

Appendix 1: Specialized Secondary Datasets

Dataset Source	Description	Characteristics	Limitations
<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture</p> <p>Natural Resources Conservation Service</p> <p>Geospatial Data Gateway (GDG)</p> <p>Web address: http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/</p>	<p>If your food system assessment team wishes to map watershed boundaries, soil conditions, or other natural resource features as part of planning or evaluation, this is the essential source of data. Healthy soil and clean water certainly affect the economic possibilities for food producers, so this can be quite relevant to your economic planning and evaluation.</p>	<p><u>Unique Feature:</u> One-stop source for environmental and natural resources data.</p> <p>Comprehensiveness: Exceptionally detailed mapping data covering most of the U.S. at a localized scale. A separate area of the NRCS website offers technical assistance tools for conservation programs.</p> <p><u>Levels:</u> Local to national levels.</p> <p><u>Accuracy:</u> Very accurate. Based on thorough scanning of aerial maps, field data, etc.</p> <p><u>Ease of use:</u> Relatively easy to access, with a broad array of data sources available. However, professional assistance for interpreting data and mapping is often advised to understand the precision and limitations of the data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This data set does not speak directly to economic conditions on farms, but rather covers the environmental and natural resource contexts in which farmers operate. • The finest resolution of this farm data is an area of 30 meters by 30 meters (roughly 10,000 square feet) so very small fields or small-farm regions may not be well represented.
<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture</p> <p>Economic Research Service</p> <p>Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS)</p> <p>Web address: http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/arms-farm-financial-and-crop-production-practices.aspx#.U9kBv0i5KUY</p>	<p>This annual survey of farm financials provides summaries of important data covering farm production, mostly at the farm operation level.</p> <p>Data from these surveys may also be useful for modifying IMPLAN to express local business conditions (see Module 8).</p>	<p><u>Unique Feature:</u> Based upon a nationally representative survey targeting about 5,000 fields and 30,000 farms each year.</p> <p><u>Comprehensiveness:</u> Focuses on specific commodities, but also the economic viability of farms, including off-farm income. ARMS states that the survey is “designed to be representative of the Continental U.S., and to support State-level estimates for 15 key agricultural States.”</p> <p><u>Levels:</u> Specific farms and categories of farms.</p> <p><u>Accuracy:</u> Based on thorough surveys of U.S. farms.</p> <p><u>Ease of use:</u> Restricted access, though summaries of data are available via USDA-ERS reports posted on their website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to be more suited to analysis in key farm states and major commodities. • Greater access for a limited number of researchers engaged in research partnerships with USDA-ERS. • Data collection on “local food” sales started in 2008, but sample size is limited (see Low and Vogel 2011).

<p>MarketMaker</p> <p>Web address: https://national.foodmarketmaker.com/</p>	<p>An internet ordering platform geared to wholesale trading; Market Maker allows producer to list products they wish to make available, while buyers and consumers may place orders.</p> <p>These listings may also be used by researchers to identify farms and food businesses that are engaged in local food trade.</p>	<p><u>Unique Feature:</u> Engages land grants, state departments of agriculture, and food businesses in networking and food trading.</p> <p><u>Comprehensiveness:</u> Market Maker has been adopted by 20 states as of this writing.</p> <p><u>Levels:</u> States, although more localized data are incorporated.</p> <p><u>Ease of use:</u> Quite easy to locate listings of farms and food businesses that have registered with the service.</p> <p><u>Accuracy:</u> Presumed accurate but may require updating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since participation is voluntary, farm and business listings cannot be presumed to be comprehensive.
<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture</p> <p>Economic Research Service</p> <p>National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey (Food APS)</p> <p>Web address: http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/foodaps-national-household-food-acquisition-and-purchase-survey.aspx</p>	<p>Provides information about household size and composition, available resources, and acquired food items (and their prices).</p> <p>Also includes information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) • Income 	<p><u>Unique Feature:</u> First nationally representative survey of American households that collects detailed data about low-income household food purchases, and factors that affect consumer spending decisions.</p> <p><u>Comprehensiveness:</u> Includes detailed information from a nationally representative sample, about 4,826 households.</p> <p><u>Levels:</u> National</p> <p><u>Accuracy:</u> Very reliable, robust data set for certain research purposes.</p> <p><u>Ease of use:</u> Easy-to-use reports are available reporting aggregated data, but researchers wishing to access raw data for research have restricted access, requiring a MOU with USDA-ERS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These data currently have limited utility for local food assessments or economic impact calculations, since findings apply only to the national level.