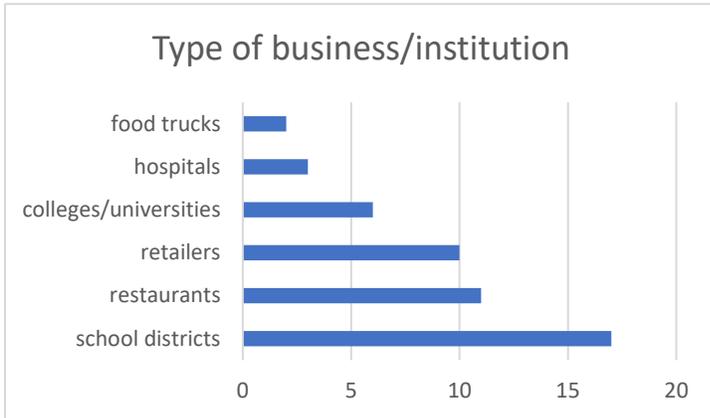


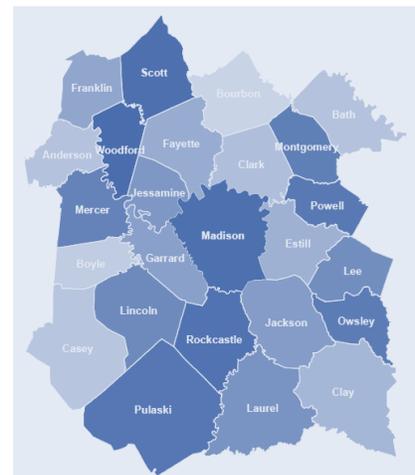


## INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASING OF LOCAL FOOD IN CENTRAL KENTUCKY

In Fall of 2019, Community Farm Alliance staff, with assistance from KCARD, conducted a survey of food buyers in central Kentucky. In the 25-county area of the study, 46 institutions participated in the survey. Two primary purposes of the study were: a) to estimate the demand for local foods in the area and b) to understand barriers to utilizing local foods.



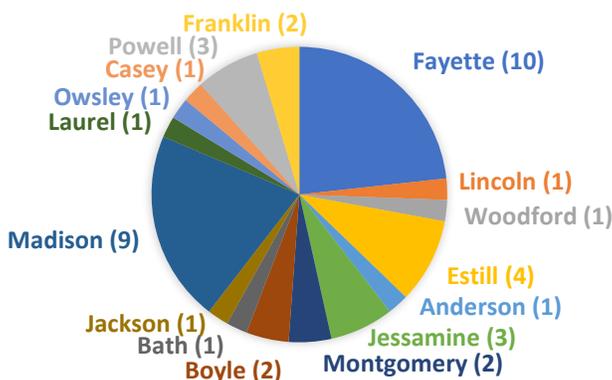
From the 25-county study area, buyers from 16 counties participated. The map below shows the study area.



### Current Local purchasing status

36 buyers reported some level of current local purchasing. 9 were not purchasing locally at all. 1 did not know if any purchases were local. Buyers reported a mix of purchasing directly from producers as well as indirect purchases through distributors. One retailer reported buying produce from a produce auction.

### BUYER SURVEY PARTICIPATION BY COUNTY



### SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR:

“We have tried multiple times to set something up. So far, most local producers would rather sell for greater margins at a Farmers Market. Also, they typically aren’t growing enough volume. If you find someone, let me know.”

## Food items currently being sourced locally

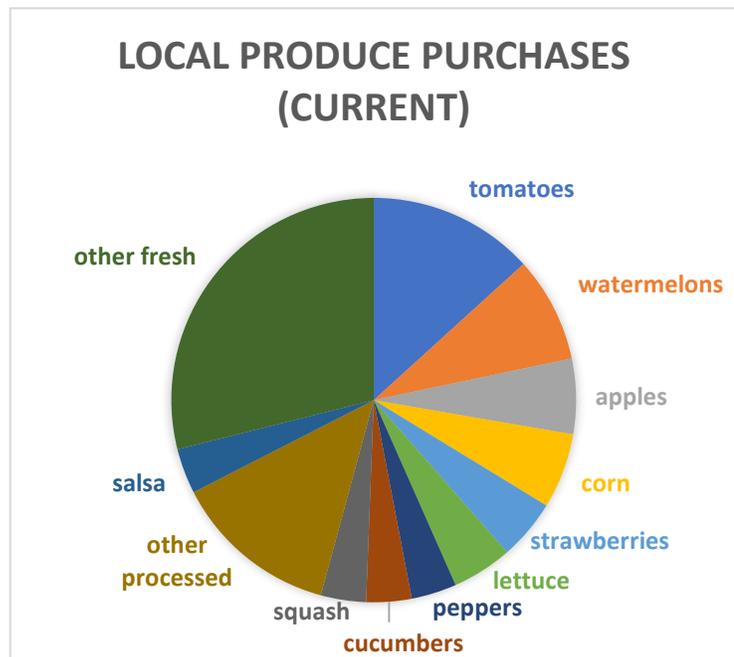
Buyers were asked, “Which types of food products (fresh produce, meat, dairy, eggs, grains, canned or frozen produce or other processed foods) have you sourced from Kentucky/local producers in the past year?” Answers were compiled by counting the number of times each food item was mentioned. A total of 46 foods were mentioned as current local purchases.



A general category of “produce” was mentioned 18 times, with all fresh produce mentions totaling 86. The produce items most buyers reported currently using are tomatoes (11), watermelons (7), apples (5), corn (5), strawberries (4) and lettuce (4). Other fresh produce mentioned included peppers, cucumbers, squash, spinach, green beans, pumpkins, greens, blueberries, cantaloupe, okra, potatoes, microgreens, peaches, onions, celery, asparagus, cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, green

tomatoes and kale. Canned or processed produce items were mentioned 14 times. Salsa was most frequently mentioned, followed by marinara, barbeque sauce, hot sauce, taco sauce, jam and frozen butternut. Quantities reported ranged from small (10 bunches of greens per week) to large (hundreds of pounds per week). Some buyers reported regular, weekly or monthly purchases, while others had only occasional, one-time opportunities.

In protein foods, locally grown meats were mentioned 26 times, while purchase of local eggs was reported 10 times by buyers. Of the buyers who reported buying local meats, 6 mentioned beef, 4 reported buying chicken, 3 buyers mentioned pork and hotdogs and 2 reported using local bacon. Two buyers reported their meat purchases in numbers of whole animals (beef and hogs) per month and three reported numbers of whole chickens used per week or month.

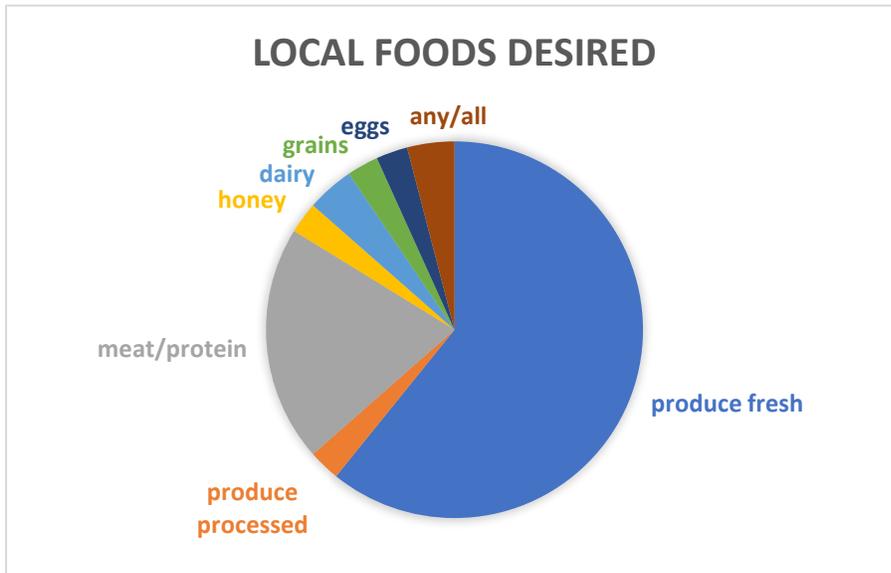


For dairy products, 5 buyers reported using local cheese, while 4 reported buying local milk.

Other local products that respondents reported buying included baked goods, flour, honey, sorghum and chestnuts.

### What local products are desired?

Buyers were also asked what products they would like to be able to purchase from local sources. Again, fresh produce was the category most frequently cited, with some kind of fresh

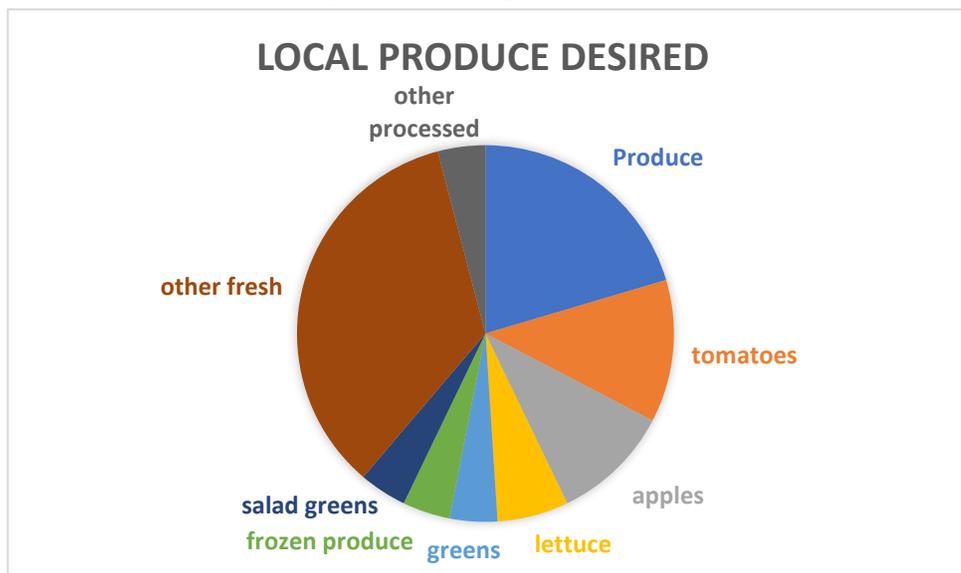


produce being mentioned 45 times by the 41 buyers who answered this question. Some buyers offered more specific information about items that they have had difficulty sourcing locally. For example, buyers specifically mentioned the need for bulk quantities of bacon, eggs, ready to eat salad greens, marinara, honey

and oats. Some buyers expressed interest in greater availability of local products with specific social or environmental values, as in cage free eggs or dairy products that allow a living wage for producers.

Meat/Protein were mentioned 15 times, including the following: 4 beef (ribeye/tenderloin, ground), 3 chicken, 2 pork, 1 catfish, other seafood, bacon (bulk quantity). Other desired items included honey, dairy foods, cheese, grains & flour and oats. Three buyers optimistically reported that they would like any/all local foods.

The top most frequently mentioned



produce items were tomatoes (6), apples (5) and lettuce (3). Greens, frozen produce and salad greens were each mentioned twice. The following produce items were mentioned once each: peaches, broccoli, potatoes, carrots, celery, green tomatoes, okra, yellow squash, kale, squash, fruit, seedless watermelon, red bell peppers, cucumbers, strawberries, melons, corn, processed (frozen) potatoes and marinara (in bulk quantities).

### Success and Barriers in Purchasing Local Foods

Buyers reported that quality was the most successful aspect of local food purchasing. One chef noted that freshness and flavor are the main advantages of local foods, and that his customers appreciate the difference.



When asked about challenges and obstacles to local purchasing, buyers could select multiple answers. Out of the 44 who responded, more than half reported that finding producers was an obstacle. The second greatest reported challenge was seasonal limitation, followed by a tie between pricing and quantity.

### TWO RETAILER PERSPECTIVES ON BUYING LOCAL FOODS

“We have 120 produce items, so I’d like to get as many of them locally as I can”

And

“don’t have much produce and it’s easier and more affordable to buy wholesale.”

## MORE BUYER PERSPECTIVES

“Locally procured products have to be more easily located, procured, and priced competitively” – school food service director

“I’ve had success in locating producers but would like more and more options. I usually rely upon middle man ... for delivery because producers aren’t reliable. I’ve had great success but not what I could do with more producers and better infrastructure.” – a restaurant owner

“I would like to buy a lot more from local people, but I’m limited by franchise restrictions.” – a retailer

## Challenges and Obstacles to Local Food Purchasing



### Recommendations

Work is needed on production, distribution, promotion and procurement in order to overcome the barriers to greater utilization of local foods. The following actions are recommended:

- Continue work in the region to develop connections between buyers and growers.
- Develop some sort of aggregation center which is brick and mortar and/or an online hub.
- Increase systematic training for farmers on market possibilities, marketing expertise, season extension and business planning and production to help farmers achieve the scale needed to have competitive prices for institutional purchasers.
- Develop a transportation system for moving local produce around the region.
- Recognize, champion and promote utilization of local foods.

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