

Data Sources on Food Handling, Processing, Marketing, and Distribution

Dataset Source	Description	Characteristics	Limitations
<p>Local Food Directories</p> <p>If any food initiative in your region has published a local food directory, consult this first to learn what has already been compiled. Many have been published through the national “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaign coordinated by the Food Routes Network (http://www.foodroutes.org/), or through local Cooperative Extension office. Similarly, there are several national organizations that have compiled local food directories. Local Harvest (http://www.localharvest.org) has a useful directory focused on farms selling product directly to consumers.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is impossible to characterize the quality of these directories as a whole, since comprehensiveness and quality will vary from place to place, and over time. If such a listing has already been published, this will be important to know to avoid duplication of energies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers may be required to pay to be included – thus potentially limiting the number of businesses included. Some directories focus on producers of a particular commodity or production practice (i.e., organic).
<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture</p> <p>Agricultural Marketing Service Register of Local Food Directories</p> <p>Web address: http://www.usdalocalfooddirectories.com/</p>	<p>A listing of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers’ markets CSA farms Food hubs On-farm markets <p>Data submitted voluntarily by each firm or market.</p>	<p><u>Unique Feature:</u> Most comprehensive national source for listings of farmers’ markets, CSAs, food hubs, and on-farm markets</p> <p><u>Comprehensiveness:</u> Since businesses post their own information, coverage may not be thorough.</p> <p><u>Levels:</u> Farms, locales, nation.</p> <p><u>Accuracy:</u> Varies depending on source and how recently a listing has been updated. Some duplication of entries occurs. The definition of “food hub” may vary from place to place or business to business.</p> <p><u>Ease of use:</u> Straightforward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listings are submitted by each business or market, so coverage is not comprehensive, and may not be updated frequently. For example, at the writing of this module the USDA AMS' Register of Local Food Directories included 130 listings for food hubs, compared to a national estimate of more than 300.

<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture,</p> <p>Agricultural Marketing Service Fruit and Vegetable Market News Data</p> <p>Web address: https://www.marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/fv-home</p>	<p>USDA AMS has provided fruit and vegetable reports since 1915. These data are collected directly from industry sources and disseminated within hours through internet postings. Approximately 375 different formatted reports are issued daily, monthly and annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and vegetable shipments (specific products such as carrots and bananas) are tracked daily through terminal markets, major shipping points, and entry ports, including amount shipped and prices, for both organic and conventional produce. • Pilot-testing of selected farmers' market price reports was added in 2014. • Organic price data were recently introduced, and there are plans to include food hub and other local food price data in the near future. 	<p>Unique Feature: Primarily intended for wholesalers wishing to track shipments of produce on a daily basis. Historical trend data available for most commodities from 1998 to present.</p> <p>Levels: Specific entry ports and shipping points only. Farmers' market pilot limited to a handful of states/sites.</p> <p>Accuracy: Presumed accurate for larger shipments. Data are collected through direct telephone and face-to-face contacts with sales persons, suppliers, brokers, and buyers. Reporters collect, validate, analyze, and organize data on price, volume, quality, and condition of produce traded.</p> <p>Ease of use: Relatively easy to access with considerable detail available for analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data cover shipments arriving at 13 specific collection points, identifying only the state where each shipment was sourced, which may not be the same as the location of the farm that actually grew each product. • Shipping data from locations in any of the 50 states may not show the ultimate destination.
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<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture</p> <p>Economic Research Service</p> <p>Food Environment Atlas</p> <p>Web address: http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/.aspx#.U9kS6Ui5KUY</p>	<p>One-stop website showing maps of specific food-related facilities, prices for specific food items, and issues surrounding food access and food insecurity. Atlas aggregates data from many different sources, and provides specific information about hyper-local areas (neighborhoods and smaller geographies, e.g., census tracts).</p>	<p>Unique Feature: Maps showing locations of grocery stores, locales that are distant from grocery stores (“food deserts”), locations of farmers’ markets, farm-to-school programs, direct farmer-to-consumer sales, access to restaurants, SNAP allocations, and much more.</p> <p>Comprehensiveness: Very detailed data.</p> <p>Levels: Hyper-local to national.</p> <p>Accuracy: Sometimes individual entries may be coded improperly.</p> <p>Ease of use: Quite visual and easy to use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the underlying economic factors often requires reference to other data sources listed herein.
<p>U.S. Department of Commerce</p> <p>Bureau of the Census</p> <p>County and ZIP code Business Patterns</p> <p>Web address: http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/</p>	<p>Offers annual summaries of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of firms, • Employment, • Total payroll. <p>Data is for key industrial sectors, not including farming, for each county of the U.S.</p>	<p>Unique Feature: Time-series data covering employment and payroll for industry sectors in each county in U.S. from 1986 to the present.</p> <p>Comprehensiveness: comprehensive but not targeted for food system use.</p> <p>Levels: counties, zipcodes, metro regions, states, nation.</p> <p>Accuracy: Often data are compiled by categories that do not offer a thorough overview of food-related business activity</p> <p>Ease of use: Relatively straightforward; now integrated with Economic Census</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories (by North American Industry Classification System, NAICS) are not precisely connected to food system activity. • Confidentiality concerns mean that many industry subsectors do not report data at the county level.
<p>U.S. Department of Commerce</p> <p>Bureau of the Census</p> <p>Economic Census</p>	<p>Compilations of employment, payroll, sales, and type of ownership data for broad industry sectors</p>	<p>Unique Feature: Collected every five years from 2002 to the present.</p> <p>Comprehensiveness: Comprehensive but not targeted for food system use.</p> <p>Levels: C counties, zipcodes, metro</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often data are compiled by categories that do not offer a thorough or detailed enough overview of food-related business

<p>Web address: http://www.census.gov/econ/</p>		<p>regions, states, nation. <u>Accuracy:</u> Often data are compiled by categories that do not offer a thorough overview of food-related business activity <u>Ease of use:</u> Relatively straightforward.</p>	<p>activity.</p>
<p>Proprietary Datasets</p>	<p>While proprietary databases listing businesses by industrial category exist, making use of them can often prove to be prohibitively expensive. Dun & Bradstreet and InfoUSA, as two examples, publish directories of all the businesses they have registered in the nation. Many marketing firms purchase these lists at high cost for commercial purposes. Even though access to this list is often available at low cost through a business library, users are usually not allowed to publish what they look up.</p>		