



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
EASTERN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL FIELD OFFICE
601 WEST BROADWAY, SUITE 645
LOUISVILLE, KY 40202



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 11, 2016

Contact: Dee Webb
(919) 733-6333 ext. 215

USDA Launches First-Ever Local Foods Survey

Data from the 2012 Agriculture Census shows North Carolina ranked third in the nation in number of farms (579) selling through a CSA arrangement.

RALEIGH, NC – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in April the 2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey as part of its continued support of local and regional food systems. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is conducting this first-time survey to produce official benchmark data on the local food sector in the United States.

"In my mind, the buy-local movement has been a game-changer for North Carolina agriculture," North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler said. "Local farmers markets, roadside stands and community-supported agriculture services give shoppers the opportunity to make a real connection with the person growing their food, which is a positive for consumers and farmers alike."

The Local Food Marketing Practices Survey will ask producers for information on their production and local marketing of foods during the 2015 calendar year. Information includes the value of food sales by marketing channel (i.e. farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) arrangements, restaurants, and roadside stands), value of crop and livestock sales, marketing practices, expenses, and more.

NASS mailed a second round of the Local Foods Marketing Practices Survey today to a random sample of producers who grow and sell foods locally. Response to the survey is vital as the information gathered will be used to account for all farmers involved in the local and regional food system. Producers who receive the 2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey from NASS are strongly encouraged to respond. Farmers can fill out the survey online via a secure website, www.agcounts.usda.gov, or return their form by mail.

"In the 2012 Census of Agriculture, nearly 4,500 farms in North Carolina reported selling directly to consumers," said David Knopf, director for NASS's Eastern Mountain Regional Field Office, which serves North Carolina. "Consumers spent nearly \$32 million here on fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats. Current trends show people making more of an effort to buy local, and we wouldn't be surprised to see higher numbers in this survey."

Besides connecting with households is through CSA arrangements, which deliver food to subscribers who purchase shares in that season's products, North Carolina also ranked fifth in the nation for number of farms selling their products directly to retail outlets, such as restaurants, grocery stores, schools and hospitals.

USDA stakeholders, including farmers, various levels of government, and related businesses and organizations, will all benefit from the new information, which will be published in December 2016. The data will be used for decisions and programs that support local and regional food systems, including:

- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Farmers Market Promotion Program, Local Food Promotion Program, Specialty Crop Block Grants Program.
- USDA Farm Service Agency's Microloan Program.
- USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives Program, a collaboration between USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture and USDA's Food and Nutrition Service
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service's efforts to expand EBT availability at farmers markets
- State and local agencies' support and promotion of local food markets
- Farmers' and ag organizations' business and marketing strategies
- Researchers', extension's and university members' local foods research

For more information about the 2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

###

NASS provides accurate, timely, useful and objective statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. We invite you provide occasional feedback on our products and services. Sign up at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/subscriptions> and look for "NASS Data User Community."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).