

ROCKINGHAM

COUNTY

FOOD SYSTEM PROFILE

This county profile & policy toolkit has been created as part of the Piedmont Triad Regional Food System Assessment, conducted in 2020 by the Piedmont Triad Regional Food Council, an initiative of the Piedmont Triad Regional Council of Governments.

The profiles are intended to provide a snapshot of results in a number of research areas, including food security, supply chains, food and farm production, and economic development.

If you're ready to get involved, read through for resources that can be leveraged to contribute to your county's food system and contact information for local leaders and other agencies working near you.

You can also view the full food system assessment report online at carolinacreators.com/ptrfc-regional-food-assessment/.



PIEDMONT TRIAD
REGIONAL FOOD COUNCIL

FOOD INSECURITY

WHERE FOOD DOESN'T TRAVEL

All counties showed high rates of adult & child food insecurity rates before COVID-19, with children and communities of color at the highest risk. Numbers could rise by 10% or more in 2021.

see the full analysis at <https://carolinacreators.com/ptrfc-regional-food-assessment/>

The food insecurity rate is projected to increase by at least 5% in every county in the Triad region, with the child food insecurity rate increasing by nearly 10% in every county. Older adults are also at higher risk due to the pandemic.

The six counties with the highest food insecurity rates are all rural counties, where economic impacts from the pandemic are expected to be worse. Child rates are consistently over 10% in all counties for every year of data we have.

EVERYONE DESERVES GOOD FOOD



PRODUCE, SELL, DISTRIBUTE

NAICS analysis of seven food production & distribution industries shows that the Triad sees \$28 billion in food system related sales supporting over 6,400 businesses

see the full analysis at <https://carolinacreators.com/ptrfc-regional-food-assessment/>

There are over one million acres in the Piedmont Triad that are being operated on in a farming capacity with 9,408 farms total. The 12-county Piedmont Triad region sold \$1,072,818,000 in agricultural products in 2017.

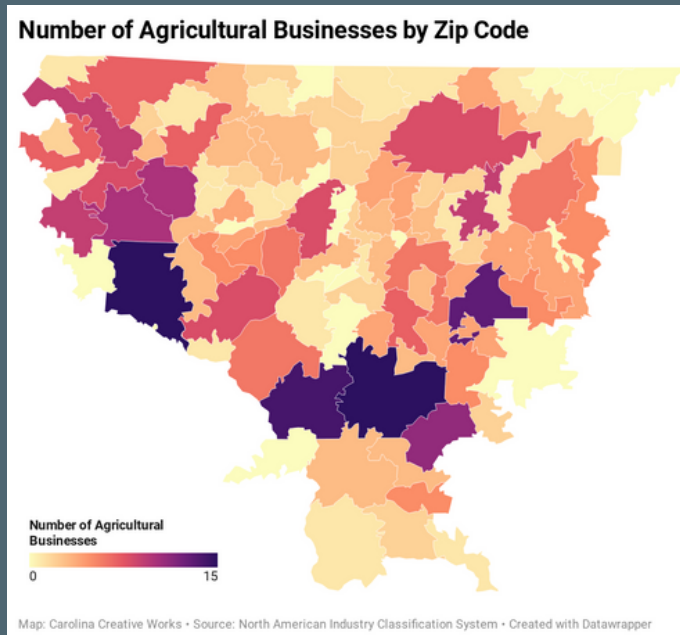
For ag infographics by county, please see <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/08/resource-highlight-updated-local-farms-and-food-profiles/> (these are the updated 2017 Ag Census infographics for each county from CEFS).

WHY FOOD MATTERS

310 **\$1.09 BILLION**

Rockingham is home to 310 food businesses in seven industry sectors

Those businesses collectively bring in over \$1.09 billion in annual sales, ranging from wholesale to restaurants to food producers to purveyors of storage and distribution services.



WHO GROWS YOUR FOOD?

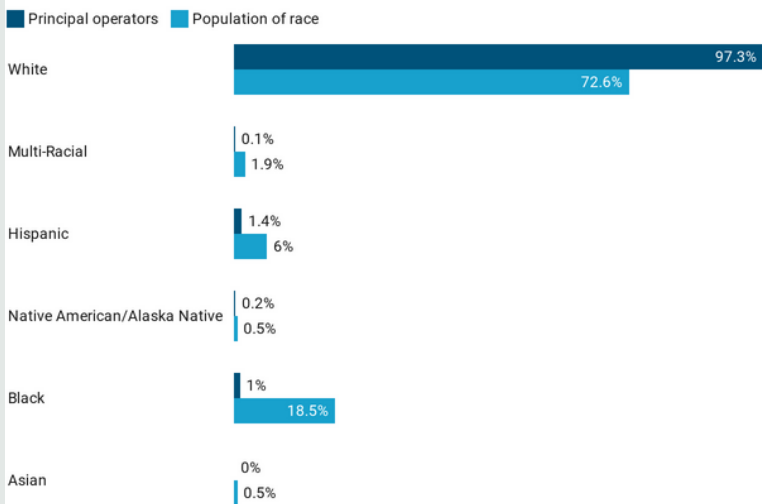
Each county's 2017 Agriculture Census data was analyzed for demographic indicators such as age, gender, and race.

see the full analysis at <https://carolinacreators.com/ptrfc-regional-food-assessment/>

Regionally, most small farms are only bringing in up to \$100,000 (38,699 farms); most of the economic value is in large farms that bring in \$1 million or more (3,442 farms) or between \$250,000-\$999,999 (4,277 farms).

The total number of acres in production in the Triad region is well over a million, operated by almost 9,500 farms and bringing in more than \$1 billion in sales in the latest data available.

Race/Ethnicity Comparison of Principal Farm Operators to Overall Population: Rockingham County



Created with Datawrapper

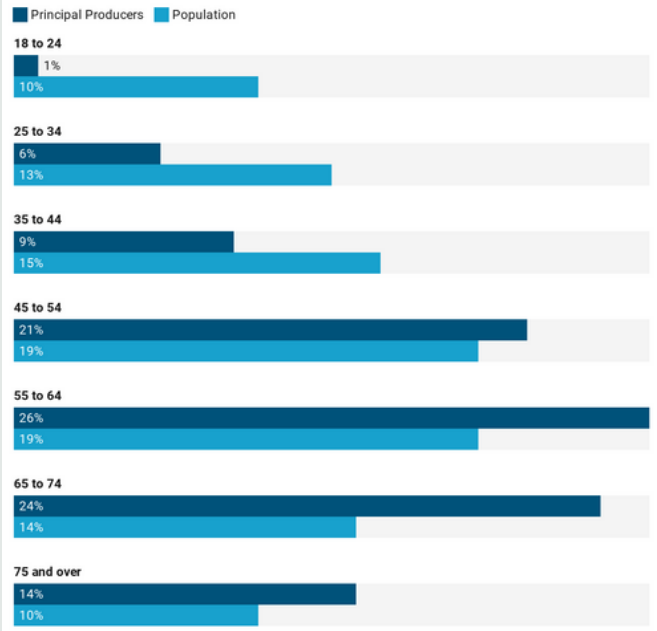
Rockingham's principal producers are unevenly distributed among age groups, with well over half being 55 and over.

In terms of gender, there is also a sizable gap between men and women that are principal producers, with a 77-23 percent split.

Over 97% of Rockingham County's principal producers are white.

Age Comparison of Principal Farm Operators to Overall Population: Rockingham County

This chart demonstrates the age disparities between principal producers and the overall population. In general, people under the age of 45 comprise a lower proportion of principal producers compared to the overall population, whereas people 45 and older comprise a larger proportion of principal producers compared to the overall population.



Comparison of Principal Farm Operators to Population by Gender - Rockingham County



Chart: Enoch Sarku • Source: Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2017 (5-Year Estimates) (SE), ACS 2017 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau • Created with Datawrapper

SEEKING EQUITY IN FARMING

Rockingham County

Food Supply Chain

This is a county overview of the food supply chain of Rockingham County, North Carolina. This information is based on the Food Flow Model developed by University of Illinois using Freight Analysis Framework from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, US Ag Census and 8 other databases.



FOOD GROWN IN ROCKINGHAM THAT STAYS IN THE COUNTY DID NOT REACH MEASUREABLE LEVELS **

85 MILLION

KG OF FOOD GROWN IN ROCKINGHAM STAYS IN PIEDMONT TRIAD REGION



76 MILLION

KG OF FOOD IS IMPORTED FROM THE PIEDMONT TRIAD REGION



142 MILLION (63%)

KG OF FOOD GROWN IN ROCKINGHAM LEAVES THE PIEDMONT TRIAD REGION

210 MILLION (73%)

KG OF FOOD IMPORTED FROM OUTSIDE THE PIEDMONT TRIAD REGION

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Although we've only included high-level recommendations here, you can view all the recommendations in the final section of the full report at ptrc.org/triadfoodcouncil. **The regional food council will be working closely with county partners to create a five-year workplan with strategic goals in each research area for each county.** If you're interested in being involved in setting priorities and co-creating programs and projects, please contact Jennifer Bedrosian, PTRFC Food System Coordinator, at jbedrosian@ptrc.org.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

- Engage leaders of color in small and grassroots organizations across the Triad in co-creating food system strategies
- Serve as a voice to advocate for state and federal policy changes that can have a real impact on equity in local communities
- Prioritize council actions in a manner that ensures equitable support, including reserving loan funds for farmers and food producers of color and rural businesses and prioritizing underserved recipients in shared gifting processes
- Reduce the administrative burden required for underserved communities to be involved in and take ownership of the food system, both through internal programs and through external relationships

IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGIES

- Co-create action plan strategies with county and community partners
- Expand PTRFC audience & partnerships, especially with grassroots and community-level advocates and local governments
- Maintain paid apprenticeship programs to support council development & encourage youth participation in the food system
- Implement regular council-to-community listening sessions

FOOD SECURITY

- Support resources that provide services to benefit all partners, such as translation services, assistance with online benefits access, and funding for innovative programs
- Integrate food access into transportation planning at the regional and local level through PTRC's management of regional transportation processes
- Integrate food system needs into regional and local economic development strategies, such as through recruitment of grocery and food retail and capital programs for food & farm businesses
- Advocate for school district food programs that are flexible and innovative (especially post-COVID-19 approaches) and work with school districts to implement regionally
- Build small grant programs that support food access at a micro level, such as community gardens, microgardens, fresh produce distribution, and other strategies to increase healthy food access

FOOD & FARM PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Partner with Cooperative Extension, local economic development agencies, and Small Business Centers to leverage resources for small businesses navigating the pandemic and associated economic impacts
- Map and support microfarms with the assistance of community partners
- Work with existing lenders to expand access to capital for entrepreneurs of color, and to build PTRC's own lending policies in a way that supports underserved entrepreneurs
- Encourage adoption of Food Access Plans and updated Land / Unified Development Ordinances at county and municipal levels
- Promote adoption of the NC 10% Campaign and NC Farm to School programs and aim for 100% participation in both programs in all counties by the end of 2021
- Leverage Opportunity Zones for development of food & farm infrastructure and supply chains
- Work directly with county governments & form a supply chain subcommittee that serves as the connecting agency for counties interested in working together to increase both import/export relationships and shared infrastructure development

GET INVOLVED



PIEDMONT TRIAD
REGIONAL FOOD COUNCIL

PTRC.ORG/TRIADFOODCOUNCIL

PIEDMONT TRIAD REGIONAL FOOD COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Stesha Warren, Owner, Eliana's Garden; Educator

stesha@elianasgarden.com

Steven Pulliam, Dan Riverkeeper for Good Stewards Rockingham

steven@danriverkeeper.org



@TRIADFOODCOUNCIL

YOUR COUNTY'S REPRESENTATIVES ON THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Commissioner Mark Richardson,
mrichardson@co.rockingham.nc.us

Councilman Darryl Carter, City of Eden
dcarter@edennc.us

STATE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Jerry Carter
jerry.carter@ncleg.gov

Representative Kyle Hall
kyle.hall@ncleg.gov

Senator Phil Berger
phil.berger@ncleg.net

DATA SOURCES

US Agriculture Census (2012, 2017)

NAICS

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Feeding America Map the Meal Gap

NC DHHS FNS

Second Harvest Food Bank

Please visit ptrc.org/triadfoodcouncil for the full report with methodology and data sources in detail.

see the full report at
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