



# Local Food Production Survey 2017

## Executive Summary

Each December, the Acadiana Food Alliance conducts an annual survey to assess the health of our local food economy. The responses gathered help us take a comprehensive look at the growers in our region and identify the needs and opportunities within each parish. This year, our results reflect growers of a variety of food products including fruits and vegetables, proteins, and dairy. Results also account for a range of ownership models including generational family farms, sole proprietorships, and community gardens.

Similar to 2016 findings, the 2017 primary distribution method for growers in this region is farmers' markets sales, at 52% of responses. An additional 29% of respondents report that their primary distribution is through direct sales with individuals or clients. This assumes a delivery or pick-up of products by the grower or purchasing individual/business. One respondent uses internet sales as a primary sales method, while no growers report using an aggregation service.

When asked about total sales as compared to last year, 44% of respondents say their sales increased, 32% report stable sales, and 24% report a decrease in sales. These results are overall better than 2016's in that responses claiming an increase or stability in sales are 15 points higher this year. Unfortunately, the 27% decrease in 2017 does not speak to the four farm businesses that closed in 2017.

Our largest group of growers for the Acadiana region continues to be those with 5-10 years in business, and annual earnings of \$25,000 and below continues to be the norm. (It is worth noting that the AFA primarily focuses reporting efforts on small, local farms and food producers.) Upcoming federal standards require a number of new mandatory standards for farms producing above the \$25,000 mark, and this data shows that a large portion of our growers will not be affected by these rules. We recently began asking about generational farming operations in our region, and identified 5 businesses that are either generationally owned or operated. Our local food (production) economy employs approximately 45-50 full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers according to survey responses.

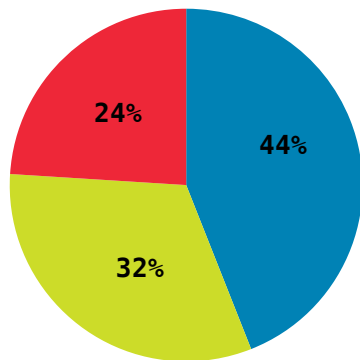
When asked about the barriers to success and topics of interest, responses show a strong desire to access new markets and to learn about improving marketing skills. Likewise, growers show an interest in a food aggregation service and value-added production assistance.

We would like to thank the Lafayette Economic Development Authority for partnering with us in this regional data collection and all of the participating farms and growers that contributed to this study.

Sincerely,  
*The Acadiana Food Alliance*

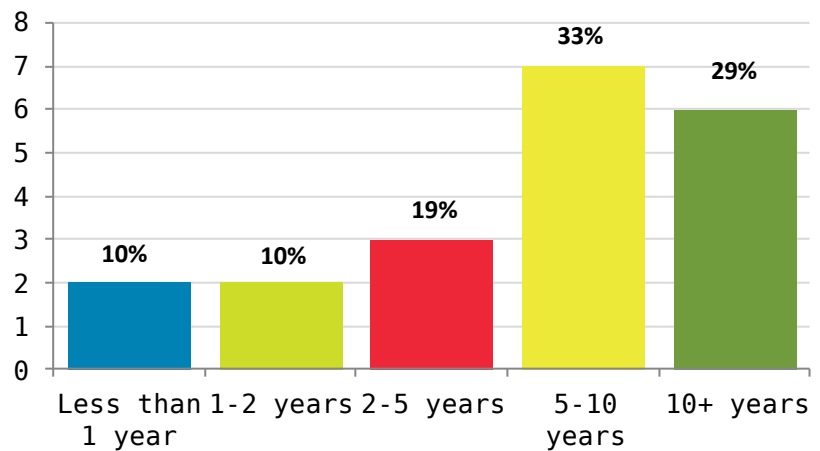
# How Does the Local Food Economy Look?

## Sales Compared to Last Year



■ Increased ■ Stable ■ Decreased

## Years in Business

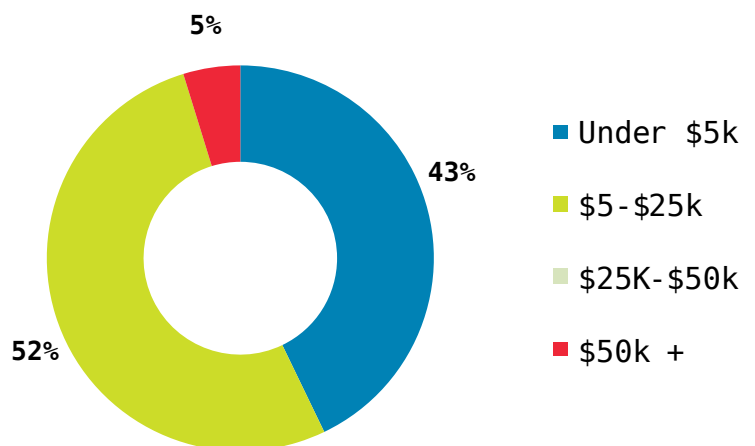


## Employment

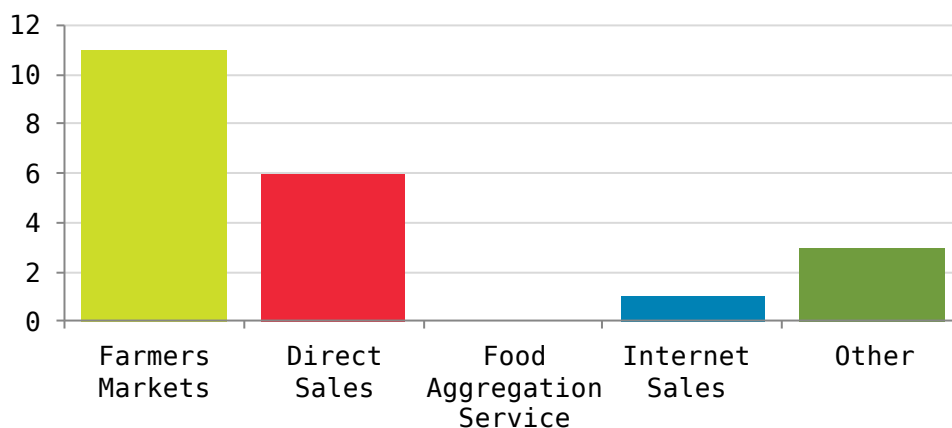
Seventeen of the twenty-two respondents contributed to this question.

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| <b>Full-time</b> | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Part-Time</b> | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Seasonal</b>  | <b>14</b> |

## Total Annual Farming Revenue



## Primary Distribution Method

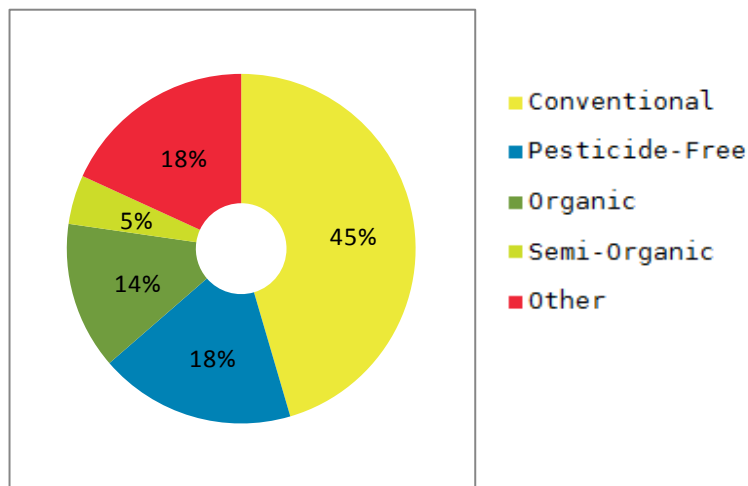


Generationally  
Owned and  
Operated  
Businesses

5

# What Are the Needs and Interests of Our Growers?

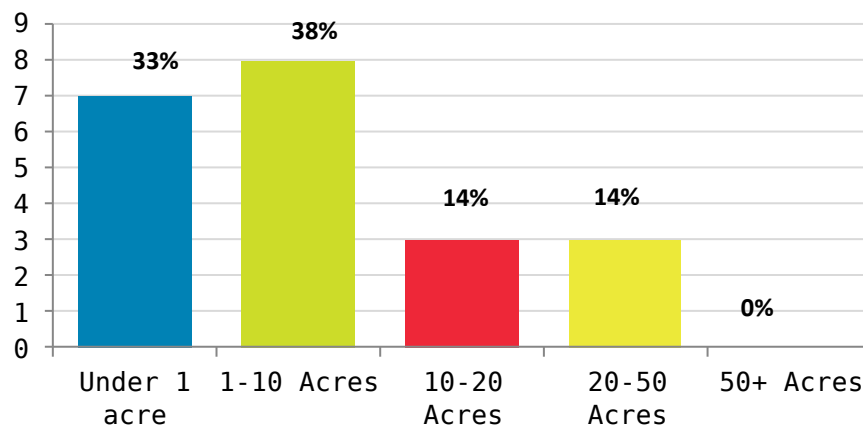
Method of Growing



## Barriers to Success

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Access to New Markets                            | 6 |
| Shortage of Labor                                | 5 |
| Access to Finance/Loans/<br>Funding              | 3 |
| Cost of Leasing or<br>Purchasing Additional Land | 2 |
| Cost of Leasing or Paying<br>for Current Land    | 1 |
| Access to Business/<br>Financial Consultation    | 0 |
| Other  | 6 |

## Acreage Farmed



## Topics of Interest

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Marketing Assistance</b><br>(i.e. social media training, access to new markets, etc.)   | 6 |
| <b>Food Aggregation Service</b><br>(Provides a single point of sales for growers.)   | 5 |
| <b>Value-Added Production Assistance</b><br>(Products developed for wholesale markets and can be packaged, stored, and distributed.) | 5 |
| <b>Agricultural Techniques</b><br>(i.e. increasing output/efficiency, new techniques in agricultural practices)                      | 4 |
| <b>Grower/Buyer Liaison Service or Contract Negotiation Assistance</b>   | 4 |
| <b>Small Business or Entrepreneurial Assistance</b><br>(i.e. business strategy consultation, financial planning, etc.)               | 4 |
| <b>Networking Events with Regional Farmers</b>   | 3 |
| <b>Farm to School Progress Updates</b>   | 3 |
| <b>GAP/FSMA Certification Guidance</b><br>(Necessary for sales to large institutions like hospitals, grocery stores, or schools.)    | 2 |
| <b>Other</b> (please specify)  | 4 |

|     | <b>Survey Question Summary</b>   | <b>Responses</b> |
|-----|--|------------------|
| Q1  | How were sales compared to last year?  | 22               |
| Q2  | What is your total annual farming revenue?   | 18               |
| Q3  | What size area are you farming?  | 18               |
| Q4  | How many employees does your farming operation employ?<br>(Include yourself in this count if applicable)   | 18               |
| Q5  | How long have you been selling produce commercially?   | 18               |
| Q6  | Is your business generationally owned and operated?  | 17               |
| Q7  | What is your primary distribution method?  | 18               |
| Q8  | How would you describe your method of growing?   | 18               |
| Q9  | In your opinion, what are barriers to the continued success of your business?  | 16               |
| Q10 | What topics would you want to learn more about? (Check all that apply.)  | 15               |
| Q11 | What types of produce/protein/dairy do you anticipate growing this coming year (2018)? (List as many as applicable, from greatest expected production to | 18               |
| Q12 | Contact Information  | 18               |
| Q13 | Do you want to be included in the Local Food Directory for the Acadiana region?  | 18               |
| Q14 | Any other comments, questions, or concerns?  | 7                |

#### **Confidentiality Statement**

The Acadiana Food Alliance agrees to keep individual business information confidential. Data is reported in respect to the Acadiana region as a whole, with no business names tied to individual responses or listed as participants in the survey.

#### **Survey Methodology**

Surveys administered over the course of one month (December 2017). Questionnaires were sent via email and direct mail. Data collected from a total of 25 respondents. Outreach to 70 food production businesses that sell within the Acadiana region. (Margin of error: 10)