

1. What food product(s) do you raise/grow? Do you have a specialty?

Vegetable farmers made up the largest group. A total of sixteen farmers or 64 percent of the agricultural businesses interviewed grew vegetables, five businesses raised meat and/or eggs (20 percent) and the remaining four (16 percent) were considered specialty producers. Fruits, spices and flowers were included in the vegetable category. Vegetables raised within Waushara County varied; this category contained leafy vegetables such as cabbage, beets, lettuce and brussel sprouts; stem vegetables such as asparagus and kohlrabi; fruit vegetables such as squash, pumpkin, peppers, tomatoes, green beans and cucumbers; root vegetables such as potatoes and inflorescence vegetables or edible flowers such as broccoli. Fruits grown in Waushara County included apples, berries (black, raspberry and strawberries), peaches, pears, plums, watermelon, and cantaloupe. Spices included dill, parsley, basil, and cilantro. Finally, one business listed gladiolus as a crop that they sold. The meat and/or eggs category included eggs plus beef, chicken, buffalo and lamb. The specialty category included single crop producers that may have been included in the vegetable category as well as other crops. Products, within this category included honey, shitake mushrooms, pumpkins, strawberries and raspberries.

2. Where is the product sold? Do you sell your products in the local market, either directly to consumers or to grocery stores, restaurants, or other institutions? Why do you choose to sell them in this way?

Vegetable: Since both large and small vegetable agricultural businesses were interviewed, some variations in marketing of their products could be seen. A number of businesses sold their products through a variety of outlets. Overall, out of the 16 agricultural businesses included in this category (vegetable), ten (62.5 percent) sold their product at a farm/roadside stand. Reasons given ranged from wanting to stay small, more profitable, enjoy interacting with people, and more convenient. Three businesses indicated that they sold products at farmers markets in Berlin, Madison and Oshkosh. Four businesses indicated that they sold products wholesale through produce auctions, to other growers who sell through farm markets and farm stands and brokers. Reasons given included limited time and profitability. One business's products were planted through contract. Other outlets for selling products included grocery stores (3), restaurants (1), advertisement in paper (1), word of mouth (2) and farm store (1). Reasons given for not selling to grocery stores included groceries selling produce for less than the farmer sold it on his own. Reasons for not selling to restaurants included the restaurant not willing to pay the farmer for what the product was worth.

Meat and/or Eggs: Overall, four out of the five agricultural businesses (meat and/or eggs category) sold their products by word of mouth. Only one business maintained a store on the

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farm which was inspected by the state. Reasons given for not selling to grocery stores, restaurants and other institutions included too much work, cost, uncertainty of what's required.

Specialty: Most agricultural businesses in this category (specialty) sold their product in a variety of ways. These outlets varied from word of mouth (1), school fundraiser (1), farm stand (3), grocery store (1), and wholesale (1).

3. Are you interested in expanding your local sales? (Local market options could include produce auctions, web-based sales, grocery stores, restaurant, institutions, etc.).

Vegetable: Overall, ten out of the 16 (62.5 percent) agricultural businesses (vegetable) are interested in expanding. Reasons given included a need to change as the market changes, and a willingness to explore different outlets, as long as those outlets were not too time consuming.

Two agricultural businesses were not interested, primarily because of age. Finally four businesses stated that they may consider expanding sales.

Meat and/or Eggs: All of the agricultural businesses in this category (meat and/or eggs) expressed some level of interest in expanding sales, though some voiced concerns about paperwork, knowledge of computers and government regulations.

Specialty: All of the agricultural businesses in this category (specialty) were overwhelming interested in expanding sales.

4. If you are not currently selling locally, what would it take to sell your products in the local market? Are there barriers to doing this?

Vegetable: Most agricultural businesses in this category (vegetable) are already selling locally. The one wholesaler, who does not have local sales, is not interested. Reasons given for not expanding local sales included manpower, time constraints, name recognition and that a third of the people in Waushara County are on food stamps and are not interested in buying fresh fruit and produce.

Meat and/or Eggs: All agricultural businesses in this category (meat and/eggs) are already selling locally. Barriers for increasing sales included finding people to buy a ¼ to ½ side of beef, government regulation, and not a large market in area for their product.

Specialty: All agricultural businesses in this category (specialty) are already selling locally. Barriers for increasing sales included constraints of local farm markets (only want one honey producer), time, transportation, storage, and finances.

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5. Do you currently, or would you consider direct marketing through a CSA model (Community Supported Agriculture Project)?

Vegetable: Ten out of the 16 agricultural businesses (vegetable) in this category were not interested in participating in a CSA. Reasons given included limited produce selection, not a large enough population base to support this type of market, tight local dollars, concerns about crop failures and consumer expectations, time constraints, small scale operation and past experience.

Meat and/or Eggs: There was not a lot of interest (by meat and/or eggs) expressed in direct marketing through a CSA. Agricultural businesses in this category voiced concern that a CSA would not apply well with local meat, primarily because they butcher only a couple of times per year.

Specialty: Agricultural businesses in this category (specialty) were split evenly over interest in direct marketing through a CSA and not utilizing this outlet. Reasons given by the two businesses that were not interested reflected the seasonal nature of the product and the lack of diversity.

6. Are you interested in selling or are you currently selling to institutions in Wisconsin i.e. schools, hospitals, etc.?

Vegetable: Agricultural businesses in this category (vegetable) had a mixed reaction to this question; selling to institutions. Five expressed interest in selling to institutions but had some concerns regarding the size of their operations, contacts, how to get started and regulations. Eight were not interested, reasons voiced include the size of their operations, incompatible time frame (schools not open in summer when produce is in season), and regulations. Of the three agricultural businesses currently selling to institutions, two would like to expand these operations if it were logistically practical.

Meat and/or Eggs: Agricultural businesses in this category (meat and/or eggs) were not very interested in selling to institutions; they voiced concerns about the size of their operations, location, and regulations. Only one business stated that they were open to selling to institutions, while another thought that ground beef may be a possibility.

Specialty: All the agricultural businesses in this category (specialty) expressed interest in selling to institutions; however two mentioned that this would only be when they had available product.

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7. What currently happens to your surplus products? Why? Is it possible to donate products to others in the community? Why? Why Not? (liability, time, expense, etc.)

Vegetable: Most agricultural businesses (vegetable) donate surplus products to variety of different outlets that benefit low income people, these outlets include local food pantries (7), low income/elderly populations (1), needs in the community (4), and the local church (1). Two businesses process products that they are unable to sell, while three indicated that surplus materials are used to feed cattle. Four businesses plow under surplus product. The number one reason given for not donating surplus produce was timing or not being able to get someone to pick up the produce before it was plowed under.

Meat and/or Eggs: Agricultural businesses in this category (meat and/or eggs) stated that they did not have surplus products that they needed to get rid of.

Specialty: Due to the variety of products in this category, only one agricultural business stated that the produce was allowed to rot in the field. Two mentioned that the products they sold were not perishable, while the final business stated that they have never experienced a surplus. The one business, whose produce rotted in the field, stated that they would donate the surplus if someone would pick them up.

8. Would a farmer's market benefit your farming operations? Would you consider participating? Please explain.

Vegetable: Agricultural businesses in this category were split between the feeling that a farmer's market would benefit their operation (8) and no (6), it wouldn't. One farmer did not comment on this question, while the other stated perhaps it would be a possibility. Concerns raised regarding the farmers markets included competition from other farmers, price cutting, lack of profit, lack of time and the location of the closest market.

Meat and/or Eggs: Only one business in this category stated that they would participate, if the markets were closer. Reasons given against participating in farmer's markets included proximity to the market, time and logistics of keeping the meat frozen and government regulations.

Specialty: Three out of the four agricultural businesses in this category would be interested in participating in farmer's markets. The business that did not see the benefit, felt that the amount of money earned through this outlet would not be worth the effort.

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9. What would help you continue your agricultural operations in Waushara County?

Vegetable: Responses from agricultural businesses within this category was varied and extensive. Some of the responses dealt with issues that may be beyond local control such as the price of fertilizers, fuel, irrigation and health insurance. While other issues may be within local control and include zoning (too restrictive, does not allow for signage), grant assistance, publicity (countywide advertising campaign), reliable labor pool, International Food Standards (IFS) for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), public education (produce auctions, buy local/fresh), local apprenticeship program for high school seniors, seed swap, farmer education (continue and update operations, new farmers, subsidized food products), grocery store pricing practices, consistent/standardized rules for farmers markets between communities, and farmers markets should be selling local food or it should be clearly marked that the food is not locally grown. Agricultural businesses also mentioned programs that they felt were beneficial such as the WIC and senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) certificates.

Meat and/or Eggs: Responses from agricultural businesses within this category included publicity, public education (alternatives to grocery stores, benefits of grass fed animals), farmer education (how to expand market base), government incentive programs for food producers and a review of government rules and regulations.

Specialty: Responses from agricultural businesses within this category included public education (specialty product, processing, and food nutrition), financing, and an expanded market base.

10. How might Waushara Food Connections assist you in this effort?

Vegetable: Responses from agricultural businesses within this category included establishment of a reliable distributor for pickup and delivery for donations to food pantries and other areas, public education (raise awareness of local food choices), publicity (free listing of local producers, advertising), farmer education (certification of WIC and senior assistance programs, financial assistance, advertising opportunities, tunnel growing, greenhouse operations, developing a website), provision of financial incentives (seed grants), feedback from the farmer survey and assessment, provide portable restroom facilities at local farm markets and assistance with grocery store contacts.

Meat and/or Eggs: Responses from agricultural businesses within this category included publicity (public awareness of local opportunities, free listing of local producers), public education (grass fed beef), and farmer education (government rules and regulations, expansion of local markets, how to develop local contacts, internet sales, and how to develop a brochure)

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Specialty: Responses from agricultural businesses within this category included publicity (development of a Waushara County Farm Fresh Atlas), farmer education (website development, and financial opportunities), public education (local farm operations, specialty crops and food processing), and provide transportation to get the product to the market.

11. If you market directly to the public, would you like to be on our free listing of local food producers? This list will be distributed to people interested in buying directly from local farms. If yes, please fill out the form, “Free Listing of Local Food Producers.”

Vegetable: Thirteen agricultural businesses or 81.5 percent of the businesses surveyed in this category indicated that they would like to be included in the “Free Listing of Local Food Producers”. Two businesses said that they were not interested and one did not feel that this applied.

Meat and/or Eggs: All five agricultural businesses within this category were interested in being listed on the “Free Listing of Local Food Producers”.

Specialty: All four agricultural businesses within this category were interested in being listed on the “Free Listing of Local Food Producers”.

12. Would you like to receive a copy of our food assessment report when complete?

Vegetable: Fifteen agricultural businesses or 93.8 percent of the businesses surveyed in this category indicated that they would like to receive a copy of the food assessment report when it was complete. Only one business indicated that they weren’t interested.

Meat and/or Eggs: All five agricultural businesses within this category were interested in receiving a copy of the food assessment report when it was complete.

Specialty: All four agricultural businesses within this category were interested in receiving a copy of the food assessment report when it was complete.

13. Would you like to be informed of Steering Committee meetings and/or join the committee and be a part of planning community food projects?

Vegetable: Eight agricultural businesses or half of the businesses surveyed in this category would be interested in either being on the steering committee or staying informed on what the committee is doing and discussing. Seven or slightly less than half are not interested, reasons given included time constraints. Only one agricultural business indicated that they may be interested in participating.

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Meat and/or Eggs: Four out of the five agricultural businesses within the category were interested in either participating in the meetings or staying informed. Only one agricultural business was not interested due to time constraints.

Specialty: All four agricultural businesses in this category expressed interest in staying informed or updated on what was going on.