

# Farming Diversity for a Sustainable Future

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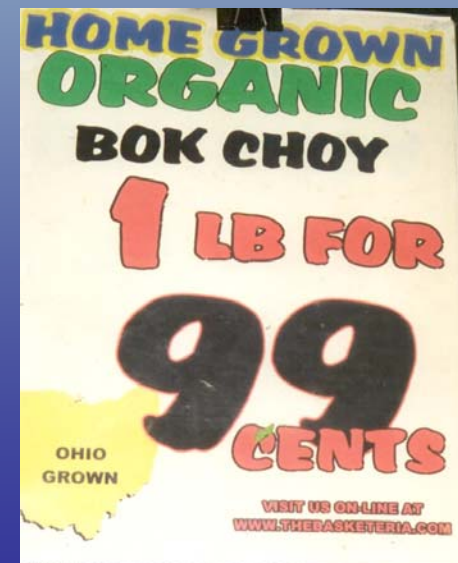


# Dimensions of Sustainability: Defining the Social

- Environmental Sustainability
- Economic Sustainability
- Social Sustainability
  - Health, Well Being, and the Quality of Life of Individuals, Families and Communities

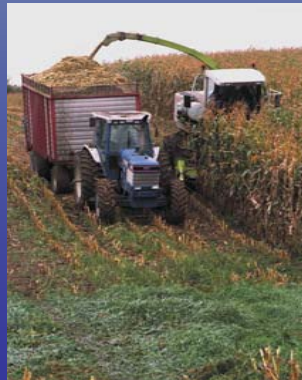


# How Important are Social Issues in Markets & Economic Development?



# SARE's Commitment to All Dimensions of Sustainability

*“SARE’s **mission** is to advance – to the whole of American agriculture – innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education” (SARE 2009)*





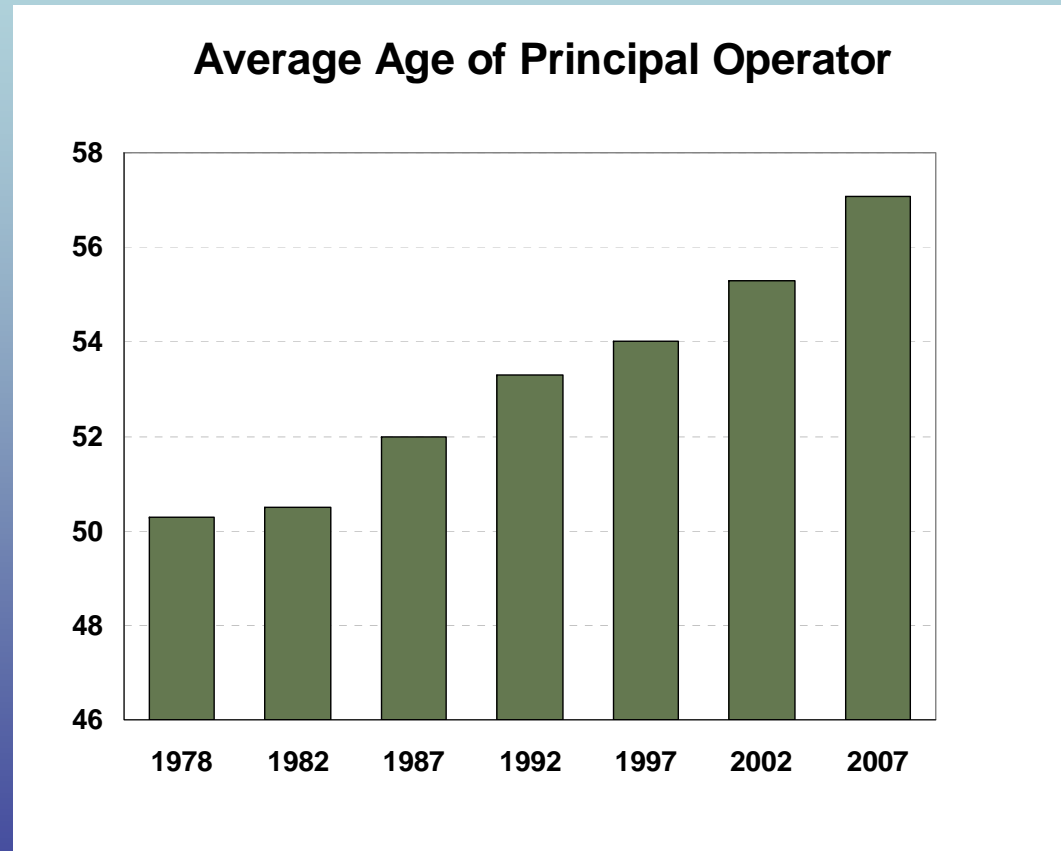
# NC SARE Graduate Student Research Grant:

Sustaining the Family Farm at the Rural Urban Interface (RUI) – A Comparison of the Farm Reproduction Processes among Commodity & Alternative Food and Agriculture Enterprises (AFAE)



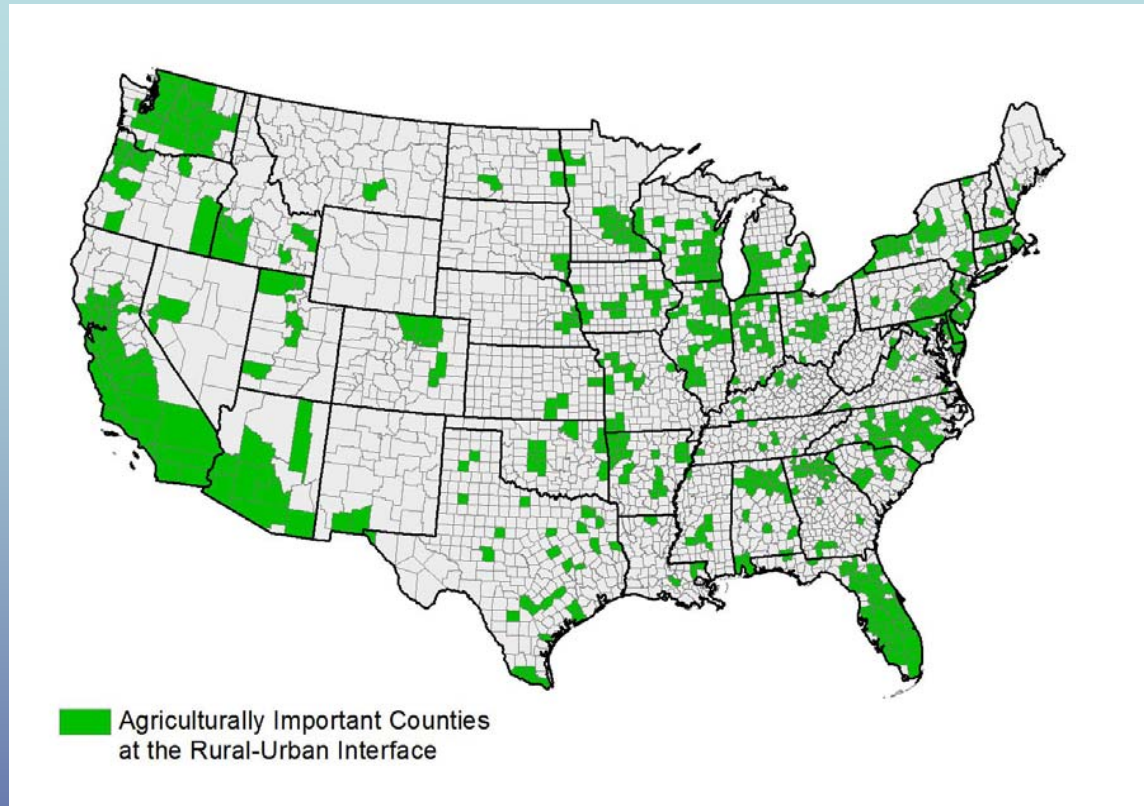
# The Graying of America's Farm Sector

- America's farm population is aging
- Lack of succession planning
- Fewer heirs are choosing farming as an occupation





# Ag. Important Counties at RUI



## Typology of Agricultural Change at the RUI

<b>Decline</b>	<b>Deintensify</b>	<b>Stable</b>	<b>Intensify</b>	<b>Growth</b>
157	89	164	209	28



# Social Sustainability: Succession

- Passing down the family farm
- Economic development through food and agricultural systems



## Research Question

How do household, cultural values and land use motivations influence farm enterprise adaptation and persistence at the RUI?





# Alternative Food and Agricultural Enterprises

NAFDMA



Today's farming strategies. . . .  
to preserve tomorrow's Family Farms.



**Pennsylvania Farm Specializes  
in Adding Value**

## Fruit and Vegetable Grower News



**Michigan Farm Replaces  
Squash With Flowers**

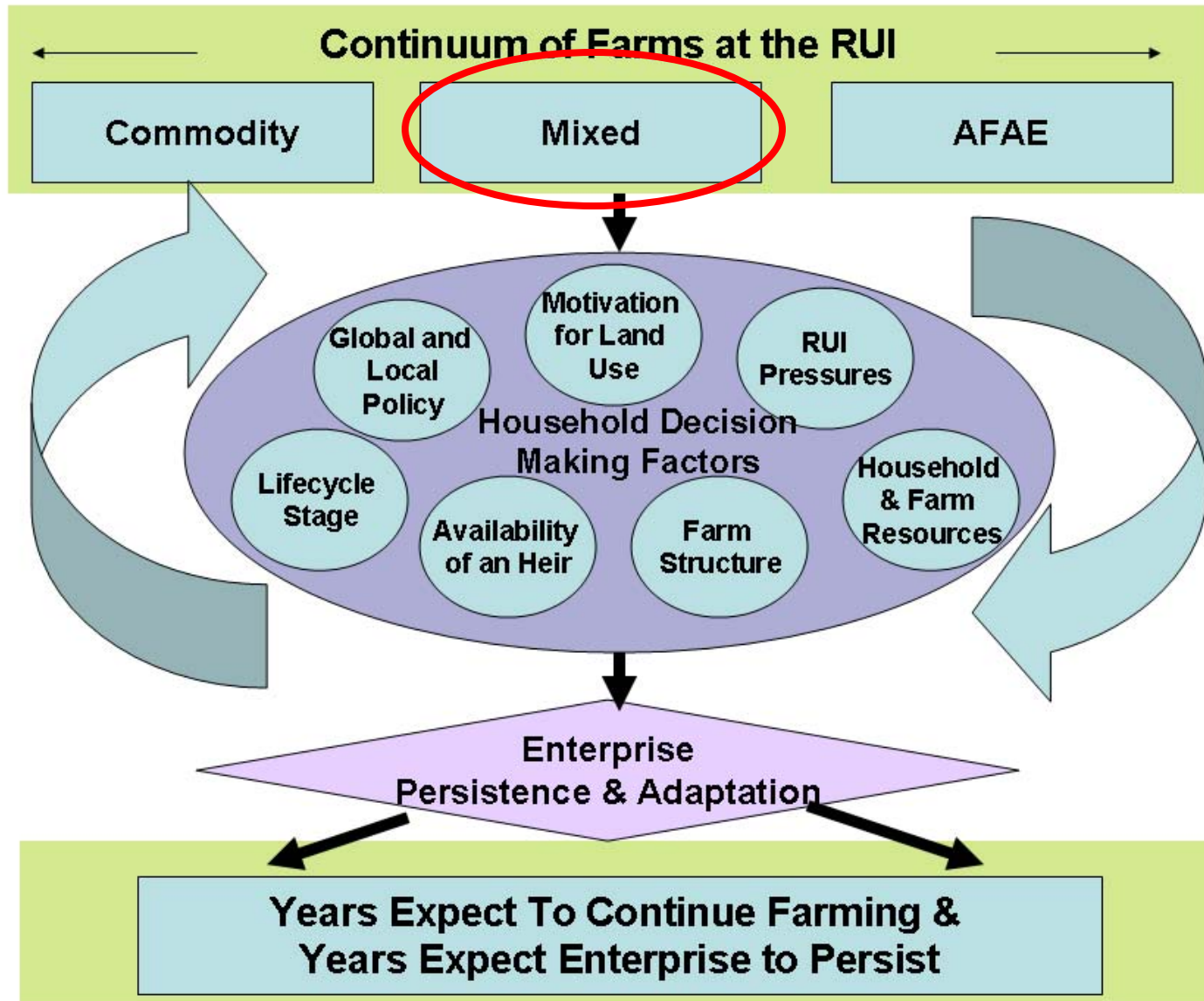
## *"Market Strives To Focus on Local Food"*



**Tanners Orchard Serves Up Fun for  
Illinois Visitors**



# Model of Household Factors Influencing Farm Adaptation and Persistence at the RUI



# Methods

## I. Quantitative Data- Landowner Survey

- 8 Case Study Counties
- Analysis of Commercial farmers and Rural Residential farmers

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Commercial Farmer</b>	293	68.80%
<b>Rural Residential</b>	133	31.20%
<b>Total</b>	426	100%



- Bivariate and Multivariate SPSS Analysis

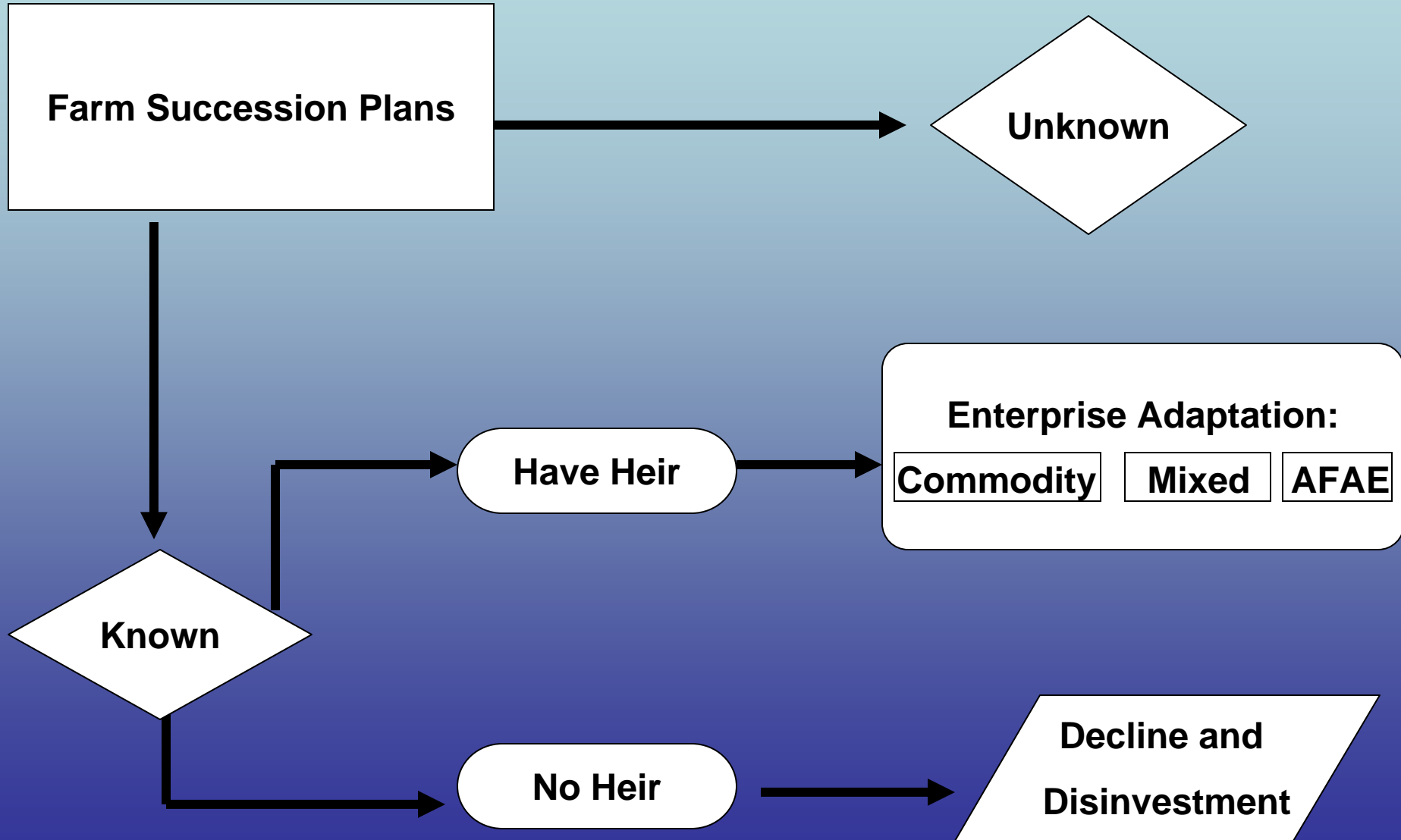
## II. Qualitative Data- In Person Semi-Structured Interviews

- Grand Rapids Metro
- Columbus Metro
- Analyzed with NVivo QSR 7

	Farms
<b>Commodity</b>	11
<b>First-generation AFAE's</b>	8
<b>Multi-generation AFAE's</b>	6
<b>Mixed</b>	8
<b>Non-farming Heir</b>	2
<b>Total Farm Families</b>	35
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	53



# Influence of Succession on Enterprise Adaptation at the RUI



# Heir Identified:

## 4 Types of Growth & Intensification

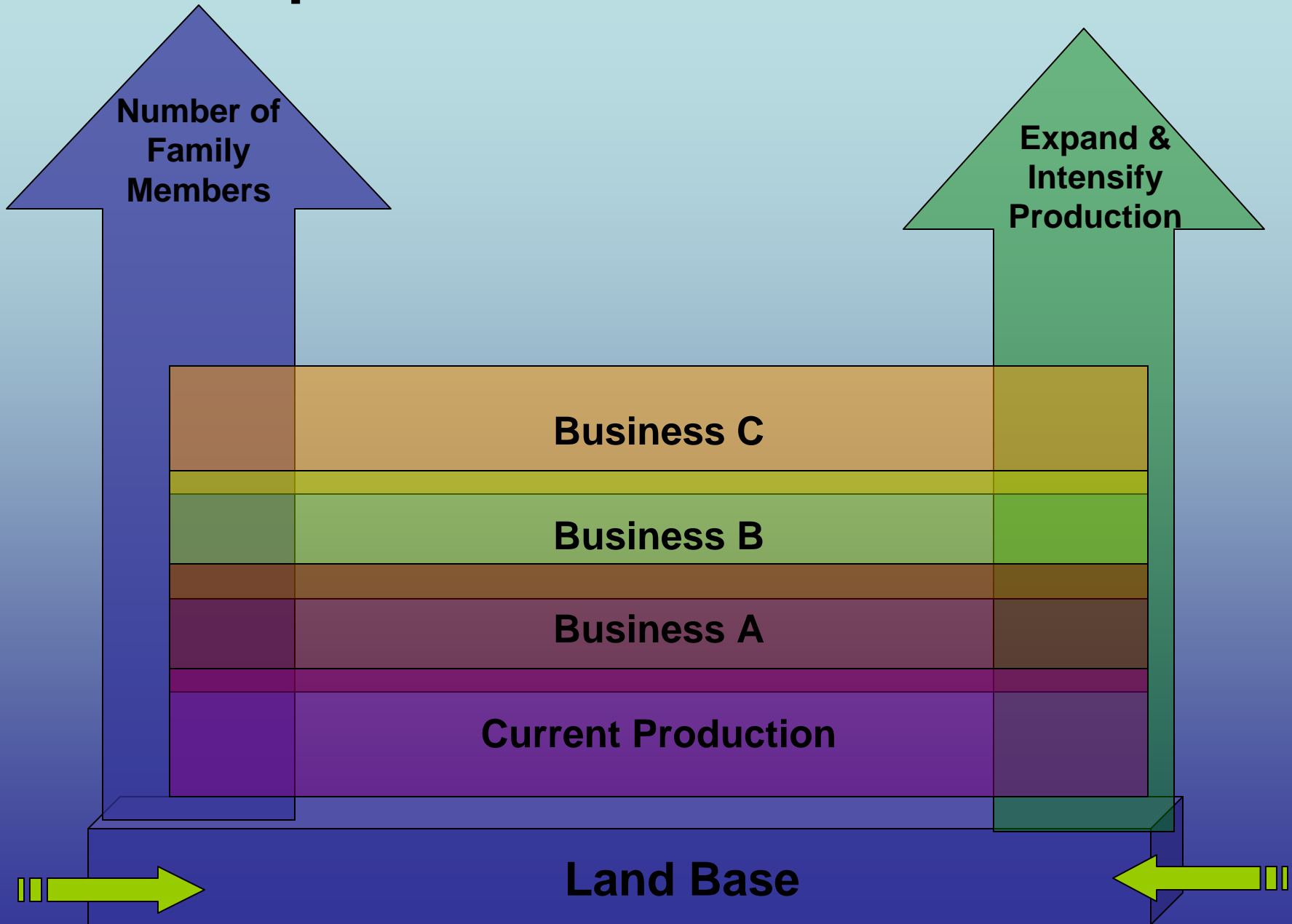
- **Commodity Farms**

- **The Expanders** - Growth via expansion of land
- **The Intensifiers** - Value added to existing commodity mix

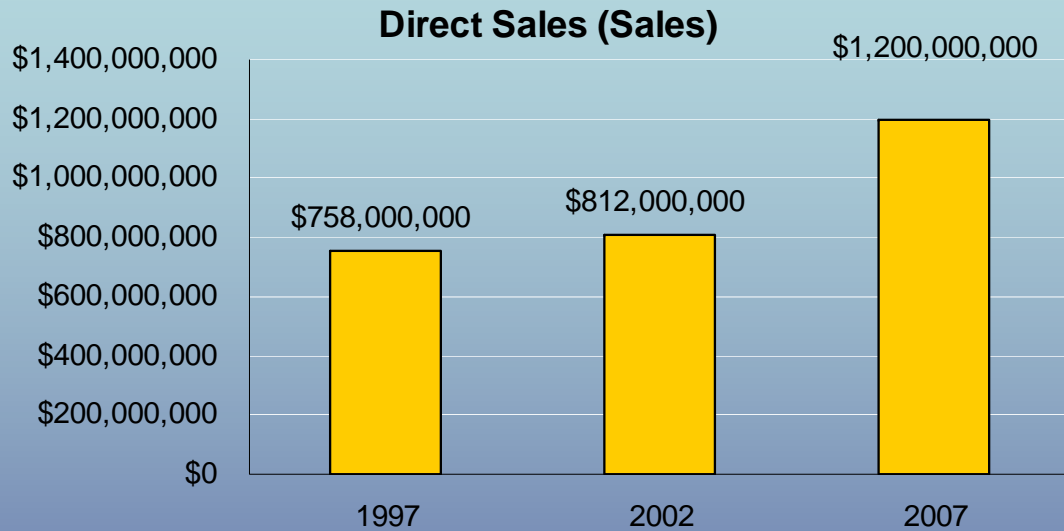
- **AFAE & Mixed Farms**

- **The Stackers** - Individuals stack skills within same business
- **The Entrepreneurial Stackers** – Stack complimentary but independent farm enterprises off each others production systems

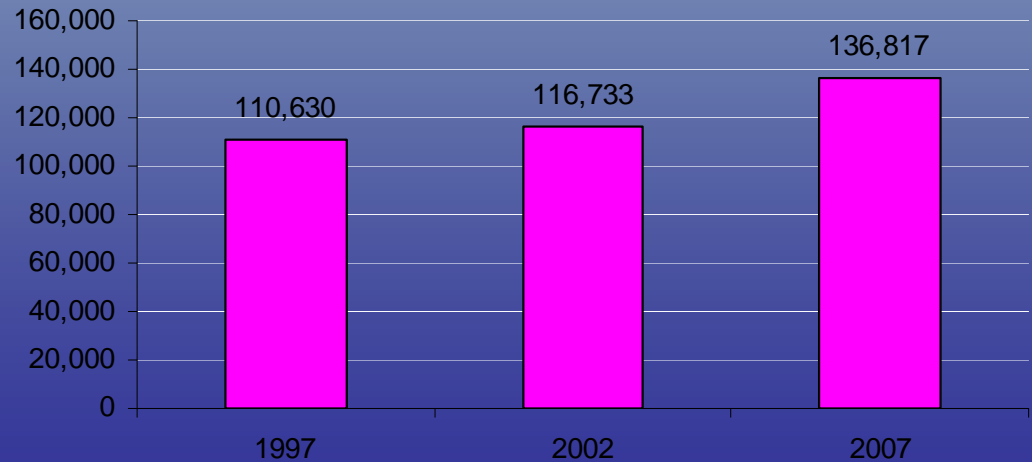
# Enterprise Intensification and Growth



# Direct Sales, 2007 Census of Agriculture



### Direct Sales (Farms)





# Household Dynamics & the Structure of Agriculture at the RUI

- Evidence of similar AFAE adaptations on the landscape rooted in different motivations
  - Multi-Generation AFAE's
  - First Generation AFAE's
  - Mixed Type Farms
    - Purposefully creating opportunities for the next generation
    - Entrepreneurship is seen as a form of agency



# Policy Recommendations

- Development Pressure at the RUI does not have the biggest impact on enterprise persistence and adaptation
  - Life Cycle and Succession Effects
  - Heterogeneous household and enterprise organization lends resiliency to agriculture at the RUI
- New Generation Policy Recommendations
  - Flexible and targeted policy to address specific lifecycle and business cycle needs
  - Role for local, state and federal governments
  - Expand land use policy to include succession, ability to afford retirement, health insurance, labor, access to capital
  - Increasing profitability for farmers
  - Regulatory laws (food safety, building codes, zoning, market competition) at national, state, and local levels
  - Foster and encourage diversity

# Future Directions for American Agriculture

- **Challenges**

- Climate change
- Energy uncertainty
- Build ecologically based agricultural systems that promote healthy water and soil systems on our farms and thriving rural, urban and peri-urban communities

- **Future Directions**

- *Multiple Problems Require Multiple Solutions*
- Move beyond notions of “good” and “bad” farmers—and work in the grey

# Opportunities and New Directions for a Sustainable Future

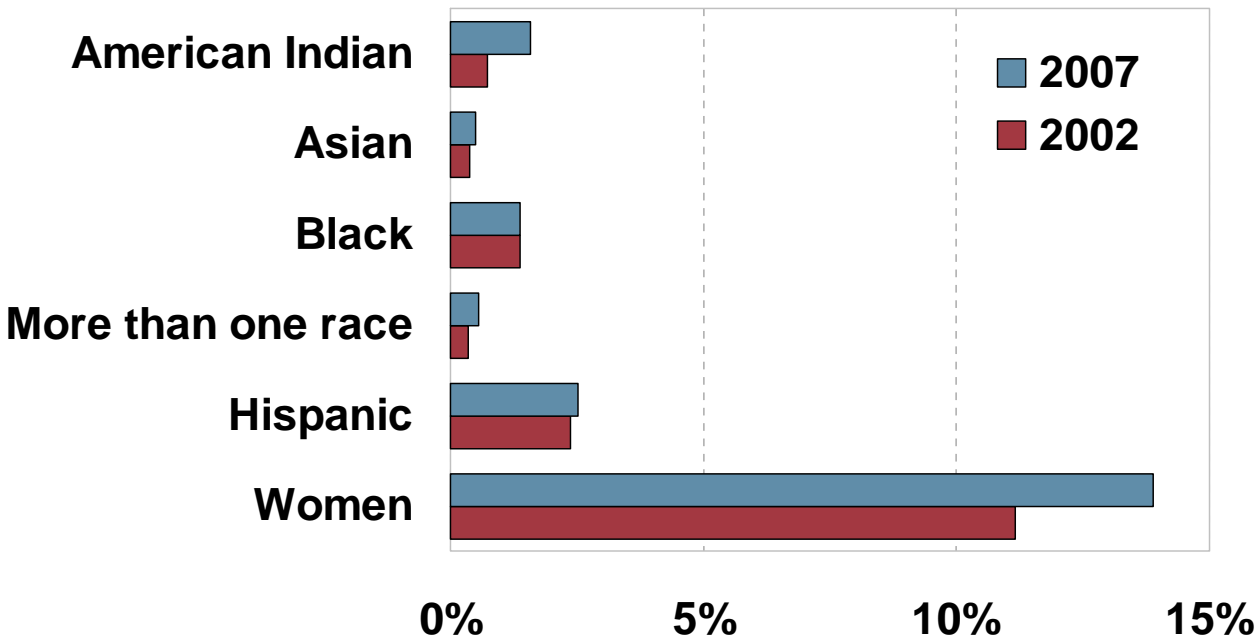
- Technical and *Social* Solutions
  - Off-set the risk of transition
  - Farmer support teams
  - Develop systems appropriate for individual farm scale, local agro-ecology and family goals.
- Use food as a platform for expanding farm policy debates.
- Tap into the diversity of farmers and consumers





# *“The New American Farmer”*

## Percent of Operators by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender



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- Use food as a platform for expanding farm policy debates.
- Tap into the diversity of farmers and consumers
- **Foster Diversity**
  - Biological
  - Social
  - Markets



**Thank You**

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