



Agricultural Marketing Service

Supporting Local & Regional Food Systems

Helping American Farmers Feed the Country

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) works to improve opportunities for U.S. growers and producers, including those involved in local and regional food systems. Each year, AMS conducts research and provides technical services and grants that help thousands of agricultural food producers and businesses enhance their local food marketing efforts.

Locally and regionally grown food is an estimated \$12 billion-per-year market. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, nearly 30,000 farmers and ranchers nationwide are now selling directly to retailers, institutions, and food hubs, and over 130,000 farmers and ranchers are selling their products directly to consumers. That means more consumers are seeking farm-fresh food, and more farmers—especially small and mid-size operations—are profiting from these new markets.

AMS works to improve market access for producers and develop new markets through funding, technical assistance and research. AMS seeks to provide local food producers, markets and communities with easy access to ideas, innovations and research to grow and sustain a productive business. This information ensures that opportunities for U.S. food producers are readily available and communities are equipped to successfully grow and sell regionally produced foods.



Funding Opportunities

AMS offers several grant programs that support local and regional food systems. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants for more information.

Technical Assistance and Research

An interdisciplinary staff of agricultural marketing specialists, economists and facility design experts study direct marketing practices and opportunities, including farmers markets and food hubs. AMS works with federal agencies and external partners to explore challenges and opportunities related to market access and development in local and regional food systems.

USDA maintains an archive of publications and presentations authored by staff and research partners about local and regional food systems. View publications at www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional.

Wholesale Markets and Facility Design

The team provides technical assistance and support to customers about the construction of new structures or the remodeling of existing ones. These facilities include wholesale markets, farmers markets, public markets, and food hubs, all of which are important parts of the national food distribution network. The facilities may be indoors or outdoors, a single building, or an industrial complex. Learn more at www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional.

AMS coordinates local and regional food systems efforts across USDA through an interagency Local and Regional Food Working Group. Learn about other USDA programs, grants and loans that support the local and regional food sector at www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FoodSupplyChainFactSheet.pdf.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Partnership

AMS works with NASS to gather information on local and regional food systems through the Census of Agriculture, the Local Food Marketing Practices Survey, and the Farmers Market Managers Survey. These tools provide benchmarks and vital data for the sector and USDA to use in supporting the development of alternative market channels.

The infographic (right) provides highlights from the 2019 Farmers Market Managers Survey.

USDA Market News

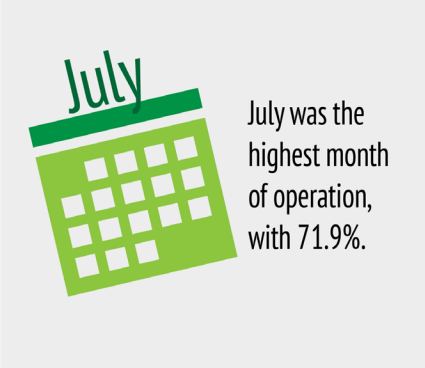
For more than 100 years, USDA Market News reports have given farmers, producers and other agricultural businesses the information they need to evaluate market conditions, identify trends, make purchasing decisions, monitor price patterns, evaluate transportation equipment needs, and accurately assess movement of agricultural products. The Local and Regional Food Market News reports provide producers and consumers a one-stop shop for reports on local and regional food outlets. To learn more, visit www.ams.usda.gov/MarketNews.



National Farmers Market Managers Survey Results
2019



Fruits and vegetables were the most common food category sold. 99.6% of markets sold fruits and vegetables.



Marketing Resources, Opportunities, and Certifications

USDA Local Food Directories
The directories provide current information on farmers markets, community supported agriculture enterprises, food hubs and on-farm markets. As an easy, one-stop resource of local food business services, the directories are an important marketing tool used by consumers, app developers, policymakers and businesses to identify local and regional food sources.

Each directory is voluntary. Managers of farmers markets, food hubs, community-supported

agriculture (CSAs) operations and on-farm sales operations list their businesses through usdalocalfooddirectories.com.

USDA Grass-Fed Program for Small and Very Small Producers
This program is designed as a marketing tool for small and very small producers to certify that animals meet the requirements of the USDA-grass-fed marketing claim. Producers receive certificates that allow them to market their cattle or sheep as USDA-certified grass-fed, increasing demand for their products and creating access to new economic opportunities.

Additional information is available at www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/grass-fed-SVS.

Selling Food to USDA
Federal food and nutrition programs include the AMS small business set-aside program, which allows small businesses to participate in the Federal purchase program by having them compete against other similarly sized businesses. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food to learn more about selling your products to USDA.

Sign up for *From the Ground Up*, a monthly digest featuring news and notes on AMS' local and regional food systems work. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y2yfk67l> to subscribe.