



# Crossroads Resource Center

7415 Humboldt Ave. S. / Minneapolis, Minnesota 55423 / 612.869.8664  
<kmeter@crcworks.org> <<http://www.crcworks.org/>>

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

## **Santa Rosa County Region Food & Farm Economy**

*Highlights of a data compilation*

by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis) for  
**Team Santa Rosa** (Economic Development)  
March 31, 2006

### **Santa Rosa County Region (Florida and Alabama)**

5 Counties — *Escambia, Okaloosa and Santa Rosa (Florida); Baldwin and Escambia (Alabama).*

761,000 residents hold \$14.7 billion in annual purchasing power

### **The region's farms (2002)**

3,150 farms. 111 Native American operators, 105 Black, 66 Hispanic.

- Average size is 152 acres. Half of farms are less than 50 acres.
- Average value of land and buildings is \$353,159.
- 274,731 acres total cropland.
- 80 % of farm sales involve crop sales.
- \$9.3 million of farm subsidies collected by growers.
- 79 million pounds of peanuts produced (primarily in Santa Rosa and Baldwin Counties).
- 26 million pounds of potatoes produced (primarily in Baldwin County).
- 29 million pounds of sweet potatoes produced (solely in Baldwin County).
- 73,000 acres of cotton producing 68,000 bales.
- 850,000 bushels of corn produced.
- 356,000 bushels of wheat produced.
- 346,000 bushels of soybeans produced (primarily in Baldwin County).
- 72,000 tons of forage (hay) produced.
- 1.1 million broiler chickens raised each year.
- \$28 million of livestock and products sold.
- \$17 million of forage crops sold.
- \$6.6 million of cattle sold in 2002 (down from \$14.2 million in 1997), mostly in Baldwin Co.
- \$2.5 million of milk produced (down from \$4.5 million in 1997) on 14 farms, mostly in Escambia County, Florida.
- \$80,000 of organic foods are sold by 19 farms.
- 193 farms sell \$1.1 million of food directly to consumers.
- Baldwin County has 78% of the region's orchard acreage, and 22% of Alabama's, but lost 25% of its orchard acreage from 1997 to 2002.

## *Highlights of Santa Rosa Region Farm & Food Economy (Florida and Alabama)*

Region's farmers produce \$147 million of food commodities per year (2001-2003 average), yet spend \$156 million to raise them, losing an average of \$9 million in production costs each year. This is a total loss of \$27 million over the last 3 years. 60 % of the region's farms lost money in 2002.

Farmers earn another \$34 million per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, rental income and sale of forest products or Christmas trees — and another \$30 million of federal supports, to cover the costs of farming.

While Baldwin County, Alabama, accounts for most of the region's positive farm income — primarily for raising flowers, bedding plants, and other nursery crops — 56% of Baldwin farms lost money in 2002.

### **The region's consumers:**

The region's consumers spend \$1.5 billion buying food each year, primarily from outside the region. Only \$193,000 of food products (0.1%) are sold by farmers directly to consumers.

### **Farm and food economy summary:**

Farmers lose \$9 million each year producing food commodities, and also spend \$80 million buying outside inputs, while consumers spend \$1 billion buying food from outside. This is a total loss to the region of \$1.09 billion of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to 7 times the value of all food commodities raised in the region.

### **Santa Rosa Region: markets for food**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 247
Fruits & vegetables	146
Cereals and bakery products	96
Dairy products	124
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	295

### **Individual County Highlights (2002 Ag Census):**

#### **Baldwin County, Alabama** (1,062 farms):

Main crops are forage (hay), cotton, peanuts, soybeans, and sod.

Market value of crops and livestock sold in 2002 (\$86 million) was 30 higher than 1997.

Over half of farm sales (\$48 million) involve nursery /greenhouse crops. Baldwin County devotes more acreage to sod production than any other county in Alabama (9,638 acres).

County ranks first in Alabama for its \$8.4 million sales of vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes (this includes collards, snap beans, cucumbers, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnip greens, watermelon).

At 10,734 acres, Baldwin County ranks seventh in the state for peanut acreage, producing 30 million pounds of peanuts in 2002.

Ranks second in state for sales of fruits & nuts (mostly pecans, but also peaches, pears, and persimmons).

Ranks second in state for sales of nursery /greenhouse crops (mostly sod, bedding plants and flowers).

*Highlights of Santa Rosa Region Farm & Food Economy (Florida and Alabama)*

Ranks fourth in Alabama for number of layer chickens 20 weeks old and older.

Ranks fifth in state for hay sales (\$5.8 million).

Ranks fifth in Alabama for acreage devoted to soybeans (10,610).

Ranks fifteenth in the state for acreage devoted to cotton (12,292)

**Escambia County, Alabama** (444 farms):

Main crops are cotton, forage (hay), peanuts, feed corn, and wheat.

Market value of crops and livestock sold in 2002 (\$19 million) was 52 percent lower than 1997.

Government payments rose 30 percent from 1997 to 2002, to \$1.7 million.

Cattle sales are the largest single source of farm market income at \$3.3 million.

**Escambia County, Florida** (674 farms):

Main crops are cotton, forage (hay), feed corn, soybeans and peanuts.

Market value of crops and livestock sold in 2002 (\$16 million) was 5 percent lower than 1997.

Government payments nearly doubled from 1997 to 2002, to \$2.5 million.

Ranks second in Florida for acreage devoted to soybeans (1,651).

Ranks third in state for cotton sales (\$3.7 million) and acreage devoted to cotton (16,242).

Ranks fifth in Florida for acreage devoted to feed corn (1,917).

**Okaloosa County, Florida** (465 farms):

Main crops are cotton, forage (hay), and peanuts.

Market value of crops and livestock sold in 2002 (\$6.5 million) was 33 percent lower than 1997.

Government payments declined nine percent from 1997 to 2002, to \$418,000.

Ranks fifth in Florida for cotton sales (\$779,000) and sixth in acreage devoted to cotton (4,279).

**Santa Rosa County, Florida** (505 farms):

Main crops are cotton, peanuts, forage (hay), sod, and feed corn.

Market value of crops and livestock sold in 2002 (\$21 million) was 28 percent lower than 1997.

Government payments rose 167 percent from 1997 to 2002, to \$2.4 million.

Ranks first in Florida for cotton sales (\$6.5 million) and second in acreage devoted to cotton (29,366).

Ranks third in Florida, and 36<sup>th</sup> in U.S., for acreage devoted to peanuts (11,473).

Ranks sixth in Florida for forage crop sales (\$7.2 million).

Ranks first in Florida for numbers of quail, and fourth in numbers of pheasants.

**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 keynote appearance to the Minnesota Rural Partners Summit in July, 2005: <http://www.crcworks.org/metersummit05.pdf>.

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

Contact Ken Meter at Crossroads Resource Center  
<[kmeter@crcworks.org](mailto:kmeter@crcworks.org)>  
(612) 869-8664