



Connecticut Agriculture at a Glance P.1



A Deeper Look at Connecticut's Agriculture P.2



Conservation Reserve Program and Food and Nutrition Service Program Benefits P.3

Agriculture In Connecticut

Volume 2, Issue 1

Christopher Jeffords and Marilyn Altobello

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT



University of Connecticut
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

A recent study conducted by the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Connecticut found that the total impact of Connecticut's agricultural industry on the state economy ranges from \$2.7 to \$3.5 billion (Lopez et. al., 2010). Connecticut agriculture is quite diverse, ranging from state-wide participation in the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to sponsoring over 100 Farmers' Markets and providing various benefits to low-income residents through the Food and Nutrition Service Program (FNS). To explore this diversity, this newsletter offers a unique perspective on Connecticut's agricultural industry, focusing on various aspects of the state economy that help make Connecticut one of the most agriculturally productive states in New England.



Section I – Connecticut Agriculture at a Glance

The recent Census of Agriculture notes that the principal operators of farms in Connecticut are males whose primary occupation happens to be something other than farming. At an average age of fifty-eight years, Connecticut's principal operators are the oldest in New England – but age is just a number! For farms with at most three operators, the majority of operators are white, yet Connecticut has the second highest proportion of non-white operators compared to the rest of New England. The following table displays these characteristics for all New England states as of 2007.

Table I – Farm Operator Characteristics

State	Characteristics of Principal Operator					All Operators by Race ⁽¹⁾		
	Sex		Average Age	Primary Occupation		More than One Race	Non-White	White
	Male	Female		Farming	Other			
Connecticut	3,755	1,161	58	2,273	2,643	39	208	7,579
Maine	6,093	2,043	56	3,540	4,596	76	226	12,616
Massachusetts	5,465	2,226	56	3,688	4,003	44	350	11,787
New Hampshire	2,929	1,237	56	1,930	2,236	58	99	6,717
Rhode Island	922	297	56	621	598	8	41	1,834
Vermont	5,518	1,466	57	3,461	3,523	58	162	11,050

Notes:

(1) For farms with a maximum of three operators

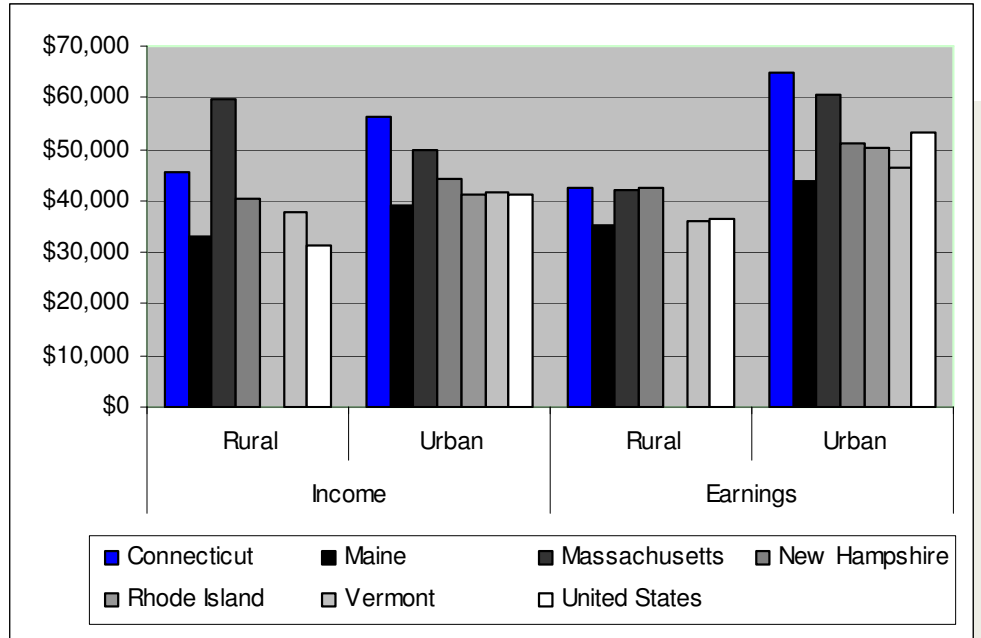
Source: Census of Agriculture, State Profile, 2007

Agriculture *In Connecticut*

In 2009, rural and urban Connecticut workers were among some of the highest paid in New England. On average, each rural and urban job in Connecticut generated relatively high earnings compared to the other states in New England. Income per capita in the rural and urban sectors was \$45,312 and \$56,248 respectively, and earnings per job were \$42,441 and \$64,651. The following figure displays these statistics for all New England states, as well as the United States in 2009.



Figure 1 – 2009 Income per Capita and Earnings per Job, Rural and Urban Sector



Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Economic Research Service, State Fact Sheets.
 Note: Missing rural income per capita and earnings per job data for Rhode Island.

Given Connecticut’s proximity to the financial industry of New York, it is perhaps no surprise that urban income and earnings are the highest. Yet the figure above also shows that rural Connecticut workers have relatively high income per capita and rural jobs earn a considerable amount – compared to the rest of New England and the average values for the United States.

Section 2 — A Deeper Look at Connecticut Agriculture

The diversity of Connecticut’s agricultural industry is also evident in the various programs and services offered by the state and in that which the state participates at a national level. For example, Connecticut’s FPP has preserved over 37,000 acres of farmland in 74 municipalities since 1978. With a goal of preserving 130,000 acres of farmland, 85,000 of which is cropland, the program touts as its primary objective to “secure a food and fiber producing land resource base, consisting primarily of prime and statewide important farmland soils, for the future of agriculture in Connecticut (2010 Annual Report Summary).”

Agriculture *In Connecticut*

Connecticut also participates in the CRP. This program, administered by the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency, “reduces soil erosion, protects the Nation’s ability to produce food and fiber, reduces sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources (Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2011).” As of January 2010, Connecticut had 17 farms enrolled in the CRP totaling 176 acres at an average payment of \$80 per acre. The following table displays New England enrollment statistics for the CRP as of January 2010.

Table 2 – Conservation Reserve Program Statistics by State for New England

State ⁽¹⁾	Number of Contracts	Number of Farms	Acres	Annual Rent, \$1000	Average Payments per Acre
Connecticut	19	17	176	14	80
Maine	761	508	20,602	1,084	53
Massachusetts	4	4	15	3	173
New Hampshire	6	6	60	3	55
Vermont	351	250	2,703	267	99

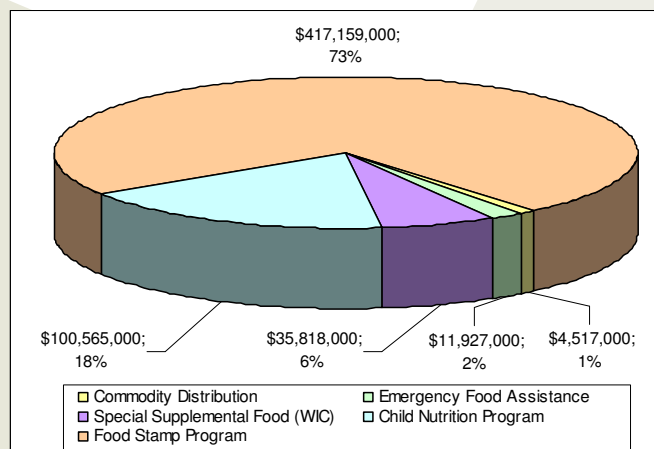
Notes:
 (1) Data for Rhode Island not available
 Source: United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2010

While not a huge source of income for the state, the CRP provides non-traditional ecological and amenity benefits, the value of which could be considerably larger than \$14,000. Clearly FPP and CRP offer a way to preserve land and partially alleviate the stress of importing agricultural goods and services into Connecticut.

To further address the need for local agricultural goods and services, Connecticut has a vast network of Farmers’ Markets offering local produce, meats, and other agricultural products. According to a recent master’s paper by Rachel Rindfleisch (2010) and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Connecticut has over 100 Farmers’ Markets and, as of 2000, was growing at a rate of six to ten markets per year. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture notes that seven new markets were created in 2010, while nine have formed through July 2011.

Most Farmers’ Markets in Connecticut tend to participate in some portion of FNS. Rindfleisch (2010) notes that with an expansion of certain FNS programs, Farmers’ Markets may be a key instrument in closing the urban food gap in Connecticut. The following pie chart notes the total amount of funding Connecticut devoted to FNS in 2009.

Figure 2 – 2009 Food and Nutrition Service Program Benefits



Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics 2010

Agriculture *In Connecticut*

The Food Stamp Program, also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, makes up the largest portion of FNS benefits in Connecticut at 73% of \$569.9 million. The Child Nutrition Program encompasses child and adult care food, summer food (i.e., food for children when school is not in session), special milk (i.e., for children without access to other meal programs), national school lunch, and breakfast. Special Supplemental Food (WIC) includes the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program that provides \$10-\$30 vouchers annually to be used at Farmers' Markets, farm stands, and Community Supported Agriculture. Rindfleisch (2010) notes that the limited dollar amount of these vouchers tend to bring an increased number of low-income people to the markets, where they often spend more than the voucher amounts. Part of this problem has been accounted for by the Wholesome Wave Foundation. The Bridgeport-based non-profit organization doubles the value of foods stamp benefits at participating Farmers' Markets through a coupon program where the coupon benefits never expire (Podsada, July 4, 2011).

Connecticut's agricultural industry certainly has a significant impact on the state's economy, generating roughly \$1,000 in output per Connecticut resident per year (Lopez et. al., 2010). Contributing to the strength of the agricultural industry, Connecticut's farm operators are among some of the most diverse in New England. Rural income per capita and earnings per job are relatively high in Connecticut, especially when compared to the rest of New England and the United States. Connecticut's participation in various preservation programs contribute to the lush agricultural industry in both traditional and non-traditional ways. Finally, the widespread use of Farmers' Markets as a means to promote local, sustainable agriculture coupled with the various FNS benefits offered to low-income residents, strengthen the role of agriculture in Connecticut.

SOURCES:

Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Farmers' Markets (website).

Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Farmland Preservation Program, 2010 Annual Report Summary.

Lopez, R., Joglekar, D., Zhu, C., Gunther, P., and Carstensen, F. (2010) "Economic Impacts of Connecticut's Agricultural Industry." A report by The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Connecticut in cooperation with The Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA).

Podsada, J. (July 4, 2011). "Private Charity Doubles Food Stamp Value at Farmers Markets." Hartford Courant, online edition, business section.

Rindfleisch, R. (2010). "Use of Farmers' Markets to Close the Urban Food Gap." University of Connecticut unpublished MS paper.

United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics Annual, 2010 Agricultural Statistics.

United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, State Fact Sheets (Updated May 19, 2011).

United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Services, 2010 State Fact Sheet(s).

United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Services, 2010 State Fact Sheets, 2007 Census of Agriculture State Profile(s).

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Reserve Program (Updated March 9, 2011).

ADDRESS

ADDRESS