Local Food in Government Statistics

A NATIONAL FARM TO INSTITUTION METRICS COLLABORATIVE WEBINAR
Webinar Agenda -- 30 minutes!

- Welcome & Introduction
- Local Procurement
- Questions and Answers
Webinar Agenda

• Welcome & Introduction
  • Jeff Farbman
    Wallace Center at Winrock
    International
    National Good Food Network
  • Local Food in Government Statistics
  • Questions and Answers
The 2017 Census of Agriculture and Local Food Trends: What Can We Say?

Jeffrey K. O’Hara – USDA AMS
May 28, 2019
National to Farm to Institution Metrics Collaborative Webinar

The views expressed are those of the presenter and should not be attributed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
What is the Issue?

• Census of Ag provides a unique opportunity to evaluate agricultural trends

• 2017 Census of Ag contains new questions on local food markets
  – Good news: far more complete and accurate snapshot of local food systems than previously available
  – Bad news: tricky to infer trends with new questions
  – More good news: this is essentially a one-time problem if future surveys ask questions consistently
Evolution of Local Food Data Collection Efforts

• Pre-1978: Dark Ages

• 1978 – 2012: Census of Agriculture

• 2015: Local Food Marketing Practices Survey

• 2017: Census of Agriculture

• Summary and conclusions
Census of Agriculture

- Administered by USDA every five years

- Objective: account for any place from which at least $1,000 worth of agricultural products were potentially produced and sold
  - In 2017: list frame of ~3 million operations

- 1978 was first Ag Census in which direct-to-consumer (DTC) agricultural sales data was collected

- Through the 2012 Ag Census:
  - Only local food market channel for which sales data available
  - Only measured DTC sales of unprocessed commodities (e.g., fresh fruits and vegetables)
Local Food Data Challenges

• Census of Agriculture (as of 2012)
  – Non-DTC local sales not measured at all even though this is biggest market segment (Low and Vogel 2011)
    • Binary question introduced in 2012
  – Value-added product sales not measured
    • Meat, cheese, butter, cider, wine, jam, jelly, salsa
  – Difficult to add questions

• Agricultural Resource Management Survey
  – Annual survey of farms
  – Focused on production practices of conventional farms

• Local Food Marketing Practices Survey (LFMPS) developed to overcome these issues
Local Food Marketing Practices Survey (LFMPS)

- Administered by USDA in 2016 (to collect 2015 data)

- Who received a 2015 LFMPS?
  - Respondents that indicated local sales on previous USDA surveys
  - “Web-scraping”

- First time USDA collected data on value-added agricultural products

- First time USDA collected local non-DTC sales data
  - Direct to retailer:
    • Supercenters, supermarkets, restaurants, grocery stores, caterers
  - Direct to “distributor”
    • Institutions (schools, hospitals, colleges)
    • Intermediaries that market locally-branded food products
Direct-to-Consumer Sales Over Time (Incorporating Value-Added Sales in LFMPS)

Source: USDA NASS (2019a,b).
2015 Local Sales by All Market Channels

(Previously measured in Ag Census italic/underline font)

Direct to Distributors: 1.8 Billion USD
Direct to Consumers: 1.7 Billion USD
Direct to Retailers: 1.6 Billion USD

Source: Local Food Marketing Practices Survey
2017 Ag Census

- Local food questions in 2017 Ag Census designed off LFMPS

- Direct-to-Consumer sales and farm counts of value-added products and commodities (aggregated)
  - Until 2012, this question only encompassed commodities

- Non-DTC local sales of value-added products and commodities
  - Sales data never previously collected in Ag Census
  - Farm count available in 2012, although question more narrowly phrased

- Total value-added product sales (irrespective of market channel)
  - Never previously collected in Ag Census
Inferring trends with 2017 Ag Census Data (1)

• 2017 Ag Census vs. 2015 LFMPS
  – 2017 Ag Census more accurate

  – Ag Census = Population (census) of ALL farms

  – LFMPS = Sample (survey) of farms selling locally
    • Estimates extrapolated from ~5,700 survey responses
    • Since 1st time survey administered, estimates contingent on list-frame accuracy

  – For instance, direct-to-institution farm sales data not released at all with LFMPS due to low response rate

• With these caveats, the trends for local non-DTC sales encouraging (50% increase)
Local Food Trends Between 2015 (LFMPS) and 2017 (Ag Census)

Billion 2017 USD

Source: USDA NASS (2019a,b).
Inferring trends with 2017 Ag Census Data (2)

• 2017 Ag Census vs. 2012 Ag Census
  – Impossible to compare sales data of any market channel
  – May be possible to compare trends in farm counts despite changes in question phrasing

  – This is because 2017 Ag Census question is broader than that in 2012 Ag Census
    • If 2017 farm counts are larger than in 2012, it’s unclear whether this is a trend or caused by broader question phrasing
    • If 2017 farm counts are smaller than in 2012, then this would be attributable to a trend
Farm-to-Retail/Institution Ag Census Questions

• 2012 Ag Census:
  – Farms that sell direct to retailers that in turn sell directly to consumers
    • Restaurants, grocery stores, schools, hospitals, and other businesses

• 2017 Ag Census:
  – Farms that sell to direct to retail markets, institutions, or **food hubs of local/regionally branded products**
    • Supermarkets, supercenters, restaurants, caterers, independently-owned grocery stores, food cooperatives, K-12 schools, colleges/universities, hospitals, workplace cafeterias, prisons, foodbanks
Considerable Decline in Direct-to-Retail/Institution Farms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>2012 Rank</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>4,432</td>
<td>4,301</td>
<td>-131</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
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<td>1,587</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1,802</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>2,201</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>-1,276</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>49,043</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,958</strong></td>
<td><strong>-20,085</strong></td>
<td><strong>-41%</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the punchline?

• For direct-to-retail/institution farms:
  – Sales may be increasing between 2015 and 2017
    • hard to know the extent due to methodological differences between Ag Census and LFMPS
  – Farm counts declined considerably between 2012 and 2017
    • Difficult to understand why due to different phrasing of questions

• Will be better-equipped to infer trends in the future as questions become consistently asked
  – LFMPS being planned for 2021 (to collect 2020 data)
  – 2022 Ag Census

• Important to note that USDA surveys only measure farm sales, and do not provide more comprehensive local food market size estimates
Questions??

jeffreyk.ohara@usda.gov (202 756 2575)

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illinois farm bureau
FARM CREDIT
USDA

market maker
farmers market coalition
Ag MRC

https://localfoodeconomics.com/agsummit/
- or -
http://dashboard.farmtoinstitution.org/national-metrics-collaborative
Next NFTIMC webinar

Cultivate Michigan

Colleen Matts
Farm to Institution Specialist with the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems and Coordinator of the Michigan Farm to Institution Network

• Registration posted soon:
  http://ngfn.org/webinars