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Tools for Community Self-determination

Eastern Montana Local Farm & Food Economy

Highlights of a data compilation
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for

Community GATE & Montana Farmers Union September 6, 2011

*Covers Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland,
Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley, & Wibaux Counties in Montana*

Eastern Montana Region (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2009)

71,343 residents receive \$2.4 billion of income annually. The two largest sources of personal income are transfer payments (from government programs such as pensions), at \$530 million, and capital income (interest, rent or dividend income), at \$520 million. These capital transfers account for over 40% of personal income.

The largest source of personal income from employment is government jobs, where workers earn a total of \$430 million. Retail workers earn about \$100 million. Other private sources of income cannot be reported fully since so much of this data has been suppressed to protect the confidentiality of local firms.

The region's population decreased 20% from 89,619 in 1969. Forty years ago, the Eastern Montana region held 13% of the state's population; now it has 7% of the Montana population. Personal income has risen 39% during the same period (adjusted for inflation). Despite this increase in personal income, and rising consumer expenditures for food, farm income is falling, and very little planning has been devoted to ensuring a secure food supply for Eastern Montana residents.

¹ Nick Wojciak, intern for Crossroads Resource Center, contributed considerable research to this report.

Issues affecting low-income residents of the region:

Nearly 24,000 Eastern Montana residents (34%) 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 \$48 million each year buying food, including more than \$12 million of SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) and additional millions in WIC (Women, Infants and Children) coupons. The region's farmers receive a combined total of \$144 million in subsidies (thirty-one-year average, 1979-2009), mostly to raise crops such as wheat and barley that are sold as commodities, not to feed local residents. *Data from Federal Census American Community Survey, 2005-2009, Bureau of Labor Statistics, & Bureau of Economic Analysis.*

9% percent of Eastern Montana households (6,600 residents) earn less than \$10,000 per year. *Source: Federal Census; American Community Survey, 2005-2009.*

23% of adults aged 18-64 in Montana have no health insurance (2010). *Source: Centers for Disease Control. Data on health conditions is reported for the state and for metro areas only.*

Food-related health conditions:

7% of Montana residents have been diagnosed with diabetes as of 2010. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.* Medical costs for treating diabetes and related conditions in the Eastern Montana are estimated at \$41 million per year; for the state of Montana the total is \$563 million. *Source: American Diabetes Association cost calculator.*

62% of Montana residents were overweight (38%) or obese (24%) in 2010. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

59% of Montana adults reported in 2009 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. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

26% of state residents reported in 2009 that they eat five or more servings of fruit or vegetables each day. 74% do not. 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.*

The region's farms (Census of Agriculture, 2007)

Census of Agriculture 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:

- 6,651 farms. This is 23% of Montana farms.
- The Eastern Montana region had 2% more farms in 2007 than in 2002. Some of this may be due to census takers making better contact with small farms.
- 3,462 (52%) of these are 1,000 acres or more in size.
- 482 (7%) farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average farm size is 3,436 acres, significantly more than the state average of 2,079 acres.
- The region has 23 million acres of land in farms.
- This amounts to 37% of the state's farmland.
- Eastern Montana region holds 3.5 million acres of harvested cropland.
- 282,000 of these acres are irrigated.
- Average value of land and buildings per farm was \$1.8 million. This was more than the Montana average of \$1.6 million.

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 \$870.1 million of crops and livestock in 2007.
- Farm product sales increased by 53% from 2002 to 2007.
- \$422.6 million of crops were sold (49% of sales).
- \$447.5 million of livestock and products were sold (51% of sales).
- 2,615 (39%) of the region's farms sold less than \$10,000 of products in 2007.
- Total sales from these small farms were at least \$3.1 million. *Note that data for total sales of less than \$10,000 in Garfield, Prairie, Treasure, and Wibaux counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 2,111 (32%) of the region's farms sold more than \$100,000 of products.
- Total sales from these larger farms were \$782 million, 90% of the region's farm product sales.
- 32% of the region's farms (2,136 of 6,651) reported net losses in 2007. This is less than the Montana average of 49%.
- 4,666 (70%) of Eastern Montana region's farmers collected a combined total of \$77 million of federal subsidies in 2007.

Top farm products in Eastern Montana (2007)

	\$ millions
Cattle & calves	431
Wheat	278
Other grains/edible beans**	48
Corn**	15
Barley**	13
Forage**	12
Sheep & goats**	7

Note that the total value of products marked with asterisks (**) are incomplete due to data suppression by USDA intended to protect confidentiality. Because of limited data availability, the chart above shows only 92% of the value of farm products sold by Eastern Montana farmers in 2007.

Production Expenses:

- Depreciation was the largest single expense for Eastern Montana region farmers in 2007, totaling \$102 million (14% of production expenses).
- Fertilizer, lime, and soil conditioners ranked as the second most important expense, at \$82 million (12%).
- Livestock and poultry purchases totaled \$80 million (11%).
- Land and building rental cost farmers \$78 million (11%).
- Gasoline, fuels, and oil costs totaled \$71 million (10%).
- Supplies, repairs, and maintenance cost farmers \$68 million (10%).
- Interest expenses totaled \$55 million (8%).

Cattle & Dairy:

- 3,164 farms hold an inventory of 846,000 cattle.
- 584,000 cattle were sold by farmers in 2007 for total sales of \$431 million.
- 2,975 farms raise beef cows.
- 59 farms raise milk cows.
- 164 farms produced at least 450,000 tons of corn for silage on at least 22,000 acres. *Note that data for acreage and tons of corn for silage in Daniels, McCone, Powder River, and Wibaux counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*
- 3,041 farms produced 1.5 million tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 944,000 acres.
- 1,433 farms sold at least \$12 million of forage. *Note that data for sales of forage in Carter, Custer, McCone, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley, and Wibaux counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

Other Livestock & Animal Products:

- 75 farms hold an inventory of at least 2,413 hogs and pigs. *Note that data for inventory of hogs and pigs in Fallon, McCone, Prairie, Rosebud, and Wibaux counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

- 82 farms sold at least 3,432 hogs and pigs in 2007, worth at least \$353,000. *Note that data for number of hogs and pigs sold in Fallon, Sheridan, Treasure and Wibaux, and data for sales of hogs and pigs in Carter, Fallon, Sheridan, Treasure, and Wibaux counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*
- 373 farms hold an inventory of 114,000 sheep and lambs.
- 396 farms sold \$7 million worth of sheep, goats, and lambs in 2007.
- 235 farms hold an inventory of at least 4,649 laying hens. *Note that data for inventory of laying hens in Treasure County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 6 farms raise broiler chickens.
- 2 farms engage in aquaculture.
- 297 farms raise horses and ponies.

Grains, Oil Seeds, & Edible Beans:

- 2,304 farms produced at least \$354 million of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans. *Note that data for sales of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans in Wibaux County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 2,110 farms produced 49 million bushels of wheat on 2 million acres, worth \$278 million.
 - 555 farms produced 8.7 million bushels of winter wheat on 273,000 acres.
 - 1,597 farms produced 29 million bushels of spring wheat on 1.3 million acres.
 - 563 farms produced 11 million bushels of durum wheat on 447,000 acres.
- This amounts to an average price per bushel for wheat of \$5.67. *Note that this price is an approximation, and does not necessarily represent an actual price at which wheat was sold.*
- The total value of wheat amounted to 32% of all farm product sales in 2007.
- 768 farms produced \$48 million of “other” grains, oil seeds, and edible beans. *Note that there was considerable suppression of data for sales of these items.*

Vegetable & Melons

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

- 19 farms worked at least 379 acres to produce at least \$12,000 of vegetables. *Note that data for acreage of vegetables in Carter, McCone, Prairie, Sheridan, Valley, and Wibaux counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 12 of these farms raised potatoes.

Fruits

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

- 6 farms in the region maintain orchards.
- 5 farms sold fruits, nuts and berries.
- *The value of fruit sales was not recorded.*

Nursery & Greenhouse plants:

- 16 farms sold ornamentals in 2007.
- This represents an increase of 33% in the number of farms (from 12).

Direct & Organic Sales:

- 122 farms sold at least \$532,000 of food products directly to consumers. This is a 14% increase of amount of farms (107 in 2002) selling direct over 2002. *Note that data for direct sales in McCone and Treasure counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete. Data for 2002 direct sales were also suppressed.*
- This amounts to at least 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.4%. *Note that data for direct sales in McCone and Treasure counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this percentage is incomplete.*
- Garfield County leads the region in direct sales, with \$127,000. Custer County is a close second, with \$117,000. *Note that these rankings are subject to the fact that data for direct sales were suppressed in McCone, and Treasure counties.*
- 41 farms in the region sold at least \$2.3 million of organic products, accounting for at least 26% of Montana's organic sales. *Note that data for organic product sales in Dawson, Garfield, Richland, and Sheridan counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this percentage is incomplete.*
- For comparison, 207 farms in Montana sold \$8.8 million of organic food products.
- 21 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 248 farms produce and sell value-added products.

Conservation Practices:

- 1,870 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.
- 1,703 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 137 farms generate energy or electricity on the farm.

Other Crops:

- 14 farms product over 3.1 million pounds of sunflower seed on at least 2,914 acres. *Note that data for acreage and pounds of sunflower seed in Sheridan County were suppressed by the UDSA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete. Sales figures for sunflowers are not reported.*
- 99 farms produced over 628,000 tons of sugarbeets on at least 25,000 acres. *Note that data for tons and acreage of sugarbeets in Roosevelt County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete. Sales figures for sugar beets are not reported.*

**Limited-resource farms and others in the Eastern Montana region
(Census of Agriculture, 2007)**

	Farms	Percent	Acres	Percent
Small Family farms				
Limited Resource	782	12%	633,422	3%
Retirement	1,081	16%	1,315,740	6%
Residential/lifestyle	1,530	23%	1,531,533	7%
Farming occupation/lower sales	1,114	17%	2,584,657	11%
Farming occupation/higher sales	944	14%	5,319,752	23%
Large family farms	606	9%	5,045,412	22%
Very large family farms	345	5%	4,163,150	18%
Nonfamily farms	249	4%	2,136,296	9%
Totals	6,651		22,729,962	

Following are the definitions used by USDA in reporting data for the table above.

1. Rural residence farms. Specific typologies included in rural residence farms are *limited-resource, retirement, and residential lifestyle farms*.

- *Limited-resource farms.* Small farms with sales less than \$100,000 in 2003 and low operator household income in 2003 and 2004. Household income is low if it is less than the poverty level in both 2003 and 2004 or if it is less than half the county median income both years.
- *Retirement farms.* Small farms whose operators report they are retired (excludes limited-resource farms operated by retired farmers).
- *Residential/lifestyle farms.* Small farms whose operators report they had a major occupation other than farming (excludes limited-resource farms with operators reporting a non-farm major occupation).

2. Intermediate farms. Includes *farming occupation/lower-sales* and *farming occupation/higher-sales* farms.

- *Farming occupation/low-sales.* Small farms with sales less than \$100,000 whose operators report farming as their major occupation (excludes limited-resource farms whose operators report farming as their major occupation).
- *Farming occupation/high-sales.* Small farms with sales between \$100,000 and \$249,999 whose operators report farming as their major occupation.

3. Commercial farms. Includes *large, very large, and nonfamily* farms.

- *Large family farms.* Farms with sales between \$250,000 and \$499,999.
- *Very large family farms.* Farms with sales of \$500,000 or more.
- *Nonfamily farms.* Farms organized as non-family corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms operated by hired managers.

County Highlights

Carter County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 308 farms, 7% more than in 2002.
- Carter County has 1.7 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$42.8 million of products in 2007.
- \$8.5 million (20%) of these sales were crops.
- \$34.3 million (80%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 219 farms (71%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 500 to 999 acres with 29 (9%) farms.
- 19 farms (6%) are less than 50 acres.
- 75 farms (24%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 133 farms (43%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 10 farms sold \$21,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 400% increase in the number of farms selling direct (2 in 2002). *Note that data for 2002 direct sales were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Direct sales were 0.05% of farm product sales, one eighth the national average of 0.4%.
- Carter County ranks 1st in Montana for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 37,000.
- The county ranks 1st in Montana for sales of sheep, goats, and their products, with \$2.5 million.
- Carter County ranks fourth in the state for acreage of forage, with 100,000.
- The county ranks 6th in the state for acreage of field and grass seed crops, with 1,778.

Custer County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 411 farms, 3% less than in 2002.
- Custer County has 2.1 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$73.2 million of products in 2007.
- \$9.5 million (13%) of these sales were crops.
- \$63.7 million (87%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 167 farms (41%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres with 77 (19%).
- 86 farms (21%) are less than 50 acres.
- 177 farms (43%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 117 farms (28%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 24 farms sold \$117,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 33% increase in the number of farms selling direct (18 in 2002), and a 588% decrease in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$17,000.
- Direct sales were 0.4% of farm product sales, the same as the national average of 0.4%.
- Custer County ranks 2nd in Montana for aquaculture sales, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 3rd in Montana for livestock and poultry sales.
- Custer County ranks third in the state for sales of cattle and calves, with \$62 million.
- The county ranks 3rd in the state for acreage of corn for silage, with 5,156.
- Custer County ranks 4th in Montana for inventory of cattle and calves, with 100,000.
- The county ranks sixth in Montana for acreage of corn for grain, with 2,292.

Daniels County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 397 farms, 9% more than in 2002.
- Daniels County has 860,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$51 million of products in 2007.
- \$41 million (80%) of these sales were crops.
- \$10 million (20%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 197 farms (50%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 500 to 999 acres with 83 (21%) farms.
- 20 farms (5%) are less than 50 acres.
- 177 farms (45%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 128 farms (32%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- No farms sold directly to consumers.
- Daniels County ranks 2nd in Montana and 6th in the U.S. for acreage of dry edible peas, with 49,000.
- The county ranks 2nd in Montana and 9th in the U.S. for acreage of lentils, with 6,746.
- Daniels County ranks second in the state for acreage of flaxseed, with 4,762.
- The county ranks 6th in the state for acreage of wheat, with 255,000.
- Daniels County ranks 8th in Montana for sales of grains, oilseeds, and dry edible beans and peas, with \$40 million.

Dawson County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 535 farms, 2% more than in 2002.
- Dawson County has 1.4 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$57 million of products in 2007.
- \$32 million (56%) of these sales were crops.
- \$25 million (44%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 282 farms (53%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 78 (15%) farms.
- 44 farms (8%) are less than 50 acres.
- 192 farms (36%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 167 farms (31%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 10 farms sold \$32,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 43% increase in the number of farms selling direct (7 in 2002), and a 68% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$19,000.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, one quarter the national average of 0.4%.
- Dawson County ranks 2nd in Montana and 4th in the U.S. for acreage of safflower, with 6,637.
- The county ranks 10th in Montana for acreage of dry edible peas, with 3,902.

Fallon County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 296 farms, 9% less than in 2002.
- Fallon County has 979,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$36 million of products in 2007.
- \$7 million (19%) of these sales were crops.
- \$29 million (81%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 164 farms (55%) in this category.

- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 43 (15%) farms.
- 29 farms (10%) are less than 50 acres.
- 106 farms (36%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 99 farms (33%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 9 farms sold \$20,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a slight decrease in the number of farms selling direct (10 in 2002), and a 100% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$10,000.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, one quarter the national average of 0.4%.
- Fallon County ranks 6th in Montana for acreage of forage, with 91,000.
- The county ranks 7th in Montana for acreage of safflower, with 2,460.
- Fallon County ranks 10th in the state for acreage of corn for grain, with 1,221.

Garfield County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 288 farms, 7% more than in 2002.
- Garfield County has 2.4 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$42 million of products in 2007.
- \$16 million (38%) of these sales were crops.
- \$26 million (62%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 228 farms (79%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 26 (9%) farms.
- 10 farms (3%) are less than 50 acres.
- 70 farms (24%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 129 farms (45%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 9 farms sold \$127,000 of food directly to consumers. This is an 80% increase in the number of farms selling direct (5 in 2002), and a 243% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$37,000.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.4%.
- Garfield County ranks 2nd in Montana for sales of sheep, goats, and their products, with \$1.5 million.
- The county ranks 2nd in Montana for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 23,000.
- Garfield County ranks seventh in the state for inventory of bison, with 350.
- The county ranks 8th in the state for acreage of oats, with 1,289.

McCone County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 489 farms, 1% less than in 2002.
- McCone County has 1.5 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$51.5 million of products in 2007.
- \$32.2 million (63%) of these sales were crops.
- \$19.3 million (37%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 305 farms (62%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 76 (15%) farms.
- 12 farms (2%) are less than 50 acres.
- 178 farms (36%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 162 farms (33%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 4 farms sold food directly to consumers. This is a 56% decrease in the number of farms selling direct (9 in 2002).

- *The value of direct sales was suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- McCone county ranks 5th in Montana for acreage of dry edible peas, with 5,102.
- The county ranks 6th in Montana for acreage of safflower, with 2,471.
- McCone County ranks ninth in the state for acreage of wheat, with 218,000.
- The county ranks 10th in the state for inventory of broiler chickens, but *inventory figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

Powder River County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 319 farms, 6% more than in 2002.
- Powder River County has 1.6 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$41 million of products in 2007.
- \$5.2 million (13%) of these sales were crops.
- \$35.8 million (87%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 199 farms (62%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 43 (13%) farms.
- 24 farms (8%) are less than 50 acres.
- 87 farms (27%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 123 farms (39%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 3 farms sold less than \$500 of food directly to consumers. There was no change in number of farms since 2002, and a decrease of over 90% in direct sales from 2002 sales of \$5,000.
- Powder River County ranks 3rd in Montana for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 15,000.
- The county ranks 5th in Montana for acreage of forage, with 92,000.
- Powder River County ranks fifth in the state for acreage of field and grass seed crops, with 2,187.
- The county ranks 6th in the state for sales of sheep, goats, and their products, with \$946,000.
- Powder River County ranks 10th in Montana for inventory of cattle and calves, with 77,000.

Prairie County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 173 farms, 7% more than in 2002.
- Prairie County has 768,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$24 million of products in 2007.
- \$8 million (33%) of these sales were crops.
- \$16 million (67%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 109 farms (63%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 25 (14%) farms.
- 11 farms (6%) are less than 50 acres.
- 47 farms (27%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 73 farms (42%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 5 farms sold \$12,000 of food directly to consumers, up from 4 farms selling direct in 2002. *Note that data for 2002 direct sales were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, one eighth the national average of 0.4%.
- Prairie County ranks 7th in Montana for acreage of sugarbeets, with 1,705.
- The county ranks 8th in Montana for acreage of corn for silage, with 1,691.

Richland County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 548 farms, 7% less than in 2002.
- Richland County has 1.3 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$107 million of products in 2007.
- \$53 million (50%) of these sales were crops.
- \$54 million (50%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 282 farms (51%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 89 (16%) farms.
- 59 farms (11%) are less than 50 acres.
- 218 farms (40%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 180 farms (33%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 8 farms sold \$11,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 20% decrease in the number of farms selling direct (10 in 2002), and a 78% decrease in direct sales since 2002 sales of \$50,000.
- Direct sales were 0.01% of farm product sales, significantly less than the national average of 0.4%.
- Richland County ranks 1st in Montana, and 2nd in the U.S., for acreage of safflower, with 8,890.
- The county ranks 1st in Montana for sales of forage, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Richland County ranks first in the state for acreage of sugarbeets, with 15,239.
- The county ranks 3rd in the state for sales of agricultural products.
- Richland County ranks 4th in Montana for crop sales.
- The county ranks fifth in Montana for livestock and poultry sales.
- Richland County ranks 5th in the state for sales of vegetables, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks 6th in the state for sales of cattle and calves, with \$52 million.
- Richland County ranks sixth in Montana for inventory of cattle and calves, with 83,000.
- The county ranks 8th in the state for acreage of barley, with 25,000.

Roosevelt County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 728 farms, 7% more than in 2002.
- Roosevelt County has 1.5 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$68 million of products in 2007.
- \$52 million (77%) of these sales were crops.
- \$16 million (23%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 319 farms (44%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 151 (21%) farms.
- 34 farms (5%) are less than 50 acres.
- 347 farms (48%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 184 farms (25%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 7 farms sold \$6,000 of food directly to consumers. There was no change in number of farms since 2002, and a 57% decrease in direct sales since 2002 sales of \$14,000.
- Direct sales were 0.01% of farm product sales, significantly less than the national average of 0.4%.

- Roosevelt County ranks 3rd in Montana and 8th in the U.S. for acreage of safflower, with 5,875.
- The county ranks 3rd in Montana and 9th in the U.S. for acreage of wheat, with 319,000.
- Roosevelt County ranks fourth in the state for acreage of dry edible peas, with 24,000.
- The county ranks 4th in the state for sales of grains, oilseeds, and dry beans and peas, with \$48 million.
- Roosevelt County ranks 5th in Montana for crop sales.

Rosebud County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 478 farms, 16% more than in 2002.
- Rosebud County has 2.7 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$56.8 million of products in 2007.
- \$13.8 million (24%) of these sales were crops.
- \$43 million (76%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 205 farms (43%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 105 (22%) farms.
- 54 farms (11%) are less than 50 acres.
- 220 farms (46%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 109 farms (23%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 9 farms sold \$96,000 of food directly to consumers, up from 7 farms selling direct in 2002, and a 638% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$13,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, one half the national average of 0.4%.
- Rosebud County ranks 2nd in Montana for acreage of corn for silage, with 5,253.
- The county ranks 7th in Montana for sales of cattle and calves, with \$42 million.
- Rosebud County ranks eighth in the state for acreage for sugarbeets, with 1,494.
- The county ranks 9th in the state for livestock and poultry sales.
- Rosebud County ranks 9th in Montana for inventory of cattle and calves, with 79,000.

Sheridan County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 602 farms, 4% less than in 2002.
- Sheridan County has 1.1 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$91 million of products in 2007.
- \$79 million (87%) of these sales were crops.
- \$12 million (13%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 296 farms (49%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 123 (20%) farms.
- 16 farms (3%) are less than 50 acres.
- 263 farms (44%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 209 farms (35%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 8 farms sold \$33,000 of food directly to consumers, up from 7 farms selling direct in 2002, and a 65% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$20,000.
- Direct sales were 0.04% of farm product sales, one tenth the national average of 0.4%.
- Sheridan County ranks 1st in Montana and 1st in the U.S. for acreage of lentils, with 58,000.
- The county ranks 1st in Montana and 5th in the U.S. for acreage of dry edible peas, with 50,000.
- Sheridan County ranks second in the state for crop sales.

- The county ranks 2nd in the state for sales of grains, oilseeds, and dry edible beans and peas, with \$77 million.
- Sheridan County ranks 4th in the Montana for acreage of wheat, with 313,000.
- The county ranks eighth in Montana for sales of agricultural products.
- Sheridan County ranks 10th in the state for sales of vegetables, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

Treasure County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 101 farms, 12% less than in 2002.
- Treasure County has 462,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$30.4 million of products in 2007.
- \$11.4 million (38%) of these sales were crops.
- \$19 million (62%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 48 farms (48%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 500 to 999 acres with 19 (19%) farms.
- 9 farms (9%) are less than 50 acres.
- 34 farms (34%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 42 farms (42%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 2 farms sold food directly to consumers, down from 3 farms selling direct in 2002.
- *The value of direct sales was suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Treasure County ranks 4th in Montana for acreage of sugarbeets, with 4,008.
- The county ranks 6th in Montana for acreage of corn for silage, with 2,510.
- Treasure County ranks ninth in the state for sales of forage, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

Valley County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 770 farms, 4% more than in 2002.
- Valley County has 2.1 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$80.4 million of products in 2007.
- \$44.8 million (56%) of these sales were crops.
- \$35.6 million (44%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 348 farms (45%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 499 acres with 164 (21%) farms.
- 44 farms (6%) are less than 50 acres.
- 344 farms (45%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 203 farms (26%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 11 farms sold \$40,000 of food directly to consumers. There was no change in number of farms since 2002, and a 5% decrease in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$42,000.
- Direct sales were 0.05% of farm product sales, one eighth the national average of 0.4%.
- Valley County ranks 1st in Montana for acreage of flaxseed, with 11,000.
- The county ranks 1st in Montana for aquaculture sales, but *sales figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Valley County ranks third in the state and 7th in the U.S. for acreage of dry edible peas, with 43,000.
- The county ranks 3rd in the state for inventory of mink, but *inventory figures were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

- Valley County ranks 5th in Montana for acreage of wheat, with 291,000.
- The county ranks seventh in Montana for sales of grains, oilseeds, and dry beans and peas, with \$41 million.
- Valley County ranks 9th in the state for crop sales.

Wibaux County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2007):

- 208 farms, 3% less than in 2002.
- Wibaux County has 493,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$18.6 million of products in 2007.
- \$9.8 million (53%) of these sales were crops.
- \$8.8 million (47%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 94 farms (45%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 180 to 599 acres with 54 (26%) farms.
- 11 farms (5%) are less than 50 acres.
- 80 farms (38%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 53 farms (25%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 3 farms sold \$16,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 50% increase in the number of farms selling direct (2 in 2002). *Note that data for 2002 direct sales were not released by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, one fourth the national average of 0.4%.
- Wibaux County ranks 4th in Montana for acreage of safflower, with 4,232.
- The county ranks 4th in Montana for acreage of corn for grain, with 2,787.
- Wibaux County ranks eighth in the state for acreage of dry edible peas, with 4,240

State of Montana highlights

Montana highlights from the Census of Agriculture (2007):

- 29,524 farms, 6% more than in 2002.
- Montana has 61 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$2.8 billion of products in 2007.
- \$1.3 billion (46%) of these sales were crops.
- \$1.5 billion (54%) of these sales was livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 1,000 acres or more with 9,791 farms (33%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres with 5,462 (19%) farms.
- 7,379 farms (25%) are less than 50 acres.
- 15,695 farms (53%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 6,380 farms (22%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 1,287 farms sold \$6.3 million of food directly to consumers. This is an 11% increase in the number of farms selling direct (1,164 in 2002), and a 40% increase in direct sales over 2002 sales of \$4.5 million.
- Montana ranks 2nd in the U.S. for acreage of barley, with 719,000.
- The state ranks 2nd in the country for acreage of dry edible peas, with 222,000.
- Montana ranks second in the U.S. for acreage of lentils, with 88,000.
- Montana ranks 3rd in the U.S. for acreage of wheat, with 5.1 million.
- The state ranks 5th in the country for acreage of forage, with 2.8 million.
- The state ranks seventh in the U.S. for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 272,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, one half the national average of 0.4%.
- If direct food sales made up a single commodity, the value of these sales would outrank the state's 17th-most important product, safflower seeds.
- Statewide sales in vegetables totaled \$39 million.
- 229 farms farm organically, with a total of 58,868 acres of harvested cropland, and 75,807 acres of pastureland.
- 37,260 acres on 106 farms are undergoing organic conversion.
- 207 farms in Montana sold \$8.8 million of organic food products, including \$6.9 million of crops (this may include ornamental and greenhouse crops), \$847,000 of livestock and poultry, and \$1.1 million of products from livestock and poultry (such as milk or eggs).
- 148 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 1,224 farms produce value-added products.
- 7,115 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.
- 7,707 farms practice rotational management of intensive grazing.
- 514 farms generate energy or electricity on the farms.

Montana's top 25 farm products in 2009 (Economic Research Service)

See chart on next page

	\$ millions
1 Wheat	949.9
2 Cattle and calves	896.1
3 Barley	189.8
4 Hay	116.4
5 Sugar beets	50.9
6 Lentils	42.9
7 Dairy products	42.8
8 Hogs	36.5
9 Potatoes	34.4
10 Greenhouse/nursery	30.2
11 Dry peas	27.1
12 Sheep and lambs	18.7
13 Corn	15.4
14 Honey	14.8
15 Chicken eggs	6.9
16 Dry beans	6.8
17 Safflower	5.3
18 Oats	3.5
19 Wool	2.4
20 Cherries	1.6
21 Flaxseed	1.3

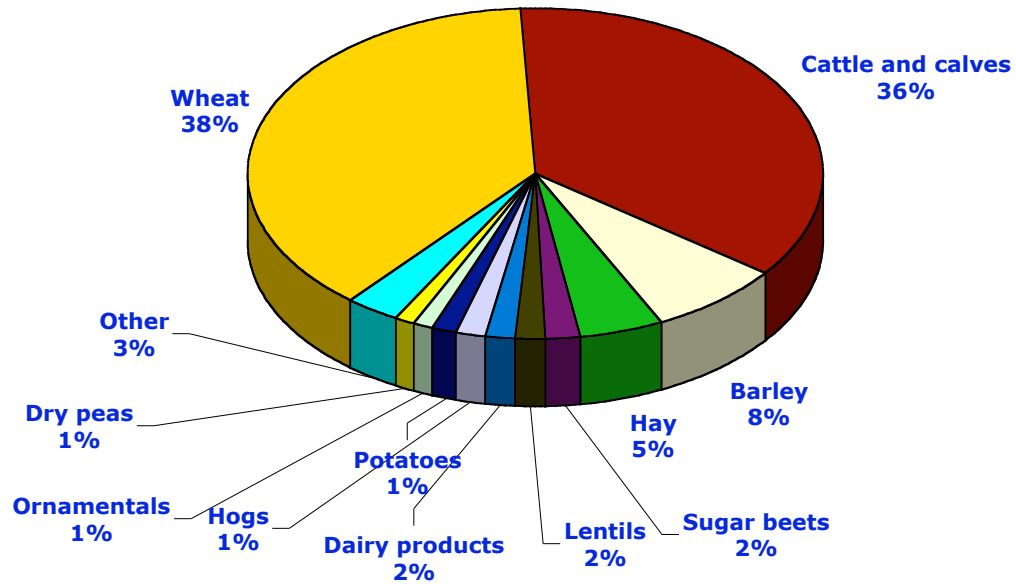
Note: aquaculture, turkeys, and mushrooms were also listed among Montana's top 25 products, in that order, but sales figures for these products were not released by ERS. Sales for these products combined appear to total about 3% of the state's farm product sales of \$2.6 billion in 2009.

Note also that at \$6 million, direct sales from farmers to consumers amount to more than the value of the 17th ranking product, safflower seeds.

Montana's top 25 farm products in 2009 (Economic Research Service)

See table on previous page

Top farm products sold by Montana farms, 2009



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (BEA):

Eastern Montana ranchers and farmers sell \$757 million of food commodities per year (a thirty-one-year average for 1979-2009), spending \$947 million to raise them, for an average loss of \$90 million each year. These figures do not include federal subsidies (see below). *Note that these sales figures compiled by the BEA may differ from cash receipts recorded by the USDA Census of Agriculture (above).*

Since 1979, farm producers have spent \$2.8 billion more producing crops and livestock than they earned by selling these products. This amounts to a loss of 12% of farm product sales. Total cash flow for farmers in the region has been negative for all but five years since 1979. Moreover, 32% of the region's farms and ranches reported net losses in 2007 (Ag Census). Eastern Montana farmers and ranchers earned \$270 million less by selling commodities in 2009 than they earned in 1969 (in 2009 dollars).

Farmers and ranchers earn \$37 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, and rental income (thirty-one-year average for 1979-2009). Federal farm support payments average \$144 million per year for all farms in the region combined (for the years 1979-2009). Overall, this means farm families rely heavily on off-farm jobs to make ends meet, and to obtain health care benefits.

The region's consumers:

Eastern Montana consumers spend \$189 million buying food each year, including \$110 million for home use. Most of this food (an estimated \$170 million) is produced outside the region. Only \$532,000 of food products (0.1% of farm cash receipts, and 0.3% of the region's consumer market) are sold by farmers directly to consumers.

Estimated change in net assets for all region households combined was a loss of \$372 million in 2009 alone (BLS). This places further pressure on residents trying to pay for food.

Farm and food economy summary:

Farmers lose \$90 million each year producing food commodities, and spend \$415 million buying inputs from external suppliers, for a total loss of \$505 million to the region. Federal subsidies (see above) do not fully compensate for these losses, and moreover, only are given to farmers who grow select crops, such as wheat and barley.

Meanwhile, consumers spend an estimated \$170 million buying food from outside the region. Adding losses from the farm economy to these consumer dollars that flow away from the region, total loss to the region is \$675 million of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to about 90% of the value of all commodities farmers sell in the region.

Consumer Markets for Food

Eastern Montana Region — markets for food eaten at home (2009):

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Eastern Montana residents purchase \$189 million of food each year; \$110 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 24
Fruits & vegetables	20
Cereals and bakery products	14
Dairy products	12
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	40

If Eastern Montana consumers purchased only 15% of the food they need for home use directly from farmers in the region, this would produce \$17 million of new farm income in the region.

Billings — markets for food eaten at home (2009):

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Billings residents purchase \$410 million of food each year; \$239 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 52
Fruits & vegetables	44
Cereals and bakery products	31
Dairy products	26
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	87

State of Montana — markets for food eaten at home (2009):

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Montanans purchase \$2.6 billion of food per year, \$1.5 billion of this to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 328
Fruits & vegetables	278
Cereals and bakery products	194
Dairy products	162
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	548

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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