Oxford County farmers, to list just a few); a food hub could play a major role in providing a focal point and nexus for these efforts. Food hub activities can thus impact a range of Lewiston–Auburn consumers, including lower-income residents, young professionals with an interest in local foods, and everyone in between.

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<sup>4</sup> NB: Attempts to speak with PFG–Northcenter and Crown O’ Maine were unsuccessful

## KEY FINDINGS

We have pursued the objectives of this project with a focus on identifying the current food landscape of the Lewiston–Auburn region, specifically, the needs of its farmers, commercial buyers, and community at large, and the assets in the region that already support food activity and might be leveraged for greater effectiveness. The needs and assets we have identified are the basis for our recommendations, and are intended to inform potential next steps that Grow L+A and the Food Hub Task Force may take toward supporting food network and food hub activities in the region. These findings are summarized below.

### Needs of the region's producers

Through conversations with 22 farmers in all three counties in the region, as well as representatives of farm-oriented programs such as Maine Farmland Trust and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, we identified the following key needs expressed by the region's farm sector:

- Operating support for emerging networks that are already in place aiming to expand aggregation and distribution of local food to commercial buyers
- Resources and well-coordinated strategy for farmland protection across the state that focuses on strengthening the foodshed<sup>5</sup>: land access, growing food production, right-sizing distribution efforts
- Strengthening and building local food production and distribution infrastructure, including access to credit; access to on-farm (or near-to-the-farm) washing, packing, storage, and distribution infrastructure; technical assistance; aggregation; and connection to markets
- Stronger coordination among emerging food enterprises, focused on forming stronger commercial networks
- Directory of commercial kitchen space opportunities appropriate to small and emerging food businesses
- Public policy commitment to grow the local foods sector by investing in emerging food initiatives, e.g., school spending to purchase high quality foods from local farms
- Locally produced/harnessed energy to fuel local food production and distribution

### Needs of commercial buyers

We spoke with five commercial buyers including two institutional purchasers, two restaurants, and one distributor. The following needs were identified:

- Better aggregation of local product
- Specific processed products (e.g. broken-down poultry, chopped root vegetables, sauces)
- More competitive prices for local product, especially meat, poultry, and fish
- Extended availability of local produce (into late fall and winter, and starting earlier in spring)

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<sup>5</sup> Inspired by the concept of a watershed, a foodshed can be defined as the geographical area from which a population draws its food supply.

## Needs of the community

Through our own observations in the region, conversations with our interviewees about their reflections on the community at large, and review of the Lewiston CFA, we identified the following key needs for community members:

- Improved physical access to fresh, healthy foods
- Better knowledge about nutrition, cooking, and food shopping
- Support for community engagement around healthy, local foods
- Outreach and activation of public benefits tied to fresh and local foods
- Increased availability of local foods (In a statewide survey, lack of access was the most frequent reason given for not purchasing more local food<sup>6</sup>)

## The region's assets

The Lewiston–Auburn region already has a number of active, engaged, and successful partnerships, stakeholders, and organizations that are doing valuable work around food production and food security; much of this work relates directly to food hub functions. In order to best capture the breadth and detail of this work, we have categorized activities as follows:

- *Food production*
- *Farmer education (including training and technical assistance)*
- *Land access*
- *Certification*
- *Aggregation*
- *Distribution*
- *Infrastructure (including farm and kitchen infrastructure)*
- *Financial support (including loans, credit, capital, and grants)*
- *Consumer education*
- *Access to benefits (such as SNAP)*
- *Food security*
- *Communications and networking*
- *Policy-making*
- *Advocacy*

The following is a summary inventory of the key food network assets in the region. Although this inventory is not intended to be exhaustive or complete, it illustrates the vital activity already present in the local food economy. As Grow L+A and the Food Hub Task Force continue their work around local foods, we encourage them to deepen their understanding of these functions, and if appropriate, find ways to support them.

- **Over 1,200 farms**, whose top product is vegetables and nearly 1/3 of which engage in direct sales: *Food production*
- **A strong core of immigrant farmers dedicated to growing for local markets:** *Food production*

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<sup>6</sup> Maine Food Strategy. *Consumer Survey Report*. May 2014.

- **Existing underutilized on-farm storage, washing, and packing facilities:** *Infrastructure*
- **Informal aggregation and distribution networks** (e.g. Oxford County farmers): *Aggregation, Distribution*
- **Formal distributors** (Native Maine Produce, Crown o' Maine, Farm Fresh Connection) that purchase from area farmers and distribute to area buyers: *Distribution*
- **St. Mary's Nutrition Center**, a leader in the region's food movement. In addition to its programming around urban gardens, the food pantry, Lewiston Farmers' Market, and cooking and nutrition education, it has also played a vital role in organizing and advocacy: *Food Production, Infrastructure, Consumer education, Access to benefits, Food Security, Communications and networking, Advocacy*
- **Vacant commercial space**, a potential resource for storage or warehouse functions: *Infrastructure*
- **Nearby vacant farmland**, though not always available or affordable: *Land access*
- **Cultivating Community's New American Sustainable Agriculture Project**, which offers considerable expertise in training new farmers, and offers land through its Fresh Start Farms program: *Farmer education, Land access*
- **Maine Farmland Trust**, which protects farmland in the state, connects that land to farmers, and also offers lending and other farmer support: *Farmer education, Land access, Financial support, Policy-making, Advocacy*
- **Brunswick Topsham Farmland Trust**, which protects farmland around Brunswick, Topsham, and Bowdoin, and also operates a farmers' market and community garden: *Land access, Food security*
- **Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI)**, which has lending programs for farmers, and substantial expertise and presence in community economic development efforts in the state: *Financial support, Farmer education, Policy-making*
- **Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)**, which offers training and education, loans, business assistance, and organic certification, while also being active in the public policy realm: *Farmer education, Financial support, Certification, Policy-making, Advocacy*
- **Good Shepherd Food Bank**, which seeks to eliminate hunger in Maine by sourcing and distributing food to people in need, and advocating to end hunger. Their Mainers Feeding Mainers program sources food from local farmers; its distribution infrastructure and expertise is also a valuable resource: *Aggregation, Distribution, Infrastructure, Consumer education, Access to benefits, Food security, Advocacy*
- **Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn**, which was formed to support improvements to the community's food system, especially through fostering collaboration and coordination among organizations and stakeholders in Lewiston-Auburn: *Consumer education, Communications and networking, Policy-making, Advocacy*
- **Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments' Agriculture Loan Program**, which offers loans to farmers in Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin counties, with a sustainable

agriculture/local foods focus; business counseling and technical assistance are also available: *Financial support, Farmer education*

- **Bates College**, an exemplary institution actively advancing local food, through their staff CSA, curriculum, and local sourcing efforts: *Consumer education, Communications and networking*

### **Concluding thoughts**

It is clear from our work that the primary barrier to an expanded local food economy in the Lewiston–Auburn region is limited production of regional agriculture products. Two factors dominate this assessment: farmers’ lack of access to land and capital, and a degree of lack of interest or belief that a market is there should they expand their operations. As Grow L+A, the Food Hub Task Force, and other actors in this realm work to support and advance local foods, we encourage them to give special focus and attention to these needs in the region, and existing assets that may be leveraged to meet those needs. In particular, farmland preservation and support for new and existing producers in the region would go a long way toward building momentum for expansion of the local food economy and community.



*The potential redevelopment of Bates Mill No. 5 presents new opportunities for local food activity and programming in downtown Lewiston. Photo courtesy Portland Camera Club.*

## THE BATES MILL NO. 5

### BACKGROUND

Bates Mill No. 5 is undoubtedly one of Lewiston–Auburn’s most significant architectural assets. Designed by architect Albert Kahn and completed in 1914, this “weave shed” was built to hold massive looms under its distinctive sawtooth roofline. At over 350,000 square feet, it is the largest building in the once–bustling mill complex along the Lewiston waterfront.

After decades of decline, ownership of the building was transferred to the city of Lewiston in 1992. Since that time a number of plans have been considered for the building, including a casino, a regional convention center – and demolition. Twenty years after that transfer of ownership, while developer Tom Platz had successfully redeveloped many of the other mill buildings into a mixed–use complex, Grow L+A formed to pursue a community vision for Mill No. 5.

Today, prospects for redevelopment of Mill No. 5 appear promising. The city of Lewiston will need to approve a plan from Grow L+A and Platz Associates in order to transfer ownership. Lewiston City Councilor (and state senator) Nathan Libby has affirmed that the city would like to see Grow L+A bring forward a proposal for mixed–use development in the next 6–12 months. If the development is approved, Mr. Libby said that the city is likely to transfer the property to Platz Associates for a nominal fee. He also noted that the city may offer a tax increment financing district, which allows a property to be taxed on its pre–development value; this would reduce the tax liability for the property’s new owners and help to offset development costs. He also mentioned, with less confidence, the possibility of issuing a bond to further assist the redevelopment. In a February article



in the Lewiston–Auburn Sun Journal, Lewiston City Administrator Ed Barrett was quoted saying that “this is the closest we have ever been to actually seeing something real take place there.”<sup>7</sup>

There are a number of potential tenants in consideration for the mill building:

- Independent grocer, with warehousing/distribution and retail education components (25,000 sq ft)
- Secondary education (20,000 sq ft)
- YMCA/Wellness Center (80,000 sq ft)
- Doctors’ offices (20,000 sq ft)
- Potential 2017 Baxter Brewing expansion (20,000 sq ft)
- Potential call center (35,000–50,000 sq ft)

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR A FOOD HUB PRESENCE**

The appeal of Bates Mill No. 5 as a home for a food hub is undeniable: the structure itself is impressive and architecturally unique, and its historic industrial location, relevant to a re-imagined downtown, is well-situated near the riverfront at the core of the Lewiston–Auburn community. Furthermore, many of the tenants currently being considered for occupancy provide appealing potential synergies around food, health, and wellness.

We undertook this project with the knowledge that Grow L+A has a high level of interest in understanding the potential for operating a physical food hub in the mill. We spent a lot of time considering the potential for this, and in particular, understanding the high cost and therefore risk of establishing a dedicated space in the building. We conclude that pursuing a dedicated food hub in the mill building would be premature at this time; however, there is significant potential for other “virtual” food hub activities to align with how the mill is being developed.

The Independent Retailers Shared Services Cooperative (IRSSC) grocery store, planned as an important food anchor to the development, will create a highly visible and interactive food presence in the building. Its retail education center will include a commercial kitchen available for short-term lease, which could support community kitchen programming. Its warehousing and distribution components, though 5–10 years out according to IRSSC leader Mark Sprackland, will also support the local food economy, and its plans to distribute food at satellite locations across the Lewiston–Auburn area could improve food access for the city’s residents.

There are opportunities for food hub activities to programmatically engage with the building’s other tenants as well. Alignment around health, nutrition, and local foods can enable partnerships with the YMCA/Wellness Center, doctors’ offices, and secondary education, while the presence of Baxter Brewing will demonstrate a successful local food/beverage business.

The expense of outfitting and occupying the mill will be significant for any commercial venture considering locating there. Our conversations with Tom Platz have helped paint a realistic picture of each tenant’s required contribution to the overall feasibility of the property. These figures—presented below in sketch form—will present a significant challenge for a brick-and-mortar food

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<sup>7</sup> Skelton, Kathryn and Scott Taylor. *Is Mill No. 5 alive?* Lewiston–Auburn Sun Journal, February 21, 2015.



hub operation, even if all other factors (availability of supply, assuredness of volume purchasers at accepted price points, etc.) proved feasible. While food hub developments across the U.S. have been prolific in recent years, and many have been successful, some have not found sufficient supply or demand to sustain their activities.

While we are not recommending the establishment of physical food hub in Mill No. 5, the following broad brush stroke financial picture illustrates what potential expenses, overhead and model P&L might be for a 5,000 square foot food hub, based on figures provided to us by Gabrielle Russell at Platz Associates and our own calculations based on existing food hub operations elsewhere.

**Initial occupancy costs for 5,000 square foot food hub**

Expense type	Rate	Expense total
Basic build-out, 5,000 sq ft	@ \$80/sq ft	\$400,000
Kitchen build-out, 2,000 sq ft	@ \$150/sq ft	\$300,000
Contingency	10% of total	\$70,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$770,000</b>

**Annual costs for 5,000 square foot food hub**

Expense type	Rate	Expense total
Rent	@ \$10/sq ft	\$50,000
Utilities	@ \$2.50/sq ft	\$12,500
Taxes (\$30/\$1000)	@ \$80/sq ft valuation	\$12,000
Construction loan	@ 6% for 15 yrs	\$78,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$152,500</b> <b>(\$12,709/month)</b>

**Approximate model P&L for 5,000 square foot food hub**

Revenue/Expense category	Revenue & (Expense)
Sales	\$800,000
Other revenue streams	\$45,000
Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)	(\$812,156)
Regular expenses	(\$368,632)
Other expenses	(\$51,700)
<b>PROFIT &amp; (LOSS)</b>	<b>(\$387,488)</b>

A more detailed version of this model P&L can be found in Appendix C.



*Vegetable fields at Crystal Springs Farm. Photo © Ken Meter, 2014.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### OVERVIEW

The Grow L+A Food Hub Task Force initiated this study to determine the community's readiness for a regional food hub that combines functions of aggregation, packing, processing, storage, distribution, and food retail, to be located in the Bates Mill No. 5. Although we encountered tremendous energy for local foods among those we spoke with, and observed engagement and partnerships across the area's food system, we conclude that establishing a brick-and-mortar food hub in the mill building would be premature at this time. Supply in the region is currently insufficient to fill a food hub with a year-round and diversified supply of local food. Even with sufficient supply and grants and/or subsidies, the projected economics of a physical entity are too risky to recommend at this time. Further, the operating costs at Bates Mill No. 5 as we understand and have projected them are additionally prohibitive for this concept, compared with operating costs for other food hubs.

The preparation for and development of a physical food hub in Lewiston–Auburn may be a years-long process, but there is significant momentum in the region to expand on the recommendations of the Community Food Assessment while supply is growing, if perhaps more slowly. We see numerous opportunities for Grow L+A and the Food Hub Task Force to take an active role in supporting the local food economy. Assuming that community interest in a food hub concept and programs is sustained, this may lay the foundation for establishing a Lewiston–Auburn food hub facility in the future.

We encourage Grow L+A and the Lewiston–Auburn local food network to engage in an ongoing, iterative and reflective process to answer the questions:

*What will the local food economy look like to be ready  
for a food hub, and what can we do to get it there?*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROW L+A AND THE FOOD HUB TASK FORCE

We recommend that Grow L+A and the Food Hub Task Force strike a balance between a bold vision and a phased approach that progressively builds momentum both for the organization as a whole and for its food hub activities. Grow L+A and its food-related efforts will achieve greater community buy-in and support by strategically building successes.

### Overview of recommendations and actions

#### Recommendation: Continue to integrate with the area's local food initiatives and activities.

##### Actions

6. Restructure the Food Hub Task Force so that it has participation of a broad cross-section of community organizations and stakeholders, including and especially those from other local agriculture and food organizations.
7. Offer Grow L+A's specific expertise in the service of the local food economy.
  - Advocate for zoning regulations conducive to agriculture and food-system facilities in Lewiston and Auburn.
  - Explore creation of agricultural zones where land is set aside for food production for the Lewiston-Auburn region, available at lease rates commensurate with the productive capacity of the land, rather than development value.
8. Assist with fundraising for food initiatives.
9. As food hub activities emerge across the region, participate, perhaps by offering to coordinate or offer a host site.
10. Maintain flexibility when considering the extent of the FHTF region.

#### Recommendation: Build momentum and successes through collaboration.

##### Actions

5. Create an inventory and map of the region's food infrastructure assets and needs to guide strategic partnerships.
6. Identify and take on 1-2 pilot projects involving local food distribution/processing or collaboration.
7. Establish a temporary space in downtown Lewiston as a pilot location for local food activities.
8. Create and facilitate a network of community/commercial kitchen facilities.

#### Recommendation: Continue involvement with Bates Mill No. 5; if redevelopment moves forward, work to integrate local food activities into the mill through collaboration with its tenants and other community partners.

##### Actions

4. Focus immediate and near-term activities on successfully advancing the redevelopment of Bates Mill No. 5.
5. Support the visioning of Bates Mill No. 5 redevelopment while exploring possibilities for a FHTF home in the mill.
6. Develop relationships and programming with other tenants as they sign on to Bates Mill No. 5.

## RECOMMENDATION

**Continue to integrate with the area's local food initiatives and activities.**

We recommend that the Food Hub Task Force continue its participation in the community's local food and agriculture network by making and maintaining contact with other organizations and initiatives focused on similar outcomes of building a robust local farm and food economy. We encourage Food Hub Task Force members to participate in events and convenings that allow this network to self-organize and advance the food economy. As a relative newcomer on the landscape, we encourage the FHTF to be a listener, learner, and supportive partner for the breadth of activities in the region.

## ACTION

**1. Restructure the Food Hub Task Force so that it has participation of a broad cross-section of community organizations and stakeholders, including and especially those from other local agriculture and food organizations.**

The Grow L+A Food Hub Task Force has achieved commendable work thus far. The group can build on this success by actively pursuing greater participation from other key organizations, stakeholders, and constituencies, and by creating mechanisms for these participants to play a role in decision-making and agenda-setting. For maximum resilience and support, programmatic food hub activities such as we are recommending are likely to function best when not "owned" by a single entity like Grow L+A, but rather when operating with shared leadership and buy-in across the community. Until that time, it is crucial that the FHTF build relationships and trust by actively engaging, listening to, and seeking the participation of its stakeholders.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Organizations: Bates College, CEI, Cultivating Community / NASAP, Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn, Good Shepherd Food Bank, Maine Farmland Trust, MOFGA, St. Mary's Nutrition Center, other stakeholder organizations.

Constituencies: Farmers, local institutions and restaurant/retail (potential purchasers), community members at large.

## MODELS

Participatory community planning approaches

The Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn as a local example of collaborative, community-driven initiative representing multiple stakeholders.

## TIMEFRAME

Begin immediately

## PLAN

**1. Research approaches to participatory planning and shared leadership.**

***Begin immediately***

There are a number of approaches and frameworks for participatory planning, collaborative governance, and shared leadership. Many of these are already practiced by existing food system

groups in the region, and other technical resources also exist. Research these varied frameworks by reading relevant literature and consulting with other organizations that operate under such governance. One nearby resource serving Maine is Cooperative Maine (<http://cooperativemaine.org/>), affiliated with New England's Cooperative Development Institute (<http://www.cdi.coop/>), and we assume other organizations serving for-profit business clientele or community networks also exist in New England. Discuss these approaches within the FHTF and begin to identify successful and appropriate structures that you would like to incorporate and adopt.

## **2. Undertake outreach to constituencies from whom you seek representation.**

### ***Begin immediately***

The composition of the Food Hub Task Force membership is critical. We encourage outreach efforts to actively engage with the organizations and constituencies listed in "Potential Partners" above, and others you consider appropriate. Arrange meetings with these groups, inform them about the activities and interests of the FHTF, and most importantly, listen to their objectives, needs, and assets and consider how the FHTF can help support their work. Broad and engaged representation will be crucial to the success of the FHTF and its projects.

## **3. With broader participation, discuss, document, and formalize the task force's structure and decision-making system.**

### ***Complete by Fall 2015***

Using your research and the input from your outreach as a guide, formalize a governance structure to the FHTF that, even if convened and led by Grow L+A, allows for meaningful community input, agenda-setting, and decision-making.

**Future steps:** Even if the FHTF continues to be convened by Grow L+A, with broad membership and collaborative decision-making, evaluate the successes and shortcomings of its governance structure on an annual basis, and adjust as necessary. As FHTF activities develop, the group may find that it becomes necessary to hire a part- or full-time coordinator to manage its activities.

## **ACTION**

### **2. Offer Grow L+A's specific expertise in the service of the local food economy.**

- Advocate for zoning regulations conducive to agriculture and food-system facilities in Lewiston and Auburn.
- Explore creation of agricultural zones where land is set aside for food production for the Lewiston-Auburn region, available at lease rates commensurate with the productive capacity of the land, rather than development value.

As Grow L+A and the FHTF participate in the region's food network, their unique expertise in urban and regional planning, real estate, historic preservation, etc., may be of service to others in the local food network.

As a specific example, according to Kirsten Walter, Auburn's zoning is a barrier to expanded agricultural activity at the Whiting Farm, recently acquired by the John F. Murphy Homes. This is a prime opportunity for Grow L+A and the FHTF to offer their knowledge of planning and zoning to advocate for smart zoning policies that allow agricultural activity in Auburn and Lewiston. We

recommend pursuing the following plan in partnership with the Whiting Farm advisory group, which will begin activity in Fall 2015.

#### **POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

John F. Murphy Homes Whiting Farm Advisory Group (to form in September, according to Kirsten Walter)

Maine Farmland Trust, MOFGA

#### **RESOURCES**

Sustainable Cities Institute's "Promoting Urban Agriculture Through Zoning" site provides a number of resources.

[sustainablecitiesinstitute.org/topics/food-systems/urban-agriculture/promoting-urban-agriculture-through-zoning](http://sustainablecitiesinstitute.org/topics/food-systems/urban-agriculture/promoting-urban-agriculture-through-zoning)

#### **TIMEFRAME**

Begin immediately

#### **PLAN**

##### **1. Reach out to John F. Murphy Homes Whiting Farm Advisory Group to understand the issues.**

*Immediately*

Although the advisory group has not yet formed, according to Kirsten Walter, those involved can discuss what specific zoning regulations are presenting challenges to agricultural activity at Whiting Farm.

##### **2. Research smart agriculture zoning.**

*Begin immediately; complete by Fall 2015*

Many communities across the country have updated zoning codes to be more conducive to agricultural activity. Learn more about these models and best practices for codes that support agriculture.

##### **3. Draft and advocate for updated zoning regulations.**

*Fall 2015*

Based on your research and in partnership with the advisory group and other stakeholders, draft ideal language for updated zoning regulations and advocate for their adoption by Auburn and Lewiston.

#### **ADDITIONAL ACTIONS**

##### **3. Assist with fundraising for food initiatives.**

Another asset Grow L+A can offer the local food movement is its success with fundraising. By lending its expertise in this realm, Grow L+A can help secure much-needed resources for a wide range of food activities in the community that can be carried out by multiple partners.

##### **4. As food hub activities emerge across the region, participate, perhaps by offering to coordinate or offer a host site.**

Food hub activities may ultimately have more resilience as separate but networked facilities and programs. In particular, functions like storage, warehousing, IQF freezing, etc., may make more sense in a lower-cost location than the mill or in a downtown location.



## 5. Maintain flexibility when considering the extent of the FHTF region.

For the purposes of this report, we studied Androscoggin, Oxford, and Sagadahoc counties.. Although Lewiston–Auburn–based food activities will likely have their core supply and demand in these three counties, the practical supply region will undoubtedly be larger. Don't overly limit the geographic boundaries of your region.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Build momentum and successes through collaboration.**

Grow L+A and the FHTF will achieve their greatest successes through collaboration with other stakeholders, organizations, and community members. Working with others on tangible, visible projects will strengthen the FHTF's existing relationships and cultivate new ones through shared goals, activities, and programs.

### ACTION

#### 1. Create an inventory and map of the region's food infrastructure assets and needs to guide strategic partnerships.

Documenting the region's existing assets is a key first step in networking and leveraging these assets for strategic partnerships. For example, surplus or underutilized storage infrastructure could be leveraged for increased efficiency and production; knowing its capacity, location, and what needs are nearby would be key in making the most of it. Detailed inventory and mapping of these assets will guide smarter collaboration.

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area farmers, stakeholder organizations, other organizations/institutions with infrastructure

Maine Food Atlas project of Maine Food Strategy

#### TIMEFRAME

Begin immediately, complete by Fall 2015

#### PLAN

##### 1. Inventory the region's infrastructure assets.

Survey farmers, organizations, and institutions about their infrastructure assets that may be of use to the community at large, and their willingness to collaborate for resource-sharing. Target infrastructure could include cold storage and warehousing, washing equipment, food preparation facilities (see also kitchen network recommendation), trucks and transport routes, composting of organic wastes suitable for food production use, human resources, etc. A community asset-mapping exercise can be an effective way of building closer collaboration among stakeholders.

##### 2. Document and map assets.

Develop documents and maps illustrating the details and location of infrastructure assets that may be of use to the community. Share these documents with stakeholders and constituents who can help to identify and drive partnerships.

### **3. Identify potential partnerships and collaborations.**

Work with infrastructure owners, potential users, and community organizations to broker partnerships for greater leverage of these infrastructure assets. One example of such a partnership is Lucky Dog Organic, operated by Richard and Holley Giles in New York's Hudson Valley. Lucky Dog Organic is a farm that has stepped into an aggregation and distribution role for neighboring farmers<sup>8</sup>; their approach has been highly successful. A nascent aggregation and distribution program is currently underway in Oxford County, as well as an effort to train farmers to farm at a larger scale.

#### **ACTION**

### **2. Identify and take on 1-2 pilot projects involving local food distribution/processing or collaboration.**

By identifying and executing “low-hanging fruit” projects in collaboration with others, the FHTF will build momentum and achieve tangible results and partnerships.

#### **POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Oxford County micro-distribution project, local farmers, We Compost It!

#### **TIMEFRAME**

Ongoing; aim to have existing initiatives formally networked, and at least one new project in process by end of 2015

#### **PLAN**

Detailed plans and timelines will depend on projects selected for execution. Engage in dialogue and brainstorming with potential partners to identify opportunities. Potential projects include:

- Working with the Oxford County micro-distribution project (contact: Ken Morse) to bring product into Lewiston-Auburn.
- Working with local orchards and food entrepreneurs to create applesauce with surplus apples.
- Working with local schools and We Compost It! to initiate school food scrap collection.
- Working with the Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn on their Farm-to-Institution initiative.

#### **ACTION**

### **3. Establish a temporary space in downtown Lewiston as a pilot location for local food activities.**

A relatively low-risk effort to try out activities in a temporary or “borrowed” space will energize the Food Hub Task Force and inform future more permanent steps for physical infrastructure. Initial programming could include workshops, classes, a winter farmers market, a “meet the buyers” event to introduce farmers and purchasers, food programs to coincide with downtown art walks, etc.

#### **POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Downtown property owners, FHTF member organizations, farmers, food entrepreneurs, etc.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.luckydogorganic.com/#lhub/c1prx>



## MODELS

“Pop-up” projects such as Grow L+A’s previous exhibits.

Borrowed space: Chashama and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council in NYC (art programming).

## TIMEFRAME

Aim for occupancy to begin Fall 2015

## PLAN

### 1. Identify and secure a space.

*Complete by Fall 2015 if possible*

Leverage your relationships with local property owners to identify a suitable space downtown. Seek a 4-6 month agreement to start, with month-to-month occupancy to follow. Ideally this short-term use will be donated free of charge or for a nominal fee.

### 2. Create a programming plan in partnership with FHTF members and other organizations; seek and secure necessary funding.

*Concurrent with above*

Work with FHTF members to design a diverse roster of programming in the space. This programming might include workshops, classes, a winter farmers market, a “meet the buyers” event to introduce farmers and purchasers, food programs to coincide with downtown art walks, and many other possibilities. As programming develops, explore funding opportunities to enable these projects.

### 3. Execute programming in partnership with FHTF members and other organizations.

*After occupancy begins*

Continue collaboration and partnerships throughout the execution of programming. Ensure the community is made aware of these programs through outreach and marketing. Track and document attendance, successes, and challenges.

### 4. Reflect on the challenges and successes of programming a temporary space, and consider the potential for establishing a permanent space.

*Ongoing, after occupancy has begun*

A short tenure in a donated space will provide valuable insight into the community’s need for a more permanent physical space for local food activities, what its possibilities are, and what resources are needed to execute it.

**Future steps:** If the space continues to be successful, explore possibilities for a permanent space, whether in the Mill or elsewhere downtown.

## ACTION

### 4. Create and facilitate a network of community/commercial kitchen facilities.

St. Mary’s Nutrition Center, the Green Ladle program, and Central Maine Community College all have kitchen facilities; churches and schools in the region also offer potential kitchen resources. As a preliminary step to establish demand for community kitchen use, the Food Hub Task Force can develop partnerships with these facilities, establish competitive short-term rental rates, and match these facilities with emerging food entrepreneurs seeking kitchen infrastructure. Success with this

approach could build a strong case for ultimately establishing a new community kitchen program – or the effort may reveal that existing facilities are sufficient to meet the community’s needs.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Central Maine Community College Culinary Program, Green Ladle program, St. Mary’s Nutrition Center, church and school kitchens

**MODELS**

Kitchen Commons: [kitchencommons.net/](http://kitchencommons.net/)  
Detroit Kitchen Connect: [detroitkitchenconnect.com/](http://detroitkitchenconnect.com/)  
NYC Commercial Kitchen: [nyccommercialkitchen.com/](http://nyccommercialkitchen.com/)  
ACEnet: [acenetworks.org/facilities/athens/](http://acenetworks.org/facilities/athens/)

**TIMEFRAME**

Begin immediately

**PLAN**

**1. Inventory local kitchen facilities.**

***Complete by Summer 2015***

Meet with potential partners to discuss their kitchen facilities and their willingness to participate in such a program. Develop and maintain a detailed inventory of potential facilities, and document any interest in working among a collaboration of nearby kitchens.

**2. Document likely users and their needs.**

***Complete by Summer 2015***

Reach out to farmers, food entrepreneurs, and community organizations that might help identify additional potential users of this program. Assess and keep track of potential users’ needs and what rental rates they are willing to pay.

**3. Research other models.**

***Complete by Summer 2015***

Reach out to other shared kitchen projects to learn about their programs. In particular, find out how issues of liability are addressed, how rental rates are established, and what their biggest challenges and successes have been.

**Future steps:** If these initial steps confirm the potential of this program, seek funding for a pilot project and, if successful, expand the program as appropriate. If the program continues to be successful, it could build a strong foundation for ultimately establishing a new dedicated community kitchen space.

## RECOMMENDATION

Continue involvement with Bates Mill No. 5; if redevelopment moves forward, work to integrate local food activities into the mill through collaboration with its tenants and other community partners.

## ACTIONS

### **1. Focus immediate and near-term activities on successfully advancing the redevelopment of Bates Mill No. 5.**

Saving the mill building was Grow L+A's founding objective, and the organization's identity is closely linked with that goal. Multiple stakeholders, including and especially local government, value Grow L+A's activity in pursuit of that mission. Although Grow L+A has begun to broaden its scope and vision, those broader goals will be more likely achieved if they are built upon a prior success. The city's approval of the Platz Associates redevelopment plan will be a crucial tipping point and a major success for Grow L+A.

### **2. Support the visioning of Bates Mill No. 5 redevelopment while exploring possibilities for a FHTF home in the mill.**

Although we urge caution about investing in food hub infrastructure in the mill, the FHTF might more realistically establish a small office/event space in the building. Participate in development discussions and consider the feasibility of that option. Even if the FHTF does not ultimately establish a dedicated home in the mill, it can work closely with the developer and other stakeholders to shape a redevelopment plan that supports and celebrates the local economy with an emphasis on food and agriculture through programmatic interconnections between and among the tenants.

### **3. Develop relationships and programming with other tenants as they sign on to Bates Mill No. 5.**

As previously discussed, the tenants slated for potential occupancy offer synergy for food- and health-related programming. The Food Hub Task Force, once its membership is broadened, would be well-situated to develop and execute such programming in partnership with these tenants, focusing on local foods and community food access. In particular, the presence of the IRSSC grocery store or some other key food tenant may serve as a crucial linchpin for a food presence in the mill, while the YMCA would offer opportunities for health-related programming. If the IRSSC concept moves forward, several food hub functions are planned to be performed by the store (e.g. aggregation, storage and redistribution of regional foods; education) and the Food Hub Task Force can play a role in guiding those functions. Notably, the IRSSC concept also includes an education center and commercial kitchen that could be leased out for food hub activities and programs. Even if the FHTF does not establish its own dedicated presence in the building, it can form a mutually beneficial partnership with the grocery store to achieve visibility in the market by offering programming through the store's facilities, or even by curating a selection of local products (see as reference Brooklyn Flea curating products for Whole Foods<sup>9</sup>).

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<sup>9</sup> <http://media.wholefoodsmarket.com/northeast/news/whole-foods-market-and-brooklyn-flea-introduce-smorgasburg-snack-bar>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LEWISTON-AUBURN LOCAL FOOD NETWORK

In our research, we identified needs in the local food sector that could be met through additional targeted efforts. Because these efforts will rely on the coordination and expertise of various food system actors, we do not recommend that Grow L+A lead these efforts, but that the local food network at large consider them in support of strengthening the region's food economy, especially its supply side. We group these recommendations into two overarching strategies:

- **Weave** together existing programs and efforts.
- **Activate** the community through targeted new initiatives and programs.

### Weave

The Lewiston-Auburn region has a number of successful initiatives and programs already on the ground, working to meet the needs of farmers, purchasers, and the community. By positioning itself at the nexus of these constituencies, the food hub project can perform a crucial function of networking, bridge-building, and coordinating these efforts for greater effectiveness and success.

- **Pursue a two-tiered strategy of support for expanding production in the region, with separate offerings targeted at new farmers and more established farmers who want to scale up.** While supporting the distinct needs of these two groups, the food network can also encourage interaction and knowledge- and resource-sharing between these two groups. For example, as larger farmers build aggregation capacity, they could bring smaller farmers into their product stream. As the production sector grows, the local food network might consider how many small- and medium-scale farmers would be needed to meet demand for a physical food hub. This two-tiered strategy is described in more detail below:
  - **Bundle support for new farmers.** Training, land access, credit, and access to direct markets are all crucial needs for new farmers. Maine Farmland Trust, CEI, MOFGA, NASAP, and others each offer programs to meet some of these needs. The food hub could partner with these organizations to formally bundle these services as a “one-stop shop” for new farmers.
  - **Expand and facilitate training and resources for farmers who want to scale up.** Increased food supply in the region will rely in part on scaling up of existing producers. Access to land, capital and training are key needs in that transition that could be provided by the programs listed above for new farmers. The food hub could also coordinate connections between producers and potential purchasers/distributors. (E.g. Native Maine is explicitly interested in working with farmers who want to scale up; as is the Maine Scaling Up Working Group)
- **Develop an agenda for local food in the Lewiston-Auburn region, and convey that agenda to civic leaders.** Making the case that a robust local food economy is key to the success of the region will secure key buy-in and support from local government. You may wish to invite Karp Resources and/or Crossroads Resource Center to help make this case. The draft City of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan<sup>10</sup> highlights a number of goals and principles that are

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<sup>10</sup> Legacy Lewiston, City of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan, Client Draft July 2014.

consistent with the objectives of the local food network; the alignment of these objectives can help rationalize support from the city.

- **Explore partnerships to develop place-based programming in the region.** Both Maine Farmland Trust and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association have expressed interest in creating geographically-based initiatives. An innovative partnership between them, targeting the Lewiston-Auburn region, could direct valuable resources and training to local farmers.
- **Develop partnerships with other food initiatives across Maine.** Other food initiatives and food hubs in Maine or even further afield can be vital partners in strengthening the local food economy and potentially creating a Lewiston-Auburn food hub. Information sharing and networking between peer organizations will guide and inform food network activities.

### **Activate**

Strategic, targeted investments and new initiatives will further support and develop the local food economy and meet gaps in existing programs. We have identified the following as potential programs that can meet needs in the local food system.

- **Preserve land for farms and new farmers, especially in Androscoggin County.** Limited production is the primary obstacle to a more robust local food economy in the Lewiston-Auburn region. Preserving existing farmland and bringing new land into production are crucial components of a strategy to develop local food supply in the region.
- **Support season extension and greenhouse production.** Purchasers in the region specifically cite a desire and need for extended seasonal access to local produce. Training and infrastructure that enables farmers to grow earlier in spring and later into fall would help meet local demand.
- **Target the meat and poultry sectors for expanded local production and distribution.** Local sourcing for meat and poultry faces significant obstacles. A major institutional purchaser has great desire for buying local poultry but cannot find it broken down and doesn't have the capacity to break down in-house, while a leading high-end restaurant sources beef from the Midwest because local grass-fed beef is too expensive. Targeted investments and support for producers and purchasers could help to overcome these obstacles and develop a more robust local meat supply.

### **IN CLOSING**

Grow L+A has quickly emerged in its short life as a promising new and innovative organization that is contributing to revitalizing Lewiston-Auburn for a vibrant future. We strongly endorse its mission and objectives, and expect it to grow in its importance as a player within the community. Through its creation of the Food Hub Task Force, it has demonstrated a keen interest in the region's local food economy, its potential growth, and its potential role in creating a more sustainable Lewiston-Auburn. To pursue these goals, we recommend that Grow L+A actively partner with other local-foods initiatives to develop the potential for food hub activities both in and outside of Bates Mill No. 5. Although we conclude that the Lewiston-Auburn region is not yet ready to support a physical food hub, Grow L+A, the Food Hub Task Force, and the community's greater local food network can all take coordinated steps toward creating the conditions that would enable and support a food hub

in the future. When the community can confidently affirm that there is sufficient local food activity (supply, demand, and economic feasibility) to support a food hub, and that the addition of a food hub to the landscape would in turn strengthen the local food network, then the time will be right.





*Lamb grazes at Crystal Springs Farm. Photo © Ken Meter, 2014.*

## APPENDICES

**A. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND ACTIVITIES**

**B. L+A REGION FARM AND FOOD ECONOMY**

**C. DETAILED MODEL P&L FOR PHYSICAL FOOD HUB**

**D. MILL NO. 5 TIMELINE/HISTORY**

**E. LEWISTON-AUBURN COMMUNITY NEEDS SUMMARY**

**APPENDIX A**  
**LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Farmers**

Jabril Abdi	Fresh Start Farms
Mohamed Abukar	Fresh Start Farms
Seynab Ali	Fresh Start Farms
Don Baldridge	Lollipop Farms
David Bell	Bell Farms, Inc.
Karen Bolduc	Food Joy & South Auburn Organic Farm
Ralph Caldwell	Caldwell Farms
Kate Delvecchio	Tender Soles Farm
Trent Emery	Emery Farm
Charlie Erskine	Erskine Farms
Tom Harms	Wolf Pine Farm (Alfred, Maine)
Marian Ibrahim	Fresh Start Farms
Batula Ismael	Fresh Start Farms
Scott Jillson	Jillson's Farm Sugarhouse
Seth Kroeck	Crystal Ridge Farm
Muhidin Libah	Somali Bantu Community Organization
Hussein Muktar	Fresh Start Farms, New American Farmers
Carol Segal	Mount Apatite Farm
Kathy Shaw	Valley View Farm, Four Seasons Market
Keena Tracy	Little Ridge Farm
David Wolfe	Four Loves Farm

**Commercial buyers**

Dennis Bouyea	St. Mary's Regional Medical Center Health System
Christine Schwartz	Bates College
Ileshea Stowe & others	Rails Restaurant
Eric Agren	Fuel Restaurant
Sean Ryan	Native Maine (distributor)

**Additional stakeholders & experts**

Sarah Bostick	Cultivating Community, New American Farmers
Bob Dodd	Good Shepard Food Bank
Steven Estes	STAR Distributed Energy (re: anaerobic digestion)
Peter Flanders	Grow L+A



Jim Hanna	Portland Mayor's Task Force
David Levy	Vinland Restaurant (Portland)
Nathan Libby	Lewiston City Councilor and Maine State Senator
Ken Morse	Community Food Strategies
Nancy Perry	Good Shepard Food Bank
John Piotti	Maine Farmland Trust
Tom Platz	Platz & Associates
Ted Quadday	Maine Organic Food and Gardening Association (MOFGA)
Mark Sprackland	Grow L+A; independent retailers cooperative
Daniel Ungier	Cultivating Community, New American Farmers
Dan Wallace	Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI)
Kirsten Walter	St. Mary's Nutrition Center

## APPENDIX B

### LEWISTON-AUBURN REGION FARM AND FOOD ECONOMY

PREPARED BY KEN METER, CROSSROADS RESOURCE CENTER

WITH CONSIDERABLE RESEARCH ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY NICK WOJCIAK

#### Lewiston-Auburn Region (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2012)

200,281 residents receive \$7.4 billion of income annually. Personal income increased 126% from 1969 to 2012, after dollars were adjusted for inflation. The largest source of personal income is transfer payments (from government programs such as pensions) at \$1.8 billion. Ranking second is capital income (from interest, rent or dividends) at \$1.1 billion. Manufacturing income appears to be \$960 million per year, and appears to be declining, but considerable data is not available covering this sector due to data that is not reported by BEA out of concerns for confidentiality. Health care workers earn \$731 million, while government workers earn \$594 million. Personal income for retail workers is \$354 million, and construction workers earn \$325 million. Note that income from public sources makes up 33% of all personal income in the region.

Income earned from transfer payments includes \$596 million of retirement and disability insurance benefits; \$813 million of medical benefits; \$225 million of income maintenance benefits; \$55 million of unemployment insurance; and \$79 million of veterans' benefits.

Government income includes \$63 million of income earned by federal workers and \$500 million earned by state and local government workers. Military personnel earn \$29 million of personal income.

Although population has increased 27% since 1969, there has been only limited public planning to assure a secure and stable food supply.

#### Issues affecting low-income residents of the L + A Region

Over 61,000 residents (32%) 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 \$129 million each year buying food, including \$70 million of SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) in 2012<sup>11</sup> and additional WIC coupons. The region's 8,173 farms receive an annual combined total of \$1.4 million in subsidies (24-year average, 1989-2012), mostly to raise crops such as corn 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.*

7% percent of the region's households (about 13,600 residents) earn less than \$10,000 per year. *Source: Federal Census of 2008-2012.*

13% of all adults aged 18-64 in Androscoggin County<sup>12</sup> carried no health insurance in 2012. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

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<sup>11</sup> Lewiston-Auburn residents received an average of \$30 million in SNAP benefits over the years 1989-2012, but this average is not representative because food stamp use has risen dramatically to \$70 million in recent years.

<sup>12</sup> CDC publishes health data for both the State of Maine and for the Lewiston-Auburn metropolitan area, which is defined by CDC as Androscoggin County. These data were selected as the closest match to conditions in the three-county region, but may not adequately represent conditions in Oxford or Sagadahoc counties. Data are not reported for each year, so the most recent data available were selected in each case.

## Food-related health conditions

19% of adults in Androscoggin County reported in 2011 they participated in sufficient aerobic and muscle strengthening exercises to meet guidelines. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

9.5% of Androscoggin County residents have been diagnosed with diabetes as of 2010. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.* Medical costs for treating overweightness, diabetes and related conditions in the state of Maine are estimated at \$1.2 billion per year. *Source: American Diabetes Association.*

67% of Androscoggin County residents are overweight (33.5%) or obese (33.7%) in 2012. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

## The region's farms (Agricultural Census, 2012)

*Agriculture Census data for 2012 were released May 2, 2013*

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:

- 1,243 farms. This is 15% of Maine farms.
- The L + A Region had 12% more farms in 2012 than in 2007. Some of this may be due to census takers making better contact with small farms.
- 13 (1%) of these are 1,000 acres or more in size.
- 607 (49%) farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average farm size is 125 acres, less than the state average of 178 acres.
- The region has 155,000 acres of land in farms.
- This amounts to 11% of the state's farmland.
- L + A Region holds 37,000 acres of harvested cropland.
- 1,443 of these acres are irrigated.
- Average value of land and buildings per farm was \$338,000. This was less than the 2012 state average of \$411,000.

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 at least \$82 million of crops and livestock in 2012.
- *Note that data for total agricultural sales, and livestock sales, in Sagadahoc County were not reported by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality. The county's farm sales were valued for this report at \$9.5 million, by taking the sum of the available USDA data for the county (all data that has not been suppressed to protect confidentiality).*

### Farm product sales by county (Census of Agriculture, 2012)

County	\$ millions
Androscoggin	53.8
Oxford	19.2
Sagadahoc	**9.5
<b>Estimated total</b>	<b>**82.5</b>

*\*\*Note that data for total agricultural sales, and livestock sales, in Sagadahoc County were not reported by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*

- \$33 million of crops were sold.
- At least \$49 million of livestock and products were sold. *Note that data for sales of livestock and products in Sagadahoc County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 873 (70%) of the region's farms sold less than \$10,000 of products in 2012.
- Total sales from these small farms were \$2.1 million, 3% of the region's farm product sales.
- 79 (6%) of the region's farms sold more than \$100,000 of products.
- Total sales from these larger farms were \$70 million, 92% of the region's farm product sales.
- 66% of the region's farms (826 of 1,243) reported net losses in 2012. This is more than the Maine average of 61%.
- 158 (13%) of L + A Region's farmers collected a combined total of \$1.1 million of federal subsidies in 2012.

### Top farm products of L + A Region (2012)

Note: \*\* denotes sales data has been suppressed.

Product	\$ millions
Vegetables	**8.6
Forage crops (Hay, etc.)	5.2
Ornamentals	**3.8
Milk	**3.7
Cattle & calves	3.3
Corn	**2.6
Berries	1.5
Fruit trees & nuts	**1.2
Poultry & eggs	**0.4
Hogs & pigs	**0.3
Horses	**0.3

Note that direct sales of farm products to household consumers, at \$4.3 million, creates more sales for L + A Region farmers than the third-most important product, Ornamentals.

### Vegetable sales by county (Census of Agriculture, 2012)

County	\$ millions
Oxford	5.5
Androscoggin	3.2
Sagadahoc	**
<b>Total</b>	<b>**8.6</b>

\*\*Note that data for vegetable sales in Sagadahoc County were not reported by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.

#### Production Expenses:

- Feed purchases were the largest single expense for L + A Region, with \$18 million (23% of production expenses). This suggests that considerable poultry sales were suppressed in the Census of Agriculture.
- Hired farm labor ranked as the second most important expense, with \$13 million (17%).
- L + A Region farmers charged \$7.6 million to depreciation (10%).
- Repairs, supplies, and maintenance costs were \$5.4 million (7%).
- Property tax payments totaled \$4.5 million (6%).
- Farmers purchased \$3.8 million (5%) of gasoline, fuels, and oil.
- \$3.5 million (5%) of farm expenses involved purchasing or leasing livestock.
- Interest expenses were \$2.5 million (3%).
- Fertilizer, lime, and soil conditioners cost L + A Region farmers \$2.4 million (3%).
- Utility costs were \$2.2 million (3%).

#### Cattle & Dairy:

- 422 farms hold an inventory of 9,952 cattle.
- 4,007 cattle were sold by farmers in 2012 for total sales of \$3.3 million.
- 231 farms raise beef cows.
- 73 farms raise milk cows.
- 19 farms produced corn for silage.
- 455 farms produced 54,000 tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 28,000 acres.
- 413 farms sold \$5.2 million of forage.

#### Other Livestock & Animal Products:

- 127 farms hold an inventory of 1,927 hogs and pigs.
- 129 farms sold 2,796 hogs and pigs in 2012.
- 111 farms hold an inventory of 1,652 sheep and lambs.
- 98 farms sold \$179,000 worth of sheep, goats, and lambs in 2012.
- 323 farms hold an inventory of at least 4,343 million laying hens. *Note that data for the inventory of laying hens in Androscoggin County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 75 farms raise broiler chickens.
- 3 farms engage in aquaculture.
- 89 farms raise horses and ponies.

#### Grains, Oil Seeds, & Edible Beans:

- 18 farms produced at least \$976,000 of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans. *Note that data for sales of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans in Oxford and Sagadahoc counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*



- 9 farms produced corn, worth at least \$2.7 million. *Note that data for sales of corn in Sagadahoc County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 2 farms produced soybeans, *but sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

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

- 203 farms worked 2,138 acres to produce vegetables, worth at least \$8.6 million. This is 4% of the state's vegetable sales. *Note that data for sales of vegetables in Sagadahoc County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- This represents a 71% increase in the number of farms over 2007 levels.
- 66 farms raised potatoes.

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

- 54 farms in the region hold 900 acres of orchards.
- 114 farms sold at least \$2.1 million of fruits, nuts, and berries. *Note that data for sales of fruits, nuts, and berries were suppressed in Androscoggin County, so this total is incomplete.*

Nursery & Greenhouse Plants:

- 189 farms sold at least \$3.8 million worth of ornamentals in 2012. *Note that data for sales of ornamentals in Androscoggin and Sagadahoc counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- This represents an increase of 93% in the number of farms over 2007.
- 35 farms sold Christmas trees.

Direct & Organic Sales:

- 387 farms sell \$4.3 million of food products directly to consumers. This means 31% of the farms in the region sell directly to household customers.
- This amounts to 5% of farm product sales, far more than the national average of 0.3%.
- This is a 23% increase of number of farms (214 in 2007) selling direct, and a 18% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales.
- Androscoggin County leads the region in direct sales, with \$2.3 million.
- 61 farms in the region sold organic products.
- 84 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 146 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 152 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 58 farms had on-farm packing facilities.

**Direct farm sales by county (Census of Agriculture, 2012)**

*(Direct to household consumers)*

County	pct of farms	\$ millions
Androscoggin	37%	2.3
Oxford	25%	1.3
Sagadahoc	34%	.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>4.3</b>

Conservation Practices:

- 201 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 4 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 26 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

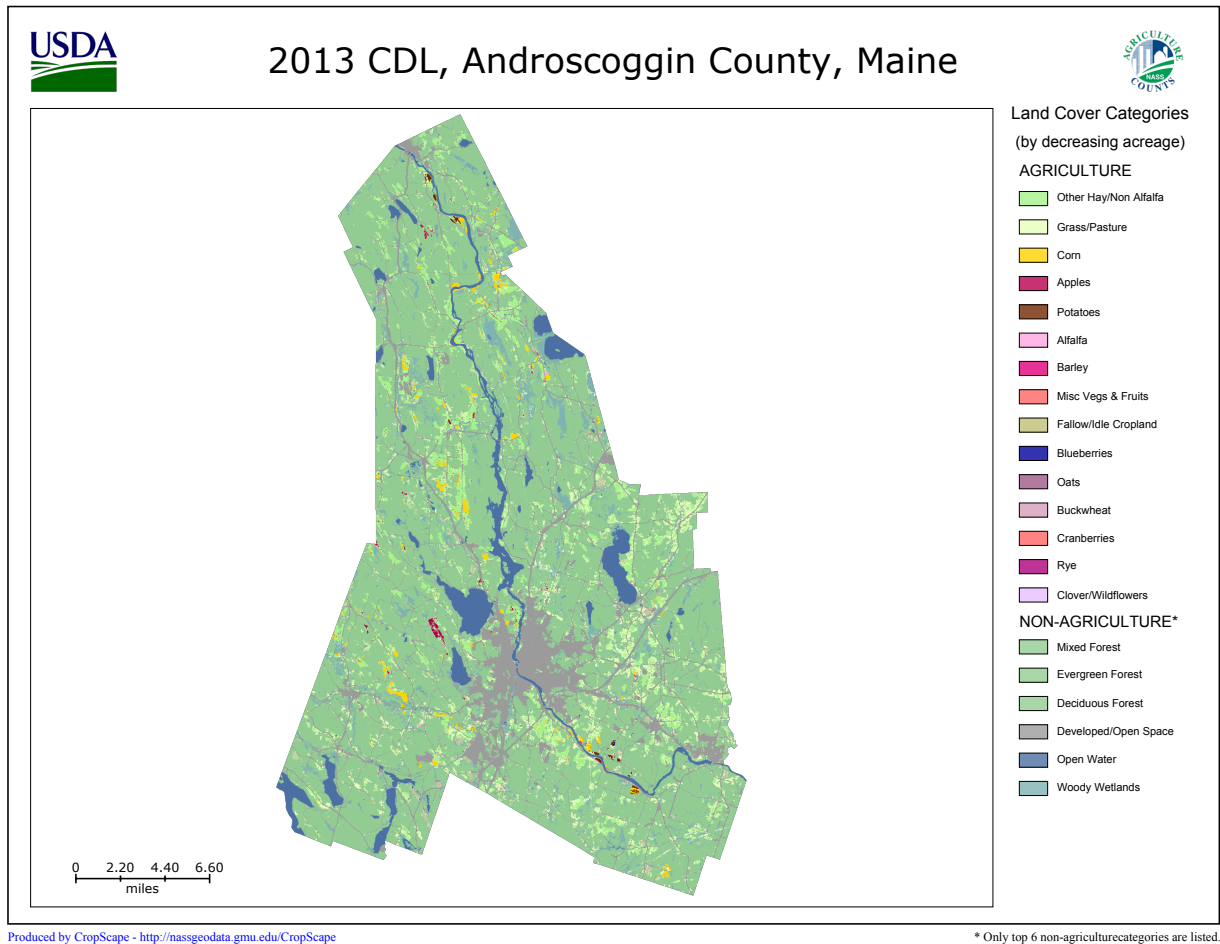
**Operations by Legal Status for Tax Purposes in the L + A Region.**

(Census of Agriculture, 2012)

*Note: \*\* denotes sales data has been suppressed.*

	<b>Farms</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Family or individual	1,084	**97,942
Partnership	81	15,880
Corporation (family held)	67	21,066
Corporation (other than family held)	5	**
Other – cooperative, estate or trust, institutional, etc.	6	**
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>134,888</b>

## County and State Highlights



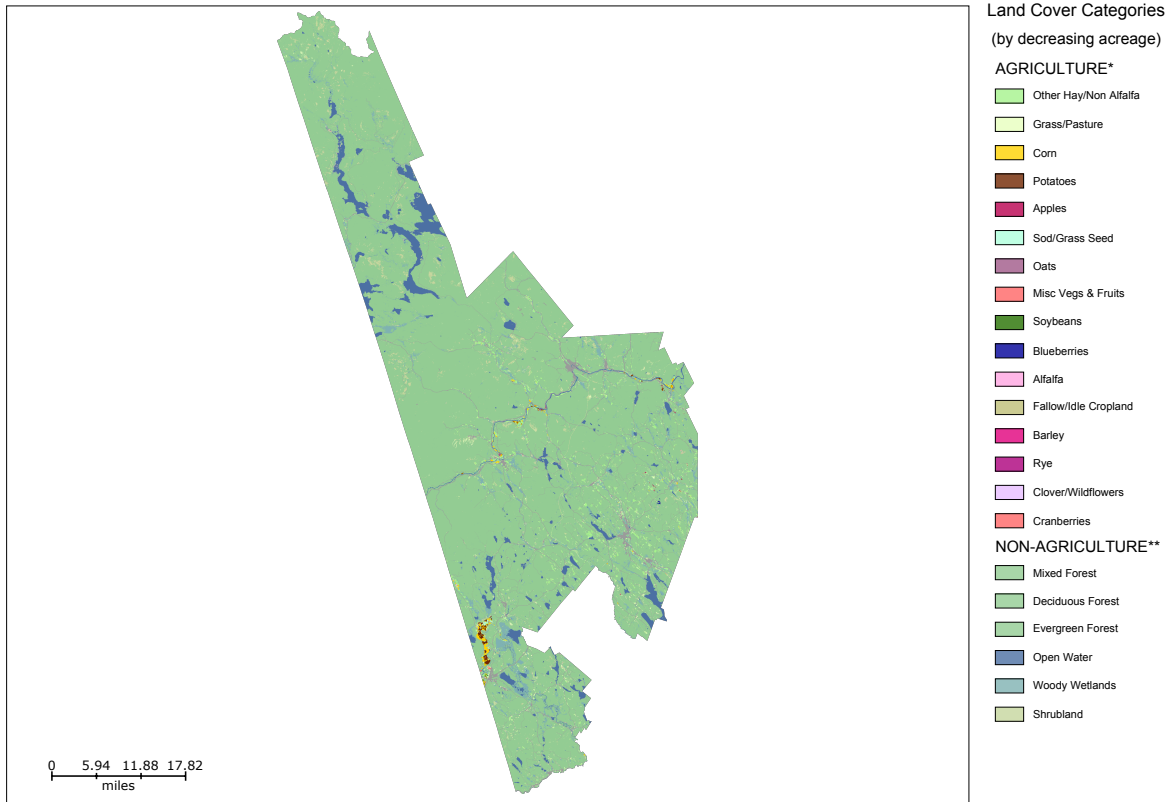
### Androscoggin County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

- 463 farms, 22% more than in 2007.
- Androscoggin County has 59,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$53.8 million of products in 2012.
- \$11.87 (22%) of these sales were crops.
- \$42.96 (78%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1 to 9 acres, with 141 farms (30%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 118 (25%) farms.
- 8 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 239 farms (52%) are less than 50 acres.
- 311 farms (67%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 37 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Androscoggin County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Maine for sales of tobacco, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

- The county ranks first in the state for inventory of laying hens, but *inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Androscoggin County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks second in the state for sales of livestock and poultry, with \$42 million.
- Androscoggin County ranks second in Maine for acreage of sweet corn, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks second in the state for inventory of hogs and pigs, with 1,155.
- Androscoggin County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.*
- The county ranks third in the state for acreage of apples, with 472.
- Androscoggin County ranks fourth in Maine for sales of agricultural products, with \$54 million.
- The county ranks fourth in the state for sales of forage crops (hay, etc.), with \$3.6 million.
- Androscoggin County ranks fifth in the state for sales of vegetables, with \$3.2 million.
- The county ranks fifth in the state for sales of cattle and calves, with \$1.9 million.
- Androscoggin County ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in Maine for sales of milk, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks fifth in the state for acreage of corn for silage, with 1,932.
- 171 farms sold \$2.3 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 43% increase in the number of farms selling direct (120 in 2007), and a 4% increase in direct sales over 2007.
- Direct sales were 4.2% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.



## 2013 CDL, Oxford County, Maine



Produced by CropScape - <http://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape>

\* Only top 16 agriculture categories are listed. \*\* Only top 6 non-agriculture categories are listed.

### Oxford County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

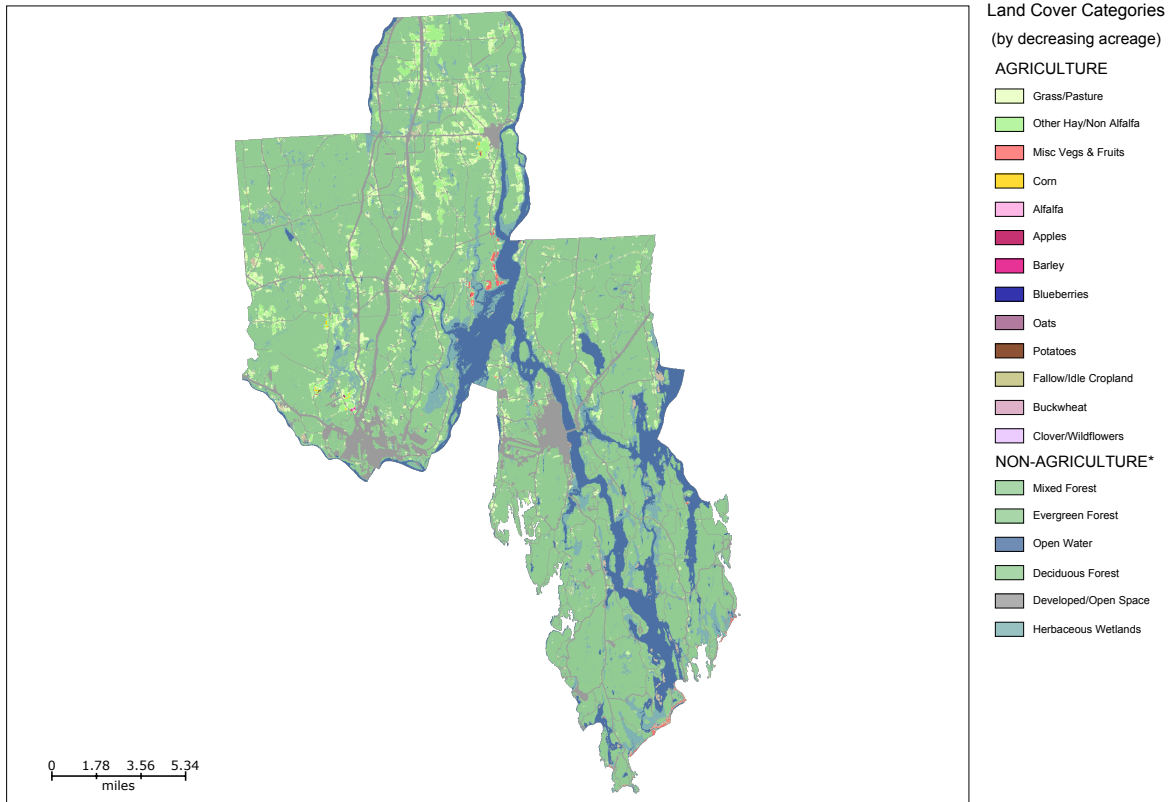
- 551 farms, 1% more than in 2007.
- Oxford County has 75,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$19.22 million of products in 2012.
- \$14.48 (75%) of these sales were crops.
- \$4.74 (25%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 176 farms (32%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 169 (31%) farms.
- 3 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 245 farms (44%) are less than 50 acres.
- 402 farms (73%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 29 farms (5%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Oxford County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Maine for acreage of corn, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

- The county ranks third in the state for sales of grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas, but *sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Oxford County ranks third in the state for sales of vegetables, with \$5.5 million.
- The county ranks third in the state for sales of hogs and pigs, with \$204,000.
- Oxford County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for acreage of vegetables, with 1,263.
- The county ranks third in Maine for acreage of potatoes, but *acreage figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Oxford County ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of ornamentals, with \$3.8 million.
- The county ranks fifth in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$446,000.
- Oxford County ranks fifth in Maine for inventory of broilers, with 1,757.
- The county ranks fifth in the state for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 870.
- 137 farms sold \$1.3 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 6-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct, and a 11% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales.
- Direct sales were 6.8% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.





## 2013 CDL, Sagadahoc County, Maine



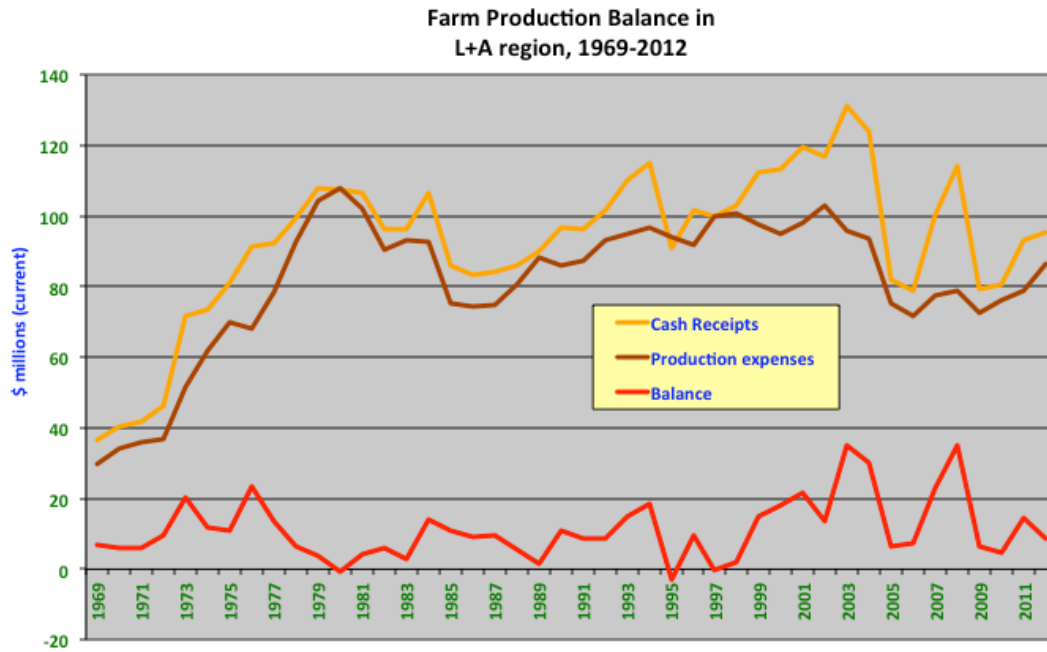
Produced by CropScape - <http://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape>

\* Only top 6 non-agriculture categories are listed.

### Sagadahoc County highlights (Agriculture Census 2012):

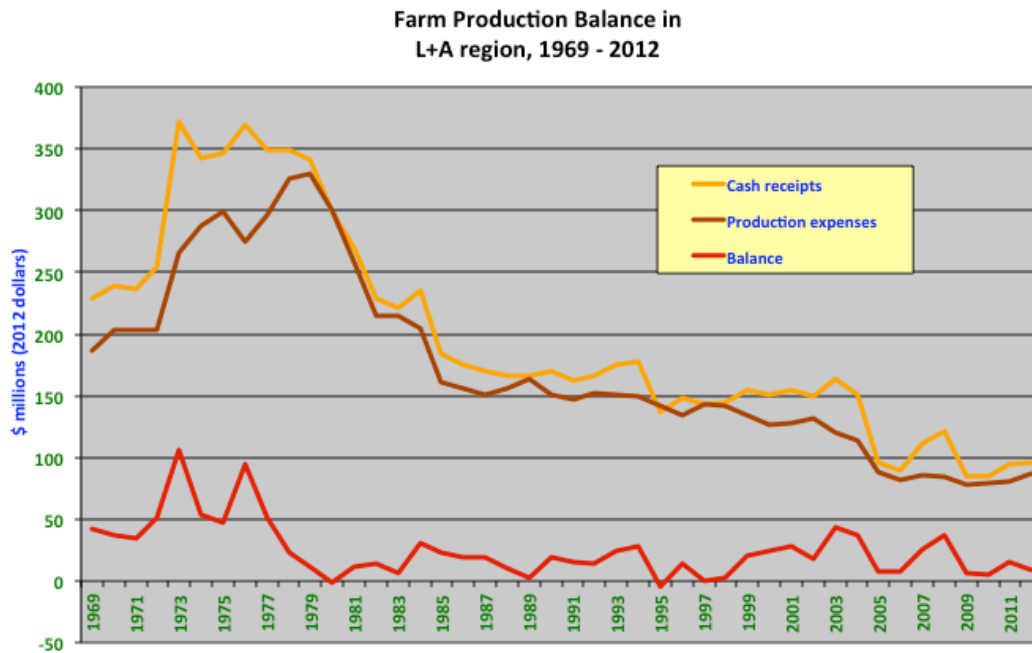
- 229 farms, 25% more than in 2007.
- Sagadahoc County has 20,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold at least \$9.5 million of products in 2012.
- Crop sales totaled \$6.8 million.
- Livestock sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 82 farms (36%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 81 (35%) farms.
- 2 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 123 farms (54%) are less than 50 acres.
- 160 farms (70%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 13 farms (6%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 79 farms sold \$743,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 55% increase in the number of farms selling direct (51 in 2007), and a 337% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales.

Chart 1: Farm Production Balance (Net cash income) for L + A Region farms



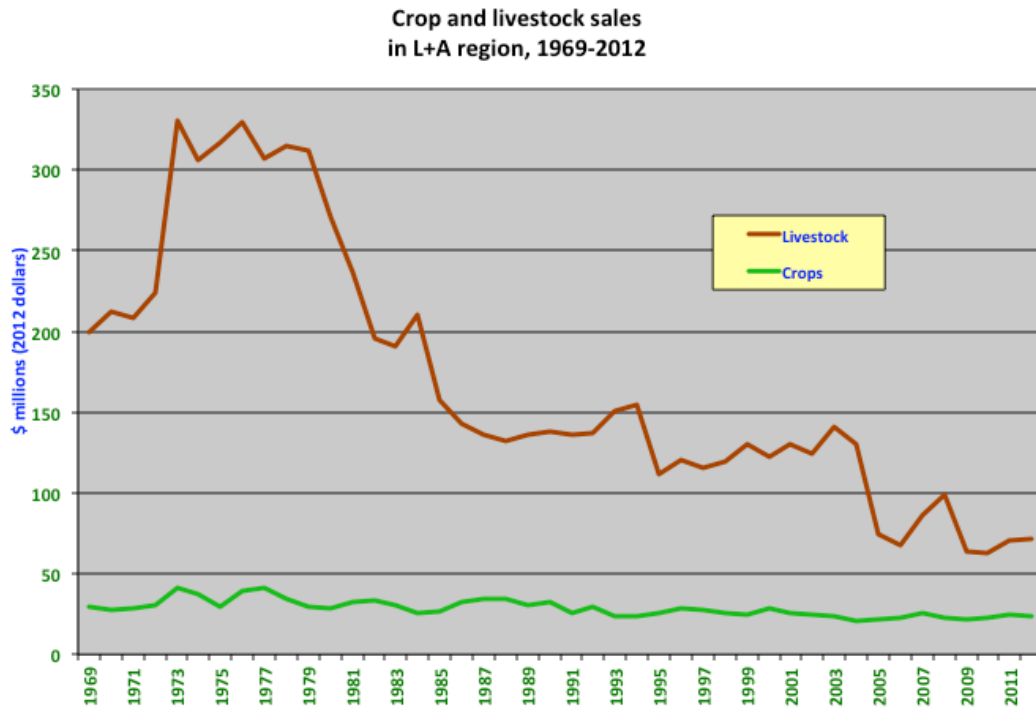
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Chart 2: Farm Production Balance (Net cash income adjusted for inflation) for L + A Region farms



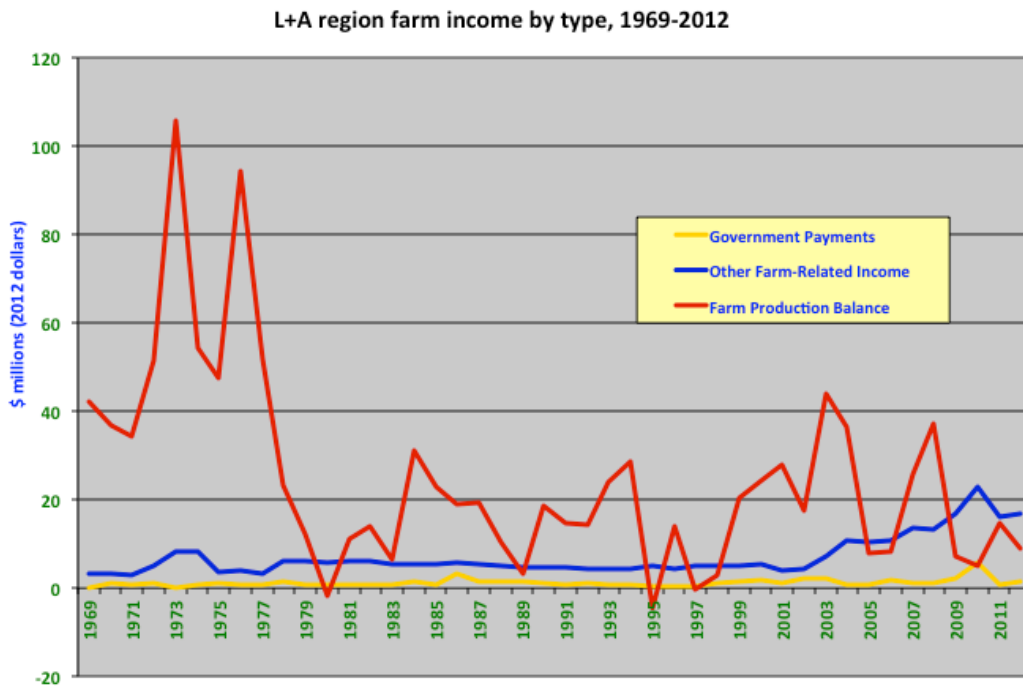
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 3: Cash receipts for crop and livestock sales for L + A Region farms



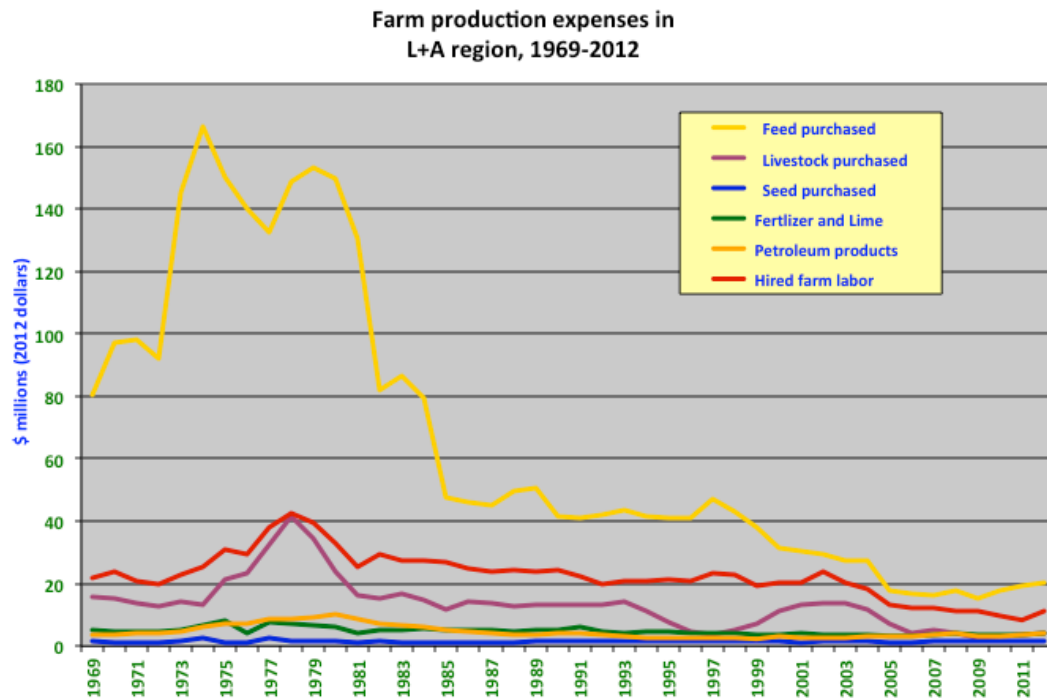
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 4: Net farm income for L + A Region farms by type of income



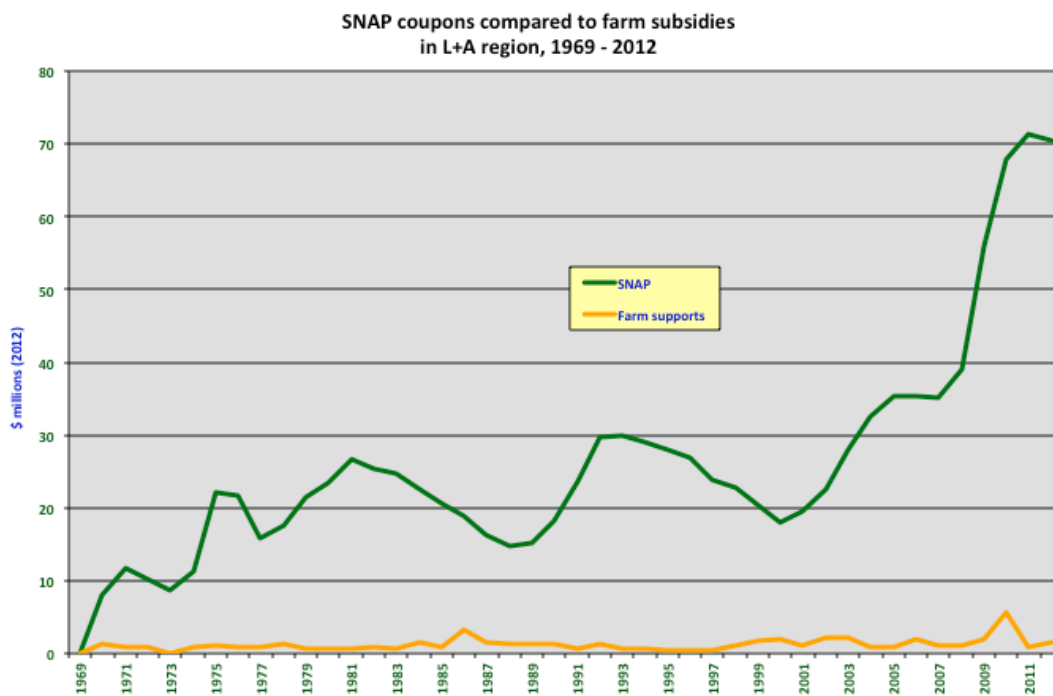
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 5: Farm production expenses for L + A Region farms



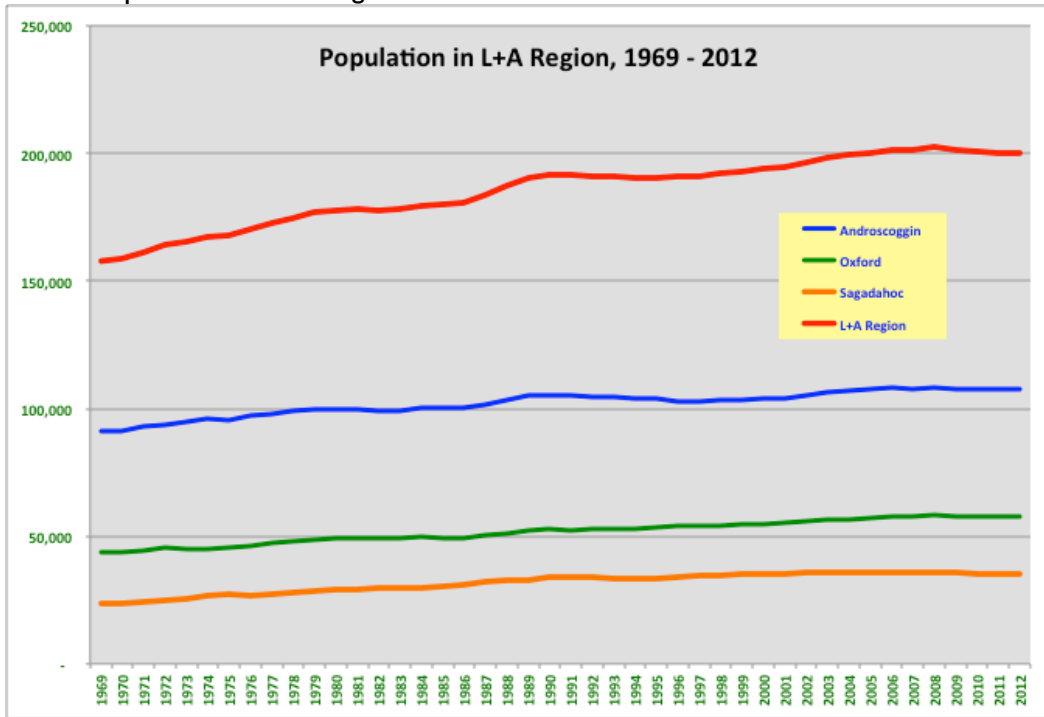
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 6: SNAP coupons and farm subsidies for L + A Region



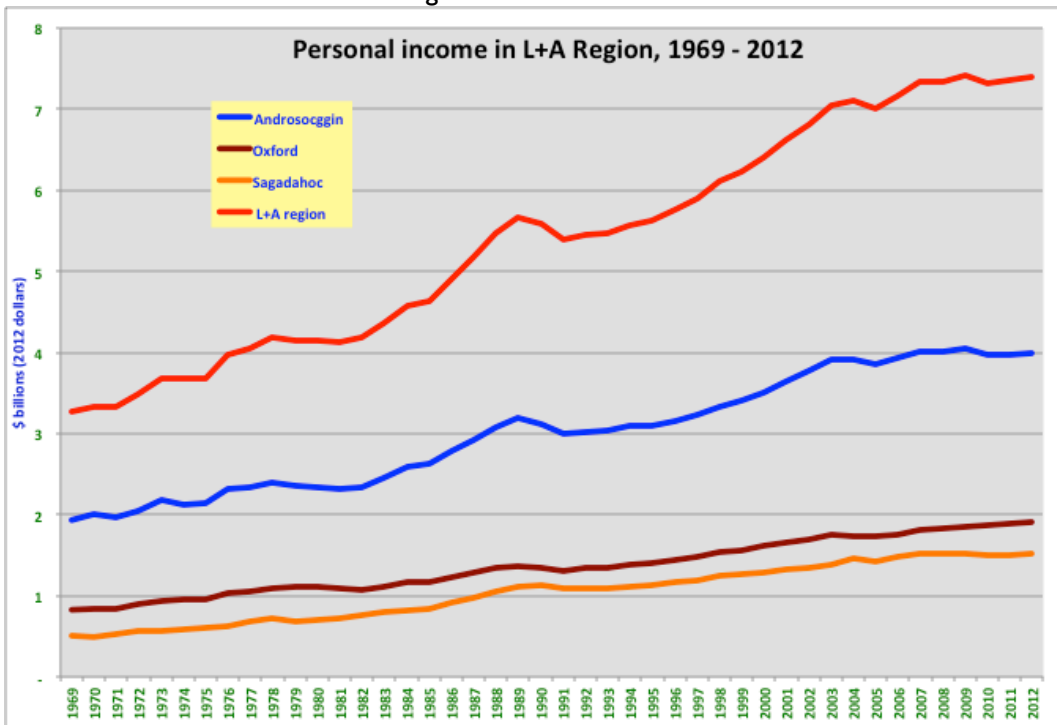
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 7: Population in L + A Region



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Chart 8: Personal income in L + A Region



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

### State of Maine highlights (Agriculture Census 2012<sup>13</sup>):

- 8,173 farms, 5 more than in 2007.
- Maine has 1,500,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$763 million of products in 2012.
- \$474 million (62%) of these sales were crops.
- \$289 (38%) of these sales was livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 2,794 farms (34%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 2,278 (28%) farms.
- 212 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 3,517 farms (43%) are less than 50 acres.
- 5,346 farms (65%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 778 farms (10%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Maine ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the United States for acreage of wild blueberries, with 39,000.
- The state ranks second in the country for acreage of land in berries, with 40,000.
- Maine ranks fifth in the country for acreage of potatoes, with 61,000.
- The state ranks eighth in the United States for aquaculture sales, with \$75 million.
- Vegetable sales by Maine farmers totaled \$207 million.
- 2,311 farms sold \$25 million of food directly to consumers. This means 28% of the state's farms sell directly to household consumers, far higher than the national average of 7%.
- This is a 36% increase in the number of farms selling direct (1,705 in 2007), and a 35% increase in direct sales, over 2007 levels.
- Direct sales were 3.2% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.
- Note also that at \$27 million, direct sales from farmers to consumers are more valuable than the state's 9<sup>th</sup>-ranking product, cattle and calves.
- 554 farms farm organically.
- 406 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 926 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 1,074 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 456 farms had on-farm packing facilities.
- 1,372 farms practice rotational or management-intensive grazing.
- 58 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 164 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

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<sup>13</sup> Figures on pp. 45-46 are drawn from two separate data sources: the 2012 Census of Agriculture and the Economic Research Service. Data from the two sources do not always agree.



### Maine's top farm products in 2012 (Economic Research Service)

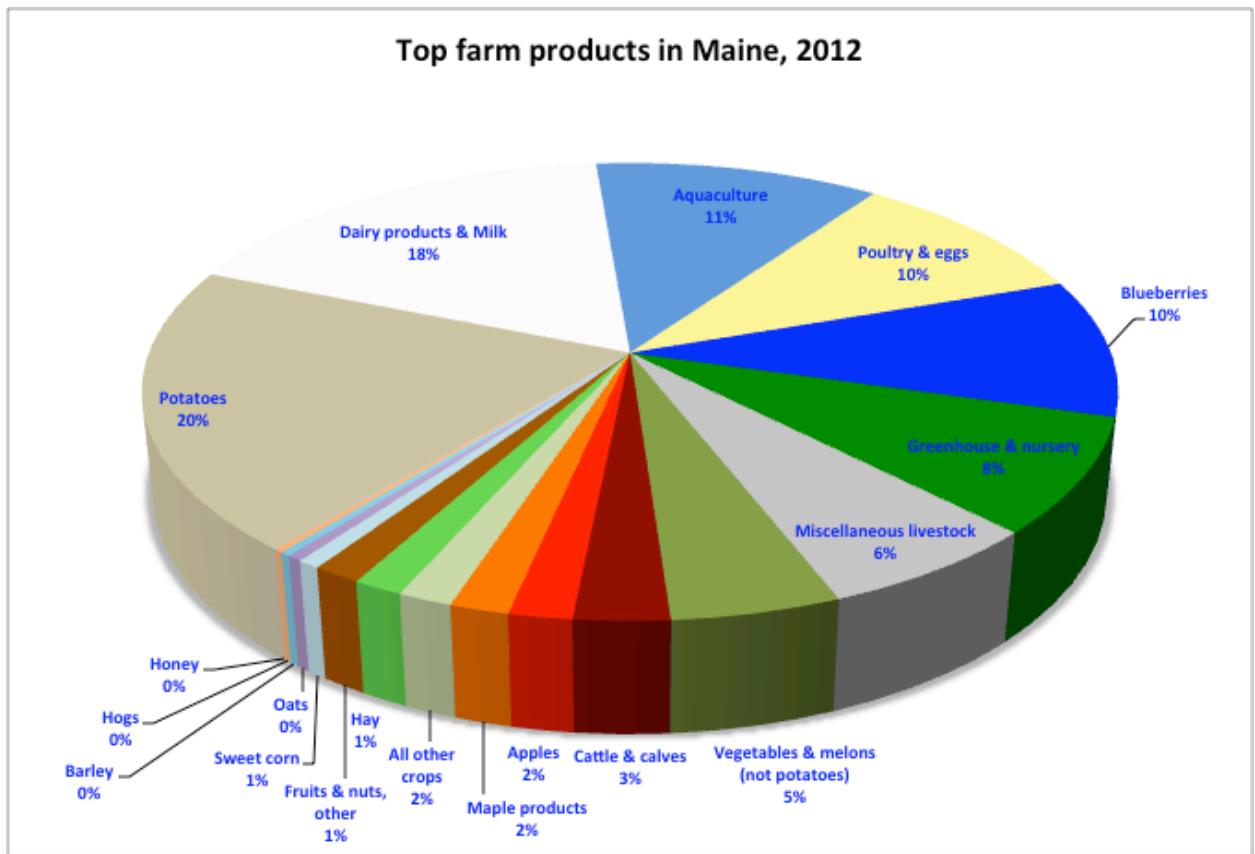
The data in the table and pie chart below are for Maine as a whole. See chart on next page.

	<b>\$ millions</b>
1 Potatoes	141.6
2 Dairy products & milk	124.2
3 Aquaculture	78.7
4 Poultry & eggs	69.9
5 Blueberries	69.1
6 Greenhouse & nursery	57.8
7 Miscellaneous livestock	45.6
8 Vegetables & melons (not potatoes)	34.1
9 Cattle & calves	19.2
10 Apples	12.7
11 Maple products	11.9
12 All other crops	11.0
13 Hay	10.1
14 Fruits & nuts, other	9.8
15 Sweet corn	4.6
16 Oats	3.1
17 Barley	2.2
18 Hogs	1.8
19 Honey	0.3

Note also that at \$27 million, direct sales from farmers to consumers are more valuable than the 9<sup>th</sup>-ranking product, cattle and calves.

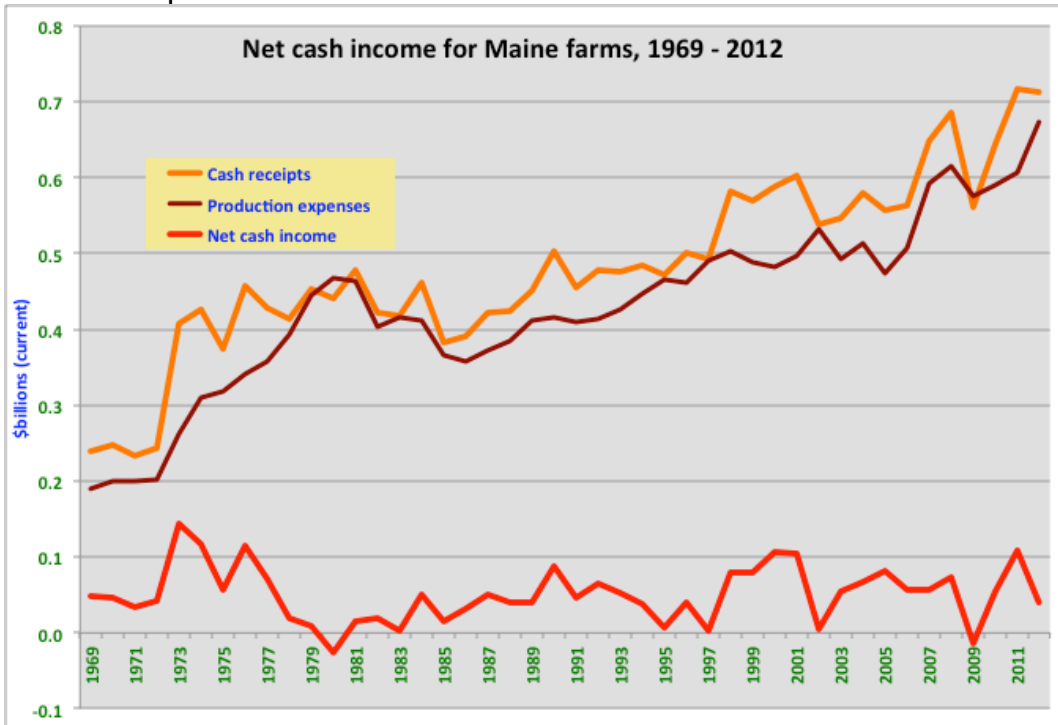
### Maine's top farm products in 2012 (Economic Research Service)

See table on previous page



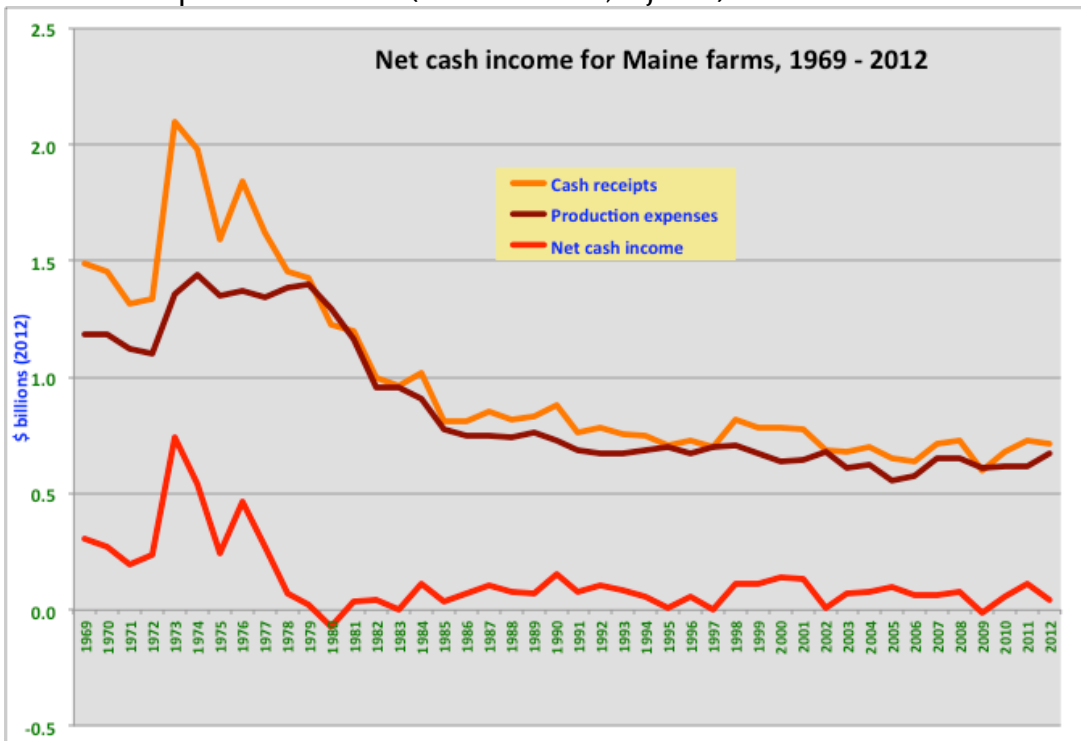
Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Chart 9: Farm production balance (net cash income) for Maine farmers



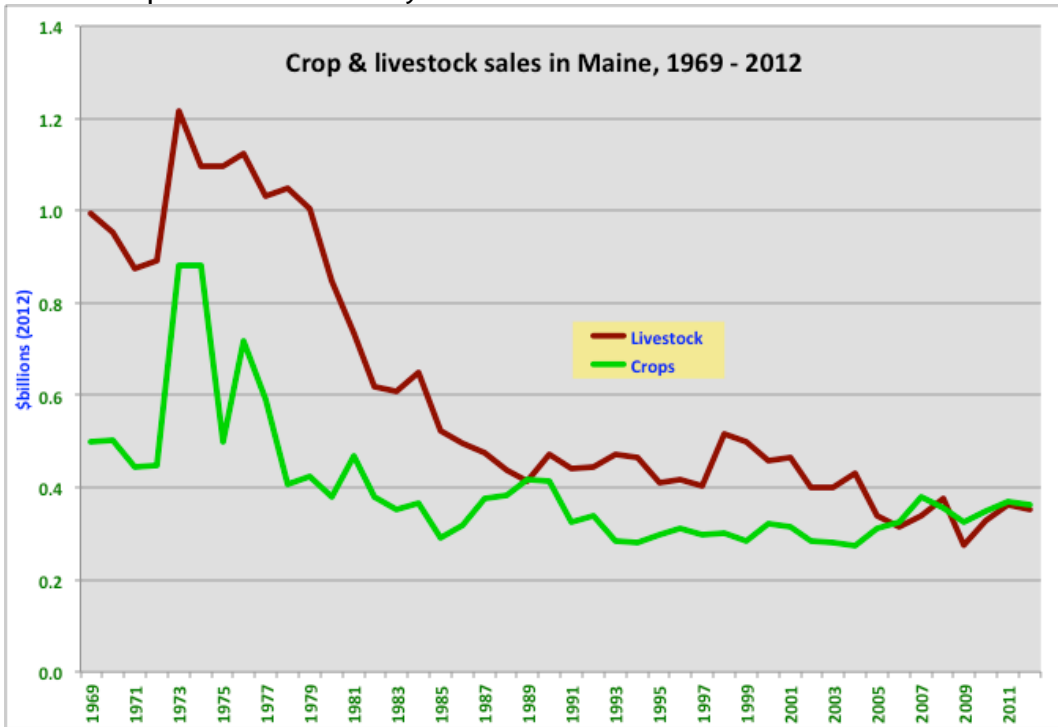
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Chart 10: Farm production balance (net cash income, adjusted) for Maine farmers



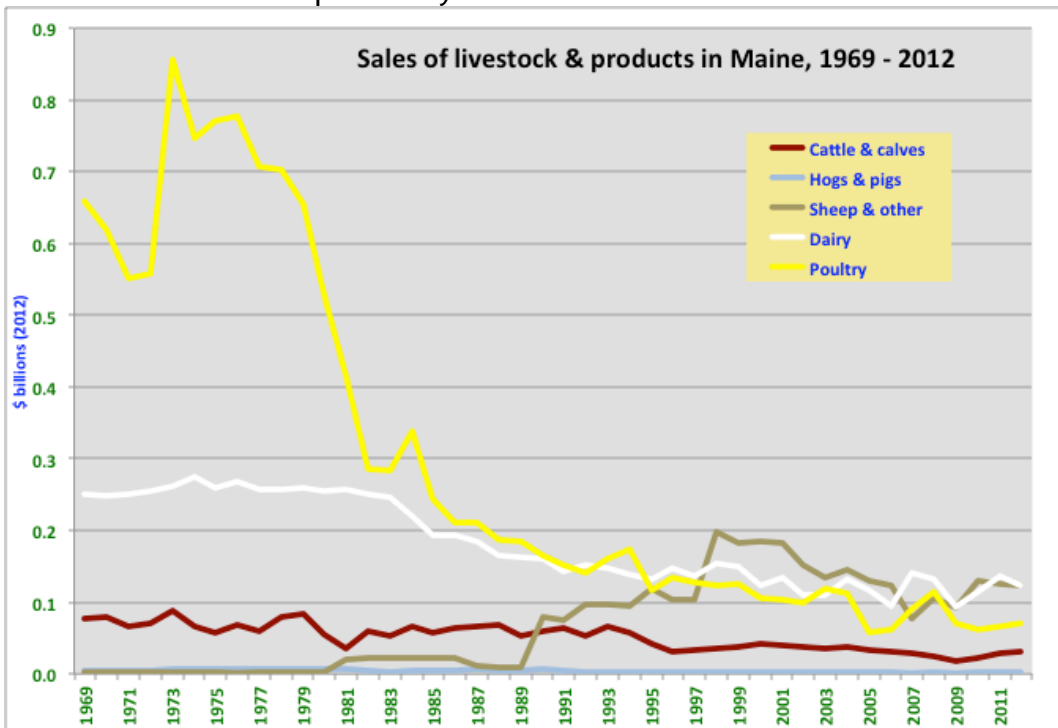
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 11: Crop and livestock sales by Maine farmers



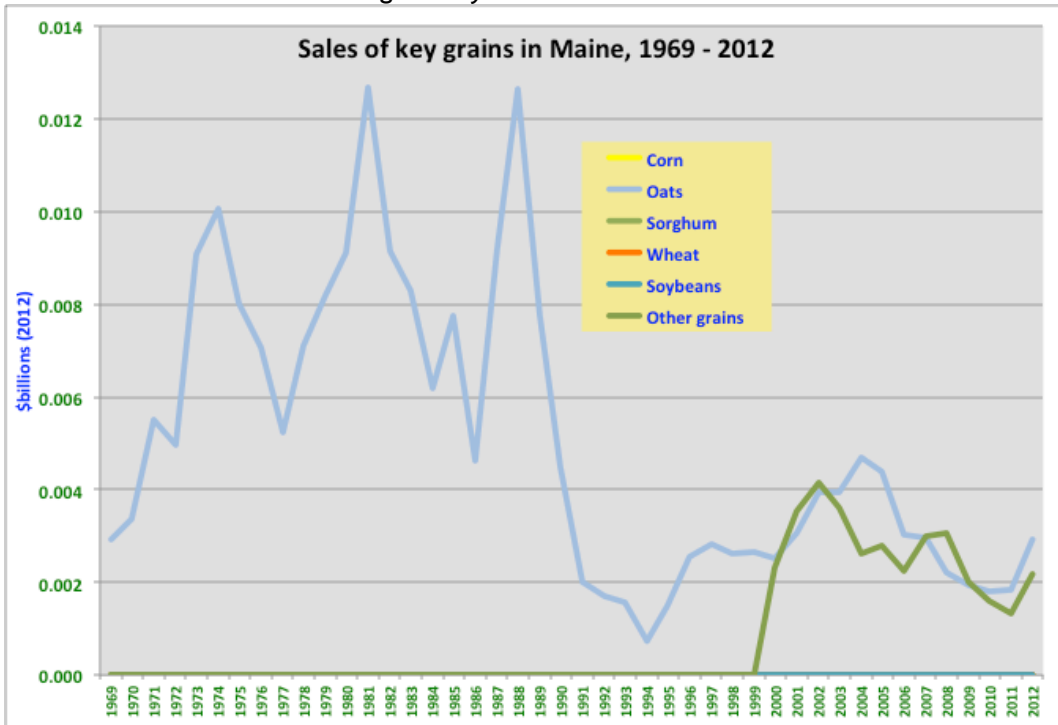
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 12: Sales of livestock products by Maine farmers



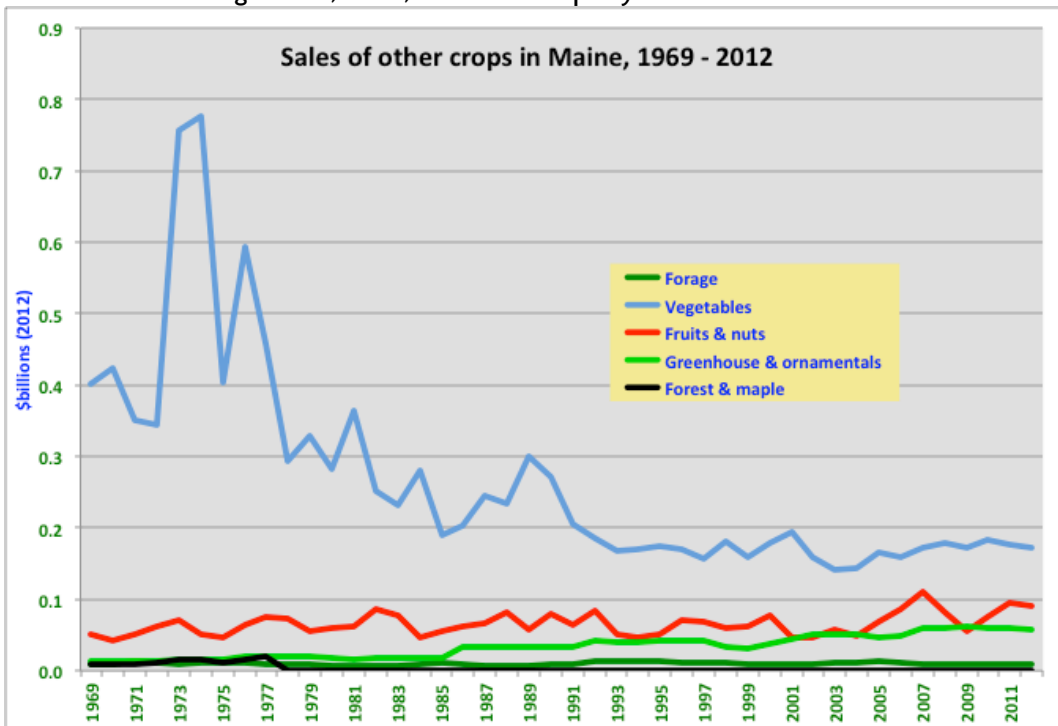
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 13: Sales of oats and other grains by Maine farmers



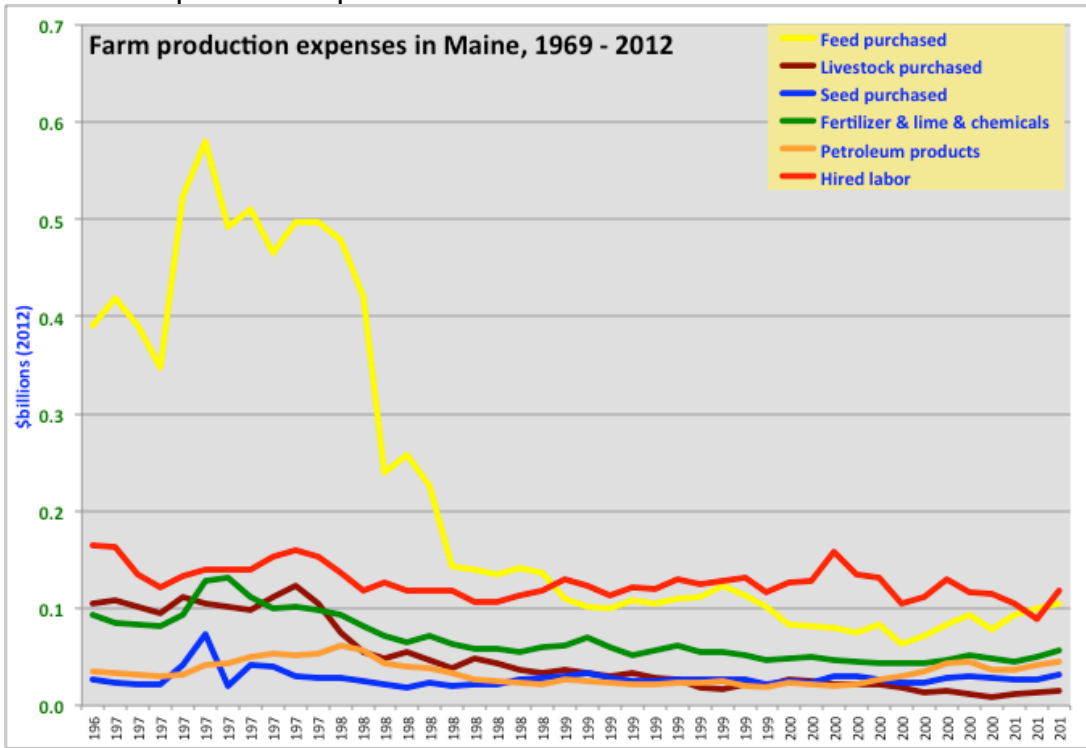
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 14: Sales of vegetables, fruits, and other crops by Maine farmers



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

Chart 15: Farm production expenses for Maine farmers



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – adjusted for inflation

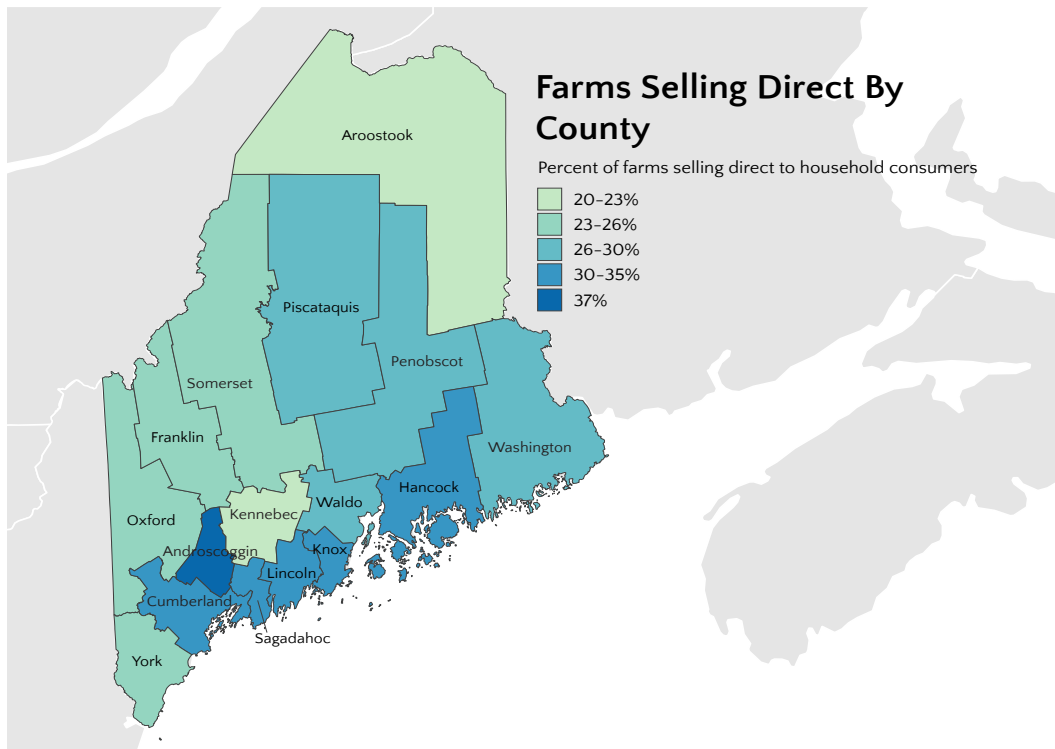


## Maps showing farm production in the State of Maine

### Map 1: Percent of Farms Selling Direct to Household Consumers (percent of farms, by county)

Androscoggin County has the highest percentage of farms selling direct to consumers, with 37% of farms selling direct. Maine ranks fifth in the U.S. on this measure, with 28% of the state's farms selling direct – typical for New England farm states, and far above the national average of 7%.

Following Androscoggin, leading counties in Maine are (in order) Hancock (35%), Sagadahoc (34%), Knox (34%), Lincoln (33%), and Cumberland (33%). Oxford ranks 11<sup>th</sup> with 25%.

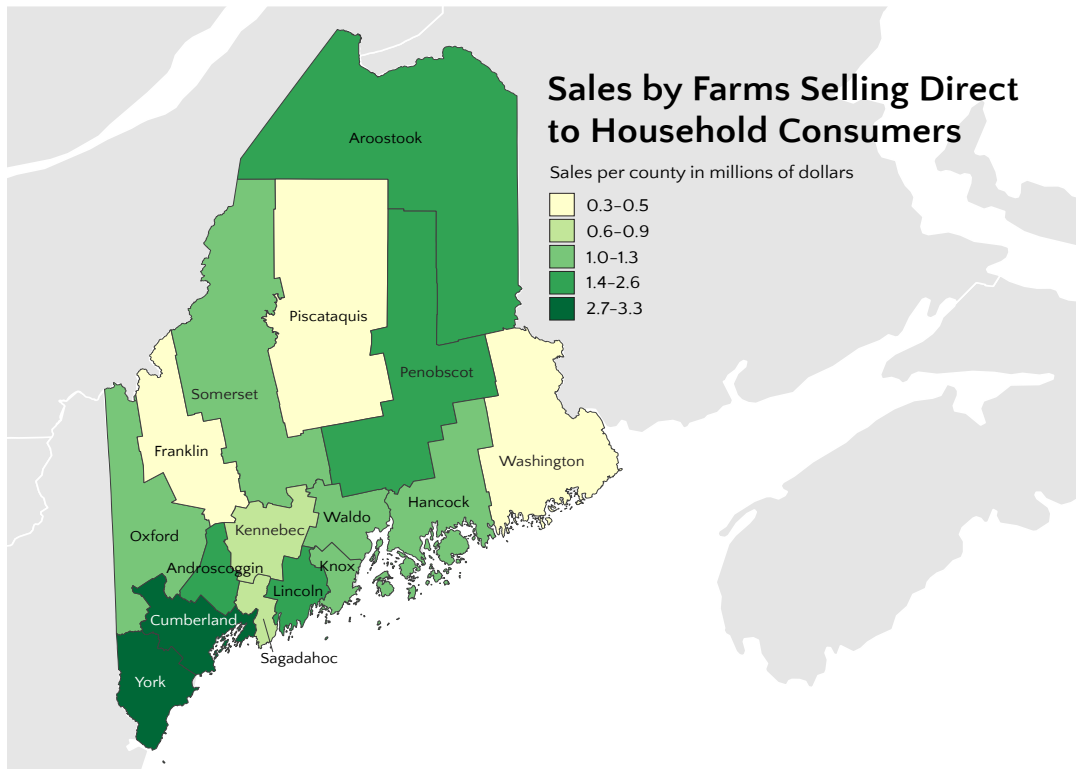


Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

## Map 2: Sales by Maine Farms Selling Direct to Household Consumers (by county)

Farmers in six Maine counties sell more than \$2 million of food direct to household consumers. York County ranks first, with \$3.3 million. Cumberland farmers sell \$3.0 million. Farmers in Lincoln County rank third, selling \$2.5 million. Aroostook County farmers sell \$2.5 million, while

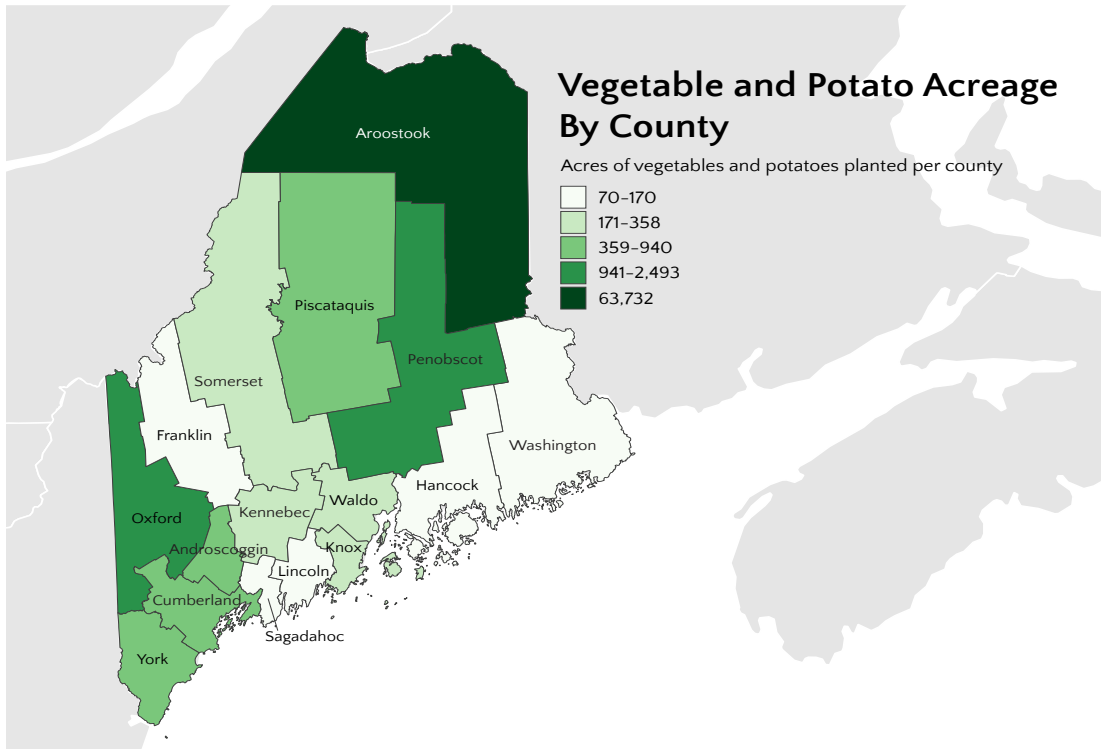
Androscoggin ranks fifth with \$2.3 million in direct sales. Farms in Penobscot County sell \$2.0 million. Oxford County ranks ninth, with \$1.3 million in direct sales, while Oxford County ranks thirteenth, with \$743 million.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

### Map 3: Vegetable and potato acreage by county

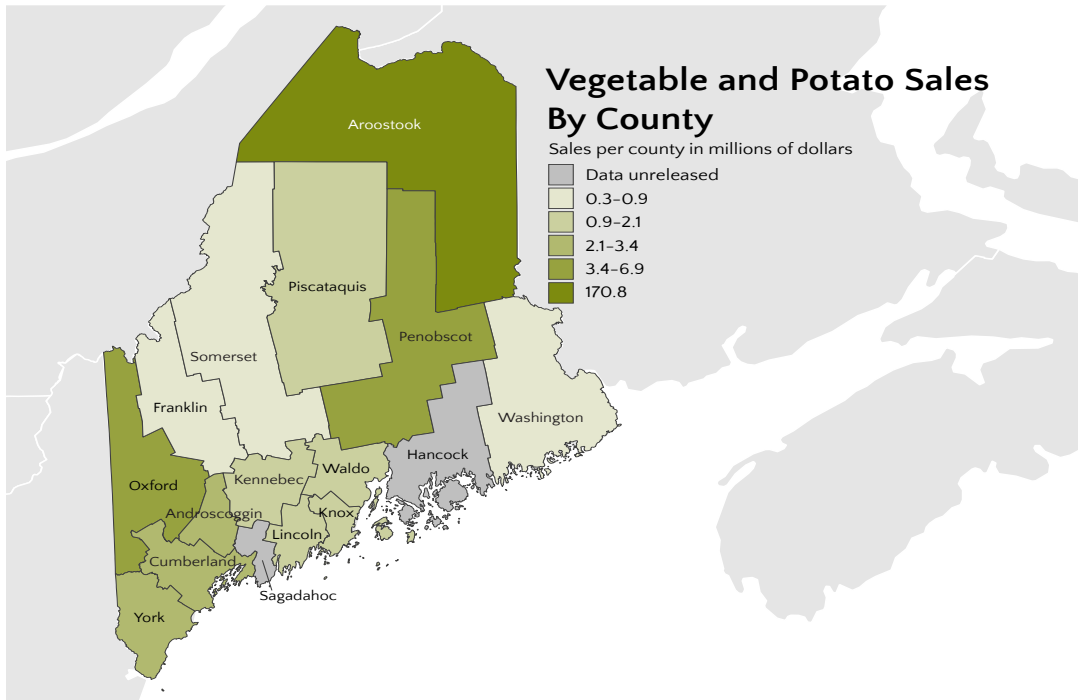
Aroostook County leads the state in land devoted to vegetables, with 63,700 acres. Many of these farms sell potatoes, but other crops such as onions and carrots are also important. Penobscot County ranks second with 2,493 acres, while Oxford County ranks third at 1,259. Androscoggin has 738 acres devoted to vegetables, while Sagadahoc County has 119.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

#### Map 4: Vegetable and potato sales by county

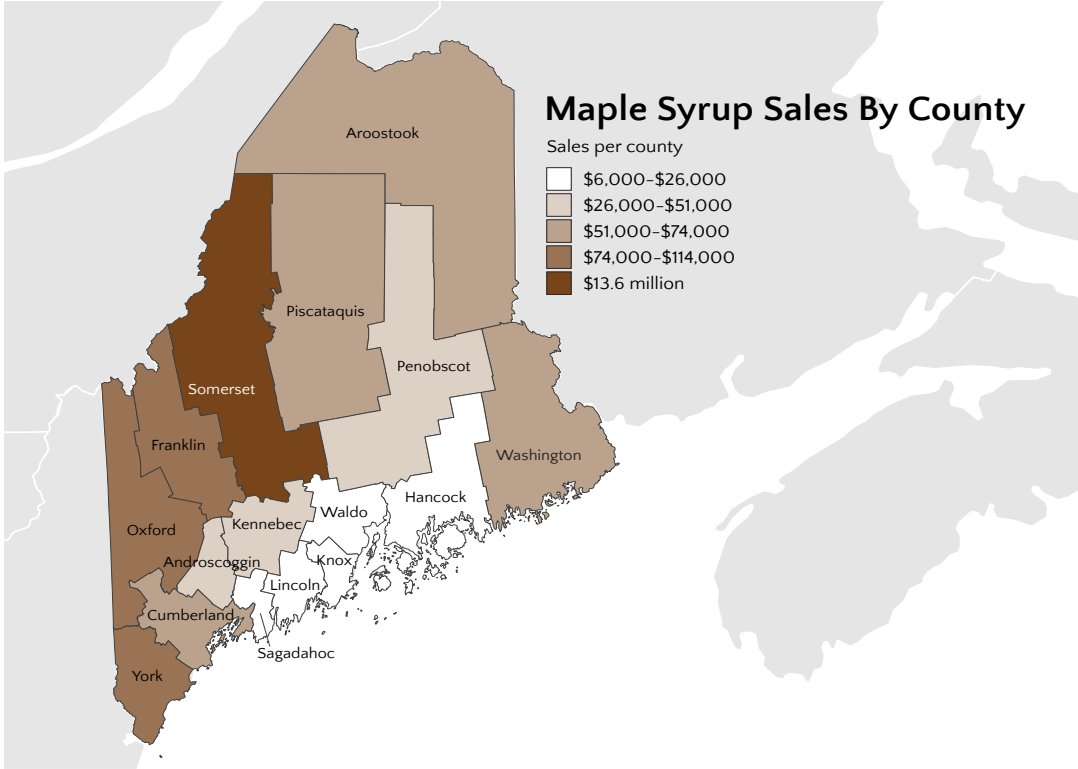
Not surprisingly, these rankings remain intact when vegetable and potato sales are considered. Aroostook County farmers sold \$171 million in 2012. Penobscot County farmers sold \$6.9 million, while Oxford County sold \$5.5 million. Androscoggin farmers sold \$3.2 million of vegetables, while Sagadahoc County sales were not released by USDA, in an effort to protect confidentiality of the farms that sell these products.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

**Map 5: Maple syrup sales by county**

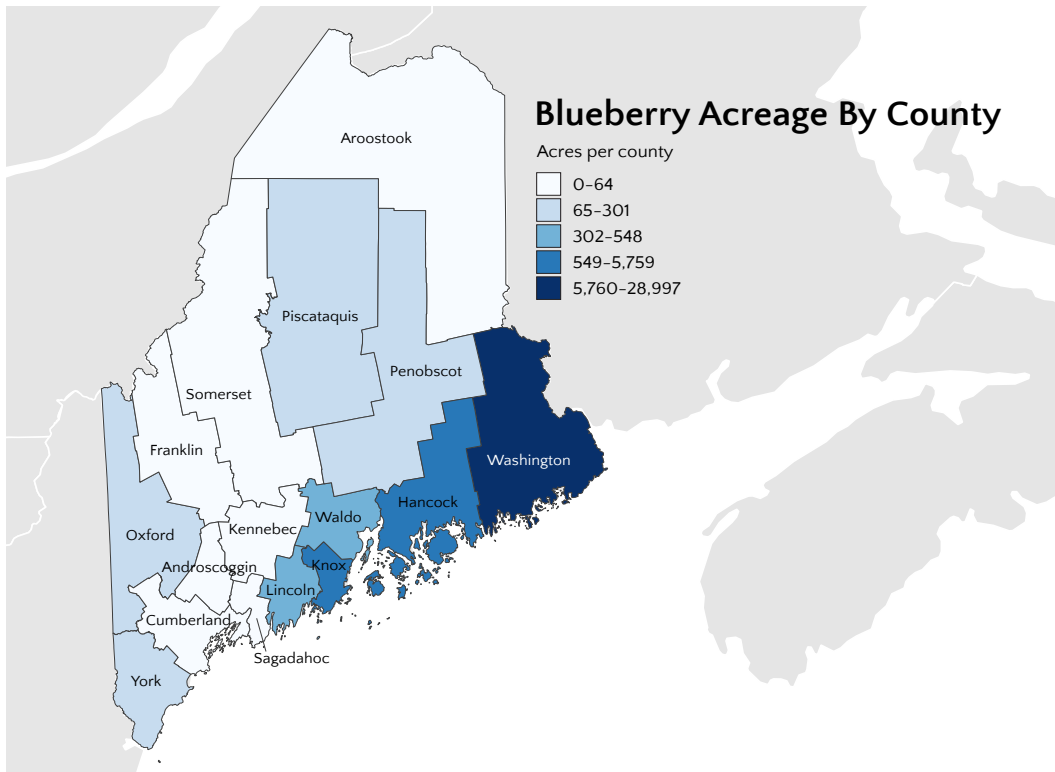
All Maine counties sell maple syrup, but Somerset County is far and away the leader with \$13.6 million in sales. Oxford County ranks a distant second with \$114,000, Androscoggin farmers sold \$47,000, and Sagadahoc County farms sold \$8,000.



*Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.*

### Map 6: Blueberry acreage by county

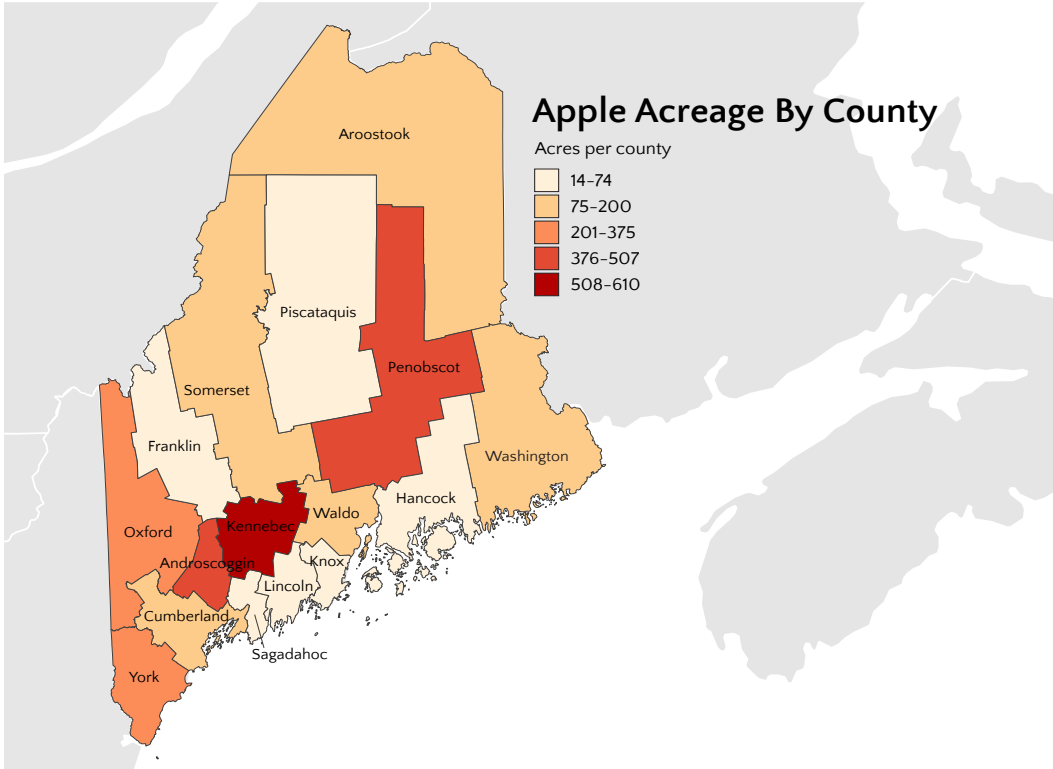
All Maine counties except one sell blueberries commercially, but Washington County is the clear leader with 28,997 acres devoted to the crop. Hancock ranks second with 5,759 acres, and Knox County ranks third with 1,856. Oxford County hosts 301 acres of blueberries, while Sagadahoc has 12, and Androscoggin 1. Aroostook County reported no commercial blueberry production. Any of these counties is likely to have additional acres of blueberry land that was unreported, in scattered small plots.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

### Map 7: Apple acreage by county

Six Maine counties have 200 acres or more of commercial apple production. Kennebec County leads with 610 acres. Penobscot County ranks second with 507. Androscoggin and Oxford Counties rank third and fourth with 472 acres and 375 acres, respectively. York County counted 292 acres in 2012, and Somerset County tallied 200. Sagadahoc County ranks last with 14 acres.

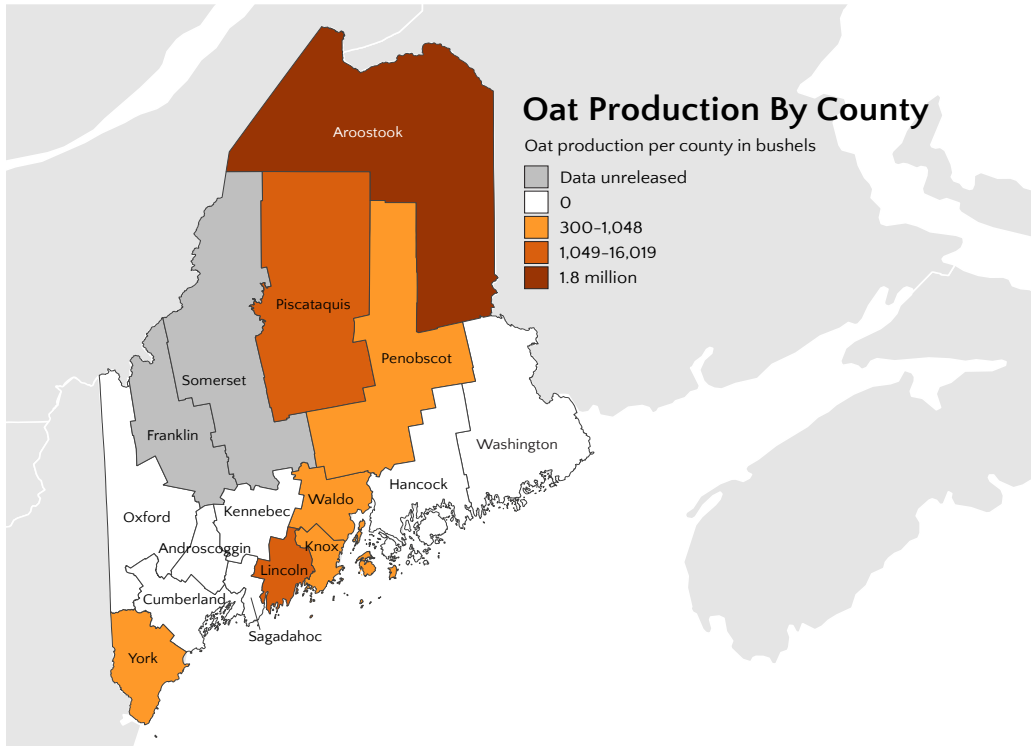


Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.



### Map 8: Oat production by county

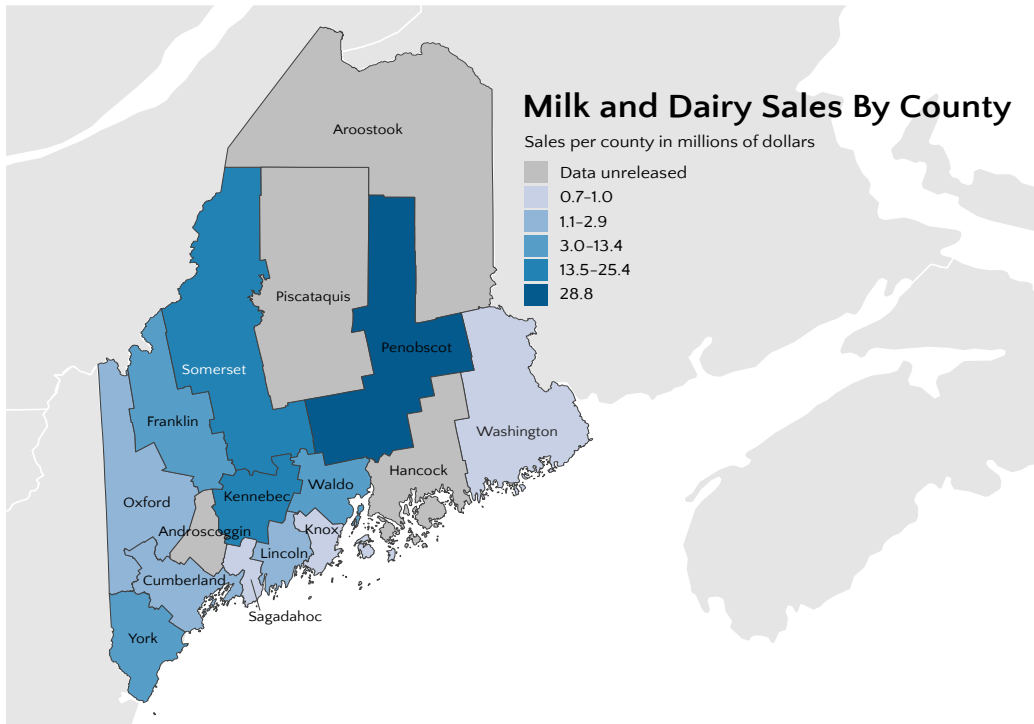
Aroostook County leads the state in oat production, with 1.8 million bushels in 2012. Piscataquis County ranks a distant second with 16,000 bushels.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

### Map 9: Milk and dairy sales by county

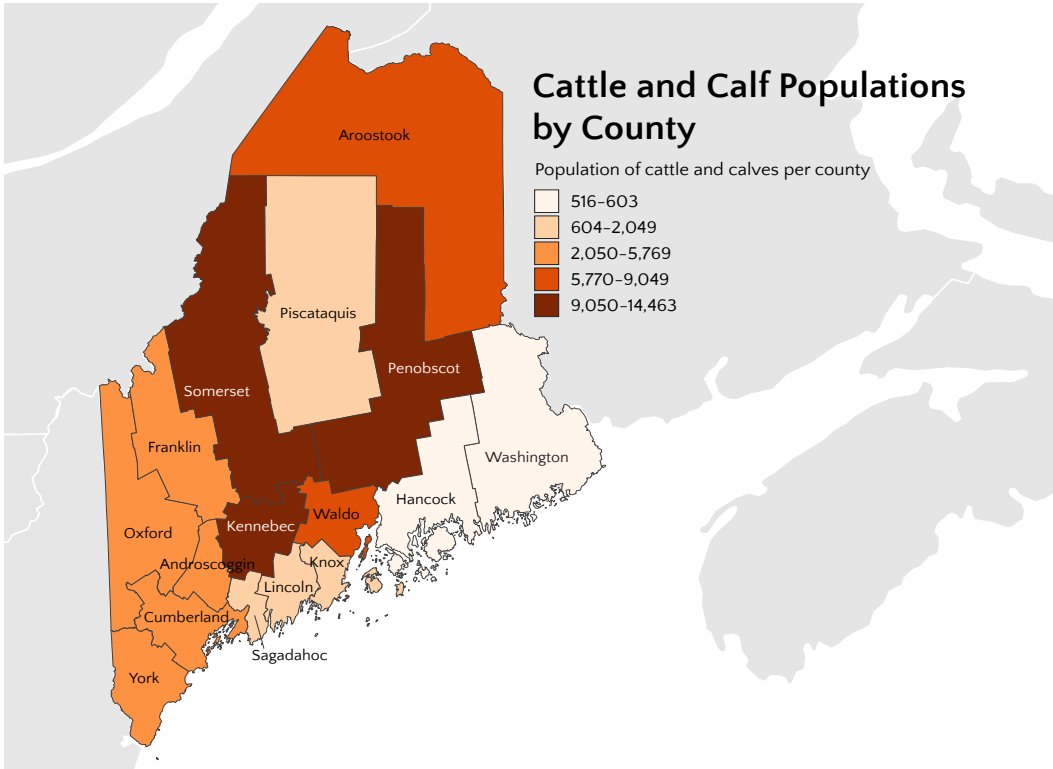
Penobscot County leads Maine in dairy production, with \$29 million in sales, while Kennebec and Somerset Counties each sold \$25 million. Oxford County farms sold \$2.7 million of dairy products, while Sagadahoc County sold \$1 million. Sales of dairy products in Androscoggin County, along with Aroostook, Hancock, and Piscataquis Counties, were not reported by USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

**Map 10: Cattle and calf populations by county**

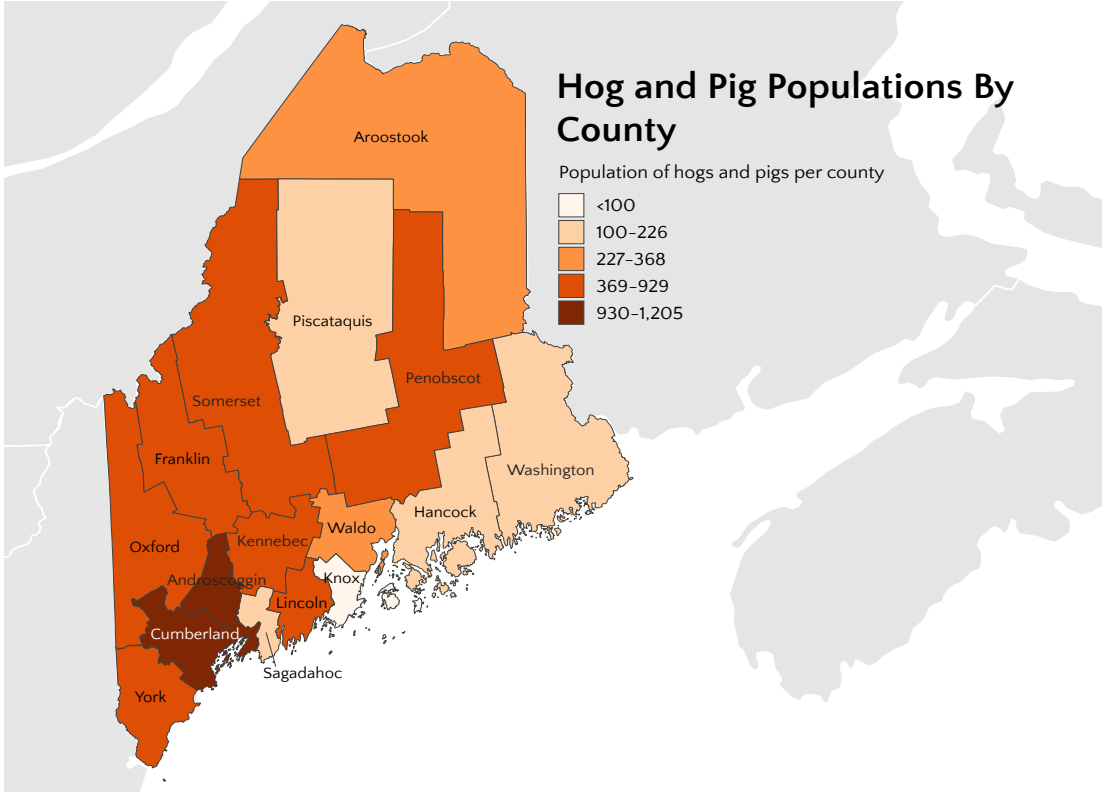
Five Counties – Kennebec (14,463), Somerset (13,842), Penobscot (13,714), Aroostook (9,049), and Waldo (8,008) – supported cattle populations over 8,000 head in 2012. Androscoggin County farms reported 5,769 cattle, while Oxford farms reported 2,981, and Sagadahoc County farms reported 1,202.



*Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.*

### Map 11: Hog and pig populations by county

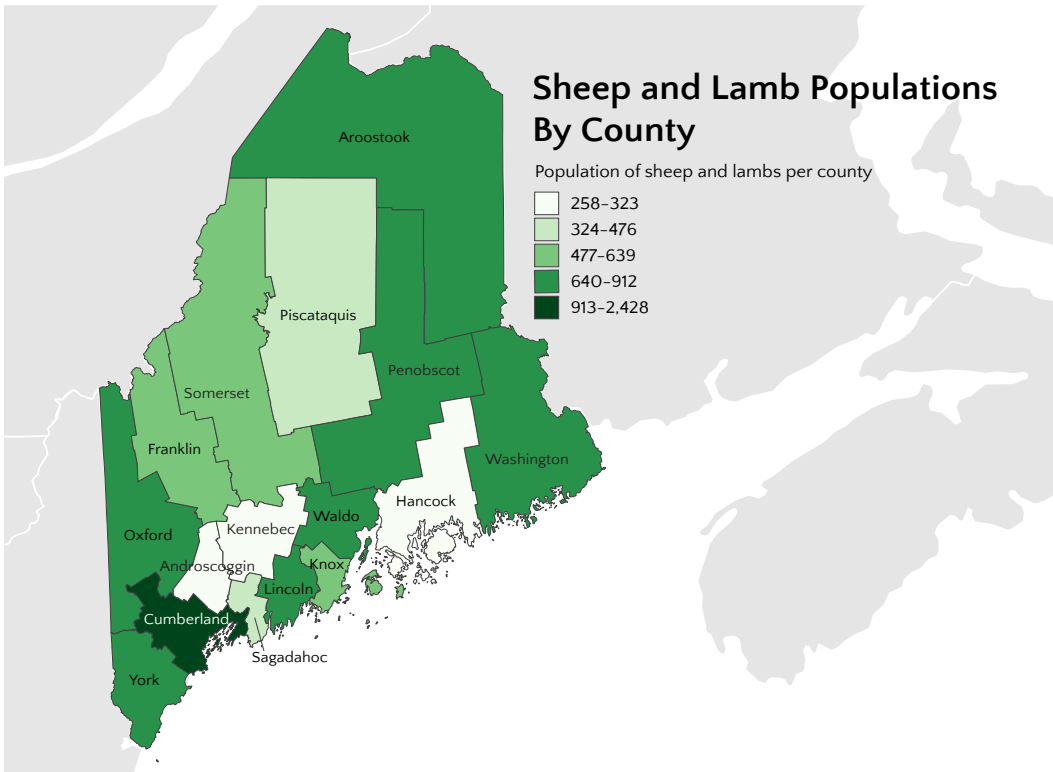
Both Cumberland County (1,205) and Androscoggin County (1,155) reported populations of more than 1,000 hogs and pigs in 2012. Oxford farms reported 642, while Sagadahoc County reported 130.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

**Map 12: Sheep and lamb populations by county**

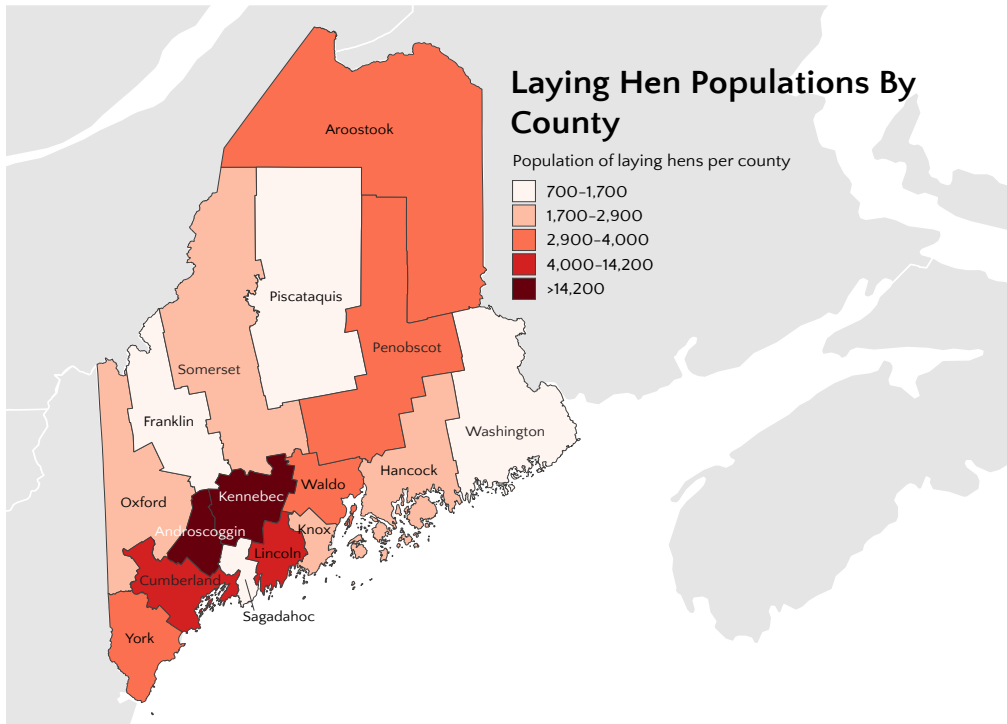
Cumberland County ranked first in Maine for sheep and lamb population, with 2,428. Lincoln (912), Waldo (894), and York (893) Counties ranked second through fourth. Oxford County ranked fifth with 870, while Androscoggin County farms reported 306 sheep and lambs, and Sagadahoc County farms reported 476.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

### Map 13: Laying hen populations by county

Androscoggin County ranked first in Maine for number of laying hens, but the actual population was not reported by USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality. Kennebec County ranked second, but no data were reported for this county either. Together the two counties held population of over 3.5 million hens. Lincoln County ranked third with 14,200. Oxford County farms held 2,9000, while Sagadahoc County farms reported a population of 1,400.



Map by Ben Kerrick using data from the Census of Agriculture for 2012, compiled by Ken Meter.

## Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (BEA)

8,173 farmers sell \$137 million of food commodities per year (1989–2012 average), spending \$120 million to raise them, for an average gain of \$17 million each year. This is an average net cash income of \$2,042 per farm. *Note that these sales figures compiled by the BEA may differ from cash receipts recorded by the USDA Agriculture Census (above), especially since BEA data released in 2014 were not updated to include information from the 2012 Census of Agriculture, due to the government shutdown.*<sup>14</sup>

Overall, farm producers earned a surplus of \$400 million by selling crops and livestock over the years 1989 to 2012. Yet net cash income remained essentially steady over that 24-year period. Moreover, 66% of the region's farms reported that they lost money in 2012 (Ag Census), and L + A Region farmers and ranchers earned \$33 million *less* by selling commodities in 2012 than they earned in 1969 (in 2012 dollars). Note that this mirrors state trends, as shown on Charts 9 and 10.

Shifts in farm cash receipts appear to be led by the decline of the dairy and cattle industries, as shown on Chart 3. See also Charts 11 and 12, which show similar declines in poultry and dairy industries in Maine as a whole. Sheep and lamb sales have increased in Maine since 1989. Statewide, vegetable production (primarily potatoes) has also declined, as shown on Chart 14. Oat sales have also decreased, as shown on Chart 13.

L + A Region farmers and ranchers earn another \$8.5 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, and rental income (24-year average for 1989–2012). Federal farm support payments are a relatively small source of net income for the region's farmers, averaging \$1.4 million per year for the same years.

### The region's consumers

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

L + A Region consumers spend \$580 million buying food each year, including \$338 million for home use. Most of this food is produced outside the region, so the region's consumers spend about \$520 million per year buying food outside the region. Only \$4 million of food products (5.6% of farm cash receipts and 0.7% of the region's consumer market) are sold by farmers directly to consumers.

Estimated change in net assets (that is, assets minus liabilities) for all of the region's households combined was a loss of \$488 million in 2012 alone (BLS). This places additional pressure on L + A Region] consumers trying to buy food.

### Farm and food economy summary

Farmers earn \$17 million each year producing food commodities, but spend \$40 million buying inputs sourced outside of the region. Even when farmers make money, these input purchases result

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<sup>14</sup> BEA officials told our research team that, due to the government shutdown of 2013, BEA staff were not able to update their regional economic data by taking into account the findings of the 2012 Census of Agriculture. This means that data portrayed in charts above will change once this procedure has been followed. Current BEA data is modeled upon 2007 Census of Agriculture data, when crop prices were far lower than in 2012. All the same, 2012 grain prices were unusually high, and have already fallen to low levels as of 2014.



in substantial losses to the region as a whole. Overall, farm production creates a loss of \$23 million to the region.

Meanwhile, consumers spend \$520 million buying food from outside. Thus, total loss to the region is \$540 million of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to nearly *four times* the value of all food commodities raised in the region.

**L + A Region: markets for food eaten at home (2012)**

L + A Region residents purchase \$581 million of food each year, including \$338 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	75
Fruits & vegetables	67
Cereals and bakery products	49
Dairy products	37
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	111

If each L + A Region resident purchased \$5 of food each week directly from some farm in the region, this would generate \$52 million of farm income for the region.

**Androscoggin County: markets for food eaten at home (2012)**

Androscoggin County residents purchase \$312 million of food each year, including \$182 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	40
Fruits & vegetables	36
Cereals and bakery products	26
Dairy products	20
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	59

**Oxford County: markets for food eaten at home (2012)**

Oxford County residents purchase \$167 million of food each year, including \$97 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	22
Fruits & vegetables	19
Cereals and bakery products	14
Dairy products	11

“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils 32

**Sagadahoc County: markets for food eaten at home (2012)**

Sagadahoc County residents purchase \$102 million of food each year, including \$59 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	13
Fruits & vegetables	12
Cereals and bakery products	9
Dairy products	7
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	19

**Augusta Metro region: markets for food eaten at home (2012)**

Augusta Metro residents purchase \$353 million of food each year, including \$206 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	46
Fruits & vegetables	41
Cereals and bakery products	30
Dairy products	23
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	67

**Portland Metro region: markets for food eaten at home (2011)**

Portland Metro region residents purchase \$1.5 billion of food each year, including \$876 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	194
Fruits & vegetables	172
Cereals and bakery products	127
Dairy products	97
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	286

**State of Maine: markets for food eaten at home (2012)**

Maine residents purchase \$3.8 billion of food each year, including \$2.2 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>Millions of dollars</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	497
Fruits & vegetables	442
Cereals and bakery products	325
Dairy products	248
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	735

### **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>

To view a PowerPoint presented in March, 2008, by Ken Meter at Rep. Collin Peterson’s (D-MN) Minnesota agricultural forum, called the “Home Grown Economy”:

<http://www.crcworks.org/crcppts/petersonkm08.pdf>

For further information:

<http://www.crcworks.org/>

Contact Ken Meter at Crossroads Resource Center

<[kmeter@crcworks.org](mailto:kmeter@crcworks.org)>

(612) 869-8664

## APPENDIX C

### Detailed Model P&L for Physical Food Hub

Sales	Amount	% of sales	Notes
Colleges & Universities	105,771	0.13	
Eldercare	15,693	0.02	
Hospitals	97,622	0.12	
Local Farm Box Programs	55,155	0.07	
Private Schools	151,034	0.19	
Public Schools	56,873	0.07	
Restaurants	106,938	0.13	
Retailers	197,241	0.25	
Value Added Producers	4,313	0.01	
Business & Industry	8,074	0.01	
Other	3,156	0.00	
Adjustments	-1,869	(0.00)	
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>		
	\$66,667	monthly sales	
	4.00	per pound average sale	
	16,667	monthly poundage sold	
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>			
Product	590,567	73.82%	note: very high COGS, reflecting mission of Food Hub (low mark-up)
Spoilage + Broken Boxes	14,288	1.79%	
Packing Supplies	3,976	0.50%	
Software - Virtualnet	2,698	0.34%	
Credit Card Merchant Charge	2,325	0.29%	
Warehouse COGS	4,938	0.62%	
Truck Depreciation	3,848	0.48%	
Transport	84,212	10.53%	
Labor (Packers & Drivers)	105,303	13.16%	
<b>Total Cogs</b>	<b>\$812,156</b>	101.52%	
<b>Gross Profit from Sales</b>	<b>(\$12,156)</b>		
<b>Other Revenue Streams</b>			
Contracts - Fee for Service	35,000		consulting services, e.g.
Foundation Grants	TBD		grant revenue could offset net operating loss
Donations - Corp & Ind	10,000		
<b>Total Other Revenue Streams</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>		
<b>Expenses</b>			
Salary (non-COGS)	162,500		2 1/2 FTE @\$65,000 per year
Administrative Expense	6,632		
Fundraising Expense			
Rent	50,000		\$10 per sf rent
Utilities	12,500		per Platz Associates
RE Taxes	12,000		per Platz Associates
Plant & Equipment			
Communication/Marketing	50,000		
Program Expense	75,000		education programming (executed by Salaried employees)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$368,632</b>		
<b>Net Regular Income</b>	<b>(\$335,788)</b>		
<b>Other Expenses</b>			
Bad Debt			
Loan Repayment (Principle)	2,700		principal on 15 year loan, year 1
Loan Interest & Fees	49,000		interest on above, year 1
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>\$51,700</b>		
<b>Net Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$387,488)</b>		net operating loss (could be offset by grants)

**APPENDIX D**  
**BATES MILL NO. 5 TIMELINE**  
**PREPARED BY JUSTIN NADEAU**

**Pre-2012**

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**1992**

City of Lewiston takes control of entire Bates Mill Complex after years of unpaid taxes by Bates Manufacturing. It creates the Lewiston Mill Redevelopment Corp. to oversee and lead the redevelopment of the sprawling nine-building complex. Effort to also save 100 jobs

**1994**

Federal grants are received to apply towards building improvements. Boilers are upgraded and the Mill 5 roof is replaced for \$1 million.

**1995**

Mill No. 8 is torn down

**1996**

LMRC and Bates Mill LLC, a group of local developers led by Auburn native Tom Platz of Platz Associates, reach agreement on redevelopment of Bates Mill Complex. Allan Turgeon is hired as the onsite property manager. A phase one environmental assessment is completed.

**1997**

Platz Associates creates master plan for entire mill complex. Process includes community outreach to educate and invite public participation. Allan Turgeon begins giving tours and presentations. LMRC expands board to include public members. Various committees are formed to research and report financial projections. Three reports project cost of demolition, status quo, and redevelopment. Mill No. 5 identified as best fit for a convention center. Economic Research Consultants Coopers & Librand, hired to evaluate the Lewiston-Auburn area for a meeting and conference center, identifies Bates Mill No. 5 as one of several sites suitable for a convention center. In the following years, the city explores that idea. Platz Associates does some design work and completes a model for redeveloping Bates Mill No. 5 as a convention center.

**1998**

First of two local referendum attempt to block the city from using local tax money to fund a convention center; both measures fail. EPA awards a removal action.

**1999**

Second local referendum attempt to block the city from using local tax money to fund a convention center. City of Lewiston considers demolition of Mill No. 5. City receives Brownfield Pilot demonstration grant for a phase 2 environmental assessment and cost analysis for remediation.

**2000**

City receives revolving loan. Local contractor Summit Environmental, works in conjunction with DEP (oversight / supervision) and EPA (program admin) to complete phase 2. Summit Environmental and DEP complete a VRAP (voluntary response action plan) to mitigate environmental contaminations discovered in phase 2 and submit to EPA. Bates Manufacturing ceases operations in Bates Mill No. 5, vacating the building in 2001.

## **2001**

EPA accepts VRAP. City of Lewiston and DEP form memorandum of agreement. Tom Platz allowed to finance private business into Bates Mill Complex without liability for prior environmental issues. City sells Mill No. 6 undeveloped, Mill No. 3 half developed, and Mill No. 7 fully developed to development group led by Tom Platz. Tom Platz buys the three buildings which returns to the City of Lewiston all City funds invested into the redevelopment of these buildings.

## **2002**

Second VRAP submitted for engineering evaluation and cost analysis. Focus remains on renovating Mill No. 7, 3, & 6 to a salable condition. All other mills receive evaluation of drainage trenches, chemicals, etc still existing in the complex. Lead and asbestos removed from areas being redeveloped.

## **2003**

First certificate of completion issued for Mill No. 3, 6, & 7. Next submission of VRAP for Mill No. 1 & 2, #1 & #2 wing and storehouse, Mill #4. Separate VRAP submission for remaining buildings. EPA approval of VRAP plan for Lot #1, clears the way for Mr. Platz to purchase Lot #1 buildings. The City of Lewiston agrees to update and modify the Bates Mill Acquisition Agreement with developers. City required to provide steam heat for mill buildings at cost, a schedule of infrastructure improvements, a seven year operating assistance schedule, and parking garages.

## **2004**

Platz and his partners close a deal with Lewiston to take over most of the buildings of the Bates Mill Complex. Bates Mill No. 5 is not part of it.

## **2007**

Lewiston City Council creates the Bates Mill No. 5 Task Force to identify and evaluate viable reuse options. Maine Preservation lists the building as one of the most endangered historic properties in Maine.

## **2008**

Task force delivers report to city councilors who reject the convention center plan because of costs. They issue a directive to market the property. Request for proposals receives only one reply, but the potential investor ends up withdrawing bid.

## **2009**

Councilors solicit bids for demolition of Bates Mill No. 5. The rest of the Bates Mill Complex has been redeveloped into a mixed-use complex with more than 1,000 people working there. Mill No. 5 survives adjacent Main St. building explosion. Embers from the Cowan Mill fire damage roof membrane on Mill No. 5.

## **2010**

City council reverses itself on demolition of building, paving way for city voters to approve a local ballot measure to give Great Falls Recreation and Redevelopment LLC an option to buy the building and create a casino there. That plan unravels when a Lewiston casino fails to get statewide approval in a November referendum.

## **2011**

Rhode Island architect James Mangrum proposes creating a server farm in the basement of Bates

Mill No. 5 and an indoor greenhouse on the second floor. His concept sparks the interest of local architect Gabrielle Russell and others, who form Grow L+A to save the building. (later in 2012)

## 2012

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### April

City's Riverfront Island Master Plan recommends demolishing Bates Mill No. 5 and redeveloping the space as a park or business development.

Gabrielle Russell purchases original linen architecture drawings of Mill No. 5.

### May

Three part series held to display original drawings. James Mangrum shares thesis work and his vision for a Mill No. 5 redesign. Three series held on May 3, 10, and 17. Speakers include James Mangrum, Richard Whiting, and Mark Lapping.

### June

Weekly meetings begin after three part series (view meeting minutes for details)

### July

Lewiston City Council budgets \$2.5 million in the 2012-13 capital plan toward the demolition of Mill No. 5.

### August

Bates College students engage in the work to redevelop Mill No. 5 as part of their capstone projects for environmental studies. Three groups totaling 12 students focus on food (bites), technology (bytes), and recreational economic development.

### September

Grow L+A is incorporated with the help of Phillip Isaacson's donated services

### October

Gabrielle Russell delivers Ted Talk at TedxDirigo at Bates College.

### Winter 2012- 2013

Grow L+A begins preparing conceptual drawings and preliminary figures about a Mill No. 5 redevelopment project. Jonathan LaBonte urges Grow L+A to apply for Sewall Grant.

## 2013

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### January 15

Submit Sewall grant application with the help and support of Kirsten Walter, Daniel Wallace, Jonathan Labonte, Matt Dube.

### January-February

Began approaching individual Lewiston city council members starting with Craig Saddlemire. Worked toward securing a spot on the council agenda/workshop.

### March

Lewiston City Council accepts Grow L+A into an executive session. In attendance: Councillors, Mayor, Staff, and Grow L+A key members, not open to the public. Grow L+A presented their research, drawings, and initial figures. Asked for 18 months to pull together information to prove

feasibility of moving forward. Peter Flanders and Gabrielle Russell later meet with Lincoln Jeffers and Ed Barrett to negotiate and write up a resolution as an easy measure of success to vote on by councilors.

#### **April 3**

Placed on Lewiston city council meeting agenda to vote on resolution. Meeting packed with an inspiring number of people who spoke in support of Grow L+A including Bates students, Phillip Isaacson and Kirsten Walter. Councilors passed Grow L+A's request (4 to 3) with a 6 month term to achieve items on resolution. Included agreement to not tear down Mill No. 5 during this time and support Grow L+A's efforts to complete the resolution. Efforts relieved the City's \$2.5 Million budget allocation for Mill No. 5 demolition and placed Grow L+A's energy in a brighter light.

#### **April 4**

Got to work immediately compiling all documents, figures, and conceptual plans laid out in the resolution and due at the 3 month milestone mark. A willing and reputable developer was expected to be found by the 6 month milestone mark.

#### **May**

Awarded Sewall grant for feasibility studies.

#### **June 12**

First public meeting to discuss Grow L+A's vision for Bates Mill No. redevelopment project called Five-2-Farm after James Mangrum's initial inspiration.

#### **June**

Two copies of Five-2 Farm Bates Mill No. 5 Re-Development package delivered to city councilors. Packet included all items on the resolution and more. Packet signed off as meeting expectations, and approved to move forward looking for a developer. Peter Flanders continued to build a relationship with Tom Platz including discussions negotiations about the project.

#### **July 16**

Five-2-Farm Round Table July 31 2013: Second Five-2-Farm Public Meeting

#### **August**

Food Hub task force (FHTF) begins meeting weekly. Group tasked with identifying set of feasibility study questions.

#### **September**

Negotiations begin to ramp up with Tom Platz, Lincoln Jeffers, Peter Flanders, and Gabrielle Russell.

#### **October 3**

City council Meeting and end of 6 month resolution period. City councilors voted (7 - 0) for a Grow L+A SUCCESS! Unanimous vote approved / allowed for efforts to move forward and enter negotiations with Tom Platz. Tom now had a secured option on the Mill No. 5 building.

#### **December**

FHTF finalizes set of well thought out feasibility study questions addressing 11 key focus areas.



## 2014

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### January

Five-2-Farm advisory group formed

### March

FHTF submits Food Hub feasibility study – Request For Proposals to 11 potential consultants with 1 month to submit proposals.

### April

Seven high quality proposals received from feasibility consultants

### May

Members of the Grow L+A Board, FHTF, Advisory Board, and the Good Food Council of Lewiston and Auburn evaluate consultant proposals. Karp Resources from New York is selected as best fit choice.

### June

Five-2-Farm advisory group works to submit application for Local Foods Promotion Program (LFPP) planning grant.

### Summer

FHTF volunteers work hard to bring awareness of the food hub project to the community. Members can be found writing articles for local newsprint, talking with patrons and vendors at the local Lewiston Farmers' Market, and engaging kids and creatives at the L/A Art Walks.

### August 4

Grow L+A receives announcement of 501(c)3 Non Profit status

### August

Food hub feasibility study officially underway managed by Karen Karp of Karp Resources.

### September

Grow L+A awarded LFPP planning grant for funding second phase of food hub feasibility study.

### October

Karp Resources team visits Maine to talk with several farmers, restaurants, and institutions. Team meets with Tom Platz and arranges a number of other meetings and site visits.

## APPENDIX E

### LEWISTON-AUBURN COMMUNITY NEEDS SUMMARY

Prepared by Justin Nadeau

#### Key food needs in the community

Community food needs identified in the Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn's Community Food Assessment (CFA):

- Education
- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Social Capital
- Food Assistance
- Availability

"Good Food," as defined by the CFA, "provides the nutrients needed to lead healthy, active lives and [for] children to learn and play well; fits our cultural and religious beliefs; is grown in ways that treat producers and employees with respect and that provides them with a livable wage; supports local businesses; nourishes both our bodies and the Earth—so that our soil and water can provide the nutrients needed to grow food in the future; and comes from animals treated humanely."

#### Education

General knowledge of *good food* is missing in key topic areas such as reading nutrition labels and food preparation / cooking. Knowledge varies by demographic groups such as age, culture, language, and ability. For example, the Lewiston community houses a large population of the New American Somali and Bantu population who may not be able to locate assistance because the information to find food assistance programs is often written in English. Fruits and vegetables are widely understood as healthy food choices. There is greater need to understand the importance of quality proteins and carbohydrates in a balanced diet. Preparation and cooking knowledge is lacking in younger generations. Clean water is identified among Somali population as being specifically important in good nutrition.

#### Accessibility

More unhealthy food exist in close proximity downtown than healthy food options. When people don't have a car or rely on a public transit system it's often more difficult to get to healthy food at larger grocery stores. People look for ways to share rides and the cost of buying bulk food to stretch their income. More stores with healthy food choices that are walking distance need to be accessible. More services can be created to help people access good food and access to resources can be made available for people to produce some of their own food.

#### Affordability

Often people have to decide whether to eat or pay other bills. When dollars are stretched it can be more difficult to buy bulk. People can share resources and plan their spending but the perception is good food is still more expensive. Long-term costs to health from poor food are difficult to hold as a priority when people are hungry today.

## Social Capital

Resilient social webs of friends and families are important for gaining access to *good food* in the community. People share resources, information about emergency food, and transportation suggestions. Somali population tend to seek support inwardly from friends and families while others seek outward support from community assistance programs. Individuals feel like they have an impact helping friends and family and don't feel they can have an impact on larger food system changes. Individuals view close personal social webs as their only choice because they can't affect change in the larger political, economic, and food systems who are not providing enough help. Social capital is also important among inter-organizational relationships.

## Food Assistance

Supplemental food programs can be for some, their "life support" as stated in the CFA. Fruit and vegetable assistance programs don't supply enough support to get the recommended servings. Other barriers to being eligible include needing a physical address, emotional distress from being identified as receiving aid, and language comprehension that enable understanding of how to access and hold on to assistance.

## Availability

People that don't have cars are limited to shopping at small corner stores with few healthy food choices. Healthy options are often lower quality and more expensive. Farmers markets and community gardens are helpful but can only provide when produce is in season and hours are during a limited time frame.

## Local Programs and Organizations

### St. Mary's Nutrition Center

*Education, accessibility, availability, affordability, social capital*

The Nutrition Center is positioned in the heart of downtown Lewiston. They operate in several ways like a community food hub to neighborhood food insecure residents. They serve a diverse range of ages, economic abilities, and cultures; the young, the elder, refugees, and families. The Nutrition Center promotes a viable food system while supporting local leaders, strengthening community ties, and engaging youth as agents of change. A multitude of programs are available and address several community food needs in the downtown area.

- **Cooking and Nutrition – *education***  
In the center's community learning kitchen, workshops are hands-on. The social atmosphere is positive and encouraging and boots a healthy attitude about food and cooking. Designed to speak to a diverse range of people, workshops focus on children, youth and adult, and Somali-Bantu. People also have the opportunity to participate in more intensive "Cooking Matters" programs and Specialty classes like making cheese.
- **Lots to Gardens – *accessibility***  
Increasing food access to downtown L+A residents is one of the Center's core strategies. More than a dozen lots and more than 115 families gain low barrier access to more fresh fruit and vegetables. People can access affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate food through personal garden production. Gardens act as an outdoor classroom to learn how to grow

food and be more self-reliant. Youth learn leadership skills, how to cook and neighbors learn to value differences in culture and social justice. Food that comes from the gardens is used for harvest dinners, weekly veggie shares for elders and youth, and farmers' markets.

- **Lewiston Farmers Market** - *availability, affordability*  
The year round farmers market makes fresh healthy food options more available to the downtown area. Farmers are invited from farther reaching towns in the surrounding counties. There are opportunities to be a guest farmer; several Fresh Start Farmers participate, and new farmers can learn the skills to selling their products. Many residents would not have access to these fresh foods otherwise. The Market Dollar Program makes the market more affordable and inviting for lower income community members. For every \$2 spent with EBT at the market a \$1 market dollar is given back, up to \$10 per week. The program is funded by multiple sources.

Other programs such as a Food Corps chapter, the Great Falls Buying Club, and emergency food pantry work toward improving several levels of food insecurity in the community. This is well accomplished even with limited resources.

#### Good Shepherd Food Bank *Food assistance, availability*

The Good Shepherd Food Bank is one of the largest emergency food distributors in the area providing food to several food pantries and soup kitchens. They aim to balance the distribution of food and meet the various levels of food insecure community members. The Mainers feeding Mainers program currently partners with 20 local farmers and fisherman to feed those in need. An emergency mobile food truck responds to urgent short-term needs after a disastrous event. Senior program like Senior Brown Bags and a food mobile program helps elder's supplement their nutrition needs when they otherwise have a difficult time meeting their own food needs. The Cupboard collective collects cupboard resources and redistributes it to ensure more areas get food including rural areas. Child hunger programs such as: the backpack program, school pantry, and kids cafe at Tree Street Youth Center in Lewiston help families feed their children when it's often difficult to even find a meal for themselves. The GSF also offers some light cooking classes. The GSF demonstrates a clear effort to connect local food to those in need. Their website offers good information for accessing food and can be difficult for those without internet access, or an ability to read English.

#### Androscoggin Land Trust *Availability*

The Androscoggin Land Trust is a private non-profit supported by its members. Their mission is to protect and conserve the land in the Androscoggin watershed including important natural areas, traditional landscapes and promoting its use through outdoor experiences. They conserve over 4,850 acres and over 10 miles of riverfront plus an additional 3000+ acres through assisted programs. The ALT helps to conserve land for working farms including the Packard-Littlefield Farm, vital to the Cultivating Communities, Fresh Start Farms program for our New American farmers. LA Trails is a program to improve non-motorized trail networks and advocate for better sidewalks and bike lanes. The program aims to enhance community through the benefit of healthier people, safer transportation, and improved economy. All this can enable and encourage downtown residents to

access more good food and the biggest benefit to food is protecting local area agriculture land and fresh local farm products.

#### New American Sustainable Agriculture Program

*Accessibility, availability*

With a more recent growth in our community's New American population many have moved here with farming skills and culturally appropriate food needs. The New American Sustainable Agriculture Project was created to help immigrant and refugee farmers gain access to land, connect farming skills with knowledge of different growing conditions and learn sustainable farming techniques. Now based in Portland with Cultivating Communities the Fresh Start Farms are located on 30 leased acres of the Packard-Littlefield Farm in Lisbon, ME. Farmers operate CSA's, sell at farmers markets, and wholesale. They sell to restaurants and other growers. It's one more way to help uprooted families sustain their families once again and bring value to their community.

#### Seniors Plus

*Accessibility, affordability, food assistance, social capital*

Seniors Plus, Inc. as Western Maine Older Citizens Council in 1972, is a private non-profit located in Lewiston, ME. They serve western ME. Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin counties. Their mission is to enrich the lives of seniors and adults with disabilities by supporting their independence, dignity, and quality of life. They aim to be the area expert on aging, help people have choices about where they live, and support the health of those communities to better serve their customers. Seniors Plus provides three important nutrition services to the aging and disabled community. The goal is to provide a minimum of one-third their daily nutritional needs.

- **Meals on Wheels, local agency program - *accessibility***  
The Meals on Wheels program meets three important needs: A nutritious meal delivered to their residence, a daily check in from a familiar face, and socialization with the driver which may be the only person they see in a day or week sometimes. The meals are provided with a suggested \$3 donation per meal. The CFA states program has been stable for over a decade and funding is not growing.
- **Lunch Plus Cafes - *social capital***  
These are community dining services organized in a few locations in a number of the more densely populated areas of the counties served. A nutritious meal low in salt, fat, and sugar is prepared with a suggested donation of \$3 per meal. The meal is available to anyone joining for \$6.50 which can be helpful to caretakers who may travel people to the cafe. Time surrounded by more people also offers a time to socialize with friends they may not otherwise be able to see regularly.
- **Around Town Cafes - *affordability***  
Low participation at collective community meals lead to developing the Around Town Cafes program. A meal vouchers can be picked up from Seniors plus and redeemed at participating area restaurants for specific meals that have been selected to meet a minimum of one-third of an individual's daily dietary needs. A donation of \$5 is suggested per meal. The program enables more choice and available options at a price that can be affordable.

Good Food Council of Lewiston and Auburn  
*Social capital*

Lewiston and Auburn's Good Food Council formed in 2012 and extends back to 2008 when they began work on the Community Food Assessment. This comprehensive study of Lewiston's food landscape is helping to guide community food efforts with an understanding of where food exists in the community, how people access area food resources, and what stands in their way. The GFCLA is a valuable community resource for information about the community food system. They hold community discussion forums to educate the public and connect organizations to build stronger relationships. They look at policy and speak up about it. They are a vital link to the network of community food councils around the state sharing information and resources that aid in building a stronger community food system.

**Gaps identified among these activities – program and networking opportunities**

The working low-income population

There are presently no identified programs that address specifically the working poor and those who do not qualify for assistance but struggle to put healthy and nutritious food on the table. Food bank hours limit access because they are not open at night when the working poor might be available to access assistance without missing work. While there are clearly ample programs available, a large population of the working poor struggle to feed themselves and their families.

Summer can be an especially difficult time for families to feed their children. Parents still have to work and without school in session, food can be more difficult to provide for children. There are very few programs to help with this and few that focus on the use of local food other than Lots to Gardens and local farmers who partner to trade work for produce for struggling families.

Opportunities for education

Education, while a focus for many of the programs, is not always known by the people who need them and the information about the programs is sometimes difficult to access. If an education program where Somalian and Canadian French cuisine was taught using local produce it could be beneficial for both cultural relations and increasing knowledge of local food use.

Availability, and access to well planned community scheduling of programs

Several good programs exist in the area. They scatter around the community attempting to reach a larger population but with limited resources more programs can do better when they work together. Access to these programs is also a limitation so when someone may want to participate they may be limited to the one or two programs nearby. By far the greatest gap continues to be affordability.

Affordability

While many people would like to eat local it presently cannot compete with the prices of superstores like Wal-Mart and their low prices. The ability for farmers to make an honest living while selling their produce and products at an affordable price will be an issue that must be addressed if food access for all is to be successful.