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Tools for Community Self-determination

Columbus Region (Indiana) Local Farm & Food Economy

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for
Columbus Regional Health (Columbus, Indiana)

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Covers Bartholomew & Jackson Counties in Indiana

Columbus Region (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2011)

120,836 residents receive \$4.5 billion of income annually. Personal income more than doubled from 1969 to 2011, after dollars were adjusted for inflation, in part due to a population increase. The largest source of personal income is manufacturing jobs, at \$1.6 billion. The second most important income source is transfer payments (from government and private programs such as pensions), at \$800 million of personal income [*see below*]. Government jobs rank third, with \$500 million. Health care professions bring in \$300 million of personal income.

Income earned from transfer payments includes \$347 million of retirement and disability insurance benefits; \$330 million of medical benefits; \$72 million of income maintenance benefits; \$33 million of unemployment insurance; and \$16 million of veterans' benefits.

Government income includes \$24 million of income earned by federal workers and \$449 million earned by state and local government workers. Military personnel earn \$18 million of personal income.

Although population has increased 36% since 1969, there has been only limited public planning to assure a secure and stable food supply.

Issues affecting low-income residents of the Columbus region:

Nearly 32,000 residents (27%) 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 \$67 million each year buying food, including \$8 million of SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and additional WIC coupons. The region's 1,495 farmers receive an annual combined total of \$14 million in subsidies (23-year average, 1989-2011), mostly to raise crops such as corn or soybeans that are sold as commodities, not to feed local residents. *Data from Federal Census of 2007-2011, Bureau of Labor Statistics, & Bureau of Economic Analysis.*

¹ Considerable research assistance provided by Nick Wojciak.

5% percent of the region's households (nearly 6,000 residents) earn less than \$10,000 per year. *Source: Federal Census of 2007-2011.*

18% of adults aged 18-64 in the state of Indiana carried no health insurance in 2010. This was lower than the rate of 20% in 2009, but higher than the 1995 rate of 12%. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

Food-related health conditions:

21% of Indiana residents reported in 2009 that they eat five or more servings of fruit or vegetables each day. 79% do not. This level of adequate consumption is about the same as the 1996 rate. This is a key indicator of health, since proper fruit and vegetable consumption has been connected to better health outcomes. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

48% of Indiana adults report they have at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five or more days per week, or vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes three or more days per week. This is about the same rate as in 2001. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

9% of Indiana residents have been diagnosed with diabetes. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.* Medical costs for treating diabetes and related conditions in the Columbus region are estimated at \$70 million per year. Costs for the state of Indiana as a whole total \$3.8 billion. *Source: American Diabetes Association cost calculator.*

65% of Indiana residents were overweight (35%) or obese (30%) in 2010, up from 56% in 1996. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

The region's farms (Agricultural Census, 2007)

Agricultural Census data for 2007 were released February 4, 2009

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:

- 1,495 farms. This is 2% of Indiana farms.
- The Columbus Region had 6% more farms in 2007 than in 2002.
- 109 (7%) of these are 1,000 acres or more in size.
- 639 (43%) farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average farm size is 251 acres, slightly more than the state average of 242 acres.
- The region has 376,000 acres of land in farms.
- This amounts to 3% of the state's farmland.
- Columbus region holds 299,000 acres of harvested cropland.
- 12,000 of these acres are irrigated.
- Average value of land and buildings per farm was \$843,000. This was slightly less than the 2007 state average of \$869,000.

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 \$266 million of crops and livestock in 2007.
- Farm product sales increased by 117% from 2002 to 2007.
- \$110 million of crops were sold.
- \$156 million of livestock and products were sold.
- 781 (52%) of the region’s farms sold less than \$10,000 of products in 2007.
- Total sales from these small farms were \$1.9 million, 1% of the region’s farm product sales.
- 294 (15%) of the region’s farms sold more than \$100,000 of products.
- Total sales from these larger farms were \$248 million, 93% of the region’s farm product sales.
- 46% of the region’s farms (688 of 1,495) reported net losses in 2007. This is more than the Indiana average of 44%.
- 971 (65%) of the Columbus region’s farmers collected a combined total of \$7.8 million of federal subsidies in 2007.

Top farm products of the Columbus Region (2007). *Note: **denotes sales data have been suppressed.*

Product	\$ Millions
Poultry and eggs**	121
Corn	66
Soybeans	35
Hogs and pigs	16
Milk	7
Vegetables	4

Production Expenses:

- Feed purchases were the largest single expense for the Columbus Region, with \$35 million (20% of production expenses).
- Fertilizer, lime, and soil conditioners were the second most important expense, at \$20 million (11%).
- Farmers charged \$17 million (10%) to depreciation.
- Livestock and poultry purchases were \$17 million (10%).
- Land and building rental costs totaled \$15 million (9%).
- Supplies, repairs, and maintenance cost farmers \$13 million (7%).
- Hired farm labor costs were \$13 million (7%).
- Purchases of seeds totaled \$13 million (7%).

Cattle & Dairy:

- 509 farms hold an inventory of 22,000 cattle.
- 13,000 cattle were sold by farmers in 2007 for total sales of at least \$2 million. *Note that data for sales of cattle in Jackson County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 377 farms raise beef cows.
- 32 farms raise milk cows.
- 60 farms produced corn for silage.
- 436 farms produced 26,000 tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 12,000 acres.
- 184 farms sold \$811,000 of forage.

Other Livestock & Animal Products:

- 72 farms hold an inventory of 65,000 hogs and pigs.
- 88 farms sold 194,000 hogs and pigs in 2007.
- 33 farms hold an inventory of 655 sheep and lambs.
- 66 farms sold \$184,000 worth of sheep, goats, and lambs in 2007.
- 64 farms hold an inventory of at least 640 laying hens. *Note that data for inventory of laying hens in Jackson County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 4 farms raise broiler chickens.
- 2 farms engage in aquaculture.
- 47 farms raise horses and ponies.

Grains, Oil Seeds, & Edible Beans:

- 826 farms produced \$102 million of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans.
- 694 farms produced 19 million bushels of corn on 156,000 acres, worth \$65.5 million.
- This amounts to an average price per bushel of corn of \$3.45. *Note that this price is an approximation, and does not necessarily represent an actual price at which corn was sold.*
- 651 farms produced 3.9 million bushels of soybeans on 123,000 acres, worth \$35 million.
- This amounts to an average price per bushel of soybeans of \$8.97. *Note that this price is an approximation, and does not necessarily represent an actual price at which soybeans was sold.*
- The total value of corn and soybeans amounted to 38% of all farm product sales in 2007.
- 139 farms produced 393,000 bushels of wheat on 7,638 acres. *Note that data for sales of wheat in both counties 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):

- 47 farms worked 3,447 acres to produce vegetables, worth \$4.3 million.
- This represents an 8-farm decrease in the number of farms growing vegetables since 2002.
- 8 farms raised potatoes.

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

- 7 farms in the region hold at least 21 acres of orchards. *Note that data for acreage of orchards in Jackson County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 12 farms sold fruits, nuts, and berries.

Nursery & Greenhouse Plants:

- 14 farms sold \$2.4 million worth of ornamentals in 2007.
- This represents a 12-farm decrease since 2002.
- 5 farms sold Christmas trees.

Other Crops:

- 3 farms produced 255,000 pounds of tobacco on 129 acres worth \$387,000.

Direct & Organic Sales:

- 81 farms sell \$747,000 of food products directly to consumers. This is a 3-farm decrease since 2002, and a 7% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of 696,000.
- This amounts to 0.3% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.4%.
- Jackson County leads the region in direct sales, with \$384,000. Bartholomew County follows closely behind with \$363,000 in direct sales.
- 5 farms in the region sold organic products, *but sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- For comparison, 239 farms in Indiana sold \$8.7 million of organic food products.
- 13 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 34 farms produce and sell value-added products.

Conservation Practices:

- 653 farms use conservation methods such as no-till, limited tilling, filtering field runoff to remove chemicals, fencing animals to prevent them from entering streams, etc.
- 212 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 5 farms generate energy or electricity on the farm.

**Limited-resource farms and others in the Columbus Region
(Census of Agriculture, 2007)**

Small family farms:	Farms	Percent	Acres	Percent
Limited-resource	164	11%	10,165	3%
Retirement	331	22%	42,800	11%
Residential/lifestyle	583	39%	42,327	11%
Farming occupation/lower sales	135	9%	18,415	5%
Farming occupation/higher sales	88	6%	46,297	12%
Large family farms	82	5%	80,120	21%
Very large family farms	68	5%	97,137	26%
Nonfamily farms	44	3%	38,388	10%
Total	1,495		375,649	

Definitions of terms (Agricultural Census 2007):

Limited-resource farms have market value of agricultural products sold gross sales of less than \$100,000, and total principal operator household income of less than \$20,000.

Retirement farms have market value of agricultural products sold of less than \$250,000, and a principal operator who reports being retired.

Residential/lifestyle farms have market value of agricultural products sold of less than \$250,000, and a principal operator who reports his/her primary occupation as other than farming.

Farming occupation/lower-sales farms have market value of agricultural products sold of less than \$100,000, and a principal operator who reports farming as his/her primary occupation.

Farming occupation/higher-sales farms have market value of agricultural products sold of between \$100,000 and \$249,999, and a principal operator who reports farming as his/her primary occupation.

Large family farms have market value of agricultural products sold between \$250,000 and \$499,999.

Very large family farms have market value of agricultural products sold of \$500,000 or more.

Nonfamily farms are farms organized as nonfamily corporations, as well as farms operated by hired manager.

County and State Highlights

Bartholomew County highlights (Agriculture Census 2007):

- 668 farms, 10% more than in 2002.
- Bartholomew County has 166,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$69.5 million of products in 2007.
- \$60.8 million (87%) of these sales were crops.
- \$8.7 million (13%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 200 farms (30%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 172 (26%) farms.
- 56 farms (8%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 307 farms (46%) are less than 50 acres.
- 345 farms (52%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 129 farms (17%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Bartholomew County ranks 3rd in Indiana for sales of vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes, with \$2.8 million.
- The county ranks 3rd in the state for acreage of vegetables, with 2,843.
- Bartholomew County ranks 5th in the state for aquaculture sales, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality*.
- The county ranks sixth in Indiana for sales of tobacco, with \$387,000.
- Bartholomew County ranks 10th in the state for sales of sheep and goats, with \$145,000.
- 42 farms sold \$363,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a one-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct since 2002, and a \$1,000 decrease in direct sales since 2002.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, slightly more than the national average of 0.4%.

Jackson County highlights (Agriculture Census 2007):

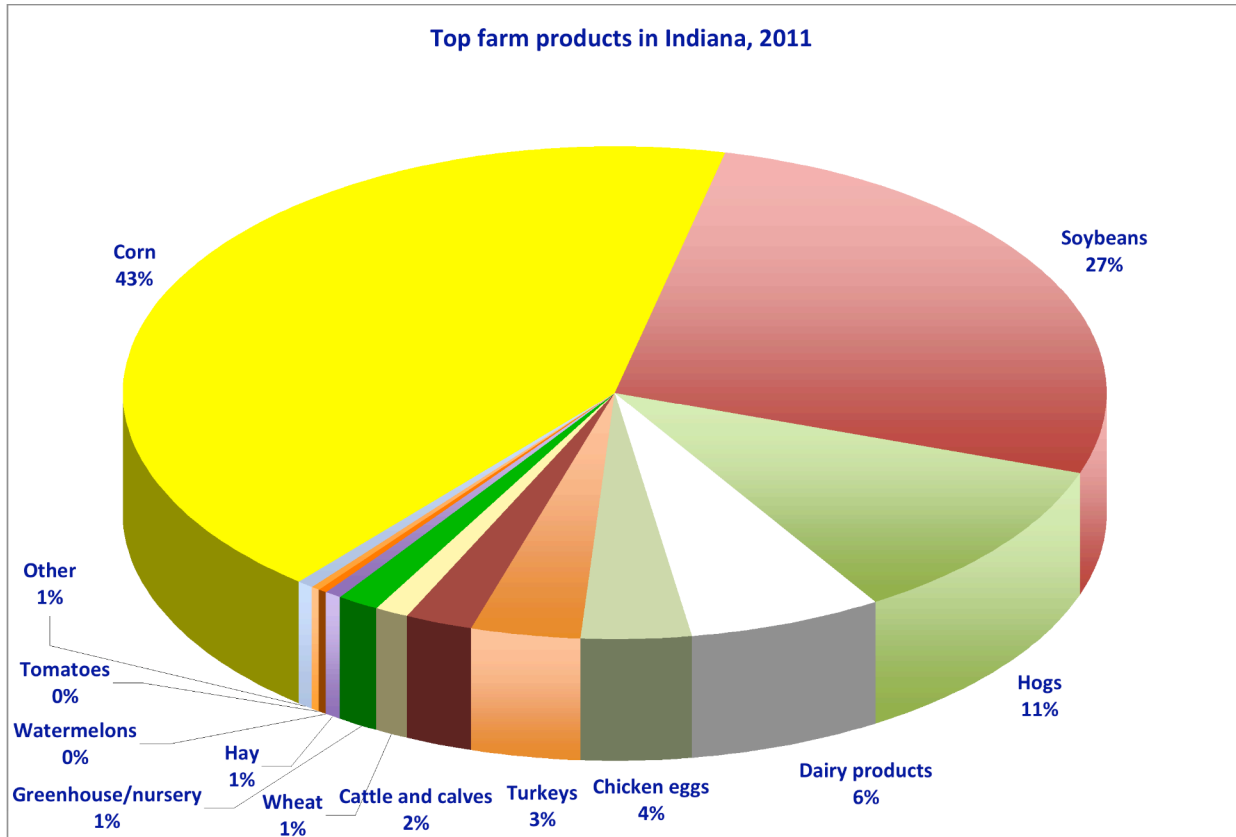
- 827 farms, 3% more than in 2002.
- Jackson County has 209,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$196.9 million of products in 2007.
- \$49.5 million (25%) of these sales were crops.
- \$147.4 million (75%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 235 farms (28%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 223 (27%) farms.
- 53 farms (6%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 332 farms (40%) are less than 50 acres.
- 436 farms (53%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 165 farms (14%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Jackson County ranks 1st in Indiana, and 5th in the United States for inventory of laying hens, but *inventory numbers were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 2nd in the state for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, but *inventory numbers were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Jackson County ranks 2nd in the state for sale of poultry and eggs, with \$121 million.
- The county ranks third in Indiana for sales of livestock and poultry, with \$147 million.
- Jackson County ranks 5th in the state for sales of agricultural products, with \$197 million.
- The county ranks 6th in the state for inventory of broiler chickens, but *inventory numbers were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 39 farms sold \$384,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 2-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct, and a 16% increase in direct sales, over 2002 sales of \$332,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, one half the national average of 0.4%.

State of Indiana highlights (Agriculture Census 2007):

- 60,938 farms, 1% more than in 2002.
- Indiana has 15 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$8.3 billion of products in 2007.
- \$5.3 billion (64%) of these sales were crops.
- \$3 billion (36%) of these sales was livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 19,533 farms (32%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 50 to 179 (26%) farms.
- 3,906 farms (6%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 29,000 farms (48%) are less than 50 acres.
- 33,000 farms (54%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 13,000 farms (18%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Indiana ranks 3rd in the United States for inventory of laying hens, with 24 million.
- The state ranks 4th in the country for acreage of soybeans, with 4.8 million.
- Indiana ranks 5th in the country for sales of grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas, with \$5 billion.
- The state ranks fifth in the country for sales of hogs and pigs, with \$974 million.
- Indiana ranks 5th in the United States for acreage of corn, with 6.4 million acres.
- The state ranks 5th in the country for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, with 7 million.
- Indiana ranks 5th in the country for inventory of hogs and pigs, with 3.7 million.
- The state ranks seventh in the country for inventory of turkeys, with 6 million.
- Indiana ranks 8th in the United States for crop sales, with \$5.3 million.
- The state ranks 10th in the country for sales of agricultural products, with \$8.3 million.
- 3,576 farms sold \$22.3 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 12% increase in the number of farms selling direct (3,205 in 2002), and a 24% increase in direct sales, over 2002 sales of \$18 million.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.4%.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled \$79 million.
- If direct food sales made up a single commodity, the value of these sales would outrank the state's 13th-most important product, mint.
- 287 farms farm organically, with a total of 9,273 acres of harvested cropland, and 4,245 acres of pastureland.
- 7,973 acres on 206 farms are undergoing organic conversion.
- 239 farms in Indiana sold \$8.7 million of organic food products, including \$2.5 million of crops (this may include ornamental and greenhouse crops), \$726,000 of livestock and poultry, and \$5.4 million of products from livestock and poultry (such as milk or eggs).
- 273 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 1,645 farms produce value-added products.
- 22,000 farms use conservation methods such as no-till, limited tilling, filtering field runoff to remove chemicals, fencing animals to prevent them from entering streams, etc.
- 7,055 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 538 farms generate energy or electricity on the farms.

Indiana's top farm products in 2011 (Economic Research Service)

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



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Indiana's top farm products in 2011 (Economic Research Service)

See table on previous page

	\$ millions
1 Corn	4,850
2 Soybeans	3,055
3 Hogs	1,216
4 Dairy products	738
5 Chicken eggs	422
6 Turkeys	395
7 Cattle and calves	248
8 Wheat	154
9 Greenhouse/nursery	131
10 Hay	66
11 Watermelons	34
12 Tomatoes	30
13 Mint	19
14 Corn, sweet	18
15 Cantaloupe	13
16 Aquaculture	9
17 Apples	9
18 Blueberries	3
19 Cucumbers	1
20 Honey	1
21 Oats	1
22 Farm chickens	<1
23 Wool	<1

Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Note: Broiler chickens and snap beans were also listed among Indiana's top 25 products, but sales figures for these products were not released by ERS, in an effort to protect confidentiality.

Note also that at \$22 million, direct sales from farmers to consumers amount to more than the value of the 13th-ranking product, mint.

Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (BEA):

Columbus region farmers sell \$225 million of food commodities per year (1989-2011 average), spending \$203 million to raise them, for an average gain of \$22 million each year. This is an average net cash income of \$14,715 per farm. *Note that these sales figures compiled by the BEA may differ from cash receipts recorded by the USDA Agriculture Census (above).*

Overall, farm producers earned a surplus of \$514 million by selling crops and livestock over the years 1989 to 2011. Yet farm production costs exceeded cash receipts for eight years of that 23-year period. Moreover, 46% of the region's farms reported that they lost money in 2007 (Ag Census). Columbus region farmers and ranchers earned \$40 million more by selling commodities in 2011 than they earned in 1969 (in 2011 dollars), but these gains occurred only since 2008.

Farmers and ranchers earn another \$8 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, and rental income (23-year average for 1989-2011). Federal farm support payments are nearly as important a source of net income as commodity production, averaging \$14 million per year for the region for the same years.

The region's consumers:

See also information covering low-income food consumption and food-related health conditions, page 1-2 above.

Columbus region consumers spend \$314 million buying food each year, including \$193 million for home use. Most of this food is produced outside the region, so Columbus region consumers spend about \$300 million per year buying food sourced outside the region. Only \$747,000 of food products (0.3% of farm cash receipts and 0.2% 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 region households combined was a loss of \$114 million in 2011 alone (BLS). This places additional pressure on Columbus region consumers trying to buy food.

Farm and food economy summary:

Farmers earn \$22 million each year producing food commodities, and spend \$100 million buying inputs sourced outside of the region. Even when farmers make money, these input purchases result in substantial losses to the region as a whole. Overall, farm production creates a loss of \$78 million to the region.

Meanwhile, consumers spend \$300 million buying food from outside. Thus, total loss to the region is \$375 million of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to more than the value of all food commodities raised in the region.

Columbus Region: markets for food eaten at home (2011):

Columbus region residents purchase \$314 million of food each year, including \$193 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 40
Fruits & vegetables	35
Cereals and bakery products	27
Dairy products	21
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	70

If the region’s residents purchased \$5 of food each week directly from farmers in the region, this would generate \$31 million of new farm income.

Bartholomew County: markets for food eaten at home (2011):

Bartholomew County residents purchase \$202 million of food each year, including \$125 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 26
Fruits & vegetables	23
Cereals and bakery products	18
Dairy products	13
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	46

Jackson County: markets for food eaten at home (2011):

Jackson County residents purchase \$112 million of food each year, including \$69 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 14
Fruits & vegetables	12
Cereals and bakery products	10
Dairy products	7
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	25

Metro Indianapolis: markets for food eaten at home (2011):

Metro Indianapolis residents purchase \$4.6 billion of food each year, including \$2.8 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 586
Fruits & vegetables	516
Cereals and bakery products	404
Dairy products	303
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	1,038

State of Indiana: markets for food eaten at home (2011):

Indiana residents purchase \$17 billion of food each year, including \$10 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 2,148
Fruits & vegetables	1,890
Cereals and bakery products	1,480
Dairy products	1,111
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	3,804

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/>

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