

# Crossroads Resource Center

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## **Tools for Community Self-determination**

### **Atlanta Metro Region & The State of Georgia Farm & Food Economies**

*Highlights of a data compilation*  
by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis) for

### **Georgia Organics & Emory University**

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*This overview contains data for the state of Georgia as well as the Atlanta metro region of 28 counties: Barron, Barton, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, & Walton Counties.*

#### **Atlanta Metro Region (2006)**

5.1 million residents receive \$185 billion income annually. Metro residents pay \$3 billion of taxes each year. Real personal income (adjusted for inflation) has increased more than fourfold since 1969, with rising population an important contributing factor. Despite the rapid increase in population, little policy or planning has been devoted to ensuring a secure food supply.

Moreover, 1.1 million residents, 21% of the population, live below 185% of the poverty level — a bare minimum living wage, and the level at which children qualify for free or reduced school lunch.

#### **The region's farms (Agricultural Census, 2002)**

*This is the most recent Census data currently available. Data for 2007 are scheduled to be released in early 2009. Note that this report includes 2006 data for the state of Georgia, page 13.*

#### *Land:*

- 9,370 farms. This is 0.1% of Georgia's total.
- 109 (1%) of these are acres or 1,000 more in size.
- 5,006 (54%) farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average farm size is 109 acres.
- Average number of farms per county is 335.
- The region has 1.0 million acres of land in farms.
- This amounts to 9.6% of the state's farmland.

- 147,266 acres of harvested cropland.
- 530 farms (6%) have a total of 11,000 acres of irrigated land.
- Average value of land and buildings per farm is \$445,000. This is 97% of the state average.

**Farm size in Metro Atlanta region:**

<b>Size category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct of region</b>
1 to 9 acres	1,017	11%
10 to 49 acres	3,989	43%
50 to 179 acres	3,032	32%
180 to 499 acres	1,000	11%
500 to 999 acres	223	2%
1,000 acres or more	109	1%

*Sales:*

- \$623 million of crops and livestock sold (2002).
- \$93 million of crops sold (15% of sales).
- \$531 million of livestock and products sold (85% of sales).
- 327 farms (3%) account for \$423 million (68%) of the region's farms sales. Each of these farms sells more than \$500,000 of products each year.
- The 7,236 (77% of the region's farms), each selling less than \$10,000 of products per year, sell a total of \$13 million of farm products.
- Poultry is the main product of the Atlanta region, with \$469 million in sales. This amounts to 88% of all livestock sales, and 75% of all agricultural sales.
- Next largest product is nursery and greenhouse crops, with sales of \$66 million.
- The number of farms/ranches selling livestock, poultry and related products fell 17% from 1997 to 2002 (6,351 to 5,275), while the amount of livestock products sold decreased 2% from \$542 million to \$531 million.
- 793 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 of products.
- 69% of region farms (6,500 of 9,370) reported net losses in 2002.
- Federal support payments are relatively minor, with a total of \$2.8 million received by all farmers of the region in 2006 [Bureau of Economic Analysis].

**Farm product sales in Metro Atlanta region:**

<b>Sales Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct of region</b>
Less than \$2,500	5,096	54%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	1,041	11%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	1,099	12%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	869	9%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	329	4%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	143	2%
\$100,000 or more	793	8%

*Poultry (see detail by county, below):*

- Poultry is the main product of the Atlanta region, with \$469 million in sales. This amounts to 88% of all livestock sales, and 75% of all agricultural sales.
- This wholesale value is more than double the retail value of chickens purchased (\$206 million) by Atlanta consumers to eat at home.
- The number of farms selling poultry fell 8%, and sales fell 1%, from 1997 to 2002.
- 584 farms hold an inventory of 231 million broiler chickens.
- 249 farms hold an inventory of 2.5 million laying hens.

*Cattle & Dairy:*

- 3,786 farms sold \$38 million of cattle in 2002; this is an 8% decline in sales, and a 28% fall in the number of farms, from 1997.
- 5,034 ranches and farms hold an inventory of 195,000 cattle.
- 60 farms sold \$5 million of milk and dairy products. This is a decline in sales of 42%, with 26% fewer farms selling dairy products, in 2002 compared to 1997.
- 2,897 farms produce 230,000 tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 111,000 acres. This is 31% of the region's farms, and 20 percent of Georgia farms, that raise forage.

*Other livestock & animal products:*

- 829 farms sold \$4.4 million in horses in 2002.
- 300 farms sold \$353,000 of sheep and goats.
- Total inventory of sheep and goats is 1,004.
- Hog and pig sales fell 51% from \$136,000 in 1997 to \$67,000 in 2002. The number of farms selling hogs fell 45% over the same period.
- 78 farms hold an inventory of 835 hogs and pigs.

*Grains and edible dry beans*

- 93 farms raise 3,122 acres of corn for grain, producing 308,000 bushels.
- 80 farms raise 293,000 bushels of winter wheat on 7,018 acres.
- 26 farms raise 59,187 bushels of soybeans on 2,271 acres.

*Peanuts & Cotton*

- 19 farms raise \$100,000 of cotton on 404 acres, down from sales of \$3 million in 1997. *Note that the statewide trend in Georgia from 2002 – 2006 was to produce more cotton.*
- 2 farms raise peanuts.

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

- 190 farms work 922 acres to raise \$1.8 million of vegetables and potatoes, a small fraction of the state's \$384 million of vegetable production.
- 9 farms raise sweet potatoes, and 2 raise potatoes.

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

- The region has 334 farms with a total of 3,100 acres of orchards, which sold \$1.9 million of fruits and vegetables. This is 2% of the Georgia total of \$122 million.
- Pecans are an important tree crop. These sales are included in the above figures.

*Nursery and Greenhouse plants*

- This sector accounts for \$66 million in sales, 71% of the region's crop sales.

- This accounts for 10% of all agricultural sales in the metro region.
- This is 21% of the state's nursery and greenhouse production.
- 63 farms raise \$336,000 of Christmas trees.

*Direct and organic sales:*

- 335 farms sell \$1 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 2% rise in the number of farms (328 in 1997) selling direct, and a 37% increase in direct sales, from 1997 to 2002.
- Atlanta metro farmers account for 21% of the state's farms selling direct, and 11% the state's \$9 million in direct sales.
- 8 region farms sold organic foods (\$274,000 sales).
- 32 farms in Georgia sold \$671,000 of organic food products.

**Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (BEA):**

Metro Atlanta ranchers and farmers sell \$831 million of food commodities per year (1969-2006 average over 38 years), spending \$715 million to raise them, for an average gain of \$116 million each year. Note that these sales figures compiled by the BEA are higher than cash receipts recorded by the USDA Agriculture Census (above).

Overall, farm producers have earned a surplus of \$4.4 billion since 1969. Total cash flow for all crops and livestock produced on the region's farms has been positive each year except for 1980 and 1987. Nevertheless, 69% of the region's farms and ranches lost money in 2002 (Ag Census). Metro Atlanta farmers and ranchers earned \$9 million less by selling commodities in 2006 than they earned in 1969 (in 2006 dollars).

Farmers and ranchers earn another \$42 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, and rental income (thirty-eight year average for 1969-2006). Federal farm support payments are relatively small, averaging \$10 million per year for the entire region for the years 1969-2006.

**The region's consumers:**

Atlanta Region consumers spend \$8.5 billion buying food each year, including \$4.7 billion for home use. Most of this food is produced outside the region. Only \$1 million of food products (0.1% of farm cash receipts) are sold by farmers directly to consumers.

Estimated change in net assets for all region households combined was a loss of \$5.4 billion in 2006 (BLS), primarily due to new debt that was assumed.

**Farm and food economy summary:**

Farmers gain \$116 million each year producing food commodities, and earn \$42 million of farm-related income as well as collecting \$10 million of federal supports. Yet farmers spend \$250 million buying inputs from external suppliers, for a net outflow of \$82 million from the region's farm production. Many farm families have a member working off the farm to help cover these losses.

Meanwhile, consumers spend over \$6 billion buying food produced outside the region. Thus, total loss to the region is \$6 billion of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to six times the value of all farm commodities raised in the region.

**Atlanta metro region: markets for food eaten at home (2006):**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 1,150
Fruits & vegetables	771
Cereals and bakery products	613
Dairy products	494
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	1,691

If Atlanta consumers bought only 18% of the food they need for home use directly from farmers in the region, it would provide farmers with as much income as the entire value of all commodities now produced by metro Atlanta farms.

Georgia consumers purchase \$19.9 billion of food each year, \$11 billion of that to eat at home, and another \$8.9 billion eating out.

**State of Georgia: markets for food eaten at home (2006):**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 2,693
Fruits & vegetables	1,805
Cereals and bakery products	1,435
Dairy products	1,156
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	3,959

**State of Georgia: per capita fruit consumption (rapid estimate — USDA data)**

<b>Fruit</b>	<b>Pounds / year</b>
Apples	405,913,376
Apricots	8,034,189
Avocados	23,355,200
Bananas	250,087,482
Blackberries	840,787
Blueberries	2,428,941
Cantaloupe	103,697,088
Cherries	15,507,853
Cranberries	19,057,843
Dates	1,681,574
Figs	4,297,357
Grapes	185,160,026
Grapefruit	118,644,416
Honeydew melons	20,552,576
Kiwi	4,577,619
Lemons	82,677,408
Limes	14,293,382
Mangoes	18,403,898
Olives	11,677,600
Oranges	719,994,106
Papayas	7,380,243
Peaches	91,645,805
Pears	51,568,282
Pineapple	122,661,510
Plums	30,268,339
Raspberries	934,208
Strawberries	56,799,846
Tangerines	31,763,072
Watermelons	129,854,912

**State of Georgia: per capita vegetable consumption (rapid estimate— USDA data)**

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Pounds/year</b>
Artichokes: Fresh	8,968,397
Asparagus: Fresh, canned, frozen	11,584,179
Beans (Dry)	68,757,709
Beans (Snap): Fresh, Canned, Frozen	68,384,026
Broccoli: Fresh, freezing	66,702,451
Brussels Sprouts: Fresh	2,148,678
Cabbage: Fresh, canning	90,057,651
Carrots: Fresh, canning, freezing	117,429,946
Cauliflower: Fresh, freezing	16,815,744
Celery: all uses	61,003,782
Corn (Sweet): Fresh, canning, freezing	245,042,758
Cucumbers: Fresh, canning	107,807,603
Eggplant: Fresh	6,726,298
Escarole & Endive: Fresh	2,896,045
Garlic: Fresh	23,355,200
Lettuce (Head): Fresh	209,169,171
Lettuce (Romaine): Fresh	77,352,422
Mushrooms: Fresh, Canning	39,797,261
Onions: Fresh, Dehydrating	184,692,922
Peas (Green): Canning, Freezing	26,531,507
Peas, Lentils, Dry	6,539,456
Peppers (Bell): All uses	65,020,877
Peppers (Chile): all uses	46,616,979
Potatoes: Fresh, Canning, Freezing, Dehydrating & Chips	1,261,928,166
Radishes: Fresh	4,390,778
Spinach: Fresh, Processing	22,234,150
Sweet Potatoes: All Uses	34,472,275
Tomatoes: Canning, Freezing	817,245,158

## **County Summaries (2002 Agriculture Census)**

### **Barrow County**

- The county has 452 farms, one less than in 1997.
- Over half of these farms are less than 50 acres.
- Total farm acreage is 36,092 acres, 22% less than in 1997.
- 99% of the county's \$52 million of farm income derives from livestock sales.
- Poultry sales amount to \$48.3 million, 94% of county farm income.
- The county holds an inventory of 3.8 million broiler chickens.
- Barrow County ranks second in Georgia for number of ducks.
- Cattle sales amount to \$1.9 million.
- Vegetables are raised on 55 acres.

### **Bartow County**

- Number of farms increased 19% from 1997 – 2002, from 494 to 586.
- Nearly 400 of Bartow County's 586 farms are between 10 and 180 acres.
- Three most important products are poultry, nursery crops, and cattle.
- 72% of county farm income comes from poultry sales (\$35 of \$49 million).
- Bartow County holds an inventory of 3.2 million broiler chickens.
- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales amount to \$5.4 million — 74% of crop sales.
- The county ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the state for acres of sod planted.
- The county ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for cattle sales, with \$4.9 million.
- Vegetable sales total \$17,000.
- Fruit and nut sales are not reported by USDA to protect confidentiality.

### **Butts County**

- Butts County has 173 farms, down four from 177 in 1997.
- Two of every three county farms (120 of 173) is between 10 and 180 acres.
- Farm acreage increased 40% from 1997 to 2002, to 36,685 acres.
- During the same period, market value of farm production fell 21%, from \$3.1 million to \$2.5 million.
- Cattle is by far the most significant farm product, with \$1.6 million in sales.
- Cattle sales accounted for 66% of farm sales, and 98% of livestock sales.
- Over half of crop income is earned by selling nursery and greenhouse crops.
- Vegetable sales total \$105,000.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$44,000.
- Ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the state for llama inventory, with 72.
- 2,466 acres are devoted to forage crops.
- 147 acres are devoted to pecan orchards.

### **Carroll County**

- The number of farms in Carroll County rose 14% from 852 in 1997 to 975 in 2002.
- 780 of the county's 975 farms are between 10 and 180 acres.
- \$101 million (95%) of the county's \$106 million of farm sales derives from livestock.
- The county ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for livestock sales.

- Poultry sales total \$95 million, 90% of county farm income.
- Carroll County ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in Georgia, and 56<sup>th</sup> in U.S., for poultry sales.
- County farms hold an inventory of 7.5 million broiler chickens, 7<sup>th</sup> in Georgia.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$4.7 million.
- The county ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state for cattle inventory, with 27,000.
- Carroll County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for acres of forage, with 12,418.
- The county ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the state for acres planted in southern peas, with 198.
- Carroll County ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for number of horses, and 9<sup>th</sup> in horse sales, with \$406,000
- The county ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the state for acres planted in sod.
- Vegetable sales total \$362,000 from 249 acres.
- Fruit and nut sales are not reported by USDA to protect confidentiality.

### **Cherokee County**

- Number of farms fell 8% from 1997 to 2002, from 656 to 606.
- Over half of Cherokee County's 606 farms are between 10 and 49 acres.
- 90% of county's \$51 million of farm sales involve livestock or their products.
- Poultry sales (\$43 million) amount to 95% of livestock income.
- 96% of crop income is earned by selling nursery or greenhouse crops.
- Cherokee County ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in Georgia for number of horses, and 6<sup>th</sup> in sales.
- Vegetable sales total \$46,000 on 34 acres of land, or \$1,350 per acre.

### **Clayton County**

- The number of farms fell 13% from 71 in 1997 to 62 in 2002.
- Nearly half of the county's 62 farms are between 10 and 49 acres.
- Farm acreage decreased from 5,849 in 1997 to 3,218 acres in 2002, a decline of 45%.
- Farm sales fell 43% during the same period, from \$844,000 to \$479,000.
- The primary source of farm income is nursery and greenhouse crops, with \$239,000 (50%) of county farm sales.
- Livestock sales total \$153,000.
- Grapes, apples, and vegetables rank 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> in Georgia's acreage planted, but the number of acres of each crop is not reported by USDA to protect confidentiality.
- Clayton County ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for emu inventory.

### **Cobb County**

- Number of farms rose 10% from 1997 to 2002, from 173 to 191.
- 140 of the county's 190 farms are less than 50 acres.
- Cobb County has a total of 11,000 acres of farmland.
- 94% of county farm sales (\$5.0 of \$5.4 million) are crop sales.
- Most important crops appear to be forage crops, Christmas trees, and flowers, but sales figures are not reported.
- Cobb County ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in acres devoted to Christmas trees and flowers.
- Vegetable sales total \$17,000 on 5 acres of land, or \$3,400 per acre.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$12,000.

### **Coweta County**

- Coweta County has 480 farms in 2002, up 14% from 421 in 1997.
- 340 of the county's 480 farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- The number of farms rose 14%, while acreage increased 26%, from 1997 to 2002.
- Nursery and greenhouse crops are the most important farm products, with \$3.2 million of sales (80% of crop sales and 45% of county farm sales).
- Cattle sales rank second in the county, with \$1.2 million.
- Coweta County ranks 3rd in Georgia for inventory of both horses and llamas.
- The county ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the state for Christmas tree sales, with \$74,000.
- Vegetable sales total \$175,000.

### **Dawson County**

- The number of farms rose 13 percent from 1997 to 2002, from 196 to 222.
- 170 of the county's 222 farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- County farmland totals 20,000 acres.
- Although farm acreage fell 5% from 1997 to 2002, farm sales increased 26% from \$31.5 million to \$39.5 million.
- \$37.6 million (95%) of county farm sales are poultry products.
- Dawson County has an inventory of 3 million broiler chickens.
- Crop sales total \$1 million.
- The county ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the state for acreage devoted to field and grass seeds.

### **DeKalb County**

- The county has 37 farms, 30 of which are under 49 acres. All are under 180 acres.
- The number of farms fell 40% from 1997 to 2002, from 62 to 37.
- DeKalb County has 1,086 acres in production, an 84% decline from the 1997 level of 6,617 acres.
- Farm sales fell 56% during the same period, from 2 million to \$857,000.
- 99% (\$852,000) of county farm sales are crop sales.
- Nursery and greenhouse crops are main products, with \$805,000 in sales (93% of county's farm sales).
- Neither vegetable nor fruit and nut sales are reported by USDA to protect confidentiality.

### **Douglas County**

- Douglas County has 153 farms in 2002, one farm less than in 1997.
- Over half of the county's 153 farms are less than 49 acres.
- Douglas County has 8,000 acres of farmland, down 31 percent from 1997 to 2002.
- Farm sales rose 47% during the same period, from \$1.3 million to \$1.8 million.
- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales total \$663,000 — 80% of county crop sales.
- Livestock sales total \$1.1 million. Of this, cattle sales account for \$374,000.
- Douglas County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Georgia for rabbit inventory, with 1,100.
- Vegetable sales total \$86,000 on 31 acres, or \$2,774 per acre.

### **Fayette County**

- Number of farms in Fayette County fell 2% from 241 farms in 1997 to 235 farms in 2002.
- The county has 18,000 acres on 235 farms.
- 175 of these farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- Crop sales total \$3.3 million, 78% of county farm sales of \$4.1 million.
- Main product is nursery and greenhouse crops, with \$2.8 million in sales (85% of crop sales).
- Cattle sales (\$580,000) and horse sales (\$309,000) amount to 98% of the county's \$904,000 in livestock sales.
- Fayette County ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in Georgia for deer inventory.
- The county ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for Christmas tree acreage, with 170.
- Pecans are the fourth-largest crop in Fayette County, in terms of acreage.
- Vegetable sales total \$70,000.
- Fruit and nut sales (including pecans) total \$196,000.

### **Forsyth County**

- The number of farms fell 9% from 578 to 528 from 1997 to 2002.
- Half of these farms are 10 to 49 acres.
- Poultry and nursery crops are the two most significant products.
- Poultry sales total \$47.7 million, 95% of the county's livestock sales.
- Forsyth County has an inventory of 3.3 million broiler chickens.
- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales total \$5.2 million, 91% of crop sales.
- Vegetable sales total \$75,000 from 34 acres of land.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$49,000.

### **Fulton County**

- Fulton County had 9% fewer farms in 2002 (328) than in 1997 (359).
- 220 of the county's 328 farms are less than 50 acres.
- Farm acreage fell 17% from 1997 to 2002, from 33,622 acres to 27,975 acres.
- During the same period, farm product sales rose 35%, from \$4.4 million to \$6 million.
- Nursery and greenhouse crops are the primary farm product, with \$3.3 million (56%) of the county's farm product sales.
- Horses are the next most important product, accounting for \$1.2 million in sales.
- Fulton County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Georgia for horse sales, and 5<sup>th</sup> in inventory.
- Vegetable sales total \$112,000 on 63 acres.
- Fruit and nut sales (including pecans) total \$98,000.
- Pecans are raised on 51 acres of county land.
- 44 acres are planted to sweet corn.

### **Gwinnett County**

- The number of farms in Gwinnett County fell 28% from 436 in 1997 to 312 in 2002.
- Gwinnett County had 312 farms and a total of 15,557 acres of farmland in 2002 — 54% less than in 1997.
- 170 of these farms are between 10 and 49 acres.
- Farm sales rose 99% from 1997 to 2002, from \$10.8 million to \$21.5 million.

- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales total \$18.6 million, 99% of crop sales, and 86% of county farm product sales.
- Gwinnett County is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest producer of nursery crops in the state.
- Poultry sales account for another \$1.8 million of sales.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$511,000.
- Pecans are produced on 22 acres.
- Vegetables are grown on 21 acres.
- 18 acres are devoted to flower production, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> in Georgia.

### **Haralson County**

- Haralson County has 332 farms, five less than in 1997.
- Over 250 of these farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- Poultry sales account for \$17 million, 90% of the county's \$19 million in farm product sales.
- Haralson County hosts an inventory of 1.1 million broiler chickens.
- Cattle sales amount to \$1 million.
- The county ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in Georgia for goat sales, with \$77,000.
- Haralson County ranks first in Georgia for mule inventory, with 145.
- Vegetable sales total \$124,000.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$13,000.

### **Heard County**

- Heard County has 209 farms, six more than in 1997.
- The county had 42,000 acres of farmland in 2002, 35% more than 1997.
- 150 of the county's farms are 10 to 179 acres.
- Poultry is the most significant farm product, with \$20 million in sales, 93% of the county's \$22 million in farm sales.
- Heard County holds an inventory of 2 million broiler chickens.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$16,000.
- Pecans are produced on 86 acres.

### **Henry County**

- The county has 439 farms, up 3% from 428 in 1997.
- Over half of county farms are less than 50 acres.
- Nursery and greenhouse crops are the most significant seller, amounting to \$2 million (35%) of the county's \$5.9 million in farm product sales.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$1.7 million.
- Henry County ranks first in Georgia for Christmas tree sales, with \$246,000.
- Christmas tree acreage ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the state.
- Vegetable sales total \$244,000.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$464,000.

### **Jasper County**

- Jasper County has 210 farms, ten fewer than in 1997..
- Nearly half of these are 50-179 acres.

- Farm acreage fell 5% from 1997 to 2002.
- Market value of farm production rose 78% from 1997 to 2002, from \$14.5 million to \$25.7 million.
- Poultry sales are the most significant product in Jasper County, with \$21 million in sales, 80% of the county's \$26 million in farm product sales.
- Jasper County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for laying hens, with 1.3 million.
- County farms hold another 429,000 of broiler chickens.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$1.4 million.
- Milk and dairy product sales total \$1.3 million.
- Pecans are produced on 186 acres.
- Vegetable sales total \$43,000.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$73,000.

### **Lamar County**

- Lamar County has 243 farms, six less than in 1997.
- Nearly 180 of these farms are 10 to 179 acres.
- Farm acreage declined 7% from 1997 to 2002, from 45,198 acres to 41,908 acres.
- During the same period, farm product sales increased 36%, from \$17 million to \$23 million.
- Poultry sales top the list of farm products, with \$14 million in sales.
- This amounts to 61% of the county's farm product sales, and 73% of the county's livestock sales.
- Lamar County farms hold an inventory of 1.1 million broiler chickens.
- Dairy sales total \$1.9 million.
- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales total \$1.6 million.
- Lamar County ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in Georgia for acreage devoted to grass seed.
- Pecans are produced on 609 acres.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$509,000.

### **Meriwether County**

- The county has 339 farms, 6% more (321) than in 1997.
- 140 of these farms are between 50 and 179 acres.
- Cattle are the single most important farm product, with \$3.3 million in sales, 88% of the county's \$3.8 million in livestock sales.
- Inventory of cattle and calves is 15,000.
- Next most important is nursery crops, with \$2.5 million in sales.
- The county ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for nursery crop production.
- Meriwether County farmers sell a total of \$7 million of farm products.
- The county ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for duck production.
- Meriwether County ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the state for peach acreage.

### **Newton County**

- Newton County has 355 farms, 11 more than in 1997.
- Over half of farms are less than 50 acres.
- Farm acreage fell 8% from 1997 to 2002, from 48,968 acres to 44,839 acres.

- Market value of farm production decreased 27% from \$10.8 million to \$7.9 million, during the same period.
- Poultry sales total \$5 million.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$2 million.
- Total livestock sales is \$7.3 million, 93% of county farm sales.
- Crop sales total \$543,000.
- Newton County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in Georgia for pheasant production.
- The county ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the state for quail production.
- The county ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for Christmas tree acreage.
- Vegetable sales total \$87,000.

### **Paulding County**

- Paulding County has 265 farms, 7% less than the 285 farms it held in 1997.
- The amount of farmland in the county decreased 22% from 1997 to 2002, to a total of 16,592 acres.
- Half of county farms are 10 to 49 acres.
- Farm product sales increased 16% from 1997 to 2002, from \$12.3 million to \$14.2 million.
- Poultry sales total \$10 million, 94% of livestock sales in the county.
- Paulding County farmers hold an inventory of 1 million broiler chickens.
- Nursery and greenhouse crops are the second most important farm product, with \$2.7 million in sales, 94% of crop sales.
- Total farm sales in the county is \$14 million.
- Vegetables sales total \$28,000 on 8 acres, or \$3,500 per acre.
- Apples are an important fruit crop, but acreage is not reported by USDA.
- Total fruit and nut sales amounted to \$13,000.

### **Pickens County**

- Pickens County has 243 farms, five percent fewer its 1997 total of 256.
- Farm acreage decreased 10% from 1997 to 2002, to a total of 17,000 acres.
- Half of the county farms are 10 to 49 acres.
- Poultry sales total \$46 million, 96% of county farm sales.
- Pickens County hosts an inventory of 4.5 million broiler chickens.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$754,000.
- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales total \$341,000.
- Vegetable sales total \$51,000 on 24 acres of land, or \$2,125 per acre.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$87,000.
- Apples are raised on 22 acres, the ninth-largest acreage for any county in Georgia.

### **Pike County**

- Pike County has 327 farms, nine more than in 1997.
- 240 of these farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- Farm acreage fell 16% from 1997 to 2002, from 52,389 acres to 43,913 acres.
- Farm product sales decreased 49% from 1997 to 2002, from \$19 million to \$10 million.
- 71% of farm product sales are livestock and related products.
- Poultry is the largest factor in farm product sales, with \$5 million (50% of total).
- Nursery and greenhouse crops are second, with \$2 million of sales.

- The 305 acres devoted to nursery crops makes Pike County rank 8<sup>th</sup> in Georgia.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$1.3 million.
- Vegetable sales total \$55,000.
- Pecans are produced on 353 acres.

### **Rockdale County**

- The county has 140 farms, down six farms from 1997.
- Over half of county farms are 10 to 49 acres.
- Land in farming fell 35% from 1997 to 2002, from 13,521 acres to 8,789 acres.
- Market value of farm production fell 36% during the same period, from \$1.3 million to \$852,000.
- Cattle and calves are the most significant farm product in Rockdale County, accounting for \$280,000 in sales.
- Vegetable sales total \$34,000 on 8 acres, or \$4,250 per acre.
- Apples rank as the fourth largest crop in farm acreage, yet are produced on only a few acres.

### **Spalding County**

- Spalding County has 249 farms with 25,587 acres.
- This is three more farms than the county had in 1997.
- 180 of the county's farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- Farm product sales fell 12% from 1997 to 2002, from \$5 million to \$4.4 million.
- 85% of county farm product sales involve livestock and related products.
- Broiler chickens are the largest population of farm animals, but sales are not reported by USDA to protect confidentiality.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$793,000.
- Pecans and Peaches rank 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in farm acreage used, the majority of the county's \$75,000 of fruit and nut sales.
- Vegetables are raised on 8 acres, but USDA does not report sales.

### **Walton County**

- Walton County has 679 farms, with 66,136 acres.
- The number of farms in Walton County rose 8% from 630 in 1997 to 679 in 2002.
- 540 of these farms are between 10 and 179 acres.
- Market value of farm production is \$32 million.
- \$24 million (76%) of these sales involve livestock products.
- Poultry is the most important source of farm product sales, with \$19.6 million.
- Walton County holds an inventory of 1.6 million chickens.
- Nursery and greenhouse crop sales total \$6.6 million.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$4.1 million.
- The county ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Georgia for acres devoted to Christmas tree production.
- Walton County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for acres of nursery stock, with 558.
- The county has the largest population of horses of any county in Georgia.
- Vegetable sales total \$73,000.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$108,000.

### **State of Georgia (2002)**

- 49,311 farms, with 10.7 million acres.
- This is slightly fewer farms than in 1997, when the state had 49,343 farms.
- 16,000 farms (32%) are 10-49 acres.
- 17,000 farms (34%) are 50-179 acres.
- Average farm size is 218 acres.
- Market value of all farm products was \$4.9 billion in 2002, down 5% from \$5.1 billion in 1997.
- Georgia farmers collected \$118 million of government payments in 2002.
- Georgia ranks first in nation for poultry production, with \$2.7 billion in sales (83% of the state's livestock sales, and 56% of the state's farm product sales).
- The state holds an inventory of 204 million broiler chickens (first in U.S.), and 20 million laying hens (sixth in U.S.).
- Georgia ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in U.S. for quail inventory, with 823,000.
- Vegetables, melons, and sweet potatoes constitute the state's second most important product, with \$384 million in sales (8% of state farm product sales; ranks sixth in U.S.).
- Georgia ranks first in U.S. for peanut production, with 467,712 acres.
- Fruit and nut sales total \$122 million, ranking 9<sup>th</sup> in U.S.
- Cotton is the third-largest product in Georgia, with \$318 million in sales.
- Georgia ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally in cotton acreage, and 5<sup>th</sup> in sales.
- Nursery and greenhouse sales total \$315 million, the fourth-largest product.
- Cattle and calf sales total \$240 million.
- Milk and dairy product sales total \$213 million.
- Georgia ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in tobacco sales, with \$89 million.
- The state has 2,390 farms (5%) operated by African-American farmers, 591 Hispanic, 246 Native American, 124 Asian, 23 Hawai'ian or Pacific Islander, and 125 of mixed race.

**Farm size in Georgia:**

<b>Size category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct of region</b>
1 to 9 acres	3,569	7%
10 to 49 acres	15,759	32%
50 to 179 acres	17,160	35%
180 to 499 acres	7,962	16%
500 to 999 acres	2,735	6%
1,000 acres or more	2,126	4%

**Farm sales in Georgia:**

<b>Sales Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct of region</b>
Less than \$2,500	23,986	49%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	5,046	10%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	5,131	10%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	4,878	10%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	2,406	5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,592	3%
\$100,000 or more	6,272	13%

*Note: More recent data about Georgia farm sales, from USDA's Economic Research Service, is listed below.*

**Poultry & Egg Production in Georgia (2002):** 3,883 farms, \$2.78 billion sales

**Poultry & Egg Producing Counties in Metro Atlanta**

	2002 farms	2002 sales \$1000s	
<b>Ranked by sales</b>			
1	Carroll	131	95,562
2	Barrow	87	48,345
3	Forsyth	72	47,700
4	Pickens	51	46,140
5	Cherokee	87	43,090
6	Dawson	52	37,650
7	Bartow	76	35,467
8	Jasper	12	20,709
9	Heard	21	20,433
10	Walton	36	19,575
11	Haralson	23	17,094
12	Lamar	15	13,979
13	Paulding	17	10,650
14	Newton	12	4,992
15	Pike	4	4,968
16	Gwinnett	11	1,813
17	Fulton	6	412
18	Henry	9	12
19	Coweta	9	4
20	Douglas	8	3
21	Clayton	4	1
22	Fayette	6	(D)
23	Meriwether	5	(D)
24	Rockdale	4	(D)
25	Spalding	4	(D)
26	Cobb	3	(D)
27	DeKalb	2	(D)
28	Butts	-	-

### **Metro Atlanta Farms Raising Laying Hen Ranked by Number of Hens**

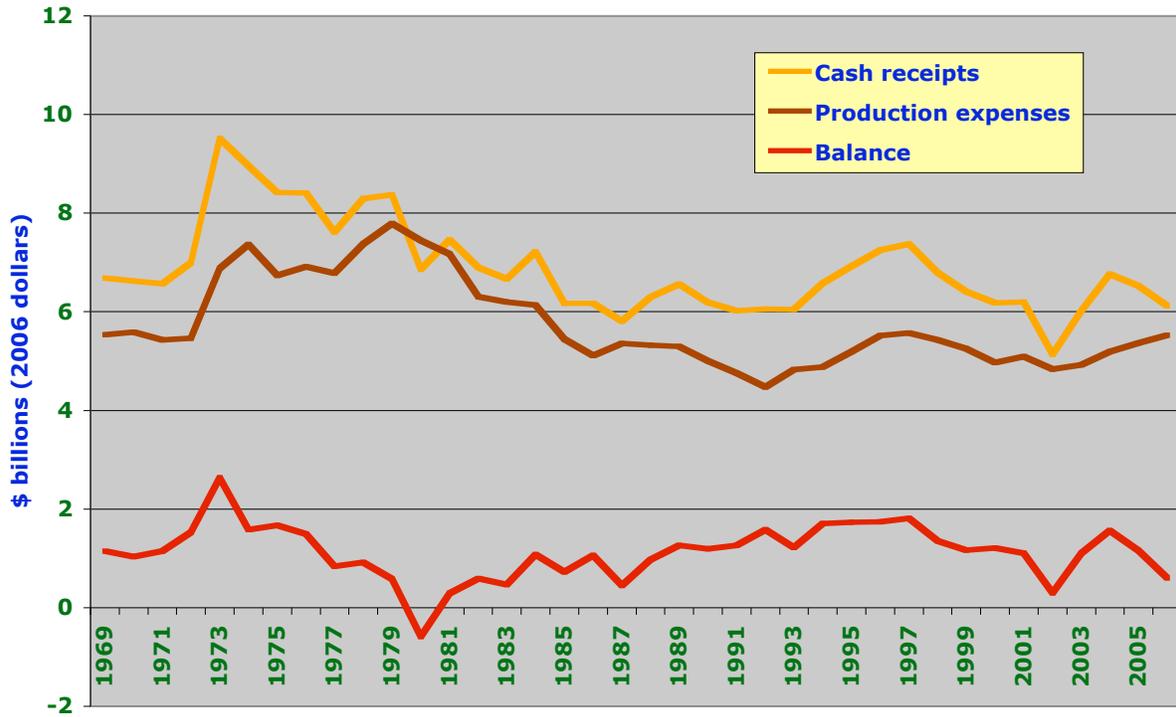
	<b>farms, 2002</b>	<b>number, 2002</b>
1 Jasper	4	1,292,848
2 Forsyth	10	431,035
3 Walton	17	203,698
4 Carroll	17	192,381
5 Barrow	11	116,042
6 Dawson	6	86,071
7 Bartow	20	76,090
8 Cherokee	21	73,581
9 Pickens	15	66,589
10 Henry	8	565
11 Coweta	10	324
12 Douglas	8	184
13 Rockdale	3	170
14 Pike	7	155
15 Cobb	4	145
16 Meriwether	12	126
17 Fulton	8	121
18 Spalding	11	90
19 Paulding	8	84
20 Gwinnett	11	73
21 Haralson	8	73
22 Lamar	7	72
23 Butts	5	36
24 Clayton	4	32
25 DeKalb	-	-
26 Heard	7	(D)
27 Fayette	4	(D)
28 Newton	3	(D)

**Top 25 products in Georgia (ERS, 2006)**

<b>Top 2006 products</b>	<b>\$ millions</b>
Broiler chickens	2,731
Cotton	590
Greenhouse/nursery	400
Eggs	369
Cattle & calves	308
Peanuts	270
Dairy products	201
Onions	82
Tomatoes	78
Corn, sweet	70
Pecans	66
Hogs	66
Blueberries	60
Watermelons	55
Corn	52
Squash	50
Tobacco	43
Hay	40
Peaches	33
Cabbage	29
Peppers, green	28
Wheat	22
Cantaloupe	21

*Note: Cucumbers and Snap Beans are also included in the state's top 25 crops, but sales are not reported by USDA to protect confidentiality.*

### Farm Production Balance in Georgia, 1969-2006



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (2008)

**Note:**

Georgia farmers earned \$546 million less from producing commodities in 2006 than they did in 1969 (when dollars are adjusted for inflation — BEA).

Farmers held production costs steady 1987 – 2006, while cash receipts declined 1997 – 2006. This decline in cash receipts is primarily due to decreased income for livestock production [BEA].

Since 1982, state farmers have, on average, sold \$6.4 billion of crops and livestock, which required \$5.3 billion to produce, for an annual net gain of \$1.1 billion. This income was augmented by an average of \$483 million of farm-related income (such as renting out land, or custom work for a neighbor) and \$302 million of federal subsidies [BEA].

An estimated \$2.8 billion of farm inputs are purchased by state farmers from sources outside of Georgia (this is intended to be a very cautious estimate) [Ag Census 2002, pro-rated to 2006].

Of the \$20 billion of food purchased by Georgia consumers each year, an estimated \$16 billion is purchased from out of state [Bureau of Labor Statistics].

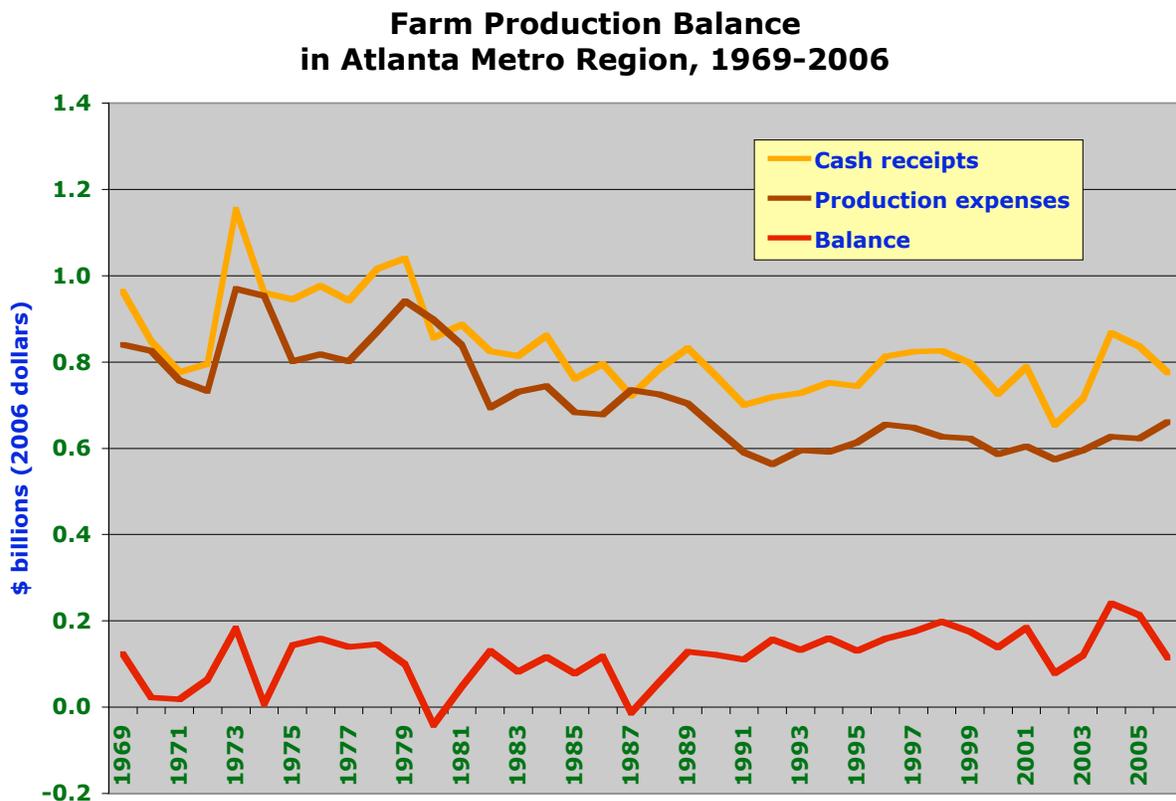
1,626 farms reported selling food directly to their customers in 2002, for a total of \$8.9 million of sales. This amounts to 0.2% of Georgia farm sales. The number of farms selling direct increased 7% from 1997 to 2002, while direct sales increased 12% [Ag Census 2002].

32 Georgia farms sold \$671,000 of organic products in 2002 [Ag Census 2002].

Thus, while Georgia farmers make money producing commodities, they send a net of \$1 billion out of state each year by purchasing inputs from external sources. Overall, the Georgia food economy leaks \$17 billion per year since so much food is purchased from out of state.

Moreover, Georgia consumers report a striking loss of net worth. All state households combined lost about \$12.6 billion of net assets in 2006, as residents took on new mortgage debt [Source: estimate based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey data].

### Farm Production Balance for Atlanta Metro Area:



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

See also: summary above.

**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/locales.html>

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>

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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