



Strengthening Our Food and Agricultural Economy

Montana's Food System Fact Sheet

Economy, Land, People

Grow Montana—
Offering the Power
of a Coalition to
Create Change

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ncat.org

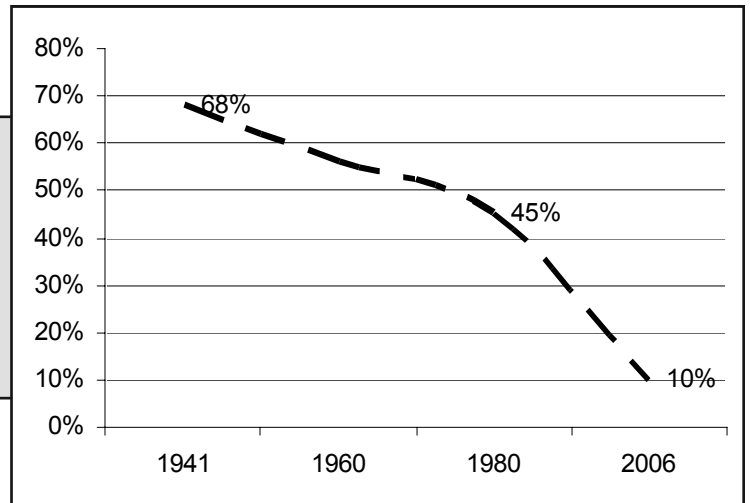
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- Montanans spent over \$3 billion on food in 2003, with roughly 15% of that total spent on Montana-produced food. If we sourced 30% instead of 15% of our food in-state, an additional \$450 million would go directly to our food producers.¹
- Another way to look at it is if each household in Montana spent just \$10 a week on Montana-grown food products, we would re-direct \$186 million dollars each year to local farmers and ranchers.²
- Until 1940, food processing was our state's number one employer.³
 - Since the spring of 2003, The University of Montana-Missoula has purchased nearly \$1.5 million in local and regional

food products through the Farm to College Program, purchasing safflower oil, beef, bread, dairy products, and fruits and vegetables from Montana producers. In the same period, the University's overall food costs—as a percentage of its food service budget—decreased.⁴

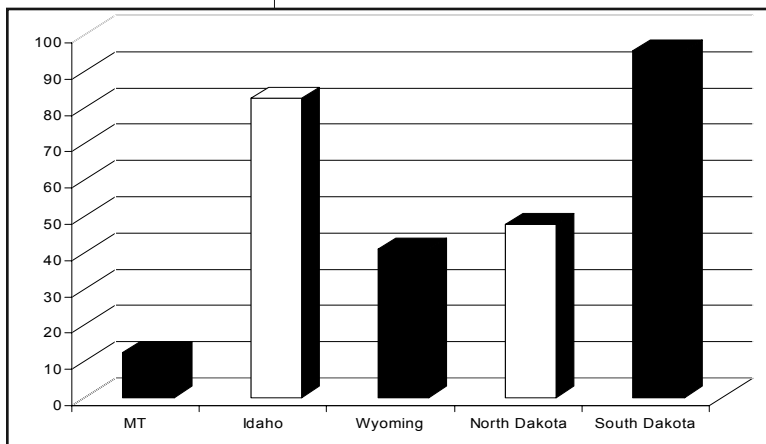
- Montana's farmers markets grew from 5 in 1990 to over 30 today.⁵
- Across the nation, grassroots and governmental initiatives successfully support community-based food systems. For instance, educational institutions buy locally-produced food through at least 200 Farm to College programs and 400 Farm to School programs in 22 states.⁶

• ***In 1950, 70% of the food Montanans ate was grown in Montana.¹***



1. Montana Population Profile. USDA AMS Marketing Service Branch. Retrieved from www.ams.usda.gov/statesummaries/MT/MontanaInBrief.htm.
 2. Based on 357,296 households. Montana Office of Rural Health. Retrieved from <http://healthinfo.montana.edu/msu/MTstate.html>.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Personal interview. Mark LoParco, Director of UM's University Dining Services. June 2005.
 5. *Farmer's Markets: Enriching Communities Across Montana*. AERO 2003. for number in 1990. USDA data for most recent numbers retrieved from www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/States/Montana.htm.
 6. Personal interview. June 2005. Marion Kalb, Director of National Farm to School Program Office, Community Food Security Coalition.

- A typical food product travels 1500 miles and changes hands 33 times before reaching the consumer. This trade is subject to volatile international markets beyond the control of our communities or state, much less individual farmers, ranchers, or consumers.
- According to the Montana Cattlemen's Association, Montana is losing about 250 ranches a year.⁷
- For every dollar spent on a loaf of bread, the typical U.S. wheat farmer now gets just 6 cents.⁸
- American Farmland Trust reports that 5 million acres of important farm and ranch lands in Montana are under pressure from development.⁹
 - Eight of the ten poorest counties in the United States are in Montana—all of them are agricultural.¹⁰
- There was nearly a 200% increase in emergency food provided through the Montana Food Bank Network from 2000 to 2003.¹¹
- In 2003, Montana had an estimated expenditure of \$175 million due to adult obesity-related medical costs.¹²



Value Added as a percentage of total agriculture and food exports (2004)

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (2004)

7. *Missoulian* " Keeping tradition alive a challenge for Montana ranch families" E8 April 27, 2005
 8. Halweil, Brian. *Eat Here: Reclaiming Homegrown Pleasures in a Global Supermarket*. W.W. Norton & Company, New York (2004).
 9. www.farmland.org/rocky_mountain/montana.htm
 10. Western, Sam citing US Census Bureau in "A New Green Revolution," *High Country News*. December 2005.
 11. *The State of Food and Nutrition in Montana 2004*. Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition.
 12. *Ibid.*