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2022 Appalachian Grown Annual Producer Survey Report

ASAP Local Food Research Center
March 2023

Introduction



About the Appalachian Grown Program

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. To support Southern Appalachian farms and build a local food system, ASAP developed the Appalachian Grown™ program in 2007 with the goal of expanding local market opportunities for farmers by providing a way for the public to easily identify products from local farms.

Appalachian Grown is a branding program for farms, farmers tailgate markets, retailers, food assistance organizations and wholesalers that annually certifies food and agricultural products grown or raised on farms in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachian Mountains. This region includes 60 Appalachian counties in North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. A trusted label helps buyers and shoppers know that they are spending their dollars to benefit local family farms and communities.

Participation in the program provides connection to a network of family farmers in the region as well as access to services, educational materials, and resources to support viable farms and a strong local food system. **In 2022, 887 farms were Appalachian Grown certified.**

The Appalachian Grown 2022 Producer Survey

Every year since the Appalachian Grown (AG) program was founded, a survey has been sent to participating farms to assess the impact of program services and gather feedback to shape the program's future direction. In November 2022, this annual online survey was sent to 887 Appalachian Grown certified producers – those farmers for which we had a valid email address. The survey asked about their experiences farming in 2022. It opened on November 15, 2022 and closed just over four weeks later on December 15, 2022. One hundred and seventy-six Appalachian Grown farmers responded to this survey. Forty-nine emails bounced back and 180 emails were unopened, for response rates of 27% (opened emails only) and 21% (opened and unopened emails).

This report contains the findings from the survey.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
About the Appalachian Grown Program	1
The Appalachian Grown 2022 Producer Survey	1
Table of Contents	2
Table of Figures	2
Executive Summary: Farmland Access & Customer Relationships	3
Summary Findings	4
Farms and Farm Operators	4
Accessing New Land for Farming	6
Building Relationships with Customers	8
Economic Impacts	10
Markets and Farm Sales	11
Participation in the Appalachian Grown Program	15

Table of Figures

Percent of Farms in Appalachian Grown States	4
Map of the Appalachian Grown Region, Shaded by Number of Survey Responses	5
Percent of Farmers that Own and Lease Land	
& Percent of Farmers that Wish to Purchase or Lease More Land	6
Strategies Farmers Used and Rated as “Very Useful” for Finding New Wholesale Buyers in 2022	8
Strategies Farmers Used and Rated as “Very Useful” for Finding New Direct Customers in 2022	8
Ways Farmers Promote their Farm Products to Customers	
& What Farmers Update Customers About their Farm	9
Number of Farms in Categories of Local Farm Input Expenditures	10
Market Opportunities in 2022 compared to 2021	
& Factors that Influenced Farmers’ Expansions into New Markets in 2022	11
Percent of Farmers that Sold to Each Market Outlet in 2022, 2021, 2020, and 2019	12
Percent of Farmers whose Sales Changed for Each Market Outlet	13
Sales Changes Compared to 2021 and Gross Sales for 2022	13
Percent of Farms Who Use Regional Branding	15
ASAP Services Rated by Farmers as “Very Important” for Increasing Sales in 2022	15

Executive Summary: Farmland Access & Customer Relationships

This report presents findings from the 2022 annual survey of Appalachian Grown (AG) certified farmers in the Southern Appalachians. These farms are small, family-owned, and primarily located and selling in Western North Carolina. This annual survey gathers information about market channel opportunities, marketing strategies, and farm product sales. Respondents report challenges to farming in this region and the AG program's impact on their farm business' success.

Two new sections were added to this year's survey, diving deeper into access to farmland and farmer relationships with their customers. To better support new farmers and farmers wishing to expand onto new land within our region, we asked farmers to share the leasing and owning situation with their current farmland, if they hope to purchase or lease more land in the future, and challenges to purchasing or leasing land. Almost sixty percent wish to expand by purchasing or leasing additional land, and cite the price and availability of land as the two major challenges.

In a local food economy, personal relationships built with customers are a key marketing strategy for farmers. Word of mouth from other farmers and buyers was the most useful strategy for building relationships with wholesale customers, like restaurants and grocery stores. Over ninety percent of farms share their farm story when finding and building relationships directly with individual customers. This year, we expanded upon previous surveys by not only inquiring about the strategies used to form relationships with customers, but also farm-related topics promoted through those approaches. Farmers described promoting based on growing practices, farmer characteristics, and community connections, among other things.

Market opportunities and sales continue to rebound after the irregularities in many markets due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More farms reported attending off-farm events, allowing customers to sample products, and offering on-farm opportunities than in recent years. Farms also expressed a better market outlook in terms of the number of market outlets available in 2022 compared to 2021. Overall sales increased or stayed the same for nearly eighty percent of farmers in 2022.

Though production costs rose again in 2022 for most farmers, many were able to take advantage of reopening markets by scaling up production and finding new ways to sell their goods. Of those that expanded into new markets in 2022, over sixty percent noted increased production as an influence for that growth.

When asked this year about hope and inspiration for the future of farming, farmers once again expressed sheer positivity and appreciation for their customers and communities. From expanding into new markets like CSA or food pantries, to experimenting with new growing practices and building additional infrastructure on their land, Appalachian Grown farmers had an abundance of success stories to be proud of this year.

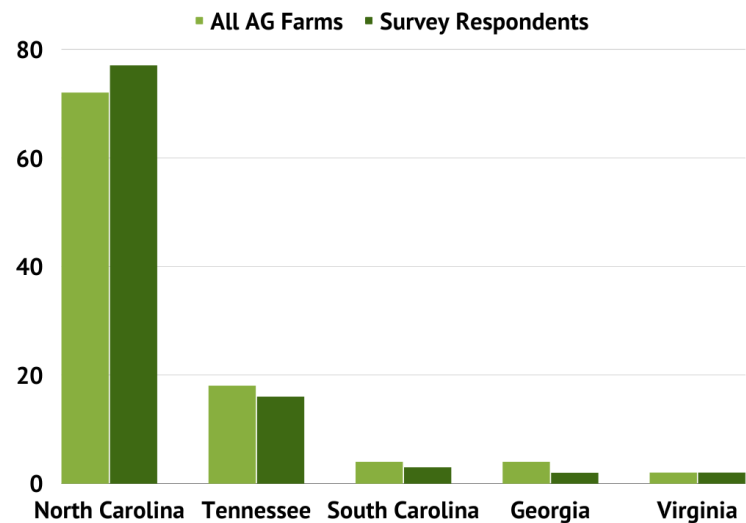
Summary Findings

Farms and Farm Operators

The responses to this survey represent the experiences and opinions of 176, or nineteen percent, of the 906 Appalachian Grown farmers in 2022. The following section details the characteristics of the Appalachian Grown farmers who responded to the survey. This survey had a representative sample of responses in terms of distribution of farms across the Appalachian region and acreage of farmland in production, compared to all farms in ASAP’s network of Appalachian Grown farmers. However, a higher proportion of survey respondents were new to farming compared to all Appalachian Grown farms in 2022.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents farm in North Carolina, compared to 72 percent of all Appalachian Grown Farms. The counties with the most survey representation include eight in North Carolina (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Haywood, McDowell, Watauga, Macon, and Ashe) and three in Tennessee (Greene, Blount, and Knox).

Figure 1
Percent of Farms in Appalachian Grown States

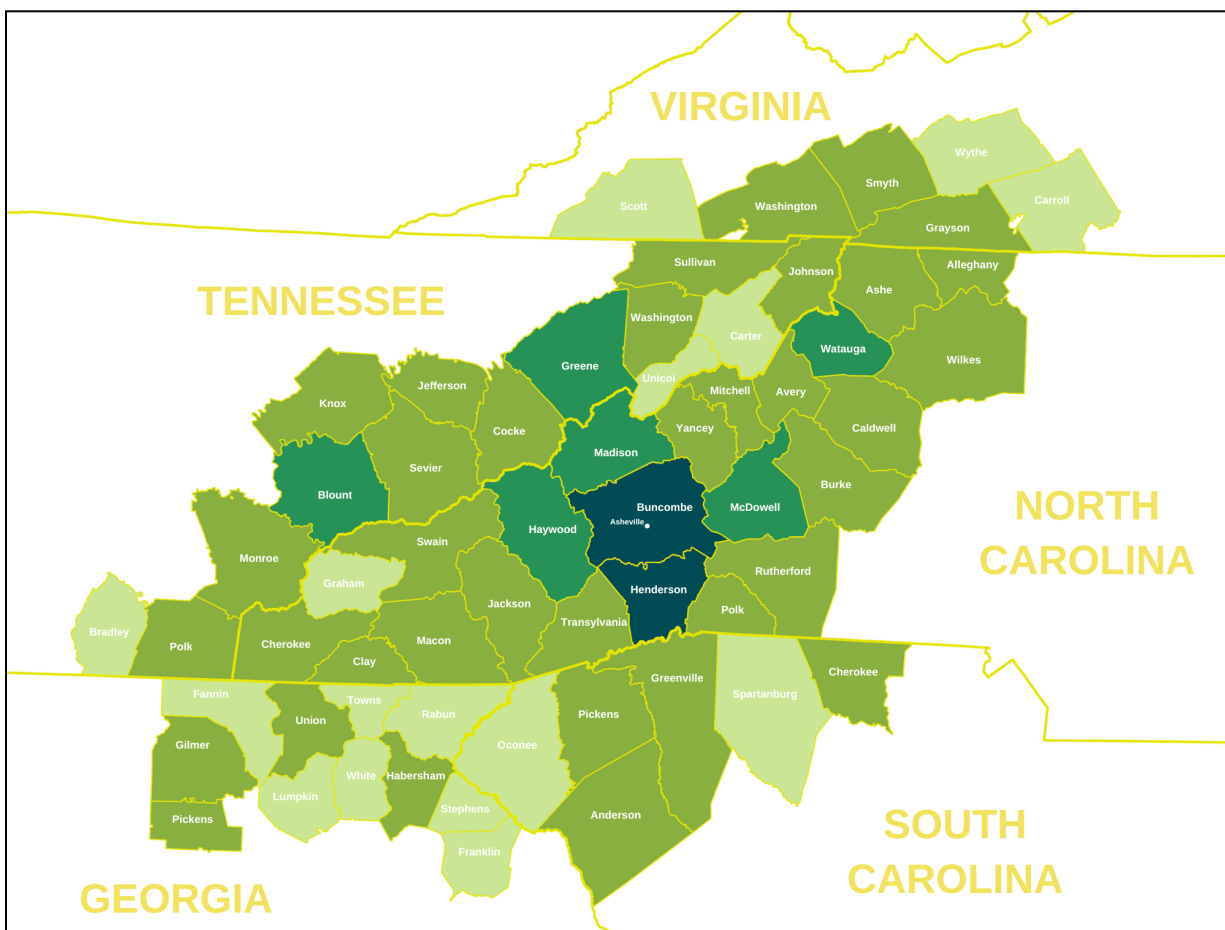


Though no farmer demographic information was gathered in the Appalachian Grown producer survey, some overall Appalachian Grown farmer demographics are available. Seventy-five percent of Appalachian Grown farmers identify as white, 3% identify as Native American, 2% identify as Hispanic, 1% identify as Black, 1% identify as Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4% identify as another race or ethnicity. Of those, 5% identify as being multiracial. The average age of Appalachian Grown farmers is fifty-two, and ages range from 21 to 91 years old. Forty-two percent of primary operators are female. When compared to all farmers in the Western North Carolina (WNC) region, Appalachian Grown farmers are more racially diverse (97% of WNC farmers are white), a higher percentage are female (35% of WNC farmers are female), and are slightly younger on average (58 years is average age across WNC farmers)¹.

¹USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2017 Census of Agriculture. Complete data available at www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus.

Figure 2

Map of the Appalachian Grown Region, Shaded by Number of Survey Responses



Fifty-four percent of respondents were “new” to farming. The USDA defines a New and Beginning Farmer or Rancher as being the primary operator on a farm (i.e., making the day to day decisions) for 10 or fewer years. Forty percent of all Appalachian Grown producers are considered New and Beginning, noticeably less than survey respondents. Thirty-six percent of farms that responded fit the USDA’s definition of limited resource farm, meaning they had low farm sales (less than \$189,200) and low household income (below national poverty level of \$27,750) for two years in a row.

Survey participants had an average of 47 acres in production in 2022. This is nearly equivalent to the average acreage for all Appalachian Grown farms: 44 acres. Acreage in production differs from total farm size, as it only includes farmland that is actively used to produce crops, graze animals, or harvest timberland. Farmland in production ranged from one-sixteenth of an acre to 1,000 acres for survey respondents and to 2,500 acres across all Appalachian Grown farms. However, 51 percent of survey respondents and 56 percent of all AG farmers operated on six acres or fewer. These are very small farms, especially compared to the average farm size in North Carolina (182 acres) and nationally (441 acres). Those who responded to this survey farm a total of 8,224 acres, twenty-six percent of the total Appalachian Grown farmland in production (32,050 acres).

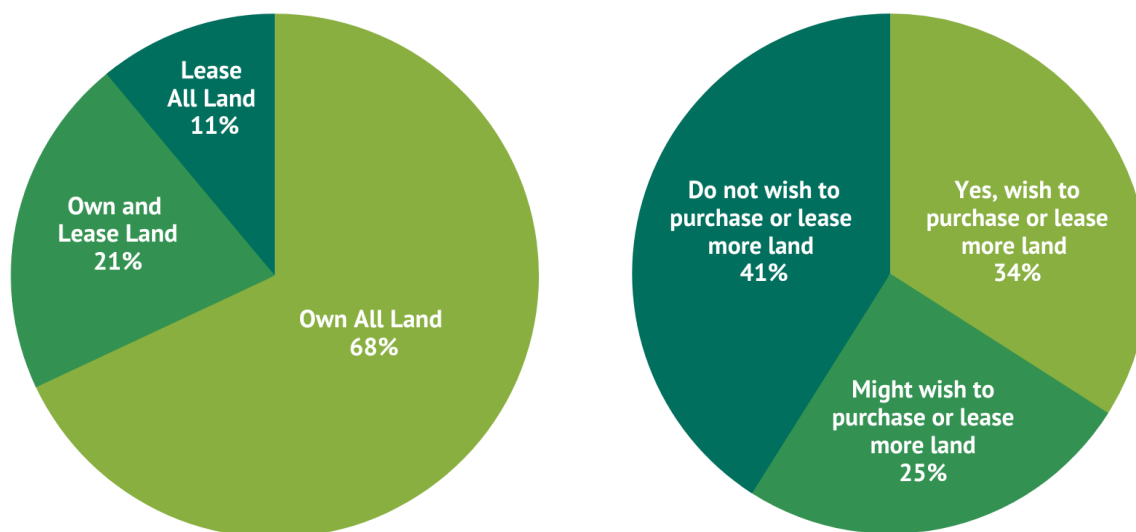
Accessing New Land for Farming

Accessing land is a focal point in recent discussions across agricultural organizations. From the National Young Farmer Survey in 2022, finding affordable land to buy is the top challenge for young farmers, and over half of respondents said that they currently need more access to land.² In a recent study by American Farmland Trust, it is expected that North Carolina will have the second most acres converted from agricultural to other purposes by 2040, followed by Tennessee and Georgia, then Virginia at seventh in the country. Seven Appalachian Grown counties (Sevier, TN; Transylvania, NC; Clay, NC; Watauga, NC; Macon, NC; White, GA; and Lumpkin, GA) were in the top fifty counties in the entire nation with the highest percentage of agricultural land projected to be converted to urban and highly developed and low-density residential uses by 2040.³

An array of farmland preservation programs, easements, and land summits to connect those on both sides of the buying/selling farmland relationship bridge the gap between older farmers leaving the profession and a new generation of farmers entering. To give context to the farmland access discussion in this region, a new section was included in this year's survey. We asked Appalachian Grown farmers to share the current owning and/or leasing structure of the land that they farm and about their interest in buying or leasing more land in the future.

Figure 3

*Percent of Farmers that Own and Lease Land
& Percent of Farmers that Wish to Purchase or Lease More Land*



² Ackoff, S., Flom, E., Polanco, V. G., Howard, D., Manly, J., Mueller, C., Rippon-Butler, H., & Wyatt, L. (2022). Building a Future with Farmers 2022: Results and Recommendations from the National Young Farmers Survey. *National Young Farmers Coalition*.

³ Hunter, M., A. Sorensen, T. Nogeire-McRae, S. Beck, S. Shutts, R. Murphy. (2022). Farms Under Threat 2040: Choosing an Abundant Future. *American Farmland Trust*.

Nearly seventy percent of farmers own all their farmland, while the remaining thirty percent lease some or all of the land they farm. A few farmers shared unique situations, like farming community- or family-owned lands. Nearly sixty percent of farmers expressed interest in purchasing or leasing different or additional land in the future.

In addition to their current farmland situation and future expansions onto new land, we also asked farmers to share barriers and obstacles related to expanding or moving their farm production to new land. Challenges relating to purchasing and leasing farmland span from the price and availability of farmable land to accessing capital and financing.

Price and availability are inevitably related. To be usable for agricultural purposes, properties need to be somewhat flat, with good water access, and have a usage history without long-term negative impacts to the soil. In the southern Appalachian Mountains, the small amount of flat land that is suitable for agriculture often overlaps with land that is easiest to develop for other purposes. Competition for the flat, farmable, and developable sections of land results in high prices. Of farmers interested in expanding their land in production, thirty-eight percent described the price of land and thirty-two percent named the availability of land as major challenges.

“Second homers outcompeting farmers. Government entities purchasing land. Flat land, ideal for farming, being bought for development. Land investors outcompeting farmers.”

“It’s either already leased by another farmer or we acquire some hay and pasture ground for a few years then the owner sells or develops and we’re out.”

“Due to the housing market boom, we have lost three potential land/properties to buy; we put in offers and were outbid each time. The worst part is that we are borrowing money from a lender but the people that outbid us paid cash for the land.”

“Availability of it, most of the land is in hay or has houses on it.”

“The cost of the land. People moving here can afford to pay big prices for land from selling their property in other places. We can’t compete with the new people coming into our state. The lease land is getting harder to find as well. Since land has gone up and interest rates were low, people moving here could afford the big prices and lease land gets sold too.”

The financing and legal systems for buying and leasing land are intricate and difficult to navigate. It takes capital to buy both new land and the production materials (fencing, machinery, seeds, etc.) needed to expand. Twenty-two percent of farmers interested in purchasing or leasing more land in the future cited financing and accessing capital as challenges.

“Time to pursue financing.”

“Capital.”

“Loan accessibility.”

“Afraid of buying and not having the business growth to make payments.”

Building Relationships with Customers

Local food producers take on many roles in their businesses. Some of the most crucial to increase and sustain sales are connecting with new wholesale buyers and building relationships directly with customers. When it comes to finding new wholesale buyers, 67 percent of farmers described meeting new buyers at farmers markets as very useful. Other very useful strategies include word of mouth from other farmers and buyers, a farm website and/or social media, and recommendations from ASAP staff.

Figure 4

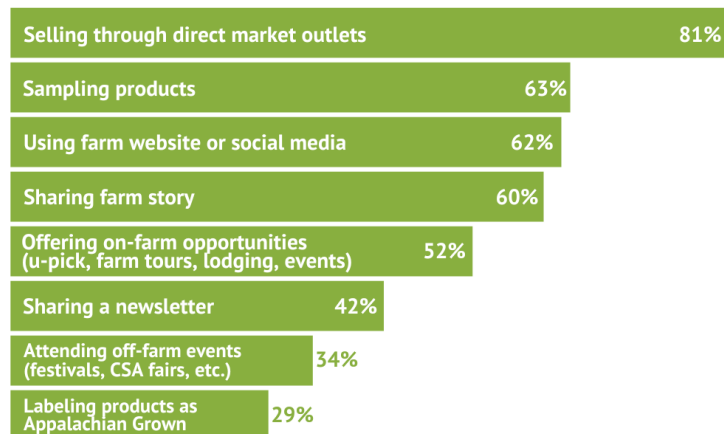
Strategies Farmers Used and Rated as “Very Useful” for Finding New Wholesale Buyers in 2022



Building direct relationships depends on marketing to communicate product availability and strengthen customer loyalty. Farmers reported that selling through direct market outlets, like farmers markets and farm stands, is the most effective way to create new customer relationships. Those settings give farmers the opportunity to interact with and teach consumers about how and where their food is grown. Much higher in usefulness than the past few years, sixty-three percent of farmers describe sampling products as being very useful for finding new direct customers. Social media outlets, sharing their farm’s story, and offering on-farm opportunities are also reported as very useful for building relationships with customers.

Figure 5

Strategies Farmers Used and Rated as “Very Useful” for Finding New Direct Customers in 2022



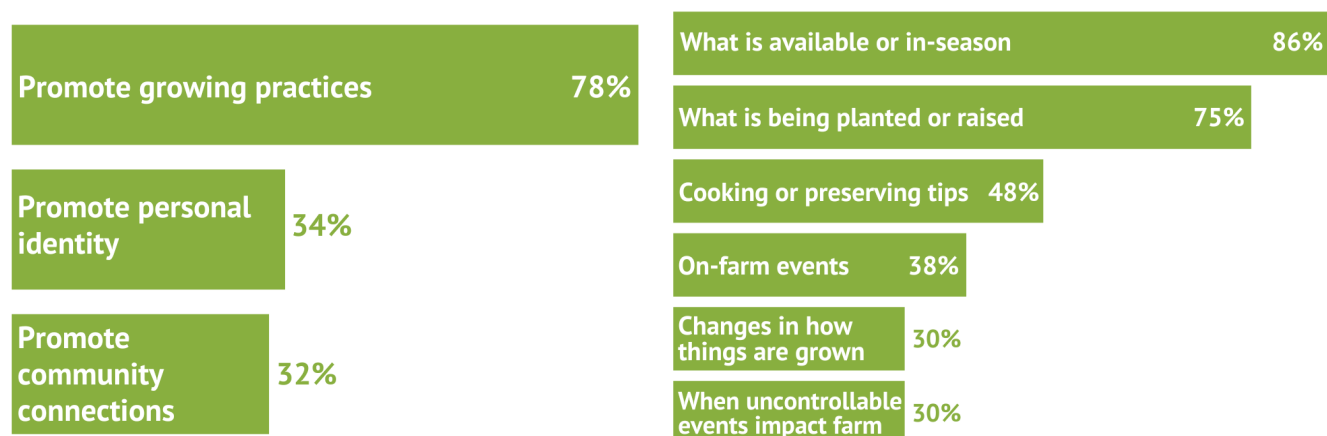
Beyond strategies to connect with wholesale buyers and directly with customers, this year we also asked farmers what kinds of information they share about their farm through those marketing techniques. Direct farming provides an opportunity to educate about your farm, promote wellness, and engage your community on many levels. The direct-to-consumer market outlets give farms the opportunity to build relationships and share their values with consumers, which is otherwise difficult in larger, highly aggregated markets.

Nearly four out of five farmers promote their growing practices to customers. That includes organic, no-till, regenerative, grass fed, and hydroponic, to name a few growing practices used in the Appalachian Grown region. Thirty-four percent of farmers promote based on their personal identity, by recognizing themselves as woman-owned, BIPOC-owned, veteran-owned, and family-owned businesses. Around the same percentage of farmers use their community connections to promote their farm products to customers. This could come in many forms, like sharing that proceeds go to a special cause or products can be found in community stores and restaurants. Beyond those, farmers also described promoting that they are century farms (owned by a single family for one hundred years or more) and the health-promoting qualities of their products.

Updating their communities about the goings on at their farm is a strategy that farmers use to promote their products and keep customers engaged. Over eighty percent update customers on what is available or in-season, and seventy-five percent share what they are planting or what is being raised. Previewing what will be available and coming up each season gets customers excited about what to expect next at markets. Forty-eight percent of farmers share cooking or preserving tips, thirty-eight share on-farm events, thirty percent share changes in how or what products are grown on their farm, and thirty percent update customers about uncontrollable events, like natural disasters or major storms, impacting their farm.

Figure 6

*Ways Farmers Promote their Farm Products to Customers
& What Farmers Update Customers About their Farm*



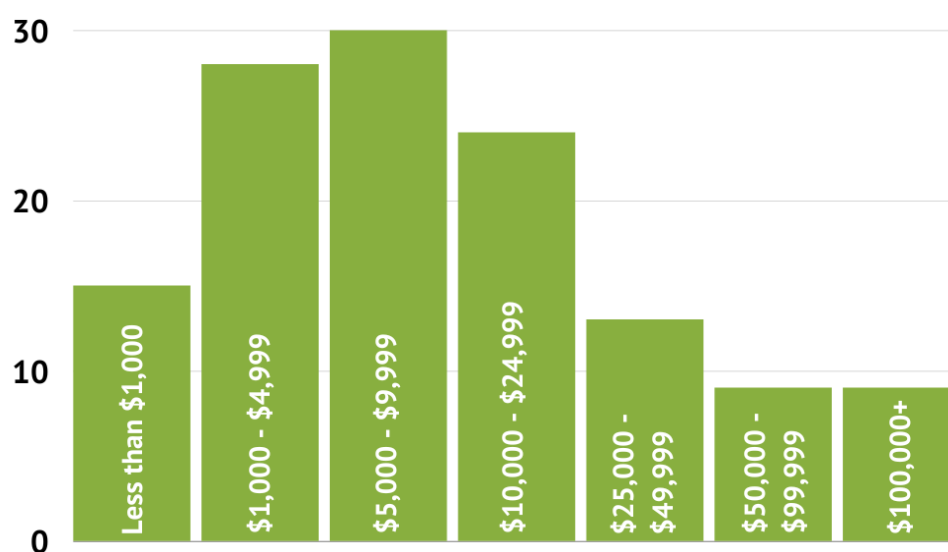
Economic Impacts

When food is bought from local farmers, the dollar doesn't stop there. In the 2022 Appalachian Grown Annual Producer Survey, we asked farmers to describe the farm inputs bought from other local businesses and about workers they hired in the last year. This section gives us a sense of the economic impact that Appalachian Grown farmers have on our region, past the dollar value of goods sold.

Agriculture supports many other businesses and service industries in our region. Inputs to production, including seeds, equipment, animal feed, fertilizers, fencing, and others, are often purchased locally. We asked farmers to share the dollar amount they spent on farm inputs from businesses within 100 miles of their farm in the last year. Of the 137 farmers that responded to this question, a total of \$3,874,755 was put back into the local economy for farm inputs alone. On average, farmers spent \$30,272 on farm inputs locally in 2022.

Figure 7

Number of Farms in Categories of Local Farm Input Expenditures



Agriculture also supports the local economy by providing jobs to those in our region. In this survey, farmers shared the number of waged and non-waged employees at their farms both seasonally and year round. Sixty-three farms accounted for nearly 300 seasonal, waged workers. Forty-four farms had 133 waged workers at their farm year round. Non-waged workers could include family members, volunteers, and interns, who are usually paid in housing, food, and other forms instead of money. Twenty-five farms hosted non-waged workers seasonally and twelve farms hosted non-waged workers year round. In total, over 500 workers were employed by respondents to this Appalachian Grown survey.

Markets and Farm Sales

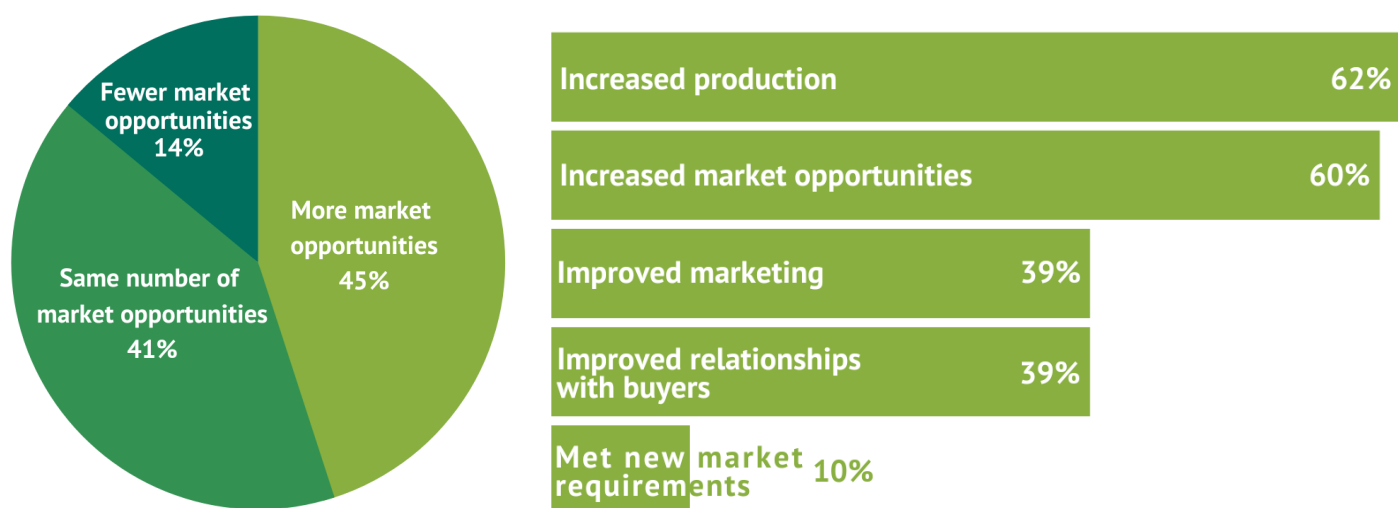
This section explores the market opportunities available to and used by producers and overall market viability in 2022. Most producers reported better market opportunities compared to 2021, as well as stable or increased sales.

Local food producers who responded to this survey had a generally better market outlook for 2022 compared to 2021. Only fourteen percent responded that there were fewer markets available in 2022, down from twenty-seven percent in 2021 and over fifty percent who responded that way in 2020. **The remaining eighty-six percent of respondents experienced the same or more market opportunities in 2022.** Increased production influenced a much higher percentage of farmers to expand into new markets in 2022 (62%) compared to last year (34%). Like last year, increased market opportunities were highly influential for expanding into new markets in 2022.

Figure 8

Market Opportunities in 2022 compared to 2021

& Factors that Influenced Farmers' Expansions into New Markets in 2022

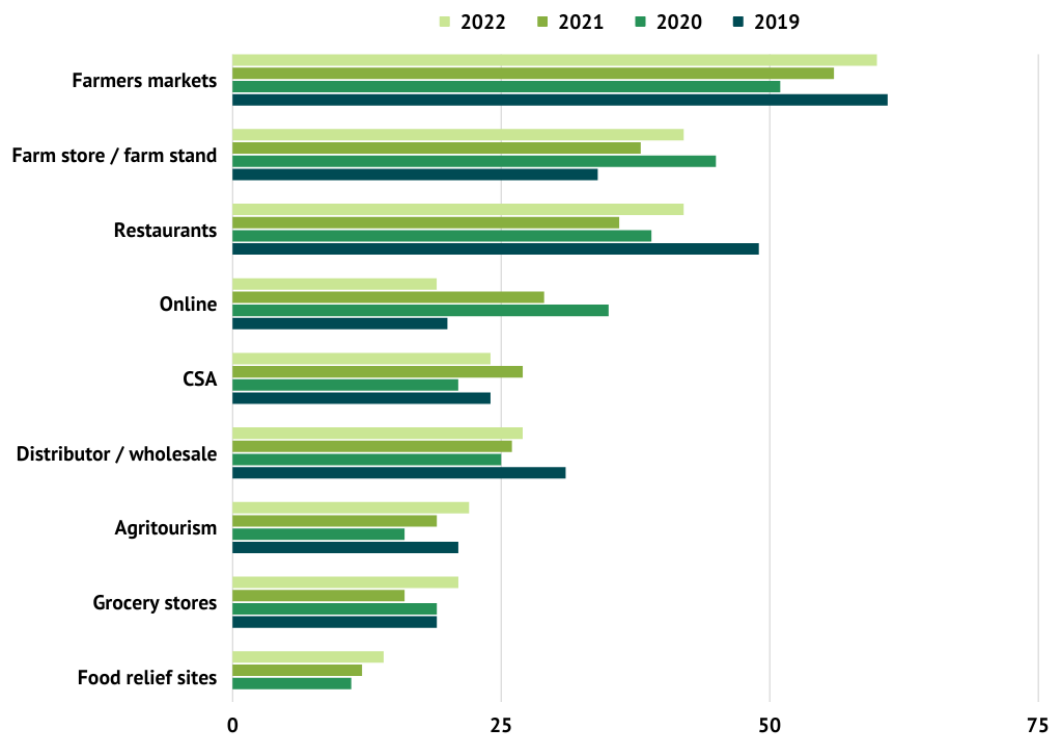


Producers who depend on selling goods locally often diversify their sales between direct, intermediate, and wholesale channels to sustain income streams. **Those who responded to this survey sell to an average of three types of market outlets, and twenty-eight percent sell to four or more market outlets.** The year 2019 was the last year of normalcy before the COVID-19 pandemic began. In 2020, the percent of farms that sold to farmers markets and restaurants and through wholesale and agritourism decreased dramatically. In response, farmers seemed to counter the loss of those face-to-face markets by selling more at farm stands and online. Another two years later as the pandemic eased, the percentage of farmers who sell at farmers markets and through agritourism has rebounded,

while those selling to restaurants and through wholesale is also on the rise. Online sales seems to have been a temporary response to the closing of other market outlets, as the percent of farms selling through online outlets is back to lower pre-pandemic levels. Food relief sites became a more viable market opportunity for local farms in recent years, and the percentage of farms selling in through that market outlet continues to increase.

Figure 9

Percent of Farmers that Sold to Each Market Outlet in 2022, 2021, 2020, and 2019



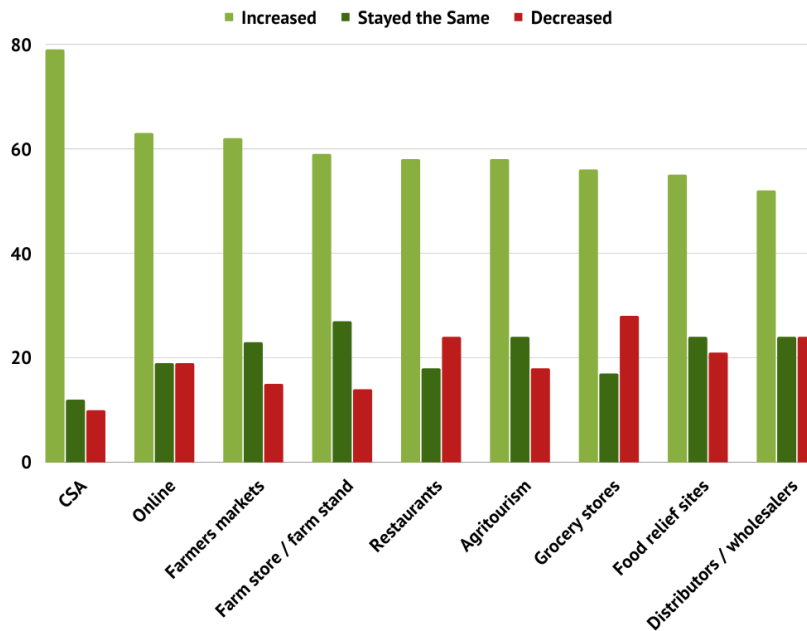
Note: Food relief sites were added as a new category in the 2020 Annual Survey.

Sales to various market outlets continue to fluctuate annually depending on economic and social trends, farm production, and how producers decide to promote their goods. The following graph (figure 9) does not capture those reasons, only the shifts in sales compared to the previous year. For the first time in three years, more farmers experienced an increase in sales to restaurants than those who saw decreased or steady sales.

The same remains true for all other markets in 2022 as well. **In fact, each market outlet had nearly two times as many producers who experienced increased sales as those who had decreased sales.** Sales increased for nearly eighty percent of those who sell farm products through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. For farmers who sold to each of the remaining market outlets, sales increased by between fifty-two percent for farmers selling through distributors and wholesale markets to sixty-three percent for farmers selling through online markets.

Figure 10

Percent of Farmers whose Sales Changed for Each Market Outlet



Sixty-two percent of farmers reported their gross sales were higher in 2022 than 2021. The outlook on sales was much better for farmers this year than in the last two years, where less than fifty percent of farmers reported higher sales than the year before. Gross sales of Appalachian Grown farmers depend on a variety of factors including farm maturity and seasonality, desired scale, and market opportunities. Those reporting sales of \$40,000 or lower represent sixty-one percent of respondents. Those that fall within the gross sales category of \$40,000 to \$120,000 make up twenty-two percent of respondents. The percentage of farmers in each of those categories is nearly exactly the same from last year.

Figure 11

Sales Changes Compared to 2021 and Gross Sales for 2022



Appalachian Grown farmers shared challenges that they had in the past year when selling to local markets. About a fourth of farmers described challenges with logistics and labor. Those types of challenges range from scheduling time to be away from the farm to having the labor to produce enough food to sell at markets. Inconsistencies with demand and educating consumers to strengthen demand for local foods was cited by around another quarter of respondents as being a challenge. Other farmers shared the challenges of capacity to supply large quantities of food, oversaturated markets and competition, and marketing their farm products to consumers.

Challenges Selling to Local Markets

Theme	Quote
Logistics & Labor 26%	<p>“My own time. I can only put so much time into sales and I’m not ready to take the leap to hire someone to help with sales”</p> <p>“Short turnaround times between customers ordering produce and then expecting a delivery.”</p> <p>“Markets aren’t the issue for us right now. Infrastructure and labor are our biggest barriers right now.”</p>
Demand, Inconsistencies and Educating Consumers 23%	<p>“Grocers in my area do not want to buy from local farmers as their produce is not the prototypical looking piece of produce found in groceries.”</p> <p>“Finding restaurant/grocery customers that will pay our asking price. There is a lack of awareness around production costs even from places that say they source from local farms.”</p> <p>“Consistency in customer traffic at farmers markets, especially in the fall.”</p>
Supply, Can’t Grow Enough to Meet Demand 17%	<p>“Being able to produce enough to meet the demand. What we produce is always well received, because we deliver quality. We are limited by land and labor constraints, and, really do not want to expand much.”</p> <p>“Being able to produce quality crops with changing temperatures and rainfall uncertainty.”</p>
Competition & Oversaturated Markets 15%	<p>“Farmers market oversaturation. The days of bringing everything you have to market and selling it all seem to be over. I constantly have to adapt and create new outlets to sell all of my products.”</p> <p>“Competing with grocery chains. I operate a U-Pick blueberry and blackberry farm. Customers can buy the same products cheaper than I can afford to sell the same. Some customers appreciate local and U-Pick, but others don’t care.”</p>
Marketing 8%	<p>“Advertising to connect with new customers.”</p>
Other 12%	<p>“Education around local food - but it gets easier every year.”</p> <p>“Being new.”</p>

Participation in the Appalachian Grown Program

This section asks farmers to reflect on their participation in ASAP's Appalachian Grown program and what impact, if any, it has had on their farm business. ASAP offers promotional materials and discounted branded packaging to help customers identify and recognize farmer products as locally grown in this region. These materials include stickers, bags, wax boxes, twist ties, and more. In 2022, sixty-three percent of respondents reported using Appalachian Grown branding for some or all of their products. Twenty-two percent of respondents used Appalachian Grown branding on all of their products. On average, thirty-nine percent of farm products were labeled with Appalachian Grown branding.

Though the Appalachian Grown program is where the emphasis of this survey lies, we recognize that there are many ways to regionally brand farm products. Some examples of others include programs by other regional agriculture organizations like Got To Be NC Agriculture and Pick Tennessee Products. Farmers regionally brand products by adding "grown in" a specific city/county/region or simply "locally made" to product packaging. Twenty-four percent of farmers responded that they used other regional branding, along with Appalachian Grown.

In addition to branded packaging, ASAP's programming aims to educate consumers on the value and availability of local food, promote local food market outlets, and engage the community in various other ways. Sixty-three percent of farmers responded that ASAP's consumer education was very important to increasing sales in 2022. Promoting local market outlets, highlighting local product availability, and sharing local farm stories in media were also ranked as highly important to increasing sales for fifty percent or more of farmers.

Figure 12

Percent of Farms Who Use Regional Branding

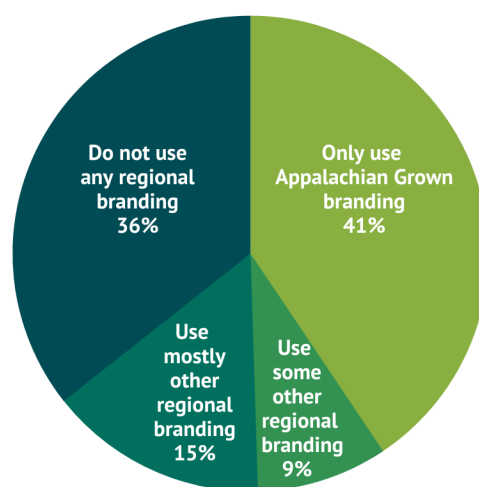


Figure 13

ASAP Services Rated by Farmers as "Very Important" for Increasing Sales in 2022



The Impact ASAP's Appalachian Grown Program has had on Farmers (selected testimonials)

"ASAP has helped a lot. I might not be farming if it weren't for all the support from organizations like this. I have occasionally received personal help from ASAP in the form of marketing, grants, and sales. The general help is good, and the personal one-on-one special attention I receive makes the biggest difference."

"You have been an organization that has accompanied us since we started. We appreciate the trust and continued support you have provided to us. Thank you for your closeness, for believing in our work, and for giving space, resources, and voice to Hispanic community members like us."

"ASAP has had a HUGE impact on our business. We're a mushroom farm wrapping up our first year and we have had so much help from ASAP making the necessary connections to survive. We met clients at the buyer-grower meetings and took ASAP's advice on how to approach markets. Now we sell out every week! We are looking forward to continuing our work with ASAP and turning surviving into thriving in our second year."

"We received an advertising grant through ASAP and were able to get things we wouldn't have otherwise. We finally have a professional logo. With this logo and the Appalachian Grown logo, we created many items like packaging, a banner, bags etc. We really appreciated this support."

"The stickers appear to make our product more attractive to buyers. Repeat customers remember our honey has them, so they know they're buying what they've bought before."

Appalachian Grown farmers had many **successes in 2022**, from expanding their production, to selling at new markets, or even starting their farm from scratch or moving to a new place. Below are some of those success stories, captured in this year's survey.

"People were thrilled to come and pick at their own pace with an honor system and happy we could share the space with them."

"This is the first year in the 4 years since we've begun our homesteading journey where we may actually 'break even' which is a 1000% increase in sales from the previous year. Homesteading can be an expensive endeavor, especially the more diversified you try to become. So, to break even after it's all said and done with full bellies, happy hearts and big smiles, I'd say that's a success in my book."

"I successfully downsized my production space and was able to take time off/one day off a week all while increasing my income from the farm!"

"My first season was a success because I learned what I need to improve and I learned that I can grow nutrient dense produce with minimal till methods and minimal inputs."

"We started our business and have already moved to a new headquarters with more space for us. Additionally, we've been asked to join the board in our first year at the farmers market."

"We experimented with a make-shift season-extension tunnel. It was a great success, and we are looking forward to receiving funding to expand this aspect of our operation next season."

In 2022 we asked again, **what gives farmers hope to continue farming?** A familiar bright and optimistic tone shone through many responses. Some described an attachment to the profession, an innate need to be close with the environment, the joys of sharing nourishment with neighbors, and the sometimes grueling, but always rewarding endeavor of trying new things in hope of a better year.

"The joy of growing local food, which is appreciated every week, both by our farmers markets customers, and by the chefs at restaurants we serve. Their expressions of gratitude and appreciation of what we have produced, makes all of our work worthwhile."

"The joys of learning, experimenting, gathering more data, implementing new ideas, working for ourselves outside in the middle of nowhere, providing healthy foods to people in my community, and more than anything, working with my wife every day!"

"Tomorrow is a new day. We're making memories one berry at a time."

"Our customer base is growing, and folks seem to really love our produce. So our only goal for 2023 is to do the same thing, just more of it."

"I believe my farm is bringing honest, wholesome and premium products from a tangible local farm to our immediate community. The repeat customer base is driving our production increase and if the trend continues next year will be the best yet."

"Our vision, the community impact of our work, the quality of our products and our commitment to our values."

"My inspiration is to teach my young daughters that they can grow their own healthy food and at the same time provide that food to our local community and be a part of changing the way we as a country think about our food and what we eat."

"Seeing my land improve - soil organic matter increasing, apex aerial predators returning, more wildlife and birdsong, pastures staying greener longer in drought and cold, & many other small victories seen and felt daily."

"Our Multi-farm CSA is wonderful. People keep coming back as they love supporting our local farmers. It is a community in itself."

"The prospect of getting past the 'break even' point with revenue, making new connections at new markets, and developing our flagship value added products."

"The farm has a young orchard. This past spring half the apple trees bloomed and there was an actual (small) pear and peach harvest. It's heartening to see the trees healthy and growing."

"Because it's always going to be better next year, that's farming."