

“SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE FARM GROWTH AND PERSISTENCE AT THE RURAL-URBAN INTERFACE: BALANCING FAMILY, GOALS, OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS”

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND APPLIED ECONOMICS
MORRILL HALL, BURLINGTON, VT 05405 / 802-656-2001 / WWW.UVM.EDU/CDAE

PROFILE OF COLUMBUS, OH

January 2014

PROJECT SUPPORT FROM THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, USDA, GRANT # 2011-67023-30139

Report Authors: Emily Stengel¹, Shoshanah Inwood¹

Research Team: Shoshanah Inwood¹, Jill Clark², Jeff Sharp³, Vicki Garrett³, Sierra Poske¹, Emily Stengel¹, Bryan O’Conner¹

¹Department of Community Development and Applied Economics, University of Vermont

²John Glenn School of Public Affairs, The Ohio State University

³School of Environment and Natural Resources, The Ohio State University

STUDY BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The project “Small and Medium Scale Farm Growth and Persistence at the Rural-Urban Interface: Balancing Family, Goals, Opportunities and Risks” is a joint project undertaken by researchers at The Ohio State University and The University of Vermont. The goal of this national study is to understand how the goals and values of farm families influence the future of agriculture in areas experiencing population and non-farm development pressures.

Despite the fact that farmland at the Rural-Urban Interface (RUI) is vulnerable to non-farm development, a substantial proportion of U.S. agricultural production occurs at the RUI.

- Counties considered to be agriculturally important¹ and located at the RUI represent less than 20% of all U.S. counties, but accounted for 41% of U.S. agricultural sales.

¹ For a detailed explanation of agriculturally important-RUI counties see Jackson-Smith and Sharp 2008.

- Just under half of total agricultural crop sales, 95% of U.S. fruit and nut sales, 84% of U.S. vegetable sales and 95% of nursery green house sales originated in metropolitan counties in 2007.

The long-term viability of agriculture at the RUI relies on successful establishment of new farm enterprises, growth of existing farms, and the persistence of farm enterprises across generations. Researchers examining agricultural change at the RUI have identified a range of issues beyond land costs and farmland conversion that affect the future of agriculture in urbanizing environments.

The core objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify and assess the relationship of household dynamics (demographics, employment strategies, goals and values) to the growth and persistence of small and medium scale farm enterprises at the RUI.
- To identify policy needs or program developments critical to improve farm and ranch vitality

In this series, we describe the three-phase study and provide background information on one of five research sites, Columbus, OH.

METHODOLOGY

Phase 1: Site Selection

The five case study sites were selected based on several criteria:

- An active agricultural base, within the top quartile of US agricultural sales
- Positive population growth indicating their location at the RUI
- Regional and production variation
- A higher than regional average percentage of small and medium size farms
- A higher than regional average presence of farmer diversity measured by women, minority, and beginning farmers

The selected sites are shown on the map in Figure 1 and listed below with a brief background. Individual site reports profile each case study site.

Lewiston, ME has seen a growth in the number of farms while overall sales and farm acres have declined. The vast majority of farms (nearly 89%) are small. The majority of farm sales are from livestock and some fruit production. Lewiston has a large portion of beginning and women farmers.

Miami, FL is made up of three primary export agricultural systems: row crops (vegetables), tropical fruit and nursery operations that are located on extremely flat, rock ground soil terrain. The highest percentage of sales comes from small-scale farms. The region has a high population of minority and women farmers.

Columbus, OH is an agriculturally dense area with the highest percentage of sales coming from large commodity producers of corn, soybeans, livestock, etc. Columbus has a high population of women farmers.

Honolulu, HI is a major population center on the island of Oahu with an agricultural focus on fruit and vegetable production. Though small-scale farms are the most numerous, the highest percentage of sales comes from large farms. Honolulu has high populations of minority and women farmers.

Burlington, VT is a northern CBSA with the vast majority of its agricultural sales from livestock and

dairy products. Burlington is notable for having a high percentage of female principal operators.

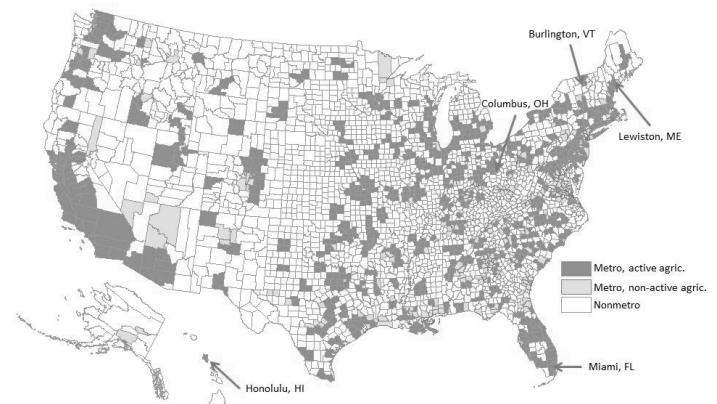


FIGURE 1: MAP OF CASE STUDY SITES

Phase 2: Interviews with Local Leaders and Farm Households

Interviews were conducted in each study site to understand the different perspectives and issues affecting farm families in particular locations. The interviews are also being used to develop questions for a farm household survey.

Phase 3: Farm Household Survey

The 2013 *Small and Medium Scale Farm Growth and Persistence* survey will be sent to 1600 farmers in the case study sites. Data collection will take place from Fall 2013 to Spring 2014.

COLUMBUS, OH INFORMATION

The Columbus, OH Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) is a major population center in Central Ohio and includes eight counties (Franklin, Delaware, Fairfield, Pickaway, Union, Madison, Morrow, Licking). The CBSA population grew 13%, increasing from 1,612,694 to 1,836,536 residents between 2000 and 2010, making it the fastest growing study site. Between 2002 and 2007 the number of farms decreased from 7,188 to 7,050 while farm sales increased by nearly 40% (from \$552,550 to \$780,099). Farm acres also increased, and farm acres outnumber non-farm acres in the CBSA (Figure 2).

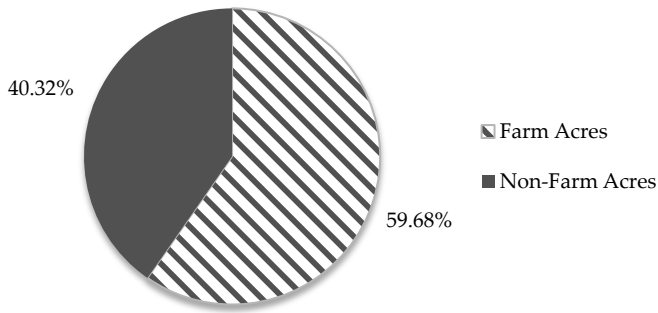


FIGURE 2: PERCENT FARM ACRES IN COLUMBUS, OH

FARM SIZE AND TYPE

The farm sector in the Columbus CBSA can be characterized as “commodity agriculture,” with 71% of annual agricultural sales in 2007 coming from crops, the most widespread of which are soybeans, corn, and wheat (Figure 3). Livestock, which includes cattle, hogs, poultry and dairy products, accounted for 29% of annual sales in 2007.

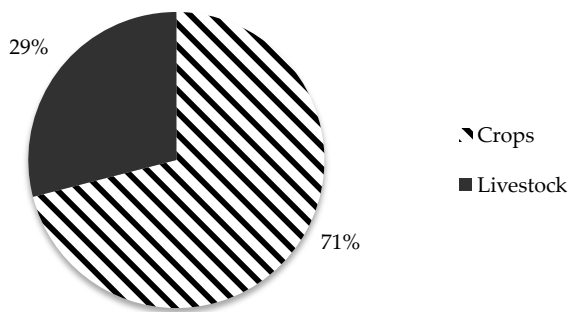


FIGURE 3: BREAKDOWN OF AGRICULTURAL SALES

Small, residential (or lifestyle) farms are the most numerous, but large farms account for the majority of sales (Figure 4).

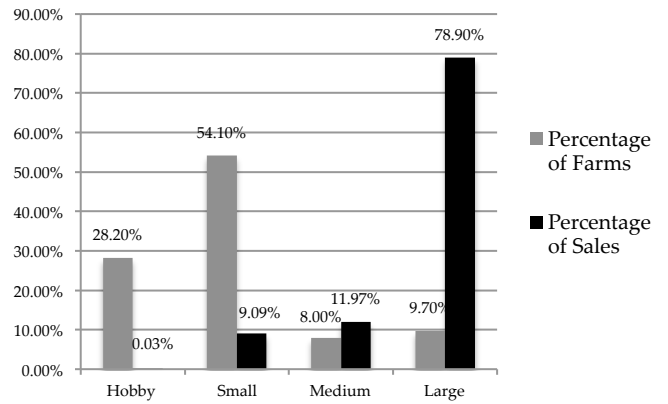


FIGURE 4: FARM TYPES AND SALES IN COLUMBUS, OH

MARKET ORIENTATION

The RUI offers opportunities to market farm products to proximate urban populations. A relatively small number of farms are selling direct to customers, through CSAs or engaged in value-added and tourism activities (Figure 5). Sales figures are shown for Direct Sales and Tourism Sales, but are not available for Value Added or CSA Sales.

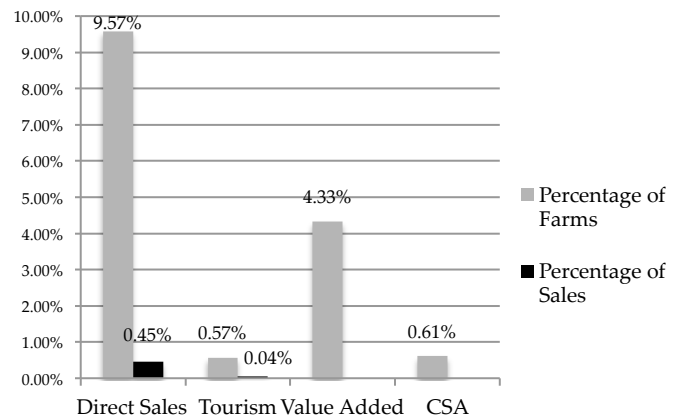


FIGURE 5: COLUMBUS, OH ALTERNATIVE MARKET FARMS

SUB-POPULATIONS

The population of the Columbus CBSA is the most homogeneous of all the research sites. Minorities account for 21.9% of the general population, but only 1.1% of the farm population (Figure 6). Minorities counted in this figure include Hispanic, Black, Native American and Asian farmers. Women involved in farm operations are more numerous, 28.7%, near the national average of 30%. Beginning farmers in this area (16.8%) are more numerous compared to the national average (13%).

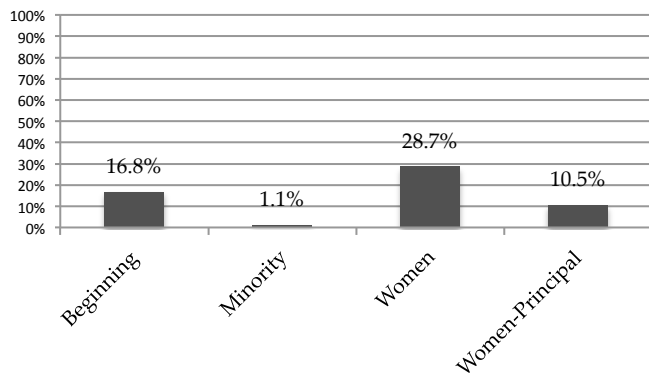


FIGURE 6: SUB-POPULATIONS OF FARMERS IN COLUMBUS, OH

NEXT STEPS

The research team is currently analyzing the qualitative data with HyperRESEARCH software. The results will be used to develop the survey of farm households. The next step will be to identify and survey 400 farm households in each study site, then analyze the data and report to the communities, local, state, and national policy-makers including USDA, nonprofit agricultural organizations, and disseminate findings through journals, press releases, and policy briefs.

REFERENCES

- United States Department of Agriculture. 2007. 2007 Census of Agriculture. Available online: <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/index.php>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. 2010 Census of Population. Available online: <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was funded by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2011-67023-30139.

Shoshanah Inwood is an assistant professor in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at The University of Vermont.

Jill Clark is an assistant professor in the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University.

Jeff S. Sharp is a Professor of Rural Sociology and Interim Director of the School of Environment and Natural Resources at The Ohio State University. His research focuses on agricultural and community change at the rural-urban interface. He teaches courses in the field of community sociology and the sociology of agriculture and food systems.

Sierra Poske is a graduate student in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont.

Emily Stengel is a graduate research assistant in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont.

Bryan O'Conner is a graduate research assistant in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont.

Vicki Garrett is a research associate in Rural Sociology in the School of Environment and Natural Resources at The Ohio State University.

Project Website: <http://senr.osu.edu/research/ag-and-food-systems>.