



Quick Tips – 2025 Local Food Survey

The purpose of this is to provide a quick reference to some of the common questions tied to scope and some common reporting issues. Please refer to the Interviewer’s manual for a comprehensive guide.

Direct to Consumer – One of the most common misreported data items in this section is the Online Sales in Item 22. Report sales based on where the transaction of money takes place. If ordered online but paid for in-person update market to reflect where money is exchanged.

Direct to Retail – Distance plays an important role here, if an operation reports selling something over 400 miles away or to an out-of-state retail market the data is likely to be out of scope. Confirm sales are from an operation selling directly to retailer and not through a distributor.

Direct to Intermediate – To be in scope for this market there needs to be evidence of intent for both the producer and intermediate agent to market the commodity locally. This can be established by referencing Section 4, Item 3. This can also be provided by identifying items like labels, signage, or participation in state “Local” programs. These sources can be cited in the comments to aid editors if possible.

Be careful of reports or estimated records of producers selling high volume of products to large retailers such as Wal-Mart where the product can be distributed to locations that would not be considered in scope.

Sales of Meat, Farmed Seafood, and Eggs – Producers may report meat sales if they have their animals custom slaughtered, and then sell that meat directly to consumers or retailers. For example, a farmer has cattle custom processed locally and sells packaged cuts at a farmer’s market. If livestock is sold with the established intent that it will be immediately butchered for consumption those sales are also in scope. The purpose of this is to allow the capture of the data from small-scale producers that sell the live animal with the established intent the animal is immediately slaughtered for consumption. When a live animal is sold directly to a consumer to be slaughtered, it is assumed that the animal will be processed and eventually eaten. Below are some examples to provide further clarification of criteria:

INCLUDE sales for human consumption when:

- Sales of meat when a farmer or rancher has livestock custom processed and sells packaged meat directly to consumers, retailers, or institutions.
- The consumer buys the live animal with the established intent to immediately slaughter for consumption, potentially incurring a separate fee. The producer may also arrange for slaughter for a separate fee. These instances should be reported as processed food.

EXCLUDE feedlots or large-scale poultry operations:

- Cattle on Feed
- Animals for purposes other than human consumption, such as research, cosmetics, pets, clothing, breeding, mink, etc.

- Animals harvested from hunting operations

Production Contracts - commodities grown under a production contract are not included in the scope of this survey. Operations may have commodities that are grown under production contract and in-house. Those commodities grown by the operation have potential to be considered in scope.

Markets and Sales – If respondent is unable to complete survey try to get their best estimate of the markets, commodities, and approximate sales.

Section 5 Question 9 and 10 – Total expenses and Marketing Expenses – Item 9 asks for the total expenses of the operation. Experience has shown that most respondents have difficulty reporting total expenses without a detailed breakdown. If the respondent does not know the total expenses a “best guess” is acceptable. If a respondent is unable or unwilling to provide an answer you may leave it blank.

Marketing expenses in Item 10 can also be difficult for respondents to report. If a respondent is unable or unwilling to provide answers for each category you may then leave a blank in the cell to indicate that the operation incurred expenses in that category. If the respondent does not have expenses in an individual category, please check the NONE box corresponding to the correct cell.

Key Terms for Understanding:

Operation:	A farm or ranch, a piece of land, or a structure where production takes place and an agricultural product is grown or raised.
Produced and Sold:	An agricultural product that is grown or raised by an operation and is also sold by that same operation.
Food:	Edible agricultural products for humans to eat or drink.
Selling Food Directly:	The first point of sales of the food produced and sold by an operation.
Production Contract:	A verbal or written agreement setting terms, conditions, and fees paid by the contractor to the operation for the production of crops or livestock. The contractor owns the product being grown or raised and often provides inputs.

Consumers:	Individuals who purchase your products from farmers’ markets, on-farm stores or farm stands, roadside stands or stores, CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), and online marketplaces.
Retail Markets:	Supermarkets, supercenters, restaurants, caterers, independently owned grocery stores, and food cooperatives.
Institutions:	K-12 schools, colleges or universities, hospitals, workplace cafeterias, prisons, and foodbanks.
Intermediate Markets:	Businesses or organizations in the middle of the supply chain that <i>market locally- and/or regionally-branded products</i> , such as distributors, food hubs, brokers, auction houses, wholesale and terminal markets, and food processors.