



Crossroads Resource Center

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Tools for Community Self-determination

Food and Farm Economy of East Chesapeake Bay Region

*Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties in Maryland
Accomack and Northampton Counties in Virginia*

Compiled for
Food & Water Watch
by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center
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East Chesapeake Bay region:

238,000 residents earn \$7 billion of income each year.

Highlights from U.S. Agriculture Census (2002)

Farms

- 2,072 farms
- 545,000 acres in farms
- 400,000 acres of cropland (73% of total acreage in region)
- Average size 263 acres
- Average value of land and buildings \$679,000
- 954 (46%) of farms are less than 50 acres
- 148 farms (7%) are 1,000 acres or more

Cash receipts

- Total farm sales \$662 million [*Note: The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports considerably higher figures for farm sales in recent years, as noted below. BEA data for 2002 correspond well with Agricultural Census data for 2002, which was an especially difficult year for U.S. farmers.*]
- Total sales of livestock and livestock products \$505 million (76% of total sales)
- Total crop sales \$157 million (24% of total sales)
- 27% of the farms (561) sell less than \$2,500 of farm products (sales of farms in this category rose \$70,000 (44%) — from \$158,000 in 1997 to \$228,000 in 2002)
- 38% of farms (791) sell less than \$10,000 (sales of farms in this category fell \$231,000 (13%) — from \$1.74 million in 1997 to \$1.51 million in 2002)
- 42% of farms (873) sell more than \$100,000 of products per year (sales of farms in this category rose \$14.5 million (2%) — from \$632 million in 1997 to \$646 million in 2002) — these larger farms generate 97% of the region's agricultural sales income.

- 850 farms (41%) reported a net loss in 2002 (compares to 59% rate for Maryland and 53% for Virginia)
- 820 farms collect \$7.6 million of federal subsidies
- 87 farms sold food directly to consumers in 2002, a decline of 35 farms (29%) from 1997
- Direct farmer-to-consumer sales fell 40% to \$536,000 from 1997 to 2002. Direct sales account for only 0.08% of total farm sales.
- 10 farms sell organic produce (value of sales not reported by USDA)

Poultry

- 727 farms (35%) sell poultry
- 673 farms have a total of 255 million broiler chickens
- The four Maryland counties in this region raise 78% of the broilers raised in the state
- 602 of these broiler operations (90%) sell more than 100,000 chickens per year
- 21 broiler operations sell less than 60,000 chickens per year
- 36 farms sell 1.1 million layer hens
- Poultry farms in the region sell over \$490 million of poultry products (sales not reported for Northampton County). This is 3% less than in 1997.
- These poultry sales amount to 97% of all livestock and livestock product sales, and 74% of all farm sales in the region.

Livestock

- 76% of region's farm sales are livestock or related products (including poultry)
- The number of farms selling livestock fell 21% from 1997 to 2002, while sales fell 4%
- 7,673 cattle and calves are raised on 166 farms and ranches in the region
- 134 of these farms raise beef cattle
- The number of farms selling calves and cattle fell 46% from 1997 to 2002
- 10 farms have milk cows
- 45 farms sold hogs or pigs
- 32 farms raise sheep or lambs
- 64 farms engage in aquaculture

Crops

- 763 farms raise 4.3 million bushels of soybeans
- 564 farms produce 9.6 million bushels of corn for grain
- 196 farms grow 13,000 tons of forage crops
- 21 farms raise 1,000 tons of corn for forage
- 317 farms grow 3 million bushels of wheat
- 76 farms raise 430,000 bushels of barley
- 47 farms produce 94,000 bushels of sorghum
- 8 farms raise 2,950 bushels of oats
- 15 farms produce 3,956 bales of cotton
- 37 farms grow 918,000 hundredweight of potatoes
- 25 farms produce 52,000 hundredweight of sweet potatoes
- 210 farms (10% of region's) have raised \$68 million of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes on 22,000 acres
- 34 farms (1.6% of region's) raise fruit on 197 acres of orchard
- The number of farms selling fruit and nuts increased 33% from 1997 to 2002
- 107 farms raise greenhouse and nursery crops (total sales of \$27 million)

- 9 farms raise Christmas trees or woody crops
- 1 farm raises tobacco

Map of East Chesapeake Region



County-by-county Ag Census highlights for 2002:

Dorchester County, Maryland

- Ranks first in state for sales of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, with \$11.9 million in sales
- Ranks first in state for acreage in vegetables with 7,437
- Ranks third in Maryland for soybean production, with 44,803 acres
- Ranks fourth in state for production of hogs and pigs (2,907)
- Ranks fourth in Maryland for production of ducks (2,600)
- Ranks fifth in state for poultry sales, with \$57 million
- Ranks fifth in state in production of broiler hens, with 4.9 million
- Ranks fifth in Maryland for wheat acreage, with 13,392 acres
- Ranks fifth in state for barley acreage, with 2,975 acres
- Ranks sixth in Maryland for value of farm products sold, at \$83 million
- Ranks sixth in state for value of livestock and products sold, at \$58 million
- Ranks ninth in state for value of crops sold, at \$26 million
- Ranks sixth in Maryland for aquaculture, with \$84,000 in sales
- Ranks sixth in state for production of grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas, with \$12.8 million in sales
- Ranks seventh in Maryland for corn acreage, with 22,856 acres

Somerset County, Maryland

- Ranks second in Maryland for value of crops and livestock sold, at \$127 million
- Ranks second in state for value of livestock and products sold, at \$118 million
- Ranks second in state for sales of poultry and eggs, and \$118 million
- Ranks third in Maryland for broiler hens, with 9.6 million
- Ranks ninth in state for production of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, with \$1.6 million in sales

Wicomico County, Maryland

- Ranks first in state for value of crops and livestock sold, at \$174 million
- Ranks first in Maryland for value of livestock and products sold, with \$148 million
- Ranks first in state for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$147 million
- Ranks first in Maryland for number of broiler hens, with 12.7 million
- Ranks fifth in state for sales of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, with \$4.6 million
- Ranks fifth in state for acres in vegetable production, with 1,989
- Ranks sixth in Maryland for number of layers 20 weeks and older, with 123,621
- Ranks sixth in state for sales of nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod, at \$13.6 million
- Ranks seventh in Maryland for acres in soybeans, with 26,200
- Ranks eighth in state for acres devoted to corn, with 22,492
- Ranks ninth in state for production of grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas, with \$7.5 million in sales
- Ranks eighth in state for value of crop sales, at \$26 million

Worcester County, Maryland

- Ranks second in state for number of broiler hens, at 10.4 million
- Ranks second in state for production of grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas, with \$15.2 million in sales
- Ranks second in Maryland for acreage devoted to corn, at 40,000 acres
- Ranks third in state for value of crops and livestock sold, at \$123 million
- Ranks third in Maryland for value of livestock and products sold, at \$107 million
- Ranks third in state for poultry and egg sales, at \$106 million
- Ranks fifth in Maryland for soybean acreage, at 42,467 acres
- Ranks ninth in state for acreage in wheat, at 6,597

Accomack County, Virginia

- Ranks first in state for sales of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, with \$28 million
- Ranks first in Virginia for sales of crops with \$47 million in sales
- Ranks third in state in sales of crops and livestock, with \$109 million
- Ranks fifth in Virginia in sales of livestock and products, with \$62 million
- Ranks second in Virginia for production of grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas, with \$11.8 million in sales
- Ranks first in state for soybean acreage, at 34,158 acres
- Ranks first in Virginia for acreage in corn, at 23,851 acres

- Ranks first in state for acreage in wheat, at 12,164 acres
- Ranks second in state for acreage in vegetables, with 5,591 acres harvested
- Ranks second in state for acreage in tomatoes, with 1,977 acres harvested
- Ranks third in Virginia for number of broiler hens, with 5.9 million
- Ranks fourth in state for poultry and egg sales, with \$60 million
- Ranks fourth in Virginia for aquaculture, with \$801,000 in sales

Northampton County, Virginia

- Ranks first in Virginia for vegetables harvested, with 7,046 acres
- Ranks first in state for snap bean acreage, with 2,986 acres
- Ranks first in state in aquaculture, with \$11.1 million in sales
- Ranks second in Virginia for sales of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, with \$21 million
- Ranks fourth in state for value of crop sales, with \$33 million in sales
- Ranks seventh in Virginia for cotton sales, with \$729,000
- Ranks eighth in state for wheat acreage, at 6,965

State of Maryland

- Ranks seventh in U.S. for number of broiler hens, with 51.1 million
- Ranks 14th in nation for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$583 million
- Ranks 34th in U.S. for value of livestock and products sold, with \$843 million
- Ranks 36th in nation for value of crops and livestock sold, with \$1.3 billion
- *Note that agricultural sales in this region amount to 50% of farm sales in Maryland, although of course this region covers parts of two states*
- Ranks 36th in U.S. for value of crops sold, with \$450 million

State of Virginia

- Ranks fourth in U.S. in sales of tobacco, with \$112 million in sales
- Ranks fourth in nation for number of turkeys, with 7.2 million
- Ranks fifth in country for sales of horses and ponies, with \$40 million in sales
- Ranks ninth in U.S. for number of broilers, with 45 million
- Ranks tenth in nation for sales of poultry and eggs, with \$750 million in sales
- Ranks tenth in U.S. for sales of Christmas trees, with \$9.6 million

Note: Agriculture Census data cited above are the most recent national data available, from 2002. A new census will be compiled in 2007. Individual states may have more recent data. Obviously, production patterns and rankings shown above may have changed substantially for certain products.

Farm Production Balance [Bureau of Economic Analysis]

Data in this section are in 2005 dollars

The region's farms sold \$824 million of crops and livestock each year, on average, from 1987 to 2005 (19 years). Farmers required only \$753 million to produce these commodities each year, for an

average annual gain of \$70 million (8% of sales). This is a total production surplus of \$1.3 billion since 1987. In 2002, the Agricultural Census year, the region's farmers spent \$61 million more to produce commodities than they earned from sales.

Subsidies were quite small until 1997. From 2001-2005 the region's farmers collected an average of \$23 million in subsidies each year — more than ten percent of crop income.

Farm families also earned \$44 million, on average, in farm-related income (cash rents for land, custom work for neighbors, etc.) each year from 1987 to 2005.

Overall, the region's farmers earned \$74 million less from farm production in 2005 than they had earned in 1969 (in 2005 dollars).

Except for brief peaks in 1973-1974, during the OPEC oil crisis, cash income for both crops and livestock has fallen steadily since 1969. Crop income fell from \$266 million in 1969 to \$224 million in 2005, \$42 million drop (16%). Cash receipts for livestock fell from \$605 million to \$538 million (11%) over that time span, meaning that livestock operators earned \$67 million less than they had 37 years before.

An estimated \$375 million is spent on farm inputs sourced outside of the region. *Outside purchases are conservative estimates made by Ken Meter using USDA/NASS data.*

Consumers

The region's consumers buy \$514 million of food each year. \$282 million of this is eaten at home, and \$232 away from home. At least \$400 million of the food consumers buy is produced outside the region. *Region, county and state food markets are summarized below.*

72,000 (32%) of the region's residents earn an income lower than 185 percent of the poverty rate. At this income level, children in school qualify for free and reduced school lunches.

Summary of Farm and Food Economy

On average, the region's farms and ranches earn about \$70 million more producing crops and livestock than it costs to raise these products each year. In so doing, the region's farmers buy about \$375 million of farm inputs that come from outside the region. Meanwhile, the region's consumers buy about \$400 million of food from outside. Overall, this is a flow of \$700 million dollars away from the five-county region each year. This loss is about the same as the total value of all agricultural products produced in the region.

If the region's consumers purchased 15% of their household food needs directly from farmers, this would bring \$77 million of new income to farmers each year. This amounts to three times the amount of federal farm subsidies now received by the region's farmers.

Household markets for food

East Chesapeake Bay: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 68.5
Fruits & vegetables	44.5
Cereals and bakery products	37.4
Dairy products	31.1
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	100.3

Dorchester County, Maryland: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 9.3
Fruits & vegetables	6.0
Cereals and bakery products	5.1
Dairy products	4.2
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	13.6

Somerset County, Maryland: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 6.1
Fruits & vegetables	4.0
Cereals and bakery products	3.3
Dairy products	2.8
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	9.0

Wicomico County, Maryland: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 23.6
Fruits & vegetables	15.3
Cereals and bakery products	12.9
Dairy products	10.7
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	34.5

Worcester County, Maryland: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 14.4
Fruits & vegetables	9.4
Cereals and bakery products	7.9
Dairy products	6.5
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	21.1

Accomack County, Virginia: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 11.2
Fruits & vegetables	7.3
Cereals and bakery products	6.1
Dairy products	5.1
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	16.4

Northampton County, Virginia: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 3.9
Fruits & vegetables	2.5
Cereals and bakery products	2.1
Dairy products	1.8
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	5.7

City of Annapolis, Maryland: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 11.2
Fruits & vegetables	7.3
Cereals and bakery products	6.1
Dairy products	5.1
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	16.4

City of Baltimore, Maryland: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 189
Fruits & vegetables	122
Cereals and bakery products	103
Dairy products	86
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	277

City of Washington, DC: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 182
Fruits & vegetables	118
Cereals and bakery products	99
Dairy products	82
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	266

Washington, DC / Baltimore, MD Metropolitan Area: markets for food eaten at home

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 2,102
Fruits & vegetables	1,364
Cereals and bakery products	1,149
Dairy products	954
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	3,079

Household Markets for Energy (Six-county East Chesapeake Bay region)

	<i>millions</i>
Gasoline and motor oil	194
Electricity	131
Natural gas	28
Fuel oil	7

This data is included as a point of comparison for possible competing uses of farmland for agri-fuels.

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 Minnesota, Iowa, California, Hawaii: <http://www.crcworks.org/fffc.pdf>.

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 by Ken Meter at a plenary appearance to the Community Food Security Coalition in October 2006: <http://www.crcworks.org/crcppts/cfsc06.pdf>.

To link to further analysis of farm and food economies in the U.S.:
<http://www.crcworks.org/rural.html>.

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