



Demographics and Agriculture in Southeastern Michigan: An Overview

A Preliminary Literature Review



Profiles for the Possibility of a Local Food System in Southeastern Michigan

County Population Profiles

Our five county area of study in southeastern Michigan (composed of Jackson, Lenawee, Monroe, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties, and henceforth referred to as the ‘five county region’), is an area ripe for a more localized food system. The most prominent feature of many successful local food economies is that they geographically contain large urban areas in close proximity to prime agricultural land. The five county region is home to several large cities, including (most prominently) the extensive metropolitan area of Detroit, which contains over two million people. Other cities of moderate size within the region include Jackson and rapidly growing Ann Arbor.



Source: US Census Bureau	Jackson County	Lenawee County	Monroe County	Washtenaw County	Wayne County	Five County Region
Total Population (2000)	158,422	98,890	145,945	322,895	2,061,162	2,787,314
Population Growth by 2030 (%)	4.7	14.6	34.7	38.8	-2.3	5.4
Percentage Urban Dwellers (2000)	58.7	45.9	63.0	82.4	99.3	91.2

County Agricultural Profiles



Simultaneously, the region boasts a substantial agricultural base. The five county region is home to over 5,500 farms, which account for over ten percent of Michigan’s farms. These farms cover almost 100,000 acres of land, and produced a market value of agricultural products worth over \$320 million in 2002, 8.5 percent of the entire state’s total. The counties are among the top producers within Michigan of many farming commodities, including, most notably, sheep, hogs, cattle and calves, as well as corn for grain and soybeans. Despite these predominating commodities, a wide array of farm products originate in the area. In fact, as a state, Michigan’s agricultural products are the second most diverse in the nation, after California.

Source: 2002 US Census of Agriculture	Michigan	Jackson County	Lenawee County	Monroe County	Washtenaw County	Wayne County	Five County Region
Farms	53,315	1,265	1,446	1,183	1,325	319	5,538
Land in Farms (acres)	10,142,958	193,011	353,083	217,421	175,259	21,485	960,259
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold (per \$1000)	3,772,435	43,096	103,357	92,243	54,618	27,559	320,873
\$ % From Crops	62.6	49.2	62.2	93.4	68.6	97.8	73.6
\$ % From Livestock and Poultry	37.4	50.8	37.8	5.9	31.4	2.2	26.4

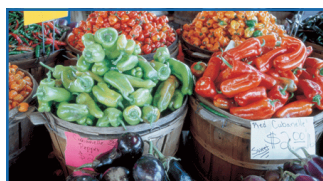


Demographics and Agriculture in Southeastern Michigan: An Overview

A Preliminary Literature Review

County Income Profiles

There are numerous other signs that the five county region could support a viable local food community. The region boasts relatively high household incomes compared with the rest of the state, especially within the region's cities. This has tremendous implications for creating a viable local food system, since higher incomes many times translates into increased discretionary income for people, which could be spent on local food. Education level attainments are also very high for the region, which not only bolsters income, but could sway consumption decisions in favor of local food. Besides these, the five county region has become increasingly and substantially ethnically diverse. It has been documented that this diversity can open up possibilities for direct niche marketing, a staple of many viable local food economies. The numerous institutional buyers in the region



also pose a significant demand base that could be tapped in supporting local food. Governor Jennifer Granholm's recent "Buy Michigan First" initiative, which allows state-based food providers to take precedence for contracts in Michigan's schools, jails, or government cafeterias may be the impetus needed to engender a substantial and viable local food system within the state.

Source: US Census Bureau	Jackson County	Lenawee County	Monroe County	Washtenaw County	Wayne County	Five County Region
Median Household Income (1999)	43,171	45,739	51,743	51,990	40,776	Michigan-44,667
Minority Population Increase from 1990-2000 (%)	3.0	1.9	1.6	5.4	5.8	5.2
Population with Associate's Degree or Higher (%)	24.3	22.3	21.7	54.1	23.1	26.7

Farm Income Profiles

Since the overall trend throughout the United States has been a shift from small to medium sized, owner operated farms to large, non-locally owned industrial farms which integrate processing and distributing, smaller local farms have increasingly had to turn to alternative markets and/or alternative livelihoods in order to survive economically. Since this is the case, the niche that local food provides may be an option farmers can turn to. The yearly net income for a typical farm in the five county region is less than \$10,000, and many farmers have augmented their incomes by engaging in employment in addition to or instead of farming. Many farmers near to urban fringes have resorted to selling their farmland, which developers are willing to pay a high price for.



Source: 2002 US Census of Agriculture	Jackson County	Lenawee County	Monroe County	Washtenaw County	Wayne County	Michigan
Net income avg. per farm (\$)	4,067	9,493	10,795	4,093	10,374	13,585
Farming as Principal Operator's Primary Occupation (%)	48.4	53.1	54.5	49.4	43.9	54.5
Farms selling less than \$2500 (%)	49.9	44.9	34.8	47.8	47.3	43.7
Avg. estimated value of farmland and buildings per acre (\$)	2,902	2,516	3,152	4,739	6,829	2,667



Demographics and Agriculture in Southeastern Michigan: An Overview

A Preliminary Literature Review

Farm Size Profiles



As a result of the aforementioned pressures, the amount of farmland has shrunk by almost 50,000 acres in the five county region from 1987 until 2002, and medium size farms (180-999 acres) continue to become less prevalent. Meanwhile, the numbers of large and small farms throughout the region have steadily increased. During this same period of time, the amount of farms selling smaller values of products has jumped considerably.

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002	Five County Total 2002	Five County Total 1997	Five County Total 1992	Five County Total 1987
Farms	5,538	4,695	4,795	5,304
Land in Farms (acres)	960,259	946,795	975,452	1,009,918
Average Size of Farm (acres)	780	941	913	855
Farms by size:				
1-9 acres	436	367	339	382
10-49 acres	2,216	1,445	1,399	1,509
50-179 acres	1,701	1,615	1,646	1,881
180-499 acres	699	767	892	1,003
500-999 acres	286	314	351	376
1000 or more	201	187	168	153
Farms by value of sales:				
Less than \$2500	2,477	1,289	1,104	1,269
\$2500-\$4999	496	451	550	744
\$5000-\$9999	481	580	710	813
\$10,000-\$24,999	753	802	845	947
\$25,000-\$49,999	405	502	499	520
\$50,000-\$99,999	339	359	410	389
\$100,000 or more	587	712	677	622

These trends are alarming for the viability of farming throughout the five county region of Southeast Michigan. However, possibilities exist for the creation of an intentionally local food system that may help to bolster farming sustainability, maintaining the rich agricultural heritage within the region that goes back generations.

For More Information:

To submit additional resources or to provide feedback, please contact the University of Michigan Local Food Masters' Project Team at foodsys@umich.edu.

The Local Food Masters' Project Team consists of five University of Michigan graduate students from the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Our objective is to work with FSEP throughout the 2006 calendar year to provide research support and tools to begin to realize the organization's preliminary goals.

Primary outcomes will include: 1) a review of local food system research focused tightly on issues and components of local food systems germane to the Southeast Michigan region; (2) a profile of the community food system within the five-county area; (3) an in-depth analysis of the viability of an intentional local food system in the region with recommendations for increasing access to and promoting efficient, effective distribution of local foods; and (4) an organizational assessment of FSEP during its first year in existence. In support of FSEP's mission, outputs will inform future efforts to develop food system networks and collaborative multi-stakeholder partnerships, and to promote entrepreneurial opportunities within a five-county region of Southeast Michigan.