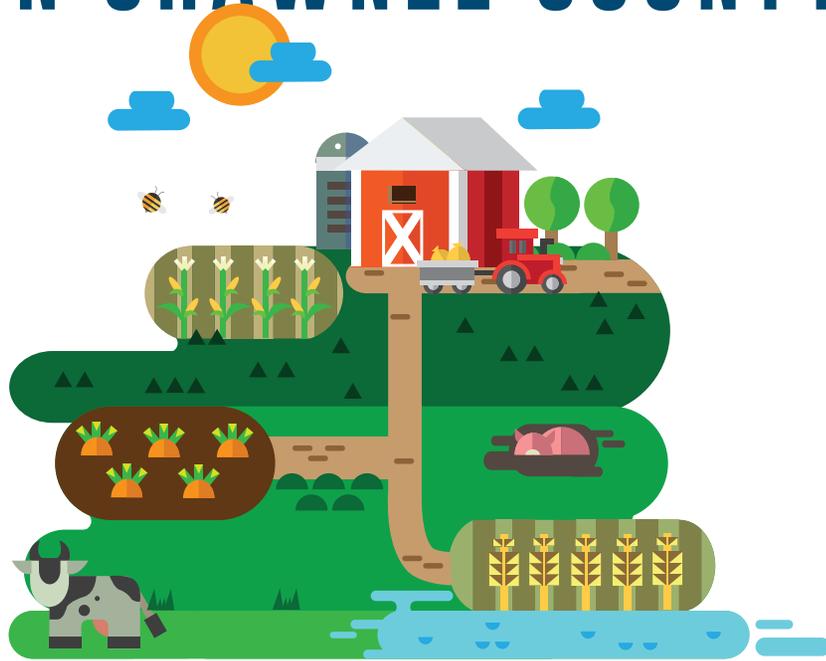


FOOD PRODUCTION IN SHAWNEE COUNTY



The food production sector is primarily comprised of farms and ranches. However, production starts with water, land, soil, sunlight, and other inputs used to enhance the quantity and quality of food produced.

Farming in Shawnee County is dominated by grain crops and beef cattle production. Less than 2 percent of all Shawnee County farms reported fruit or vegetable production as their primary activity in 2012. Promising fruit and vegetable production practices are emerging in Shawnee County and across Kansas which may increase production.

In 2012:

826 farms

194,274 acres

Only 58 acres of vegetables

And 22 acres in orchards

Net farm income averaged only \$22,226

Facts & Trends

- ▲ In 2012, the average age of farm operators in Shawnee County Operators was 59.8 years.
- ▲ Local food producers have closed their business in the past year, including a local grower's produce market and retail dairy store.
- ▲ The average market value of products sold by Shawnee County farms in 2012 was \$60,843; Total sales of products from Shawnee County farms were over \$50.2 million in 2012.
- ▲ More than one-third (35 percent) of U.S. households grew some food for their own use during 2013. That is the highest overall gardening participation levels seen in the U.S. in a decade, and an increase of 17 percent over five years.

Strengths

- ▲ Community Gardens
- ▲ Home Gardens
- ▲ The addition of a garden stand at Insane Paine produce
- ▲ Double Up Food Bucks
- ▲ Large quantity of farmland with Class 1 soils
- ▲ Worksite and community CSAs
- ▲ Farmers Markets
- ▲ Farm-to-School programs
- ▲ WIC garden in development

Challenges

- ▲ Limited production of fruits and vegetables
- ▲ Lack of infrastructure to support small scale producers of fruits and veggies
- ▲ Aging farmer population
- ▲ GAP certifications are misunderstood and expensive
- ▲ No clear consensus on "local" definition
- ▲ Confusing food safety regulations
- ▲ Women, and racial/ethnic minorities are underrepresented as farm operators

Policy Needs

- ▲ Establishment of a Food and Farm Council
- ▲ Easier access to publicly-owned vacant lots for commercial fruit and vegetable production
- ▲ Local food sourcing support for schools
- ▲ Comprehensive review of planning, licensing, and zoning to ensure inclusivity of health, equity, hunger and agriculture

Community Needs

- ▲ Private sector buy-in for healthy food guidelines and local food purchasing preferences
- ▲ Increased agricultural production and increased number of farmers
- ▲ A local-minded approach to development and planning
- ▲ Support for young, women, and minority farmers to buy and operate farms and ranches
- ▲ Education on food safety regulations
- ▲ A system-wide approach to healthy food