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Tools for Community Self-determination

Central Plains and Upper Pecos region Local Farm & Food Economy

Highlights of a data compilation
by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis)
for
New Mexico Bioneers
July 27, 2009

*This bioregion encompasses DeBaca, Guadalupe, Harding, Lincoln,
Mora, San Miguel, & Torrance Counties of New Mexico.*

Note: Bioregional boundaries do not follow county lines. However, data used in this summary are reported only by county. This regional overview covers the counties listed in their entirety, which is only an approximation of the defined bioregion.

Central Plains and Upper Pecos Region: (Bureau of Economic Analysis)

77,948 residents receive \$1.8 billion of income annually (2006). Real personal income has increased three-fold since 1969, in part due to population increase. Although population has increased to 1.6 times its 1969 level, there has been only limited public planning to assure a secure and stable food supply.

Issues affecting low-income residents of Central Plains and Upper Pecos Region:

33,323 residents (43%) 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 earn a combined \$318 million per year, including \$62 million buying food. Their food purchases are supplemented by SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and by WIC coupons (these two benefits combined generally amount to about 10-15% of low-income food expenditures). Low-income households alone lost net assets of \$20 million in the year 2007. *Data from Federal Census of 2000, & Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

Food-related health conditions in New Mexico:

One-fifth (20%) of New Mexico residents have no health insurance — the second highest rate in the U.S. Only half of state employers offer health coverage.¹ This lack of insurance carries significant public costs, since both county governments and medical facilities pay for treating customers who are not covered. Costs of this treatment are estimated to be \$6 billion per year.²

¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, State summary for New Mexico, <http://covertheuninsured.org/>, accessed May 24, 2009.

² New Mexico Human Services Department (2007). "Summary of New Mexico's Universal Health Coverage

Food has become a leading cause of death in the U.S, rivaling tobacco. A high-calorie diet, combined with a lack of exercise, accounts for one-fifth of the annual deaths in the U.S.³ Six of the fifteen leading causes of death are related to poor diet and low physical activity.⁴

60% of New Mexico residents are overweight or obese, with one-third (34%) overweight and more than one-quarter (26%) obese. Nearly four of every five state residents (78%) eat fewer fruits and vegetables that nutritionists recommend (five servings per day), and 22% report they have no physical activity. 7.8% of state residents have been diagnosed with diabetes. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

The region's ranches and farms (U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007)

Agriculture Census data for 2007 were released February 4, 2009. Note that the Census of Agriculture uses the term "farm" to include both ranches and farms.

Land:

- 2,875 ranches and farms. This is a 25% increase in ranches and farms since 2002.
- Central Plains and Upper Pecos region has 14% of New Mexico's ranches and farms.
- 1,209 (42%) farms are less than 180 acres.
- 892 (25%) of these are 1,000 acres or more.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50-179 acres, with a total of 564 farms (20% of farms).
- Average farm size is 3,521 acres, 170% of New Mexico's average.
- The region has 10 million acres of land in ranches and farms.
- This amounts to 23% of the state's farmland.
- The region's farms harvested 50,520 acres of cropland.
- 1,013 (35%) farms have a total of 68,932 acres of irrigated land.
- 155 farms receive irrigation water from the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Average value of land and buildings per farm is \$1,046,935. This is 150% of the state average of \$696,081.

Sales (Note that there may be discrepancies between Ag Census data and Bureau of Economic Analysis data, below):

- \$122 million of crops and livestock sold (2007), 6% of state ag sales.
- This is a 10% increase in sales over 2002 sales of \$111 million.
- Total farm production expenses were \$126 million, an increase of 20% over 2002 production costs of \$105 million.
- The largest expense item in farm production was feed purchases, at \$21 million. Depreciation costs ranked second, totaling \$17 million. Livestock costs totaled \$16 million, while labor costs ranked fourth at \$15 million. The region's farmers also spent \$14 million

Reform Efforts." SCI/Academy Health Summer Workshop for State Officials, August 2. Viewed May 24, 2009, at www.statecoverage.org/files/2007_SCI_Summer_Meeting_Esquivel.ppt.

³ McGinnis, J.M. & W.H. Foegen (1993). "Actual causes of death in the United States." *JAMA* 270(18):2207-12; and Mokdad, A.H, J.S. Marks, D.F. Stroup, & J.I. Gerberding (2000). "Actual causes of death in the United States." *JAMA* 291(10):1238-45 [with published corrections in *JAMA* (2005), 293(3), 293-294.]

⁴ Heron M., D.L. Hoyert, J. Xu, C. Scott, & B. Tejada (2008). *Deaths: preliminary data for 2006*. National Vital Statistics Report 56:16. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_16.pdf.

on supplies, repair and maintenance, and \$13 million for gasoline, fuels, and oils. In addition, farmers and ranchers spent \$11 million paying interest on farm debt.

- \$26 million of crops were sold (22% of sales), \$10 million (63%) more than in 2002. *Note that Harding County sales totals, though small, were suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality, and are not included in this total.*
- \$96 million of livestock and products were sold (78% of sales). This is about the same as 2002 sales. *Note that Harding County sales totals were suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality, so some sales are not included in this total.*
- 1,997 (69%) of the region's farms sold less than \$10,000 of products in 2007. Their aggregate sales of \$3.7 million amounted to 2% of the region's farm product sales.
- 279 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 of products, an aggregate total of \$97 million, 79% of region farm product sales.
- 373 farms received \$3.6 million of federal subsidies in 2007. *[Note that Agriculture Census data differ from Bureau of Economic Analysis data; see below.]*
- 69% (1,989) of region's farms reported net losses in 2007 even after subsidies are taken into account. This is slightly greater than the New Mexico rate of 65%.

Principal Products sold in 2007 (**Sales data for many of these products is suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality*):

	\$ millions
Cattle	<i>suppressed*</i>
Milk & Dairy	<i>suppressed*</i>
Forage	<i>suppressed*</i>

Grains, Dry Edible Beans, Oil Crops, and others:

- *Much of the data regarding acreage and sales of the region's grain and edible bean farms is suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality.*
- 13 region farms raised 56,011 bushels of corn on 554 acres.
- 13 of the region's farmers sold 3,234 bushels of wheat, primarily winter wheat, on 1,084 acres.
- 13 farms raise oats.
- 7 farms produce edible dry beans or oil seeds.

Cattle & Dairy:

- 1,771 ranches and farms hold an inventory of 209,490 cattle and calves.
- 129,818 cattle were sold from 1,482 ranches and farms in 2007.
- *Cattle sales figures are not reliable due to suppression of data by USDA to protect confidentiality.*
- 24 farms produced dairy products.
- *Production and sales figures for milk and dairy products are not reliable due to suppression of data by USDA to protect confidentiality.*
- 692 farms produced 134,981 dry tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 40,298 acres of cropland. Of these, 601 farms sold forage.
- In addition, 21 farms produced 176,921 tons of corn silage on 7,088 acres.

Other livestock & animal products:

- 47 farms sold 592 hogs and pigs.

- 56 farms hold an inventory of 219 hogs and pigs.
- 188 farms sold a total of \$1.2 million of horses.
- 218 farms raise laying hens, holding an inventory of 5,090.
- 127 farms held an inventory of 25,381 sheep, lambs, and goats.

Nursery, Landscape & Ornamental Crops:

- 25 farms sold more than \$8 million of ornamental and nursery crops.

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

- 39 farms produced vegetables; acreage and sales were suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality. Only 23 farms produced vegetables in 2002.
- 4 farms raised potatoes.

Detailed lists of vegetables harvested in 2007, as recorded by the Agriculture Census:

Note: (D) means data suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality; (Z) means less than half of an acre.

De Baca County

	Farms	Harvested acres
Cantaloupes	1	(D)
Peppers, Chile	-	-
Tomatoes in open	-	-
Watermelons	1	(D)

Guadalupe County

	Farms	Harvested acres
Beans, Green Lima	1	(D)
Cantaloupes	1	(D)
Cucumbers & Pickles	1	(D)
Lettuce, all	1	(D)
Lettuce, Leaf	1	(D)
Onions, Dry	-	-
Onions, Green	1	(D)
Peas, Southern	1	(D)
Peppers, Bell	-	-
Peppers, Chile	-	-
Potatoes	1	(D)
Pumpkins	3	2
Squash, all	2	(D)
Squash, Winter	2	(D)
Sweet Corn	1	(D)
Tomatoes in open	4	2
Vegetables, other	2	(D)
Watermelons	1	(D)

Harding County

	Farms	Harvested acres
(None reported)		

Lincoln County

	Farms	Harvested acres
Squash, all	1	(D)
Squash, Summer	1	(D)
Tomatoes in open	1	(D)

Mora County

	Farms	Harvested acres
Broccoli	-	-
Cabbage, Head	-	-
Cauliflower	-	-
Cucumbers & Pickles	-	-
Garlic	2	(D)
Peas, Green	2	(D)
Potatoes	2	(D)
Pumpkins	2	(D)
Spinach	-	-
Sweet Corn	1	(D)

San Miguel County

	Farms	Harvested acres
Beans, Snap	2	(D)
Cantaloupes	-	-
Cucumbers & Pickles	2	(D)
Garlic	-	-
Peas, Green	1	(D)
Peppers, Chile	1	(D)
Squash, all	2	(D)
Squash, Summer	2	(D)
Sweet Corn	6	
Tomatoes in open	2	(D)
Vegetables, other	2	(D)
Watermelons	2	(D)

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Torrance County

	Farms	Harvested acres
Beans, Snap	5	2
Beets	2	(D)
Cabbage, Head	2	(D)
Carrots	3	(Z)
Cucumbers & Pickles	2	(D)
Lettuce, all	2	(D)
Lettuce, Leaf	2	(D)
Mustard Greens	-	-
Onions, Dry	-	-
Onions, Green	2	(D)
Peas, Green	1	(D)
Peppers, Chile	4	5
Potatoes	1	(D)
Pumpkins	7	111
Squash, all	8	5
Squash, Summer	5	1
Squash, Winter	3	4
Sweet Corn	2	(D)
Tomatoes in open	2	(D)
Turnips	1	(D)
Vegetables, other	1	(D)

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

- The region has 98 fruit and nut farms with 469 acres of orchard.

Detailed list of fruit acreage in 2007, as recorded by the Agriculture Census:

Note: (D) means data suppressed by USDA to protect confidentiality; (Z) means less than half of an acre.

De Baca County

	Farms	Acres
Pecans	4	8

Guadalupe County

	Farms	Acres
Apples	5	4
Apricots	1	(D)
Cherries, Sweet	3	2
Cherries, Tart	1	(D)
Grapes	1	(D)
Other noncitrus	2	(D)

Peaches, all	5		4
Pears, all	4		3
Pecans	1	(D)	
Plums & Prunes	3		2

Harding County

	Farms	Acres
<i>(None recorded)</i>		

Lincoln County

	Farms	Acres
Apples	35	117
Apricots	1	(D)
Cherries, Sweet	1	(D)
Cherries, Tart	1	(D)
Grapes	2	(D)
Other noncitrus	1	(D)
Peaches, all	6	22
Pears, all	5	13
Pecans	8	118

Mora County

	Farms	Acres
Apples	15	29
Cherries, Tart	2	(D)
Other noncitrus	2	(D)
Peaches, all	2	(D)
Pears, all	2	(D)
Plums & Prunes	6	3

San Miguel County

	Farms	Acres
Apples	8	30
Grapes	2	(D)
Other noncitrus	1	(D)
Peaches, all	3	4
Pecans	1	(D)

Detailed list of berry acreage in 2007, as recorded by the Agriculture Census *(if a given county in the region is not listed as producing berries, the count is not named below):*

Guadalupe County

	Farms	Acres
Raspberries	1	(D)
Strawberries	1	(D)

Lincoln County

	Farms	Acres
Blackberries	1	(D)
Raspberries	1	(D)
Strawberries	1	(D)

Mora County

	Farms	Acres
Raspberries	2	(D)

San Miguel County

	Farms	Acres
Loganberries	2	(D)

Torrance County

	Farms	Acres
Other berries	2	(D)

Direct & organic sales:

- 126 ranches and farms sell \$747,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 29% increase in the number of farms selling direct (116 in 2002), and a 58% increase in direct sales, over \$474,000 in 2002. Direct sales account for 0.6% of the region's farm sales, larger than the national average of 0.4%.
- The region's farmers make up 8% of the farms selling direct in the state, and account for 7% of New Mexico's direct sales (\$11.2 million of direct sales from 1,529 New Mexico farms in 2007, an increase from \$6.6 million in 2002).
- The New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission reports that 16 farmers are certified organic, operating 54,894 acres of certified land — over half of the 105,551 certified acres in the state.
- Harding County boasts the largest number of certified acres in the region and in the state, with 38,902.
- According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, 21 region farms sold organic foods (\$173,000 sales). This data, however, suppresses sales from Guadalupe, Harding, and Torrance counties. (Harding has 71% of the certified acres in the region, according to NMOCC state data).

- This is 8% of New Mexico farms selling organic, and 2% of state sales (\$11.2 million), as recorded by the U.S. Census of Agriculture.
- Local farm lists show two Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms in the region including one in San Miguel County, and one in Torrance County, out of 20 total for the state of New Mexico.
- According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, 14 farms in the region market through community supported agriculture (CSA), 10% of New Mexico's total of 139.
- 162 farms produce added-value products on the farm (19% of New Mexico's total).

Conservation practices:

- 758 farms use rotational management or intensive grazing, 23% of those in the state.
- 267 farms use conservation practices, 12% of those in the state.
- 132 farms generate some electricity on the farm, 24% of those in the state.

State of New Mexico Highlights (Agriculture Census 2007)

- New Mexico has 20,930 farms, 38% more than the 15,170 farms in 2002.
- Nevertheless, the number of acres in farms decreased 4%, to 43 million acres in 2007.
- 8,904 farm operators are Latino.
- 6,611 farm operators are Native American.
- The state has 24,214 White farm operators.
- There are 43 Asian-American, 66 African-American, and 26 Pacific Islander farm operators.
- New Mexico farmers sold \$2.2 billion of crops and livestock in 2007, up 28% from \$1.7 billion in sales five years before.
- This includes \$1.6 billion of livestock, and \$553 million in crops.
- The Agriculture Census lists production expenses as \$1.9 billion for all state farms.
- Government payments to farmers decreased 14%, to \$43 million in 2007 from \$50 million in 2002.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1-9 acres, with 6,400 farms.
- The next most prevalent size is 10-49 acres, with 4,300 farms.
- 3,600 farms are more than 1,000 acres.
- New Mexico ranks 9th in the U.S. for dairy sales, with \$1 billion. This is also the most important farm commodity sold in the state, in terms of sales.
- Second most important product in New Mexico is cattle, with \$576 million in sales.
- The state's farms held an inventory of 1.5 million cattle, down from 1.7 million in 1997.
- The most important single crop raised is forage, with \$139 million sold from 366,000 acres.
- 302,000 acres are devoted to wheat production.
- New Mexico farms sell \$105 million of fruits and nuts, and \$89 million of vegetables.

New Mexico's top 25 farm products in 2007 (Economic Research Service)

Note that these ERS data do not always agree with results from the farm census, above. See also chart on next page

1	Dairy products	1,353.8
2	Cattle and calves	951.8
3	Hay	195.4
4	Pecans	96.2
5	Onions	63.4
6	Greenhouse/nursery	62.4
7	Wheat	38.5
8	Cotton	35.0
9	Peppers, chile	32.9
10	Corn	23.9
11	Potatoes	14.3
12	Sorghum grain	9.9
13	Peanuts	7.0
14	Dry beans	6.1
15	Sheep and lambs	5.4
16	Wool	1.3
17	Apples	1.0
18	Honey	0.5
19	Hogs	0.2
20	Mohair	0.2

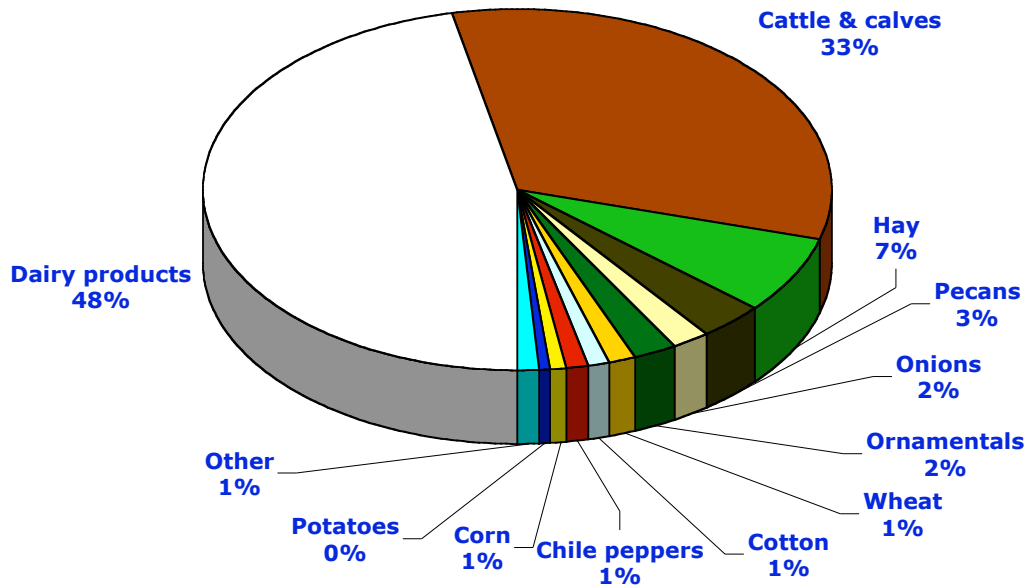
Note: chicken eggs and farm chickens were also listed among New Mexico's top 25 products, but sales figures for these products were not released by ERS.

Note also that at \$11 million, direct sales from farmers to consumers amount to more than the value of the 12th ranking product, sorghum grain.

New Mexico's top 25 farm products in 2007 (Economic Research Service)

See table on previous page

Top 25 commodities sold by New Mexico farms, 2007

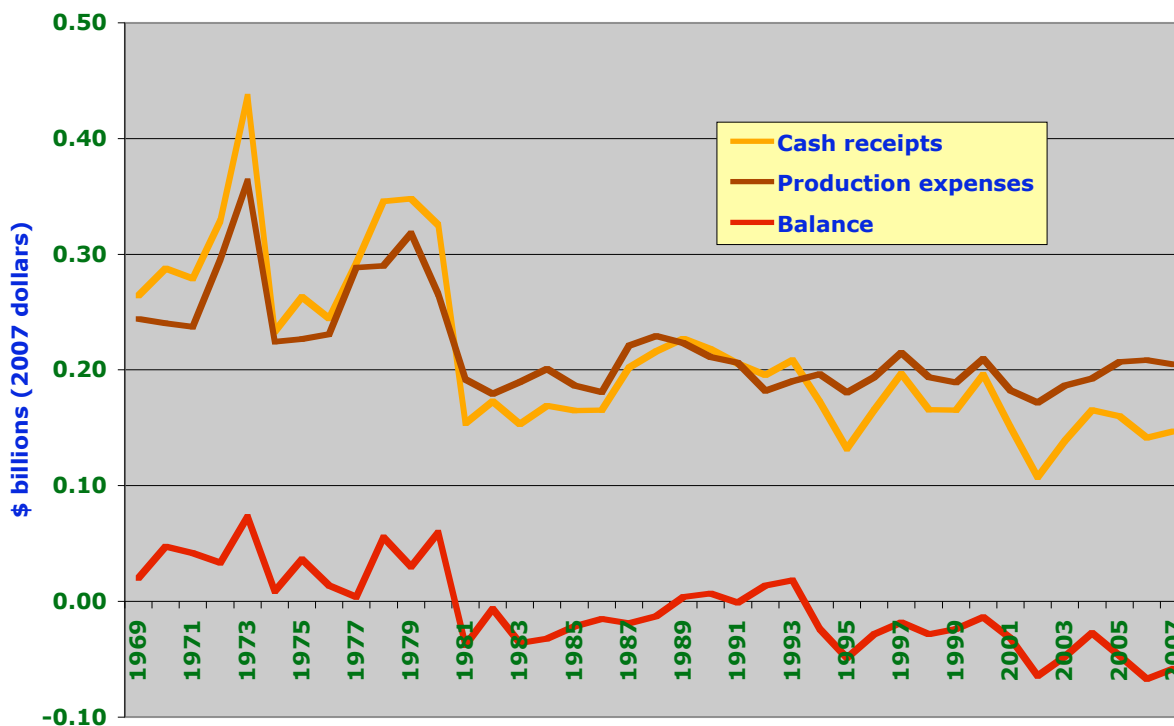


Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (Bureau of Economic Analysis):

Note: Bureau of Economic Analysis farm income data differ from Agriculture Census data.

Farm Production Balance in Central Plains & Upper Pecos region, New Mexico, 1969-2007



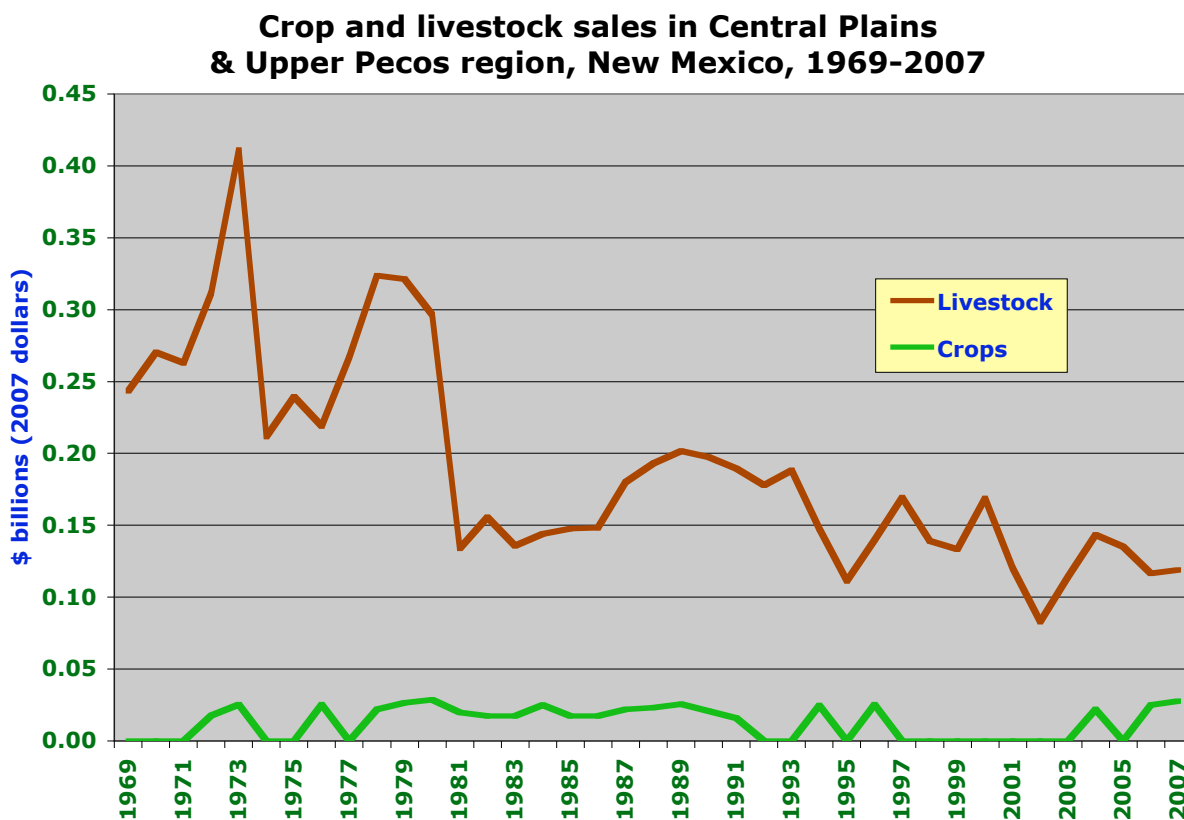
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis. Note that the Farm Production Balance for Torrance County farmers has been positive since 1997 except for the year 2002; this makes totals for the rest of the region higher than if Torrance were not reported.

Upper Pecos region farmers sell \$172 million of commodities per year (1981-2007 average), spending \$197 million to raise them, for an average loss of \$25 million each year. The farm sector as a whole has not earned a positive cash flow from raising commodities (though clearly some individual farms have made money) since 1994.

Overall, farm producers have experienced losses of \$667 million since 1981. Moreover, 69% of the region's farms and ranches reported a net loss in 2007 (Agriculture Census), even after subsidies are taken into account.

Upper Pecos region farmers and ranchers earned \$78 million less by selling commodities in 1969 than they earned in 2007 (in 2007 dollars). Sales of livestock and related products appear to be declining steadily since 1994, while crop income has stayed fairly constant since 1969. The most steadily increasing cost of production is feed costs.

Farmers and ranchers earn another \$11 million per year of farm-related income — primarily rental income for land (27-year average for 1981-2007). Federal farm support payments averaged \$10 million per year over the years 2001-2005.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis. Note missing data marked at zero for crop income for several years.

Upper Pecos region consumers (2007):

Upper Pecos region consumers spend \$203 million buying food each year, including \$114 million for home use. Most of this food is produced outside the region. \$747,000 of food products (0.6% of farm cash receipts, and 0.4% of local consumer needs) are sold by 126 farms directly to consumers, but not always to Upper Pecos region consumers, since this includes internet sales.

Estimated change in net assets for all region households was a combined loss of \$107 million in 2007 alone (BLS). This places additional pressure on Upper Pecos region residents as they pay for food.

Farm and food economy summary:

Farmers lose \$25 million each year producing food commodities, spending \$66 million buying inputs from external suppliers, for a total outflow of \$90 million from the region economy.

Meanwhile, consumers spend more than \$180 million buying food from outside. Thus, total loss to the region is \$270 million of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to more than double the value of all commodities raised in the region, and would be more than enough to feed all residents.

Upper Pecos region: markets for food eaten at home (2007):

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 25
Fruits & vegetables	21
Cereals and bakery products	14
Dairy products	13
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	42

If Upper Pecos region consumers purchased only 15% of the food they need for home use directly from region farmers, this would produce \$17 million of new farm income in Upper Pecos region — considerably more than all government subsidies given farms in the region.

State of New Mexico: markets for food eaten at home (2007)

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

New Mexicans purchase \$5 billion of food per year, \$2.8 billion of this to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 620
Fruits & vegetables	518
Cereals and bakery products	358
Dairy products	315
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	1,043

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>

Centers for Disease Control: Behavior Risk Factors Surveillance System

BRFSS <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss-smart/>

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)

Big Cities Health Inventory <http://www.naccho.org/>

For more information:

To see results from *Finding Food in Farm Country* studies in other counties of the U.S.:

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

To read the original *Finding Food in Farm Country* study from Southeast Minnesota (written by Ken Meter and Jon Rosales for the Community Design Center and the Southeast Minnesota 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>

To get a brief list of essential food facts, many of which are cited in the presentation above,

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

To link to further analysis of farm and food economies in the U.S.:

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

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