

# Fort Bragg Region Food System Assessment Focus: Institutional Markets

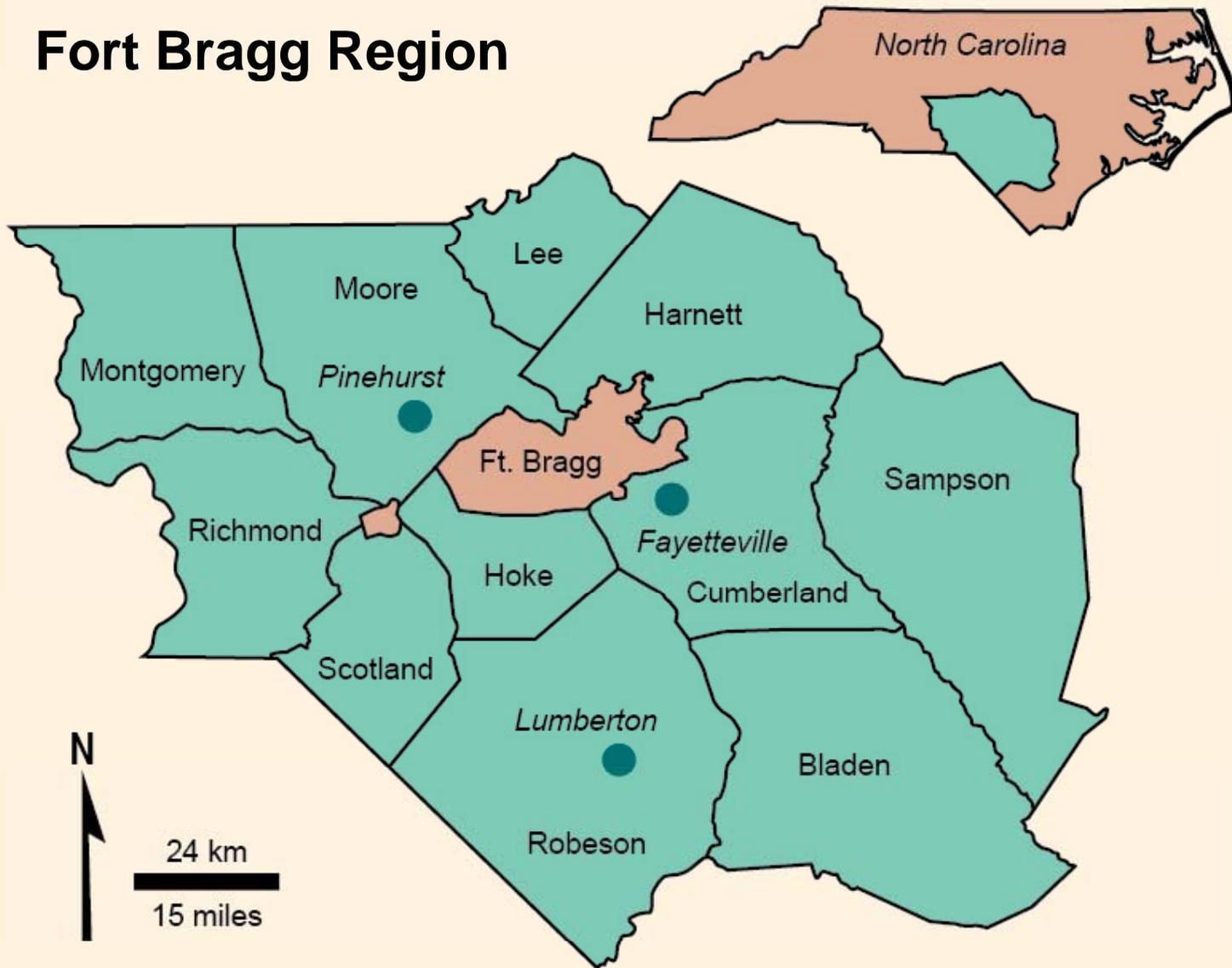
Dr. Kathi Beratan

NCSU, Dept. Forestry & Env. Resources

Fort Bragg Regional Alliance

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# Fort Bragg Region



	# Farms, 2007	% Change 2002-2007	Land in Farms, 2007 (acres) / % total County	% Change 2002-2007
Bladen	500	-9	127,171 / 22	-13
Cumberland	500	+5	88,353 / 21	-6
Harnett	727	0	111,770 / 29	-2
Hoke	249	+24	60,219 / 24	-5
Lee	272	-11	36,210 / 22	-21
Montgomery	289	-1	42,523 / 13	+2
Moore	804	-2	80,075 / 18	-21
Richmond	278	+8	40,904 / 13	-17
Robeson	1,017	+16	268,026 / 44	-7
Sampson	1,203	+2	321,454 / 53	+8
Scotland	190	+19	65,780 / 32	+13

Red indicates a negative percent change from 2002 to 2007; green indicates a positive percent change from 2002 to 2007.

“Larger farms are doing well, the small farm of 25 acres or less is a growing segment, but the mid-size farm is being squeezed out. They don’t have the efficiency of scale of the larger farms, but direct market only is not enough to sustain them. However, this is the farm that is critical to sustaining the local food movement.”

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View from the Trenches

Extension Agents' Experiences

“I had a meeting with the Fresh Market rep and encouraged him to connect with local farmers and gave him contact info. ...Our local asparagus farmer who was contacted told me the rep stated that he could get asparagus from Peru for “x” price: the expectation was that that price was the standard that the local producer had to meet. The local farmer explained there was a vast difference between asparagus grown in Peru and that grown in \_\_\_\_\_ County for a \_\_\_\_\_ County clientele, but the rep apparently couldn’t grasp the difference.”

“According to [farmer], he tried many times to contact [distributor representative] and another key person with MDI to let them know he had product available. He never heard back from them and ultimately he turned under the crop rather than keep putting money into it. Then, a few weeks after that, MDI called looking for product which of course he no longer had.

This is just to give you an example of some of the things I've run across when trying to hook up local farmers with grocery stores. In addition to MDI, I've talked to Food King (a regional grocer in our area) and Fresh Market. Both parties expressed interest in "buying local". In my opinion, they want to buy local but only if it fits within their existing "wholesale broker" paradigm. They call the Sandhills in July looking for produce. Our produce is burned up by July (except for peaches)....we should be an early stop for buyers...

...They want to buy peaches but only if they adhere to their California peach size spec. Peaches may be smaller here, but they have 10 times the flavor. They want to buy from smaller, local producers, but only if the producers have their own facilities to aggregate so the product comes to them fitting their uniformity requirements (this is what MDI says they want to see).

The issues of timing (buyers should start down east early in the season then work their way west across the state as the season progresses) and product uniformity (generic product is what they want, and sufficient quantities to supply every store so that each one is identical) are big barriers to developing a local food system, in my opinion.” ”

For more information or a copy of the  
report, contact:

Dr. Kathi Beratan

[kkberata@ncsu.edu](mailto:kkberata@ncsu.edu)