

# Crossroads Resource Center

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

### **Blue Ridge Region (parts of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) Local Farm & Food Economy**

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for  
**Heifer Project International**

September 15, 2013

*Covers Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Surry, Union, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yadkin Counties in North Carolina; Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, & Washington Counties in Tennessee; & Grayson County in Virginia*

*This region was defined by Heifer Project International; several counties within this geographic area are not included.*

#### **Blue Ridge Region (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2012)**

3,869,838 residents receive \$151 billion of income annually. Personal income increased 251% from 1969 to 2012, after dollars were adjusted for inflation. The largest source of personal income is transfer payments (from government programs such as pensions), at \$28 billion. Interest, rent, and dividend income ranks second at \$24 billion. Government jobs rank third, with \$15 billion. Manufacturing workers earn \$14 billion per year, while health care workers wearn \$12 billion. Salaries for finance and insurance workers total \$11 billion. Note that income from public sources makes up 29% of the personal income in the region.

Income earned from transfer payments includes \$10 billion of retirement and disability insurance benefits; \$11 billion of medical benefits; \$3.1 billion of income maintenance benefits; \$1.1 billion of unemployment insurance; and \$839 million of veterans' benefits.

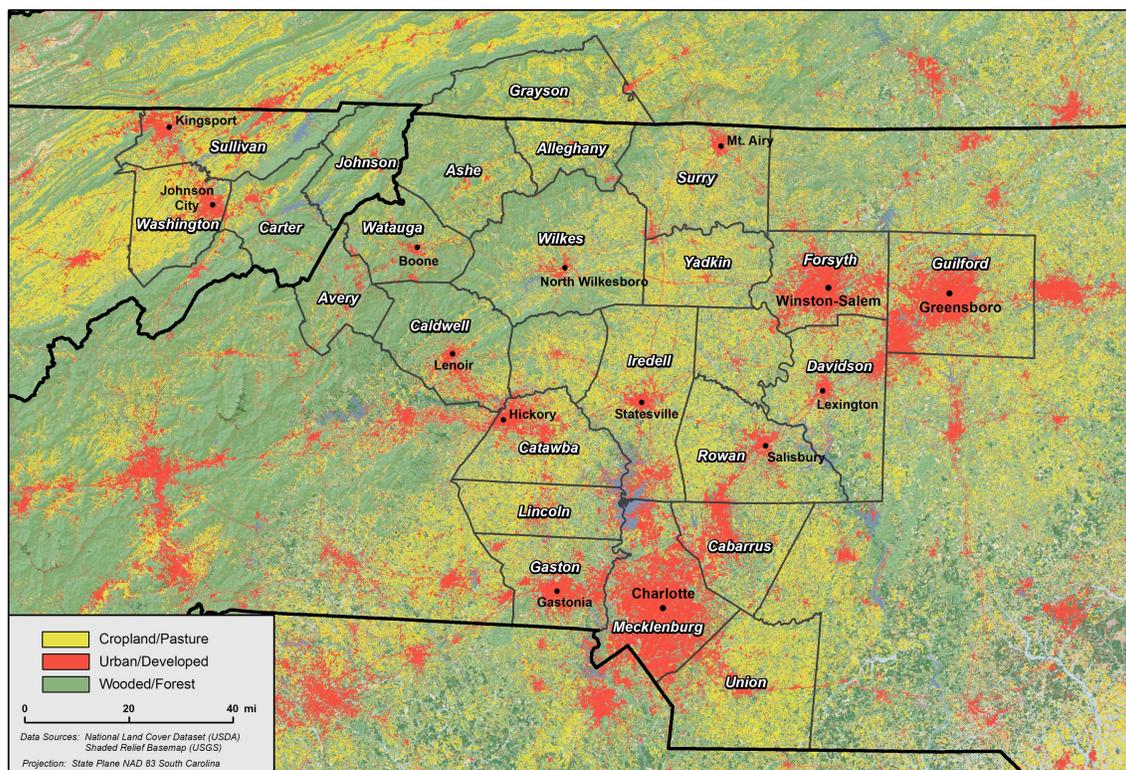
Government income includes \$1.8 billion of income earned by federal workers and \$12.9 billion earned by state and local government workers. Military personnel earn \$357 million of personal income.

Although population has increased more than 93% since 1969, there has been only limited public planning to assure a secure and stable food supply.

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<sup>1</sup> Considerable research assistance provided by Nick Wojciak.

## Land Cover in Study Area



Map by Adam Cox

### Issues affecting low-income residents of the Blue Ridge Region:

Over 1.2 million residents (33%) 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 \$2.6 billion each year buying food, including \$1 billion of SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and additional WIC coupons. Food stamp use has risen dramatically since 2003. 3,167 of the region's 19,163 farmers receive an annual combined total of \$28 million in subsidies (24-year average, 1989-2012), mostly to raise crops such as corn, soybeans, or wheat that are sold as commodities, not to feed local residents. *Data from Federal Census of 2008-2012, Bureau of Labor Statistics, & Bureau of Economic Analysis.*

8% percent of the region's households (over 291,000 residents) earn less than \$10,000 per year. *Source: Federal Census of 2008-2012.*

25% of adults aged 18-64 in North Carolina carried no health insurance in 2012. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

**Food-related health conditions:**

21% of North Carolina residents reported in 2009 that they eat five or more servings of fruit or vegetables each day. 79% 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.*

18.3% of North Carolina adults reported in 2012 they participate in enough aerobic and muscle strengthening exercises to meet recommended guidelines. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

9.8% of North Carolina residents have been diagnosed with diabetes (2010). *Source: Centers for Disease Control.* Medical costs for treating diabetes and related conditions in North Carolina are estimated at \$8 billion per year. Costs for the state of Tennessee are \$5.1 billion, and for Virginia \$6.2 billion. *Source: American Diabetes Association.*

66% of North Carolina residents are overweight (36.3%) or obese (29.6%), as of 2012. *Source: Centers for Disease Control.*

**The region's farms (Agricultural Census, 2012)**

*Agricultural Census data for 2012 were released May 2, 2014*

*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:*

- 19,163 farms.
- The Blue Ridge Region had 5% less farms in 2012 than in 2007.
- 212 (1%) of these are 1,000 acres or more in size.
- 10,055 (52%) farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average farm size is 105 acres.
- The region has 2 million acres of land in farms.
- Blue Ridge Region holds 803,000 acres of harvested cropland.
- At least 10,000 of these acres are irrigated. *Note that data for irrigated acreage in Allegheny County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- Average value of land and buildings per farm was \$605,000.

*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 at least \$2 billion of crops and livestock in 2012. *Note that data for sales in Mecklenburg County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- \$549 million of crops were sold.
- \$1.4 billion of livestock and products were sold.
- 13,000 (68%) of the region’s farms sold less than \$10,000 of products in 2012.
- Total sales from these small farms were at least \$34 million, more than 2% of the region’s farm product sales. *Note that data for sales from small farms in Cabarrus, Carter, and Johnson counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total and percentage are incomplete.*
- 1,794 (9%) of the region’s farms sold more than \$100,000 of products.
- Total sales from these larger farms were \$1.8 billion, 91% of the region’s farm product sales.
- 64% of the region’s farms (12,297 of 19,163) reported net losses in 2012.
- 3,167 (17%) of Blue Ridge Region’s farmers collected a combined total of at least \$12 million of federal subsidies in 2012. *Note that data for farmers collecting federal subsidies in Mecklenburg County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

**Top farm products of Blue Ridge Region (2012).**

*Note: \*\* denotes sales data has been suppressed.*

<b>Product</b>	<b>\$ Millions</b>
Poultry and eggs	**1,061
Cattle and calves	199
Soybeans	**117
Milk	**105
Corn	**103
Ornamentals	**83
Christmas trees and other woody crops	**64
Wheat	**40
Tobacco	**37
Forage crops (hay, etc.)	**24
Vegetables	**20

### Production Expenses of Blue Ridge Region (2012).

Note: \*\* denotes data has been suppressed.

	\$ Millions	% of Total Expenses
Feed purchased	**748	**44%
Livestock and poultry purchases	239	14%
Hired farm labor	**120	**7%
Depreciation expenses claimed	**110	**7%
Fertilizer, lime, and soil conditioners	**76	**4%
Repairs, supplies, and maintenance costs	**74	**4%
Gasoline, fuels, and oil purchased	**71	**4%
Interest expense	53	3%
Seeds purchases	**45	**3%
Cash rent for land and buildings	40	2%
Chemicals purchased	**38	**2%
Property taxes paid	38	2%

#### Cattle & Dairy:

- 9,731 farms hold an inventory of 439,000 cattle.
- 249,000 cattle were sold by farmers in 2012 for total sales of \$199 million.
- 7,769 farms raise beef cows.
- 298 farms raise milk cows.
- 348 farms produced corn for silage.
- 11,000 farms produced 749,000 tons of forage crops (hay, etc.) on 333,000 acres.
- 4,529 farms sold at least \$24 million of forage. *Note that data for sales of forage in Union County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

#### Other Livestock & Animal Products:

- 379 farms hold an inventory of at least 17,000 hogs and pigs. *Note that data for inventory of hogs and pigs in Cabarrus, Caldwell, Surry, Union, Yadkin, and Sullivan counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 228 farms sold at least 212,000 hogs and pigs in 2012. *Note that data for sales of hogs and pigs in Allegheny, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Union, Yadkin, and Sullivan counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 609 farms hold an inventory of at least 15,000 sheep and lambs. *Note that data for inventory of sheep and lambs in Allegheny County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*

- 1,089 farms sold at least \$2.5 million worth of sheep, goats, and lambs in 2012. *Note that data for sales of sheep, goats, and lambs in Caldwell and Watauga counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 1,918 farms hold an inventory of at least 4.7 million laying hens. *Note that data for inventory of laying hens in Cabarrus and Caldwell counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 499 farms raise broiler chickens.
- 44 farms engage in aquaculture.
- 1,022 farms raise horses and ponies.

*Grains, Oil Seeds, & Edible Beans:*

- 2,007 farms produced \$269 million of grains, oil seeds, and edible beans.
- 1,190 farms produced at least 14 million bushels of corn on over 128,000 acres, worth more than \$103 million. *Note that data for acreage in Allegheny County, bushels in Allegheny and Grayson counties, and sales in Allegheny, Ashe, Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, and Grayson counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*
- 1,112 farms produced at least 8.6 million bushels of soybeans on over 205,000 acres, worth more than \$117 million. *Note that data for bushels, acreage, and sales in Ashe and Carter counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 694 farms produced at least 5.9 million bushels of wheat on over 108,000 acres, worth more than \$40 million. *Note that data for acreage and bushels in Allegheny, Carter, and Sullivan counties, and data for sales in Allegheny, Wilkes, Carter, Sullivan, and Washington counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*

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

- 865 farms worked at least 6,469 acres to produce vegetables, worth more than \$20 million. *Note that data for acreage of vegetables in Union County, and data for sales in Gaston, Rowan, Surry, Union, Yadkin, and Sullivan counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*
- This represents a 14% decrease in the number of farms (from 997) since 2007.
- 378 farms raised potatoes.

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

- 489 farms in the region hold 2,388 acres of orchards.
- 610 farms sold at least \$6.8 million of fruits, nuts, and berries. *Note that data for sales of fruits, nuts, and berries in Cabarrus, Caldwell, Davidson, Gaston, Iredell, Carter, Sullivan, and Washington counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- 3 farms produced peanuts.

*Nursery & Greenhouse Plants:*

- 838 farms sold at least \$83 million worth of ornamentals in 2012. *Note that data for sales of ornamentals in Mecklenburg, Rowan, Yadkin, and Washington counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- This represents a decrease of 3% in the number of farms (from 863) since 2007.
- 942 farms sold Christmas trees.

*Direct & Organic Sales:*

- 1,438 farms sell \$8.2 million of food products directly to consumers. This is a 17% increase of number of farms (1,228 in 2007) selling direct over 2007.
- This amounts to at least 0.4% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%. *Note that data for percentage of direct sales in Yadkin County were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so this total is incomplete.*
- Washington County leads the region in direct sales, with \$1.5 million.
- 60 farms in the region sold organic products.
- 118 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 881 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 574 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 234 farms had on-farm packing facilities.

*Conservation Practices:*

- 2,422 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 29 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 193 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

*Other Crops:*

- 284 farms produced at least 26 million pounds of tobacco on over 12 million acres, worth at least \$37 million. *Note that data for pounds and acreage produced in Caldwell, and Union counties, data for sales in Allegheny, Caldwell, Surry, Union, and Carter counties were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.*

**Operations by Legal Status for Tax Purposes in the Blue Ridge Region.**  
(Census of Agriculture, 2012)

	<b>Farms</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Family or individual	17,283	**1,496,113
Partnership	1,011	**263,564
Corporation (family held)	635	**123,527
Corporation (other than family held)	76	**4,629
Other – cooperative, estate or trust, institutional, etc.	158	**9,302
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19,163</b>	<b>**1,897,135</b>

## **County and State Highlights North Carolina**

### **Allegheny County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 567 farms, 9% more than in 2007.
- Allegheny County has 91,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$36 million of products in 2012.
- \$20.6 million (57%) of these sales were crops.
- \$15.8 million (43%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 209 farms (37%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 192 (34%) farms.
- 12 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 244 farms (43%) are less than 50 acres.
- 317 farms (56%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 65 farms (11%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Allegheny County ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the United States, and second in North Carolina for acreage of Christmas trees, with 9,767.
- The county ranks third in the state for sales of Christmas trees, with \$11 million.
- Allegheny County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for acreage of corn for silage, with 3,025.
- The county ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the state for inventory of cattle, with 24,000.
- Allegheny County ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$10 million.
- The county ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of cattle, with \$5.5 million.
- 17 farms sold \$164,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 3 farm increase in the number of farms selling direct, and a 71% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$96,000.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

### **Ashe County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,140 farms, 1% more than in 2007.
- Ashe County has 112,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$54.5 million of products in 2012.
- \$40.55 million (74%) of these sales were crops.
- \$13.9 million (26%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 445 farms (39%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 429 (38%) farms.
- 7 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 543 farms (48%) are less than 50 acres.
- 706 farms (62%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 90 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.

- Ashe County ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the United States, and 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina for acreage of Christmas trees, with 14,000.
- The county ranks first in the state for sales of Christmas trees, with \$32 million.
- Ashe County ranks fourth in the state for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 1,148.
- The county ranks sixth in the state for sales of cattle, with \$13 million.
- Ashe County ranks ninth in the state for acreage of nursery stock crops, with 691.
- 83 farms sold \$404,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 34% increase in the number of farms selling direct (62 in 2007), and a 10% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$367,000.
- Direct sales were 0.7% of farm product sales, more than double the national average of 0.3%.

**Avery County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 483 farms, 6 more farms than in 2007.
- Avery County has 28,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$17.2 million of products in 2012.
- \$16.5 million (96%) of these sales were crops.
- \$664,000 (4%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 231 farms (48%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 153 (32%) farms.
- 2 farms (less than 1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 305 farms (63%) are less than 50 acres.
- 268 farms (55%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 39 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Avery County ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the United States and second in North Carolina for sales of Christmas trees, with \$12 million.
- The county ranks seventh in the country, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state, for acreage of Christmas trees, with 7,343.
- Avery County ranks sixth in the state for acreage of nursery stock crops, with 1,007.
- 40 farms sold \$382,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 135% increase in the number of farms selling direct (17 in 2007), and a 366% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$82,000.
- Direct sales were 2.2% of farm product sales, more than 7 times the national average of 0.3%.

**Cabarrus County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 589 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Cabarrus County has 66,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$55.9 million of products in 2012.
- \$13.9 million (25%) of these sales were crops.
- \$42 million (75%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 268 farms (46%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 202 (34%) farms.
- 11 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 306 farms (52%) are less than 50 acres.
- 440 farms (75%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 37 farms (6%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- 50 farms sold \$148,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 35% increase in the number of farms selling direct (37 in 2007), and a 64% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$90,000.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, the same as the national average of 0.3%.

**Caldwell County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 411 farms, 10% less than in 2007.
- Caldwell County has 32,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$17.8 million of products in 2012.
- \$9.6 million (54%) of these sales were crops.
- \$8.2 million (46%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 184 farms (45%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 130 (32%) farms.
- 2 farms (less than 1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 234 farms (57%) are less than 50 acres.
- 304 farms (74%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 30 farms (7%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Caldwell County ranks second in the state for acreage of nursery stock crops, with 1,715.
- 39 farms sold \$90,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 117% increase in the number of farms selling direct (18 in 2007), and a 26% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of \$121,000.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

**Catawba County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 698 farms, 5% less than in 2007.
- Catawba County has 67,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$67.3 million of products in 2012.
- \$19.8 million (29%) of these sales were crops.
- \$47.5 million (71%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 342 farms (49%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 218 (31%) farms.
- 4 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 388 farms (56%) are less than 50 acres.
- 473 farms (68%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 67 farms (10%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Catawba County ranks sixth in North Carolina for sales of horses, with \$859,000.
- 41 farms sold \$83,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 4-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct, and a 33% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of \$124,000.
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

**Davidson County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,062 farms, 1% less than in 2007.
- Davidson County has 87,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$54.6 million of products in 2012.
- \$21.7 million (40%) of these sales were crops.
- \$32.9 million (60%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 511 farms (48%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 369 (35%) farms.
- 4 farms (less than 1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 581 farms (55%) are less than 50 acres.
- 795 farms (75%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 75 farms (7%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Davidson County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in North Carolina for inventory of goats, with 1,880.
- The county ranks seventh in the state for acreage of forage crops (hay, etc.), with 18,000.
- Davidson County ranks ninth in the state for sales of milk, with \$5 million.
- 103,000 farms sold \$287,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 16% decrease in the number of farms selling direct (123 in 2007), and a 17% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$245,000.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

**Forsyth County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 661 farms, 3% less than in 2007.
- Forsyth County has 40,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$16.1 million of products in 2012.
- \$14.4 million (89%) of these sales were crops.
- \$1.7 million (11%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 357 farms (54%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 198 (30%) farms.
- 1 farms (less than 1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 435 farms (66%) are less than 50 acres.
- 527 farms (80%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 20 farms (3%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Forsyth County ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the state for inventory of bee colonies, with 600.
- 113 farms sold \$536,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 45% increase in the number of farms selling direct (78 in 2007), and a 239% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$158,000.
- Direct sales were 3.3% of farm product sales, 11 times the national average of 0.3%.

**Gaston County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 520 farms, 4 more farms than in 2007.
- Gaston County has 42,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$17 million of products in 2012.
- \$5.1 million (30%) of these sales were crops.
- \$11.9 million (70%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 207 farms (40%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 173 (33%) farms.
- 3 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 285 farms (55%) are less than 50 acres.
- 399 farms (77%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 26 farms (5%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Gaston County ranks fourth in North Carolina for inventory of quail, *but inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 63 farms sold \$280,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 34% increase in the number of farms selling direct (47 in 2007), and a 89% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$148,000.
- Direct sales were 1.6% of farm product sales, more than 5 times the national average of 0.3%.

**Guilford County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 962 farms, no change since 2007.
- Guilford County has 91,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$58.2 million of products in 2012.
- \$32.7 million (56%) of these sales were crops.
- \$25.5 million (44%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 494 farms (51%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 319 (33%) farms.
- 11 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 547 farms (57%) are less than 50 acres.
- 690 farms (72%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 85 farms (9%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Guilford County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina for sales of horses, with \$1.5 million.
- 93 farms sold \$521,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 5-farm increase in the number of farms selling direct, and a 32% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of \$768,000.
- Direct sales were 0.9% of farm product sales, 3 times the national average of 0.3%.

**Iredell County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,203 farms, 2 more farms than in 2007.
- Iredell County has 152,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$166 million of products in 2012.
- \$37 million (22%) of these sales were crops.
- \$129 million (78%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 474 farms (39%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 461 (38%) farms.
- 24 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 569 farms (47%) are less than 50 acres.
- 726 farms (60%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 195 farms (16%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Iredell County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the United States and 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina for inventory of roosters, with 136,000.
- The county ranks first in the state for sales of milk, with \$53 million.
- Iredell County ranks first in the state for acreage of forage crops (hay, etc.), with 28,000.
- The county ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the state for inventory of cattle, with 49,000.
- Iredell County ranks third in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 1 million.

- The county ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in North Carolina for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, with 538,000.
- Iredell County ranks seventh in the state for sales of horses, with \$843,000.
- 62 farms sold \$778,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 15% decrease in the number of farms selling direct (73 in 2007), and a 51% increase in direct sales since 2007 sales of \$516,000.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

**Lincoln County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 651 farms, 2% more than in 2007.
- Lincoln County has 56,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$56.46 million of products in 2012.
- \$9.7 million (17%) of these sales were crops.
- \$46.7 million (83%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 304 farms (47%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 240 (37%) farms.
- 5 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 349 farms (54%) are less than 50 acres.
- 471 farms (72%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 49 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Lincoln County ranks third in North Carolina for sales of milk, with \$12 million.
- The county ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the state for acreage of corn for silage, with 1,997.
- 69 farms sold \$228,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 50% increase in the number of farms selling direct (46 in 2007), and a 2% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$223,000.
- Direct sales were 0.4% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.

**Mecklenburg County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 237 farms, 1 more farm than in 2007.
- Mecklenburg County has 15,000 acres of land in farms.
- Data for total product sales were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.
- Data for crop sales were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.
- \$1.8 million of livestock were sold.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 93 farms (39%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 67 (28%) farms.
- No farms were 1,000 acres or more.

- 152 farms (64%) are less than 50 acres.
- 165 farms (70%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 14 farms (6%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Mecklenburg County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina for sales of ornamentals, *but sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 38 farms sold \$95,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 8-farm increase in the number of farms selling direct, and a 57% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of \$221,000.

**Rowan County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,011 farms, 3% 983 than in 2007.
- Rowan County has 121,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$84 million of products in 2012.
- \$51 million (60%) of these sales were crops.
- \$33 million (40%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 485 farms (48%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 331 (33%) farms.
- 17 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 558 farms (55%) are less than 50 acres.
- 713 farms (71%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 81 farms (8%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Rowan County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in North Carolina for acreage of forage crops (hay, etc.), with 19,000.
- The county ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, with \$1.2 million.
- Rowan County ranks tenth in the state for sales of milk, with \$5.1 million.
- 101 farms sold \$589,000 of food directly to consumers. There was no change in farms since 2007, and an 8% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$545,000.
- Direct sales were 0.7% of farm product sales, more than double the national average of 0.3%.

**Surry County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,256 farms, 2 farms less than in 2007.
- Surry County has 127,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$199 million of products in 2012.
- \$45.6 million (23%) of these sales were crops.
- \$153.4 million (77%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 553 farms (44%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 507 (40%) farms.
- 15 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.

- 618 farms (49%) are less than 50 acres.
- 828 farms (66%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 135 farms (11%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Surry County ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in North Carolina for inventory of laying hens, with 583,000.
- The county ranks eighth in the state for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, with \$1.7 million.
- Surry County ranks eighth in the state for sales of sheep and goats, with \$207,000.
- The county ranks eighth in the state for acreage of forage crops (hay, etc.), with 16,000.
- Surry County ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the state for inventory of cattle, with 23,000.
- The county ranks ninth in North Carolina for sales of Christmas trees, with \$216,000.
- Surry County ranks tenth in the state for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$133 million.
- The county ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of cattle, with \$9.5 million.
- 98 farms sold \$563,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 9-farm increase in the number of farms selling direct, and a 34% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$420,000.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, the same as the national average of 0.3%.

**Union County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,059 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Union County has 202,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$536 million of products in 2012.
- \$128.4 million (24%) of these sales were crops.
- \$407.5 million (76%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 495 farms (47%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 312 (29%) farms.
- 40 farms (4%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 589 farms (56%) are less than 50 acres.
- 597 farms (56%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 274 farms (26%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Union County ranks fourth in the United States, and 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina, for inventory of quail, *but inventory figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- Union County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the state for acreage of winter wheat, with 53,000.
- The county ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina for inventory of broilers, with 13 million.
- Union County ranks second in the state for sales of grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas, with \$101 million.
- The county ranks second in the state for acreage of soybeans, with 73,000.
- Union County ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 1.2 million.

- The county ranks third in North Carolina for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$396 million.
- Union County ranks third in the state for inventory of turkeys with 1.7 million.
- The county ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of agricultural products, with \$536 million.
- Union County ranks fourth in the state for sales of livestock and poultry, with \$407 million.
- The county ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, with 451,000.
- Union County ranks sixth in North Carolina for sales of ornamentals, \$20 million.
- The county ranks eighth in the state for sales of crops, with \$128 million.
- 49 farms sold \$255,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 9-farm increase in the number of farms selling direct, and a 136% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$108,000.
- Direct sales were 0.05% of farm product sales, less than the the national average of 0.3%.

**Watauga County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 609 farms, 4% more than in 2007.
- Watauga County has 56,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$15.29 million of products in 2012.
- \$5.87 million (38%) of these sales were crops.
- \$9.42 million (62%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 230 farms (38%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 229 (38%) farms.
- 4 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 301 farms (49%) are less than 50 acres.
- 399 farms (66%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 31 farms (5%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Watauga County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in North Carolina for sales of Christmas trees, with \$4.3 million.
- The county ranks fourth in the state for acreage of Christmas trees, with 3,132.
- 61 farms sold \$189,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 85% increase in the number of farms selling direct (33 in 2007), and a 115% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$88,000.
- Direct sales were 1.2% of farm product sales, 4 times the national average of 0.3%.

**Wilkes County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 972 farms, 11% fewer than the 1,095 farms counted in 2007.
- Wilkes County has 111,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$284.9 million of products in 2012.
- \$18.7 million (7%) of these sales were crops.

- \$266.2 million (93%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 396 farms (41%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 384 (40%) farms.
- 7 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 436 farms (45%) are less than 50 acres.
- 563 farms (58%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 186 farms (19%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Wilkes County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in North Carolina for sales of cattle, with \$30 million.
- The county ranks second in the state for acreage of corn for silage, with 4,867.
- Wilkes County ranks second in the state for sales of sheep and goats, with \$363,000.
- The county ranks third in the state for inventory of broilers, with 10 million.
- Wilkes County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for inventory of cattle, with 40,000.
- The county ranks fourth in North Carolina for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$231 million.
- Wilkes County ranks fifth in the state for sales of livestock and poultry, with \$266 million.
- The county ranks fifth in the state for acreage of forage crops (hay, etc.), with 18,000.
- Wilkes County ranks sixth in the state for inventory of roosters, with 42,000.
- The county ranks seventh in North Carolina for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, with 349,000.
- Wilkes County ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the state for sales of agricultural products, with \$285 million.
- The county ranks tenth in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 355,000.
- 55 farms sold \$687,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 38% increase in the number of farms selling direct (40 in 2007), and a 121% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$311,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

**Yadkin County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 952 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Yadkin County has 100,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$124.7 million of products in 2012.
- \$33.4 million (27%) of these sales were crops.
- \$91.3 million (73%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 476 farms (50%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 318 (33%) farms.
- 15 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 529 farms (56%) are less than 50 acres.
- 630 farms (66%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 117 farms (12%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.

- Yadkin County ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the United States, and second in North Carolina for inventory of roosters, with 119,000.
- The county ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for inventory of laying hens, with 1 million.
- Yadkin County ranks fifth in North Carolina for sales of milk, *but sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- 75 farms sold \$158,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 32% increase in the number of farms selling direct (57 in 2007).
- Direct sales were 0.1% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

### **State of North Carolina highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 50,218 farms, 5% less than in 2007.
- North Carolina has 8.4 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$12.6 billion of products in 2012.
- \$4.3 billion (34%) of these sales were crops.
- \$8.3 billion (66%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 20,014 farms (40%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 17,260 (34%) farms.
- 1,696 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 24,169 farms (48%) are less than 50 acres.
- 31,492 farms (63%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 8,331 farms (17%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- The state ranks first in the country for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$4.8 billion.
- North Carolina ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the United States for sales of tobacco, with \$733 million.
- The state ranks second in the country for sales of hogs and pigs, with \$2.9 billion.
- North Carolina ranks second in the country for sales of Christmas trees, with \$580 million.
- North Carolina ranks second in the country for inventory of turkeys, with 17 million.
- The state ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the country for inventory of hogs and pigs, with 8.9 million.
- North Carolina ranks fifth in the United States for sales of cotton, with \$403 million.
- The state ranks sixth in the country for sales of livestock and poultry, with \$8.3 billion.
- North Carolina ranks seventh in the country for sales of ornamentals, with \$580 million.
- The state ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the country for sales of agricultural products, with \$13 billion.
- North Carolina ranks eighth in the country for inventory of laying hens, with 13 million.
- The state ranks eighth in the United States for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, with 6.2 million.
- North Carolina ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the country for acreage of winter wheat, with 753,000.

- 4,475 farms sold \$31.8 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 21% increase in the number of farms selling direct (3,712 in 2007), and a 9% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$29.1 million.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, the same as the national average of 0.3%.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled \$435 million.
- If direct food sales made up a single commodity, the value of these sales would outrank the state's 25<sup>th</sup> most important product, cucumbers.
- 148 farms farm organically.
- 579 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 2,559 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 2,201 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 931 farms had on-farm packing facilities.
- 7,206 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 119 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 480 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

### North Carolina's top farm products in 2012 (Economic Research Service)

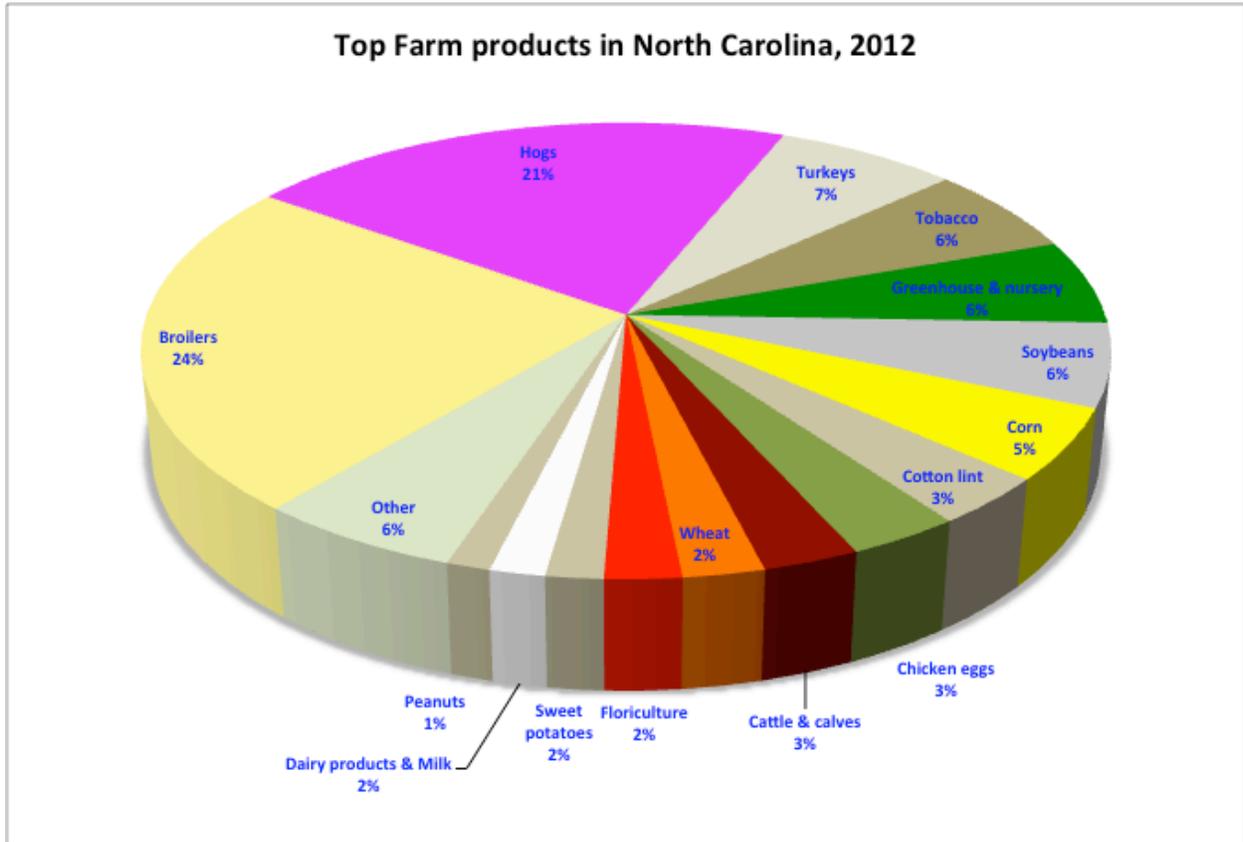
The data in the table and pie chart below are for North Carolina as a whole. See chart on next page.

	\$ millions
1 Broilers	2,839
2 Hogs	2,553
3 Turkeys	849
4 Tobacco	754
5 Greenhouse & nursery	719
6 Soybeans	706
7 Corn	607
8 Cotton lint	413
9 Chicken eggs	392
10 Cattle & calves	334
11 Wheat	283
12 Floriculture	264
13 Sweet potatoes	198
14 Dairy products & Milk	191
15 Peanuts	152
16 Poultry & eggs	97
17 Blueberries	71
18 Vegetables & melons (other)	62
19 Hay	47
20 Other livestock	42
21 Cottonseed	40
22 Tomatoes	37
23 Potatoes	36
24 Watermelon	35
25 Cucumbers	30
26 Strawberries	29
27 Aquaculture	28
28 All other crops	24
29 Peppers, Green, Fresh	22
30 Corn, Sweet	21
31 Squash	20
32 Cabbage	16
33 Farm chickens	11
34 Apples	8
35 Beans, Snap, Fresh	7
36 Trout	6
37 Peaches	6
38 Catfish	6

- Note that if direct food sales made up a single commodity, the value of these sales would outrank the state's 25<sup>th</sup> most important product, cucumbers.

### North Carolina's top farm products in 2012 (Economic Research Service)

See table on previous page



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

## **Tennessee:**

### **Carter County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 493 farms, 4% less than in 2007.
- Carter County has 40,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$8.57 million of products in 2012.
- \$1.6 million (19%) of these sales were crops.
- \$6.95 million (81%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 215 farms (44%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 188 (38%) farms.
- No farms were 1,000 acres or more.
- 255 farms (52%) are less than 50 acres.
- 374 farms (76%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 14 farms (3%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Carter County ranks second in Tennessee for sales of Christmas trees, with \$282,000.
- The county ranks second in the state for acreage of Christmas trees, with 410.
- 15 farms sold \$97,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 9-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct, and a 33% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$73,000.
- Direct sales were 1.1% of farm product sales, more than 3 times the national average of 0.3%.

### **Johnson County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 476 farms, 7% less than in 2007.
- Johnson County has 47,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$9.1 million of products in 2012.
- \$2.2 million (24%) of these sales were crops.
- \$6.9 million (76%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 191 farms (40%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 189 (40%) farms.
- 2 farms (less than 1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 214 farms (45%) are less than 50 acres.
- 335 farms (70%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 17 farms (4%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Johnson County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Tennessee for acreage of Christmas trees, with 809.
- The county ranks first in the state for sales of Christmas trees, with \$571,000.
- 26 farms sold \$55,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 1-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct, and a 47% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of \$103,000.

- Direct sales were 0.6% of farm product sales, double the national average of 0.3%.

**Sullivan County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,074 farms, 16% less than in 2007.
- Sullivan County has 85,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$17.8 million of products in 2012.
- \$1.73 million (10%) of these sales were crops.
- \$16.02 million (90%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 523 farms (49%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 359 (33%) farms.
- 6 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 623 farms (58%) are less than 50 acres.
- 854 farms (80%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 24 farms (2%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Sullivan County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Tennessee for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 2,891.
- The county ranks third in the state for sales of sheep and goats, with \$291,000.
- 45 farms sold \$57,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 1-farm increase in sfarms selling direct, and a 54% decrease in direct sales since 2007 sales of \$125,000.
- Direct sales were 0.3% of farm product sales, the same as the national average of 0.3%.

**Washington County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 1,312 farms, 20% more than in 2007.
- Washington County has 112,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$38.58 million in 2012.
- \$12.93 million (34%) of these sales were crops.
- \$25.66 million (66%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 10 to 49 acres, with 618 farms (47%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 50 to 179 acres, with 449 (34%) farms.
- 7 farms (1%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 730 farms (56%) are less than 50 acres.
- 941 farms (72%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 70 farms (5%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Washington County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Tennessee for sales of fruits, tree nuts, and berries, *but sales figures were suppressed by the USDA in an effort to protect confidentiality.*
- The county ranks fourth in the state for inventory of sheep and lambs, with 1,537.
- Washington County ranks sixth in the state for sales of vegetables, with \$5.7 million.
- The county ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in Tennessee for sales of sheep and goats, with \$278,000.

- Washington County ranks seventh in the state for acreage of forage crops (hay, etc.), with 38,000.
- The county ranks seventh in the state for acreage of corn for silage, with 1,915.
- Washington County ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the state for acreage of vegetables, with 839.
- The county ranks ninth in Tennessee for sales of cattle, with \$18 million.
- 77 farms sold \$1.526 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 17% increase in the number of farms selling direct (66 in 2007), and a 38% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$1.12 million.
- Direct sales were 4% of farm product sales, more than 13 times the national average of 0.3%.

### **State of Tennessee highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 68,050 farms, 14% less than in 2007.
- Tennessee has 11 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$3.6 billion of products in 2012.
- \$2.1 billion (58%) of these sales were crops.
- \$1.5 billion (42%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 27,037 farms (40%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 23,563 (35%) farms.
- 1,488 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 26,793 farms (39%) are less than 50 acres.
- 47,500 farms (70%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 4,160 farms (6%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Tennessee ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the United States for sales of tobacco, with \$108 million.
- The state ranks sixth in the country for acreage of cotton, with 377,000.
- Tennessee ranks eighth in the country for sales of cotton, with \$253 million.
- The state ranks ninth in the country for inventory of roosters, with 192,000.
- 3,679 farms sold \$19.18 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 3% increase in the number of farms selling direct (3,581 in 2007), and a 25% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$15.38 million.
- Direct sales were 0.5% of farm product sales, more than the national average of 0.3%.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled \$73 million.
- 36 farms farm organically.
- 266 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 3,551 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 1,102 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 669 farms had on-farm packing facilities.
- 11,766 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 51 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 631 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

**Virginia:**

**Grayson County highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 764 farms, 10% less than in 2007.
- Grayson County has 132,000 acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$31.6 million of products in 2012.
- \$5.97 million (19%) of these sales were crops.
- \$25.67 million (81%) of these sales were livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 300 farms (39%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 228 (30%) farms.
- 13 farms (2%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 264 farms (35%) are less than 50 acres.
- 437 farms (57%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 53 farms (7%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Grayson County ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Virginia for sales of Christmas trees, with \$3.2 million.
- The county ranks first in the state for acreage for Christmas trees, with 3,564.
- Grayson County ranks ninth in the state for sales of cattle, with \$21 million.
- 25 farms sold \$48,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 4-farm decrease in the number of farms selling direct, and a 36% decrease in direct sales from 2007 sales of \$75,000.
- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, less than the national average of 0.3%.

### **State of Virginia highlights (Census of Agriculture 2012):**

- 46,030 farms, 3% less than in 2007.
- Virginia has 8.3 million acres of land in farms.
- Farmers sold \$3.75 billion of products in 2012.
- \$1.36 billion (36%) of these sales were crops.
- \$2.39 billion (64%) of these sales was livestock.
- The most prevalent farm size is 50 to 179 acres, with 16,850 farms (37%) in this category.
- The next most prevalent is 10 to 49 acres, with 14,425 (31%) farms.
- 1,375 farms (3%) are 1,000 acres or more.
- 17,768 farms (39%) are less than 50 acres.
- 28,602 farms (62%) sold less than \$10,000 in farm products.
- 4,431 farms (10%) sold more than \$100,000 in farm products.
- Virginia ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the United States for sales of tobacco, with \$101 million.
- The state ranks sixth in the country for inventory of turkeys, with 5.2 million.
- Virginia ranks seventh in the country for sales of Christmas trees, with \$7.9 million.
- The state ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the country for sales of horses, with \$32 million.
- 3,581 farms sold \$41.7 million of food directly to consumers. This is a 25% increase in the number of farms selling direct (2,855 in 2007), and a 44% increase in direct sales over 2007 sales of \$28.9 million.
- Direct sales were 1.1% of farm product sales, more than 3 times the national average of 0.3%.
- Statewide vegetable sales totaled \$92 million.
- 104 farms farm organically.
- 386 farms market through community supported agriculture (CSA).
- 2,677 farms produce and sell value-added products.
- 1,769 farms marketed products directly to retail outlets.
- 704 farms had on-farm packing facilities.
- 9,315 farms practice rotational or management intensive grazing.
- 74 farms practiced alley cropping or silvopasture.
- 387 farms harvested biomass for use in renewable energy.

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

Blue Ridge Region farmers sell \$1.93 billion of food commodities per year (1989-2012 average), spending \$1.46 billion to raise them, for an average gain of \$464 million each year. This is an average net cash income of \$24,213 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 \$11 billion by selling crops and livestock over the years 1989 to 2012. Yet net farm income has declined steadily since 1994, and 64% of the region's farms reported that they lost money in 2012 (Ag Census). Moreover, Blue Ridge Region farmers and ranchers earned \$71 million less by selling commodities in 2012 than they earned in 1969 (in 2012 dollars).

Farmers and ranchers earn another \$206 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, and rental income (24-year average for 1989-2012). Federal farm support payments are relatively small, averaging \$28 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.*

Blue Ridge Region consumers spend \$9.5 billion buying food each year, including \$5.6 billion for home use. Most of this food is sourced outside the region, so Blue Ridge Region consumers spend about \$8.6 billion per year buying food sourced far away. Only \$8 million of food products (0.4% of farm cash receipts and 0.08% 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 \$4.7 billion in 2012 alone (BLS). This places additional pressure on Blue Ridge Region consumers trying to buy food.

**Farm and food economy summary:**

Farmers earn \$464 million each year producing food commodities, and receive \$28 million in government payments, and spend \$860 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 \$360 million to the region.

Meanwhile, consumers spend \$8.6 billion buying food from outside. Thus, total loss to the region is \$9 billion of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to four times the value of all food commodities raised in the region.

**Blue Ridge Region: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Blue Ridge Region residents purchase \$9.5 billion of food each year, including \$5.6 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 1,299
Fruits & vegetables	986
Cereals and bakery products	755
Dairy products	593
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	2,019

If Blue Ridge Region residents purchased \$5 of food each week directly from farmers in the region, this would generate \$1 billion of new farm income for the region.

**Alleghany County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Alleghany County residents purchase \$27 million of food each year, including \$16 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 4
Fruits & vegetables	3
Cereals and bakery products	2
Dairy products	2
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	6

**Ashe County: markets for food eaten at home (2011):**

Ashe County residents purchase \$67 million of food each year, including \$40 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 9
Fruits & vegetables	7
Cereals and bakery products	5
Dairy products	4
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	14

**Avery County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Avery County residents purchase \$43 million of food each year, including \$26 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 6
Fruits & vegetables	4
Cereals and bakery products	3
Dairy products	3
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	9

**Cabarrus County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Cabarrus County residents purchase \$454 million of food each year, including \$270 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 62
Fruits & vegetables	47
Cereals and bakery products	36
Dairy products	28
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	96

**Caldwell County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Caldwell County residents purchase \$202 million of food each year, including \$120 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 27
Fruits & vegetables	21
Cereals and bakery products	16
Dairy products	13
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	43

**Catawba County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Catawba County residents purchase \$380 million of food each year, including \$225 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 52
Fruits & vegetables	39
Cereals and bakery products	30
Dairy products	24
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	81

**Davidson County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Davidson County residents purchase \$402 million of food each year, including \$238 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 55
Fruits & vegetables	42
Cereals and bakery products	32
Dairy products	25
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	85

**Forsyth County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Forsyth County residents purchase \$882 million of food each year, including \$523 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 120
Fruits & vegetables	91
Cereals and bakery products	70
Dairy products	55
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	187

**Gaston County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Gaston County residents purchase \$512 million of food each year, including \$304 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 70
Fruits & vegetables	53
Cereals and bakery products	41
Dairy products	32
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	109

**Guilford County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Guilford County residents purchase \$1.2 billion of food each year, including \$732 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 168
Fruits & vegetables	128
Cereals and bakery products	98
Dairy products	77
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	261

**Iredell County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Iredell County residents purchase \$401 million of food each year, including \$238 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 55
Fruits & vegetables	41
Cereals and bakery products	32
Dairy products	25
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	85

**Lincoln County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Lincoln County residents purchase \$195 million of food each year, including \$116 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 27
Fruits & vegetables	20
Cereals and bakery products	15
Dairy products	12
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	41

**Mecklenburg County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Mecklenburg County residents purchase \$2.4 billion of food each year, including \$1.4 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 325
Fruits & vegetables	247
Cereals and bakery products	189
Dairy products	148
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	505

**Rowan County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Rowan County residents purchase \$340 million of food each year, including \$202 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 46
Fruits & vegetables	35
Cereals and bakery products	27
Dairy products	21
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	72

**Surry County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Surry County residents purchase \$181 million of food each year, including \$107 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 25
Fruits & vegetables	19
Cereals and bakery products	14
Dairy products	11
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	38

**Union County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Union County residents purchase \$513 million of food each year, including \$305 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 70
Fruits & vegetables	53
Cereals and bakery products	41
Dairy products	32
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	109

**Watauga County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Watauga County residents purchase \$128 million of food each year, including \$76 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 17
Fruits & vegetables	13
Cereals and bakery products	10
Dairy products	8
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	27

**Wilkes County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Wilkes County residents purchase \$171 million of food each year, including \$101 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 23
Fruits & vegetables	18
Cereals and bakery products	14
Dairy products	11
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	36

**Yadkin County: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Yadkin County residents purchase \$94 million of food each year, including \$56 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 13
Fruits & vegetables	10
Cereals and bakery products	7
Dairy products	6
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	20

**Carter County (Tennessee): markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Carter County residents purchase \$141 million of food each year, including \$84 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 19
Fruits & vegetables	15
Cereals and bakery products	11
Dairy products	9
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	30

**Johnson County (Tennessee): markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Johnson County residents purchase \$45 million of food each year, including \$26 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 6
Fruits & vegetables	5
Cereals and bakery products	4
Dairy products	3
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	9

**Sullivan County (Tennessee): markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Sullivan County residents purchase \$386 million of food each year, including \$229 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 53
Fruits & vegetables	40
Cereals and bakery products	31
Dairy products	24
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	82

**Washington County (Tennessee): markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Washington County residents purchase \$308 million of food each year, including \$183 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 42
Fruits & vegetables	32
Cereals and bakery products	24
Dairy products	19
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	65

**Grayson County (Virginia) : markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

Grayson County residents purchase \$37 million of food each year, including \$22 million to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 5
Fruits & vegetables	4
Cereals and bakery products	3
Dairy products	2
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	8

**State of North Carolina: markets for food eaten at home (2012):**

North Carolina residents purchase \$24 billion of food each year, including \$14 billion to eat at home. Home purchases break down in the following way:

	<i>billions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 3.3
Fruits & vegetables	2.5
Cereals and bakery products	1.9
Dairy products	1.5
“Other,” incl. Sweets, fats, & oils	5.1

**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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