Season extension at Mark Heidmann's Maple Springs Farm in Harrison. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016

Building Support for Community-Based Foods in the Lakes Region of Maine

Prepared for
Cumberland County, Maine and
Town of Bridgton, Maine
By

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Executive Summary

The Lakes Region is well-positioned to focus its efforts on community-based food production. The Region holds a unique cultural identity within Maine, and boasts a proud heritage of agriculture. Relatively detached from Portland's urban center, and somewhat isolated from the rest of the state by transportation routes, it has ample opportunity to look inward and address its own food needs. Yet to do so is to swim upstream against infrastructure that is very efficient at moving large quantities of food great distances very quickly. If the region wishes to feed itself, it will need to eat different foods, and develop different food system infrastructure that promotes local food trade.

The promise for "local food" in the Lakes Region is best understood as building community-based food trade, and supportive social networks within the region itself, not simply increasing access to Maine-grown foods.

If the Lakes Region wants to eat local food, consumers will have to begin to value eating the wealth of food items that can easily be grown in the region (for example, potatoes, turnips, onions, carrots, parsnips, and other root crops; greens, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and other cold crops, and apples), and will have to build considerable loyalty to purchasing from local farms.

Our primary recommendations will address multiple issues at one time, thereby moving a "lever" that will advance multiple outcomes in a single step. Often, our interview sources bemoaned the fact that only the "choir" — those already disposed to purchase food locally — actively took steps to increase local food trade. This proposal will bring in people who are not already in the choir.

1. Hire a Local Foods Coordinator for the Bridgton region. The work of building community-based food systems in the Lakes Region holds critical importance, but cannot be sustained solely through volunteer activity. At least one staff person should be hired who will work with all stakeholders to launch initiatives that build stronger support within the community for community-based food trade, and help to create commerce that upholds that purpose.

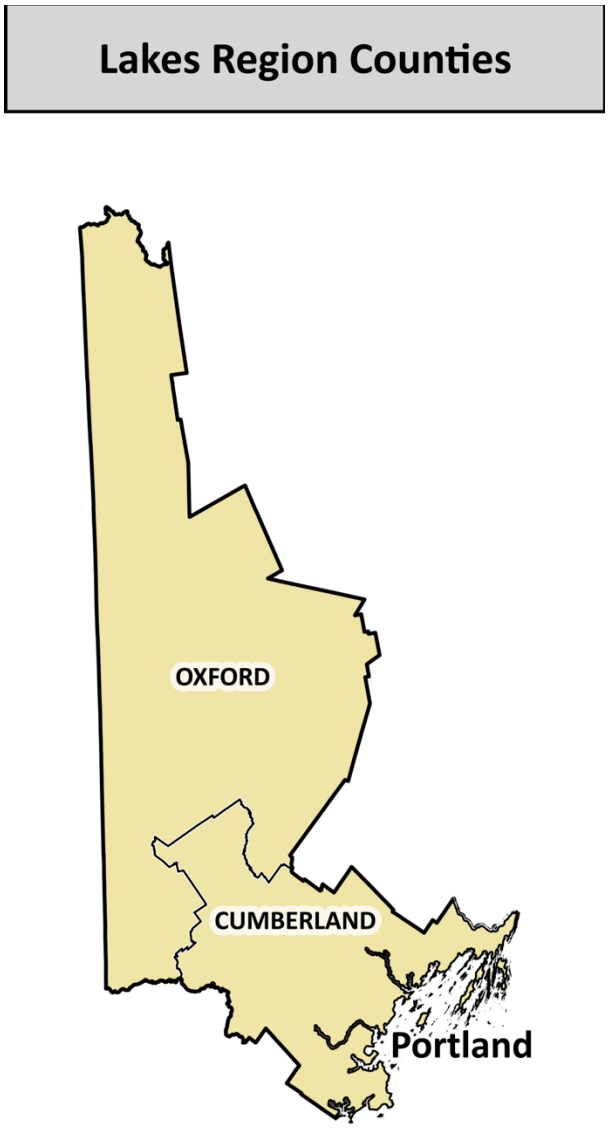
2. Facilitate the serving of locally raised foods at community meals. Community groups in the Lakes Region host nearly four community meals each week. The Local Food Coordinator should ensure that these meals feature food from local farmers. Over a year, this would expose nearly every Lakes Region resident to locally raised food. If done with care and consciousness, this would engage farmers, caterers, cooks, low-income residents, community leaders, second home owners and tourists all at once.

3. Build Community Networks that foster interest in food produced in the Lakes Region. Through educational initiatives such as cooking classes, recipe swaps, seed swaps, outreach campaigns, regional branding, as well as the community meals mentioned above, the Local Foods Coordinator will be able to bring residents into working collaborations that promote lasting social and commercial networks to support community-based food trade. Over time, these collaborations may help temper the individualism of Lakes Region residents.

List of People Interviewed

- Ron Adams — Maine Farm & Sea Cooperative (Portland)
- Don Baldridge — Lollipoppa Farm (West Paris)
- Jeanette Baldridge — Lollipoppa Farm (West Paris)
- Richard J. Brzozowski — University of Maine Cooperative Extension (Portland)
- Jim Burke — Vivo Restaurant (Bridgton)
- Phil Burnell — sales, Green Thumb Farms (Fryeburg)
- Peter Coleman — farmer, Wild Fire Fellowship (Buckfield)
- Carl Costanzi — Healthy Oxford Hills — Healthy Foods Work Group (Norway)
- Nadeen Daniels — Cumberland County Special Projects Director (Portland)
- Joel Davis — managing director, Central Maine Meats (Gardiner)
- Liz Deleo — Black Mountain Farm (Sweden)
- Will Deleo — Black Mountain Farm (Sweden)
- Bonnie Dyer — Stevens Brook Elementary (Bridgton)
- Claire Gelinas — Oxford County Fair (Norway)
- Tom Gyger — Five Fields Farm (South Bridgton)
- Father Craig Hacker — St. Peter's Episcopal Church (Bridgton)
- Jim Hanna — Cumberland County Food Security Council (Portland)
- Mark Heidmann — Maple Springs Farm (Harrison)
- Dave Herring — farmer, Wolfe's Neck Farm (Freeport)
- Mark Hews — Hews and Company (Poland)
- Anne Krieg — Town of Bridgton Economic Development (Bridgton)
- Stuart Leckie — St. Joseph's College food service (Standish)
- Jason Lilley — University of Maine Cooperative Extension (Portland)
- Carmen Lone — Bridgton Community Center (Bridgton)
- Bill Lovely — owner, Central Maine Meats (Gardiner)
- Tony Martineau — sales, Green Thumb Farms (Fryeburg)
- Tim Mayberry — farmer, Mayberry Farm (Sebago)
- Maeve McInnis — Sodexho (Biddeford)
- Ken Morse — Community Food Strategies (Norway)
- Nancy Perry — Good Shepherd Food Bank (Auburn)
- Helen Ramsdell — Rams Farm; coordinator of Bridgton Farmers' market (Denmark)
- Phyllis Roth — Town of Bridgton Planning Board (Bridgton)
- Richard Rudolph — retired (Portland); former owner, Rippling Waters Organic Farm
- Kathleen Savoie — University of Maine Cooperative Extension (Portland)
- Lori Thomae — co-owner, potential food hub (Bridgton)
- Brenna Mae Thomas — Patch Farm (Denmark)
- Lisa Webster — North Star Sheep Farm (Windham); president of Maine Agriculture Council
- Scott Vlaun — Center for an Ecology-Based Economy (Norway)
- Bear Zaidman — Wildwood Camp and Fryeburg Fair (Bridgton)

Map 1: The Lakes Region is located in Cumberland and Oxford Counties



Fifteen municipalities make up the Lakes Region:

In Cumberland County:
Bridgton, Casco, Harrison, Naples, Raymond, Sebago, Standish, & Windham

In Oxford County:
Brownfield, Denmark, Fryeburg, Lovell, Stow, Sweden & Waterford

Background

Cumberland County requested an assessment of the local farm and food system of the Lakes Region, which extends from the suburban areas north of Portland into Oxford County. The region includes Sebago Lake and roughly two dozen larger lakes as well as myriad small lakes. Located alongside these lakes are dozens of summer camps, and more than two thousand second homes.

Fifteen municipalities make up the Lakes Region. These include: Bridgton, Casco, Harrison, Naples, Raymond, Sebago, Standish, and Windham in Cumberland County, and the Oxford County communities of Brownfield, Denmark, Fryeburg, Lovell, Stow, Sweden and Waterford. The population of these 15 municipalities was 56,465 in 2014.

Very little data at the town level is robust, so for the most part our study focuses on data that is compiled at the county level. This means most data sets in this study reflect measures taken in Cumberland and Oxford Counties.

The Town of Bridgton also became a focal point for our study, since economic development officials in that city took the lead in making arrangements for the study. A cluster of seasoned local food leaders in Norway also made exceptional contributions.

Defining "Local Food"

Reflecting Cumberland County's priority in focusing on the Lakes Region, this study defined "local food" as food grown by Lakes Region farms or processed by Lakes Region firms for consumption by Lakes Region residents. This definition is also informed by prior research performed by the consultants, which showed that the distinguishing characteristic of "local" food is the way it builds social connections and commerce within communities.[1] That is, it is not a definition based primarily on geographic boundaries or miles traveled.

While many of the practitioners we interviewed defined "local" food as food that comes from Maine, or even from New England, our definition was chosen as the most appropriate to the Cumberland County's goals. This definition is also appropriate because Lakes Region communities make up the arena in which local residents and leaders can exert the greatest influence.

In the current situation, supply of local food and demand for locally produced food must be balanced with each other, as both increase over time. This suggests that incrementally building up production of food for local markets will do the most to address local needs.

Would sourcing from Maine be "local?"

If the entire state of Maine had been selected as the geography of interest, the Lakes Region would find it difficult to compete. The Lakes Region has a small number of farms interested in selling direct to local residents, and a small number interested in serving New England or wider markets, but very few that focus their efforts on Maine itself.

[1] Snyder, et al, (2014). The Real Deal: How Do We Define "Local" in a Meaningful and Measurable Way? Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture. Available at 1Local.org/resources/

Selling food *to* the rest of Maine would be difficult competitively, because so many established producers with substantial scale are already active in the marketplace. Sourcing food *from* the rest of Maine is currently relatively straightforward, but expansion of these sales is limited by both the region's income levels, and by limited resident loyalty to purchasing from Maine farms.

Moreover, food trade with the rest of Maine is more of a commodity transaction, rather than commerce that will build community connections.

If the present study were to focus on increasing the amount of Maine food sourced into the Lakes Region, there would really only be one question to raise: how much money are Lakes Region consumers and institutions willing to spend to purchase food from Maine growers? Several large-scale buyers told us they have no difficulty obtaining foods that are sourced in Maine. As demand rises, shortages could occur, but the state is well-placed to address in-state and even New England markets.

Sourcing food from the rest of Maine, however, would have several distinct limitations: (a) low-income people would be overlooked, because they have limited purchasing power in a competitive economy that is seeking higher quality food items; (b) taking this path would do nothing to conserve the Lakes Region's agricultural heritage, nor would it create a future in which local farmers would have reliable markets; and (3) few skills would be built among Lakes Region residents; this would be tragic because the region has already lost considerable resources and capacities in farming, and even in preparing food well, in large part because of the disconnect between growers and consumers.

Core Questions for this Assessment

The core questions driving this food system assessment are: (1) to determine the key assets the region holds as it strives to produce more food for itself, (2) to analyze the key limitations the region may have, (3) to identify key opportunities, and (4) to highlight the most significant barriers to progress in attaining this purpose.

To accomplish these goals, our study combined quantitative analysis of the region's farm and food economy, drawing primarily from readily available public data sources (See page 39), combined with insights gained from interviews with 39 local food system practitioners that were held in person during the weeks of March 7-11, 2016 and May 16-23, 2016, and by telephone in later months.

Local food leaders further requested that we survey second-home owners in the region, on the assumption that their access to disposable income might encourage them to buy food from local farms when they come for weekend and holiday visits. These findings are outlined below (See pages 32 & 65).

To gain further perspective on community food issues in the Lakes Region, we also attended two meetings of broader Maine networks:

- Maine Network of Community Food Councils Meeting (Gardiner, May 18, 2016)
- Portland Food Systems Council Meeting (Portland, May 21, 2016)

Summary of Findings

Lakes Region Holds Valuable Food System Assets

Our interviews showed that the Lakes Region has considerable assets to draw upon as it pursues its interest in community-based food. These are listed below.

Lakes Region carries a strong agricultural heritage

Foremost among these is the agricultural heritage that has framed development in the Lakes Region since Colonial times. Early settlers learned agricultural and food-gathering techniques from Native peoples who had managed the New England landscape efficiently for generations, including raising crops, fertilizing using natural sources, developing extensive orchards, and maximizing wildlife harvests through forest management.[2]

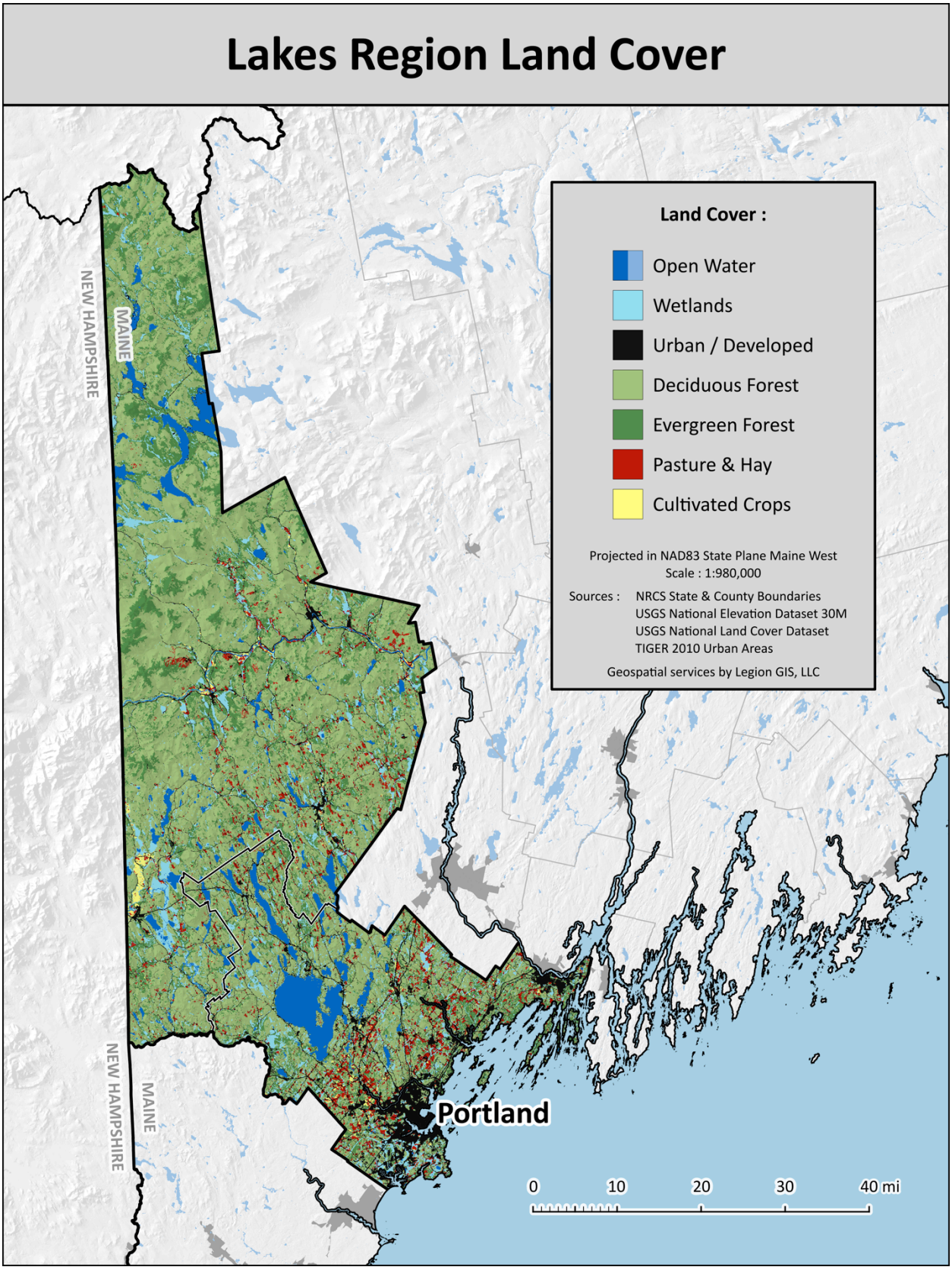
Dedicated farm families successfully farmed hilly terrain that is quite rock-laden for generations, out of necessity, primarily because commercial channels could not provide food at an affordable price at the time. This also helped to create the staunch ethic of self-determination that has characterized New England.

As farmland and transportation corridors opened in states west of New England, farmers often found they could not compete with large farms that occupied vast stretches of flat and fertile soil. These larger farms took advantage of mechanization that allowed them to produce far more efficiently, as well as from infrastructure investments (such as railroads and canals) that helped Midwestern farmers connect to markets elsewhere in the U.S.

Over time, New England became more known for its industrial prowess, and many farms were abandoned. Parcels that had once supported small family farms became forests once land clearing efforts were scaled back.

[2] William Cronon (1983). *Changes in the Land.* Hill and Wang.

Map 2: Land Cover in the Lakes Region

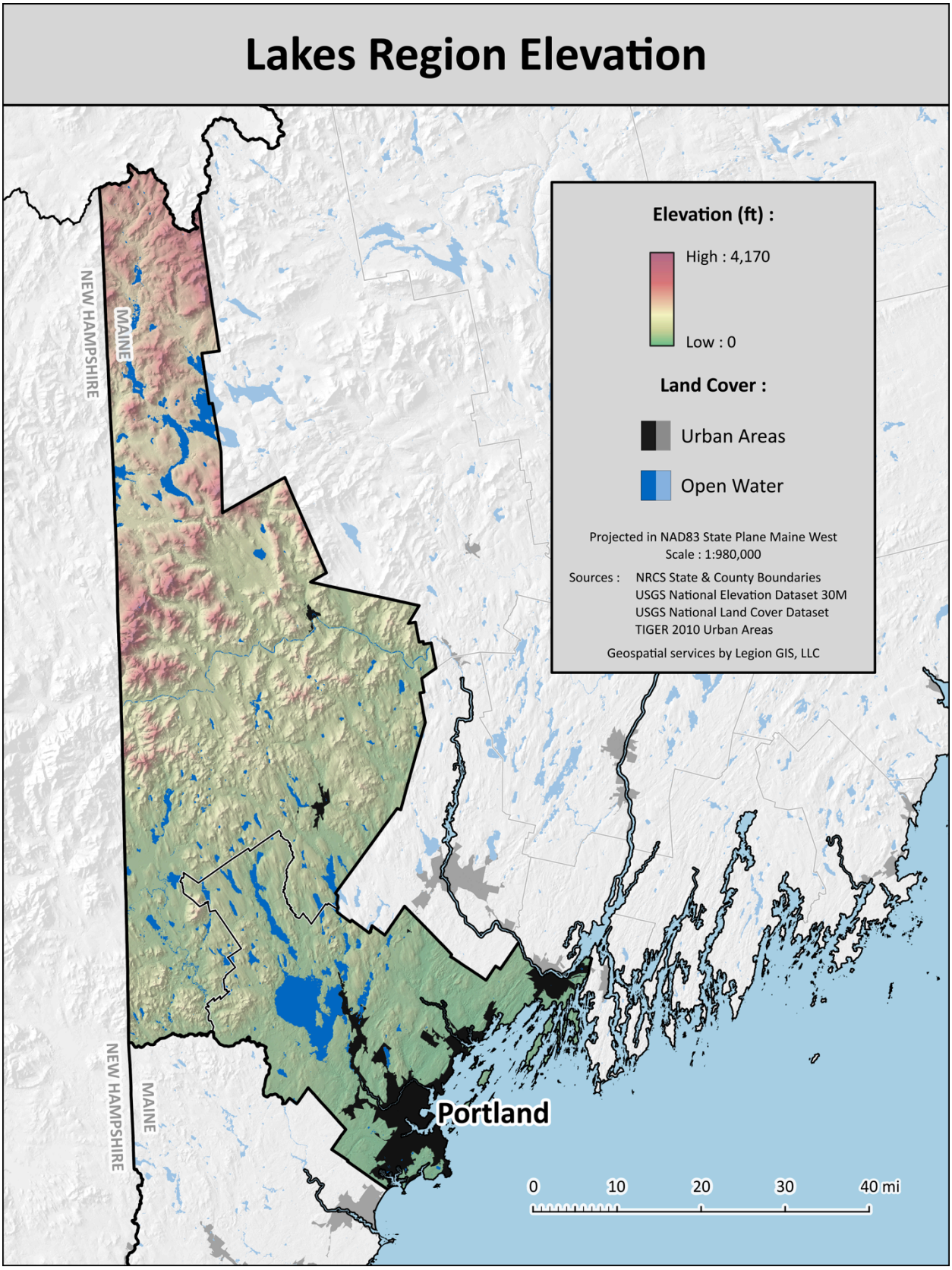


The Grange Hall in Sebago is located across the street from the Town Hall. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

The Lakes Region is full of such forested areas on former farm sites (as Map 2 shows). At the region's western edge, near the New Hampshire border, the Saco River Valley carved open fields that are suited to mechanization; several of the important farm families of the Lakes Region still farm on these fertile soils. While some raise vegetables for nearby consumers, most of these farms are large enough to export commodities like grain and potatoes to markets in Boston, New York, and beyond.

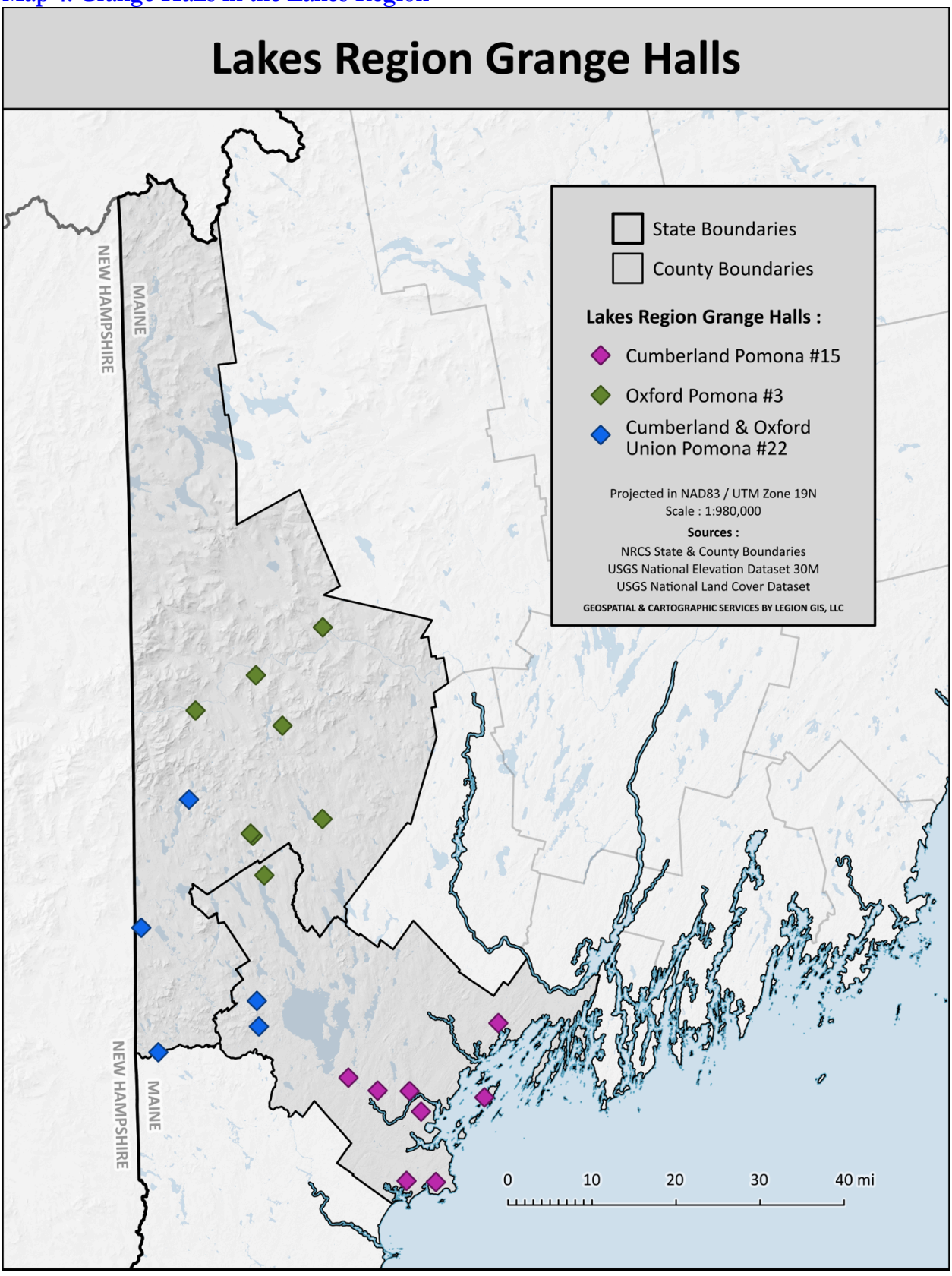
Yet a culture of farming still pervades the region, with important annual events such as the Fryeburg Fair and county fairs bringing people together to celebrate this heritage. The Fryeburg Fair attracts 300,000 annually. Twenty-one Grange halls are active in the two counties; many still host community dinners on a regular basis (See Map 4).

Map 3: Elevation of the land in the Lakes Region



The Lakes Region's larger farms are well established in the Saco River Valley. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Map 4: Grange Halls in the Lakes Region



Community dinners such as those the Granges hold are in fact a unique part of the Lakes Region's cultural identity, with myriad churches, social clubs, Granges, schools, or causes hosting meals that serve as gatherings or fundraisers. Most martial exceptional volunteer energy. Some break the isolation of the long winter; others celebrate bountiful fall harvests or special holidays. They are held year round at a rate of nearly four per week.

This heritage of farming, combined with natural beauty and a sense of detachment from population centers such as Portland, mean the Lakes Region holds a fairly solid sense of place — a unique region with bountiful lakes, clear air, and forests that offers a respite from urban life. Some 2,400 second homes were identified in the region, drawing owners from across the U.S.

Lakes Region farms hold half a billion dollars of financial assets

Indeed, though Cumberland and Oxford Counties have seen a tremendous number of their historical farms disappear, the 1,269 farmers in the two counties still hold an aggregate value of $500 million of assets in land and buildings (Census of Agriculture, 2012). Nearly 138,000 acres are under cultivation across the two counties.

It would seem incumbent upon Lakes Region leaders to protect and enhance these assets in any way possible.

Land is relatively inexpensive

Our sources told us that one of the main advantages a new farmer has in the Lakes Region is that there is considerable land available at relatively affordable levels — at least relative to urban land prices. This does not mean that young emergent farmers have the capital to purchase such acreage, however. Moreover, it poses some risk as outside investors seek cheaper land where they can launch new farms.

Local residents have created new farm & food businesses

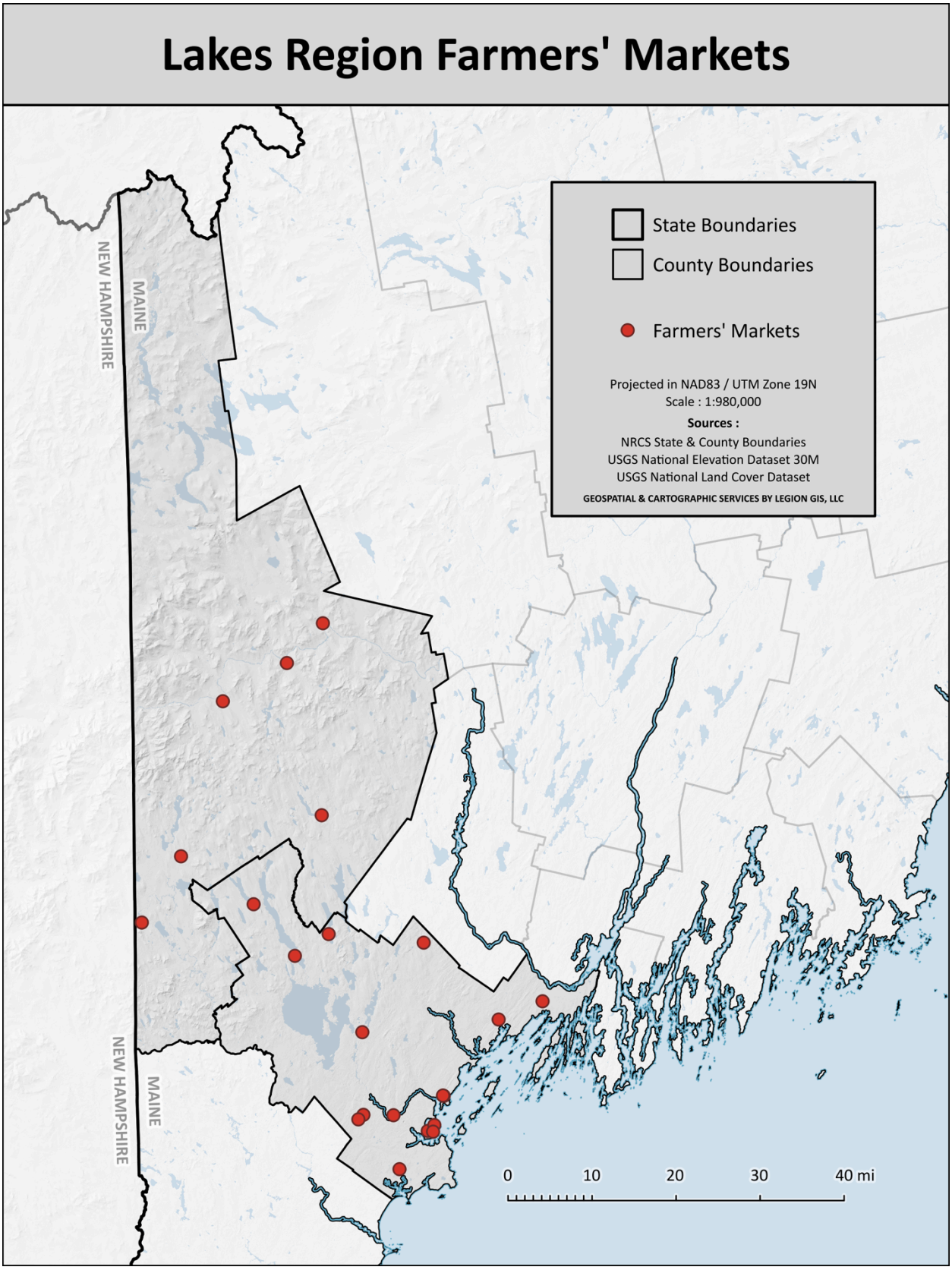
In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many residents became dissatisfied with the food choices available to them. Those living near Norway, in particular, began to focus considerable attention on farming for local neighbors, community gardening, and related pursuits including founding a cooperative grocery store, Fare Share Co-op, in 1978. Today, the core membership of the co-op includes 530 households, with thousands of others shopping as guests.

Through local action such as this, the Lakes Region took important steps to define better food options for itself. Oxford County took the lead. As these efforts built a stronger presence, residents were able to launch community gardens and sustainability initiatives. Ultimately, popular sentiment protected the historical Roberts Farm from development. Now leaders hope to turn this into an agricultural training center that will deepen the farm heritage.

Helen Ramsdell has raised goats at her farm near Denmark for 30 years. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

These food system pioneers have created discrete but critical impacts. Growing in concert with community foods activity in rural areas, the city of Portland grew into a nationally known food destination town. After decades of growth, consumers now support farm-to-table restaurants, local fishers and lobstermen, foragers and farmers.

Map 5: Farmers' Markets in the Lakes Region



Helen Ramsdell has raised Nubian dairy goats for over three decades on her farm near Denmark, fashioning artisanal cheeses on the farm. Over time, she has also held a broader presence in the local foods community by managing the Bridgton Farmers' Market.

One locally grown farm, Maple Springs Farm in Harrison, began in 1998 after owner Mark Heidmannn transplanted himself from his former farms in Illinois and Connecticut. Maple Springs has blossomed into a diverse vegetable operation that sells sustainably raised foods to consumers at the Portland Farmers' Market and through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation. The farm also sells direct to a grocer in Bridgton, several nearby restaurants, one school district, and has successfully entered wholesale markets through distributors such as Native Maine.

Tom Gyger's Five Fields Farm has sold apples locally for 87 years. Tom took the farm over from his father, and has scaled down the size over time. He sells directly to local grocers, but notices this is more difficult now than it used to be.

Rippling Waters Organic Farm held 11.5 acres of certified organic ground near the Saco River in Standish. The farm reached sales of $140,000 per year from an orchard, two greenhouses, and 20 hoophouses (temporary plastic shelters). With this income the farm was able to hire a farm manager, a couple of other people at an hourly wage, and support 4-5 apprenticeships. Several years ago the farm was sold. Former owner Richard Rudolph cautioned, "We were getting good prices, and we broke even. But we made our money on the bedding plants, not on farming."

Not all farms pursued local markets. As one example, Green Thumb Farms near Fryeburg has become a regional, if not national, leader in high-quality potato production for the household table after purchasing a farm with deep local roots. With over 2,000 acres in potato production (rotated with dry beans and corn), Green Thumb Farms is the smallest farm serving as a member of a national potato co-op. It primarily ships products out of Maine. Its only local food trade is selling 50-lb bags of corn and beans direct to consumers who visit the farm. This is by no means central to their sales strategies.

Other newer farms have also sprung up, managed by those who earned considerable wealth outside of agriculture. Pietree Orchard in Sweden and Pineland Farms in New Gloucester would be prime examples.

The Region accesses and helps build a statewide network of food leaders

One new farm couple told us they had moved to Maine precisely because they wanted to enjoy reaping the harvest of this 40 years of history. While they bemoaned a relative lack of interest from Lake Region consumers in purchasing more food from local farms, this aspiring couple also praised the statewide network that flourishes among Maine food leaders.

With the support of national funders, Maine has further integrated itself into a broader visioning process that seeks to build New England-wide food trade. While this strategy runs the risk of asking Maine to continue its pattern of dependence by feeding the rest of the New England rather than itself in the name of regional unity, this trading network has established new market opportunities for Maine farmers and considerable public visibility.

Small farms of the Lakes Region have taken special leadership in convening food policy councils across the state, and have launched a Micro-Distribution Project to pick up produce from scattered small farms, and aggregate these into larger shipments for commercial customers.

The state itself is a national pioneer in organic agriculture due to the strength of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). Formed in 1971, MOFGA is the largest and oldest state-level organic organization in the U.S. It has long championed a sophisticated and energetic set of activities determined to retain and improve the quality of the state's soil, and to ensure that healthy food is raised on that soil.

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) has also played a potent role in promoting community economic development throughout Maine, most notably perhaps in helping Maine communities through the transition of the seafood industry from formerly lucrative mass markets into more specialized and innovative markets. CEI has also successfully addressed transitions in the timber industry, the impact of international economic upheaval on small and remote communities, and emerging community food systems.

Maine Farmland Trust has helped protect working farms and scenic rural landscapes across the state, fostering legal and social mechanisms that allow local investors to retain more command over local resources and set long-term policies for land protection.

All these assets place the region in a solid position to raise food for itself. Yet our respondents also described with great honesty several limitations the region faces.

Lakes Region Also Faces Important Limitations

Seasonality limits (and creates) opportunity

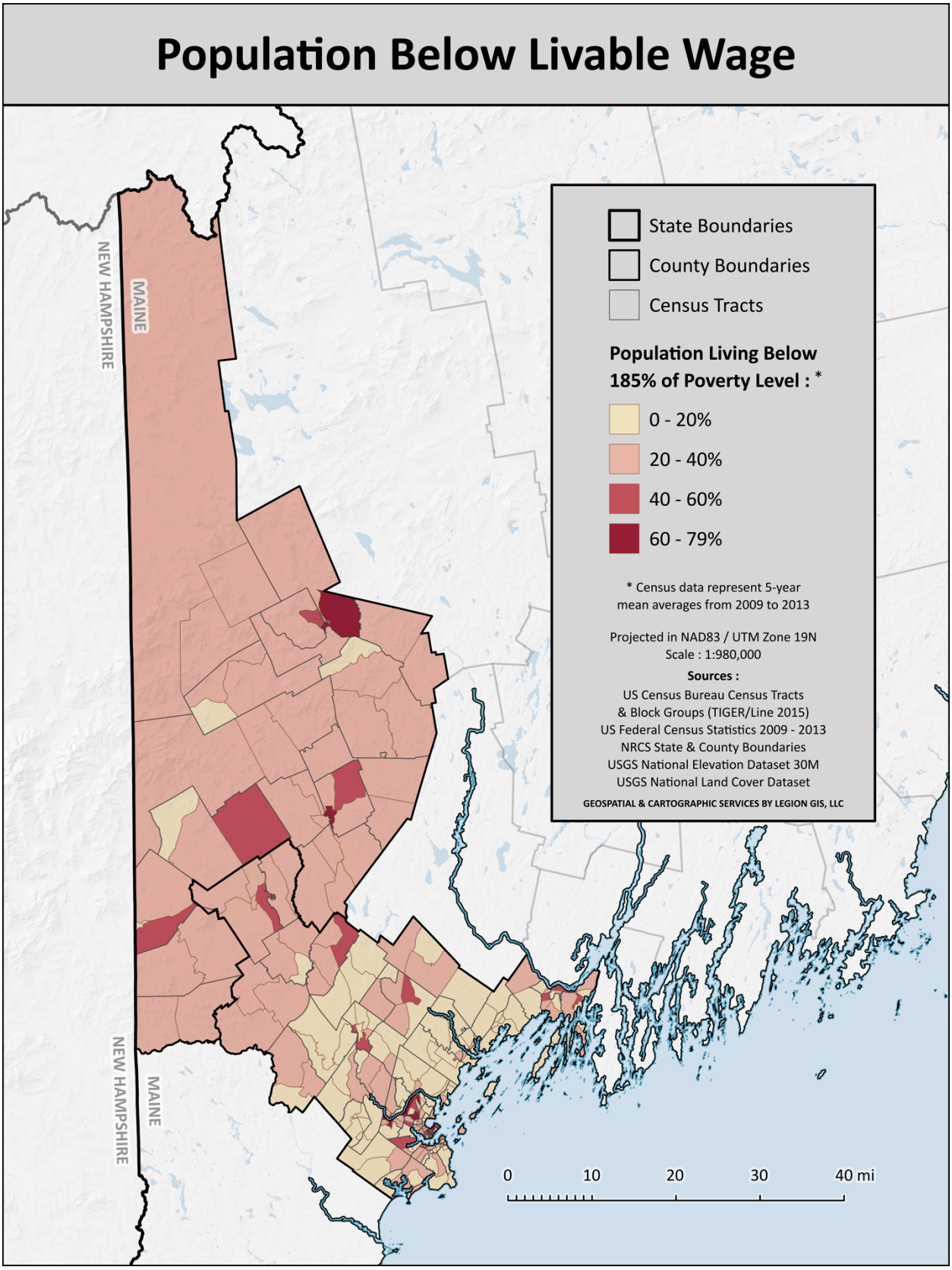
The most obvious limitation is the shortness of the growing season. Yet season-extending techniques such as planting in hoophouses, greenhouses, and similar protected environments are in use on many farms, with every reason to suspect they will grow in importance. Many launched these efforts by following the lead of Eliot Coleman, who pioneered these techniques in Harborside, Maine.

Another answer to seasonal shortness is one that was adopted historically — to eat seasonally, relying more on root crops and other stored items in the winter months, and focusing one's diet on fruits and vegetables when they ripen during the warm months. These cultivated foods would be supplemented with wildlife, fish, shellfish, and seafood that also have seasonal variations.

In actual practice, if Maine does not move toward seasonal eating, and if consumers continue to prefer to purchase bananas, pineapples, and other tropical fruits (for example) year-round, the Lakes Region will not develop strong community-based food systems.

This points to the second key limitation: incomes in the Lakes Region are limited, and this makes it difficult for local consumers to pay the higher prices emerging farmers often seek for their products.

Map 6: Lakes Region Population Living Below a Livable Wage



Carmen Lone engages low-income residents of the Bridgton community. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Financial resources are limited

As Map 5 above shows, poverty is persistent in the Lakes Region, a reality in most of the rural areas. More than 30% of the residents live in households earning less than a livable wage.

The map plots this out for the 260 census block groups (geographies used by the Federal Census to organize data) in the two counties. Of these, 100 (39%) have one of every three residents earning less than a living wage. Nearly 50 block groups (19%) have poverty levels of 40% or higher, with six at seriously high rates of 70% or more. For these calculations, a "livable wage" was considered to be 185% of the federally determined poverty level — the level at which children in schools qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Father Craig Hacker of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bridgton surveyed 235 of the lowest-income households in Bridgton several years ago. He recorded detailed data, making direct home visits and holding extended conversations where possible. Hacker concluded that, "Low food security is a strategic threat to our local work force." His calculation was that "43% of Bridgton residents are estimated to be food-insecure, and 52% of those surveyed hold 'very high anxiety' about their access

to food." One of every three people surveyed said they have had to cut the size of their meals at some point during the year because they lacked sufficient food access, he added, despite receiving $1.7 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, once known as food stamps) aid per year.

Bureau of Economic Analysis data show that SNAP assistance given to Cumberland and Oxford Counties residents averaged $44 million per year from 1989 to 2014, peaking at $89 million in 2011.

Hacker is attempting to remedy this by developing a farm where low-income residents could move temporarily to get trained in growing food, and to live in a supportive community environment where hopefully they could build life skills to help ramp them out of poverty. He believes he has access to 12 acres of church-owned property that will house this farm near the town of Bridgton.

Other experienced farmers caution that earlier efforts to foster food-growing skills among low-income residents have faltered. They say that the best answer will be for those growing food commercially to donate their products to food banks that will serve this food to the poor. Perhaps both approaches are worth pursuing at this point.

The model that is most tested in the Lakes Region to date was developed by Good Shepherd Food Bank of Lewiston. Their "Mainers Feeding Mainers" initiative works with some 50 Maine farmers who donate or sell their food products (often surplus or seconds) to the food bank to distribute. In 2015, this program dispersed nearly $1 million of produce to low-income people in Maine. While this still falls short of solving poverty in the region, the food bank has clearly fostered the growth of local farms by purchasing their products, keeping certain farmers out of poverty. In some cases, the food bank is a farm's largest single revenue stream. Having such a market for food appears to be fundamentally important to the Lakes Region's hopes for growing new farms and ensuring they have reliable markets and revenue streams.

Some farmers, however, would like to see Good Shepherd pay more for the produce items it purchases. One has found such an outlet through the Maine Hunger Initiative (MHI) in Portland, which provides 500,000 free meals each year at its Preble Street location, distributes food through a pantry, and advocates for ending hunger. This farm supplies pantries directly, with MHI covering the costs, yet in this case funding decisions are made so late in the spring that farmers have difficulty planning for these sales.

Personal capacities are diminishing

A third serious limitation for food activity in the Lakes Region is that few people have volunteer time. In the past, fledgling initiatives could often count on retired people, homemakers, or youth to volunteer to help launch a new food initiative. As economic forces become more stringent, and with high poverty levels, such donations of time are becoming more difficult to offer. Perhaps a young person will sign up for a two-hour shift in order to get community service credits at school, but the intensive volunteer involvement that once fueled local campaigns appears to be dwindling as people work longer hours with less security.

This reality suggests that local food coordination in the Lakes Region will depend on raising sufficient funds so that staff people can be hired to carry out community mobilization strategies. This will create jobs, but it will prove more expensive than prevailing approaches.

It will be our recommendation that the Lakes Region raise funds for the purpose of hiring a Local Foods Coordinator. This strategy is proving beneficial in many other small and large communities across the country.

Even for those with larger incomes, knowing about local food trade is elusive, we found. Many survey respondents showed little knowledge of local food outlets (farmers' markets, farm stands, etc.). Few consumers are dedicated to purchasing from local farms, particularly should locally produced food be priced higher than what is available at grocery stores. Certainly the Lakes Region will want to dedicate funds, and concerted effort, to ensure local consumers build great loyalty to local farms. This appears to be primarily a matter of rebuilding social connections and engaging in marketing campaigns that foster a desire for residents to meet and trade with each other.

Supplies are limited

Moreover, there are only a handful of farms located in the Lakes Region who actually hold strong interest in growing food for local residents. Most of those have started by selling direct to local consumers.

Yet many of the farmers who pioneered in direct sales are aging out. Farmers entering the market for the first time face very different conditions than their elders faced. On the one hand there is more awareness of the potential for community-based foods than there was in 1970. Yet this also means that emerging farmers face greater competition. Food costs are higher, but land and input costs have risen even more. There is great interest from wholesale food buyers, but few willing to pay the prices a starting farmer needs to establish a business. Few investments have been made in the infrastructure required to ensure that community-based food systems attain maximum efficiencies.

Brenna Mae Thomas and her husband run Patch Farm in Denmark, a diversified four-acre farm. Their CSA has attracted 40 members to whom they sell eggs and produce. They are establishing a small goat herd so they can sell raw milk. Brenna Mae said she spends "a lot of time with two restaurants, and two grocers," but otherwise focuses on her members and farmers' market sales. "It is hard for us to see the costs and benefits of selling wholesale," she said. The Thomas' plans for scaling up center around a potential collaboration with other CSA farms to distribute food boxes cooperatively.

Our interviews indicated that there may be only three to five Lakes Region growers who are currently in a position to serve wholesale markets. As Bear Zaidman, director of the Fryeburg Fair, put it, "Local farmers don't produce enough to sell to the middle guy."

One farm couple that tried to ramp up for larger markets abandoned the effort. After investing $30,000 in a greenhouse so they could supply a local grocer with greens and other produce, Don and Jeanette Baldridge of Lollipoppa Farms learned that the buyer would insist they obtain GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification. The couple decided that the cost of adding this credential was too great, so they abandoned the effort. Now they focus on working more closely with their farmers' market customers to show them how to choose foods the couple feels are healthier to eat — fermented and pickled foods, and bone broth, for example.

Similarly, one farm with long-established relationships with a grocery retailer received a letter notifying the grocer was imposing a non-negotiable 20% reduction in wholesale prices. When the farmer inquired at his local store, he was told that the order was coming from corporate headquarters, so local staff were powerless. Fortunately, this farmer was able to take his high-quality products to other stores that are, "willing to pay for quality." Yet this speaks to the lack of commitment chain retailers often have to their own local economies.

Those growers who do focus on local markets face a conundrum that is well recognized nationally: either they focus on direct sales to a small number of customers who can pay higher prices for carefully cultivated food, or they focus on growing large quantities for wholesale markets where they may not have much bargaining power to sustain high prices over the long term. Generally different types of farmers are attracted to each approach, and the on-farm infrastructure required is quite different for each type.

The main conclusions to draw in this study are that (a) direct sales are critical for emerging farmers who need to build cash flow; and (b) it is nearly impossible to compete in wholesale markets without having wealth to draw upon that was earned in other pursuits – perhaps even farming in an earlier time when farming was a more lucrative business.

As Richard Rudolph, former owner of Rippling Waters Organic Farm, pointed out, "There are opportunities in farming." But most of the people who have made it, he added, had one person in the family working off the farm. One couple he knows makes their farm work because one member of the family sells insurance, while the other farms 1.5 acres. He knows of another farm with about 9 acres that netted $30,000-40,000 by selling organic produce, but this is unlikely to support a family by itself.

His own farm's entry into wholesale was a mixed experience. Rudolph sold produce to Whole Foods, but "probably did not make money selling to them. They took 50% of the retail price for all of our products." The industry standard is 20-40%.

With outside incomes to support the operation, Rippling Waters focused on training new farmers. "We never made any money at farming, but that was never our goal." He estimated that the farm trained 50 apprentices or journeypersons during its lifetime. Some are now farming.

Tom Gyger of Five Fields Farm spoke of farming in an earlier era when he could sell through an intermediary to independent grocery stores that were able to make their own purchasing decisions, and who wanted to support local growers for the sake of the community.

"The math shows that the best place to buy is local," Gyger said. But the reality is somewhat more complex. "My father told me to keep out of the marketing – he used to work with a distributor, J.P. Sullivan. They said, join us and we will take care of all that [marketing]. We sold there for 45 years. They took a 10% commission."

Today Gyger no longer sells to larger buyers. "Now, I can't deal with the wholesale market. There is a mismatch between the producer and the buyer. I do not see anyone ever again having the golden age I had." He sells 600 cases of apples each fall to Hannaford, and also delivers direct to two stores within ten miles of his farm. "I don't know what the sticking point is, but it all runs on money."

Gyger's own marketing experience has taught him to focus on offering a single product to groceries, a five-pound tote bag of apples. Even this has become more difficult. "At Hannaford we used to

Tom Gyger's family has tended Five Fields Farm in South Bridgton for 87 years. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

have a prime location during apple season. Now we face 27 competing offerings." The grocer did, however, reimburse him for the $700 fee he was charged for GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification.

Today Gyger farms "60% of the land I took over from my father. We started at 157 acres, went to 100, and are now at 70 acres." He believes there is a way to farm apples more intensively and pare the farm down to six acres, still making as much money as he does now, but that would be up to a new owner to create, with substantial new investment.

It is also important to note here that it is quite difficult to keep wholesale food trade as community-based trade. The logistics of long-distance sales and travel are so efficient that once one enters the wholesale market, a number of long-distance markets open automatically. New competitors also enter the picture, putting pressure on farmers to scale up even more, and to withstand declining margins. Community food trade will require its own supportive infrastructure.

Infrastructure is missing

Liz & Will Deleo, who own Black Mountain Farm in Sweden, say that have made substantial investments to build on-farm infrastructure, including a small barn, a washing and packing shed, a cooler, and a hoophouse so they can sell produce all winter long. They also plan to build a small meat processing plant at their farm so they can kill and process their own poultry.

Similarly, Tim and Carol Mayberry of Mayberry Farms have built a 16-foot by 12-foot commercial food processing facility on their property. In this facility, they process 12 tons of butternut squash-washing, peeling, cubing, and packing all by hand This facility is mostly used in the late fall and early winter.

This points to the next limitation of local food trade: local food trade will not be resilient over time until appropriate physical and intellectual infrastructure exists to create efficiencies in local food trade. As Stuart Leckie of St. Joseph's College said, "To make food is one thing. To store it is another. No one has a place to store food. We store our frozen chickens in a warehouse in Portland."

This, then, is the task of economic development authorities such as those who work for the Town of Bridgton, and Cumberland and Oxford Counties, as well as private investors who may consider their task to include broader capacity building and relational commerce, not simply commodity flows: to build supportive infrastructure that creates efficiencies in community-based food trade.

Wholesale and institutional markets are limited

Food buyers held an interesting perspective on the wholesaling issue. Both Ron Adams of the Maine Farm and Sea Cooperative and Stuart Leckie of St. Joseph's College food service in Standish, pointed out that they can readily source Maine food. Adams said "there are plenty of producers in Maine willing to sell to institutions," so there is no shortage of supply as long as the buyer is willing to source from within the state of Maine. Adams added that if an institution sources its milk from Maine, it almost automatically is sourcing 20% of its total food purchases within the state.

Leckie has taken strong leadership in promoting local foods. From his position as food service director for St. Joseph's College, he not only purchases food from as many local farms as possible, but also runs the college's farm. With these resources under his command, he is able to think quite broadly about the Lakes Region food system.

"We buy from 30 farms and artisanal bakers," Leckie said. "We use all local pork, except for bacon. We buy grass-fed beef from Maine Family Farms, a collaboration of 20 different growers that coordinate through an office in Portland." Milk is raised on Baker Brook Farm in nearby Windham, but processed in Westbrook at Smiling Hills Farm.

For his next challenge, Leckie wants the St. Joseph's campus to be "the first campus that is self-sufficient for chicken." He has received a federal grant to plan the construction of a state-certified processing plant on the campus grounds. Once that is in place, Leckie will contract with local growers to raise chickens to sell to the college. He estimates he will need about 20,000 chickens per year.

Leckie estimates that sourcing from local farms involves considerable extra cost. "We probably spend an extra $150,000 per year to get quality local products," he said. One of his feature events is a "local lunch" every Thursday. As he places each menu item on the cafeteria line, he adds a small placard with the name of each farm and the number of miles each food item traveled to the college.

Stuart Leckie features locally raised foods at St. Joseph's College in Standish. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

He estimates that the college buys "28-30% from Maine farms on an average basis" each year. During peak harvest times, that may rise to 40% he added.

This extra effort is largely possible due to the fact that as a college, St. Joseph's is a "mission-aligned business." That is to say, it measures success on social and ethical dimensions and not simply the economic bottom line. It was not always this way. Leckie first began to work at St. Joseph's as the food service director for Bon Appetit, a national firm that contracted with the college. Over time, Leckie calculated that "we could save money by taking over the food service and running it for ourselves." These savings help to pay for the added costs of purchasing higher quality local items.

The college is also taking advantage of an opportunity to take possession of a French-style farm building that is located just south of the campus. This 4.75-acre site was an old alpaca farm. That means that several fields are already well manured. The college is moving its farm to some of this

former pasture, where it aims to raise tomatoes and other vegetables, pasture 60-70 head of sheep, keep 5-6 pigs, goats, rabbits, and turkeys for holiday meals. The farm will also engage students. Students taking Environmental Science 300 will sign up to work on the farm. The college's business club will manage a CSA farm there. Meanwhile, the college is renovating the main building to serve as an event center.

With all of these resources at his disposal, Leckie still relies on distribution firms to convey local products to his cafeteria. Six years ago, when he was employed by Bon Appetit, he said, he would visit local farms as often as he could. He no longer has this luxury. He relies on Native Maine to bring local products to him. He says he can source as much Maine-produced food as he wishes through Native Maine. He likes working with them, and adds that they can satisfy all of his order. "They will deliver anything I will ever buy."

Leckie also serves on the board of the Maine Farms and Sea Cooperative, where he and Adams work with other food service directors to collaborate in order to more effectively supply institutional purchasers with Maine-grown food.

Jim Burke, owner of Vivo Restaurant in Bridgton, features Maple Springs Farm on his menu, as well as other locally raised foods. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Jim Burke, owner of Vivo Restaurant in Bridgton, likes to buy as much local food as possible. "It is part of my DNA to buy locally," he said. He said the restaurant has been very busy, and added that his customers are very bright and food-wise. Burke said he, "was not aware of any obstacles to sourcing food locally," in large part due to deliveries by Native Maine. Burke recently began featuring items from Mark Heidmann's Maple Springs Farm in Harrison on his menu. He purchases New England seafood when prices are good.

Yet he also stumbles up against a community ethic: "In general, this area is not known for its food. It is all about value in a place like this." So Burke keeps his price point low, and serves large portions. He buys much of his produce through Gordon Food Service, often finding that locally raised meats from smaller farms, such as lamb or chicken, are too expensive. To reduce his costs he often purchases a whole lamb and breaks it down himself into specific cuts.

Other wholesale markets have been more difficult to penetrate. Our interview at Stevens Brook Elementary showed that, while the kitchen has ample space and staff have strong interest in purchasing from local farms, they have no say in ordering. So the district has not been purchasing locally.

Some good inroads have been made with Oxford Public Schools and Western Maine Health in Norway, but it seems that relatively early steps have been taken — and no matter how willing these institutions may be, the supplies of food available from Lakes Region farms are quite limited.

Produce farmer Mark Heidmann (Maple Springs Farm) sells to the Food City grocery store in Bridgton, to Vivo and other restaurants, and the Fare Share Co-op in Norway. He has also begun to sell to the Oxford School District #17. Yet he also looks for venues where he can sell larger volumes than is possible at the Harrison farmers' market. In addition, he sells at the Portland farmers' market, and also delivers to Westbrook where his produce will be loaded onto a Native Maine truck. Yet Heidmann noted that the Portland farmers' market is not as robust as it once was — "it is becoming more of a social time," with fewer people shopping. This is congruent with observations from farmers' markets across the country.

Mark Heidmann brings 50 years' experience to Maple Springs Farm near Harrison. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Heidmann has also invested in specific pieces of infrastructure for his farm, such as a lettuce washing machine that allows him to clean his premium quality greens with greater ease.

One small group of farmers in the greater Norway region have formed a collaborative, The Micro-Distribution Project, hoping to aggregate products into larger loads to sell direct to local wholesale buyers and possibly to Crown O'Maine Organic Cooperative, based in Aroostook County. Yet only one shipment, from one farm, had been made by March, when we interviewed the grower. Others do not have the quantity to supply larger markets.

One couple we interviewed is fully prepared and ready to supply wholesale markets with fresh lamb from their farm near Windham. Lisa and Phil Webster, who own North Star Sheep Farm, said they have partnered with Bill Lovely of Central Maine Meats (Gardiner) to create a supply of meats that can be delivered to the University of Maine as it fulfills its commitment to source 20% of its food served at its six campuses from Maine farms. Lovely added that he has invested $5 million into expanding his processing operation, including winning a federal grant to build a flash-freeze line to retain as much freshness as possible in their meats after processing. North Star farm also supplies the Somerset Tap House in the Whole Foods Market in Portland.

The Websters said they had contacted most local schools and campuses, and have yet to make any significant sales in the Lakes Region itself. Their costs appear to have scared some buyers off — they are charging 10 cents per patty for ground lamb, which competes with ground beef available at 7 cents per patty, a 42% difference.

Central Meats' expansion, and the proposed poultry processing center at St. Joseph's, posed a partial answer to an issue that was raised by several of our sources: the need for more meat processing. We frequently heard about long waits to schedule processing times, or inadequate service, or distances that were prohibitively far to travel. All of these concerns are important. Yet the answer appears to remain in the hands of entrepreneurs like Lovely and Leckie who are adding specific capacity that suits the needs of their own operations. There is little that community members can do to create new processing capacity unless someone can devote several millions of dollars for that purpose. Meat processing efforts in other parts of the U.S. have also found that finding skilled meat cutters is not easy, either, which makes Leckie's effort to train new meat processors a critically important one.

One other farm is looking to *buy* local foods. Don and Jeanette Baldridge, who run Lollipoppa Farm in West Paris, sell home-baked bread along with their produce at the Norway and Bridgton farmers' market, and they are looking for some farm in the Lakes Region that could supply organic wheat for baking. They noted that Maine supplied most of the grain eaten by Union troops during the Civil War.

Our Sources were Cautious About Food Hubs

The wholesale situation was summed up neatly by Carl Constanzi, coordinator for the "Let's Go" program at Western Maine Health in Norway, and active in Healthy Oxford Hills. Constanzi has patiently tended a conversation with area hospitals and schools to nudge each to source more food locally. "The original food hub model (of an aggregation center where smaller farms can deliver their products to be assembled into larger loads) is not going to work." There are too few farms offering "local" products at a quantity sufficient to support the business.

Moreover, our experience as researchers is that those farmers who do want to reach wholesale markets often have already purchased their own warehouses, coolers, and trucks, so they have little to gain from joining food hubs As mentioned above, smaller emergent farms typically require premium prices from direct-to-consumer markets, so wholesale trade does not suit their needs.

Nonetheless, for those with the resources to pursue wholesale commerce, our sources identified several wholesale products that were in demand and could be sourced locally. These include:

- Greens of all kinds (especially from year-round farms)
- Salad bar items (tri-color peppers, grape tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, cauliflower, broccoli, etc.)
- Squash
- Potatoes
- Green beans

Are Summer Camps a Promising Market?

Another area of potential growth identified by Cumberland County was whether the region's summer camps, or its second residences, could provide a steady market for local farm products. The answer to both of these appears to be that these markets are very limited and subject to the same constraints as prevailing commercial markets.

Ken Morse (Norway) and Mark Hews (Poland) have been involved in prior efforts to assess whether summer camps offer a viable market. Their analysis showed that there is a seasonal mismatch: camp food service directors seldom have time to make advance plans before they arrive at camp in early summer. When they arrive, they have to place orders quickly for immediate delivery. Yet they arrive when most Lakes Region farmers are just finishing planting. Few crops will ripen fully for the summer camp season. So the camp food directors simply order commodities from readily available commercial channels. Some may buy from Native Maine, but it would take an extraordinarily committed food service director to prepare specifically for local harvests spaced through the summer.

One answer for this seasonal dilemma may be to increase the number of farms with hoophouses and greenhouses that can supply camps and other customers with fresh greens throughout the year. It may also be possible to run joint marketing efforts with Native Maine to encourage camp food directors to specifically request local products when they order. Since some camps charge as much

Summer camps and second homes ring the region's lakes. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

as tens of thousands of dollars per child for the summer, it would seem that funds might be available to purchase local food even if it were to cost a bit more; but our sources indicated most chefs are primarily focused on reducing costs as much as possible.

Our Survey of Second-Home Owners

The second area of potential growth mentioned by those who commissioned our study were the thousands of summer homes that dot the lake country. Since owners of these homes are often prosperous, the hope was that this would represent a solid market for local farms. To learn whether this would be true, we surveyed second-home owners. A postcard invitation to participate in this internet based survey was sent to 2,416 households that were identified through county records as owning a second home in the Lakes Region in 2016. The postcard was sent to the primary household. 190 responses were collected between May 23, 2016 and July 27, 2016.

This sample is not representative of all second-home owners in the region, since it was not a randomized sample. Thus the findings outlined below apply only to those who responded to the survey. Since most of them have homes close to Bridgton, it appears that many chose to participate because they know city officials, or feel a bond with the city. Obviously, those people who are interested in local foods are the most likely to engage the survey, as well. These biases should be taken into account when interpreting the survey data.

Survey respondents said they shop primarily at the Hannaford in Bridgton, while a significant number rely on food items that they bring with them from their primary residence, often in another state. The Bridgton Food City and its Farmers' Market were also popular shopping destinations. Respondents showed relatively little awareness of farmers' markets, farm stands, and grocery cooperatives.

The majority of those who responded said they are able to source vegetables, fruits, eggs, and breads from local sources, but added that they would like more processed products such as meats, dairies, and grains to be available. Respondents also pointed out that they were not satisfied with the quality of chicken they found at local stores.

The majority of survey respondents (70%) would like to have access to more local items where they already shop — Hannaford, Food City, farmers' markets, and restaurants. This is consistent with consumer demand surveys conducted in other communities. People want higher quality, fresher, local produce at the locations where they already shop. There was some interest in receiving farm fresh deliveries at home, however, this was a relatively minor preference.

Interestingly, survey respondents spend a greater share of their food dollar for foods prepared and consumed at home (56.9%) versus the national average (49.9%). This is counterintuitive considering that vacationers typically spend more money eating out or on pre-prepared foods. However, this could also indicate a lack of restaurant and carry-out options consistent with consumer preferences. For example, one survey respondent commented, "Whole Foods prepared foods are a go-to for us about 2 nights a week when we are home in California." Other survey respondents are also looking for take-away items at the farmers' market, "I would love to see more local cheeses and homemade breads. I would even buy prepared meals such as potpies, lasagna, mashed potatoes, etc."

Survey results suggest that respondents spend an average of $143 per household per week on foods prepared and consumed at home during their stays in the Lakes Region, amounting to approximately $296,000 annually spent by survey respondents alone. Similarly, households spend an average of $108 per week on foods consumed away from the home (restaurants, etc.) for an estimated total of $218,000 annually.

While 11% of survey respondents indicated no willingness to pay more for locally produced foods, 31% indicated that they're willing to pay 5-9% more and another 32% indicated a willingness to pay 10-14% more. This represents a potential marketing opportunity if locally grown foods can be featured at area grocery stores and adequately advertised.

Mushroom growing kits are for sale at the Portland Farmers' Market. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Basic Food Skills Need to Be Built

Finally, our interviews with local food system leaders pointed out in very visceral terms the limits of the Lakes Region population's ability to fully embrace community-based foods. Residents, they said, need to gain greater interest and skills in handling, preparing, processing, and eating healthy food.

Several variations on this theme were offered. Helen Ramsdell of Rams Farm simply stated that, "A lot of people have no idea what to do with some of the vegetables we sell. The main thing is to train people to cook [at all]." Brenna Mae Thomas of Patch Farms took the position that, "We need to explain to people how to eat." Lollipoppa Farm's Jeanette Baldridge said she, "wants to show young people how to eat good food." Tom Gyger of Five Fields Farm, who savors a long history of selling apples to local buyers, said, "People have no clue, as my wife would say, of where food comes from. Our task right now is to achieve better understanding."

Inside the nation that claims to feed the world, these comments from farmers are humbling. Indeed, the nation has become so fixed on exporting food commodities globally that its residents are unfamiliar with the foods they eat daily, with even farm children having little notion of how vegetables are grown, or familiar with cooking for themselves. To the extent the Lakes Region lacks these skills, it will be tempting for consumers to opt for prepared, processed meals that are readily available at grocery stores. They will not learn about how to eat with the seasons, nor how to value local farmers enough to pay them more when their prices exceed levels available on the grocery shelf.

Historical Maine farmhouses often needed to house many field workers. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

As environmental consultant Mark Hews of Poland pointed out, "We've plateaued with local food. Farmers will favor selling direct to retail customers, and wholesale is difficult because of scale. We will need behavior change and infrastructure change." It would seem that behavior change would start through community building, marketing, and outreach initiatives.

Hews added, "The challenge is to increase the value of farm products, while lowering transaction costs. How do we get everyone to recognize agriculture as an economic development strategy?" This is especially true in an era when short-term rewards are so sparse, while the long-term challenges and needs are so great.

Carmen Lone, who runs the Bridgton Community Center, echoed his words. She quickly rattled off a list of zoning priorities that need to be changed. But she finds little room to move her ideas politically, she said, since "our officials know very little about agriculture." This, then, is one more casualty of removing farm production from the Lakes Region — when civic leaders have no experience with farming, it is difficult for them to write effective food policy.

Yet perhaps the overarching limitation was pointed out by Nancy Perry of the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Lewiston. Perry said, "We're pretty siloed here [in this region]." The Yankee tradition of individualism means that not that many people are willing to share uncertainties with each other, or work in collaborative ways."

This was born out by our interviews. More than once we would be discussing local foods issues with people who had overlapping interests or potentially collaborative projects — but they were not speaking to each other as they moved forward. Often one interviewer found himself thinking that if all of those he interviewed would sit in the same room at the same time, they might discover multiple ways of working together. But such gatherings will need to be held on a regular basis.

Already several organizations have begun to convene Lakes Region stakeholders to address the potential for building community-based food systems. Notably, the Cumberland County Food Security Council has hosted several meetings in the region including a Cumberland County Food System Summit on May 19, 2016, at which initial findings from this study were presented.

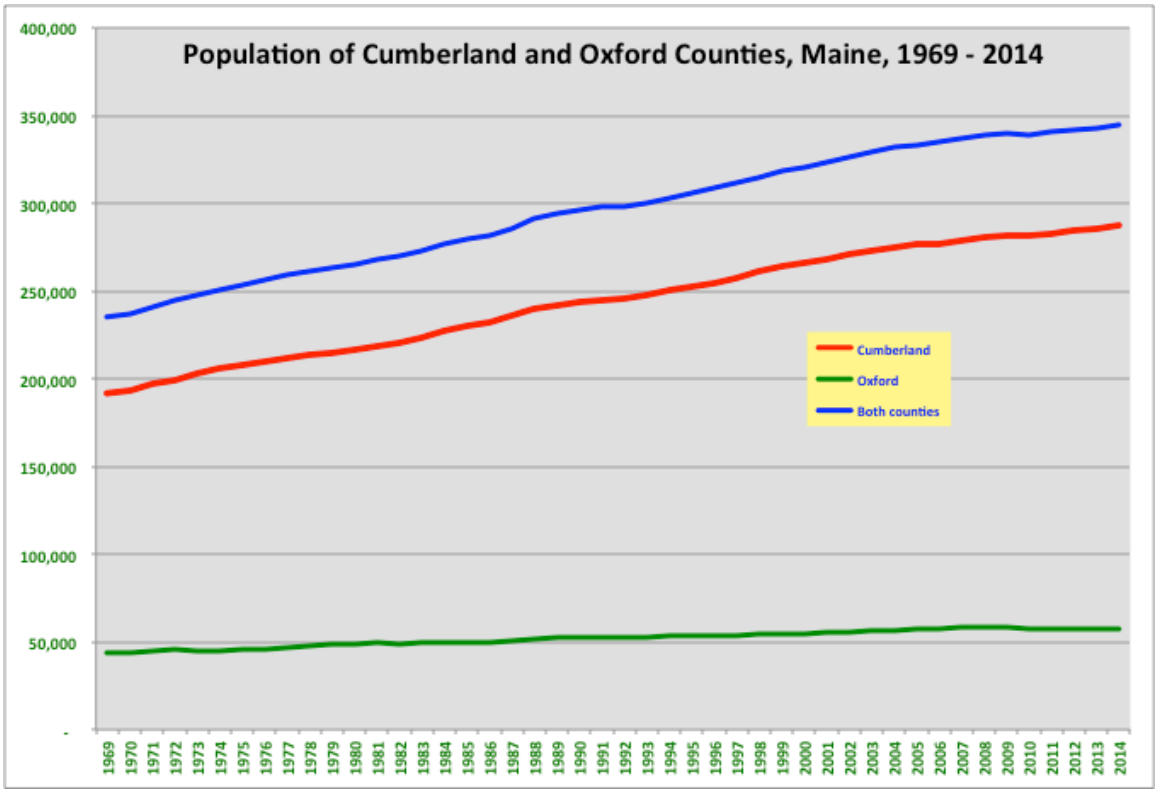
Demographic Overview

See also Appendix 4, which lists data sources.

Demographic and economic analysis could only be compiled for the two counties that encompass the Lakes Region, Cumberland and Oxford. This is a far larger area than the 15 municipalities our study targeted, but data is generally reported only at the county level. Since the city of Portland is part of Cumberland County, this will affect the interpretation of some data shown here.

The two counties have a total population of 345,035 residents. About 16% of this population, 56,465 residents, live in the 15 municipalities making up the Lakes Region. This is just less than the population of the City of Portland, with 66,317 people. The overall Portland metro area has more than 500,000 residents.

Chart 1: Population of Cumberland and Oxford Counties, 1969 - 2014

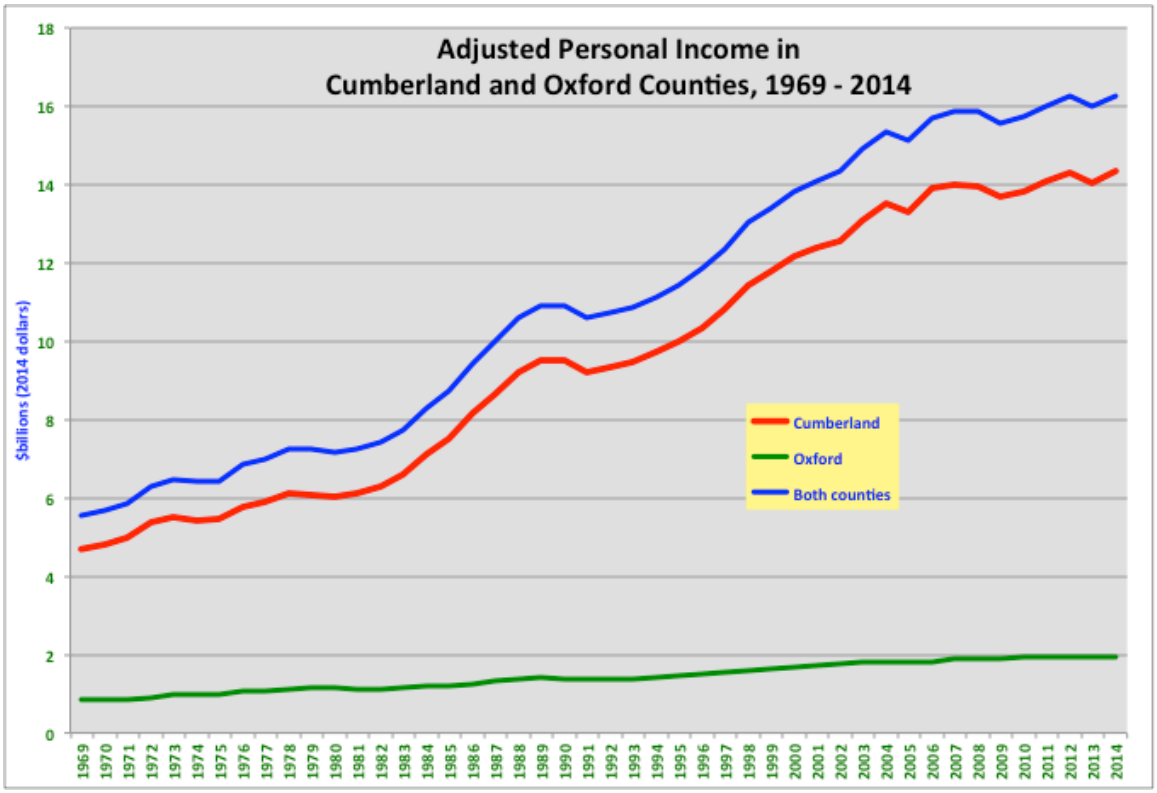


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Personal income in the two counties nearly tripled from 1969 to 2014, after adjusting for inflation, as Chart 2 shows. Aggregate personal income now stands at $16 billion. With the population rising 47% over that time, the two-county economy appears to have considerable strength.

It might be assumed that a rising population combined with increased income would predict rising farm income. As we will soon see, this does not hold, because farms are more closely linked to the global economy than to the consumers in the two counties.

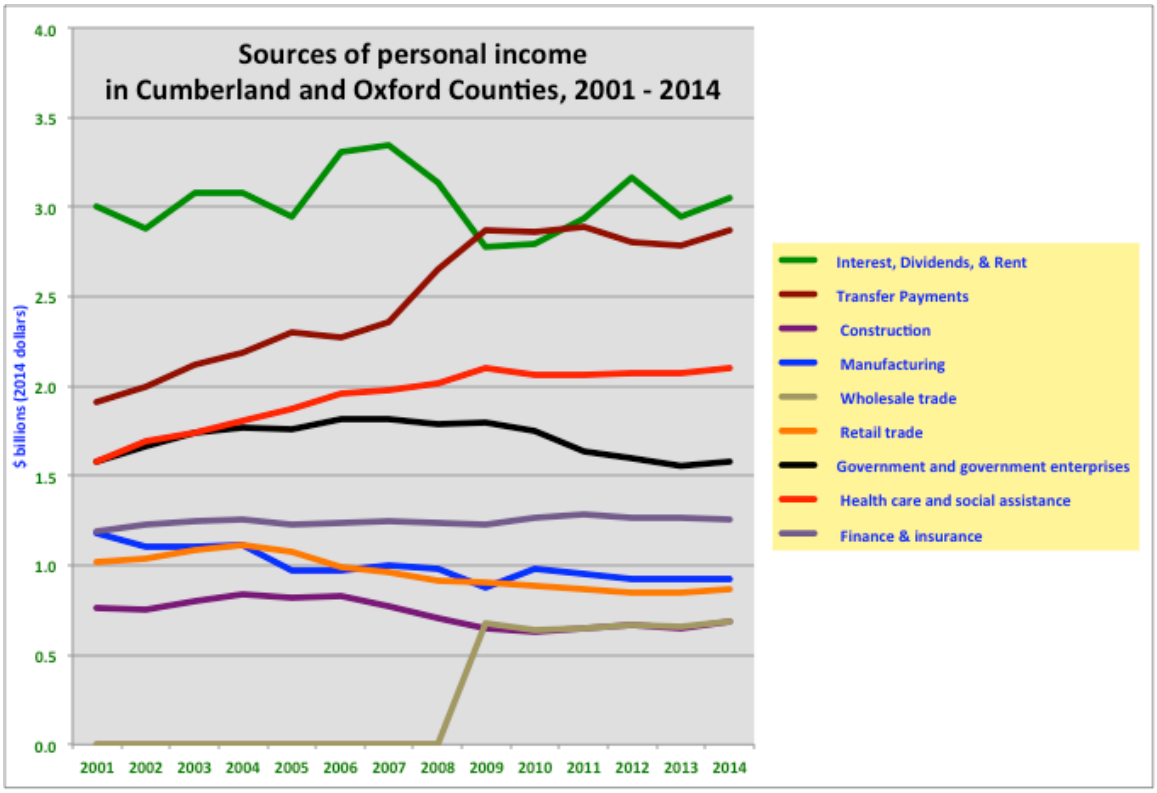
Chart 2: Adjusted Personal Income in Cumberland and Oxford Counties, 1969 - 2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

As Chart 3 shows, the largest source of personal income is capital income (from interest, rent or dividends) at $3 billion. This shows that capitalism is working for a good number of the residents of the two counties, but also suggests an aging population, since these forms of income often require considerable time to build.

Chart 3: Sources of Personal Income, 2001 - 2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis: Note that data for wholesale occupations was not reported until 2009,

More problematic, the second largest source of personal income is transfer payments (from government programs such as pensions, welfare payments, food assistance, and social security). These account for $2.9 billion of personal income. While this income is profoundly important for those who receive it, this is a strong indication that the two counties are depending upon outside sources (in this case public programs) for a significant share of personal income.

Next in line are several white-collar occupations: Health care workers rank third at $2.1 billion of personal income. Government workers earn $1.6 billion. Professional and technical workers, as well as finance workers, each earn $1.3 billion annually.

Manufacturing jobs, often considered the paramount way to build new wealth by converting raw materials into purchasable items, was a relatively minor source of income for the two counties, producing $924 million of personal income.

These data show another troubling reality: income from public sources (including government jobs and transfer payments) makes up 28% of all personal income in the region. This suggests the two counties are dependent on public policy for a substantial share of earnings. Thus, the economic options local residents can pursue are limited.

Poverty is also widespread in the region. Nearly 89,000 residents (27% of the region's population) earn less than a living wage, which we define as 185% of federal poverty guidelines. At this income

level, children qualify for free or reduced meals at school. Some of this poverty is quite dire: 6% percent of the region's households (more than 22,000 residents) earn less than $10,000 per year. Still, these lower-income residents make up a considerable consumer market, spending an estimated $130 million each year buying food, including $44 million of SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) over the past 26 years, 1989-2014, and receiving additional WIC coupons. Moreover, SNAP use has been rising in recent years and much higher than the average indicates. Benefits for the two counties totaled $68 million in 2014 after peaking at $90 million in 2011.

Food-related health conditions are costly:

Food-related health conditions have taken a toll, and not just among low-income residents. Fully 65% of Maine residents were overweight (36%) or obese (29%) in 2013. This is similar to U.S. rates.

Often related to faulty nutrition and exercise is diabetes. Nearly 10% of Maine residents have been diagnosed as having diabetes, and the costs of treating this condition are estimated at $1.2 billion each year for the state of Maine.

Furthermore, Maine residents are not eating as well as they could. Fruit and vegetable consumption are seen as key indicators of health, since those who eat more than five servings a day have better health outcomes. Yet only two of every three Mainers eat the recommended amount of fruit, while four of every five Maine residents eat vegetables at suggested levels.

More than half of Mainers get adequate exercise.

Meanwhile, not all of the state's residents have health care coverage, with 12% of adults aged 18-64 in the state of Maine carrying no health care coverage in 2013.

The Farm and Food Economy of the Lakes Region

The Lakes Region is characterized by small farms, although a handful of larger farms have flourished in the flat lands near Fryeburg, close to the New Hampshire border.

The two counties combined had 1,269 farms, 16% of Maine's total, in 2012, according to the Census of Agriculture. The USDA Census of Agriculture defines a "farm" as "an operation that produces, or would normally produce and sell, $1,000 of agricultural products per year."

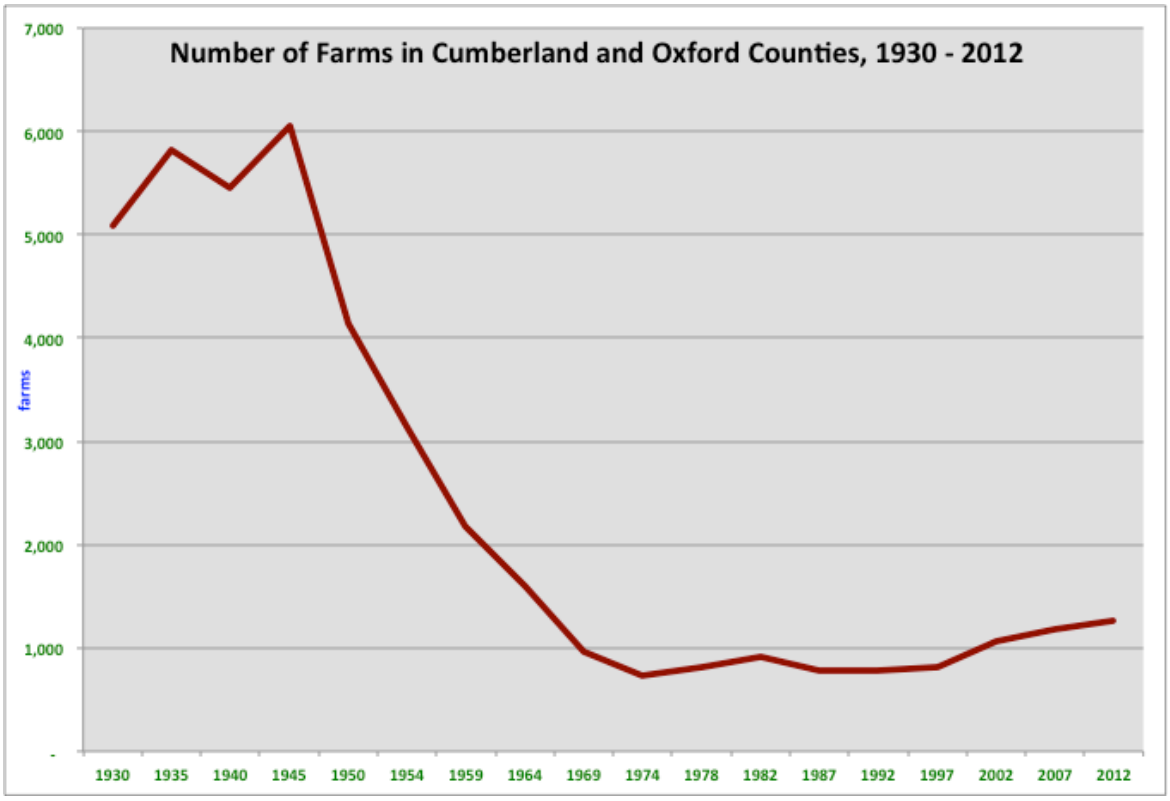
This count was 8% higher than the previous census in 2007, which may be partly explained by new farmers emerging, and also in part because the census has become more effective in counting smaller farms. Only 7 farms in the two counties were larger than 1,000 acres in size, and more than half (680) were less than 50 acres. The most prevalent farm size, in fact, was farms of 10-49 acres.

Small farms such as these are often well positioned to respond to the needs of local consumers, since they will have an easier time adapting what they grow to meet changing demand than larger farms with a fixed production system.

Both the number of farms and acreage farmed have risen slightly in recent years, but are far below historic values. Chart 4, below, shows how the number of farms peaked during World War II, then

plummeted six-fold to a low point in 1974. Since that year, there has been a steady but small increase in the number of farms. Some of this is due to changing census counts that have tended to count a greater number of small farms in recent years.

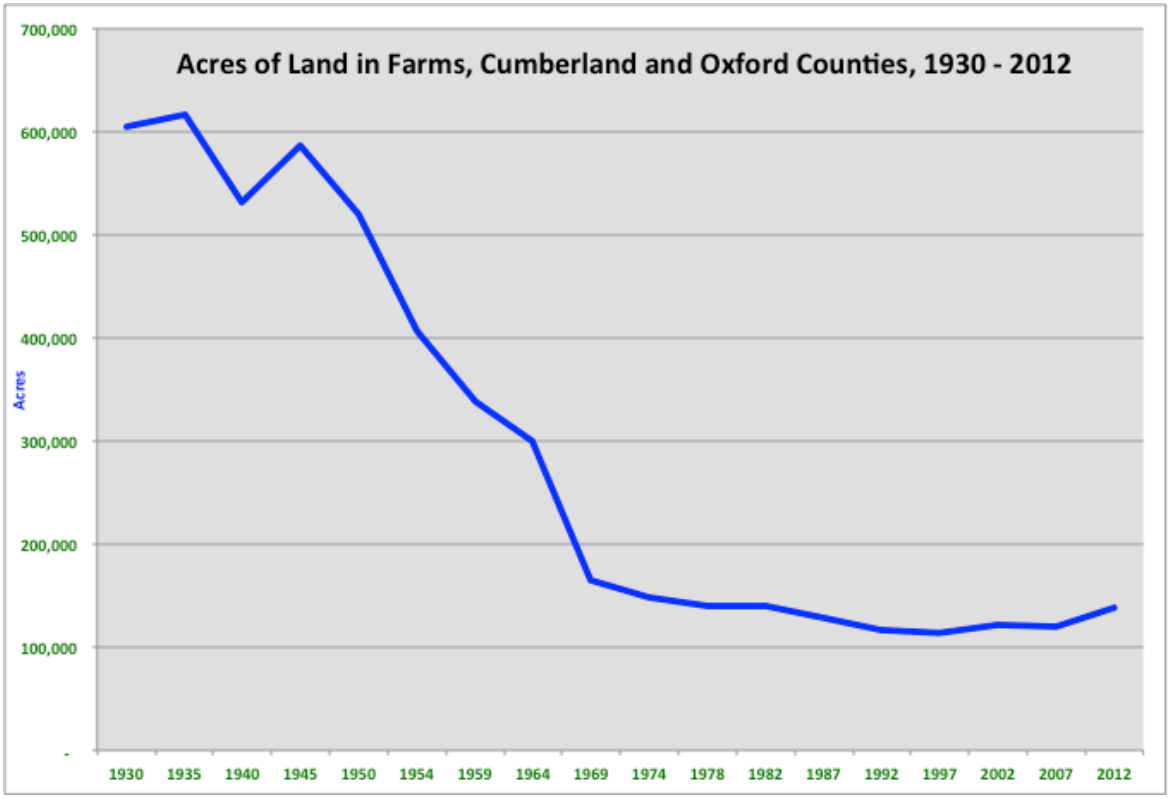
Chart 4: The Number of Farms in Cumberland and Oxford Counties.



Source: Census of Agriculture (year by year)

The amount of land farmed in the two counties has undergone similar trends, with a six-fold loss, but did not bottom out until 1997, as Chart 5 shows. New acreage has been added in Oxford County in recent years, offsetting losses in Cumberland County.

Chart 5: Acres of Land in Farms in Cumberland and Oxford Counties.



Source: Census of Agriculture (year by year)

From these farms come a variety of different products, as shown in Table 1, below.

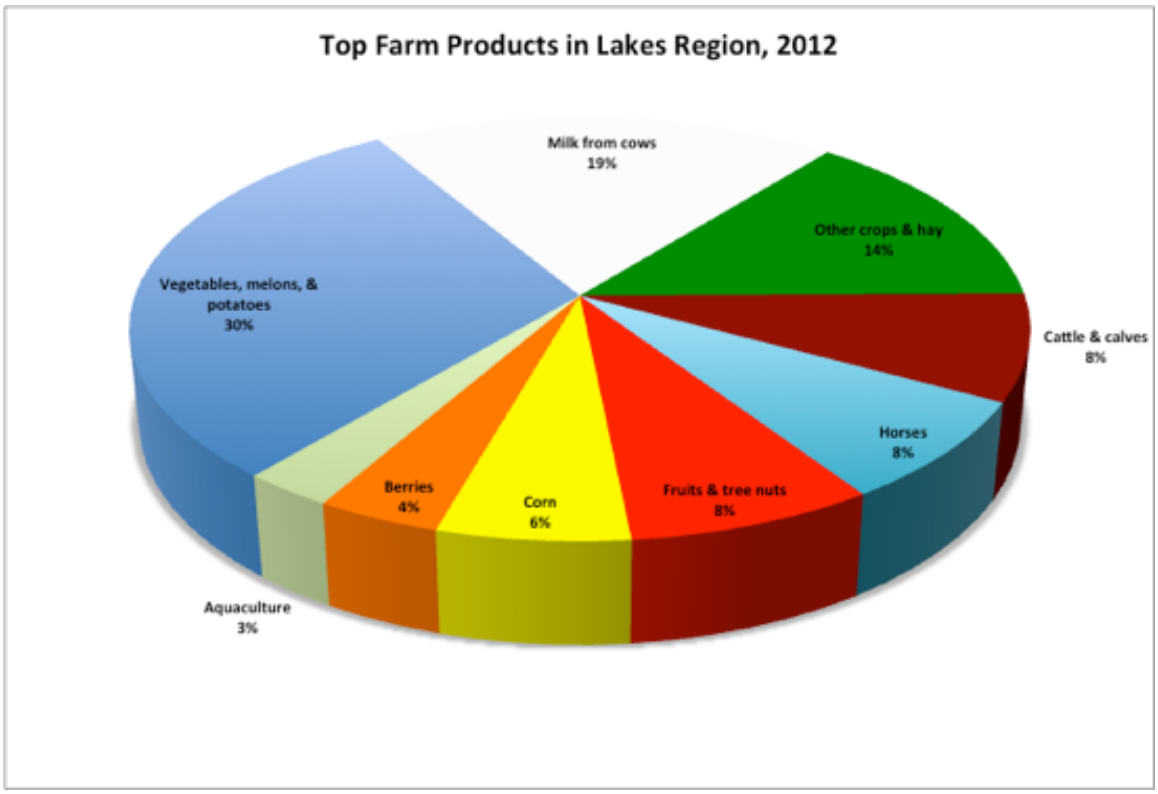
Table 1: Top Farm Products Sold by Lakes Region Farms in 2012

	$ millions
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, & sweet potatoes	8.6
Milk from cows	5.5
Other crops & hay	4.0
Cattle & calves	2.3
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, & donkeys	2.2
Fruits & tree nuts	2.2
Corn	*1.7
Berries	1.1
Aquaculture	0.8

Note: Data for Corn, Poultry & eggs, Sheep etc., Wheat, Other grains etc., and Cut Christmas trees and short-rotation woody crops were suppressed by USDA for either one or both counties in an effort to protect confidentiality.*

Note that Direct-to-consumer sales, worth $4.3 million, would have ranked as the region's third-largest product if these were a single product.

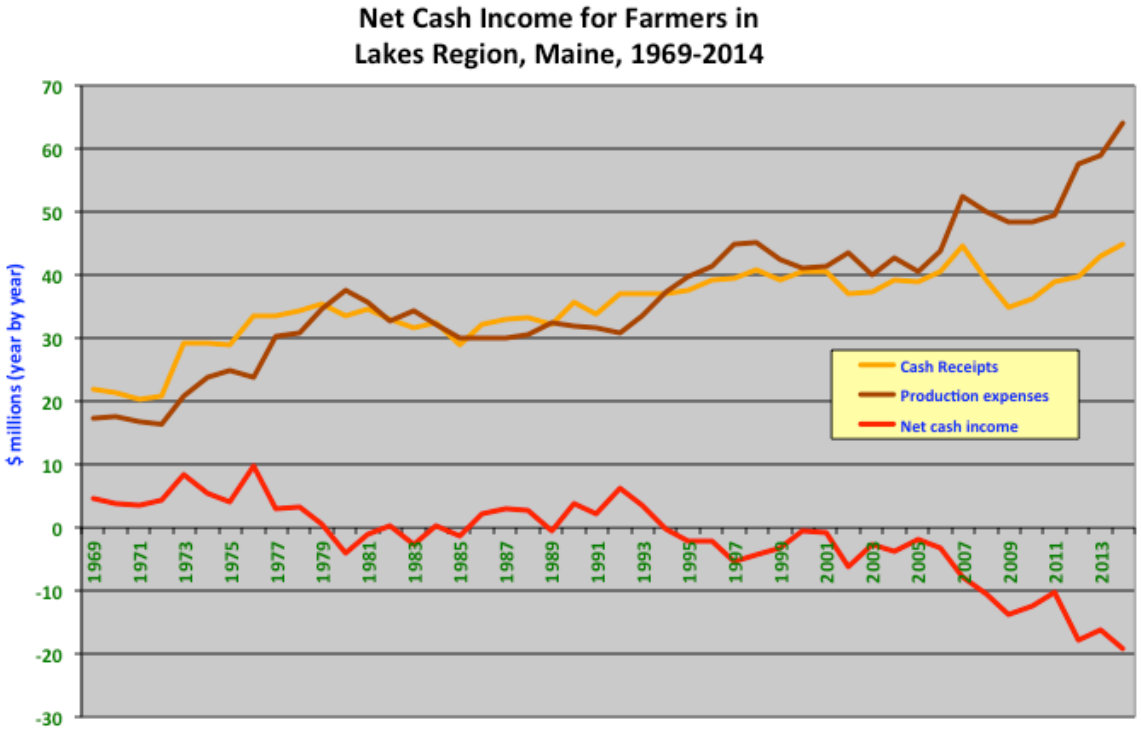
Chart 6: Top Farm Products Sold by Lakes Region Farms in 2012



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Potatoes, onions, and other vegetables are grown on some of the larger farms, as well as grain and cattle, and sales of these items total about $13 million. Dairy is a strong industry in the Lakes Region, accounting for $5.5 million in sales. The value of forage crops is $4 million, while the value of cattle and calves sold totaled $2.3 million. Commodity sales such as these determine the shape of the charts below — not vegetable or fruit production from smaller farms.

Chart 7: Net Cash Income for Lakes Region Farms, 1969 – 2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

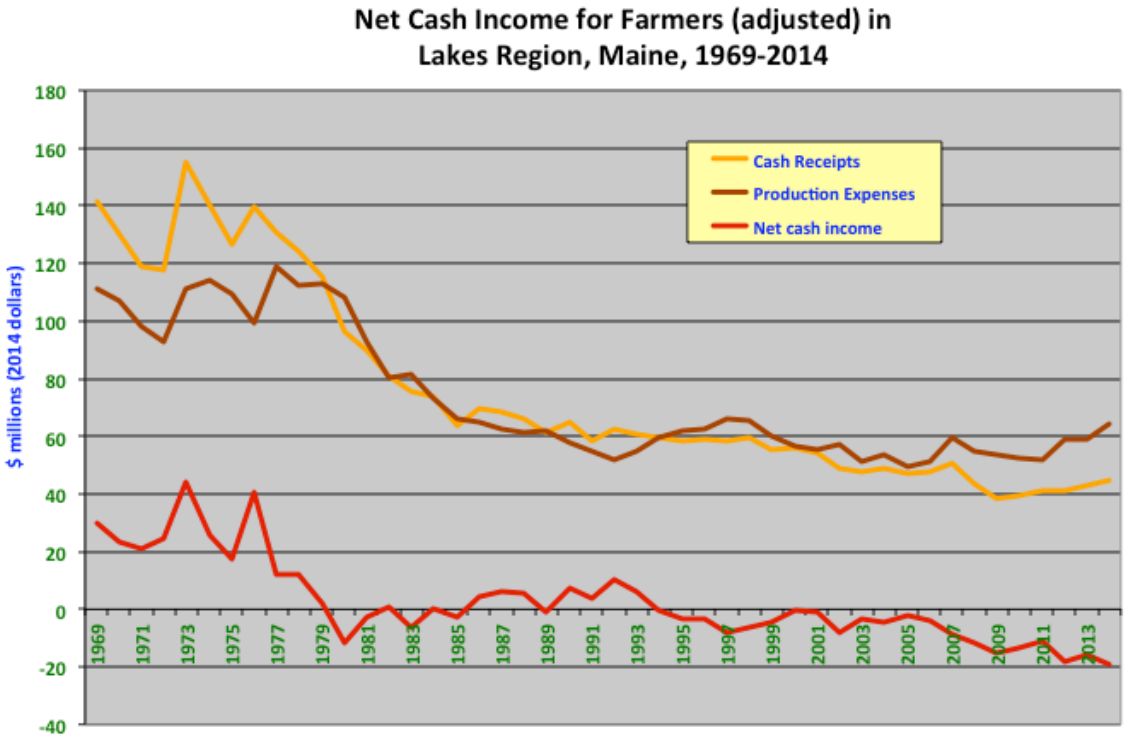
Unfortunately, farmers in the Lakes Region are undergoing difficult times. They have not experienced positive cash flow since 1993, and the losses continue to deepen each year. All told, Lake Region farms spent $20 million more to produce crops and livestock in 2014 than they earned by selling these products.

Although farm cash receipts (the orange line in Chart 7) have risen steadily until the late 1990s, they then leveled off even as production expenses (maroon line) kept rising. These losses endured by farmers in the two counties came at a time when grain and livestock prices were soaring to high levels, largely as a result of speculation in the grain industry that created a temporary bubble of income for most farmers in the U.S. This may well reflect the decline of dairy prices for conventional milk producers, coming at the same time feed costs were pushed up by speculative pressures, but these data are not detailed enough to verify that.

Yet these income data should be interpreted through another lens, to get a sense of how hard a farm family has to work today to gain the returns similar to those they obtained in earlier years. To gauge

this, the data in Chart 7 are adjusted for inflation in Chart 8 – so that all dollars are measured at their 2014 value. The same data, once adjusted, yields even more stark results.

Chart 8: Adjusted Net Cash Income for Lakes Region Farms, 1969 – 2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Once adjusted for inflation, we find that cash receipts have declined drastically after peaking in 1973 (when an earlier temporary bubble raised farm sales while the Soviet Union was purchasing grain in large quantities during two years of shortages). Production expenses have declined in turn, still outpacing cash receipts, yet held relatively steady for two decades. This certainly shows that farm income has declined compared to other sectors in the local economy.

Although the slope of the line is not as steep as in the previous chart, this is simply a matter of a different scale being required to show the same time period, since farm sales were worth so much more in the 1970s once values are adjusted for inflation. Indeed, farmers in the two counties earned $49 million less by selling farm products in 2014 than they had earned in 1969 (in 2014 dollars).

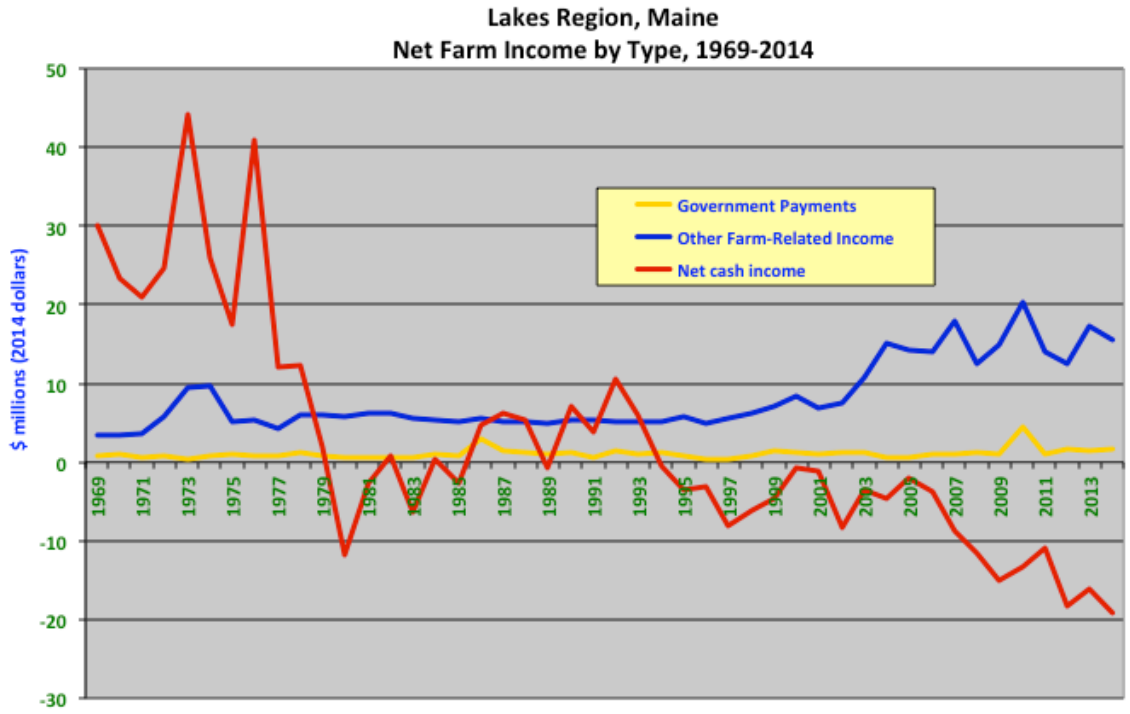
Averaging out some of the cycles in the farm economy by averaging 26 years of data (1989-2014), we see that Lakes Region farmers sell $52 million of food products per year, spending $57 million to raise them, for an average loss of $5 million each year. This is an average net loss of $3,940 per farm each year.

Over that quarter century, farmers spent $137 million more in production costs than they earned by selling crops and livestock. Farm production costs exceeded cash receipts for 22 years of that 26-

year period. Moreover, 68% of the region's farms reported that they lost money in 2012 (Census of Agriculture).

Farmers are finding that other sources of income have become more reliable. Currently, farm owners make more money by renting out land than they do by actually farming — bringing in another $10 million per year of "farm-related income," which also includes performing custom work for neighboring farms, as Chart 9 shows. As in the region's manufacturing economy, actual farm production is not creating as much value as transfer payments and rental income.

Chart 9: Adjusted Net Farm Income by Type for Lakes Region Farms, 1969 – 2014



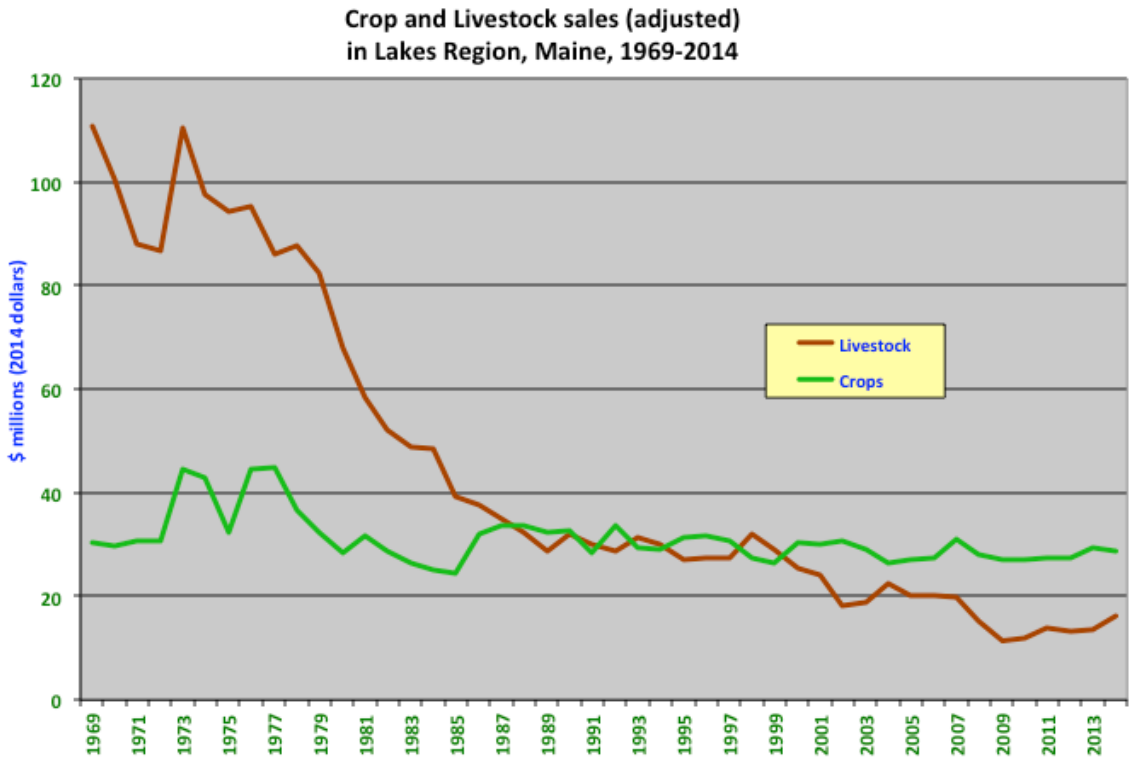
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Indeed, Chart 9 shows that ever since the economics of farming turned negative in Cumberland and Oxford Counties in 1994, the largest single source of net income for farmers has been renting out land. It has also been one of the steadiest, less prone to market fluctuations, than actually selling crops or livestock.

Federal farm support payments are also a more important source of net income than commodity production, averaging $1.2 million per year for the region for the same years, even though only 10% of the farmers in the two counties raise crops that are subsidized.

Chart 10 shows that the decline in sales has been led by the decline in sales of livestock and related products (including milk). Crop income held relatively steady over that term.

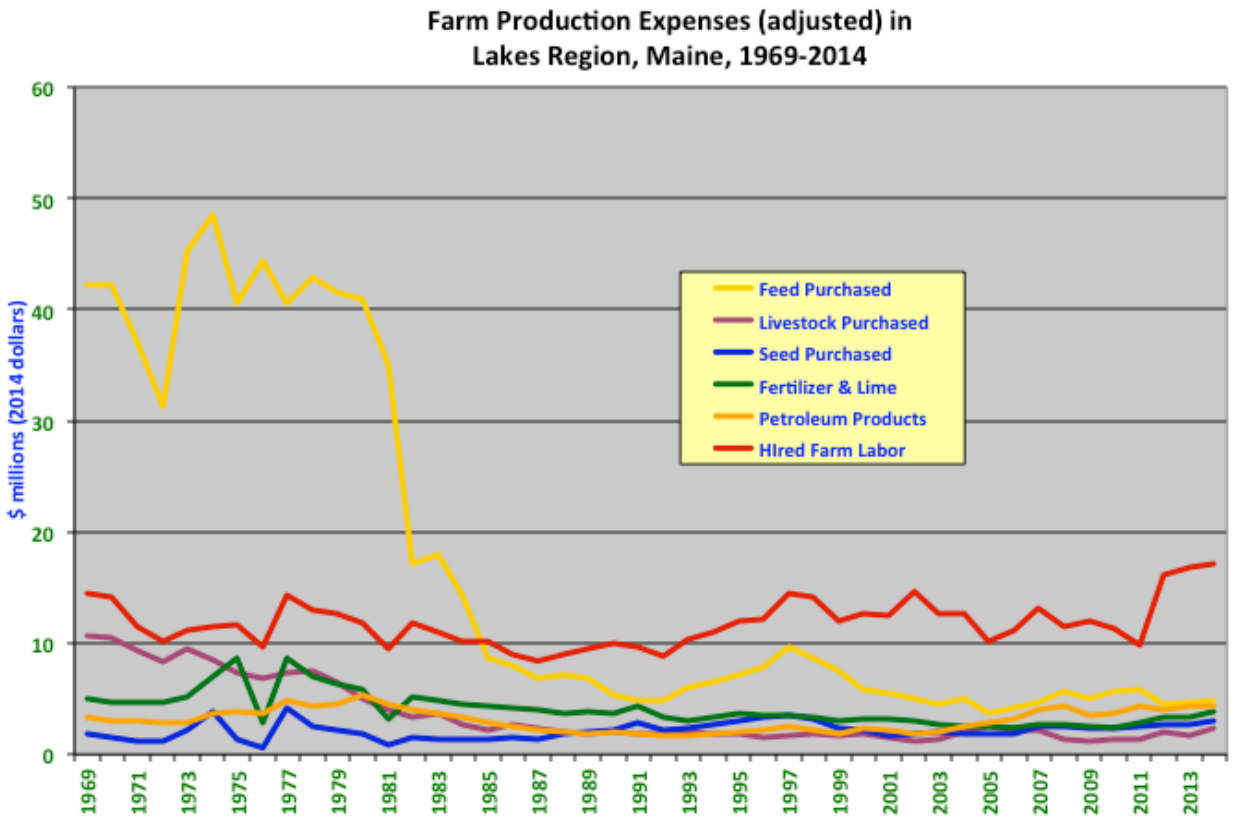
Chart 10: Adjusted Crop and Livestock Sales for Lakes Region Farms, 1969 – 2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

This, in turn, suggests that strengthening the Lakes Region farm economy will involve strengthening livestock and dairy production. One bright spot in this regard is that New England dairy farmers who farm organically are now receiving far better prices than conventional farms.

Chart 11: Production Expenses for Lakes Region Farms, 1969 – 2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Looking at farm production expenses (Chart 11) confirms the same trends. Feed purchases have fallen off dramatically since 1981, presumably as the region's farmers have reduced livestock production due to declining margins. Labor costs are now the largest expense tracked by this data, and this is positive indicator since many of these earnings accrue to workers who live in the two-county region.

Yet many of the production expenses tracked here — farm chemicals, oil and gas, and increasingly seed and feed purchases — are sourced outside of the region. This creates a flow (estimated conservatively) of some $30 million each year away from the Lakes Region as farmers purchase inputs they require to farm at a loss.

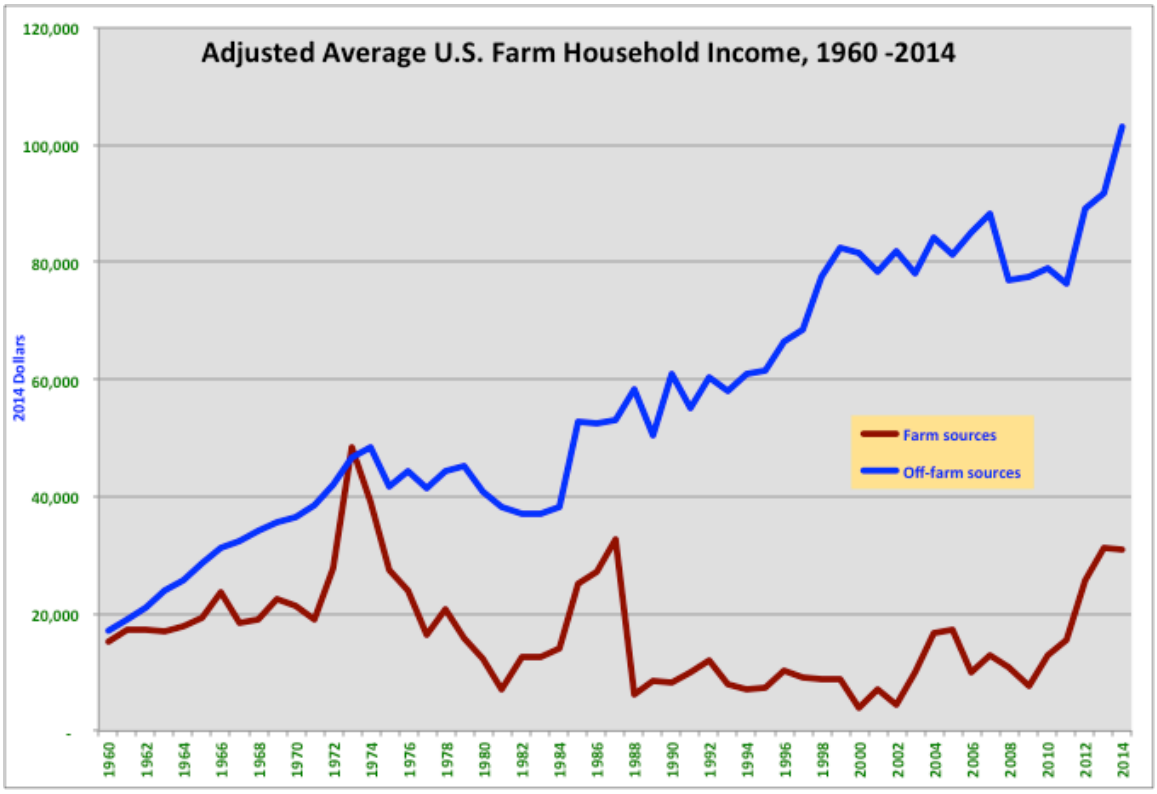
In short, farmers spend $30 million each year sourcing inputs from outside the region in order to lose $5 million each year selling their products, again mostly to markets outside the region, and receive $1 million back in subsidies — a net loss of $34 million each year. Landowners who can rent out their land, or who inherited land from a previous generation, may still be feeling they are quite happy with their profit margins – but the sector as a whole is leaking money out of the region.

This also points to an uncomfortable fact for farmers nationally — the secret to making a living as a farm family has often been to have one or more members of the family work off the farm, both to

collect health benefits, and also to even out some of the cycles inherent in a globalized farm economy.

This is shown (for all U.S. farmers) in Chart 12. Farm income has held relatively steady since 1960, while off-farm income increased 500%.

Chart 12: On-farm and Off-Farm Sources of Income for U.S. Farms, 1960 – 2014



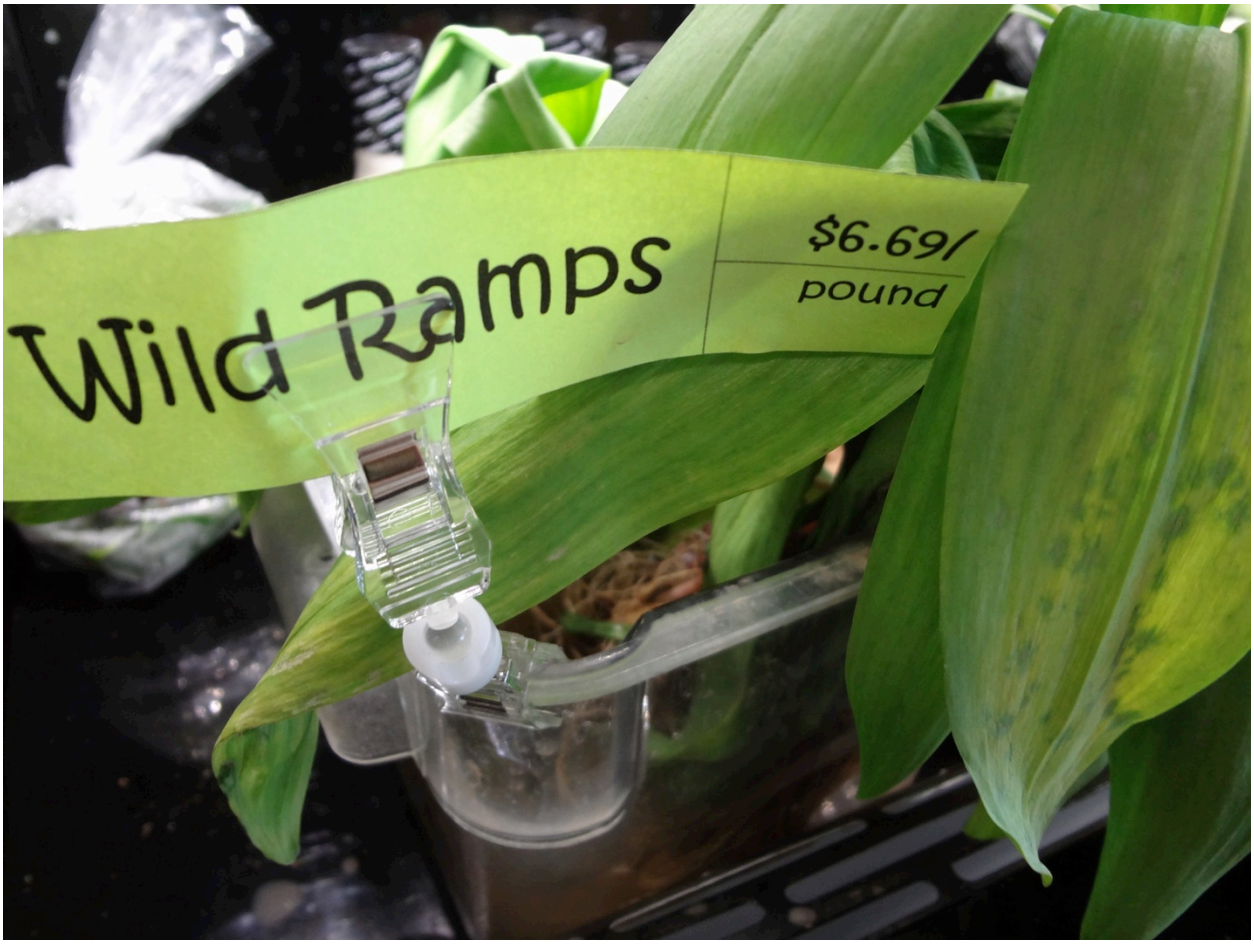
Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Lakes Region Consumers

Curiously, this decline in farming has occurred while both population and income have been rising in the Lakes Region. With a metropolitan area of Portland located on the coast of Cumberland County, there is a thriving restaurant scene that values locally raised food, and a thriving population with disposable income. Residents of the two counties purchase $985 million of food each year, $588 million of which is spent at grocery stores for eating at home. Home purchases are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Lakes Region: markets for food eaten at home (2014):

	millions
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	$ 132
Fruits & vegetables	115
Cereals and bakery products	82
Dairy products	67
"Other," incl. sweets, fats, & oils	193



Foraging is also part of the Lakes Region food system. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

There is clearly enough of a market for food in the two counties to support a far larger number of farms than currently exist. What is lacking is the infrastructure that would convey food raised by smaller farms in the Lakes Region to local consumers.

Until such infrastructure is built, all farmers can expect to suffer upheaval caused by the uncertainty in global food markets. It will be difficult for any farmer in the region (outside of those who established solid local markets decades ago) to make a reliable profit selling food to the region itself.

This makes direct sales from farmers to consumers all the more valuable as a strategy, since farmers can connect with buyers who have reason to pay a price that will cover the expenses a farm shoulders to raise food.

Remember that direct sales already account for $4.3 million of income for farmers in the two counties. As a simple thought experiment, ponder what would happen if each resident of the Lakes Region purchased $5 of food each week from some farmer in the two counties. This would generate $90 million of farm income annually — almost double current farm sales.

Our data also shows that emerging farmers wishing to produce for these local markets share one important characteristic with larger, more established farms that are focused on commodity production for export — both groups are largely depending on off-farm jobs to make ends meet, unless they independently own wealth. Farmers at all levels of scale require better support than the U.S. currently offers.

Free-range laying hens are raised in the Lakes Region. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Conclusions

Maine's history of being self-reliant, particularly in agriculture, provides the region with a strong legacy to maintain. The region holds considerable food and farm assets including well-established growers who tap global markets and emerging farmers who are focusing on feeding their neighbors.

Yet the region faces considerable obstacles, as well. A significant portion of Lake Regions residents have limited incomes, and this constrains their interest in purchasing from local farms. Few farmers are dedicated to serving local markets, and even fewer wholesale buyers are determined to purchase from local farms.

Despite these limitations, several specific opportunities can be seized.

The Lakes Region is well-positioned to focus its efforts on community-based food production. The Lakes Region holds a unique cultural identity within Maine, and boasts a proud heritage of agriculture. Relatively detached from Portland's urban center, and somewhat isolated from the rest of the state by transportation routes, it has ample opportunity to look inward and address its own food needs. Yet to do so is to swim upstream against infrastructure that is very efficient at moving large quantities of food great distances very quickly. If the region wishes to feed itself, it will need to eat different foods, and develop different food system infrastructure that promotes local food trade.

The promise for "local food" in the Lakes Region is best understood as building community-based food trade, and supportive social networks within the region itself, not simply increasing access to Maine-grown foods.

If the Lakes Region wants to eat local food, consumers will have to begin to value eating the wealth of food items that can easily be grown in the region (for example, potatoes, turnips, onions, carrots, parsnips, and other root crops; greens, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and other cold crops, and apples). If residents continue to insist on eating tropical fruits on a daily basis year-round, or imported gourmet items, the global distribution system will provide these, but at a cost to local farming. The loss of farming skills will in turn limit the possibilities for gaining food production skills, or learning healthy eating and food preparation techniques.

While the Lakes Region has a solid core of experienced growers as well as a healthy number of young, energetic, and aspiring farmers, most of these growers are either long-standing farm families with well-established commercial markets outside the region (such as the farms near Fryeburg) or relatively small farms with limited market reach and little interest in selling to wholesale accounts unless they can be paid a higher price.

Established farmers often have wholesale accounts and are not looking to serve local needs. Those farms with established wholesale markets are often selling to outside buyers, reaching New England or even national markets. Few of these farms hold a priority interest in selling to local residents or buyers, simply because local markets are too limited, or too difficult to reach compared with the relative ease of exporting. Some, however, do offer retail products at farm stands.

Many farmers hold little interest in new wholesale trade. For small startup farms, wholesale accounts are often not relevant. Most emerging farmers need to sell their products at the highest price possible, which means connecting directly with household customers who have the means to purchase food from a local farm. Moreover, by dealing directly with individual consumers, farmers become price setters to some extent, building market power by negotiating directly, individual to individual. Farmers selling direct are seldom forced to sell at below their cost of production. In many cases, in fact, they are able to persuade buyers with expendable income to pay higher prices than prevailing market prices, for the sake of having direct contact with a grower, greater convenience, obvious freshness, or environmental benefits.

Stuart Leckie manages the St. Joseph's College food service and this campus farm. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

The limiting factor to building wholesale markets is building market power for farmers. Initial efforts to build a wholesale market through The Micro-Distribution Project have been built with appropriate caution, because there is a limited supply of produce grown for wholesale trade, and farmers have limited market power when negotiating with larger buyers. This task is especially difficult when so much food is available from competing sources from grocery shelves. Building mechanisms that inherently assure that farmers can be price setters rather than mere price takers (i.e., that the farmers hold market power) will take time.

The Network's best strength would be to create efficient sales and distribution of local food items to local consumers. It is well placed to do this, because its size is appropriate to the small size and number of growers who wish to sell to local markets. This network can easily grow in a manner that is commensurate with local supply and demand, keeping each balanced at every step of the way.

The other side of this equation is that Lakes Region consumers must also remain loyal to buying local food from local farms even if prices are higher than the prevailing market can offer. If either of these fails, buyers will default to purchasing from existing commercial markets, foregoing the community building that local food trade creates, and drawing money out of the community.

Currently there are a handful of growers who are poised to, and interested in, wholesale trade for local buyers. These include: Maple Springs Farm, Mayberry Farm, North Star Sheep Farm, and Pietree Orchards. Yet even these have found wholesale markets limiting.

Maple Springs Farm has entered the wholesale market in carefully measured steps, and is the farm most likely to hold lasting interest in serving community-based markets. Having built a solid base of direct sales, and selling occasionally to two local grocery stores, and with the farm now named on the menu of Vivo Restaurant in Bridgton, owner Mark Heidmann holds interest in attracting larger accounts — yet he also wishes to receive relatively high prices for his produce, limiting the possibilities with buyers who seek to spend less.

Mayberry Farm established steady markets with local grocers, but has found these to be unreliable over time. Owner Tim Mayberry says he is now focusing on direct sales to household consumers.

North Star Sheep Farm vigorously approached potential large-scale buyers in the Lakes Region, including schools, colleges, and grocers. To date, their price point appears to be too high to interest Lakes Region buyers. Working in partnership with Central Maine Meats in Gardiner, North Star will supply the University of Maine's six campuses.

While **Pietree Orchards** has a wholesale coordinator, repeated efforts to reach this staff have been unsuccessful.

Good Shepherd Food Bank is playing a key role in fostering local food production by purchasing foods from Maine farms and giving these to low-income recipients. This work should be recognized as critical to community economic development in the Lakes Region. Good Shepard contracts with 50 area growers, promising to purchase their products at the end of the season so that this food can be distributed to low-income residents. This food tends to stay close to the farm where it was produced simply because of the costs of distribution, and the fact that Good Shepard has built trusted relationships with farmers.

Good Shepard has also recognized that its existing capacity in safe food handling — storing, processing, and distributing food — places it in an excellent position to help build local food trade. One potential benefit of this understanding is Good Shepard is well placed to make sure that the needs of low-income residents will be addressed in the Lakes Region food system of the future, since the food bank has deep familiarity with the region's low-income residents.

The Lakes Region is blessed with several promising initiatives that address hunger. While our research time did not allow us to become deeply familiar with all of these, two stand out: (1) The

dedicated work of the Bridgton Community Center, and (2) The proposed initiative by St. Peter's Episcopal Church to use a 12-acre parcel of land near town as a training site for new farmers. These two initiatives appear to collaborate effectively, and complement each other's work well: while the community center offers free meals and food distributions on an emergency basis, Father Craig Hacker of St. Peter's has become intimately acquainted with the needs of low-income residents of Bridgton, and is tackling long-term work that promises to engage low-income residents in growing food and creating a more resilient food system in the future.

Norway has also dedicated considerable community garden space so local residents, many of them low-income, may grow their own food. The renovation of Roberts Farm, a historic farm above Norway may also offer opportunities to grow new farmers in the Oxford Hills area.

Fare Share Co-op in Norway was an early effort by residents to get new food choices. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

St. Joseph's College has taken strong leadership in sourcing food from Maine farms, and could source more food from the Lakes Region as new growers emerge. This will bring benefits to the Lake Region, as the on-campus farm gets expanded, and St. Joseph's continues to work with other institutional food buyers to coordinate efforts. St. Joseph's also plans to build its own poultry processing facility, enabling local farmers to supply the college with chickens that were raised in the region.

Local grocery stores have been willing to sell food items raised by local farms. Lakes Region farmers reported that both Hannaford and Food City purchase selected food items from local farms. Often this is right at harvest time when individual growers can be featured. It would seem that expanding these food purchases is limited primarily by the lack of farmers who are able to produce sufficient quantities to meet grocery needs, although the easy access to produce from distant sources, often at prices below what a local grower can sustain, serves as an immense obstacle as well. Lack of spending power by local residents also poses a significant obstacle, as well as a limited outreach to Lakes Region residents to encourage them to purchase products from local farms.

One local restaurant has begun to feature foods raised by local farms. Now that its business is somewhat established, Vivo (in Bridgton) has begun to feature Maple Springs Farm products on its menu. Owner Jim Burke expressed strong interest in sourcing more foods from local farms as they become available.

Maple syrup from Maine is featured in many of the Lakes Region community meals. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Second-home owners represent a potential market opportunity, yet they show little awareness of the local food options. Most shop at Hannaford when they are in the region, but also bring much of their food from home. Some do express interest in purchasing fresher, healthier items produced in the local area, including processed foods (breads, pies, prepared dinners,

restaurant meals, etc.). Specific marketing to these part-time residents may create new revenue streams for area farm stands and farmers' markets. Most second-home owners said they were willing to pay more for locally produced items, but they will need help identifying local sources.

At the present time, wholesale opportunities are very limited. This is not to discourage motion toward wholesale markets, but wholesale appears to be something that will build slowly based upon the measured growth of food distribution efforts in Oxford Hills and through Good Shepard Food Bank. Bridgton schools did not express any commitment to sourcing food from local farms, but Norway schools are entering into preliminary purchases.

New food safety regulations put forward by the FDA have had the unintended consequence of discouraging some experienced farmers from continuing to sell produce. Many do not trust government regulation to be fair, or consider this to be an unnecessary burden in both time and expense.

At this time, there is clearly an insufficient volume of local food sales to support a new food aggregation business in Bridgton, as some have proposed. The best focus for this work at the present time would be to increase coordination among local food system partners.

This means that the most progress in building local food trade at this time will likely be made through direct sales. Even farmers with established wholesale accounts are exploring direct sales to household consumers.

Concerted effort to encourage more local residents to purchase foods will also be essential. Farmers report that interest from local consumers is limited, and few restaurants have found a clientele looking for locally produced foods. With more than one of every four Lakes Region residents living below the 185% of poverty level (that is, at less than a livable wage), the capacity for local residents to spend more money to purchase food items directly from farms is certainly limited. While this is a challenge to the community, it should be remembered that the Lakes Region is better off in this respect than the U.S. as a whole, in which 32% of the population, one of every three people, lives below this poverty line.

Equally important, fostering a community culture that places high value on locally produced food will be essential. If local consumers with means do not purchase local food items as a first preference, it will be difficult for any emerging farmer to succeed, and the region will lack farms that can supply local markets. If local consumers are not loyal to specific local farms, they can be more easily seduced to buy products that come from far away. Such purchases do not build strong community.

It is important to note that community-based food will only become a sustained effort if it is *woven into cultural life on a daily basis*: Local residents who grow up knowing how to grow food, if only in their own garden, are far more likely to understand what a farmer goes through, and thus are better placed to help build local food trade as consumers. Such informed residents are also more likely to know how to handle food safely, how to process food into value-added products, and how to prepare food for each other in a savory manner.

These skills literally must be passed down through generations by families — it is not enough to adopt community programs or new ordinances to encourage this behavior. There is a reason we call farming "agri-culture:" farming is a **culture** that builds self-sufficiency and resilience.

The Lakes Region carries forward a potent culture of feeding its neighbors through community meals. As we interviewed local food leaders, the strongest theme that emerged was that the Lakes Region has a strong heritage of sponsoring community meals. This, indeed, appears to be one of the distinguishing aspects of the local culture. Going through the community pages of the *Bridgton News*, our team found listings for 139 community meals that were held during the first nine months of 2016 alone. That is an average of nearly four each week.

Lake Sebago near Standish. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

These meals are often held by churches, fraternal groups, or community organizations in an effort to support local projects, to benefit some family that has faced a calamity, to pull people out of their homes during wintertime, to celebrate the maple syrup or strawberry harvests, or to celebrate the advent of summer, among many other reasons. Many of these meals feature Maine maple syrup, for example, as part of a pancake breakfast, or strawberry shortcake when berries are in season. These meals clearly elicit exceptional volunteer activity, as folks plan each event, prepare a venue, plan meals, cook the food, serve it, and clean up. Published notices show that each venue has carved out

a unique niche by offering unique recipes and dining experiences, often featuring homemade foods such as eggs cooked to order, pies, or muffins. Many emphasize that fresh ingredients are used. Gourmet recipes are often featured. Many community meals offer a unique, once-in-a-year main course. Meals are marketed in sophisticated ways to capture consumer interest.

Many community meals feature products that are grown in the region: baked beans, cabbage, corned beef, maple syrup, strawberries, potatoes, and turnips. Many are timed to coincide with seasonal cycles (for example strawberry season). Yet few of these dinners feature food from local farms in their publicity. It would appear there is ample room to feature locally produced foods in these meals and that local residents take considerable interest in attending.

Maine has long been a leader in organic food production. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

It strikes us that ensuring these dinners feature food from local farmers would be a critical step to take to make sure every Lakes Region resident is exposed to the potential for locally raised food to build community well-being. How this would happen is indicated by one community dinner in the region that is held on a regular basis: small teams are pulled together by community leaders, who offer to come to a commercial kitchen to prepare food for their neighbors, and serve this food in a public setting. In one instance, a local fire chief assembled a team of friends to plan and prepare a

meal to give to low-income residents. This has the strong advantage of helping the cooks directly meet the low-income population of the community. If these volunteer teams also met with local farms as part of the process, and spent part of their food budget purchasing items from local farmers, and perhaps inviting these farmers to make a brief appearance at the meal to describe the mission of their farm, exceptional connections would be made among community residents. Broader awareness of the food system would grow organically as residents make direct contact with each other by preparing meals and eating together.

We also expect that second-home owners who are looking for a prepared meal might be enticed to join more of these community meals if they express the region's commitment to embracing its own farms, and invite second-home owners to join in a community that is already being expanded by local residents.

One of the most profound obstacles to building local food trade is a lack of volunteer time. More than any other region we have studied, the Lakes Region suffers from over commitment by its leaders. This is not to deny the importance of their volunteer efforts, nor the efficacy of their work. Yet when it comes to taking new steps to build the local food system, several people we spoke with said something to the effect of, "That's a great idea, as long as someone else actually does the work." Several folks who promised to assist this study ended up discovering that they had no time to devote to this project. This is not to chastise anyone, but it does point out a severe obstacle — if residents have no time left to volunteer beyond what they are already doing, funds will have to be raised to ensure that community builders are paid adequately for their time. This will require those who do have resources — funders, investors, well-off residents — to invest in community ventures that do not bring a rapid return, simply because the community needs to act to build its own capacity.

Lack of coordination is also a severe obstacle. Our interviews showed that effective leaders in the community were not talking frequently enough with each other. At times, we wished we could put everyone in the same room at the same time, so that local food animators could learn from each other's work, find ways to collaborate, and share resources more fully. Often people were working on projects that had significant overlap, and high potential for synergy, yet while each was aware of the other's work, no detailed information exchange had happened for quite some time.

Many local farmers are opting to eat fermented foods for health. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Recommended Strategies

Our primary recommendations are put forward because each will address multiple issues at one time, thereby moving a "lever" that will advance multiple outcomes in a single step. These will provide a context in which both supply of and demand for local food can be enhanced, in which greater coordination can readily be mounted, and in which more local consumers can easily be exposed to the benefits of locally produced food. Often, our interview sources bemoaned the fact that only the "choir" — those already disposed to purchase food locally — actively took steps to increase local food trade. This proposal will bring in people who are not already in the choir.

1. Hire a Local Foods Coordinator for the Bridgton region. The work of building community-based food systems in the Lakes Region holds critical importance for ensuring that the region, like other rural regions, will survive in the future. It is clear that this work cannot be sustained solely through volunteer activity. At least one staff person should be hired who will work with all stakeholders to launch initiatives that build stronger support within the community for community-based food trade, and help build commerce that upholds that purpose. One of the first priorities for that staff, once they get settled into their position, will be to implement recommendation 2, below.

2. Facilitate the serving of locally raised foods at community meals. Ensuring these dinners feature food from local farmers would be a critical step to take to make sure every Lakes Region resident is exposed to the potential for locally raised food to improve their lives. If done with care and consciousness, this initiative could engage farmers, caterers, cooks, low-income residents, community leaders, second-home owners, and tourists all at once.

This facilitation would require a paid staff to take the listing of community meals (See Appendix 2), expand it with additional listings, perhaps creating a public web site that listed all community meals for the entire year in a single place, and then coordinating with both local farms and those who provide these meals to ensure that local food products are included wherever possible.

This could start with a simple step such as procuring enough dry beans in one season from one local farm that would be sufficient to supply all of the community meals that wish to serve baked beans. Chances are these beans could be supplied at a lower cost than currently available on the market, at higher quality, and with far greater community building capacity. Some chef or caterer might cook some of these beans with a special local recipe, featuring local onions, bacon, maple syrup, or other vegetables, to make a baked bean recipe that features local food items, and could be frozen or canned until a community meal venue wishes to heat it and serve. Green Thumb Farms, for example, grows dry beans as part of its crop rotation and sells them in 50-lb bags to be picked up at the farm. Other farms may step forward with their own offers once strong interest is expressed.

From there, the Local Foods Coordinator could determine how many other food items (for example, onions, potatoes, carrots, turnips, strawberries, corned beef, maple syrup, lettuce, tomatoes, or other products) are required by the few meal preparers who are most willing. Once this is determined, farmers could be asked to grow these products especially for specific community meals, with forward contracts made to lower the farmers' risks. Some subsidy may be required so that the prevailing low cost of community meals can be kept affordable to local residents. This

might come, for example, in the form of payments to farmers who sell food items at a lower price than they normally would ask, or payments to each community venue that adopted more than a certain amount of local products into their food planning each year.

Then, the Local Foods Coordinator would work with farmers to coordinate deliveries to a central storage facility, or to each community venue as appropriate. Local food distributors might be solicited to actually carry each product to each venue at the proper time. The coordinator might further develop a schedule of appearances for farmers to attend selected community meals to meet those who purchase the meals they provided food for.

Given the large number of community meals sponsored in the region, it is not difficult to imagine that after two or three years, most everyone in the Lakes Region would have had the experience of eating a meal that featured locally raised foods, and had a direct experience of a local culture that celebrates seasonal cycles and the work farmers and chefs do within those cycles. In small, discrete steps, farmers would sell more products, make closer connections with a broader number of local residents, and enjoy new visibility. Community venues would hold a stronger sense of how their meals fit into a community-wide effort, and might find pragmatic ways to coordinate with each other around delivery of foods. New market channels would be built that are appropriate to the supply of food that farmers can provide, and the demand for local food that these community meals can harness. Supply and demand would grow in harmony with each other, balanced over time.

With one single strategy, then, multiple community connections could be built, new commerce mounted, new visibility created for farmers, new capacities built among those who volunteer to plan and prepare these meals, and new loyalty to local foods created among consumers. This, in turn, would serve as a solid foundation for future commercial efforts and systems — training new farmers, fostering stronger local purchasing, and building interest in wholesale trade.

In brief, this would strengthen the culture of local food in ways that would hold economic benefits over the long run. It would provide a systemic push to local food system construction that would be very potent, and reap multiple benefits.

It should be noted that this would be a modification of a strategy that has been used in Bangor, where church meals have attracted greater interest by cooking gourmet food.[3] The Lakes Region may achieve similar results by cooking enticing meals using locally raised ingredients.

3. Build Community Networks that foster interest in food produced in the Lakes Region. Through educational initiatives such as cooking classes, recipe swaps, seed swaps, outreach campaigns, regional branding, as well as the community meals mentioned above, the Local Foods Coordinator will be able to bring residents into working collaborations that promote lasting social and commercial networks to support community-based food trade.

[3] Burnham, Emily (2013). "Hold the beans, pass the jambalaya: When church suppers go gourmet." *Bangor Daily News,* May 23. http://bangordailynews.com/2013/05/23/living/a-supper-thats-anything-but-ordinary-at-monroe-community-church/

Prioritizing these three activities will also mean placing a lower priority on other approaches that have been suggested, such as organizing growers to sell to second-home owners, or to summer camps, or forming an aggregation business for locally grown produce. Over time, this will mean that future endeavors to build food aggregation can be mounted by a community that is more engaged and encultured in the possibilities of community food production.

Vegetable seedlings for sale at the Portland Farmers' Market. Photo © Ken Meter, 2016.

Secondary recommendations include:

Our research also suggests secondary steps that could be taken as resources allow. Some of these actions are already underway, and should be coordinated with actions recommended above.

1. Good Shepard Food Bank's work in purchasing food from Maine farms should be expanded in the Lakes Region as appropriate. Their model of forward contracting (promising to buy products at harvest) reduces much of the risk of planting for farmers, thus encouraging existing farmers to expand, and energizing new farmers to start farms. Just as CSA investments do at a household level, this upfront promise allows farmers to plan with a greater sense of security for larger scale markets.

Over time, the food bank may find itself in the position of offering storage capacity to local foods coordination efforts, delivering food to local venues, and helping to coordinate local foods activity to ensure that the needs of low-income residents are addressed.

2. This forward contracting approach should be adopted by other institutional purchasers, such as colleges, schools, and hospitals.

3. The Micro-Distribution Project (Oxford) should be supported in any way possible. — primarily by training new growers who can supply the firm, and by encouraging local buyers to purchase these products.

4. Expand and maintain double bucks incentives. For lower-income residents, the adoption of "double-bucks" purchases at the farmers' market, where expenditures made by low-income consumers are leveraged to twice their value by funders who match these purchases, seem essential to maintain so that low-income residents have the best possible access to locally raised foods and farmers have this wider consumer base. These subsidies hold far more value than many subsidies that are often given to wealthier community members, because they reduce costs for health care and social services over the long run, and help unify opportunity within the community while also providing additional income to farmers.

5. Expand the efforts of St. Peter's Church and the Bridgton Community Center to engage low-income residents in empowerment activities such as producing more food for themselves, and learning more about food preparation and safe handling. Combining the capacity to offer food distribution through Community Kettle meals with the capacity to foster a culture of self-reliance in a community setting should support empowerment rather than a culture of handouts.

6. Grow new farmers. If the Lakes Region wishes to retain its agricultural heritage, it will have to train new generations of farmers in a lasting way, and ensure that each graduate has access to land that can be farmed at costs that align with the agricultural value of the land — not at development prices.

7. Build a "food web." Out of the social and commercial networks fostered above will come potential for new collaborations, new commercial products, and new ways of farming. Ultimately, community-based food will not be resilient over time unless local infrastructure is built that creates local efficiencies. This will require the Lakes Region to create a comprehensive approach to community economic development — one that ensures that all of the region's residents have access to fresh, healthy, community-grown foods.

Appendix 1: Survey of Second-home owners

Survey by Megan Phillips Goldenberg, Associate of Crossroads Resource Center

Methodology

A postcard invitation to participate (see below) in this internet-based survey was sent to 2,416 households that were identified through county records as owning a second home in the Lakes Region in 2016. The postcard was sent to the owner's primary household. Several weeks later, another 700 postcards went out as a reminder to participate in the survey.

190 responses were collected between May 23, 2016 and July 27, 2016. Survey responses were sorted by hand in Excel. Summary statistics and infographics are provided below.

Since this was not a randomized sample, conclusions can only be drawn about those who responded to the survey. They cannot be viewed as representative of the whole population of second-home owners. There appears to have been some sampling bias, in that respondents tended to have a connection to Bridgton (and perhaps to the city staff there) and also were likely to be among those who hold the most interest in local foods. Results below should be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

Summary of Results

Survey respondents primarily reside in the New England area with some concentrations of respondents in California and Florida. The vast majority of the respondents own second homes in the Bridgton area. Most of these households consist of two members who reside in the Lakes Region for an average of 3 months a year.

Consistent with other consumer demand surveys, these second-home owners do the majority of their food shopping at least once a week, if not more frequently, relying primarily on major grocery stores (Hannaford and Food City in Bridgton). A secondary source of grocery items is their primary homes (gardens, CSAs, etc.), with multiple people indicating that they also stop at favorite farm stands and markets on their way to their second home, but still outside of the Lakes Region. Respondents indicated a low level of awareness of farm stands and farmers' markets in the Lakes Region.

Despite this, survey respondents indicated they are able to source local vegetables, fruits, and eggs to a reasonable degree. However, they would like better access to locally raised proteins (meats, and processed dairy), and feel the quality of the chicken available is not what they would like.

Survey respondents mostly want to see more local foods and better-labeled local foods at the places where they already shop (Hannaford, Food City, and the Bridgton Farmers' market). There was relatively little interest in other food retail channels (farm stands, direct delivery, etc.).

Expenditure responses indicate that second-home owners spend more money on foods prepared and consumed at home than on foods eaten away from home (restaurants, carry-out, etc.). This is incongruent with assumptions about the habits of vacationers and also at odds with national trends (where people spend more money on foods consumed away from the home). This could indicate a lack of local restaurants or carry-out options in line with consumer preferences.

Overall, survey responses reflected a desire to support the local food economy and a willingness to spend more money to do so, however seem to lack information regarding how and where to purchase locally grown foods.

Survey Instrument and Responses

Lakes Region Food Purchasing Survey

Dear Second Home Owner in the Maine Lakes Region, Cumberland and Oxford Counties:

In collaboration with Cumberland County and its local partners, Crossroads Resource Center is conducting a survey of second homeowners to better understand their food consumption needs and interests, to better support area growers, and to increase the sales of local foods to local residents. The results will be incorporated into a long term strategic vision and plan for a sustainable local food system for the region.

As an integral part of the community, would you please take the survey?

http://www.cumberlandcounty.org/524/Lakes-Region-Food-Purchasing-Survey

Thank you! We appreciate your time and are so glad to have your input.

For questions please contact:

Anne M Krieg, AICP, Director of Planning, Economic & Community Development

Town of Bridgton, Maine

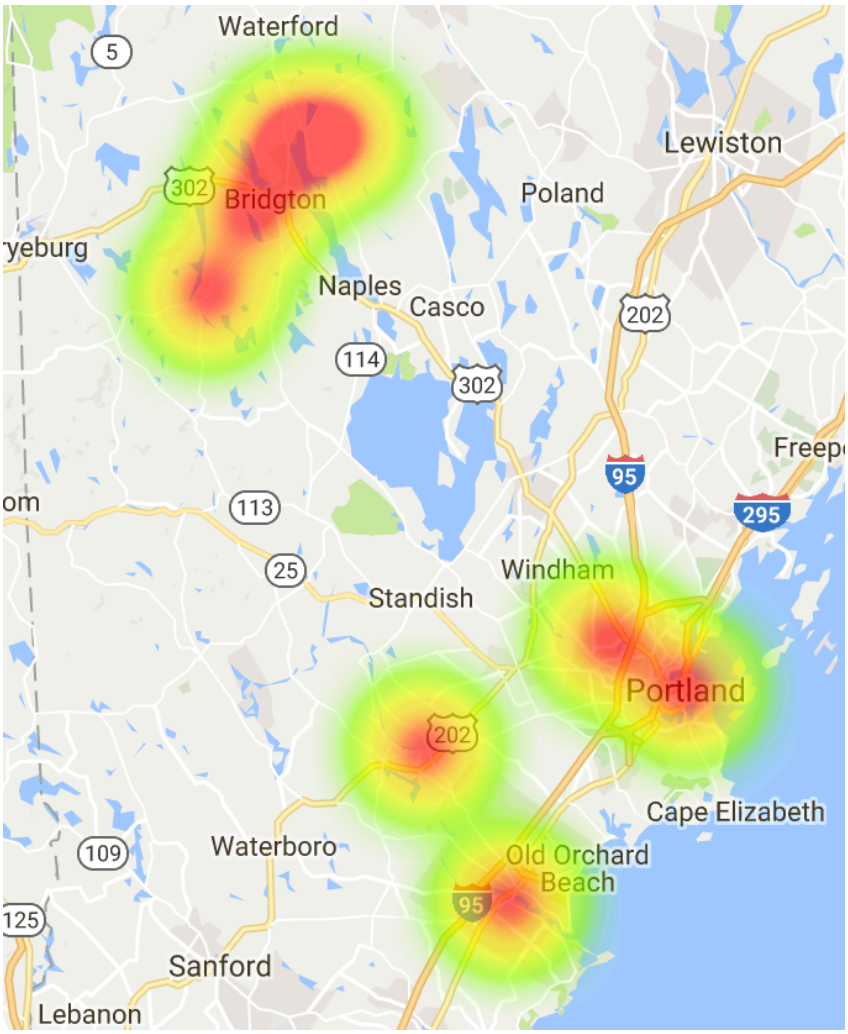
krieg@bridgtonmaine.org, (207) 647-8786

The survey will take you approximately 15 minutes and your responses are ANONYMOUS. More information about Crossroads Resource Center is available at www.crcworks.org

1. Please provide the zip code of your permanent residence:

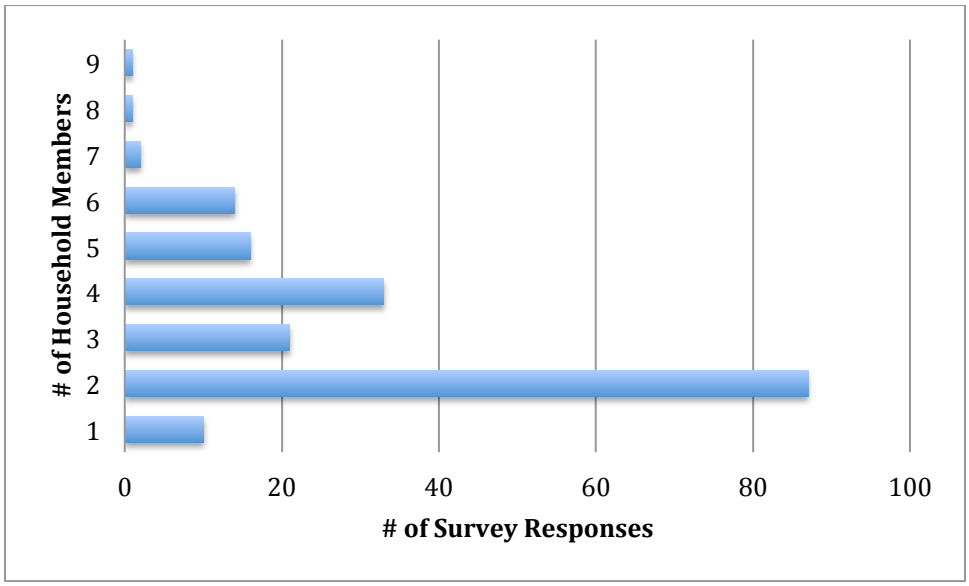
2. Please provide the zip code of your second residence in the Lakes Region:

Survey Responses	Count
04004 Bar Mills, ME	1
04007 Biddeford, ME	1
04009 Bridgton ME	173
04022 Denmark, ME	2
04040 Harrison, ME	2
04057 North Bridgton, ME	3
04092 West Brook, ME	1
04101 Portland ME	1
04909	1
Total	185



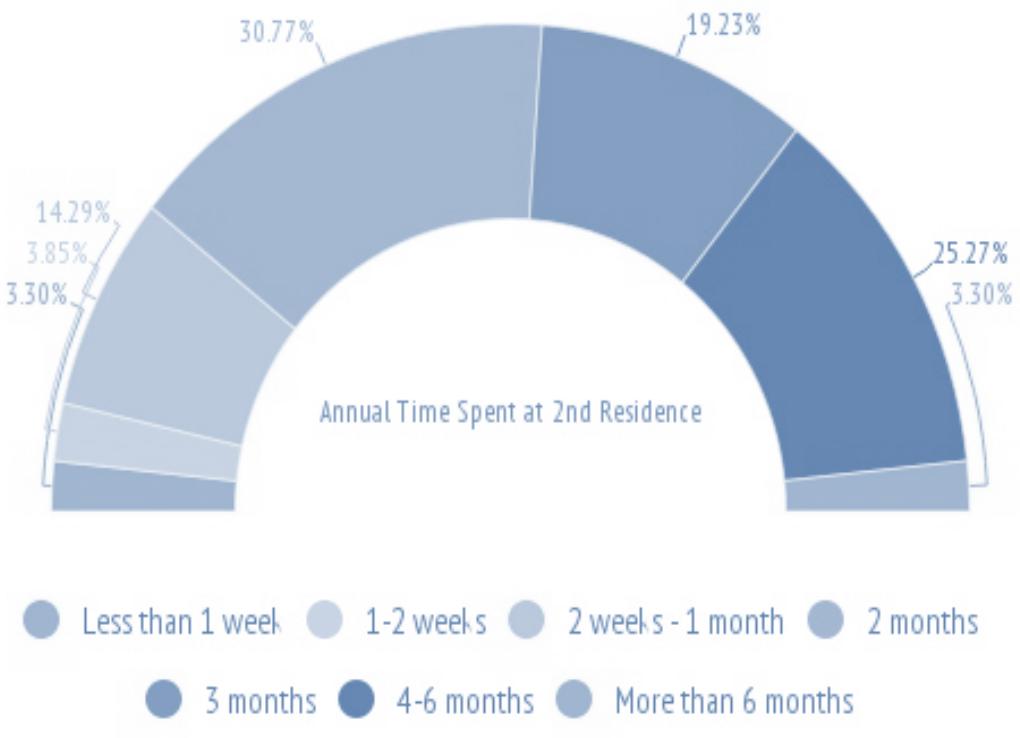
3. How many people reside in this second home?

Survey Responses	Count
1	10
2	87
3	21
4	33
5	16
6	14
7	2
8	1
9	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	**185**



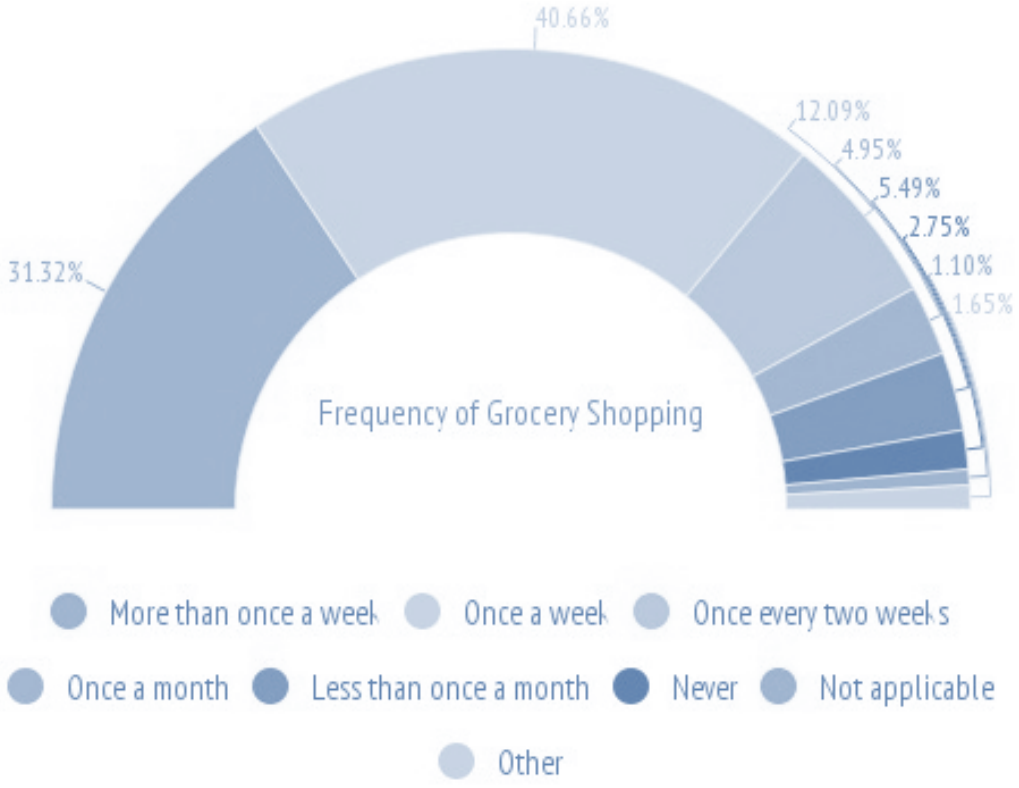
4. Approximately how much time do you typically spend at this second residence each year?

Survey Responses	Count
Less than 1 week	6
1-2 weeks	7
2 weeks - 1 month	26
2 months	56
3 months	35
4-6 months	46
More than 6 months	6
Total	182



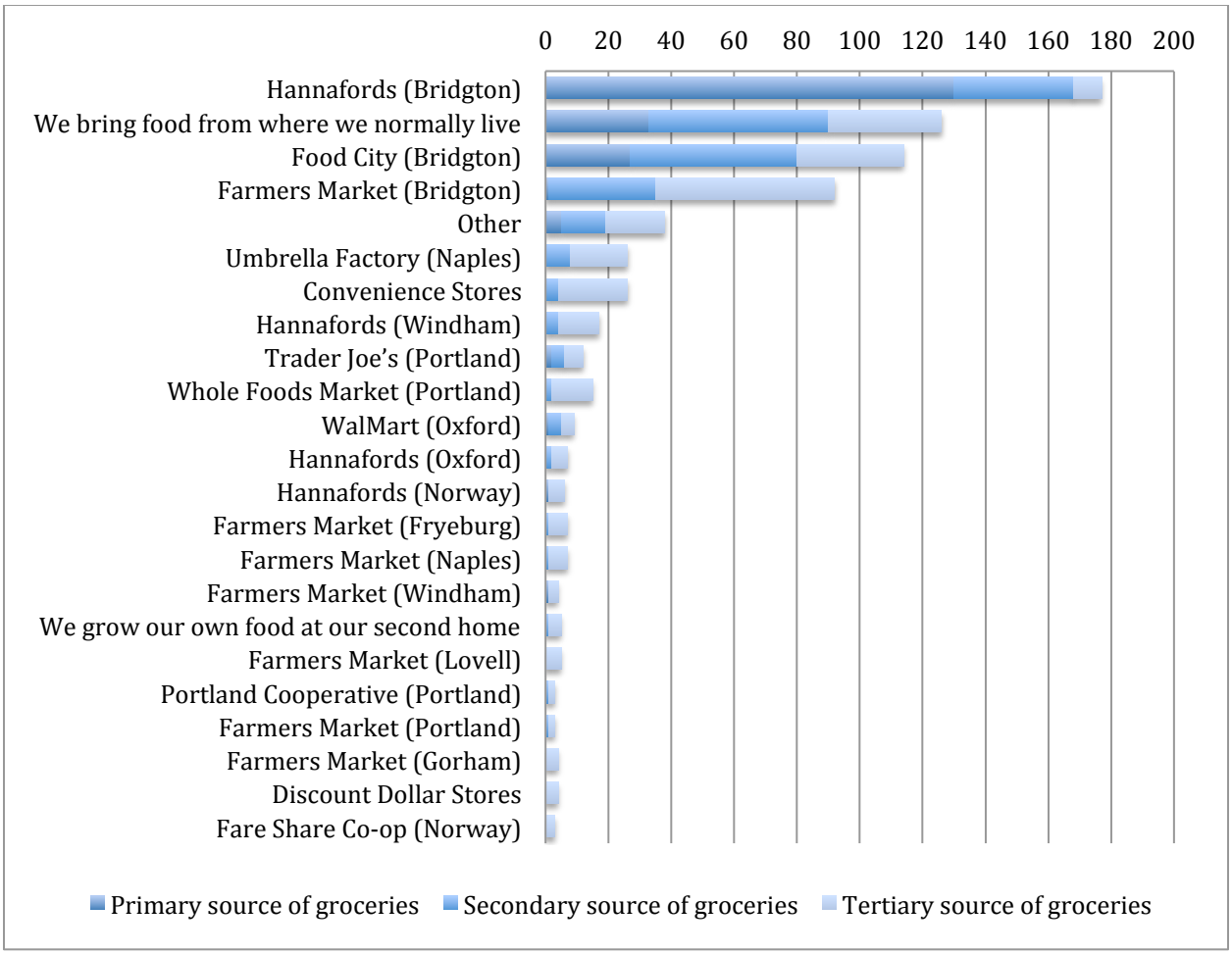
5. On average, how often does someone do major food shopping for this household?

Survey Responses	Count
More than once a week	57
Once a week	74
Once every two weeks	22
Once a month	9
Less than once a month	10
Never	5
Not applicable	2
Other	3
Total	183



6. What is your primary source for groceries when you live in the Lakes Region?

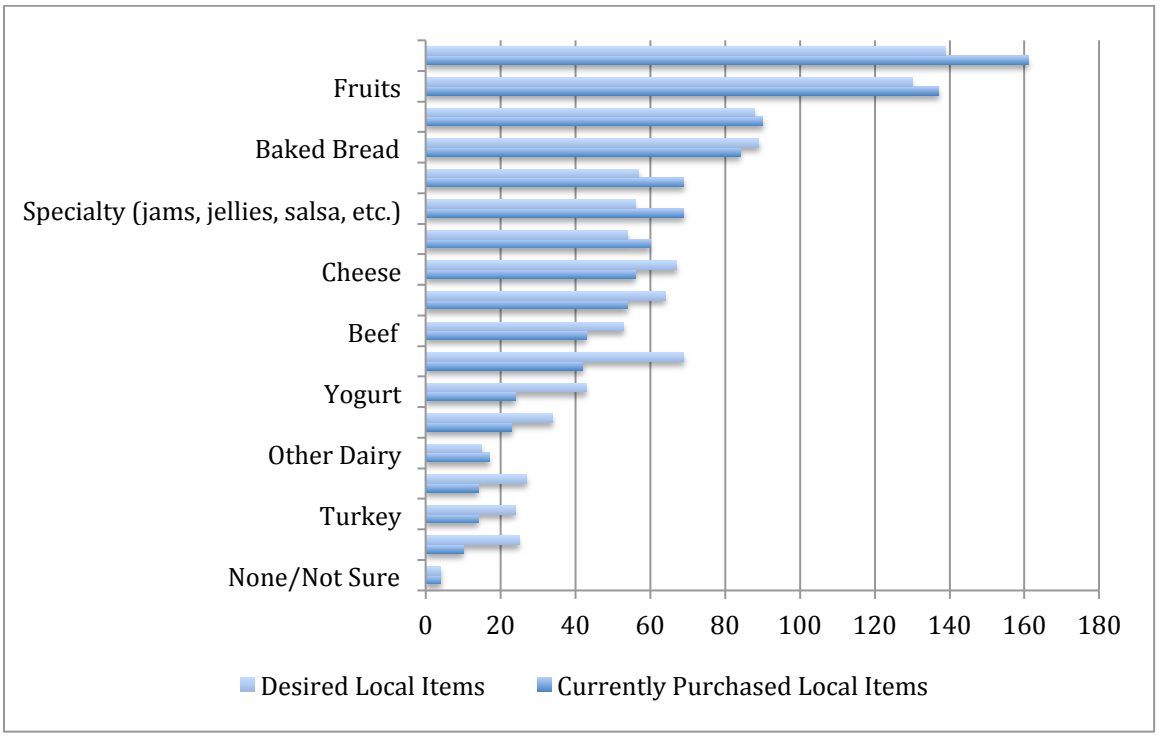
Survey Options	Primary source of groceries	Secondary source of groceries	Tertiary source of groceries
Hannaford (Bridgton)	130	38	9
We bring food from where we normally live	33	57	36
Food City (Bridgton)	27	53	34
Farmers Market (Bridgton)	1	34	57
Other	5	14	19
Umbrella Factory (Naples)	0	8	18
Convenience Stores	0	4	22
Hannaford (Windham)	0	4	13
Trader Joe's (Portland)	2	4	6
Whole Foods Market (Portland)	0	2	13
WalMart (Oxford)	1	4	4
Hannaford (Oxford)	0	2	5
Hannaford (Norway)	1	0	5
Farmers Market (Fryeburg)	0	1	6
Farmers Market (Naples)	0	1	6
Farmers Market (Windham)	1	0	3
We grow our own food at our second home	0	1	4
Farmers Market (Lovell)	0	0	5
Portland Cooperative (Portland)	0	1	2
Farmers Market (Portland)	0	1	2
Farmers Market (Gorham)	0	0	4
Discount Dollar Stores	0	0	4
Fare Share Co-op (Norway)	0	0	3
Total Respondents			181


0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
180
200
Hannafords (Bridgton)
We bring food from where we normally live
Food City (Bridgton)
Farmers Market (Bridgton)
Other
Umbrella Factory (Naples)
Convenience Stores
Hannafords (Windham)
Trader Joe's (Portland)
Whole Foods Market (Portland)
WalMart (Oxford)
Hannafords (Oxford)
Hannafords (Norway)
Farmers Market (Fryeburg)
Farmers Market (Naples)
Farmers Market (Windham)
We grow our own food at our second home
Farmers Market (Lovell)
Portland Cooperative (Portland)
Farmers Market (Portland)
Farmers Market (Gorham)
Discount Dollar Stores
Fare Share Co-op (Norway)
Primary source of groceries
Secondary source of groceries
Tertiary source of groceries

7. Which food products raised in the Lakes Region do you currently purchase for eating in your second home?

8. Which food products raised in the Lakes Region would you most like to purchase more of for eating in your second home?

	Currently Purchased Local Items	Desired Local Items
Vegetables	161	139
Fruits	137	130
Eggs	90	88
Baked Bread	84	89
Specialty (jams, jellies, salsa, etc.)	69	56
Honey and Maple Syrup	69	57
Milk	60	54
Cheese	56	67
Fish and Seafood	54	64
Beef	43	53
Chicken	42	69
Yogurt	24	43
Pork	23	34
Other Dairy	17	15
Turkey	14	24
Grains or flour	14	27
Blank	10	25
None/Not Sure	4	4

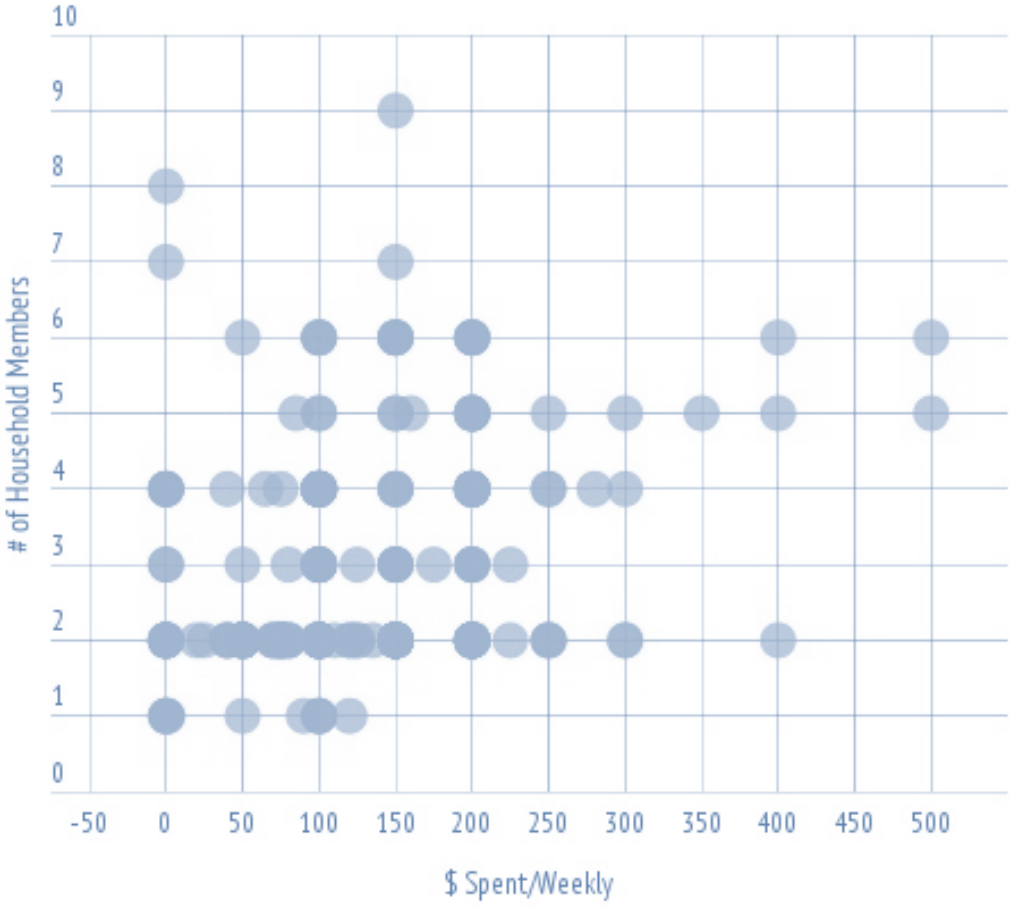


9. How would you prefer to purchase these local food items?

Survey Responses	Top preference	Second preference	Third preference
At places where I already shop	132	20	11
At the farm and/or produce stand	65	57	27
At a farmers market	64	63	23
A seasonal assortment of items selected by the producer, delivered to our second home	5	10	52
Individually ordered items, delivered to our second home	4	7	61
Other	2	1	24
A seasonal assortment of items selected by the producer, delivered to a drop site near our home	2	10	55
Individually ordered items, delivered to a drop site	2	12	55

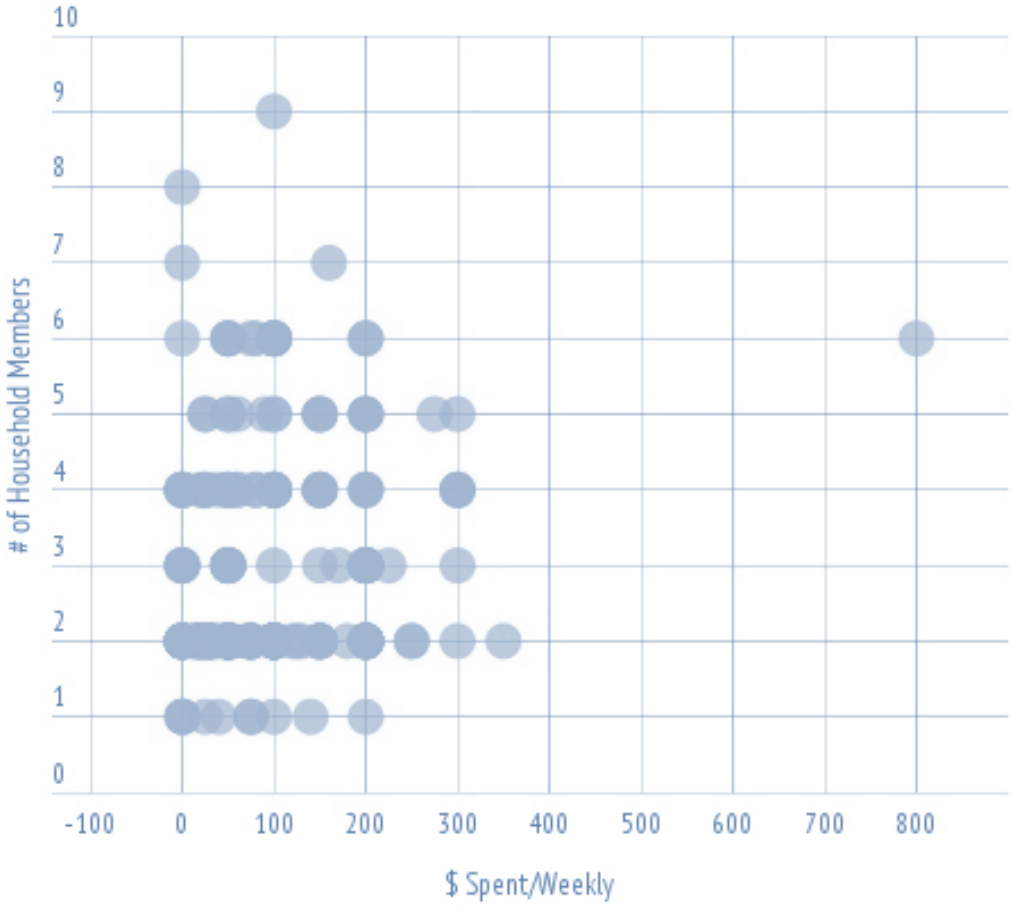
10. On average, how much money does your household spend, per week, on food that is prepared and/or eaten at home while you are living in your second home? (Include packed lunches, snacks, etc. Do not include food purchased at restaurants, etc.)

Total Spent per Week	$24,656
Average Spent per Household per Week	$143
Average Spent per Person per Week	$48



11. On average, how much money does this household spend, per week, on food prepared away from the home while you are living in your second home? (Restaurants, fast food, carry out, cafeterias, vending machines, etc.)

Total Spent per Week	$18,562
Average Spent per Household per Week	$108
Average Spent per Person per Week	$37

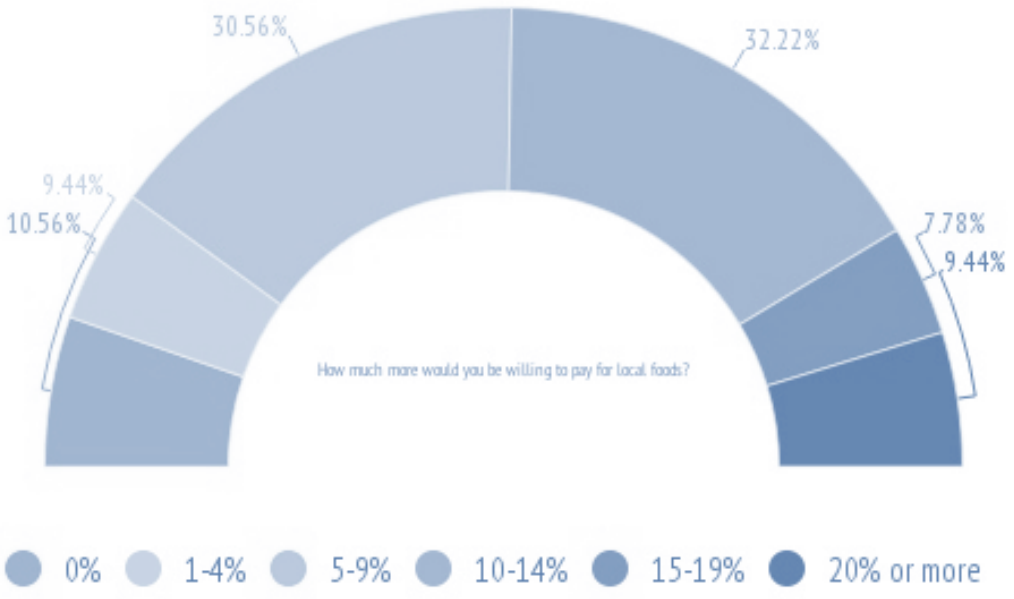


12. How much do you currently spend weekly to purchase locally produced food?

Survey Responses	Count
$0	15
$1-9	11
$10-24	59
$25-49	48
$50-99	36
$100-199	5
$200 or more	2

13. How much MORE would you be willing to spend weekly to purchase locally produced food?

14. If it cost more to purchase local food items, how much more would you be willing to pay to obtain foods raised on local farms?



Please share any thoughts you may have regarding purchasing foods produced in the Maine Lakes Region.

High Prices

- "We bring most of our food from Mass. All food costs 10% more for the same item purchased in Mass. The food stores believe they have a captive person who needs them and will pay the price asked. We used to always buy in Bridgton but once Hannaford came prices went up and we began to bring almost everything from Mass. We buy frozen and other items needed when staying at our second home. The Bridgton Farmer's has good value for what is offered."
- "I enjoy the foods in the area, I have been here for over 25 years, but find the supermarkets here very high compared to Massachusetts."
- "Farmer Markets and local foods tend to be much higher than grocery stores and if you are trying to save money it is not that economical to shop at Farmers Markets. If produce was competitive with grocery stores more people would shop at Farmers Markets."
- "Our primary residence (for now) is in NYS and strangely enough, the price of food is one thing that is lower (especially dairy). With that said, we generally don't mind paying little more. It's not that much and the local farm stands and local produce available at places like Food City is excellent."
- We transport 90% of our groceries from home as the prices are cheaper back home than in Bridgton, other than some sale prices."
- "I purchase food and beverages at primary home location due to cost in the area of my second home. I have noticed prices elevated during high traffic times of year especially at the Umbrella Factory in Naples. I no longer shop there. Hannaford is very good but

expensive. We refer to it as Can't Affords..... We didn't reach the ability to purchase a second home because we were wasteful with our money. We save quite a bit bringing food from home especially since we live in NH so there is no tax or deposits."

Lack of Selection/Quality

- "Sometimes I worry about Farmers market meats that they may not have been refrigerated properly."
- "We have had a second residence in Bridgton for over 10 years and the lack of fresh local ingredients has been very discouraging. I'm so happy to see an interest in increasing the presence. We are purchasers of local meats and vegetables and would be happy to support local farms. In fact, we have been going to the Bridgton and Norway Farmers Markets for years but the variety doesn't fill all our needs."
- "I would prefer a section of Hannaford devoted to local produce and the butcher providing locally sources meats."
- "We appreciate the high quality fruits and vegetables and are willing to pay a premium to support local producers. Enjoy local farmers market but find selection hit or miss during the summer."
- "We love buying as much as possible of our weekly food purchases at the local farm markets -- particularly fresh fruits and vegetables. But at least when we have gone, many of the local markets seem to be relatively small, and fresh fruit and vegetables are often in limited supply. We hope this survey will encourage more vendors to bring as wide an assortment of vegetables as they are comfortable growing; we would be delighted to purchase much more than we currently do!!"
- "Would love to see a larger variety of food at the farmers markets!"
- "I love the idea of locally grown foods. The most challenging part is having to stop at various locations to get different foods - meat in one place, veggies in another."
- "The grocery list is a challenge for our family each week while visiting our second home. When you are accustomed to making 50% of weekly grocery purchases at a farmers' market year-round, and the other 50% at Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, Bridgton presents a real conundrum. I have found the produce at both Hannaford's and Food City to be sub-par compared to what is available at our primary home in Southern California and have come to accept this. Our Bridgton Farmers' Market is only once a week, so we will purchase what we can and supplement from other area grocery stores during the rest of the week. I only purchase meat from Mr. Butcher, but not all of his meat is locally sourced. Purchasing locally sourced products (especially organic), wild-caught fish, free-range poultry and eggs, is important to our family. I realize that many people in this region are unable or unwilling to pay extra for these products and price point is most important to them and this could be why grocers do not offer a wide organic selection. This is a brief period of time for our family to be away from the comforts we are accustomed to (Whole Foods prepared foods are a go-to for us about 2 nights a week when we are home in California). Being in Maine gives new meaning to the slow food movement, but we're ok with that...it's summer vacation and a time to slow down!"
- "We get a lot of vegetables from our local CSA in Massachusetts. We supplement this with produce from the farmers market and farm stands. I would really like a regular source for locally humanely raised meat, poultry and eggs as we can't always make it to

the farms market for these products. We just discovered the butcher in Bridgton who has some of these products, but it would be great to have them at Food City or Hannaford too."

Lack of Information

- "We spend two-four days a week at our second home from spring thru the fall, although I do bring some food with us, I try to purchase most of our food locally. However, I usually do not know what is "produced" locally, or what is shipped in. I would be happy to buy more locally produced food, but we seem to miss the farmers market day. We are happy to shop at Food City because it is a local store."
- "It would be incredibly convenient to have a farmers market right in Bridgton."
- "We spend every other weekend in the summer, although I have not heard of most of the farmer's markets that were listed. We will be certain to check them out this summer, thanks!!"
- "If Hannaford carried more local products that would be great."
- "I think more advertising is needed to inform 'from away' people about locally sourced food choices. I've owned a house in Bridgton for over 40 years, so it's not necessarily me that you need to reach, but perhaps the people who are less familiar with the area. Or first time visitors."
- "You need more publicity for where to find farm stands, farmers markets, etc."
- "While most of it is labeled "local", I don't recall much if any food saying it was produced in the Lakes Region."

Desire for More Retail Options

- "We'd love if Bridgton had a farm stand with good produce!"
- "We do not use the local Farmer's Market because this is a shared second home and our turnover is on Sunday. Shopping on Sat does not work for us. Three of the five families have vegetable gardens at their primary residence."
- "We go to Weston's as well as Sherman Farms. While I buy local food and prefer organic, the prices and selection are better at Weston's than at the Bridgton Farmers Market. Plus I can go anytime during the week to the farm stand."
- "We would probably buy more if there was a storefront for locally grown products vs. the farmers market that we don't always know the day or hours."
- "I would love to see more local cheeses and homemade breads. I would even buy prepared meals such as potpies, lasagna, mashed potatoes, etc. Ideally, I would prefer not to do all my shopping at Hannaford, though it is consistent."
- "I'd like to see expanded hours and more vendors at the Bridgton Farmers Market"
- "Prefer to take advantage of locally produced foods when possible. However, number of people present at the second home varies and often we prefer to spend more time on the lake rather than preparing food inside. That causes more to be spent on taking advantage of prepared foods from outside vendors. Would be happy to see local "take-out" restaurants using more locally grown food items and would be willing to pay more for that."

- "We really enjoy the Bridgton Farmer's Market and always try to make it there when we are in town. Consider expanding the days the farmer's market is there. I think the hours are sufficient, but more days would be welcome. Maybe a Wednesday?"
- "The home delivery of locally sourced foods would be a welcome service. We use this kind of service at our permanent home, especially during the summer. Also at our permanent home, a year-round service delivers dinners, which come complete, and need to be prepared. Also, at our from-away home, we are part of a farm cooperative, which as your choice above suggests, delivers farm produce chosen by the producer weekly to our home."
- "Would like to see more farm stands selling locally grown items. On the North Fork of Long Island New York farms stands are a common place to shop. Many sell vegetables, fruits, cheeses, breads, pies etc... Corn and local strawberry's are a big hit. Some stands sell local seafood all fresh!"
- "Our time in the Lakes Region is limited, so we are often looking for convenience and efficiency when purchasing food. We would be looking for high quality products that do not take a lot of time -- including driving time -- to find and purchase so that we can spend our time on activities that we enjoy in the area."
- "We would support a food cooperative or year-round farmer's market in Bridgton if and when available."
- "I have a farm stand back home and grow most of my own produce. I would love to see more farm stands in the Bridgton area to stop at. We only pass one or two in our area. We have not stopped at the Bridgton Farmers Market as the hours do not coincide with our schedule. I would like to make a point to stop and see what they have to offer.
- "While Bridgton is currently our 2nd home, it will be our permanent home within a year. I would really love to see a farm or store front where I could buy fresh local produce and locally raised beef, pork, chicken, turkey. Local grains would also be great."
- "When we lived in Chatham, NH we regularly bought food at Weston's or Sherman's Farm Stands, and still do once every couple of weeks. Now that we live on Moose Pond I would really like to see more farm stands in this area."

Miscellaneous Comments

- "Hannaford and the Bridgton farmers Market are basically our source of food while in Bridgton"
- "We belong to a CSA which works fine. At Hannaford - Bridgton we purchase local vegetables when we need them. The other Hannaford we occasionally shop at is the one in N. Conway, which wasn't on the list.
- "I love the development of downtown Bridgton. I'm very excited about the new and diverse restaurants opening in the area."
- "The Mennonites in Brownfield are another place we have shopped and that is not listed here."
- "Always look forward to purchasing locally grown fruits and vegetables and to buying jellies, jams, breads, desserts, etc that are locally made"
- "I always prefer (and try) to buy local foods but there is a limit as to how much more I will spend for it. Usually the local food (i.e. strawberries, blueberries, etc) is significantly better quality so it is worth the added expense."

- "You left the famer's market in Harrison out of your list. I go there almost every Friday."
- "I grew up going to Bucknell's Farm in Denmark. They supplied our family with fresh vegetables purchased at their farm stand all summer and pick your own strawberries and peas. The cost was reasonable and it was a pleasure driving to the farm. This is a better experience for me than farmer's markets where I always find the products too expensive - cheese, honey, flowers, jams etc. and I usually just leave without purchasing anything."
- "My favorite place to shop is the Bridgton Farmers Market on Saturday mornings. I love meeting the growers and producers, and supporting them while buying food that I enjoy feeding to my family. The food is fresh and there is wide variety. What a great feeling to return in the spring to be remembered and recognized by some of the vendors at the farmers market!"
- "Our son is a farmer in Sweden, Maine. We support your efforts to sustain the production of locally sourced food by increasing awareness of farming in the Lakes Region."
- "I love the Bridgton Farmer's market. Great produce. I hope it continues to grow!"
- "As a proponent of purchasing and consuming locally-sourced products (both edible and non-edible), we would be excited to see any type of expansion in support of local growers, tradespeople, craftsman, etc."
- "When in Bridgton, we are also big purchasers of locally produced non-perishable foods such as honey and maple syrup and bacon, which we take to our from-away home for our own use and we gift to our friends and family in our from-away state."
- "We also purchase wine locally in Bridgton for use there and at our from away-home. The wine is less expensive in Bridgton and we like to support the local businesses in Bridgton."
- "In the summer, I usually stop at a tiny farm stand on King Hill Road in Naples on my way up and buy whatever they have, corn, tomatoes, etc. I also shop at a farm stand on the way into Bridgton. I buy lobsters at Maine Lobster Express in Bridgton. I usually don't make it to the farmers' market. What I really miss is baked goods that are edible--for instance the 'Danish' pastries at Hannaford are just awful--they look good, but... So local baked goods made with good ingredients would be nice.
- "Purchasing food in the Maine Lakes Region is very good, readily available and good quality."
- "We always enjoy coming upon a farm stand while traveling and prefer to purchase local grown food directly from farmers / growers / producers."
- "The food seems to be better in Maine than in our local stores here in MA - thank you!"
- "1. Nearly all of our farm-store purchases are from the Weston Farm Market in Fryeburg. 2. Your survey does not consider that many people spend quality time in the Mount Washington Valley and the mountains versus in Portland, and that Shaws Market and Sherman's Farm Stand are readily available options in Conway and Fryeburg. As is the Country Side Butcher on route 302 at Fryeburg."
- "We are retired and on a limited income and food is one of the few purchases that we can control!"
- "We aren't far from camp. We spend two full weeks and many weekends. We love Hannaford and they often have local food which we purchase. We also go out to local restaurants."
- "Sherman Farm is a wonderful source for local foods."

- "We purchase a fair amount of food at a farm stand in NH (Sherman's)."
- "We used to shop a lot at Frosty Hill in Harrison (all our vegetables and fruits) but they closed. We used to buy eggs at Middle Ridge Road - the farm- but they have closed. Would look for strawberries, blueberries, corn on the cob, in season."
- "The Bridgton Farmers' Market is improving each year...happy to see this and hope the vendors have a successful year!!"
- "I buy many fruits and vegetables at Brownfield Market which was not listed as a local store."
- "I would be much more likely to purchase local food if I lived there full time and could shop during the week. I drive from CT on most weekends to enjoy the area and local restaurants, so do not wish to spend my time shopping and preparing food. I am not much of a cook. On more extended vacations I have frequented a large farm stand in Fryeburg, Brownfield, East Conway, and South High Street, Bridgton, for vegetables and sweet corn. I have also gone to Sweden/ Waterford to the Pie Tree Farm for apples and baked goods.
- "We buy at the grocery stores mentioned, at the Butcher shop in Bridgton, 2 farms in Freyburg, and Good Life's in Windham. Also at apple orchards in the fall. We have not gone to farmers markets but are not opposed, we just don't think of that. We prefer locally grown fruits, veggies, meats, jellys and jams, pies, syrup, breads and other goodies. We don't mind paying more for local, maybe up to 20% or more. We'd probably consider seasonal veggies and fruits delivered or to pick up. Hope that helps."
- "I wish there were more local food available. Often I can't count on the local supply so I supplement with fresh food from grocery stores. I'd rather support the local economy."
- "Locally grown, fresh, are always better. Also we have discovered recently a new food store on RT 5 in Brownfield, run by local Mennonites, that is excellent, clean with really fresh vegetables, breads etc. "
- "Locally organic grown foods would be great! Foods like Bread - (healthy - no fructose) fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, basil, non processed foods are desirable."
- "a central website has all vendors and their link to order online then deliver to a central place so we could pick the bags up on the way to my second home."
- "please also make sure the vendors have their contact information so I could call if any question."
- "A reward system to help second-home owners to continue to shop w the local vendors."
- "We like the idea of supporting local business and shop local for food and other items. We don't know how much of our food bill is local vs national brands; sorry."
- "When in MA at my primary home I often shop stores, markets that provide local produce, meat, etc. This option is more appealing to me for my second home as well."
- "I look for locally made products in the grocery store. I do not mind paying extra for locally produced food."
- "We only use the condo in the winter.....therefore, there are no farmer's markets. I think you should ask what months people use their second home because that would impact your results."
- "We especially enjoy local apples but miss the peaches we get at home--not grown here because of shortness of growing season. Another thing we enjoy is various greens: kale, spinach, chard, beet tops, etc. We have been very happy with the Bridgton Farmers Market."

- "I think that there is a lot of potential and I think that many second-home owners are of the demographic that can afford to purchase locally sourced food/goods and may already being doing that at their primary home. Therefore, I think this is a great idea! But a big way to encourage people to do this is to advertise it more. For example, make the farmers market more visible and in a grocery store where second-home owners, or anyone for that matter, already shop there should/could be a bigger local push (in advertising). So, there could be a local section, etc. I also think, though, that not enough people know the difference between locally sourced and organic produce/goods so there is that to consider...and how to promote locally sourced (as good for you, the environment and the economy)."
- "Other than the Farmer's Market once a week, I would like to see more home grown stands for fruits & vegetables locally."
- "My Bridgton vacation home only recently was vacated by renters so that I have hardly spent any time in Bridgton yet. For grocery shopping my first choice would be a Trader Joes, which is not in Bridgton yet. I like shopping at Hannaford, which I do at home. Farm Stands would be great for fresh fruit and vegetable. The Maine Lobster Express in Bridgton is a great addition where I have shopped for many lobster rolls."

Appendix 2: Community Meals in the Lakes Region (2016)

Note:
This list includes nearly 140 meals advertised for the first nine months of 2016.
Listings were drawn from the Bridgton News.
This is not a comprehensive listing of all community meals in the Lakes Region.
Meals that are primarily commercial in nature have been excluded.

Free meals also occur regularly:

Bridgton (Thursdays)
Free Community Kettle Supper
Bridgton Community Center

Naples (Wednesdays)
Free Breakfast
Naples United Methodist Church

Fryeburg, Sat., January 16
Pancake Breakfast
Pythagorean Lodge

Waterford, Sat., January 16
Public Supper / Waterford World's Fair Assn.
North Waterford Congregational Church

Harrison, Sat., January 16
Free Lunch
Harrison Lions Den

East Otisfield, Sat., January 30
Soup & Chowder Fest
East Otisfield Free Baptist Church

Windham, Sat., February 6
Bean Supper
North Windham Union Church

Norway, Sat., February 13
Dessert Extravaganza
Norway Memorial Library

Lovell, Sun., February 14
A Taste of Lovell
Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library

Waterford, Thu., February 18
Community Potluck Dinner
Wilkins House

Bridgton, Sat., February 20
Baked Haddock Supper
St. Joseph's Church

Waterford, Sat., February 20
Public Supper / Waterford World's Fair Assn.
North Waterford Congregational Church

North Conway, NH, Tue., February 23
Fryeburg Academy Pizza Night
Eastern Slopes Hotel

Casco, Sat., February 27
Fabulous Florida Fiesta
Casco Village Church United Church of Christ

Fryeburg, Sat., March 5
Pancake Breakfast
Pythagorean Lodge

Sweden, Sat., March 5
Baked Bean & Ham Dinner
Sweden Town Meeting Hall

Denmark, Sat., March 5
Baked Bean & Casserole Supper
Denmark Municipal Building

Harrison, Sun., March 6
P&R March Madness Turkey Dinner
Harrison Fire Station

Bridgton, Sat., March 12
Pancake Breakfast
Bridgton Methodist Church

Brownfield, Sat., March 12
St. Patrick's Day Meal
Mt. Moriah Masonic Lodge #56

Bridgton, Sun., March 13
Corned Beef Supper
South Bridgton Congregational Church

Bridgton, Mon, March 14
Spaghetti Dinner -- Benefit for Ralph & Laurie Knight
Beef & Ski

Naples, Sat., March 19
Smoked Ham or Corned Beef Dinner
United Methodist Church of Good Fellowship

Waterford, Sat., March 19
Public Supper / Waterford World's Fair Assn.
North Waterford Congregational Church

Windham, Sat., March 19
Baked Haddock Dinner
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church

Windham, Sat., March 19
Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner
Windham Hill Church

Lovell, Thu., March 24
PTA Italian Dinner -- Served by 5th graders
New Suncook School

Bridgton, Sat., April 2 Spaghetti Dinner (Benefits Project Graduation 2016)
Masonic Hall; sponsored by Oriental Lodge A.F. & A.M.

West Baldwin, Sat., April 2
Pancake Breakfast
West Baldwin United Methodist Church

Locke Mills, Sat., April 2
Benefit Dinner for Alexis Sing
Legion Hall

Fryeburg, Sun., April 3
Maine-ly Maple Brunch
First Congregational Church of Fryeburg (sponsor); at Masonic Hall

East Conway, Sat., April 9
All-you-can-eat buffet
Fryeburg Historical Society (benefits to Society)

Naples, Sat., April 9
Buffet benefit for Camp Susan Curtis
Bush Children's Hospital (sponsor); at American Legion

East Otisfield, Sat., April 9
Community Church Supper
East Otisfield Free Baptist Church

Lovell, Sat., April 16
All-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner (benefits church youth group)
Lovell United Church of Christ

Naples, Sat., April 16
Baked Bean Dinner
Edes Falls Sewing Circle; at Edes Falls Community Hall

West Bridgton, Sat., April 16
"Roast Beast" Dinner (for First Congregational Church of Bridgton) Shawnee Park Ski Resort

Harrison, Sat., April 16
Spaghetti Dinner (Appreciation for landowners)
Harrison VFW

North Lovell, Sat., April 16
Cabin Fever Breakfast (benefits library)
Lewis Dana Memorial Library

Naples, Sat., April 16
Spaghetti & Meatballs Dinner
United Methodist Church of Good Fellowship

Waterford, Sat., April 16
Baked Stuffed Haddock Supper / Waterford World's Fair Assn.
North Waterford Congregational Church

Waterford, Thu., April 21
Community Potluck Dinner
Wilkins House

Bridgton, Sat., April 23
Boiled Dinner (Daughters of the Nile)
Masonic Lodge

Lovell, Sat., April 23
Roast Beef Dinner
Lovell Volunteer Fire Department

Windham, Sat., April 23
Roast Beef Dinner
Windham Hill Church

Sweden, Sat., April 23
Celebration of Soups (benefit Emergency Fund and Food Pantry) Sweden Town Hall

Bridgton, Sun., April 24
Pancake Breakfast
Oriental Lodge

Fryeburg, Sun., May 1
May Day Breakfast (benefits Pilgrim Lodge in Gardiner)
Masonic Lodge

Baldwin, Fri., May 13
Pot Luck (donations for Ronald McDonald House)
Mt. Etna Grange

Bridgton, Thu., May 19
Charity Auction & Catered Dinner (benefits Bridgton Academy)
Goldsmith Dining Center

East Baldwin, Sat., May 21
Public Baked Bean Supper
East Baldwin Church

East Otisfield, Sat., May 21
Haddock Supper
Free Baptist Church

Casco, Sat., May 21
Traditional Saturday Night Supper
Casco Village Church United Church of Christ

Harrison, Sat., May 28
Memorial Day Breakfast
United Parish Church

Stoneham, Sun., May 29
Memorial Day Breakfast
Stoneham Rescue, Rescue Barn

Sweden, Sat., June 4
Barbeque -- Sweden Village Fire Association
Sweden Town Hall

West Baldwin, Sat., June 4
Pancake Breakfast
West Baldwin United Methodist Church

Hiram, Sat., June 4
Roast Beef Supper
Hiram Community Center

Naples, Sat., June 11
Bean Supper
United Methodist Church of Good Fellowship

Otisford, Wed., June 15
Community Supper
Community Hall

East Baldwin, Sat., June 18
Public Baked Bean Supper
East Baldwin Church

North Windham, Sat., June 18
Bean Supper
North Windham Union Church

Fryeburg, Sat., June 18
Harbor (Bean) Supper
Bradley Memorial United Methodist Church

Bolsters Mills, Sat., June 18
Famous Chicken Pie Supper
Bolsters Mills United Methodist Church

North Waterford, Tue., June 21
Bean Supper
North Waterford Congregational Church

Raymond, Thu., June 23
Raymond Food Pantry
Lake Region Baptist Church

East Conway, Fri., June 24
Annual Strawberry Festival
East Conway Community Hall

Harrison, Sat., June 25
VFW Pie Sale
VFW Hall

North Conway, Sat., June 25
4th Annual Strawberry Festival (benefits Vaughan Community Services)
North Conway Congregational Church

Norway, Sat., June 25
Free community breakfast
Norway Grange Hall

Raymond, Sat., June 25
Strawberry Festival
Nathaniel Hawthorne House

Casco, Sat., June 25,
"Sensational Summer Strawberry Shortcake Saturday Night Supper"
Casco Village Church United Church of Christ

North Sebago, Sat., June 25
Bean Supper
North Sebago Methodist Church

South Bridgton, Sun., June 26
Public Breakfast (benefits Oriental Lodge)
Oriental Lodge #13 A.F & A.M

Windham, Sun., June 26
Sunday Brunch
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church

Bridgton, Sun., June 26
Public Supper
South Bridgton Congregational Church

Bridgton, Wed., June 29
Free Community Supper
St. Peter's Church

Sebago, Sat., July 2
Baked Bean and Chop Suey Supper
Sebago Town Hall

Bridgton, Sun., July 3
Spaghetti Dinner
Masonic Lodge

Waterford, Tue., July 5
Public Supper
North Waterford Congregational Church

Harrison, Sat., July 9
Public Breakfast Buffet
United Parish Church

Denmark, Sat., July 9
Annual Bean Hole Bean Supper (Lions Club)
Denmark Municipal Building

Waterford, Wed., July 13
Summer Breakfast
Wilkins House on Waterford Flats

Bolsters Mills, Sat., July 16
Famous Chicken Pie Supper
Bolsters Mills United Methodist Church

East Baldwin, Sat., July 16
Public Baked Bean Supper
East Baldwin Church Parish Hall

South Bridgton, Sun., July 17
Baked Bean Supper
South Bridgton Congregational Church

Waterford, Tue., July 19
Public Supper
North Waterford Congregational Church

Otisfield, Wed., July 20
Otisfield Community Lunch
Community Hall

North Sebago, Sat., July 23
Bean Supper
North Sebago Methodist Church

Bridgton, Sat., July 23
Bean Supper
Bridgton Fire Department

Lovell, Sat., July 23
Sam Nortfle/Charlile Micklin Baked Bean Supper
Delta Masonic Lodge

Waterford, Wed., July 27
Summer Breakfast
Wilkins House

Fryeburg Harbor, Fri., July 29
Annual Turkey Supper
Bradley Memorial United Methodist Church

Casco, Sat., July 29
Annual Casco Days Chicken BBQ Dinner
Community Center

Casco, Sat., July 29
Project Graduation Fundraiser
Casco Village UCC Church

Casco, Sun., July 30
Casco Days Supper
Casco Village UCC Church

Bridgton, Sun., July 30
Barbeque
Bridgton/Fryeburg Knights of Columbus

North Waterford, Tue., August 2
Public Supper
North Waterford Congregational Church

Bridgton, Sat., August 6
Baked Bean and Hot Dog Supper
Bridgton Methodist Church

Hiram, Sat., August 6
Roast Beef Supper
Hiram Community Center

West Baldwin, Sat., August 6
Pancake Breakfast
West Baldwin United Methodist Church

Sebago, Sat., August 6
Baked Bean Supper
Sebago Volunteer Association; at Old Town Hall

Harrison, Sun., August 7
Pancake Breakfast
Harrison Lions Club; at Long Lake Park

Sebago, Sun., August 7
Barbeque Chicken Supper
North Sebago Methodist Church

Waterford, Wed., August 10
Summer Breakfast
Wilkins House

Bridgton, Sun., August 13
Blueberry Pancake Breakfast
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Lovell, Sun., August 13
2nd Annual Spaghetti Dinner
Delta Masonic Lodge

Sebago, Sun., August 13
Team Thomas Spaghetti Supper
Sebago Town Hall

Fryeburg, Tue., August 16
Church Supper
First Congregational Church of Fryeburg; at Masonic Hall

Bridgton, Tue., August 16
Free Community Picnic (St. Peter's Episcopal Church & Beth's Café)
Shorey Park

Waterford, Tue., August 16
Public Supper
North Waterford Congregational Church

South Paris, Tue., August 16
Christian Women United Luncheon
South Paris First Congregational Church

Fryeburg, Thu., August 18
Pork Roast and Turkey Supper
Fryeburg Rescue; at Fairgrounds Craft Center

East Baldwin, Sat., August 20
Public Baked Bean Supper
East Baldwin Church Parish Hall

Bolsters Mills, Sat., August 20
Famous Chicken Pie Supper
Bolsters Mills United Methodist Church

Lovell, Sat., August 20
Chicken BBQ
Lovell Volunteer Fire Department

Bridgton, Sun., August 21
Public Breakfast (benefits Oriental Lodge general fund)
Oriental Lodge #13 A.F & A.M.

Harrison, Sun., August 21
Pancake Breakfast
Harrison Lions Club; at Long Lake Park

Sebago, Wed., August 24
Sebago Harvest Dinner
Camp O-At-Ka

Fryeburg Harbor, Fri., August 26
Harvest Supper
Bradley Memorial United Methodist Church

Casco, Sat., August 27
Saturday Night Supper
Casco Village Church United Church of Christ

North Sebago, Sat., August 27
Harvest Dinner
North Sebago Methodist Church

North Fryeburg, Sat., August 27
Annual Buffet Supper
Saco Valley Firehouse

South Bridgton, Sun., August 28
Public Supper
South Bridgton Congregational Church

Waterford, Tue., August 30
Public Supper
North Waterford Congregational Church

Harrison, Sat., September 3
Buffet Breakfast
United Parish Church

Sweden, Sat., September 3
Annual Deep Fried Turkey Dinner
Sweden Town Meeting Hall

Hiram, Sat., September 3
Roast Beef Supper
Hiram Community Center

Fryeburg, Sat., September 3
Public Breakfast (benefits flood victims in Louisiana)
Pythagorean Lodge

West Baldwin, Sat., September 3
Pancake Breakfast
West Baldwin United Methodist Church

Stoneham, Sun., September 4
Labor Day Weekend Breakfast
Stoneham Rescue

Lovell, Fri., September 9
Harvest Supper
Lovell United Church of Christ

Naples, Sat., September 10
Fall Supper
Edes Falls Community Hall

East Otisfield, Sat., September 10
Old Fashioned New England Boiled Dinner
East Otisfield Free Baptist Church

East Baldwin, Sat., September 17
Public Baked Bean Supper
East Baldwin Church Parish Hall

Bridgton, Sat., September 17
Annual Harvest Supper
Narramissic Farm

Bolsters Mills, Sat., September 17
Famous Chicken Pie Supper
Bolsters Mills United Methodist Church

Sebago, Sun., September 18
Turkey Pot Pie Dinner
Sebago Town Hall

North Sebago, Sun., September 18
Baked Bean Supper
North Sebago Methodist Church

Appendix 3: Farmers' Markets in the Lakes Region

Source: USDA. See Map 5, page 16.

Oxford County

Bethel Farmers' Market
Parkway
Bethel, Maine 04217

Bridgton Farmers' Market
Depot Street
Bridgton, Maine 04009

Fryeburg Farmers' Market
7 Portland St.,
Fryeburg, Maine 04037

Lovell Farmers' Market
Route 5
Lovell, Maine 04051

No View Farm & Bakery Co-op
855 S Rumford Rd
Rumford, Maine 04276

Norway Farmers' Market
Main Street
Norway, Maine 04268

Western Maine Farmers' Co-op
Route 2, Abbott Farm Plaza
Rumford, Maine 04276

Cumberland County

Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust Farmers' market
Crystal Spring Farm
277 Pleasant Hill Rd
Brunswick, Maine 04011

Casco Farmers' Market
940 Meadow Road, Route 121,
Casco, Maine 04015

Cumberland Farmers' Market
Tuttle Road
Falmouth, Maine 04105

Falmouth Farmers' Market
Falmouth, Maine 04105

Freeport Farmers' Market
L.L. Bean Campus
Freeport, Maine 04032

Gorham Farmers' Market
270 Main Street
Gorham, Maine 04038

Greater Gorham Farmers' Market
Between 71 and 77 South Street
Gorham, Maine 04038

Lakes Region Farmers' Market
709 Roosevelt Trail
Windham, Maine 04062

Naples Farmers' Market
Naples Village Green — Off Route 302
Naples, Maine 04055

New Gloucester Community Market
1095 Lewiston Rd. (Rt. 100)
New Gloucester, Maine 04260

Portland Farmers' Market — Deering Oaks Park
Deering Oaks Park
Portland, Maine 04101

Portland Farmers' Market — Indoor Winter Market
200 Anderson Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Portland Farmers' Market — Monument Square
Monument Square
Portland, Maine 04101

Scarborough Farmers' Market
259 U. S. Route One
Scarborough, Maine 04070

Westbrook Farmers' Market
off William Clark Dr. (Rt. 25)
Westbrook, Cumberland, Maine 04092

Appendix 4: 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

Citations
When citing the data included in this report,
please cite both the original source and this report.

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

For further information: http://www.crcworks.org/

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