



Crossroads Resource Center

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Tools for Community Self-determination

Golden Hills Region (Iowa) Food & Farm Economy

Highlights of a data compilation

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Golden Hills RC&D

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Golden Hills RC&D region

8 Counties — *Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, & Shelby Counties*

183,000 residents earn \$3.3 billion in annual income; pay \$200 million in taxes each year.

The region's farms (2002)

6,180 farms

- Average size is 453 acres
- 9 % of Iowa farm land
- 23% of Iowa's irrigated acres
- 9 % of Iowa's corn acreage
- 9 % of Iowa's soybean production
- 8 % of Iowa's cattle
- 4 % of Iowa's hogs
- 0.3 % of Iowa's dairy sales
- 149 farms sell \$874,000 of food directly to consumers (277% increase in sales in 5 years)
- \$754 million of crops sold [BEA]
- \$827 million of livestock and products sold [BEA]
- 26 organic farms selling \$529,000 of organic products
- 6 % of Iowa's vegetable farms (2 % of state vegetable acreage)
- 8 % of Iowa's orchards

Region's farmers produce \$792 million of food commodities per year (Bureau of Economic Analysis data, 1998-2003 average), yet spend \$887 million to raise them, losing an average of \$95 million in production costs each year. This is a total loss of \$572 million over the last six years. One third of the region's farms reported net losses in 2002. Farmers spend an estimated \$400 million buying inputs sourced outside the region.

Farmers earn another \$48 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work and rental income — and an additional \$129 million of federal supports, to cover the costs of farming.

The region's consumers:

The region's consumers spend \$370 million buying food each year (Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Census), primarily from outside the region. At least \$300 million of this food, and likely far more, is sourced outside Golden Hills region.

Only \$874,000 of food products (0.1%) are sold by farmers directly to consumers (U.S. Agriculture Census, 2002).

Farm and food economy summary:

Farmers lose \$95 million each year producing food commodities, and also spend \$400 million buying outside inputs, while consumers spend \$300 million buying food from outside. This is a total loss to the region of \$800 million of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to the entire value of all food commodities raised in the region.

Golden Hills region markets for food eaten at home (BLS) (\$210 million of \$370 million total):

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 50.5
Fruits & vegetables	35.0
Cereals and bakery products	30.1
Dairy products	22.9
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	70.0

Golden Hills region markets for household energy use (BLS):

	<i>millions</i>
Household Electricity	\$ 64.7
Household Natural Gas	32.7
Household Fuel Oil	5.5
Gasoline for vehicles	90.7

Golden Hills region transportation costs (BLS):

All transportation costs	288.3
Motor vehicles	581.3

Iowa recreation markets:

- Iowa travelers spend \$ 4.6 billion each year (2004 — Prouty, Vilsack)
- \$1.8 billion of this is spent in rural areas (Prouty)
- \$1.4 billion per year is spent by Iowa travelers to buy food (IDED, 2005a)
- Tourism generated \$273.4 million of tax receipts in 2004 and 62,000 jobs (IDED, 2005b)

Iowa recreation and tourism assets:

- 400 certified organic operations
- 165 farmers' markets — first in U.S. in markets per capita
- 31 wineries
- First in nation in number of farm acres set aside for conservation

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>

Prouty, Dennis (2000). "Economic Impact of Travel on the Iowa Economy." Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Prepared for U.S. Travel Data Center of the Travel Industry of America, January 26, 2. International travel is not included in this total.

Vilsack announces new tourism stats, October 13, 2004. "Travel industry grows to \$4.6 billion annually in Iowa." www.traveliowa.com/iowafacts/statistics.html Viewed December 5, 2005.

Iowa Department of Economic Development (2005a). "Travel Industry." Survey of visitors to 13 Welcome Centers in the state during the year, 2. Viewed at http://www.traveliowa.com/travelindustry/wc_intro.html, January 30, 2006.

Iowa Department of Economic Development Tourism Office (2005b). Iowa Tourism Results as of November 1, 2005. PowerPoint presentation. Charts drawn by IDDED.

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 of the Community Food Security Coalition in October, 2006: <http://www.crcworks.org/crcppts/cfsc06.pdf>. [PDF file].

To link to further local economic studies in the U.S.: <http://www.crcworks.org/econ.html>.

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