

Growing What We Eat?

As the side table illustrates, Oklahoma agriculture does not currently meet the in-state demand for many foods (in particular, many fruits and vegetables). This is despite the fact that demand is relatively low because many Oklahomans of all ages are not eating enough fruits and vegetables to maintain good health.

That many produce items grow well here is evident at farmers' markets around the state.

Community food activists propose that if more Oklahomans had the opportunity to taste and buy locally-grown fruits and vegetables, demand for these foods would increase. And if Oklahoma farmers could meet this "demand for healthy food," they would reap the benefits at the cash register.

More Than Enough: Top Crops for Export

Food /Crop	Percentage of Oklahomans' Consumption Exported Out-of-State
Rye (14)	4706.1
Wheat (2)	1738.4
Corn (11)	1210.5
Peanuts (13)	586.3
Beef (1)	443.9
Pork (3)	393.5
Watermelon (15)	392.8
Chicken (18)	302.0
Blackberries	214.2
Mustard greens	203.7
Spinach	107.3
Turnip greens	78.9
Southern peas	43.7
Okra	17.0
Eggs (8)	5.0

Crops listed are those for which USDA keeps production records in Oklahoma, and the list is not all inclusive.

The number in parentheses after the name of the crop is the sales rank of that crop in Oklahoma for 2002. For example, Oklahoma sold 17 times more wheat than it ate in 2002, and wheat had the second highest sales of any crop grown in the state. Similarly, Oklahoma imports 98% of the milk it consumes, even though milk is the state's fifth-ranking crop in terms of sales.

It's important to bear in mind that these estimates of the amount of different foods that Oklahoma imports are the lowest possible. It's possible that Oklahoma could be importing even more of certain foods than these numbers suggest.

For example, we know how much milk Oklahoma produces, and we know how much milk Oklahomans drink. Together, those two numbers tell us that Oklahoma must import at least 98% of the milk that's drunk within the state.

However, if Oklahoma exports all the milk it produces, it would have to import all the milk that Oklahomans drink. The data sources used for this report don't permit us to know when that's the case.

Not Growing Enough: Food Imports

Food/Crop	Percentage of Oklahomans' Consumption Imported from Out-of-State
Broccoli	100.0
Lettuce	100.0
Cherries, tart	99.9
Figs	99.3
Asparagus	99.2
Garlic	99.2
Apricots	99.0
Onions	99.0
Eggplant	98.8
Tomatoes	98.2
Grapes	98.1
Milk (5)	98.0
Plums and prunes	97.5
Beets	97.2
Raspberries	96.9
Honey (21)	95.8
Apples	95.5
Cucumbers	92.7
Strawberries	92.2
Blueberries	86.2
Chile peppers	81.7
Peaches (19)	81.2
Cabbage	81.1
Squash	77.6
Pears	67.8
Cantaloupe	56.3
Sweet corn	53.2
Snap beans	34.5
Lamb/Sheep (17)	30.6
Pumpkins	11.5



Excerpted from the Kerr Center Centennial Report: *Closer to Home: Healthier Food, Farms, and Families in Oklahoma.*

The full report is available on the Kerr Center website, www.kerrcenter.com or by calling 918-647-9123.



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