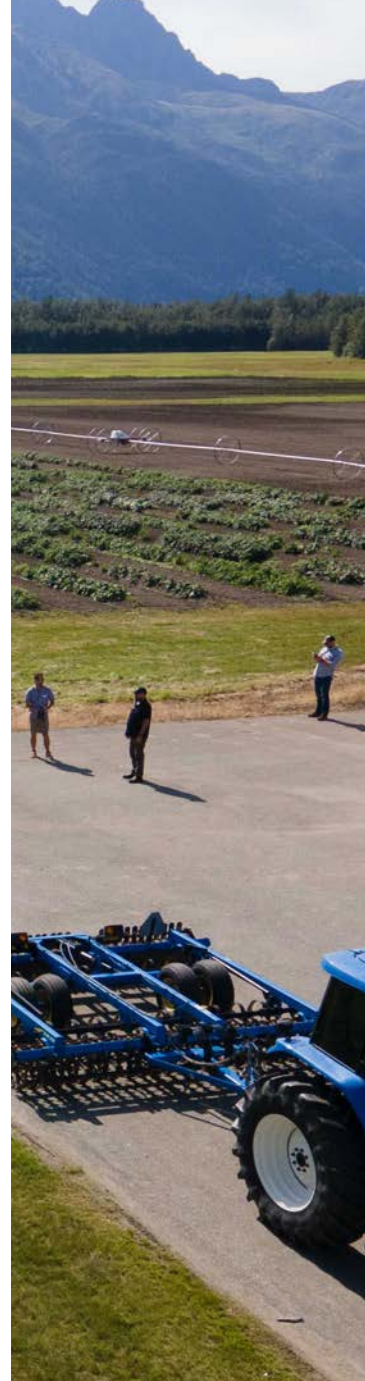




2024 REPORT



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION





A. LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

August 1, 2024

Honorable Michael Dunleavy
Office of the Governor
State of Alaska

Honorable Presiding Officers and Members
Alaska State Legislature
State of Alaska

Dear Governor Dunleavy, Presiding Officers, and Members of the Alaska State Legislature:

As prescribed in our state's uncodified law via House Bill 298, signed in 2022, and as Chair of the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force, I submit our second and final report, respectfully requesting your earnest review and consideration of the actionable steps to increase food access and independence in Alaska. If we work together, we can overcome obstacles that have plagued our state for decades and caused our over-reliance on outside sources to skyrocket, limited our in-state food production, and too often resulted in inefficient and stifled transport of food.

Food systems are a complex network of interconnected pieces, and in a large state with relatively little infrastructure like Alaska, those pieces must effectively complement each other to ensure sustenance for Alaskan households. From production and harvesting to manufacturing, transportation, storage, and consumption, efficient interconnections in the Northern Frontier must prevail despite challenges if we are to succeed.

The work of the 36-member Alaska Food Strategy Task Force (AFSTF) in 2023 and 2024 has been to develop recommendations to address these challenges. Whether it is, for example, to ensure more efficient transport of food items (imported as well as in-state grown) or to increase in-state food production and processing, the AFSTF has developed actionable items to achieve greater food access and independence in our state over time.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



As you are aware, Alaska's food system heavily relies on importing food from out-of-state, which makes it vulnerable from the get-go to food and supply chain disruptions in both urban and rural areas – disruptions such as those caused by severe weather, major events (earthquake, volcano), equipment failure, or port labor strikes. In addition, with over 80% of Alaska's communities off the road and rail systems¹, village residents rely on planes, boats, and even snow machines to access and transport food rather than on trucks and trains. The distance food travels, the time it takes, and the lack of temperature-controlled storage make it difficult for Alaskans to access fresh, nutritious foods consistently in many Alaskan communities, resulting in a high volume of wastage and food insecurity. One in seven Alaska households is challenged with food insecurity².

While wild caught and harvested foods are unique and important to Alaska's food system, particularly in rural communities, the availability of certain fish has been on the decline³ in recent years impacting access to a major source of high-quality protein for many Alaskan households who rely on their annual harvest to feed their families.

In rural areas of Alaska, 33.9 million pounds of fish and game are harvested for subsistence, with over 80% of rural community households participating in subsistence activities. An additional 13.4 million pounds are harvested by urban residents⁴. Based on the average poundage of food consumed per person at 1996 pounds⁵ and our population of 734,821,⁶ Alaskans accumulatively consume 1.47 billion pounds. Of this total consumed, 3.2% is wild caught and harvested foods.

Not including the \$1.2 billion value of harvested wild foods⁷, or the \$98 million spent on non-wild foods grown in Alaska⁸, Alaskans spend \$3.01 billion on foods imported from out-of-state⁹.

It is important to note that dollars coming into our state grow our economy; dollars going out do not. Our state's GDP only improves when our production, the value of our production, or the combination of the two goes up. Although oil, gas, mineral, and commercial fisheries production make up and will continue to make up the vast bulk of our GDP, we have opportunities to increase production – and our GDP – in other natural resources areas such as agriculture, forestry, and mariculture. The outcome of increasing production in Alaska would be the growth of private industry and a more favorable, appropriate ratio of the private sector to the public sector.

¹ [Statewide Aviation, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska](https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdav/) <https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdav/>

² [2023-Food-Bank-of-Alaska-Annual-Report.pdf](https://foodbankofalaska.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-Food-Bank-of-Alaska-Annual-Report.pdf) (foodbankofalaska.org) <https://foodbankofalaska.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-Food-Bank-of-Alaska-Annual-Report.pdf>, Page 12.

³ [Department of Fish & Game Fishery 2023 Yukon Announcement - 1471017142.pdf](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1471017142.pdf) (alaska.gov) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1471017142.pdf>

[Department of Fish & Game Fishery 2023 Kuskokwim Announcement - 1475130212.pdf](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1475130212.pdf) (alaska.gov) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1475130212.pdf>

⁴ [Subsistence in Alaska: Home Page, Alaska Department of Fish and Game](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=subsistence.main) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=subsistence.main>

⁵ [The Average American Ate \(Literally\) A Ton This Year : The Salt : NPR](https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2011/12/31/144478009/the-average-american-ate-literally-a-ton-this-year) <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2011/12/31/144478009/the-average-american-ate-literally-a-ton-this-year>

⁶ [Alaska | Data USA](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/alaska) <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/alaska>

⁷ 2014 figure adjusted for inflation. [Building Food Security in Alaska, Meter, Goldenberg - akfood140910](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/584221c6725e25d0d2a19363/t/58b0e030ebbd1abb37f85817/1487986738928/14-09-17_building-food-security-in-ak_exec-summary-recommendations.pdf) https://static1.squarespace.com/static/584221c6725e25d0d2a19363/t/58b0e030ebbd1abb37f85817/1487986738928/14-09-17_building-food-security-in-ak_exec-summary-recommendations.pdf

⁸ 2022 figure adjusted for inflation. [2024 Census of Ag Infographic Alaska Farm Flavor_v2](https://eadn-wc01-4177395.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Census-of-Ag-Infographic-Alaska-Farm-Flavor.pdf) (nxedge.io) <https://eadn-wc01-4177395.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Census-of-Ag-Infographic-Alaska-Farm-Flavor.pdf>

⁹ 2023 figure adjusted for inflation. [AFSTF DoAg White Paper](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155) (akleg.gov) https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155, Page 1





Although increasing food production within Alaska is not an overnight endeavor, will never eliminate the importation of many food products into our state, nor will singlehandedly correct the private/public sector ratio, every food item produced in-state and every dollar spent to purchase it helps shore up our economy instead of draining it.

When our food production and processing industries grow, and more items begin to be marketed outside the state (like Alaskan king salmon have been), those outside dollars coming in will result in a net-positive growth of our economy. Keep in mind, too, that for certain foods produced in Alaska to fill our grocery shelves consistently and reliably, their prices must be competitive with the lower 48.

To achieve price competitiveness, economies of scale are often needed, i.e., a larger market of consumers than the 734,821 Alaskans spread over 663,000 square miles. This means that in some cases, to increase production and keep certain items stocked in our own stores, an export market to outside stores for more consumers will be necessary. The good news with this export scenario, again, is that it will definitively and literally grow our economy while increasing our access to in-state food items.

Increasing food independence and reducing reliance on outside sources and vulnerable supply chains will result too in benefits at the household level. More jobs and access to more nutritious (and delicious) foods for better health are not insignificant examples of the advantages families and individuals will reap as we work to improve food security in Alaska.

To achieve the economic, household, and health goals along with providing some protection against supply chain disruptions, ensuring the following is necessary: the viability and continuance of wild food harvesting in Alaska, the growth of agriculture and food processing sectors at both commercial and community/home levels, and efficient transport systems and storage. These goals are embodied in the recommendations proposed by the AFSTF both in our 2023 report¹⁰ and in this 2024 report.

As the AFSTF has repeatedly emphasized, our reports are not intended to sit on a shelf but have been created to be used as guides with specific actionable items. With a focus on removing barriers for the private sector and steering clear of government boondoggles, we would be remiss if we did not note the AFSTF-recommended steps taken this past year toward the goal of greater food independence and security and thank those involved.

In that vein, we wish to thank the Alaska State Legislature and Governor Dunleavy for not only their careful review of last year's report but their implementation of some of the recommendations through legislation including instituting and expanding tax exemptions related to agriculture, rolling back barriers to accessing loans for agriculture production and food processing, removing industrial standard requirements for small food processing operations, and calling for specific language to hold the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) accountable to maintain rural airport weather systems to decrease flight delays and thus food spoilage. For that last item, we are grateful to our federal delegation for their success in securing that language in the FAA Reauthorization Act which passed in May.

¹⁰ [AFSTF 2023 Report \(akleg.gov\) https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=27146](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=27146)



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



A special thanks is also in order to the Legislative Food and Farm Caucus and the Alaska House and Senate Resource Committees for their responsiveness to, and promotion of, our proposed recommendations as well as to the sponsors and co-sponsors of the related legislation.

Most importantly, the AFSTF truly appreciates the broad support of Alaskans and their call for increased food production and food security in our state. It is why we do what we do. The public's input, including that of the agriculture producers, was an invaluable part of the process which ultimately improved the legislation passed. We broke records as to what was accomplished in this arena this year, and it only happened because a majority of Alaskans consider this work a priority.

The AFSTF will continue to value ongoing dialogue and input from Alaskans and looks forward to working with the 2025-2026 legislature and the Dunleavy administration to take further action steps recommended by the AFSTF, including items in this report and remaining items in the previous year's report¹¹. In the long term, we set our sights on the days and years ahead when access to nutritious food is no longer a problem; we also eagerly anticipate the time when more of the food consumed in Alaska originates in Alaska, and our economy and state as a whole are better and stronger because of it.

In closing, I want to thank the AFSTF members and all those¹² who devoted countless hours to the work before us this past year. Despite the fact that the AFSTF has a \$0 budget, I am proud of our efforts and this work product. It has truly been a grassroots, bottom-up endeavor.

In pursuit of greater food independence and security for Alaskans with you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shelley Hughes". The script is fluid and cursive.

Senator Shelley Hughes, Chair
Alaska Food Strategy Task Force

¹¹ [AFSTF 2023 Report \(akleg.gov\)](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=27146) https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=27146

¹² [AFSTF Members listing, Pages 11-14.](#)





B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. PROCESS

The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force (AFSTF) has taken a systems approach in offering recommendations in seven focus areas to improve statewide food security. The 2023 Report focused on the first three of the seven areas. The AFSTF this year again established committees to address the remaining four focus areas. Because certain issues and challenges are common to more than one focus area, the recommendations reflect the overlap between the many parts of Alaska's food system.

To accomplish the task at hand, like last year, the AFSTF committees were comprised of members with expertise in each focus area topic. The committees were directed to review previous work done on the topics, consider other ideas and issues related to each area, and invite speakers to present on their topic (optional). For developing recommendations, committees were instructed to not only propose recommendations on needs but also to do the following:

- 1) describe the necessary steps to make the recommendation actionable,
- 2) identify the responsible entities/agencies*,
- 3) identify funding, policy, and data needs, and
- 4) suggest metrics for measuring success if the recommendation is implemented.

**Note that the responsible party for carrying out the developed action steps within each recommendation is not in the list on the following pages but can be found in the corresponding section of this report. The responsible entity may be a private sector business or organization, a volunteer advocate, the legislature (if it requires legislative action), the administration, or a non-profit entity.*





2. FOUR FOCUS AREAS FOR 2024 REPORT

The four focus areas addressed in this report and their corresponding recommendations are the following (list order does not reflect the level of importance):

1. **Enhancing the climate for food and beverage businesses or distribution businesses:**
 - a. Establish a competitive shipping marketplace in Alaska.
 - b. Develop educational programs for food manufacturing in Alaska.
 - c. Establish a State Food Security and Manufacturing Officer in Alaska.
2. **Minimizing food waste and diverting it from the waste stream:**
 - a. Invest in financial scoping of community-level composting and scale-appropriate rural biogas production facilities.
 - b. Support rural hub and transportation infrastructure.*
**Re-recommending from 2023 AFSTF Transportation & Infrastructure Committee*
 - c. Improve connecting food donors with food recovery and distribution entities.
3. **Improving connectivity, efficiencies, and outcomes in state-run programs affecting food availability and access:**
 - a. Leverage Alaska match with GusNIP*.
 - b. Coordinate with federal delegation to advocate for USPS improvements to bypass mail.
 - c. Establish co-op purchasing for school foods.
 - d. Address SNAP/FDPIR dual enrollment conflict.
**Refer to relevant section or in the Appendix A: Glossary for acronym meanings.*
4. **Ensuring food security in rural and urban communities:**
 - a. Streamline and make food security data transparent.
 - b. Improve (statewide) aviation infrastructure.*
**Re-recommending from 2023 AFSTF Transportation & Infrastructure Committee*
 - c. Develop and implement community and household food access and food independence initiatives.
 - d. Encourage cooperation between agencies in the consideration of ANS and other data to help ensure subsistence activities can continue.
 - e. Develop “Alaskans First” preference to purchase or lease state agricultural land.





3. THREE FOCUS AREAS FROM 2023 REPORT

This report also includes an update on progress made related to the recommendations proposed in the AFSTF 2023 Report, which pertain to the first three of the seven focus areas:

1. Sustainably growing the agriculture industry:

- a. Create an Alaska Department of Agriculture.*

**The AFSTF white paper, Why a Department of Agriculture Makes Sense for Alaska, on this topic was released in February, 2024 and is enclosed in this report and can also be viewed online.¹³*

- b. Expand leases on state-owned land and ensure agriculture activities via a state-driven proactive approach.
- c. Increase research capacity and programs through UAF IANRE's agricultural and forestry experiment stations.
- d. Improve access to capital for producers through the Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund and Agricultural Forgivable Loans.
- e. Encourage tax exemptions for farmland.

2. Sustainably growing markets for local products:

- a. Create Alaska Grown Marketing Institute.
- b. Re-establish an Alaska meat inspection service.
- c. Add technical assistance officer position.
- d. Request grocery stores track and sell more Alaska Grown products.
- e. Expand Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund to food processors and manufacturers.

3. Improving transportation and infrastructure:

- a. Improve maritime infrastructure.
- b. Decrease rural hub food loss via climate-controlled storage infrastructure.
- c. Improve aviation infrastructure.
- d. Improve bypass mail operations.
- e. Improve data collection and analysis.
- f. Invest in research and innovative technologies.
- g. Create Supply Chain Coordination Council.
- h. Increase food storage for community food banks and disaster preparedness.
- i. Extend rail system.

¹³ AFSTF DoAg White Paper ([akleg.gov](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155)) https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155



C. BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, & MEMBERSHIP



1. BACKGROUND

The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force (AFSTF) wishes to acknowledge the Governor's Alaska Food Security & Independence Task Force 2022 Report¹⁴ as a foundation for much of its work. The AFSTF seeks to continue the good work started in 2022 by this earlier 22-member group of dedicated Alaskans.

2. PURPOSE

The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force was established when HB 298¹⁵ was passed and signed in 2022 into uncoded law to achieve the following mission:

- a. Develop a comprehensive statewide food strategy
- b. Strengthen the state's diverse food systems
- c. Improve food security for all residents of the state
- d. Grow the local food economies of the state

To advance these objectives, the AFSTF was tasked with presenting state policy, legislation, and strategy implementation recommendations in the seven focus areas previously listed in the Executive Summary section on pages 7-8.

The legislation included guidance on certain elements to consider pertaining to the seven focus areas:

- Public, nonprofit, and private investment in infrastructure
- Regulatory issues
- Research and development needs
- Environmental changes

¹⁴ [Food Security Task Force Directives | Alaska Food Security and Independence \(arcgis.com\)](https://alaska-food-systems-soa-dnr.hub.arcgis.com/documents/agio-hub::food-security-task-force-directives/explore) <https://alaska-food-systems-soa-dnr.hub.arcgis.com/documents/agio-hub::food-security-task-force-directives/explore>

¹⁵ [Food Strategy Task Force; Loan Programs - Enrolled HB298 \(akleg.gov\)](https://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/Bills/HB0298Z.PDF) <https://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/Bills/HB0298Z.PDF>, Pages 7-12



- Workforce development needs
- Infrastructure needs and storage
- High food costs and food access
- Food safety
- Varying scales of food system and storage development
- Innovative technologies for Circumpolar North
- Adaptation of successful food system policies, models, and programs across the Circumpolar North and other states
- Alaska tribal relations pertaining to food security, food sovereignty, and local storage methods
- Emergency preparedness

Along with considerations for each focus area, the legislation requires the recommendations to meet the following criteria:

- Evidence-based
- Stakeholder informed
- Economically sound
- Environmentally sustainable
- Equally accessible



AFSTF MEMBERS

Executive Board Members



SHELLEY HUGHES - CHAIR
Alaska State Senate



GEORGE RAUSCHER - VICE-CHAIR
Alaska State House of Representatives



JESSE BJORKMAN
Alaska State Senate



DONNA MEARS
Alaska State House of Representatives



KELLI FOREMAN
Alaska Farm Bureau



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EVIE WITTEN
Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC)



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Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA)



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MEMBER	SEAT
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Scott Mugrage <i>Alaska Farm Bureau</i>	Agricultural Development
Erica Moeller <i>The Roaming Root Cellar</i>	Local Food Marketing Development
Cara Durr <i>Food Bank of Alaska</i>	Hunger & Nutrition
Alyssa Rodrigues <i>Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)</i>	Economic Development
Kyle Hill <i>Alaska Commercial Co.</i>	Food Distribution/ Transportation
Anthony Lindoff <i>Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska</i>	Alaska Native/Intertribal Org. or Alaska Tribal Government*
Arthur Keyes <i>Glacier Valley Farm</i>	State Food Producer
Bryce Wrigley <i>Alaska Flour Company</i>	
David McCarthy <i>49th State Brewery/Northern Hospitality Group</i>	Food Service
Natalie Janicka <i>Twisted Spruce Kitchen</i>	



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Alaska Future Farmers of America (FFA) or 4-H youth

Jodie Anderson

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Kitty LaBounty

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Greg Smith

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development

Gavin Northey

Child Nutrition Programs

Department of Education & Early Development

Katherine Keith

DOTPF Deputy Commissioner

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

**Second seat vacant*





ASSISTING THE TASK FORCE »

Anneliese Roberts*	Senator Hughes
Stephen Knouse*	Senator Hughes
Laura Achee	Senator Bjorkman
Corey Alt	Representative Mears
Craig Valdez	Representative Rauscher
Ryan McKee	Representative Rauscher
Robbi Mixon*	Alaska Food Policy Council
Amy Seitz*	Alaska Farm Bureau
Lunia Oriol*	AFPC Graduate Intern (University of Michigan)
Vanessa Collier	UAA-Institute of Social & Economic Research (ISER)

**An additional thanks to these individuals for countless hours of work over the past year related to meetings, research, communications, and this report.*

4. DATA DISCLAIMER

Alaska is data-poor in terms of food systems tracking. While much knowledge already exists within individuals, communities, and cultures about building resilient food systems, that knowledge remains a disconnected and underleveraged resource in Alaska to attain state-wide food security. Efforts to address food insecurity in Alaska are ongoing and involve various stakeholders, including private industry, non-profits, communities, households, individuals, and government agencies. Accurate and up-to-date food system data and information are essential for policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing Alaska’s food system, develop strategies to promote greater food independence and security, and to measure the impact. We have incorporated some data in this report but because there is little available, the AFSTF wishes to emphasize the great need for accurate data to assess gaps and successes in attaining better food access and food independence.

5. ACRONYM DISCLAIMER

This report is packed full of acronyms. Please use the Glossary in Appendix A to discover their meanings.





SECTION 2

2024 FOCUS AREAS



FOCUS AREA ONE



Enhancing the climate for food and beverage businesses or distribution businesses

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Establish a Competitive Shipping Marketplace in Alaska



FOCUS AREA ONE:

Enhancing the climate for food and beverage businesses or distribution businesses



Businesses in Alaska suffer from high shipping costs due to limited competition among shipping providers. For instance, shipping hazardous materials can cost nearly five times the price of the products themselves.

What's the goal?

To decrease shipping costs for Alaska-based agriculture and food processing businesses by fostering a competitive shipping industry.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Increased competition in shipping services has been shown to lead to lower costs, which can help local food-related businesses reduce overhead and improve profitability. Lower costs result in an increase in consumer purchases of food items. When these are in-state grown and/or in-state processed food items, reliance on out-of-state food items decrease and food independence increases.



Responsible Entity/Entities: <i>with brief justification</i>	Alaska State Legislature: <i>policy enactment and oversight.</i>	
	Department of Transportation: <i>industry deregulation and support.</i>	
	Private entities: <i>coordination and collaboration to save transport costs (e.g., to secure freight train container together).</i>	
Action and Implementation Timeline: • <i>Mid (3-5 years)</i>	YEAR 1	<i>Take legislative action to deregulate certain shipping industry barriers to allow new entrants.</i>
	YEARS 1-2	<i>Provide incentives for new shipping companies, e.g., tax exemptions.</i>
	YEARS 2-5	<i>Monitor and evaluate the impact on shipping costs.</i>
Assets or Resources Available:		<i>Potential partnerships with international shipping firms; existing regulatory frameworks.</i>
State Funding Needs:		<i>Incentives for new market entrants; funding for regulatory oversight.</i>
Statutory or Regulatory Changes:		• <i>Deregulation of certain shipping industry barriers.</i> • <i>Incentives for new entrants.</i>
Additional Research:		<i>Market analysis to identify potential entrants and barriers to entry.</i>
Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:		<i>Reduction in shipping costs as reported by businesses; the number of shipping providers operating in Alaska.</i>
Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?		<i>Data collection from businesses on shipping costs; monitoring of industry participation.</i>
Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks in the implementation of this recommendation:		<i>Ensuring competitive practices among new entrants and maintaining quality and safety standards in shipping.</i>
Anticipated tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success of the implementation:		<i>Effective monitoring of shipping rates and service quality.</i>



RECOMMENDATION 2:

Develop Educational Programs for Food Manufacturing in Alaska



FOCUS AREA ONE:

Enhancing the climate for food and beverage businesses or distribution businesses



A notable shortage of skilled labor in food manufacturing exists in Alaska, hindering industry growth and operational efficiency. Skilled labor is an important component needed to attain the goal of increasing the industry. Specialized educational programs offered in Alaska would provide opportunities for people to stay in-state for training and, perhaps, attract new people to Alaska. Training on the use of automated equipment for food production and manufacturing is a component of this recommendation as it allows for fewer staff, lower costs, and greater efficiencies.

What's the goal?

To expand the local skilled labor pool with specialized training in food manufacturing and safety, enhancing both employment rates and industry capabilities.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Training programs aligned with local industry needs can directly address labor shortages and are supported by evidence from other regions where similar programs have successfully boosted local industries.



Responsible Entity/Entities: with brief justification	• Department of Education in conjunction with private training entities for curriculum development and implementation; • Higher education institutions for program hosting; • Department of Labor for job placement and tracking; • Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education for student loans.
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Action and Implementation Timeline: • Mid (3-5 years)	YEAR 1	Development of curriculum in partnership with local food manufacturers.
	YEAR 2	Launch of educational programs in career and technical high schools, community colleges, universities, and private training institutions. Coordination with Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education for student loan eligibility for training programs.
	YEARS 2-3	Integration of internships and apprenticeships with local businesses.
	YEARS 4-5	Ongoing assessment and adjustment of program offerings.

Assets or Resources Available:	Existing educational infrastructure; industry partnerships for practical training.
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State Funding Needs:	Funding for curriculum development.
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Statutory or Regulatory Changes:	None were initially required, and potential adjustments were based on program evaluations.
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Additional Research:	Needs assessment within the food manufacturing sector to tailor programs effectively.
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Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:	Number of graduates, job placement rates in the food manufacturing sector, feedback from industry on employee performance.
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Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?	Some data may be available through educational institutions, but new tracking systems may need to be established for detailed metrics.
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Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks in the implementation of this recommendation:	Sufficient enrollment and engagement from the industry in program development and internship offerings.
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Anticipated tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success of the implementation:	Establish effective collaboration between educational institutions and businesses to track graduate success and job placements.
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RECOMMENDATION 3:

Establish a State Food Security and Manufacturing Officer in Alaska



FOCUS AREA ONE:

Enhancing the climate for food and beverage businesses or distribution businesses



Alaska faces unique food security and manufacturing challenges, including high shipping costs, lack of infrastructure, and a small skilled labor pool. These issues lead to higher food prices and limited local food production capabilities.

What's the goal?

Coordinating state efforts in these areas will improve food security, boost local food manufacturing, and create private sector jobs, leading to more efficient food systems and increased local production.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

A dedicated officer could oversee and integrate various initiatives, ensuring that efforts to enhance food production and manufacturing are effective and aligned with food independence, food access, and overall food security goals. This role would also serve as a central point of contact and streamline communication between the private sector and the government and also help ensure the private sector benefits from greater efficiencies (e.g., with employee recruitment, in-house training, and shipping of goods).



Responsible Entity/Entities: <i>The Executive Branch, specifically under the Department of Natural Resources (or the Department of Agriculture when established) or the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, would house this position. These departments align closely with the agricultural and economic aspects of food security and manufacturing.</i>		
Action and Implementation Timeline: Short (1-2 years)	YEAR 1	<i>Legislative approval for the creation of the position and its responsibilities.</i>
	YEAR 2	<i>Recruitment and hiring of the Food Security and Manufacturing Officer. Development of a comprehensive plan for food manufacturing based on private sector input.</i>
	YEARS 2»	<i>Implementation of the plan with periodic reviews and adjustments.</i>
Assets or Resources Available: <i>Existing departmental resources; collaborations with local businesses, educational institutions, and governmental agencies.</i>		
State Funding Needs: <i>Salary and operational costs for the new position.</i>		
Statutory or Regulatory Changes: <i>Creation of the new state position with defined responsibilities and authority.</i>		
Additional Research: <i>Needs assessment for food security and manufacturing across different regions in Alaska to tailor initiatives effectively.</i>		
Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress: <i>Improvements in local food production statistics; reduction in food shipping costs; feedback from local businesses and consumers regarding food availability and quality.</i>		
Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from? <i>Some data may be available through existing agricultural and economic studies, but additional specific metrics would need to be developed and tracked by the new officer.</i>		
Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks in the implementation of this recommendation: <i>Ensuring the officer has sufficient authority and resources to make impactful changes; integration of efforts across diverse geographical and business sectors.</i>		
Anticipated tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success of the implementation: <i>Developing new data collection methods to accurately measure comprehensive food security and manufacturing outcomes.</i>		



FOCUS AREA TWO

A photograph showing several apples in various stages of decay on a forest floor. Some apples are whole but bruised, while others are split open, revealing hollowed-out centers. The background is a soft-focus view of a wooded area with fallen leaves and branches.

**Minimizing Food Waste and
Diverting from Waste Stream**



FOCUS AREA TWO:
*Minimizing Food Waste and
Diverting from Waste Stream*

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Invest In Financial Scoping of Community-Level Composting and Scale-Appropriate Rural Biogas Production Facilities

To understand the viability of evolving technologies, invest in a financial analysis of 1) community-level distributed composting facilities designed for Alaska climates and 2) community-level small-scale biogas facilities. This analysis will help Alaska understand how current technologies intersect with feedstock availability, the value of generated outputs, and the economic returns to investment.

Alaska should attempt to repurpose as much food-related waste as possible that is economically viable. From what cannot be diverted, evolving technologies and environments may allow for improved economic returns for community-level composting investment as well as conversion to energy through biogas. Current feedstocks for such scale-appropriate facilities are known to be large but are difficult to quantify and vary by region. Demand for community-scale compost outputs, as well as the input/output economics of a biogas facility, will also naturally vary by region and merit investment in studying strategic investment opportunities.

What's the goal?

Technologies and economic environments are constantly evolving. Recently, small-scale biogas facilities have been leveraged in northern, isolated zones such as the Faroe Islands. The 1.5MW facility has a footprint of less than 3 acres and is primarily fed by about 100,000 tons annually of fish waste and was strategically co-located with a processing facility. While a small portion of total energy production for the Faroes, this supports their local energy independence and provides power for over 1,000 homes. Examples like these may provide blueprints for opportunities in Alaska, where localized conditions support appropriate feedstock and breakeven energy cost environments for a scale-appropriate facility to be economically advantageous.

Similarly, technologies for small-scale and community-scale composting facilities are improving and may present new opportunities to reclaim



biomass for local food production. While insufficient data exists to make explicit investment recommendations for specific locations, the importance of supporting exploration of these opportunities is clear.

Responsible Entity/Entities: with brief justification	<i>DEC in the waste management program could take the lead in evaluating the financial feasibility of community or scale-appropriate composting as part of an initiative to be more involved in integrated waste management.</i> <i>Supporting agencies could include the Alaska Energy Authority, AIDEA, and UA research entities.</i>
Action and Implementation Timeline:	<i>Identification of entities with capacity to conduct scoping and feasibility studies.</i> <i>Conducting scoping and feasibility studies for facilities.</i> <i>Mid (3-5 years)</i> <i>Long (5-10 years)</i>
Assets or Resources Available:	<i>Drawing lessons and data from the experience in the Faroes and any other examples, particularly in Northern environments.</i> <i>Expertise scoping this genre of facility within DEC, the Alaska Energy Authority, and relevant UA entities (e.g. Alaska Center for Energy and Power).</i>
State Funding Needs:	<i>Support for state agency FTE to expand integrated waste management .</i> <i>Where external funding is not available, support for collaboration with communities and other entities in the development of scoping studies.</i>
Statutory or Regulatory Changes:	<i>This will need to be assessed after initial scoping of community compost and biogas production facilities.</i>
Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:	<i>Quantity of food/bio-waste diverted as feedstock for repurposing .</i> <i>Quantity of soil nutrients generated and applied to local food production.</i> <i>Quantity (MW) of energy produced from scale-appropriate biogas facility; quantity of alternative fuel sources (e.g. diesel) displaced and financial returns from diversion.</i>
Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?	<i>General food waste data is extremely difficult to quantify precisely at the community or state level. Data on potentially diverted fish waste from processing facilities is likely to be available.</i>



*FOCUS AREA TWO:
Minimizing Food Waste and
Diverting from Waste Stream*

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Support Rural Hub and Transportation Infrastructure

Rural communities struggle with receiving perishable goods before they have spoiled. There are multiple factors that play a part in this, including lengthy travel time with inadequate facilities for proper handling. Assessing and investing in storage facilities will increase the amount of fresh foods making it to rural communities and reduce the high volume of food waste currently happening.

1. Assess the need for food storage and wastage in hubs and communities.
2. Invest in food storage facilities at strategic locations across Alaska to extend the shelf life of perishable goods and facilitate their distribution.
3. Support expansion of chill/freeze spaces at hub airports through a model that promotes cost-effective ease of use by regional carriers to increase fresh food preservation transiting through hubs.

What's the goal?

Develop a pilot program to reduce food loss and increase food security through rural hub infrastructure and transportation support. There is an identified need for statewide rural hub community infrastructure to accommodate week(s)-long delays in the transportation system. This would include dry, cold, and freezer storage. Following industry terms, “insuls” are insulated units designed to keep food from freezing, and “reefers” are refrigerated units with an attached generator. Reefers require diesel fuel and regular maintenance similar to that required for any generator. Currently, we understand the presence and volume of these assets vary by hub and carrier, though a complete census of these types of assets has not occurred in a public-facing way.



Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

To reduce the amount of food waste and grocery costs and increase the availability of healthy, perishable items in rural Alaska communities that are reliant on bypass and priority mail for grocery items.

Responsible Entity/Entities: <i>with brief justification</i>	• Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities: <i>oversees rural airports.</i> • Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development: <i>can lead the assessment of freeze/chill storage needs, gather data on shortages, and coordinate the investment in food storage facilities.</i> • Retail grocers: <i>their products are subject to spoilage.</i> • Shippers and receivers: <i>play a role in transport.</i> • Interested Native corporations: <i>their members are impacted by spoilage.</i> • Local Government Entities: <i>can collaborate with responsible entities to identify suitable locations and facilitate the implementation of food storage facilities.</i>
Action and Implementation Timeline:	Research bottlenecks, losses, options for storage, infrastructure, and tracking of food. Total costs include infrastructure, staffing, etc. • Conduct a needs assessment: • Identify the types and quantities of perishable goods requiring freeze/chill storage. • Assess the existing storage infrastructure and its capacity. • Gather data on shortages and potential locations for new facilities. • Develop a strategic plan: • Analyze the assessment data to determine the optimal number and size of storage facilities needed. • Identify strategic locations across Alaska based on demand, transportation accessibility, and population centers. • Consider Anchorage as a hub for freeze/chill storage to support distribution to other areas. • Identify two to three pilot communities that include a regional staff position to monitor food security and food safety in the pilot hub regions. YEAR 1 & 2 • Modify pilot programs. • Implement programs throughout the state as research dictates. • Construction and Usage: • Secure funding for construction or retrofitting of storage facilities. • Collaborate with local governments to acquire suitable land or buildings. • Initiate the construction or retrofitting process. YEAR 3-4



Assets or Resources Available:

- AC stores data, ISER, Models in Canada and other Nordic countries.
- Expertise and resources within the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, AIDEA and shippers.
- Collaboration with local governments, airline companies, dock facilities, warehouse owners, retail grocers for site identification and facilitation.

State Funding Needs:

- Potential funding as an alternative to state funding: public-private partnerships, Native corporations, federal or other grants.
- Funding for research and pilot program implementation.
- Funding to conduct needs assessment, develop strategic plan, oversee construction or retrofitting, manage leases, and implementation.

Statutory or Regulatory Changes:

- Evaluate existing statutes and regulations related to the construction, operation, and leasing of food storage facilities.
- Make necessary amendments to enable the efficient implementation and utilization of these facilities.

Additional Research:

- Conduct research on current freeze/chill storage capacity in Alaska and identify gaps.
- Study successful models of food storage facilities in other regions or states to gather best practices.
- Identify hubs with the greatest bottlenecks and food disruption issues.
- Identify or create regional food security staff positions - potentially with DOT.
- Identify bypass mail tracking options.
- Identify any alternatives to bypass mail, accounting for costs to end users.
- Identify existing infrastructure at airport hubs including space for needed climate-controlled food storage and other equipment needs (forklifts, trucks, etc.) and staff capacity.

Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:

- Increase in available freeze/chill storage capacity in Alaska.
- Reduction in food spoilage and waste due to improved storage capabilities.
- Number of local operators utilizing leased storage facilities.
- Improvement in the shelf life of perishable goods.
- Enhanced distribution efficiency and increased access to fresh, locally sourced produce.
- Potential reduction or stagnation in end user food costs.

Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?

Track through ongoing scraping of ACC and urban food retailer data. This is a major data product that ISER intends to publish and auto-update.



RECOMMENDATION 3:

Improve Connecting Food Donors With Food Recovery and Distribution Entities



FOCUS AREA TWO:
Minimizing Food Waste and
Diverting from Waste Stream



Expand infrastructure to support timely food distribution to entities to avoid spoilage. Food is often discarded even when fit for human or livestock consumption because of time delays due to delivery obstacles. Some food items could be used for compost instead of ending up in landfills. Infrastructure and connection efficiencies must be built into the system. Refer to the previous recommendation and to 2023 AFSTF Report Focus Area #3: Improving Transportation and Infrastructure.

*** Items such as responsible entity, timeline, assets, research, etc. were not provided by the relevant committee for this recommendation. Contact the AFSTF Chair for a referral to the committee chair to learn more information about the committee's discussion and suggestions.*

FOCUS AREA THREE



Improving Connectivity, Efficiencies, and Outcomes in State-run Programs Affecting Food Availability and Access

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Leverage Alaska Match With GusNIP



FOCUS AREA THREE:

Improving Connectivity, Efficiencies, and Outcomes in State-run Programs Affecting Food Availability and Access



The USDA's Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) is a competitive grant program that allocates tens of millions each year to states to provide incentives—discounts and rebates at the point of purchase—for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income individuals. Multiple states across the political spectrum have used these grants to provide rebates to SNAP users when they purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, either at grocery stores or farmers markets. These incentives increase the purchasing power of SNAP recipients with respect to fruits and vegetables, increasing consumption of healthy foods.

This recommendation proposes that Alaska leverage these USDA grants for rebates to incentivize SNAP recipients to purchase fresh produce at participating grocers and farmers markets.

At grocery stores, the rebate program would work as follows:

1. SNAP recipients spend at least \$10 on fruits and vegetables at participating grocers.
2. Those customers receive a coupon equal to the value of qualifying fruits and vegetables purchased on their receipt (up to a maximum of \$40).
3. Stores record the value of coupons redeemed and are reimbursed by the Department of Health (DOH) through the USDA grant.

At farmers markets, the rebate program would follow an existing program administered by the Alaska Farmers Market Association (AFMA) known as Market Match. Using the USDA grant, DOH would reimburse the market who in turn would reimburse each participating vendor.

1. SNAP recipients purchase fruits and vegetables at participating markets.
2. Those customers receive scrip from vendors equal to the value of their qualifying items to use at other stands in the market.



3. Vendors keep records of purchases using SNAP and are reimbursed by markets for scrip distributed at the end of the day.
4. Markets report totals to and are reimbursed by DOH.

The existing Market Match program has been currently funded with 100% state funds through a legislative appropriation. This recommendation would allow for USDA federal funding to leverage the state funds for a greater return: increased food security and nutritious produce for individuals. Safeway piloted a similar grocery rebate match as a promotion this spring and has indicated they would be open to continuing it on an ongoing basis if an option like this is available.

Too many people in Alaska fail to eat an adequate amount of healthy food. 88% of Alaska adults do not meet their recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables¹⁶. Eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables contributes to a healthier life as measured in lower incidence rates of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and more¹⁷. Low-income Alaskans eat very small amounts of fruits and vegetables at much higher rates than their higher-income peers¹⁸. Health problems of poor diet have numerous consequences throughout the state: e.g., medical professionals face higher demand for their services creating a healthcare access issue and more state Medicaid dollars to pay for these services drain state coffers.

What's the goal?

This proposal aims to reduce food insecurity and promote healthier diets among SNAP recipients by incentivizing purchases of healthier foods. Although the SNAP program is effective at reducing food insecurity, research shows that SNAP recipients eat less healthy diets than their peers who don't participate¹⁹. By providing these incentives to SNAP recipients to purchase fruits and vegetables, this program seeks to increase participants' consumption of these foods and improve their health by doing so. The increase in fresh produce purchases also supports Alaska agricultural producers.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Evidence consistently shows that access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables promotes a healthy life²⁰. Incentives to purchase more healthy foods may increase the share of fruits and vegetables in the diet of SNAP beneficiaries. The broader SNAP program improves health outcomes and lowers medical expenses for recipients²¹. It stands to reason that expanding

16 [Alaska Physical Activity, Nutrition & Obesity Facts Report - 2020 Update](https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Obesity/pubs/2020_AKPANFacts.pdf) https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Obesity/pubs/2020_AKPANFacts.pdf, Page 16

17 [Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases-The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables](https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/fandv_2011_web_tag508.pdf) https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/fandv_2011_web_tag508.pdf, Page 3

18 [DNPAO Data, Trends and Maps: Explore by Topic | CDC](https://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpao_dtm/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DNPAO_DTM.ExploreByTopic&isClass=FV1&isTopic=FV1&isYear=20192019) https://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpao_dtm/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DNPAO_DTM.ExploreByTopic&isClass=FV1&isTopic=FV1&isYear=20192019

19 [Dietary Quality of Americans by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Status A Systematic Review - PMC \(nih.gov\)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6022372/) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6022372/>

20 [Health Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables - PMC \(nih.gov\)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3649719/) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3649719/>

[Fruit and vegetable consumption and stroke: meta-analysis of cohort studies - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16443039/) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16443039/>

[Adherence to a DASH-style diet and risk of coronary heart disease and stroke in women - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18413553/) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18413553/>

21 [SNAP Is Linked With Improved Health Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(cbpp.org\)](https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-health-outcomes-and-lower-health-care-costs) <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-health-outcomes-and-lower-health-care-costs>



the program to cover additional fruits and vegetables would only accentuate that impact.

These rebate programs also benefit local economies. USDA research finds roughly \$2 in economic benefit for every program dollar spent²². Because the rebates are directed for the purchase of fresh produce, Alaska food producers will benefit from increased sales.

Responsible Entity/Entities: with brief justification	<i>DOH would be responsible for making the grant application in collaboration with AFMA. DOH and AFMA would work with vendors to provide the benefits.</i> <i>The legislative branch would be responsible for the existing annual appropriation for the current rebates and allocating the incoming USDA federal grants for additional rebates.</i>								
Action and Implementation Timeline:	<i>The GusNIP recommends that applicants begin with a pilot project before moving to a large scale. The description of the program options is available for review and should be used to develop the pilot project²³.</i>								
Mid (3-5 years)	<table><tr><td data-bbox="545 762 630 789">YEAR 1</td><td data-bbox="691 730 1521 821"><i>Fall 2024 – Prepare GusNIP pilot grant application—develop program guidelines, evaluation protocols, and integrity measures; gauge interest from grocers to estimate costs.</i></td></tr><tr><td data-bbox="545 936 630 963">YEAR 2</td><td data-bbox="691 863 1521 1031"><i>Spring 2025 – Submit grant application to USDA.</i> <i>Fall 2025 – Once approved, DOH would begin administering the grocery match program with stores selected for the pilot project and work with AFMA to retrofit the Farmers Market Match program to meet USDA data collection requirements. Begin data/survey collection.</i></td></tr><tr><td data-bbox="545 1104 630 1131">YEAR 3</td><td data-bbox="691 1073 1521 1163"><i>Fall 2026 – After operating pilot program for a year, begin preparing GusNIP application for full-scale statewide program—recruit additional retail partners, plan to scale existing operations.</i></td></tr><tr><td data-bbox="545 1226 630 1253">YEAR 4</td><td data-bbox="691 1194 1521 1278"><i>Spring 2027 – Submit application for expanded program to USDA.</i> <i>Fall 2027 – Begin statewide operations.</i></td></tr></table>	YEAR 1	<i>Fall 2024 – Prepare GusNIP pilot grant application—develop program guidelines, evaluation protocols, and integrity measures; gauge interest from grocers to estimate costs.</i>	YEAR 2	<i>Spring 2025 – Submit grant application to USDA.</i> <i>Fall 2025 – Once approved, DOH would begin administering the grocery match program with stores selected for the pilot project and work with AFMA to retrofit the Farmers Market Match program to meet USDA data collection requirements. Begin data/survey collection.</i>	YEAR 3	<i>Fall 2026 – After operating pilot program for a year, begin preparing GusNIP application for full-scale statewide program—recruit additional retail partners, plan to scale existing operations.</i>	YEAR 4	<i>Spring 2027 – Submit application for expanded program to USDA.</i> <i>Fall 2027 – Begin statewide operations.</i>
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YEAR 4	<i>Spring 2027 – Submit application for expanded program to USDA.</i> <i>Fall 2027 – Begin statewide operations.</i>								
Assets or Resources Available:	<i>The Alaska Farmers Market Association currently administers Market Match, a program by which they provide point-of-sale rebates for SNAP recipients to purchase fruits and vegetables at farmers markets. This program is currently funded by a legislative grant. A GusNIP grant could provide a continued funding stream to expand that valuable program while reducing state spending.</i> <i>Safeway ran a promotion earlier this year under which they offered rebates on SNAP purchases of fruits and vegetables. Input and feedback from this retail grocer would be helpful in designing GusNIP for Alaska.</i>								
State Funding Needs:	<i>Year 1 – Only grant development costs.</i> <i>Year 2 – <\$100,000, per program requirements.</i> <i>Year 3 – At full scale, assuming similar utilization to a similar program in Washington state, a statewide program in Alaska would cost in the range of \$430,000 total, so ≈\$215,000 in state funds.</i>								

²² GusNIP NTAE: Impact Findings Y3 ([nutritionincentivehub.org](https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/2uwlf3ch/gusnip-y3-impact-findings-report.pdf#page=8)) <https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/2uwlf3ch/gusnip-y3-impact-findings-report.pdf#page=8>

²³ GusNIP-NI ([usda.gov](https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/FY24-GusNIP-NI-RFA-P.pdf#page=9)) <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/FY24-GusNIP-NI-RFA-P.pdf#page=9>



Statutory or Regulatory Changes:

Previous GusNIP Request for Applications have required that purchases of goods through this program be exempt from state and local sales tax. Would require a statute change to exclude SNAP produce purchases from local sales tax.

Additional Research:

- *Implementation challenges in other states.*
 - *Scoping program costs in detail.*
 - *Could we give additional bonus for Alaska Grown?*
 - *Does capacity exist to track purchases on EBT cards and deliver rebates back to beneficiary accounts? If implemented, this step would make rebates interoperable between vendors.*
 - *What promotional efforts do successful states use to drive participation?*
 - *If a federal grant is not secured, does appetite exist within the legislature to fund such a program with 100% state dollars?*
-

Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:

The USDA has numerous reporting requirements for this program²⁴, collecting data both from partner retailers as well as program participants. DOH would be required to collect data from grocers about their operations, products available for incentives, benefits distributed, and marketing activities²⁵. USDA also requires program administrators to survey program participants about their demographics and program use²⁶.

These data are collected into monthly and annual reports for submission to USDA.

Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?

Merchants would be responsible for collecting data on inventory and sales of incentive-eligible products, reporting to DOH. DOH would also be responsible for surveying program recipients.

Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks in the implementation of this recommendation:

DOH faces significant administrative burdens on other programs and may struggle to muster the capacity to apply/administer/evaluate another federal program.

Anticipated tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success of the implementation:

Recruitment of retail partners may be a challenge because of the administrative burden of federal data reporting requirements.

²⁴ [Reporting Requirements: Which is Which? \(nutritionincentivehub.org\)](https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/ue3dqzie/reporting-requirements.pdf) <https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/ue3dqzie/reporting-requirements.pdf>

²⁵ [Nutrition Incentive Projects - List of Brick and Mortar Firm Core Metrics \(nutritionincentivehub.org\)](https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/llund3sq/ni-projects-list-of-brick-and-mortar-firm-core-metrics.pdf) <https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/llund3sq/ni-projects-list-of-brick-and-mortar-firm-core-metrics.pdf>

²⁶ [List of Participant-Level Core Metrics Nutrition Incentive Projects.pdf \(nutritionincentivehub.org\)](https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/elfhflej/list-of-participant-level-core-metrics-nutrition-incentive-projects.pdf) <https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/elfhflej/list-of-participant-level-core-metrics-nutrition-incentive-projects.pdf>



RECOMMENDATION 2:

Coordinate With Federal Delegation to Advocate for USPS Improvements to Bypass Mail



FOCUS AREA THREE:

Improving Connectivity, Efficiencies, and Outcomes in State-run Programs Affecting Food Availability and Access

Write a letter from the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force to Alaska's Congressional Delegation and after consultation with the delegation, if they are in agreement, to the USPS in Washington to express support for bypass mail, asking for an update on the status of recommendations made in a 2022 Inspector Generals' report, and encouraging their investment in additional staffing to make the bypass mail program more successful²⁷.

Engage with the Alaska Broadband Office to bring awareness of the need for improving broadband in areas that rely on bypass mail as broadband outages impact AWOS (Automated Weather Observing Systems) at rural airports and cause shipping and bypass mail delivery delays.

Since its launch in 1972, the Alaska Bypass Mail system has successfully lowered the cost of food and general merchandise for 75,000+ Alaskans in hundreds of villages in rural Alaska. However, the system faces numerous challenges relating to transparency, acceptance, carrier performance, and payments. As a result of these challenges, millions of dollars of food arrive in unacceptable conditions, carriers struggle to get paid on time, and the Postal Service struggles to keep track of it all.

In 2022, the USPS Inspector General came to Alaska to evaluate the operations and internal controls of the bypass mail program in Alaska. Their report made four primary findings²⁸:

1. USPS lacked visibility into the movement of mail through the bypass mail system.
2. USPS found problems with mail accepted for bypass, including shippers dropping mail without appointments and USPS staff failing to verify postage and that packages met weight thresholds.
3. USPS failed to properly follow up on reports of mishandling of bypass mail by carriers.

²⁷ Alaska Mail Services. Report Number 22-090-R22. <https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-01/22-090-R22.pdf>, Pages 5-8

²⁸ *Ibid.*



4. USPS did not always pay air carriers in a timely or accurate manner.

To address these shortcomings, USPS made seven recommendations for the Vice President for Logistics:

1. Implement a solution to provide visibility over all mail movement in Alaska.
2. Require shippers to schedule appointments to tender bypass mail, allowing for more organized review of packages and postage.
3. Establish a standard weight threshold for shipments by air carriers.
4. Add staff to assist with monitoring of air carrier performance.
5. Establish a review and approval process for air carrier payments and provide oversight.
6. Issue new guidance to air carriers reminding them to submit claims on time.
7. Coordinate with USPS Headquarters to monitor bypass mail program costs in Alaska.

What's the goal?

Many of the report's recommendations remain unfulfilled, and, if implemented, would lead to more efficient operations of the bypass mail program in Alaska. If USPS in Alaska paid carriers on time and implemented accountability standards, more efficient bypass mail operations would ensure less food spoilage on tarmacs across Alaska.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

The State of Alaska has no formal influence over the operations of the bypass mail system, and many of the carriers have consistently expressed fears that if changes are made to the bypass mail program in federal law that the program could be curtailed or not appropriated the necessary resources to adequately provide for this essential service to Alaskans. This approach engages the federal delegation to help ensure the advocacy to the USPS to follow the IG's recommendations accepted by Postal Service leadership will not jeopardize Alaska's bypass mail system.



Responsible Entity/Entities: <i>with brief justification</i>	• The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force to write the letters. • Alaska's Congressional delegation to continue pushing for improvements to the bypass mail system. • United States Postal Service to implement the needed changes.
Action and Implementation Timeline:	Short (1-2 years) YEAR 1 September 2024 <i>AFSTF send letter to Alaska's Congressional delegation.</i> October 2024 <i>Arrange follow-up meeting with each office for their input on AFSTF's proposed communication with USPS and to encourage their communication with USPS.</i> November 2024 <i>If recommended by Alaska's Congressional delegation, send letter to USPS.</i> <i>Engage with Alaska's broadband office through letters or meetings to bring awareness to this issue, urging improved broadband in areas that rely on bypass mail.</i>
Assets or Resources Available:	<i>Necessary resources would be de minimis.</i>
State Funding Needs:	<i>None.</i>
Statutory or Regulatory Changes:	<i>None.</i>
Additional Research:	<i>Additional conversations with carriers and USPS staff to identify the status of each recommendation and barriers to implementation as well as to facilitate working relationships between carriers and the USPS and among each other.</i>
Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:	<i>Numerical data would be difficult to obtain, and attribution of any change in outcome to implementation of a particular recommendation would be difficult.</i>
Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?	<i>USPS may be able to provide additional updates in the future on the status of the IG's recommendations.</i>
Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks in the implementation of this recommendation:	<i>None Significant.</i>
Anticipated tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success of the implementation:	<i>None in implementing the AFSTF's recommendation, but USPS data on bypass mail operations is not available publicly and, per the OIG report, has significant integrity issues.</i>



FOCUS AREA THREE:

Improving Connectivity, Efficiencies, and Outcomes in State-run Programs Affecting Food Availability and Access

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Establish Co-Op Purchasing for School Foods

Redesign, relocate, and reinvigorate the Nutritional Alaska Foods in Schools (NAFS) to allow co-op purchasing of Alaska Grown food and foods processed/manufactured in Alaska for schools.

Alaska schools are interested in purchasing local foods to serve in their school meals, and Alaska's producers and food manufacturers would like to access institutions as a mid-sized market that would help farms and food processing facilities scale up. With the difficulties getting local farmers and food processors into the system for state procurement contracts, schools are a possible institutional market. A study done with local cabbage in the Fairbanks School District found that there was less waste using fresh vs. pre-packaged, shredded cabbage, and the students ate more of the fresh cabbage, resulting in less waste at the end of meals. With the proper framework and funding for a local purchasing program through schools, this could serve as a mechanism to increase fresh foods and foods processed in-state into schools while assisting Alaska's farmers and ranchers to expand.

What's the goal?

Reduce costs and administrative burden for district purchasing of Alaska Grown foods and foods manufactured in-state by consolidating school purchasing through a co-op. Use institutional purchase agreements to provide scale and prime the pump of agricultural production and food manufacturing in Alaska.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

In the early 2010s, Alaska established the Nutritional Alaskan Foods for Schools (NAFS) program to provide funding to every district in Alaska to purchase Alaska Grown foods²⁹. The program allocated funds to districts and

²⁹ [Nutritional Alaskan Foods for Schools - proj59105.pdf](https://omb.alaska.gov/ombfiles/13_budget/CapBackup/proj59105.pdf) https://omb.alaska.gov/ombfiles/13_budget/CapBackup/proj59105.pdf





is in need of a framework to connect district purchasing staff with producers and establish limits on prices districts can pay above the price of substitutable non-Alaska Grown foods and imported processed foods.

Discussions with Alaskan producers, school procurement officers, and DEED officials identified three primary issues that hindered uptake of the original DCCED-administered NAFS:

- Schools were required to make purchases under the program on a reimbursement basis, forcing districts to front the cost for more expensive products.
- Schools had a hard time connecting with Alaskan producers.
- Schools that did connect with producers faced performance issues on producers’ contracts.

To that end, a goal of a revised NAFS program would be to reduce the risk faced by both schools and producers.

Under a revised NAFS program, DEED would work with the Alaska Grown staff at the Division of Agriculture and producers themselves and with DCCED and in-state food manufacturers to create a catalog of available Alaska Grown and in-state manufactured food products available to schools. The catalog would include any items closely substitutable with anything listed in the US Foods catalog or USDA Foods in Schools Program list³⁰, subject to a limited purchase preference of 125% of the cost of its imported substitute.

This co-op purchasing approach, aided by a helpful catalog resource, would reduce administrative and logistical burdens on districts and producers compared to the previous model.

Districts would place their orders in the fall, giving producers time to plan and scale their operations with demand certainty. At the time of purchase, the state would provide half of the payment for the product up front—essentially an interest-free loan for the year—to help prime the pump of agricultural production.

Producers would deliver goods to a DEED-operated warehouse in Anchorage and be paid the second half of their invoice. Districts would then reimburse the state for the equalized price of the products delivered. The extent of the program would be limited by the amount of funds allocated to it by the legislature.

Responsible Entity/Entities: DEED would administer the program at the state level. <i>with brief justification</i>		
The Division of Agriculture would work with DEED and producers to develop a catalog and facilitate connection. Districts would participate in the program.		
Action and Implementation Timeline: • Mid (3-5 years)	YEAR 1	If no NAFS statute update is needed, DEED promulgates new regulations, takes comments, and finalizes. If unable to update regulations without a statute change, a bill will need to pass which could shift the timeline by 1-2 years.

30 [USDA Foods Available List for SY 2025 | Food and Nutrition Service](https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-fis/foods-available) <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-fis/foods-available>





Action and Implementation Timeline: (cont.)	YEAR 2	<i>Legislature budgets NAFS. DEED issues RFP for requested food items and receives bids back from producers. DEED compiles a catalog of available items. Districts place orders. DEED issues half payment to producers.</i>
	YEAR 3	<i>Farmers plant, products grow. Producers and manufacturers deliver food products to schools. DEED issues final payments to producers. Districts reimburse DEED.</i>
Assets or Resources Available:	<i>Districts have existing food purchasing staff/facilities and storage. Alaska Grown and Buy Alaska have existing directories of Alaska producers and manufacturers. Food hubs and local distributors have systems and infrastructure that could be useful in building this program.</i>	
State Funding Needs:	<i>Undetermined as it is dependent on interest and uptake among districts and participation from producers. DEED does not currently have a warehouse in Anchorage to operate such a program. It would also require a staff member to manage relationships with producers, create catalogue, liaise with districts, and a staff member to work at the warehouse.</i>	
Statutory or Regulatory Changes:	<i>If regulations cannot be promulgated without statute changes, legislation would be required.</i>	
Additional Research:	<i>Scope interest from districts and producers to get a sense of the capacity of the logistical chain that needs to be set up.</i>	
Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:	• Amount of Alaska Grown and in-state manufactured foods delivered to schools. • Number of producers enrolled in Alaska Grown and number of food manufacturers enrolled in Buy Alaska. • Producer/manufacturer performance on contracts. • Numbers of school district, school, and student participation in the program. • Quantity of food purchased. • Cost of food purchased.	
Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?	<i>Data does not currently exist, as this would be a new program. DEED would collect data on participation, performance, and delivery to evaluate the program's effectiveness in stimulating Alaskan agricultural and food manufacturing demand and increasing schoolchildren's consumption of Alaska-grown and in-state processed foods.</i>	
Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks or tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success in the implementation of this recommendation:	<i>Timely distribution of fresh food off the road system remains a hurdle. The system outlined here, with a hub-and-spoke distribution model, makes program administration more efficient, but it could lead to inefficiencies and spoilage for goods not grown in the Anchorage/Mat-Su area. The cost of shipping perishable goods off the road system reliably and at scale remains a challenge as well.</i>	



RECOMMENDATION 4:

Address the SNAP/FDPIR Enrollment Conflict



FOCUS AREA THREE:

Improving Connectivity, Efficiencies, and Outcomes in State-run Programs Affecting Food Availability and Access

Send letters to Senators Murkowski and Sullivan to co-sponsor Senate legislation to allow enrollment in SNAP and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) so that Native Alaskans can receive assistance when they need it. Send letter to Representative Peltola to introduce or co-sponsor similar legislation on the House side. Include request in both letters that the federal delegations support the inclusion of this provision in the upcoming Farm Bill.

Federally recognized Native communities suffer from high levels of food insecurity. Native people with low incomes living on tribal land are eligible for SNAP, providing nutritional assistance through conventional food distribution channels like grocery stores. Those households are also eligible for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Lands (FDPIR), which provides a supplemental food package for recipients to assist in nutrition provision.

Simultaneous enrollment in both SNAP and FDPIR is currently not allowable under federal law. This prohibition is inconsistent with dual enrollment standards in other federal nutrition programs. There is no prohibition against dual enrollment in SNAP, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), or the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). In this way, tribal members are uniquely excluded from accessing the full array of federal assistance programs for which they are eligible.

FDPIR is currently only available in a small fraction of Alaskan communities³¹. Allowing dual enrollment in SNAP and FDPIR would dramatically boost demand for FDPIR food deliveries, making it feasible for more communities to participate in the program.

This recommendation would provide more access to nutritious food.

31 Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations | Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (anthc.org) <https://www.anthc.org/what-we-do/traditional-foods-and-nutrition/food-distribution-program-on-indian-reservations/#partners>



What's the goal?

To allow simultaneous enrollment in SNAP and FDIIR to provide more consistent access to nutritious food for families who require a temporary safety net. Requiring families to choose one program or the other each month denies nutritional assistance to a population who are disproportionately food insecure.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Removing this conflict in SNAP and FDIIR would push additional nutritional resources to communities, mostly off-the-road systems that already face high levels of food insecurity³². This fix is narrowly targeted to a population with acute needs. This solution would require no additional state funding, as these programs are federally funded with no state match.

There is an existing proposal to eliminate this prohibition—S.2563, the Tribal Access to Nutrition Assistance Act of 2023, by Patty Murray (D-WA)³³. It's a simple bill, inserting only a couple of lines of statute. Although it was introduced almost a year ago, it has yet to receive a hearing in the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. That bill will expire at the end of this year. If reintroduced in the next Congress, co-sponsorship by Republican Senators like Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan could provide much-needed momentum to this otherwise stalled proposal. There is currently no companion legislation in the US House. This proposal could also be included in the Farm Bill which is expected to pass in late 2024.

32 [Hunger & Poverty in Alaska | Map the Meal Gap \(feedingamerica.org\)](https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2022/overall/alaska) <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2022/overall/alaska>

33 [S.2563 - 118th Congress \(2023-2024\): Tribal Access to Nutrition Assistance Act of 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](https://www.congress.gov/bills/118/congress/senate/bills/2563) [https://www.congress.gov/bills/118/congress/senate-bill/2563?](https://www.congress.gov/bills/118/congress/senate/bills/2563)

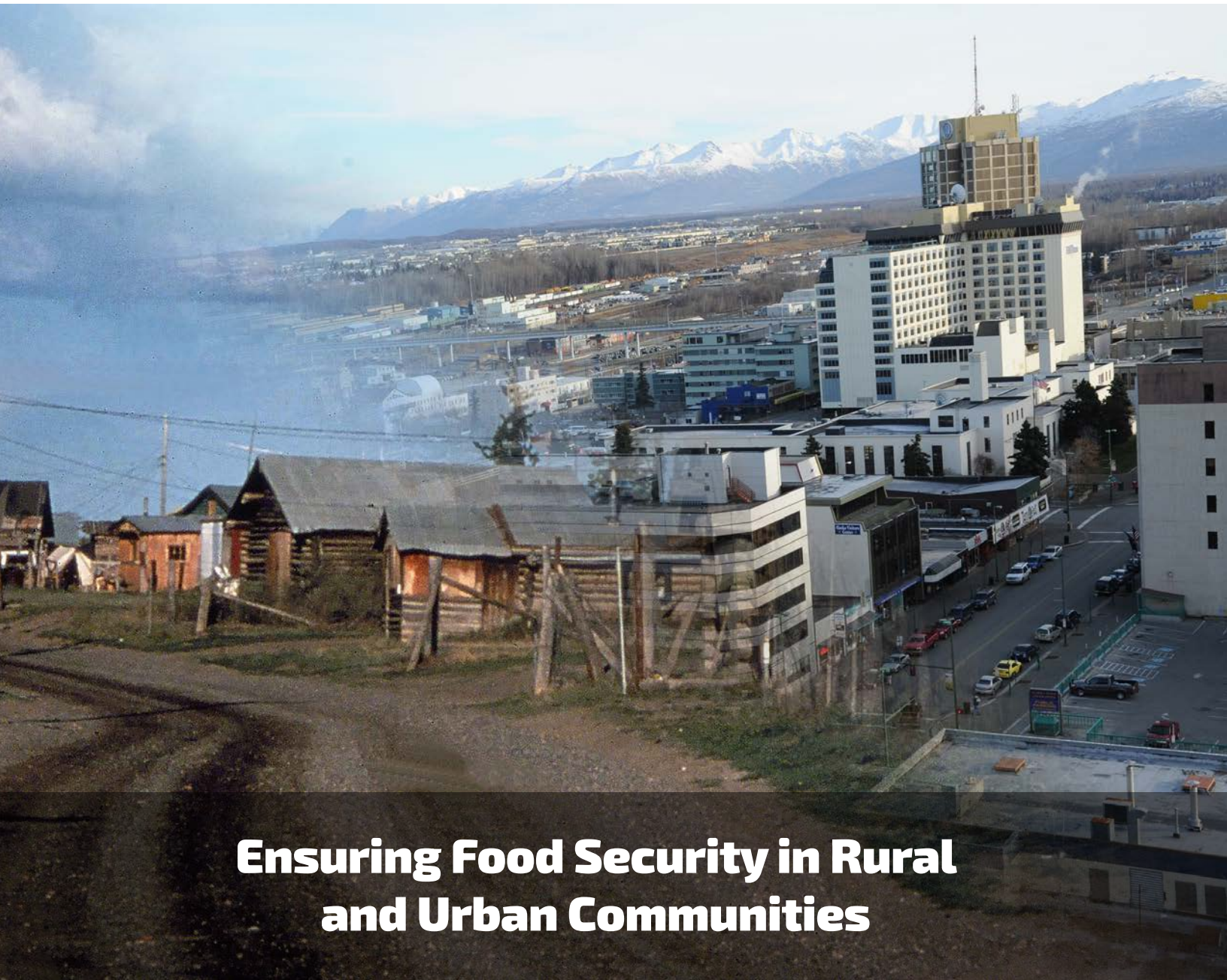




Responsible Entity/Entities:	US Congress: <i>these are federal programs, and the solution will require a change in federal law.</i>
Action and Implementation Timeline:	<i>2025 Legislative Session – send letters to Alaska’s federal delegation.</i>
<i>Short (1-2 years)</i>	
Assets or Resources Available:	<i>None.</i>
State Funding Needs:	<i>None.</i>
Additional Research:	<i>What impact would addressing this issue have on health outcomes? Would it reduce Medicaid spending? Would this change in federal law crowd out traditional food consumption to any degree?</i>
Statutory or Regulatory Changes:	<i>Section 4(b)(2) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2013(b)(2)) would be amended by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following: “(C) SIMULTANEOUS PARTICIPATION IN SNAP.—A plan for distribution described in paragraph (1) shall permit any household eligible to participate in the program established under this subsection to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program simultaneously.”</i>
Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:	<i>Uptake rates of each program by community.</i>
Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?	<i>DOH does not currently report this data at the community level, nor do they submit it to USDA.</i>
Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks or tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success in the implementation of this recommendation:	<i>Hurdles to implementing this resolution would be political in nature. Systems to deliver these benefits to every eligible person already exist. DOH may need to modify its systems to collect information on the extent of additional uptake of each program.</i>



FOCUS AREA FOUR



**Ensuring Food Security in Rural
and Urban Communities**

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Streamline and Make Food Security Data Transparent



FOCUS AREA FOUR:
Ensuring Food Security in Rural and Urban Communities



Commit funding and resources to maintain a third-party portal on food security and food systems data to provide the state with an aggregated and detailed view of all publicly available federal, state, and other agency data pertinent to Alaskan communities.

Data on Alaskan food systems and food security metrics are currently spread across several platforms and are often difficult to find and access in a user-friendly manner. Efforts have been made to aggregate data, though platforms have served more as data repositories than a user-friendly source of synthesized data capable of generating custom graphics and data pulls.

What's the goal?

Streamline all relevant major data sources on food systems in the state and provide a vehicle to maintain this portal. The portal would serve as a living auto-updating data repository and go further to create an easily digestible source of trend analysis for producers, communities, researchers, and decision-makers.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Good data appropriately informs decision-making; identifies opportunities for cost reductions, time saving, and other efficiencies; and improves risk management, among other benefits. Most importantly in food security efforts, it indicates what is working and what is not, and the extent to which goals are being reached.

Methods exist to automate the pulling, transformation, and integration of data from many public sources. While the “food data” ecosystem is extremely broad, and it is surely impossible to aggregate all data, it is possible to make



strong headway in bringing together a comprehensive foundation. The approach should minimize labor costs through automation wherever possible. The approach should also maximize useability by auto-generating trend analysis with graphics and providing raw data where desired — users should not need technical expertise to utilize data on the portal.

Responsible Entity/Entities: with brief justification	UAA-ISER (with cooperation from various agencies, private sector, non-profits, and other stakeholders) due to its research/data focus. The Alaska Food Policy Council is working on a data dashboard related to food security.
Action and Implementation Timeline: Short (1-2 years)	<i>This effort should be feasible to assemble and publish a beta portal within 1-2 years.</i> <i>First, consultation should occur with (e.g.) major state agencies (ADF&G, DNR Division of Agriculture), legislators in the Food & Farm Caucus, the governor's office, NGOs such as the Alaska Food Policy Council networks, producer groups, and relevant interested tribal entities.</i>
Potential Sources for Food-Related Data:	Food production & workforce: <i>National Agricultural Statistics Service; USDA Census of Agriculture; Ag Statistics Annual.</i> <i>Available through automatable, API-based tools (e.g., 'rassqs' package in R; preliminary work underway at UAA-ISER).</i> <i>Integrate work generated by members of the Alaska Geospatial Council to map Alaskan agricultural land.</i> <i>Alaska-grown producers by product type voluntarily.</i> Quantitative food security indicators: <i>US Census Current Population Survey (through the December Food Security Supplement) for official statistics on state-wide food security.</i> <i>Need for a greater understanding of who is represented in the Census surveys, as Alaska is the only state where the Census can consider the cost of surveying in sampling. The only direct geographic differentiation available in CPS data is "Anchorage" and "outside of Anchorage".</i> <i>Need to break down broad food security categorizations into constituent underlying questions for improved communication of what "food (in)secure" categories mean.</i> <i>Some existing analyses are available through the highly detailed Feeding America Map the Meal Gap portal. It is important to note that data below the state level is from a statistical projection based on nationwide models and not through direct borough or census area-level census surveying.</i> <i>Available through automatable, API-based tools (e.g., 'ipums' package in R; preliminary work underway at UAA-ISER).</i> <i>Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence household comprehensive surveys.</i> <i>The Subsistence division has conducted some of the only quantitative, systematic food security surveys in rural Alaskan communities. Food security data exist on 100+ communities, and the state would benefit from elevating the visibility of this research to better understand remote and rural food security. While not fully longitudinal, the questions have been adapted from the Census Food Security Supplement instrument to better account for the role of wild food while remaining statistically comparable to the national survey framework.</i> <i>Available in part on the Subsistence Division website and through direct request.</i>





Potential Sources for Food-Related Data: (cont.)**Additional food security indicators:**

- a) *Aggregation and synthesis of reports from tribal bodies (e.g., Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska).*
- b) *Past and ongoing research from university and other research initiatives (e.g., UA entities, tribal health organizations, ANTHC epidemiology, etc.), with procedures to upload and provide context for integrating lessons/metrics into the broader data universe.*

Retail food prices (historical and current/ongoing)

- a) *Historically, programs such as the USDA-sponsored Food Cost Survey were administered by UAF, using direct price data recording by community members. However, this effort lapsed in 2018. Any historical product-level retail price data from the duration of this program should be archived and accessible.*
- b) *Modern methods make some retail price collections easier and cheaper, following current best practices. Grocery retailers with a web presence, including national retailers and Alaskan rural grocery retailers with a wide presence, provide the opportunity to scrape store-specific price data for key products. This allows fairly wide coverage, though sampling beyond web presence will inherently involve much higher data collection costs.*
- c) *Intersection of local retail food prices with key composite basket indices such as the Thrifty Food basket benchmark for USDA SNAP.*

Community health statistics related to diet

- a) *Collaboration with the Alaska Dept of Health for tracking key diet-related indicators.*
- b) *Draw from ANTHC investigations producing Alaska Native health data, aggregated as appropriate and allowable.*

Regional organizational annual reporting on food-related priorities, needs, challenges

- a) *Comprehensive assessment of Alaska Regional Development Organization annual reports scraping for keywords (some progress made through this committee's activities) and highlighting these historical trends with ongoing updating for 'direct' solicitation from regions.*

Assets or Resources Available:

- *Alaska Data Geoportal.*
- *API-based access is possible with some major national datasets (e.g., Census of Agriculture data).*
- *Existing data analysis framework for some items begun by UAA-ISER, expertise available.*
- *Existing geospatial data expertise in both public and private sectors.*
- *Expertise in diet-related health data in public agencies.*
- *Expertise and ongoing vetted programs in the ADF&G Subsistence Division.*

State Funding Needs:

Explore grants and sponsor support first for the upfront cost to create a portal to begin aggregating key data sources as well as for the maintenance of the third-party portal.





Statutory or Regulatory Changes:

Promotion of data transparency and accessibility to the greatest extent possible while maintaining appropriate safeguards for inherently sensitive information. Expansion of the survey monitoring ability of the ADF&G Subsistence Division would provide helpful data.

Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:

- *Creation of portal.*
- *The number of data categories incorporated.*
- *Years of coverage.*
- *Number of fields automated to avoid unnecessary human cost.*
- *Tracking of unique views, total engagement, downloads of graphics and datasets.*
- *Cooperating agencies providing data.*

Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?

[outlined above in detail]

Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks or tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success in the implementation of this recommendation:

Alaska generally suffers from poor data visibility, which is especially true for more granular analysis. Federal data collection (e.g., USDA Census of Ag) is routinely forced to redact production data due to small sample sizes of producers and the need to maintain data confidentiality.

Some food security and health-related survey data at the community level may be regarded as sensitive, and acceptable levels of aggregation would need to be agreed upon.

Given the structure of firms' websites, automating some data collection, e.g., retail food prices, is only partially possible. Some ongoing labor will almost surely be required for debugging, cleaning, and uploading.



RECOMMENDATION 2:

Improve Aviation Infrastructure



*FOCUS AREA FOUR:
Ensuring Food Security in Rural and
Urban Communities*

Ensure redundancy of AWOS/ASOS (Automated Weather/Surface Observing Systems), reliable reporting on key factors such as runway condition, and broad compliance of real-time AWOS/ASOS outage and performance reporting mandated in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Bill; find pathways forward to funding runway extensions. Prepare for and support autonomous aviation for food delivery.

What's the goal?

Improve food security in Alaska by ensuring reliable aviation infrastructure for efficient transportation and delivery of food supplies.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Redundancy of AWOS/ASOS systems and accurate reporting on runway conditions are crucial for safe and uninterrupted operations. Funding runway extensions will enable the use of larger aircraft, enhancing the capacity for transporting food and essential supplies. Preparing for and supporting autonomous aviation can also optimize food delivery logistics in remote areas.

1. Reliability and redundancy of AWOS/ASOS systems: Ensuring redundancy in AWOS/ASOS systems reduces the risk of disruptions in aviation operations caused by equipment failures or adverse weather conditions. This leads to improved safety and efficiency in transporting food supplies.
2. Accurate reporting on runway conditions: Reliable reporting of runway conditions enables pilots and ground personnel to make informed decisions, ensuring safe takeoff, landing, and overall aviation operations.



3. Runway extensions: Extending runways allows larger aircraft to operate, increasing capacity and efficiency in transporting larger quantities of food and supplies to remote areas of Alaska.
4. Autonomous aviation for food delivery: Preparing for and supporting autonomous aviation can address logistical challenges in remote regions where traditional aviation services are limited. Autonomous delivery systems can potentially enhance the efficiency and timeliness of food distribution.

Responsible Entity/Entities:
with brief justification

- **Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF):** Responsible for overseeing Alaska's aviation infrastructure and runway management.
- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):** Responsible for providing guidance and funding for airport infrastructure projects.

Action and Implementation Timeline:

- *Short (1-2 years)*
AWOS/ASOS
- *Mid (3-5 years)*
Runway Extension

Feasibility Study & Assessment

- *Identify Alaska airports requiring improvements in AWOS/ASOS systems and runway condition reporting - 1 month.*
- *Evaluate the current state of AWOS/ASOS systems and runway condition reporting at selected airports - 2 months.*
- *Assess the cost and technical requirements for implementing redundancy measures for AWOS/ASOS systems - 2 months.*
- *Develop a prioritized plan for implementing redundancy measures and runway condition reporting improvements - 1 month.*

Advocate for FAA Funds Eligibility:

- *Engage with FAA representatives to discuss the importance of runway extensions for Alaska's unique transportation needs - Ongoing.*
- *Provide comprehensive data and analysis showcasing the benefits and economic impact of runway extensions in Alaska - Ongoing.*

Collaborate with other stakeholders, such as industry associations and local communities, to build a coalition supporting Alaska's eligibility for FAA funds - Ongoing.

Assets or Resources Available:

- *Existing AWOS/ASOS systems and runway condition reporting infrastructure.*
- *Expertise and knowledge within DOT&PF and FAA.*
- *Collaboration with aviation stakeholders and industry associations.*

State Funding Needs:

- *Seek federal funding, grants and support from private transportation entities for the feasibility study and technical assessments.*
 - *Seek federal allocation for potential redundancy measures, AWOS/ASOS systems improvements, and runway condition reporting.*
-



Statutory or Regulatory Changes:

Potentially revise regulations or policies related to FAA funds eligibility for runway extensions in Alaska.

****Policy update:** *The 2024 FAA Reauthorization Bill may provide new flexibility for Alaska to expand AWOS/ASOS redundancy and engage the private sector to cost-effectively meet expansion needs.*

****Policy update:** *Section 332 of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Bill now requires the FAA to release real-time outage/performance data on weather observation systems, which will be instrumental in monitoring and advocating for performance improvements.*

****Policy update:** *Related to AWOS/ASOS requiring internet connectivity, the Digital Equity Act (DE)³⁴ and the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program³⁵ established under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)³⁶ passed by Congress in November 2021, allocate funds to expand broadband access for underserved and unserved communities in Alaska. The Alaska Broadband Office (ABO) is overseeing efforts to expand access to high quality, affordable internet for all Alaskans. With a five-year plan as its guide, the ABO is in the first year of its plan.³⁷*

Additional Research:

- *Conduct research on best practices and case studies from other regions or countries with similar aviation infrastructure challenges and successful redundancy measures.*
- *Explore potential funding mechanisms or grant opportunities beyond FAA funds for runway extensions in Alaska.*
- *Create an action plan for leveraging novel funding and flexibility within the FAA Reauthorization Bill to provide the greatest coverage of weather and domain awareness infrastructure to benefit Alaskan communities, drawing from newly synthesized weather station outage history and impacts on air traffic flows.*

Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:

- *Number of airports with improved AWOS/ASOS systems and runway condition reporting.*
- *Reduction in downtime or disruptions due to AWOS/ASOS system failures.*
- *Increase in the availability and accuracy of runway condition reports.*
- *Progress in advocating for Alaska's eligibility for FAA funds for runway extensions (e.g., meetings held, stakeholder support).*
- *Number of successful runway extension projects funded through FAA or alternative sources.*

Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?

Data on AWOS/ASOS systems already exists in FAA outage logs. Some data on runway conditions may already exist at DOT&PF and the FAA. Additional data may need to be collected through assessments and evaluations conducted specifically for this recommendation.

Update: As a result of the first-year task force recommendations, FAA data on historical AWOS/ASOS outages was obtained and analyzed by UAA-ISER researchers in conjunction with the ADOT&PF and presented to the FAA, DOT, and state airline leadership in several major meetings in spring 2024.

34 [DE - Program Overviews and Timelines, Alaska Broadband Office](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#DigitalEquityAct) <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#DigitalEquityAct>

35 [BEAD - Program Overviews and Timelines, Alaska Broadband Office](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#BroadbandEquityAccessandDeployment(BEAD)Program) [https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#BroadbandEquityAccessandDeployment\(BEAD\)Program](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#BroadbandEquityAccessandDeployment(BEAD)Program)

36 [IIJA - Program Overview and Timelines, Alaska Broadband Office](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#InfrastructureInvestmentandJobsAct(IIJA)) [https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#InfrastructureInvestmentandJobsAct\(IIJA\)](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/abo/ProgramOverviewsandTimelines#InfrastructureInvestmentandJobsAct(IIJA))

37 [Alaska's BEAD Five-Year Action Plan.pdf](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/19/pub/Alaska%E2%80%99s-BEAD-Five-Year-Action-Plan.pdf?ver=eMRubmFcS9zPw_Rzj6C4Zw%3d%3d) https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/19/pub/Alaska%E2%80%99s-BEAD-Five-Year-Action-Plan.pdf?ver=eMRubmFcS9zPw_Rzj6C4Zw%3d%3d



Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks or tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success in the implementation of this recommendation:

Logistical and Practical Bottlenecks:

- *Coordinating with multiple airports and stakeholders to conduct assessments and implement improvements may require effective communication and collaboration.*
- *Securing funding for feasibility studies, technical assessments, and actual improvements may present challenges.*
- *Ensuring compatibility and integration of redundant AWOS systems with existing infrastructure and equipment could require technical expertise.*

Tracking and Measurement Bottlenecks:

- *Measuring progress regarding AWOS system improvements and runway condition reporting may require standardizing data collection and reporting across airports.*
 - *Demonstrating the economic impact of runway extensions may involve complex data analysis and modeling.*
 - *Tracking advocacy efforts and progress in gaining FAA funds eligibility may require monitoring meetings, support gained, and any regulatory changes.*
-



RECOMMENDATION 3:

Develop and Implement Community and Household Food Independence and Food Security Initiatives



*FOCUS AREA FOUR:
Ensuring Food Security in Rural and
Urban Communities*



Develop and implement local food security initiatives for Alaska communities and regional entities (such as education and outreach regarding gardening; small scale livestock; subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering; food processing, preservation, storage; food readiness related to disaster preparedness; nutrition prescription and food as/is medicine; seafood processing; etc.). Send letters and write articles about successes to urge support and foster interest, encouraging families and community members to engage in activities and efforts to strengthen and take responsibility for food independence and security for households and communities.

What's the goal?

Improve food security in Alaska by engaging households and communities to strengthen food security in locally-determined, regionally sensible, and culturally relevant ways.

Why are we recommending this solution for this problem?

Many promising food security initiatives exist in Alaska, such as the Food is Medicine program, local fish processing, and efforts to engage the next generation of rural Alaskans in traditional subsistence activities. These need to be supported and expanded. Other opportunities exist too. We must encourage individuals in communities statewide to take additional responsibility for food security for their households and/or their community by engaging not only in subsistence harvesting but also in gardening, raising small livestock within communities, processing and preserving foods, and increasing food readiness in the event of a disaster, a supply disruption, severe weather, etc.



This recommendation would allow Alaskan communities and regional entities to implement initiatives that residents have identified as important to increase local food security.

- Responsible Entity/Entities:**
with brief justification
- Division of Agriculture:** *knowledgeable about topic, oversees food security-related grants.*
 - Cooperative Extension Service:** *equipped to train and provide educational resources.*
 - Alaska Native entities:** *knowledge about traditional subsistence.*
 - Local government:** *can identify leaders in community to help coordinate and spur participation.*
 - Local business sponsors:** *can support efforts, donate supplies or property space for gardening, food processing and storage.*
 - Media:** *help spread word about initiatives and successes.*

Action and Implementation Timeline: - Short (1-2 years) - Mid (3-5 years) - Long (5-10 years)	YEARS 1-2	<i>Evaluate structures of existing initiatives to use as starting template to develop additional initiatives. Choose additional initiatives to pilot; develop curriculum and resources; identify community(-ies) and local lead advocate(s) for pilot.</i> <i>Develop application mechanism similar to the existing Division of Agriculture microgrants for food security.</i>
	YEARS 2-3	<i>Launch pilot.</i>
	YEARS 4-5	<i>Expand initiatives to other communities and eventually statewide.</i>
	YEARS 3»	<i>Administer the food security grants to support initiatives.</i>

Implementation Details for Funding Support:

- Develop application process, text, and implementation and evaluation metrics:
 - Designate responsible individuals at the Division of Agriculture for implementing the grants program.
 - Identify a group of individuals, including Alaska individuals involved in food security initiatives, to develop the application process and text, as well as selection criteria and award amounts.
 - Develop the application process and text, as well as selection criteria and award amounts.
- Identify and allocate funding stream for Alaska Food Security Grants.
- Implement the Alaska Food Security Grants program:
 - Publicize grant program to communities.
 - Solicit and review submissions based on developed review criteria.
 - Award grants and monitor the completion of projects to include estimates of quantity of food gathered, grown, processed, preserved, etc., and number of people impacted.
 - Compile and review evaluation findings to inform continued calls for Alaska Food Security grants.



Assets or Resources Available:

- Existing Division of Agriculture grants .
 - Cooperative Extension Service offices (11 in Alaska).
 - Existing Alaska expertise and initiatives focused on food security.
 - Social media groups specific to Alaska and dedicated to subsistence, gardening, livestock, food preservation, etc.
-

State Funding Needs:

- Explore USDA, Native corporations, business sponsors, and other nonstate funding sources to help craft, market, and launch initiatives and curriculum.
 - Existing state funding for food security grants.
 - Identify funding to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and to translate them to different regions.
-

Statutory or Regulatory Changes:

May need regulatory changes to allow food security grants to be used for initiatives.

Additional Research:

- Conduct research on best practices and case studies from other regions with similar geographies and populations on food security efforts.
 - Conduct a scoping review of food security efforts that exist in Alaska, as well as any evaluation efforts and findings from those initiatives.
-

Metrics Recommended to Measure Progress:

- Number of applications received.
 - Number and dollar amount of grants awarded per year.
 - Number of individuals impacted.
 - Number of communities impacted.
 - Estimates of quantity of food gathered, grown, processed, preserved, etc., due to initiative.
 - Number of initiatives funded that completed required evaluation.
 - Findings from evaluations that indicate positive impacts on food security.
-

Does that data currently exist in an accessible form? If not, where might that data come from?

Metrics recommended to measure progress are attainable through the implementation of the program.

Anticipated logistical and practical bottlenecks in the implementation of this recommendation:

- Designating and attaining funding for the program.
 - Personnel to administer the program.
-

Anticipated tracking and measurement bottlenecks with progress/success of the implementation:

- Appropriate funding levels to allow applying communities and entities to successfully complete food security initiatives and evaluate them.
 - Training of awardees on evaluation methodologies.
 - Personnel to liaise with awardees to ensure grant requirements and evaluations are completed.
-



FOCUS AREA FOUR:
Ensuring Food Security in Rural and Urban Communities

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Encourage Cooperation Between Agencies in the Consideration of ANS and Other Data to Help Ensure Subsistence Activities Can Continue

Conflict between the federal 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) requirements related to subsistence and rural preference and the 1989 McDowell ruling by the Alaska Supreme Court upholding equal access for all Alaskans has existed for decades. With a growing number of residents who previously lived in rural areas choosing to live in areas not designated as rural but still desiring to participate in subsistence activities, the issue has become more complicated as the years pass. During time periods when certain subsistence resources are less plentiful than normal, the impacts on those who rely heavily on subsistence can be a tremendous strain.

Some want the State of Alaska to adopt best practice policies supporting subsistence rights, such as those developed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under ANILCA Sec. 810 which require an evaluation of subsistence uses and needs for any permitted activities on federal lands in Alaska³⁸. Because federal subsistence boards have prioritized fish and game resources on federal land by zip code (region) for federally qualified subsistence users (defined by the US Department of the Interior as “permanent residents of a rural area or community that has a federally recognized customary and traditional use determination for that resource”), these advocates want the state to comply.

The Alaska Supreme Court, however, ruled in the McDowell case in 1989 that the rural preference is impermissible under the Alaska State Constitution. On state lands, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) therefore maintains a rule of equal access to all Alaskans regardless of whether or not they reside in a rural area. This provides an opportunity for prior village residents and others who do not reside in rural areas to hunt and fish for food, especially important when one or more federal areas have been restricted for these nonrural Alaskans.

38 BLM Compliance with ANILCA Section 810 https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/policies/im_ak_2011_008_Policy.pdf





Although the rural preference versus equal access dispute has remained unresolved for decades, the ADF&G regularly updates the Amount Necessary for Subsistence (ANS) data on a per person basis. This data is information readily available, whether for permitting activities on federal lands or for other food independence and access purposes.

The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force encourages cooperation between agencies in the consideration of ANS and other data to help ensure subsistence activities can continue.**

*** Items such as responsible entity, timeline, assets, research, etc., were not provided by the relevant committee for this recommendation. Contact the AFSTF Chair for a referral to the committee chair to learn more information about the committee's discussion and suggestions.*





FOCUS AREA FOUR:
Ensuring Food Security in Rural and
Urban Communities

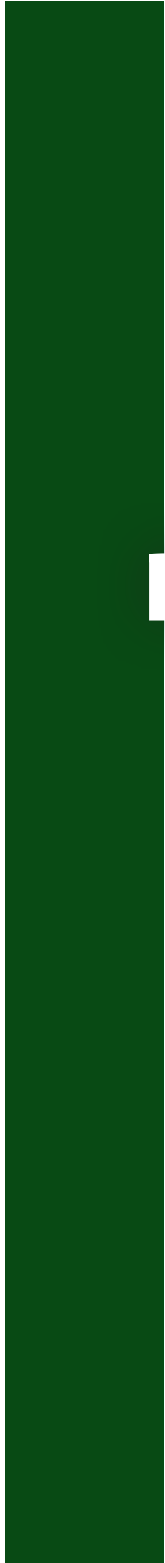
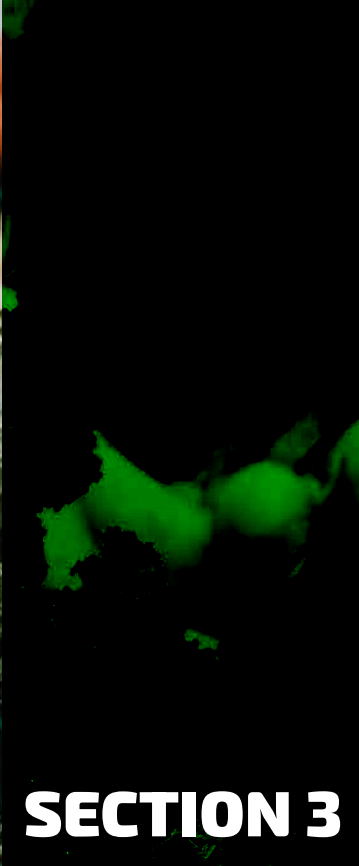
RECOMMENDATION 5:

Develop “Alaskans First” Preference to Lease or Purchase State Agricultural Land

Pass legislation to establish a resident preference to lease or purchase state agricultural land, using an “Alaskans First” strategy modeled after Veteran land access programs.

*** Items such as responsible entity, timeline, assets, research, etc., were not provided by the relevant committee for this recommendation. Contact the AFSTF Chair for a referral to the committee chair to learn more information about the committee’s discussion and suggestions.*





SECTION 3

UPDATES ON 2023 FOCUS AREA RECOMMENDATIONS





The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force developed recommendations pertaining to three focus areas in the first report published August 1, 2023, with actionable steps to facilitate implementation.

Throughout the past year, some of these action steps were taken. This section summarizes the progress on the 2023 recommendations.



2023 FOCUS AREA ONE

UPDATES



Sustainably Grow the Agriculture Industry



RECOMMENDATION 1:

Create an Alaska Department of Agriculture

UPDATE: The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force created a special committee to outline the compelling case in a white paper that the establishment of a Department of Agriculture makes sense as a next step for Alaska. The paper also provides a framework for what an Alaska Department of Agriculture could look like, its organization, and divisions.

The white paper³⁹ was released in mid-February 2024 and was presented in Resource Committee hearings in both the Senate and House. The proposal was well-received by Alaskans, private sector industry, the administration, and the legislature. Discussions continue on process and funding. The white paper, “Why a Department of Agriculture Makes Sense for Alaska” is included in Appendix C of this report.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Expand leases on state-owned land and ensure agriculture activities via a state-driven approach

UPDATE: A governor’s bill was introduced but not passed that would have eased restrictions on state land used for agriculture by allowing other businesses on the property that help support the agriculture business on the property. The 2024 Focus Area “Ensuring Food Security in Rural and Urban Communities” includes a recommendation for an “Alaskans First” requirement for state lands for lease or purchase for agricultural use.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Increase research capacity and programs through UAF IANRE’s Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Stations

UPDATE: The Board of Regents requested additional funding for inclusion in the Governor’s budget. Since the funding was not included, an amendment to the Operating Budget was offered in House Finance. This did not pass. Efforts will continue to secure additional funding for research through IANRE. It is important to note that the request for university research originated from farmers and ag producers – in other words, from boots on the ground. Research coming out of Iowa or North Carolina or elsewhere in the lower-48 is not applicable in Alaska. One dollar of state funding for ag research leverages nine additional dollars for research at UA coming into Alaska, and is a point the legislature and governor should keep in mind.

³⁹ [AFSTF Department of Agriculture White Paper https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155)
also Appendix C.





RECOMMENDATION 4:

Improve access to capital for producers through the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund and the Agricultural Forgivable Loan Program

UPDATE: The Governor introduced the CROP Act which included language for increasing the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF) limits and adjusting the board quorum requirement. The governor's ARLF language from the CROP Act was inserted into HB 251 along with an allowance for ARLF to be used for food production. The bill passed.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Encourage tax exemptions for farmland

UPDATE: Senator Bjorkman introduced SB 161 which expanded the state mandated property tax agricultural exemption to include farm structures, added farmland to the locally optional partial or total property tax exemption for farm structures, required a \$2500 minimum sale of agricultural products to qualify for tax exemptions, made the application process more efficient, changed the mandatory property tax reduction to food producing farms only and the local option to all farms. This language was inserted into SB 179 and passed.



UPDATES

2023 FOCUS AREA TWO



**Sustainably Growing Markets for
Local Products**



RECOMMENDATION 1:

Create Alaska Grown Marketing Institute

UPDATE: None available specifically on this recommendation but Representative George Rauscher's bill, HB 251 which passed, allows new entrants into the food processing market by reducing requirements to meet high industrial standards for businesses with limited sales. The bill allows food products made by these small businesses, with proper labeling, to be sold in retail stores.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Re-establish an Alaska Meat Inspection Service

UPDATE: Legislation (HB 251) sponsored by Representative George Rauscher, which passed, allows ownership of meat shares. Due to the existing meat facilities not being at full capacity due to workforce costs and shortages, the raised limits of the ARLF (proposed by Governor Dunleavy and also included in HB 251) and the ability to use these loans for processing equipment will allow these facilities the option to acquire automated equipment which will increase the quantity of livestock and volume of meat they can process. The increased capacity will reduce wait times and allow livestock producers to plan their herds accordingly. There is not a shortage of federal meat inspectors currently for the amount of meat being processed in Alaska. The USDA meat inspectors are currently keeping up with what is being processed. State funds for an inspection service right now would not help alleviate the difficulty producers are having. It's a meat processing problem not a meat inspection problem. Certain areas of the state are a great distance from a meat processing facility so some producers sell their meat on the hoof or will soon sell their meat via shares that are labeled as uninspected. A mobile meat processing unit is a concept the Division of Agriculture should explore.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Add Technical Assistance Officer

UPDATE: The AFSTF has issued a white paper and presented it to the legislature and administration on the need to establish a Department of Agriculture. It includes positions for technical assistance to support the growth of the private sector agriculture industry.





RECOMMENDATION 4: **Request Grocery Stores Track and Sell More Alaska Grown Products**

UPDATE: None available at this time.

RECOMMENDATION 5: **Expand Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund to food processors and manufacturers**

UPDATE: The Governor introduced the CROP Act which included language for increasing the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF) limits and adjusting the board quorum requirement. The governor's ARLF language from the CROP Act was inserted into HB 251 along with an allowance for ARLF to be used for food production. The bill passed.



2023 FOCUS AREA THREE

UPDATES



Improving Transportation and Infrastructure



RECOMMENDATION 1: Improve Maritime Infrastructure

UPDATE: None available at this time.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Rural Hub Infrastructure and Transportation Support

UPDATE: This is being re-recommended in the 2024 Focus Area Two “Minimizing food waste and diverting it from the waste stream” proposal. Field trips were conducted in 2023 to rural hubs and at the Anchorage airport, and meetings were held with shippers to develop the proposal for climate-controlled storage. SJR 20 was filed and passed to encourage specific solutions for rural airport AWOS/ASOS outages to be carried out by FAA. Some of these solutions were included in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Improve Aviation Infrastructure

UPDATE: This is being re-proposed in the recommendations for 2024 Focus Area Four “Ensuring food security in rural and urban communities.” The legislature passed SJR 20, which urged FAA to address outages of AWOS and ASOS stations in Alaska with specific solutions. Alaska federal delegation staff worked to incorporate specific solution language in the final bill that passed.

The 2024 FAA Reauthorization Bill may provide new flexibility for Alaska to expand AWOS/ASOS redundancy and engage the private sector to cost-effectively meet expansion needs.

Section 332 of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Bill now calls for the FAA to release real-time outage/performance data on weather observation systems, which will be instrumental to monitoring and advocacy for performance improvements.

The Alaska State Legislature funded autonomous aviation research in the FY 2025 budget. The 2024 recommendation on this topic also calls for runway extensions and continued support for autonomous aviation.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Improve Bypass Mail Operations

UPDATE: The AFSTF Chair and a few members of the executive team met with shippers, including local carriers and Amazon, to better understand the barriers and explore options. The Focus





Area Chair coordinated field trips to Anchorage and rural airports. The 2024 Focus Area Three “Improving connectivity, efficiencies, outcomes in state-run programs affecting food availability and access” includes a recommendation for AFSTF to work with the Alaska federal delegation and USPS and urges the USPS to implement the Inspector General’s recommendations for improving the bypass mail system.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Improve Data Collection and Analysis

UPDATE: Efforts are underway to create a data dashboard through the Alaska Food Policy Council and partners. Funding sources are currently being sought. 2024 Focus Area Four “Ensuring food security in rural and urban communities” includes a recommendation with action steps to streamline and make food security data transparent. ISER is currently working with AFSTF to gather and help ensure we can measure and track successes of food security efforts via good data.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Invest In Research and Innovative Technologies

UPDATE: The agriculture research proposal was presented to the House and Senate Resource Committees in relation to food security. Legislators were presented with the 1:9 funding leverage ratio (for each state dollar invested in research, nine additional dollars come into the state for research). Legislators also learned that the research request originated from farmers and ranchers who cannot rely on university research from the lower 48 considering our cold temperatures, geography, and daylight extremes. Although the legislature did not appropriate funds for agricultural research, funds were included in the budget for autonomous aviation research which is a potential solution related to food delivery and security in remote areas of state.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Support Supply Chain Coordination

UPDATE: Efforts are underway to create a Supply Chain Coordinator through Alaska Food Policy Council and partners. Currently seeking funding sources for support for the position.





RECOMMENDATION 8: **Increase Food Storage Capacity**

UPDATE: Work on recommendations to prevent food spoilage via climate-controlled storage at rural hubs is underway and is explained in 2024 Focus Area Two, Recommendation: “Support rural hub infrastructure and transportation”. 2024 Focus Area Three, Recommendation: “Establish Co-op Purchasing for School Food” includes the need for warehouse space which is likely available in larger communities. 2024 Focus Area Four, Recommendation: “Develop and implement community and household food access and food independence initiatives” includes food preservation and storage as well as food readiness in the event of a disaster. These initiatives will require storage capacity at the community level.

RECOMMENDATION 9: **Extend Rail System**

UPDATE: The legislature continues to introduce resolutions supporting completion of the Northern Rail and Port Mackenzie Rail Extension. The West Susitna Road project and the economic development and industry it spurs will create further demand for expanded rail.





SECTION 4

NEXT STEPS





STATUTORY & BUDGET NEEDS SUMMARY

Please note:

The following chart is a high-level summary and does not include many important items in the various categories. Please refer to each full recommendation to learn more.





RECOMMENDATION	STATUTORY CHANGES	REGULATORY CHANGES	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	OTHER CHANGES	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY/ENTITIES	BUDGET NEEDS
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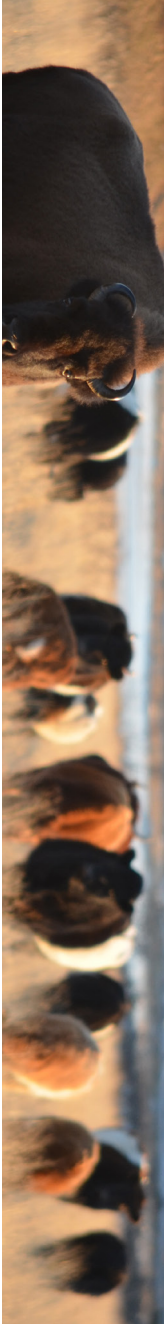
1. ENHANCING THE CLIMATE FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGE BUSINESSES OR DISTRIBUTION BUSINESSES:

1.a Competitive Marketplace (pg 17)	Deregulate certain shipping industry barriers. Create incentives for new companies	Deregulate certain shipping industry barriers.	DOT		Private shipping industries and producers provide input, and guidance; producers collaborate for economies of scale.	Incentives for new market entrants such as tax exemptions
1.b Skilled Labor for Manufacturing (pg 19)	Determine need after assessment	Determine need after assessment	DEED, DOLWD		Private entity to develop curriculum, provide training	Curriculum development, student loans and scholarships
1.c State Food Security and Manufacturing Officer (pg 21)	Creation of position. Define responsibilities and authorities.	Creation of position. Define responsibilities and authorities.	DNR or DCCED		Private sector food production and processing experts for input, guidance	Salary and operational costs

2. MINIMIZING FOOD WASTE AND DIVERTING IT FROM THE WASTE STREAM:

2.a Community Composting (pg 24)			DEC (AEA, AIDEA, UA supporting)		Private businesses to contract to do composting; private businesses with food waste to dispose	Food waste management initial framework planning
2.b Rural Hub Food Storage (pg 26)	Evaluate statutes needs for construction, operation & leasing food storage facilities	Minimal regulation to enable safe and efficient implementation & use of facilities	DOT, DCCED	Identify location and facilitation of storage facilities	Local governments; shipping industry, retail grocers, Native corporations	Funding for needs assessment, strategic plan, construction, implementation and ongoing costs for any leases and necessary staffing
2.c Food Donors and Distribution Connections (pg 29)						





RECOMMENDATION	STATUTORY CHANGES	REGULATORY CHANGES	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	OTHER CHANGES	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY/ENTITIES	BUDGET NEEDS
3. IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY, EFFICIENCIES, AND OUTCOMES IN STATE-RUN PROGRAMS AFFECTING FOOD AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS:						
3.a GusNIP SNAP Produce Incentive (pg 31)	State tax exemption for produce purchases		DOH		Alaska Farmers Market Association, municipalities, food producers, retail grocers	Year 1: less than \$100,000 year 2: \$200,000
3.b Support Bypass Mail (pg 35)			USPS	USPS to implement their own recommendations	AFSTF, Food & Farm Caucus, Congressional Delegation	Curriculum development, student loans and scholarships
3.c School Purchasing (pg 38)	Rewrite of Nutritional Alaska Foods in Schools statutes		DEED, Div of Ag, DCCED		Private Food Producers & Food Processors, School Districts	Explore directing existing federal funds districts receive for school lunches, breakfasts
3.d SNAP/FDPIR (pg 41)	Federal law change		US Congress	Resolution or letters urging Congress to act	AFSTF, Legislature, Federal Delegation	No state dollars
4. ENSURING FOOD SECURITY IN RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES:						
4.a Food Security Data (pg 45)			UAA-ISER, Alaska Food Policy Council		Private sector producers, food manufacturers, shippers, grocers, non profits, agencies	UAA-ISER funds for data research, Alaska Food Policy Council for portal maintenance
4.b Improve Aviation Infrastructure (pg 49)		Possible regulatory changes related to FAA funds eligibility for runway extension	DOT, FAA		Congressional delegation, Legislature	FAA funding for feasibility study, technical assessment, potential redundancy measure & improvements in AMQOS/ASOS system, runway extensions and condition reporting. State funds for autonomous aviation research
4.c Community and Household Initiatives (pg 53)	May need to adjust statutory language for food security grants	Require data collected for initiative if receive state funds	Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Services		Private training entities, senior centers, churches, non-profits, Native corporations, business sponsors	Base funding for initiatives including for community trainings and educational resources related to food production, processing, and preservation.
4.d Subsistence ANS Data (pg 56)			DF&G			
4.e Alaskans First Policy for Ag Lands (pg 58)	Model after Veterans' preference statutory language		DNR		Legislature	



CONCLUSION



Because we face challenges with severe weather events, disruptions in the supply chain, limited infrastructure, and struggles to access necessary food production and manufacturing inputs, a higher priority should be placed on strengthening all aspects of Alaska's food system.

While there will always be some level of reliance on imports, along with increasing agriculture production as we emphasized last year, there is a need for increasing large and small-scale food production and manufacturing businesses, ensuring the sustainability of wild-caught and harvested foods, reducing food spoilage, and providing community and household level educational resources to cultivate increased local food production, preservation, and storage. This will be more attainable as we prioritize reliable and improved transportation infrastructure systems. Agricultural and market expansion will also happen more readily with appropriate technical support by agencies as will greater efficiencies and coordination in safety net food security efforts.

Increasing food access and food independence by building a reliable food system in Alaska is no small task. It will require determination and persistence over the long haul as well as Alaskan ingenuity and ongoing coordination among multiple entities.

The AFSTF is not promoting boondoggles, pie-in-the sky ideas, unachievable goals, or unrealistic task assignments. The framework provided via the seven focus areas in the AFSTF 2023 and 2024 reports, with their corresponding recommendations, is a practical guide filled with common-sense, actionable steps, some of which we have already and recently taken.

Although there are numerous remaining steps to take in the future, with the continued support of Alaskans, the work and efforts of the private sector, and the commitment and coordination of the public sector where needed, Alaska will reap the rewards of more prosperous and healthier families, more vibrant and resilient communities, and a stronger and more diversified economy all while we increase our food independence. We can do this!



SECTION 5

APPENDICES





APPENDIX A:

Glossary of Abbreviations

United States

USDA: *United States Department of Agriculture*

FAA: *Federal Aviation Administration*

FDPIR: *Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations*

GusNIP: *Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program*

OIG: *Office of the Inspector General*

SNAP: *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*

TEFAP: *Emergency Food Assistance Program*

USPS: *United States Postal Service*

WIC: *Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children*

State of Alaska

ADF&G: *Alaska Department of Fish and Game*

ANTHC: *Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium*

BLM: *Bureau of Land Management*

DCCED: *Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development*

DEC: *Department of Environmental Conservation*

DEED: *Alaska Department of Education & Early Development*

DNR: *Alaska Department of Natural Resources*

DOH: *Department of Health and Social Services*

DOLWD: *Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development*

DOT&PF: *Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities*





State Programs and Services

AIDEA: *Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority*

ANILCA: *Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act*

ARLF: *Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund*

ASMI: *Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute*

CROP Act: *Capital access, Revenue protection, and Open Procurement Act*

AFSTF: *Food Strategy Task Force*

AFSITF: *Food Security and Independence Task Force*

AFLP: *Agricultural Forgivable Loan Program*

NAFS: *Nutritional Alaska Foods in Schools*

AGMI: *Alaska Grown Marketing Institute*

University of Alaska

UAF-IANRE: *University of Alaska Fairbanks - Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension*

UAA: *University of Alaska Anchorage*

UAA-ISER: *University of Alaska Anchorage - Institute of Social and Economic Research*

UAF: *University of Alaska Fairbanks*

UA: *University of Alaska System*

Organizations

ACC: *Alaska Commercial Company*

AFMA: *Alaska Farmers Market Association*

AFPC: *Alaska Food Policy Council*

Other

ANS: *Amount Necessary for Subsistence*

AWOS: *Automated Weather Observing System*

ASOS: *Surface Weather Observation Stations*

BVLOS: *Beyond-visual-line-of-sight systems*

CPS: *Current Population Survey*

EBT: *Electronic Benefit Transfer*

FTE: *Full-Time Employee*

GDP: *Gross Domestic Product*

MW: *Megawatt*

RFP: *Request for Proposal*

SKU: *Stock-Keeping Unit*

SJR: *Senate Joint Resolution*



APPENDIX B:

House Bill 298⁴⁰



LAWS OF ALASKA

2022

Source

SCS CSHB 298(CRA) am S

Chapter No.

AN ACT

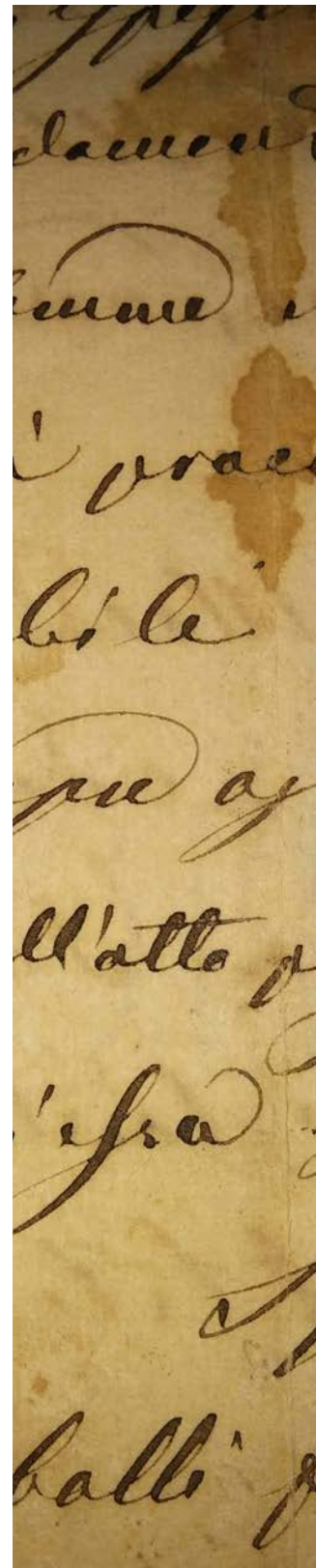
Establishing forgivable loan programs for farm development and improvement and for certain meat processing facilities; relating to a program of state inspection for certain meat processing facilities; establishing the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force; and providing for an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1

Enrolled HB 298

⁴⁰ [House Bill 298z https://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/32?Root=HB298](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/32?Root=HB298)





AN ACT

1 Establishing forgivable loan programs for farm development and improvement and for certain
2 meat processing facilities; relating to a program of state inspection for certain meat processing
3 facilities; establishing the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force; and providing for an effective
4 date.

5

6 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
7 to read:

8 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature to establish the Alaska
9 Food Strategy Task Force to

- 10 (1) develop a comprehensive statewide food strategy;
11 (2) strengthen the state's diverse food systems;
12 (3) improve food security for all residents of the state; and
13 (4) grow the local food economies of the state.

14 * **Sec. 2.** AS 03.20 is amended by adding new sections to read:





THE CONTENT OF SECTIONS 2-4 (FOUND ON PAGES 2-6 OF THE ENROLLED HB 298) IS OMITTED BECAUSE IT DOES NOT PERTAIN TO THE ALASKA FOOD STRATEGY TASK FORCE.





1 of this section for a program of state inspection for the processing and sale of meat
2 products from amenable species only if the program is approved by the federal
3 government.

4 (c) Regulations adopted by the department under this section must impose
5 requirements that are not less stringent than the requirements imposed under 21 U.S.C.
6 601 - 695 (Federal Meat Inspection Act) and 7 U.S.C. 1901 - 1907 (Humane Methods
7 of Slaughter Act).

8 (d) Subject to (b) of this section, and except as provided in (e) of this section,
9 if the department adopts regulations to establish a program of state inspection for the
10 processing and sale of meat products, the department shall

11 (1) license facilities that process meat products for sale to the public;

12 (2) adopt license requirements and fees for facilities that process meat
13 products for sale to the public; and

14 (3) use officers and employees of the department to inspect facilities
15 that are licensed under this subsection.

16 (e) The department may not establish, administer, or enforce a program of
17 inspection under this section for facilities that process meat products from equines.

18 (f) In this section,

19 (1) "amenable species" has the meaning given in 21 U.S.C. 601(w);

20 (2) "equine" means a member of the family Equidae.

21 * **Sec. 5.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
22 read:

23 **ALASKA FOOD STRATEGY TASK FORCE.** (a) The Alaska Food Strategy Task
24 Force is created in the legislative branch.

25 (b) The executive board of the task force consists of nine members as follows:

26 (1) two members from the Alaska Food Policy Council selected by the
27 governing board of the Alaska Food Policy Council;

28 (2) one member from the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the
29 University of Alaska Anchorage selected by the Board of Regents;

30 (3) one member from the Alaska Farm Bureau selected by the governing
31 board of the Alaska Farm Bureau;



- 1 (4) one member from the Alaska Industrial Development and Export
2 Authority selected by the members of the authority; and
- 3 (5) four members of the Alaska State Legislature appointed as follows:
- 4 (A) one member from the minority caucus of the senate and one
5 member from the majority caucus of the senate, appointed jointly by the president of
6 the senate and speaker of the house of representatives;
- 7 (B) one member from the minority caucus of the house of
8 representatives and one member from the majority caucus of the house of
9 representatives, appointed jointly by the president of the senate and speaker of the
10 house of representatives.
- 11 (c) The following commissioners, or their designees, serve as members of the task
12 force:
- 13 (1) the commissioner of natural resources;
- 14 (2) the commissioner of fish and game;
- 15 (3) the commissioner of health and social services;
- 16 (4) the commissioner of commerce, community, and economic development;
- 17 (5) the commissioner of education and early development; and
- 18 (6) the commissioner of transportation and public facilities.
- 19 (d) The remainder of the task force consists of 21 members selected by the executive
20 board, with due regard for broad geographic representation of the state, as follows:
- 21 (1) one member from a mariculture development organization;
- 22 (2) one member from an agricultural development organization;
- 23 (3) one member from a fisheries-related organization;
- 24 (4) one member from a local food marketing organization;
- 25 (5) one member from a hunger and nutrition organization;
- 26 (6) one member from an economic development organization;
- 27 (7) one member from the food distribution or transportation industry;
- 28 (8) two members from Alaska Native or intertribal organizations addressing
29 food sovereignty or Alaska tribal governments;
- 30 (9) two members who are food producers in the state;
- 31 (10) two members from the food service industry;





1 (11) one youth member from the Alaska Future Farmers of America
2 Association or the Alaska 4-H Program;
3 (12) one member who is a faculty member at the University of Alaska
4 Anchorage;
5 (13) one member who is a faculty member at the University of Alaska
6 Fairbanks;
7 (14) one member who is a faculty member at the University of Alaska
8 Southeast;
9 (15) one member who is a faculty member at the Alaska Pacific University;
10 and
11 (16) three members selected to provide additional expertise in food system
12 development.
13 (e) The executive board of the task force shall select members to provide expertise in
14 key areas of food system activity, including production, security, and economic, social, and
15 environmental drivers. In this subsection,
16 (1) "production" includes growing and harvesting, food processing,
17 packaging, distribution, retail, and consumption and waste management;
18 (2) "security" includes food access, availability, and use.
19 (f) The executive board of the task force shall select a chair and vice-chair from the
20 executive board.
21 (g) Members of the task force serve without compensation and may not receive travel
22 and per diem expenses.
23 (h) The task force shall meet during and between legislative sessions to accomplish its
24 duties. Meetings shall be conducted, and notice of regular meetings provided, under
25 AS 44.62.310 - 44.62.319 (Open Meetings Act). Records of the Alaska Food Strategy Task
26 Force are subject to inspection and copying as public records under AS 40.25.100 - 40.25.295
27 (Alaska Public Records Act).
28 (i) The executive board may remove a member of the task force if the member misses
29 more than two meetings in a calendar year without being previously excused or if the member
30 does not contribute in a meaningful way to the activities of the task force. Vacancies on the
31 task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original selection.



- 1 (j) The task force shall present state policy, legislation, and strategy implementation
2 recommendations in the following seven integrated focus areas:
- 3 (1) sustainably growing the agriculture industry;
4 (2) sustainably growing markets for locally grown, locally harvested, and
5 locally processed foods;
6 (3) enhancing the climate for food and beverage processing or distribution
7 businesses;
8 (4) minimizing food waste and diverting it from the waste stream;
9 (5) improving connectivity, efficiencies, and outcomes in state-run programs
10 affecting food availability and access;
11 (6) ensuring food security in all communities in the state, including those that
12 are and are not connected to the main road system of the state; and
13 (7) improving transportation and infrastructure to transfer and deliver food in
14 the state.
- 15 (k) The task force shall, in its consideration of the seven integrated focus areas under
16 (j) of this section, address, at a minimum, the following elements:
- 17 (1) public, nonprofit, and private investment and infrastructure;
18 (2) regulatory issues;
19 (3) research and development needs;
20 (4) environmental changes;
21 (5) workforce development needs;
22 (6) infrastructure needs and storage;
23 (7) high food costs and food access;
24 (8) food safety;
25 (9) varying scales of food system and storage development;
26 (10) innovative technologies for the Circumpolar North;
27 (11) adaptation of successful food system policies, models, and programs
28 across the Circumpolar North and other states;
29 (12) Alaska tribal relations as they pertain to food security, food sovereignty,
30 and local storage methods; and
31 (13) emergency preparedness.





1 (l) The task force shall establish advisory committees focused on addressing each of
2 the seven integrated focus areas under (j) of this section and the minimum elements under (k)
3 of this section, and each task force member shall serve on one or more of these committees.

4 (m) The task force shall present recommendations for metrics appropriate for
5 evaluating food system effects and food security outcomes.

6 (n) The recommendations of the task force must be

- 7 (1) evidence based;
- 8 (2) stakeholder informed;
- 9 (3) economically sound;
- 10 (4) environmentally sustainable; and
- 11 (5) equally accessible.

12 (o) The task force shall develop and present recommendations in three of the
13 integrated focus areas under (j) of this section by August 1, 2023, and recommendations in the
14 remaining integrated focus areas under (j) of this section by August 1, 2024. The task force
15 shall compile the recommendations into a report and submit the report to the governor, the
16 senate secretary, and the chief clerk of the house of representatives and notify the legislature
17 that the report is available.

18 (p) The task force shall continue the efforts of and review and, when applicable,
19 implement the recommendations of the Alaska Food Security and Independence Task Force
20 established by Administrative Order No. 331.

21 * **Sec. 6.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska enacted in sec. 5(c) of this Act is
22 amended to read:

23 (c) The following commissioners, or their designees, serve as members of the task
24 force:

- 25 (1) the commissioner of natural resources;
- 26 (2) the commissioner of fish and game;
- 27 (3) the commissioner of health [AND SOCIAL SERVICES];
- 28 (4) the commissioner of commerce, community, and economic development;
- 29 (5) the commissioner of education and early development; and
- 30 (6) the commissioner of transportation and public facilities.

31 * **Sec. 7.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to





1 read:

2 TRANSITION. The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force created under sec. 5 of this Act
3 shall begin work not later than 30 days after both the senate and the house of representatives
4 have organized in the First Regular Session of the Thirty-Third Alaska State Legislature.

5 * **Sec. 8.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
6 read:

7 TRANSITION: REGULATIONS. The Department of Natural Resources shall adopt
8 regulations necessary to implement AS 03.20.200 and 03.20.210, enacted by sec. 2 of this
9 Act. The regulations take effect under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act), but not
10 before the effective date of the law implemented by the regulation.

11 * **Sec. 9.** Sections 1, 5, and 6 of this Act are repealed June 30, 2025.

12 * **Sec. 10.** Sections 2 - 4 and 6 of this Act take effect July 1, 2022.

13 * **Sec. 11.** Except as provided in sec. 10 of this Act, this Act takes effect immediately under
14 AS 01.10.070(c).



APPENDIX C:

AFSTF White Paper: *Why a Department of Agriculture Makes Sense for Alaska*⁴¹



 **AFSTF**
ALASKA FOOD STRATEGY TASK FORCE
presenting a white paper on a topic of importance to Alaskans

The Lack of Food Security in Alaska: Tackling It Head-on

**WHY A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MAKES SENSE FOR ALASKA**

41 AFSTF DoAg White Paper https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155 *Pages with no content omitted.



INTRODUCTION

Alaska relies heavily on imported goods, especially agricultural products. This leaves Alaskans vulnerable to any disruptions in the supply chain and weather events impacting production in the Lower 48 and around the world. In addition, per capita annual spending of \$4805¹ in Alaska for food and beverages consumed at home points to \$3 billion of Alaskans' dollars each year supporting agriculture production and food processing outside our state. Presently, only a small portion of the food Alaskans purchase and consume is produced in the state².

According to the USDA NASS 2017 Census of Agriculture, Alaska's agriculture industry is indeed growing in both the number of farms and the market value of products sold, but it is still a relatively small industry that lacks infrastructure and support compared to that of other states. Alaska, at 365 million acres, has the potential for more farmable acres than any other state.³ Many of these acres are untouched, off-grid and/or off the road system and will require infrastructure and investment to get them into production. The creation of an Alaska Department of Agriculture would provide essential support necessary for expanding acreage for crops and livestock to build a stronger and more significant agriculture industry over time.

The cold climate and short growing season in Alaska are limiting but with the help of a Department of Agriculture opening up more acreage, we can increase the amount of locally grown food. In addition, increasing production will be possible due to the gradual lengthening of our growing season along with slightly rising temperatures. In the long-term, changes in soil development will also occur due to permafrost thaw which will result in more available acreage and agricultural yield.

With these changes and the guidance and resources of a Department of Agriculture, Alaskan farmers will be able to expand their production of crops such as soybeans, corn, cucumbers, and tomatoes, alongside more cold-hardy crops. The state's vulnerability to supply chain breakdowns could be decreased by a larger yield of fresh, locally grown, nutritious food paired with a more localized food system.

If we wish to truly prioritize local food production and processing, increase food security for Alaskans, and diversify and strengthen our economy via a more robust agriculture sector as well as mariculture and forestry sectors, establishing a department focused on these endeavors is a necessary and important next step.

This paper will make the case that a Department of Agriculture (DOAg), as opposed to a Division of Agriculture under the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), will better allow an increase in the private sector agriculture industry, the growth of food production, and the reduction of food dependence on the Lower 48 and other countries.

1 US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Consumer Spending by State, Category: food and beverages for off-premises consumption <https://www.bea.gov/data/consumer-spending/state>. July 2022 data adjusted for December 2023 using CPI Inflation Calculator at US Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

2 Estimates of 3-5% have been used in speeches and by the media but there is no known back-up data or source for these estimates.

3 Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry Land Ownership Map





WHY A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IS NEXT STEP TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY

REASON #1: CONSOLIDATION OF EFFICIENCIES TO BETTER SERVE INDUSTRY

Currently, the Division of Agriculture falls under the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, (DNR) but authorities that govern aspects of food and farming are spread over multiple departments, making the route to increase food production more difficult for Alaskans and the private sector to navigate. At present, in addition to the Division of Agriculture at DNR, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game all have pieces relating to food production and agriculture. Housing food and agriculture-related agencies under one department, a new Department of Agriculture (DOAg), will better coordinate and streamline government (more bang for the public's buck), eliminate duplicity of effort and any inadvertent, opposing efforts, and result in more efficient and appropriately designed services and increased access to those services by farmers, ranchers, and others in the food industry.

REASON #2: CONSISTENT CABINET-LEVEL AND LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

Although various DNR Commissioners, Governors, and the Alaska State Legislature have voiced support over the years for Alaska's food producers, government efforts in past decades to advance agriculture have been fleeting and impeded by bureaucrats' lack of reliance on input by those on the ground (food producers, farmers, ranchers) and by inadequate research, resources, and follow-through due to, very importantly, lack of consistent cabinet-level and legislative focus and prioritization. As a result, programs like the Delta Barley Project are seen as failures with the blame placed either on food producers' performance or on predisposed and inaccurate assumptions such as "agriculture can't ever be a viable industry in Alaska".

Due to the limited, short-term, and sporadic state prioritization placed on developing Alaska's agriculture industry, there has been unacceptably slow growth in local production and simultaneously unacceptably high growth in dependence on imported foods.

Future agriculture industry growth will occur, however, if we have a department assigned to and working with the industry, devoted to it day in and day out for the long term: a department with vision and clarity of purpose directed by the legislature and led by a commissioner at the governor's cabinet table. This structure will ensure services are tailored to Alaska's unique characteristics and mechanisms are in place to regularly incorporate recommendations from industry to grow agriculture and food production in Alaska.

Executive Branch

Currently, the Alaska Division of Agriculture is part of the DNR. The Commissioner is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor upon confirmation of the legislature. The Commissioner selects the Alaska Division of Agriculture Director from a list of two or more candidates submitted by the Board of Agriculture and Conservation.





Each Commissioner of each Department has a seat at the Governor’s cabinet table where they pitch and determine Alaska’s priorities and strategies to bring them to fruition. Creating a DOAg would give the DOAg Commissioner a seat at that table which would elevate agriculture and food security issues, consequently elevating potential policies that would remove barriers and grow the agriculture and food production industry.

Since agricultural issues are housed within DNR, they compete with other resources under DNR’s umbrella that are larger and provide significant revenue to the state, namely oil, gas, and mining resources. Although DNR Commissioners have occasionally brought farm-related issues to the cabinet table, their primary focus has been on those revenue-producing industries. A DOAg Commissioner would eliminate this competition between agriculture and oil and gas.

A DOAg Commissioner would be advantageous when it comes to funding priorities related to agriculture and food production. Department Commissioners participate more directly in the legislative budget process than the Division Director and staff. A Department Commissioner is more likely to secure funding for department priorities than a Director of a Division is for division priorities.

Legislative Branch

Each Department within the executive branch is associated with a specific legislative committee. Alaska’s agriculture and many food security issues are assigned to the Resources Committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate due to their oversight and jurisdiction of DNR, DEC, and DF&G⁴. However, the primary focus of each Department (with few exceptions) receives the most attention from the designated legislative committee.

As mentioned in the previous section, oil, gas, and mining resources provide substantial revenue to the State and are managed by DNR. Therefore, the Resources Committees spend a larger portion of their time and focus on those industries in a typical year, while agriculture and food security issues receive less attention and prioritization.

If Alaska formed a DOAg, the oversight of that department would be assigned to a specific committee’s jurisdiction; that committee, in turn, would be responsible to hold hearings on issues and bills relating to that department. This would increase the focus of the legislature and time spent addressing and resolving agriculture and food security issues.

In the legislative budgeting process, each department is assigned to a fiscal subcommittee of the House and Senate Finance Committees. Decisions regarding the budget for agriculture are made by the fiscal subcommittee assigned to the DNR. However, most subcommittee hearing time, attention and work are dedicated to the divisions within the DNR that pertain to the revenue-producing resources (oil, gas, and mining), leaving little focus on agriculture and food production. The establishment of a DOAg would likely result in a fiscal subcommittee dedicated to a budget for the DOAg, which in turn would result in a budget specific to the funding needs to meet the goals and achieve the priorities of the DOAg.

² Acronyms: DNR - Department of Natural Resources; DEC - Department of Environmental Conservation; DF&G - Department of Fish and Game.





REASON #3: UNTAPPED BUT DEFINITIVE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Approximately \$3 billion from Alaskans' pockets is spent on food purchased outside our state, strengthening economies elsewhere. The most recently available USDA Census of Agriculture data shows distinctions in trends between Alaskan and broader US agriculture. From 2007 - 2017, the number of Alaskan farms increased by 44.3% and total farmland decreased slightly by 3.6%. As the average farm size in Alaska has declined by 33.2%, this indicates the vast majority of these new farms are smaller operations. Of significance is the fact that over the same time period, the number of US farms decreased by 7.4% (in sharp contrast to Alaska's number which grew by 44.3%) and total farmland decreased slightly by 2.4% (similar to Alaska's decrease of 3.6%). Alaska needs expertise and added capacity to assist Alaska's new and existing farms, both the larger scale operations as well as these smaller acreage farms. A DOAg would build that capacity and provide that expertise to help grow and strengthen Alaska's agriculture industry and food systems; greater investment and new jobs in this sector would translate into a more diversified Alaska's economy⁵.

Unlike some sectors that rely on economic ups and downs, the availability of discretionary dollars, trends, needs, wants - in other words - the demand for their products or services by segments of the total sum of consumers at particular points in time, the agriculture industry has a distinct advantage. *All* consumers need agricultural products *every* day their *entire* lives. A department supporting an industry that has a sure market year in and year out would have a solid foundation of steady demand.

In Alaska

A DOAg supporting the growth of agriculture and food production across all areas of the State, both on the road and ferry systems and in remote regions, would extend to associated industries. A DOAg, hand-in-hand with more ag production, would give reason and justification for the expansion and improvement of infrastructure, whether for transport, energy, processing and manufacturing, construction, marketing or finance. Not only would food security in Alaska increase, but in-state job opportunities, direct and indirect, would increase. Households would experience new income resulting in a better standard of living and fewer Alaskans who are under the poverty level relying on government subsidies.

Beyond Alaska

A DOAg would not only expand food security and locally grown food consumption in Alaska but it would also create opportunities for domestic and international exports that would benefit Alaskans. With an established transportation network, farmers, ranchers, and food producers could connect with the demand for their goods beyond Alaska, whether in the United States or in other countries. Non-Alaskan dollars used to purchase Alaska-produced products (in addition to in-state purchases) would further bolster Alaska's economy and diversify state revenue. The scaling up of production by a farmer or rancher to meet the market needs of Alaskans and additional populations outside Alaska will mean more investment within our state boundaries, even more jobs in our state, and better economic opportunities for more Alaskan households. Along with providing programs and resources to expand production, a DOAg could build connections and assist in developing markets beyond Alaska's borders. It is important to note that it is not existing dollars circulating in a state but new dollars coming into a state that grow and strengthen its economy.

⁵ Alaska also has the opportunity to bring in new money with growth in the floriculture industry; there is worldwide interest in Alaska grown peonies due to their seasonality pattern that differs from other locales.





REASON #4: HEALTH AND VITALITY OF ALASKA COMMUNITIES

Not only will communities experience economic health and vitality due to a DOAg's focus on building a strong agriculture industry, but they will also experience improved health outcomes with fresher foods. The shorter the duration from harvest to table, the higher the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables⁶. The more nutritious food a person eats, the healthier that person is. These concepts translate to an important point that should not be overlooked: the more locally grown food Alaskans consume, the healthier Alaska's population will be. The establishment of a DOAg will help ensure more locally grown food for Alaskans by reducing the transport time of the foods consumed while increasing their nutritional value.

Lower birth weights and rates⁷, improved fitness, less heart disease and diabetes, improved mental health, and lower health care costs⁸ are some direct benefits Alaskans could reap with improved access to fresh, local foods. A myriad of positive indirect outcomes are also related to the consumption of more locally grown foods, such as improved student learning, better job performance, and increased safety alertness.⁹

While access issues to local foods may always persist to some degree, a DOAg would help provide solutions to decrease access issues, whether due to household income levels, lack of transportation infrastructure, or purchasing hurdles by institutions, wholesalers, or retailers.

REASON #5: PROVEN SUCCESS IN OTHER STATES

Each of the fifty states has an entity to oversee and support the agriculture industry. The differences between the entities relate to composition, powers, and duties, while the functions among the various states are similar (Appendix A).

Alaska's size and agricultural funding are very lopsided. Alaska's land mass is 62 times larger than Massachusetts and 425 times larger than Rhode Island, and our total agricultural acres are 13 times and 93 times larger than these small states, respectively. However, Alaska's state budget for agriculture is just \$6.9 million for FY2024. This is comparable to the budget of the Department of Agriculture in

6 Barrett, D, *Maximizing the Nutritional Value of Fruits & Vegetables*. University of California Davis

7 Azevedo, F; Morais, N; Silva, D; Candido, A; Morais, D; Priore, S; Franceschini, S (2023) *Food Insecurity and its Socioeconomic and Health Determinants in Pregnant Women and Mothers of Children Under 2 Years of Age, During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*, *Frontiers Public Health*

8 12 Health And Nutritional Benefits of Eating Fresh Food. *The .fit Way*, July, 11, 2022

9 USDA Dietary Guidelines for America, https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf

Healthy People 2030 – Nutrition and Healthy Eating, <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/nutrition-and-healthy-eating>

Benefits of Healthy Eating, <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/resources-publications/benefits-of-healthy-eating.html>

Helping Young Kids Thrive, <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/ECE-infographic.pdf>

Healthy Eating, <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/about-nutrition/pdfs/Nutrition-Fact-Sheet-H.pdf>

About Nutrition, <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/about-nutrition/index.html>

Nutrition & Injury, <https://medicine.uiowa.edu/orthopedics/content/iowa-orthopedics-researchers-study-link-between-nutrition-and-injury-recovery>





Massachusetts with a budget of \$6.7 million for FY2023 and that of the Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment in Rhode Island with a budget of \$5.3M for FY2023¹⁰.

It is even more illuminating to note how the funding for each of the entities that support the agriculture-related sector in each of these three states compares by dollars per farmland acre. Alaska spends roughly \$8.16 per farmland acre while Massachusetts spends \$13.63 and Rhode Island spends \$93.07. And while Massachusetts and Rhode Island both face declining farmland acreage (and farmer counts), Alaska is on a growth trajectory¹¹. Failing to sufficiently fund our investment needs for the present and guide the future expansion of the state's agricultural industry makes it even more difficult to shorten food supply chains and strengthen our state's independence..

Turning to consider population versus budgets, by comparison, South Dakota has a population close to Alaska with a Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources encompassing Agriculture and Environmental Services, Resources Conservation and Forestry, Office of Water, Financial and Technical Assistance, and the State Fair. South Dakota's Department of Agriculture has a budget of \$24.4M (FY 23), nearly 4x higher than Alaska's Division of Agriculture¹².

North Dakota also has a population similar to Alaska. North Dakota's Department of Agriculture has a budget of roughly \$26.6 (FY2024); more than 4x's Alaska's budget for its Division of Agriculture. North Dakota's department consists of Administrative Services, Animal Health, Business, Marketing and Information, Grain and Livestock Licensing, Livestock Industries, Pesticide and Fertilizer, and Plant Industries¹³.

Alabama's Department of Agriculture consists of 18 divisions including an Executive Division, Agriculture Compliance, Animal Industries, and Emergency Programs, among others, and has a FY2024 budget of \$17M (2.5 times that of Alaska's) with 300 employees. The agriculture sector percentage of GDP is 1.8% (more than 3 times that of Alaska's)¹⁴.

Currently, Alaska's Division of Agriculture under the Department of Natural Resources oversees Division Support Services, Agriculture Inspection and Market Services, and Plant Production and Environmental Services. The division, however, compared to departments of agriculture in these other states (whether by land mass, farm acreage, or population) does not have the capacity or state focus to adequately support and grow the agriculture industry in Alaska. The creation of a department structured as, or similarly to, the proposal herein would provide the needed capacity and focus to achieve these goals.

¹⁰ See Appendix A.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ *Ibid*





CONCLUSION AND MESSAGE FROM AFSTF CHAIR

The creation of a Department of Agriculture would not only centralize processes to allow for greater efficiencies, but it would also improve coordination and access to services for industry stakeholders. A dedicated department would ensure that agricultural, mariculture and forestry issues receive consistent and focused attention within the legislature and at the cabinet-level of the executive branch which would result in more effective policymaking, the building of necessary transportation infrastructure, and the growth of these industries. These improvements in turn would translate to greater economic diversification, a stronger economy, and more jobs in our state, as well as healthier communities across Alaska. Last but not least, and of key importance to Alaskans, the establishment of a Department of Agriculture will lead to increased food security, access to fresher and more nutritious locally grown options, and less vulnerability to external supply chain disruptions.

This initiative is poised to address long-standing barriers to opportunities and the growth of the agricultural sector as well as of the forestry and mariculture sectors. The Alaska Food Strategy Task Force recommends the legislature, the executive branch, stakeholders, and other members of the public first engage in a robust conversation about the reasons, advantages, and benefits of standing up a Department of Agriculture followed by a deliberative planning period to map out its specific aspects. With these two steps complete, we recommend action steps be taken to launch the new and necessary department without delay. The 36-member Alaska Food Strategy Task Force hopes this paper serves as a guide in the process; please know that we stand ready to assist.

Although not noted elsewhere in this publication, in closing and as Chair, I believe it is significant and important for you to know that establishing a Department of Agriculture was ranked the number one recommendation by the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force out of our eighteen priorities in our 2023 report. We understand the creation of a Department of Agriculture is pivotal to progress on all the other recommendations and imperative if we are to truly address food security in our great state.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelley Hughes".

Senator Shelley Hughes
Chair, Alaska Food Strategy Task Force

February 14, 2024





THE HOW-TO'S: ESTABLISHING AN ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

There are two options for Alaska to form a Department of Agriculture.

OPTION #1: By Executive Order Issued by Governor

According to the Alaska Constitution Article III, Section 23, the governor has the authority to reorganize departments:

The governor may make changes in the organization of the executive branch or in the assignment of functions among its units which he considers necessary for efficient administration. Where these changes require the force of law, they shall be set forth in executive orders. The legislature shall have sixty days of a regular session, or a full session if of shorter duration, to disapprove these executive orders. Unless disapproved by resolution concurred in by a majority of the members in joint session, these orders become effective at a date thereafter to be designated by the governor.

This method was utilized most recently on July 1, 2022, when the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services was officially bifurcated into the Department of Health and the Department of Family and Community Services, based on Executive Order 121.

Based on the constitutional provision, the governor could choose to issue an executive order to establish a Department of Agriculture, and if a majority of the legislature did not disapprove of this action via resolution in a joint session in the prescribed sixty days or less, the establishment of the DOAg would occur.

OPTION #2: By Bill Passed by Legislature

Also, according to the Alaska Constitution, a second method to establish a new Department of Agriculture is provided in Article III, Section 22:

All executive and administrative offices, departments, and agencies of the state government and their respective functions, powers, and duties shall be allocated by law among and within not more than twenty principal departments, so as to group them as far as practicable according to major purposes. Regulatory, quasi-judicial, and temporary agencies may be established by law and need not be allocated within a principal department.

This section grants authority for the legislature to allocate by law no more than twenty principal departments (there are currently fifteen). AS 44.17.005 codifies the departments with the various chapters detailing the structure, power, and duties of each. A bill amending this statute to add a Department of Agriculture could be filed by a legislator or a committee, and if the bill were passed by both the House and the Senate and signed by the governor, the new department would be established.





PROPOSED STRUCTURE

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The remainder of this document recommends a structure for a new Alaska Department of Agriculture. A majority of the DOAg will incorporate existing divisions and offices from the current Division of Agriculture and other divisions within DNR, DEC, and DF&G¹. Along with organizational structure, staffing, existing building space, and funding, the Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV) will need access to a laboratory.

1. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

With the creation of a new Department of Agriculture, this division is necessary to manage the administration of the department to ensure its constitutional and statutory authorities are carried out for the benefit of Alaskans.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

Administration and support for the Alaska Department of Agriculture would include the Office of the Commissioner and the Division of Administrative Services. Both entities would be structured similarly to their counterparts in other departments.

The Office of the Commissioner would have the following staff:

- Commissioner
- Deputy Commissioner
- Executive Secretary III
- Special Assistant to the Commissioner II

The Division of Administrative Services would have

the following staff:

- Accounting Tech I
- Accounting Tech II x 2
- Accounting Tech III
- Accountant IV
- Administrative Assistant II
- Budget Analyst III
- Division Director
- Micro/Network Spec I
- Micro/Network Spec II
- Micro/Network Tech II
- Procurement Specialist III
- Supply Technician II
- Administrative Assistant

Funding Needs and Sources:

According to a 2011 fiscal note, the Office of the Commissioner is estimated to have a budget of \$630,000 and the Division of Administrative Services is estimated at \$1,161,700. The funding source for positions is expected to be state general funds but availability of federal funds should be explored annually.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Statutes will need to be written creating a Department of Agriculture and granting necessary authorities to the Department of Agriculture Commissioner. Most of the statutory authorities will be moved from

¹ Acronyms: DNR - Department of Natural Resources; DEC - Department of Environmental Conservation; DF&G - Department of Fish and Game.





other departments. Coordination and communication with Tribal Organizations is necessary within the DOAg. A position within the Administration office will act as Tribal Liaison to ensure strong coordination and communication.

2. ANIMAL INDUSTRY

The consolidation of services related to the animal industry not only ensures a more cohesive and efficient approach but also enhances the overall effectiveness of veterinary support for the agricultural sector. By bringing together these complementary functions, we can optimize resource allocations, streamline processes, and foster stronger collaboration, thereby maximizing the positive impact on livestock health and welfare.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

It is recommended that the Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV) authority, staff, and responsibilities be transferred from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to the DOAg. The state veterinarians will need access to a laboratory which could be accomplished via a memorandum of understanding for access to the DEC environmental health laboratory.

OSV Staffing :

- 2 State Veterinarians
- Environmental Health Officers

It is also recommended to add 1–2 staff for Animal Feed and Pet Food inspection and testing capabilities. Animal feed and pet food inspectors would sample feeds produced and manufactured in-state as well as all imported animal feeds and pet food to confirm content is accurate with labeled products. The inspectors would work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for costs to be covered by the USDA to eliminate or minimize fees paid by farmers, ranchers, and other livestock producers.

Funding Needs and Sources:

Funds would be transferred from the DEC to DOAg for the Office of the State Veterinarian.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Move existing statutes and regulations from DEC to DOAg with consideration for veterinarian access to laboratory such as suggested above.

3. BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

The Board of Agriculture situated within the Department of Agriculture represents a strategic move toward reinforcing cooperation and synergy among key stakeholders in the agricultural sector. It will foster enhanced collaboration, streamline operations, and promote the development of a robust agricultural sector. This integration will facilitate knowledge sharing, resource optimization, and the collective pursuit of agricultural excellence.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

The board would maintain its current structure, although it is suggested that 1 administrative assistant





position be added for a total of 2 administrative assistants. Increased activity in the agriculture sector will be paired with an increased workload on behalf of the board.

Funding Needs and Sources:

An additional \$125,000 would be required to cover the salary/benefits (\$105,000) and travel (\$20,000) for the additional administrative assistant position. Funds could come from the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF) or the general fund. The availability of federal funds for this purpose should be explored annually.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Move existing statutes and regulations from DNR to the DOAg. Review and amend current ARLF statutes and regulations to expand eligibility and access to capital for agricultural producers.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Environmental Services is currently housed within DNR/Division of Agriculture. Housing these activities within the Department of Agriculture would maintain continuity in the important relationship between agriculture and these existing services. Environmental Services would also add funding and staff to support the Soil & Water Conservation Districts, moving this responsibility from DNR to DOAg and expanding their ability to assist farmers and ranchers.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

Director of Environmental Services

Current staffing and structure for:

- Invasive Plants
- Agricultural Pests
- Native Plant Commercialization, Revegetation & Reclamation - multiple staff
- Additional support staff for Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Funding Needs and Sources:

Current funding levels in the Division of Agriculture, with the addition of staff/programs for Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Move statutes and regulations from DNR to DOAg.

5. FORESTRY

Forestry is paired with agriculture in many other states under their departments of agriculture; the forestry industry also has the same pairing federally: it falls under the US Department of Agriculture. This coupling has proven to be appropriate and reasonable and for good reason, as the similarities between the forestry industry and farming industry are multiple (for example, the cultivation of land, management of acreage, weather impacts, renewable crops, and transportation infrastructure challenges). Certain





inspections related to forestry are already under the Division of Agriculture. The placement of forestry with agriculture under the DOAg would allow streamlined services due to the overlapping needs and goals of the two industries.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

Similar to the current structure, below are the recommended staff:

- Accountant III
- Administrative Officer I
- Administrative Assistant II
- Administrative OPS Manager I
- Architect I
- Division Director - Px
- Division Operations Manager
- Engineer
- Equipment Operator
- Journey II
- Forester I
- Forester II
- Forester III
- Forester IV
- Forester V
- GIS Analyst II
- GIS Analyst III
- Natural Resource Manager I
- Natural Resource Specialist V
- Natural Resource Technician II
- Natural Resource Technician III
- Office Assistant II

Funding Needs and Sources:

\$9.5 million is recommended to fund staffing needs and services.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Authorities that are currently in DNR will be moved to the DOAg.

6. INSPECTIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Moving dairy and meat inspections currently under DEC to a new DOAg not only ensures a more cohesive and efficient approach but also enhances the overall effectiveness of inspection and certification services and the ease of access to these services by those in the private sector animal production industry. By consolidating inspection and certification services in one department and bringing these complementary functions together, we can optimize resource allocation, streamline processes, and foster stronger collaboration, maximizing the positive impact on the food and farming industry.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

- Director of Inspections
- Phytosanitary x 2
- GHP/GAP Audits x2
- Dairy Inspections (move from DEC)
- FSMA (move from DEC)
- Meat Inspections (move from DEC)
- Certified Seed Potato x 1
- Organic Certification x 1
- Fertilizer Inspector x 1
- Animal Feed & Pet Food Inspector x 2*

Animal feed and pet food inspectors would sample feeds produced and manufactured in-state as well as all imported animal feeds and pet food to confirm content is accurate with labeled products.

**Same new positions mentioned under "Animal Industry" section on page 12.*



Funding Needs and Sources:

Current inspection and certification funds in the Division of Agriculture plus the meat and dairy inspection funds now directed to DEC would support this part of the new DOAg. Additional general funds would be necessary for the Fertilizer Inspector, but the availability of federal funds or funds derived from fee for service should be explored annually for this and other positions.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Statutory authority will need to be moved from DNR to DOAg for programs within the current Division of Agriculture and from DEC for programs currently housed there. Authority to create the animal feed and pet food inspection and testing service and the fertilizer inspection and testing service will need to be granted by statute.

7. MARICULTURE

Mariculture is included with agriculture in many states as well as at the federal level as it is closely aligned to active management of raising and tending to animals and crops. Placing mariculture/aquaculture under a Department of Agriculture ensures comprehensive management, leverages existing expertise and resources, promotes coordination with other agricultural sectors, facilitates policy development and regulation, enhances market access and promotion, supports research and development, and provides education and outreach opportunities. These benefits will contribute to sustainable development, responsible practices, and economic success of the mariculture industry.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

- Director of Mariculture
- 1 manager
- 2 program staff
- 1 permitting

Funding Needs and Sources:

\$638,754.00 general funds plus funds for a director-level position (current staffing is 4 positions) and \$1 million in program funds is recommended for consideration.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Transfer statutory authority from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to the new DOAg.

8. AGRICULTURE, MARICULTURE AND FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT

The Alaska Grown Program, export programs, various grants, and land sales and management are currently under the Division of Agriculture and would move to the new DOAg. To significantly impact the growth and development of not only agriculture but also mariculture and forestry production, additional staff and funding would be necessary. Increasing capacity will bolster programs to build markets, improve outreach, increase access to grants, and better manage lands devoted to these endeavors.

The establishment of an Alaska Grown Marketing Institute (AGMI) is recommended as a key strategy to advance the development of the three industries supported by the new DOAg, although the staffing, funding, and policy for this endeavor is not included in the sections below. Similar to the Alaska Seafood





Marketing Institute, the AGMI, if established, would be tasked to market Alaska grown products inside and outside the state to include food items as well as forestry, mariculture and non-edible agricultural crops such as floral and hemp products.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

Structured as a Division of Agriculture, Mariculture, and Forestry Development that includes marketing, grants, export, and lands sections.

- Agriculture Development Director - range 20
- Grants Team: responsible for seeking/managing/dispersing federal grants. Managing state grant programs (forgivable loans, cooperative/creative grant agreements, etc.).
 - 1 grants lead - range 18
 - 2 grants specialists (1 federal grant specialist, 1 state grant specialist) - range 16
 - 1 grants intern
- Marketing Team: responsible for market development programs and outreach.
- Maintaining statewide farmer/rancher database. Educational programs for farmers/ranchers. Assisting industry start-up (ie. peonies). Promoting Alaska Grown purchasing. Maintaining relationship with the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association and other export opportunities.
 - 1 marketing lead - range 18
 - 2 marketing employees (1 publication specialist, 1 outreach specialist) - range 16
 - 1 marketing intern
 - 1 export team - range 18
- Lands Team
 - Manager I
 - Natural Resource Specialist III
 - Natural Resource Specialist I/II
 - Natural Resource Tech II/III (0.5 time position)

Funding Needs and Sources:

\$1 million in general funds for programs, outreach, and publications, including cooperative/creative agreement grants. \$3 million general funds for forgivable loans. Federal funds for grants section. Current funding level for Lands with the addition of a half-time position for Natural Resource Tech II/III and transfer of funds from DNR/Division of Mining, Land, and Water to new DOAg for Natural Resource Specialist I/II. Availability of federal funds for operations and forgivable loan program to be explored annually. If an AGMI is established, state funding would cover full costs initially with the gradual replacement of state funds by fees collected from industry entities benefiting from statewide, nationwide, and worldwide marketing.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Authorities transferred from DNR to the new DOAg.



9. PLANT PRODUCTION

The Plant Materials Center (PMC) is currently housed in the DNR/Division of Agriculture and would be moved under the new DOAg. Pesticides and herbicide testing currently under DEC is used extensively in agriculture. By bringing together these complementary functions under the new DOAg, we can optimize resource allocation, streamline processes, and foster stronger collaboration, thereby maximizing the positive impact on plant production.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

- Director of Plant Production
- Current PMC staffing and structure
- 4 Pesticide program staff

Funding Needs and Sources:

Current DNR/Division of Agriculture/Plant Material Center funds plus DEC pesticide and herbicide program funding would be transferred to the new DOAg.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Plant Material Center statutes and regulations would need to be moved from DNR, and the pesticide/herbicide authorities would need to be moved from DEC to the new DOAg. Additional funds for floriculture staff.

10. ALASKA FFA ASSOCIATION

By aligning Alaska Future Farmers of America (FFA) under a unified Department of Agriculture, we can foster enhanced collaboration, streamline operations, and promote the development of a robust agricultural sector. This integration will facilitate knowledge sharing, resource optimization, and the collective pursuit of agricultural excellence. The integration of FFA within the Department of Agriculture represents a strategic move towards reinforcing cooperation and synergy among key stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

Structure and Staffing Needs:

Similar structure as current, but make temporary assistant full-time, permanent.

- Project Coordinator
- Project Assistant

Funding Needs and Sources:

Transfer current funds at DNR/Division of Agriculture to the new DOAg for this purpose and appropriate additional funds for salary/benefits for project assistant: \$105,000 plus \$20,000 travel.

Policy and Legislative Needs:

Transfer existing authorities from DNR to the new DOAg.



Appendix A

Table A: Agriculture: State Departments and Gross Domestic Product						
State	Name	No. of Areas/ Divisions	Budget (millions)	Workforce	Agriculture Related GDP, 2022 (millions)	Sector as % of total GDP
South Dakota	Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	5	\$24.4 (FY 23)	223	\$6,824.7	10.1
Nebraska	Department of Agriculture	3	\$22.2 (FY 25)	125	\$13,690.1	8.5
North Dakota	Department of Agriculture	7	\$79.9 (FY 23-25)	80	\$5,800.7	7.9
Wisconsin	Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection	6	\$129.6 (FY 24)	630	\$9,661.3	2.4
Alabama	Department of Agriculture and Industries	18	\$17.0 (FY 24)	300	\$5,117.1	1.8
Vermont	Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets	5	\$51.8 (FY 24)	147	\$643.6	1.6
Illinois	Department of Agriculture	5	\$204.0 (FY 24)	300	\$13,708.5	1.3
Maine	Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources - Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry	6	\$249.7 (FY 23)	775	\$980.8	1.2
Oklahoma	Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry	10	\$45.5 (FY 23)	152	\$2,886.3	1.2
South Carolina	Department of Agriculture	3	\$32.7 (FY 24)	132	\$2,207.0	0.75
Alaska	Division of Agriculture - Dept. of Natural Resources	3	\$6.9 (FY 24)	24	\$353.4	0.56
Tennessee	Department of Agriculture	4	\$188.3 (FY 24)	66	\$2,151.6	0.45
Virginia	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	4	\$85.8 (FY 24)	115	\$2,460.6	0.38
Rhode Island	Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment - Dept. of Environmental Management	6	\$5.3 (FY 23)	19	\$128.8	0.18
Massachusetts	Department of Agricultural Resources - Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	4	\$6.7 (FY 23)	105	\$1,019.6	0.15

Notes: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting. Workforce is based on directory counts or self-reporting and may be outdated, or exclude vacancies, part-time and seasonal employees. Divisions do not include those dedicated to the commissioner or secretary.

Source: GDP by State, Annual 2022, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, <https://apps.bea.gov/regional/histdata/releases/0323gdpstate/index.cfm>.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities	
South Dakota	<u>Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources</u>	<u>Organizational Chart</u>
The department secretary is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, with the consent of the senate.		
<u>Agriculture and Environmental Services</u>	Livestock services; inspection compliance and remediation; air quality; minerals, mining and superfund; waste management; and local food purchase assistance.	
<u>Resource Conservation and Forestry</u>	Conservation; forestry; watershed protection; specialty crop block grant; plant industry; and apiary.	
<u>Office of Water</u>	Drinking water; water quality; water rights; and operator certification.	
<u>Financial and Technical Assistance</u>	Agricultural mediation; checkoff remittance; environmental funding; and geological survey.	
<u>State Fair</u>	State fair, state fairgrounds, and the DEX.	

Nebraska	<u>Department of Agriculture</u>
The department director is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, upon confirmation by the senate. The Animal and Plant Health Protection and Food Safety and Consumer Protection sections have focus area administrators.	
<u>Ag Promotion and Development</u>	Livestock; bulk commodities; value-added foods and meats; and diversified agriculture.
<u>Animal and Plant Health Protection</u>	Animal imports; veterinarian resources; Livestock Emergency Disease Response System (LEDRS); Animal Disease Traceability (ADT); animal diseases; entomology; pesticide; fertilizer; seed; hemp; and noxious weed.
<u>Food Safety and Consumer Protection</u>	Dairy, foods, and weights and measures.

North Dakota	<u>Department of Agriculture</u>
A department commissioner is elected. Each of the seven divisions has a director.	
<u>Administrative Services</u>	Consists of fiscal management, policy development, emergency management, and human resources. The division also administers the Pipeline Reclamation and Restoration Oversight Program, Wind Energy Reclamation and Restoration Oversight Program, and the Royalty Oversight Program.
<u>Animal Health</u>	Protects the health of domestic animals and non-traditional livestock, and administers all rules and orders of the State Board of Animal Health.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
North Dakota (continued)	Department of Agriculture
Business, Marketing & Information	Monitors and analyzes federal and state regulatory activities that affect North Dakota agriculture producers and consumers, and maintains relationships with federal, state, local and foreign governments to address agricultural issues.
Grain & Livestock Licensing	Age and source verification; feed program; grain licensing; livestock licensing; livestock pollution prevention program; and pet food program.
Livestock Industries	Dairy and poultry, and, meat and poultry inspection.
Pesticide & Fertilizer	Regulates pesticides, fertilizers and anhydrous ammonia to protect human health and the environment.
Plant Industries	Oversees noxious weeds, plant protection, apiary, waterbank, and industrial hemp programs.
Wisconsin	Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Organizational Chart	
The secretary of the department is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, upon confirmation by the Senate. Each of the six divisions has an administrator and individual bureaus.	
Agricultural Resource Management	Pesticides; groundwater and surface water protection; agrichemical spills and cleanup; animal feed; fertilizer and related products; land and water resource management; livestock facility siting; farmland preservation; drainage districts; plant protection; ag and environmental impact assessments; and weather modification controls.
Animal Health	Monitors disease threats; animal imports and movement; animal identification; disease testing, reporting and certification; disease vaccination; disease investigations; emergency disease response; quarantine and condemnation; disease indemnities; licensing and registration; animal welfare and rabies control; livestock brands; and compliance monitoring enforcement.
Food and Recreational Safety	Milk and dairy products; food processing and distribution; retail food establishments; meat and poultry inspection; food emergencies; food advertising and labeling; food monitoring and hazard control; laboratory certification; food grading; lodging establishments; pools and water attractions; campgrounds and recreational / educational camps; complaints and investigations; enforcement; and coordination.
Agricultural Development	Farm Center; Agriculture and Food Center; International Agribusiness Center; and communications, outreach, operations.
Trade and Consumer Protection	Unfair and deceptive business practices; identity theft and privacy protection; consumer product safety; weights and measures; hazardous liquid storage tanks and motor fuel quality; environmental regulation of consumer products; agricultural producer security; and commodity grading.
Management Services	Finance, Information technology services, Administration, and Laboratory services.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Alabama	Department of Agriculture and Industries
A department commissioner is elected.	
Executive Division	Legal; Accounting; Personnel; General Services; Information Technology; News; Farmers Bulletin; Alternative Fuels; International Trade; and various grant and permitting programs.
Agriculture Compliance	Responsible for stockyards and brands registration and licensing/permitting of bonded livestock markets, livestock dealers, issuing livestock hauler trailer tags and livestock brands.
Animal Industries	Responsible for the administration of programs to prevent, eradicate, and control diseases among livestock and poultry with support from the Alabama Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory System to ensure quality of commercial meats.
Audits and Reports	Responsible for registering and licensing/permitting companies that manufacture or distribute commercial feed, commercial fertilizer, and agricultural liming materials; wheat & grain dealers; soybean dealers; and cooperative marketing associations.
Emergency Programs	Responsible for reducing the vulnerability to and the impact from disaster, disease, or terrorist attack on agriculture.
Farmers Market Authority	Established to assist in the marketing of agricultural products by providing information, leadership, and modern facilities.
Food Safety	Wholesale and retail food and milk establishment permitting and inspections.
Federal State Inspection Svcs.	Provides shipping point inspection services.
Gins and Warehouses	Issues permits and conducts audits for public warehouses, grain dealers, cotton merchants and cotton gins.
Legal	Represents the commissioner and ADAL in any legal matters, and regulatory, legislative affairs, economic development, and alternative energy functions; and oversees the Alabama Agricultural Mediation Program (AAMP).
Livestock Market News	Complies and disseminates information that aids in the sale and purchase of agricultural products.
Mediation Program	USDA-state program that offers mediation services to farmers, creditors, and USDA Agencies including the inspection and enforcement of laws pertaining to feed, seed, fertilizer and agricultural lime; conducts feed manufacturing inspections.
Pesticide Management	Regulates individuals or companies that sell, use, or supervise the use of restricted use pesticides, engage in the commercial application of pesticides, and structural pest control or horticultural activities.
Petroleum Commodities	Focuses on specific commodity testing to ensure safety and compliance for both producers and consumers.
Plant Protection	Protects native and commercially grown plants, and the apairy industry, from harmful pests and diseases.
Seed Laboratory	Inspects seed samples from retail and wholesale establishments for the presence of weeds, inert material, and other quality factors. Inspects seeds that are grown by farmers to enforce "Truth in Labeling."
Veterinary Diagnostic Labs	Provides diagnostic services for livestock and poultry producers, veterinarians, animal owners, and apairy owners.
Weights and Measures	Inspects and regulates weighing and measuring devices used in agricultural commerce.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Vermont	
Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets	
An agency secretary is appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. Each of the five divisions has a director.	
Water Quality	Responsible for administering the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, including farm water quality inspections and enforcement; education and outreach to the agricultural community about regulations and requirements; and technical and financial assistance to achieve state water quality goals.
Agriculture Development	Cultivates agriculture and food system through grantmaking, marketing, strategic collaboration, and connecting businesses and communities to vital resources.
Public Health and Agricultural Resource Management	Works to protect human, animal, and plant health, the environment, and consumers by providing fair regulatory programs, exceptional customer service, and in-depth technical assistance in a wide variety of agricultural topics.
Agricultural and Environmental Laboratory	Mastitis diagnostic and bulk milk quality; milk testing laboratory evaluation and licensing; pet food product guarantee analysis; water bacteriology; environmental and consumer protection; dairy products; animal health; and chemistry.
Food Safety	Works to protect the health and welfare of people and their livestock. Daily efforts revolve around advancing a safe and secure food supply within a marketplace that provides fair and equal access to consumers and processors while enhancing the working landscape, rural character and local economies.
Illinois	
Department of Agriculture	
The governor appoints a Director of Agriculture with consent of the senate. Any nomination not acted upon within sixty session days is deemed approved.	
Consumer Services	Egg Inspection; Meat & Poultry Inspection; Weights and Measurements Certification; and Motor Fuel Quality Testing.
Marketing and Promotion	Agricultural Statistics, Market News, and Marketing; State and County Fair Promotion; and Horse Racing Administration.
Animal Industries	Animal Health and Welfare; and Bees and Apiaries.
Natural Resources	Environmental Programs, and Land and Water Resources.
Agricultural Industry Regulation	Agricultural Products Inspection; Grain Dealer and Warehouse Inspection and Licensure; Fertilizer Program; and Medical Cannabis Pilot Program.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Maine	Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources - within Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
A department commissioner, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, appoints a bureau director. The commissioner shall give preference to an existing director.	
Agricultural Resource Development	Responsible for developing and implementing programs and policies to ensure that agricultural businesses remain profitable and sustainable. Programs focus on business development, market promotion, education and regulation to assure that agricultural practices are economically and environmentally sound.
Animal and Plant Health	Animal health; animal welfare; Help Fix ME; apiary; arborist; ginseng; horticulture; hemp; seed potato certification; agricultural compliance; compost; nutrient management program; Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS); Integrated Pest Management (IPM); and Board of Pesticides Control (BPC).
Harness Racing Commission	Provides oversight and support of the harness racing industry with a goal of promoting fairness and integrity of the sport.
Maine Milk Commission	A five-member consumer board to oversee the milk industry and support the viability of farms and the milk industry.
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Response	Dedicated to assisting farms impacted by PFAS contamination.
Quality Assurance and Regulations	Provides marketing assistance and consumer protection for agriculture, industry, and citizens.

Oklahoma	Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
The department is governed by the State Board of Agriculture, which is comprised of five members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. A member, designated by the governor, serves as president of the board and Commissioner of Agriculture. Eight directors oversee specific divisions.	
Agricultural Environmental Management	Develops, coordinates and oversees environmental policies and programs including licensing, registration and inspection of poultry, beef and swine growing and feeding facilities.
Animal Industry/State Veterinarian	Responsible for protecting livestock from disease and assisting in livestock productivity; enforces restrictions to ensure the health of animals industries and the public; and administers rules and orders of the State Board of Agriculture.
Agricultural Investigative Services Unit	Investigates crime victimizing agriculture. Special Agents specialize in crimes of livestock theft, agriculture equipment theft, timber theft and wild land fire arson along with other criminal offenses.
Consumer Protection	Enforces quality standards for agricultural products, regulates pesticide use, and provides information and technical assistance to consumers.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Oklahoma (continued)	Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
Forestry Services	Provides technical assistance to individuals and communities to increase active conservation management, and responsible for wildland fire detection, suppression, prevention, and investigation.
Food Safety	Enforces federal and state laws and rules relating to the production of food and food products derived from animals.
Laboratory	Tests samples to assure the quality of agricultural products sold, to protect the environment, to diagnose animal diseases and to assure the correctness of weights and measures.
Market Development	Works to increase agricultural literacy, increase consumer awareness of agriculture products, stimulate rural economic development and develop opportunities for producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers of products in domestic and international markets.
Statistical Services	Provides timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture; one of 46 Field Offices of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
Wildlife Services	Helps citizens, organizations, industries, and government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, other property, and natural resources, and to safeguard human health and safety; part of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
South Carolina	Department of Agriculture
A commissioner is elected. Each division has an assistant commissioner.	
Agency Operations	Consists of the Office of the Commissioner; Administration; Human Resources; Information Technology; State Farmers Markets; and Grants Administration.
Consumer Protection	Sections overseen include Produce Safety, Laboratory Services, Consumer Services (Metrology), Feed Safety & Compliance, Food Safety & Compliance, Federal-State Inspection Services, and the Hemp Farming Program.
External Affairs and Economic Development	Promotes and advocates for the growth of existing and new agribusiness opportunities throughout the state.

State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Alaska	Division of Agriculture - within Department of Natural Resources
A division director is selected by the commissioner of DNR from a list of two or more candidates submitted by the Board of Agriculture and Conservation, the members of which are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. The director administers the board and is responsible for the daily operations of the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF).	
Division Support Services	Administration functions; Board of Agriculture and Conservation; and Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund.
Agriculture Inspection and Market Services	Inspection and certification; Market Services Section; Agricultural Land Program; grant administration and management; and Invasive Plant and Pest Detection Program.
Plant Production and Environmental Services (Plant Materials Center)	Plant Production Services; Revegetation and Erosion Control Program; industrial hemp program; and Invasive Plant and Pest Management Program.

Tennessee	Department of Agriculture
A department commissioner, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, supervises, directs, and controls seven assistant commissioners.	
Administration and Grants	Provides budgetary, legal, human resources and communications support to achieve agency goals and objectives in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
Forestry	Provides professional, timely, up-to-date, science-based technical and financial assistance to family forest landowners, communities, non-government organizations, forest industry, and others with an interest in the conservation of forests.
Consumer and Industry Services	Monitors a diverse range of materials, products, and services to ensure quality, consumer protection, public safety, and a fair marketplace.
Business Development	Works with farmers, foresters, and agribusinesses to build rural economies and increase operation income.

Virginia	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Organizational Chart
A department commissioner is appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the general assembly. Each division has a director.		
Animal and Food Industry Services	Dairy and Foods; Laboratory Services; Meat and Poultry Services; and Veterinary Services.	
Commodity Services	Fruit and Vegetable; Grain; Livestock; Peanut; and Poultry and Egg.	
Consumer Protection	Charitable and Regulatory Programs; Pesticide Services; Plant Industry Services; and Weights and Measures.	
Marketing and Development	Agriculture and Forestry Development; Domestic and International Marketing; Food Distribution; and Market News.	

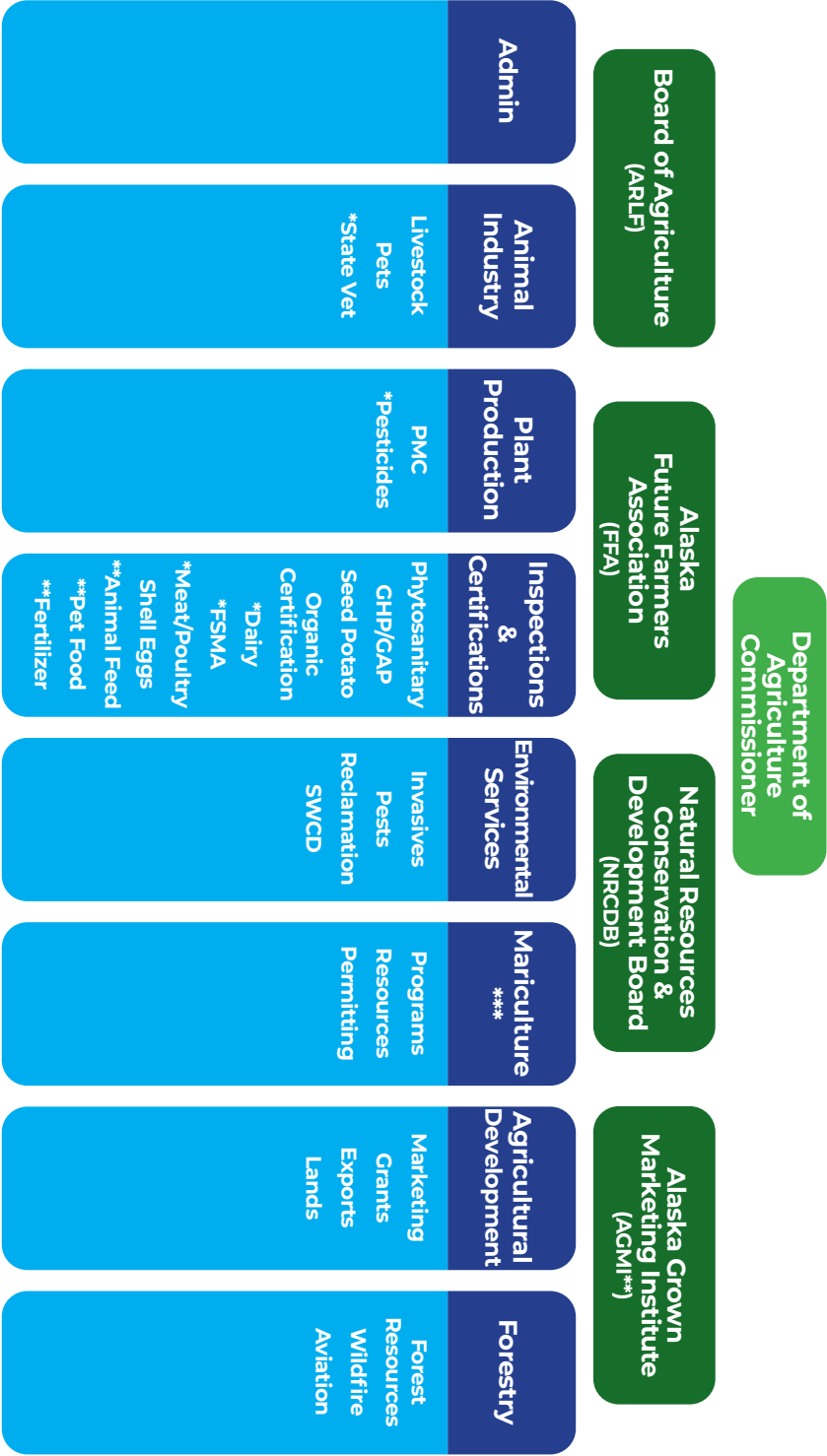


State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Rhode Island	Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment - within Bureau of Natural Resources, Dept. of Environmental Mgmt..
A division chief reports to a department director, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, upon consent of the senate.	
Forest Environment	Stewardship; forest health; forest fires; urban and community forestry; and forest legacy.
Boating Regulations and Licenses	Administers the state's boat registration program as well as the issuance of licenses for commercial and recreational fishing/shell fishing.
Coastal Resources	Responsible for the development, management, and maintenance of the Port of Galilee, State Pier #9 (Newport), State Pier #4 (Jerusalem), and State Pier #5 (Narragansett).
Fish and Wildlife	Ensures that the freshwater and wildlife resources will be conserved and managed for equitable and sustainable use.
Law Enforcement	Protects natural resources and ensures compliance with all environmental conservation laws through law enforcement and education, while maintaining the health and safety of the public.
Marine Fisheries	Manages and enhances marine resources and habitats through sound science, informed decisions, and education.
Massachusetts	Department of Agricultural Resources - within Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
The Secretary of the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor. The department is headed by a commissioner who is appointed by the secretary, upon approval of the governor.	
Crop and Pesticide Services	Farm products and plant industries; pesticides; apiary; hemp program; and invasive pest program.
Animal Health	Prevents the introduction or spread of infectious and contagious diseases of domestic animals.
Agricultural Markets	Develops/supports innovative market venues, business expansion, grant opportunities, consumer, and industry outreach.
Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance	Offers agricultural business training courses and workshops to farmers at various stages of business development.



Appendix B

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION CHART

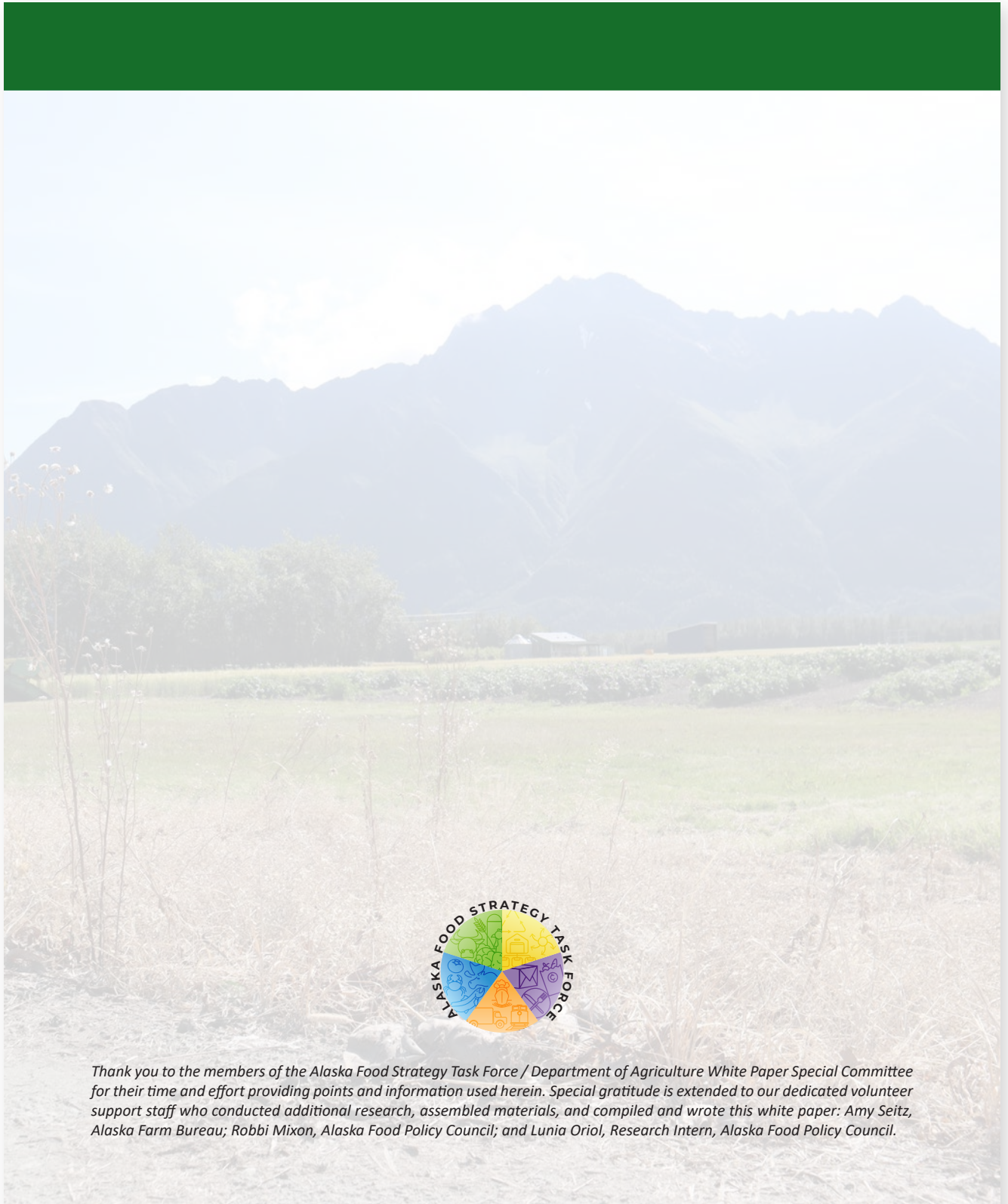


* Moved from DEC

** New Programs

*** Moved from Fish & Game

X



Thank you to the members of the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force / Department of Agriculture White Paper Special Committee for their time and effort providing points and information used herein. Special gratitude is extended to our dedicated volunteer support staff who conducted additional research, assembled materials, and compiled and wrote this white paper: Amy Seitz, Alaska Farm Bureau; Robbi Mixon, Alaska Food Policy Council; and Lunia Oriol, Research Intern, Alaska Food Policy Council.

♦ Approved by the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force for distribution on February 14, 2024. ♦



APPENDIX D:

Agriculture GDP and Role of Agriculture Departments by State⁴²

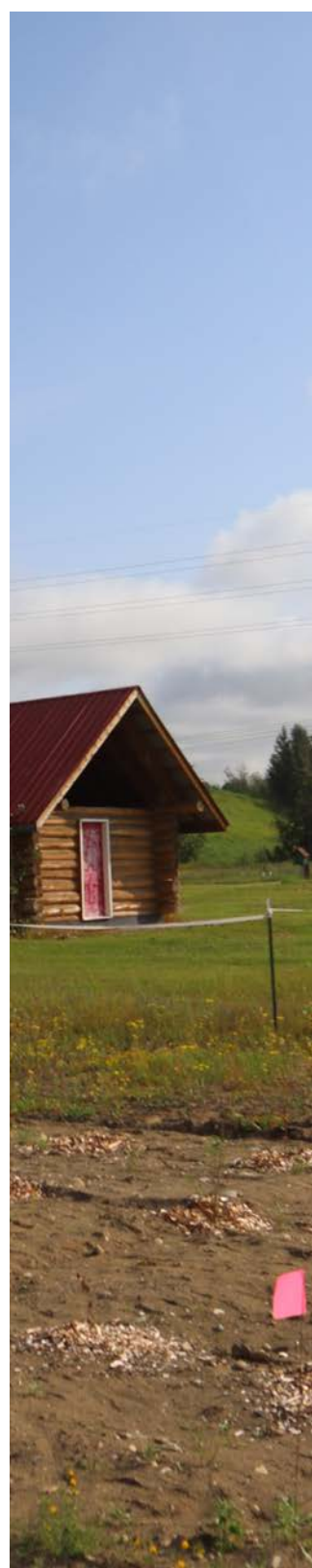


Table A: Agriculture: State Departments and Gross Domestic Product

State	Name	No. of Areas/ Divisions	Budget (millions)	Workforce	Agriculture Related GDP, 2022 (millions)	Sector as % of total GDP
South Dakota	Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	5	\$24.4 (FY 23)	223	\$6,824.7	10.1
Nebraska	Department of Agriculture	3	\$22.2 (FY 25)	125	\$13,690.1	8.5
North Dakota	Department of Agriculture	7	\$79.9 (FY 23-25)	80	\$5,800.7	7.9
Wisconsin	Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection	6	\$129.6 (FY 24)	630	\$9,661.3	2.4
Alabama	Department of Agriculture and Industries	18	\$17.0 (FY 24)	300	\$5,117.1	1.8
Vermont	Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets	5	\$51.8 (FY 24)	147	\$643.6	1.6
Illinois	Department of Agriculture	5	\$204.0 (FY 24)	300	\$13,708.5	1.3
Maine	Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources - Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry	6	\$249.7 (FY 23)	775	\$980.8	1.2
Oklahoma	Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry	10	\$45.5 (FY 23)	152	\$2,886.3	1.2
South Carolina	Department of Agriculture	3	\$32.7 (FY 24)	132	\$2,207.0	0.75
Alaska	Division of Agriculture - Dept. of Natural Resources	3	\$6.9 (FY 24)	24	\$353.4	0.56
Tennessee	Department of Agriculture	4	\$188.3 (FY 24)	66	\$2,151.6	0.45
Virginia	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	4	\$85.8 (FY 24)	115	\$2,460.6	0.38
Rhode Island	Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment - Dept. of Environmental Management	6	\$5.3 (FY 23)	19	\$128.8	0.18
Massachusetts	Department of Agricultural Resources - Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	4	\$6.7 (FY 23)	105	\$1,019.6	0.15

Notes: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting. Workforce is based on directory counts or self-reporting and may be outdated, or exclude vacancies, part-time and seasonal employees. Divisions do not include those dedicated to the commissioner or secretary.

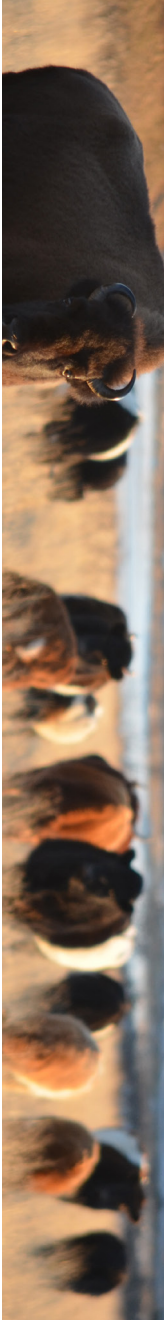
Source: GDP by State, Annual 2022, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, <https://apps.bea.gov/regional/histdata/releases/0323gdststate/index.cfm>.

⁴² AFSTF DoAg White Paper https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155



State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources The department secretary is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, with the consent of the senate.	Organizational Chart
Agriculture and Environmental Services	Livestock services; inspection compliance and remediation; air quality; minerals, mining and superfund; waste management; and local food purchase assistance.
Resource Conservation and Forestry	Conservation; forestry; watershed protection; specialty crop block grant; plant industry; and apiary.
Office of Water	Drinking water; water quality; water rights; and operator certification.
Financial and Technical Assistance	Agricultural mediation; checkoff remittance; environmental funding; and geological survey.
State Fair	State fair, state fairgrounds, and the DEX.
Nebraska Department of Agriculture The department director is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, upon confirmation by the senate. The Animal and Plant Health Protection and Food Safety and Consumer Protection sections have focus area administrators.	
Ag Promotion and Development	Livestock; bulk commodities; value-added foods and meats; and diversified agriculture.
Animal and Plant Health Protection	Animal imports; veterinarian resources; Livestock Emergency Disease Response System (LEDRS); Animal Disease Traceability (ADT); animal diseases; entomology; pesticide; fertilizer; seed; hemp; and noxious weed.
Food Safety and Consumer Protection	Dairy, foods, and weights and measures.
North Dakota Department of Agriculture A department commissioner is elected. Each of the seven divisions has a director.	
Administrative Services	Consists of fiscal management, policy development, emergency management, and human resources. The division also administers the Pipeline Reclamation and Restoration Oversight Program, Wind Energy Reclamation and Restoration Oversight Program; and the Royalty Oversight Program.
Animal Health	Protects the health of domestic animals and non-traditional livestock, and administers all rules and orders of the State Board of Animal Health.





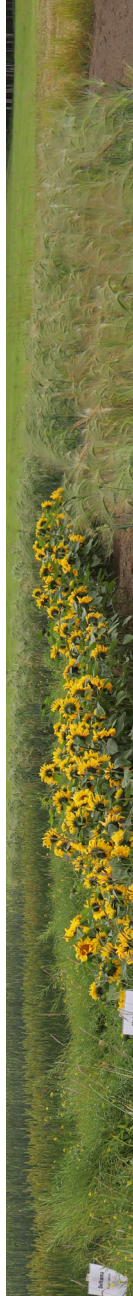
State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
North Dakota (continued)	Department of Agriculture
Business, Marketing & Information	Monitors and analyzes federal and state regulatory activities that affect North Dakota agriculture producers and consumers, and maintains relationships with federal, state, local and foreign governments to address agricultural issues.
Grain & Livestock Licensing	Age and source verification; feed program; grain licensing; livestock licensing; livestock pollution prevention program; and pet food program.
Livestock Industries	Dairy and poultry, and, meat and poultry inspection.
Pesticide & Fertilizer	Regulates pesticides, fertilizers and anhydrous ammonia to protect human health and the environment.
Plant Industries	Oversees noxious weeds, plant protection, apiary, waterbank, and industrial hemp programs.

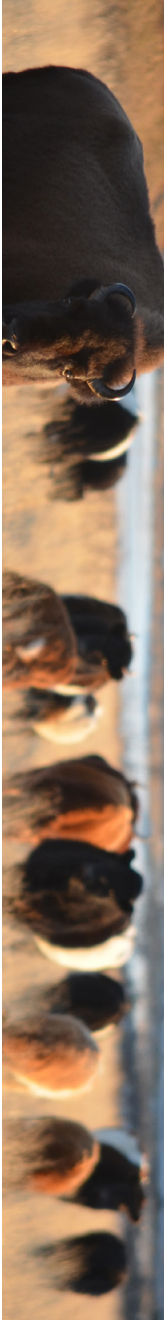
Wisconsin	Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection	Organizational Chart
The secretary of the department is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, upon confirmation by the Senate. Each of the six divisions has an administrator and individual bureaus.		
Agricultural Resource Management	Pesticides; groundwater and surface water protection; agricultural spills and cleanup; animal feed; fertilizer and related products; land and water resource management; livestock facility siting; farmland preservation; drainage districts; plant protection; ag and environmental impact assessments; and weather modification controls.	
Animal Health	Monitors disease threats; animal imports and movement; animal identification; disease testing, reporting and certification; disease vaccination; disease investigations; emergency disease response; quarantine and condemnation; disease indemnities; licensing and registration; animal welfare and rabies control; livestock brands; and compliance monitoring enforcement.	
Food and Recreational Safety	Milk and dairy products; food processing and distribution; retail food establishments; meat and poultry inspection; food emergencies; food advertising and labeling; food monitoring and hazard control; laboratory certification; food grading; lodging establishments; pools and water attractions; campgrounds and recreational / educational camps; complaints and investigations; enforcement; and coordination.	
Agricultural Development	Farm Center; Agriculture and Food Center; International Agribusiness Center; and communications, outreach, operations.	
Trade and Consumer Protection	Unfair and deceptive business practices; identity theft and privacy protection; consumer product safety; weights and measures; hazardous liquid storage tanks and motor fuel quality; environmental regulation of consumer products; agricultural producer security; and commodity grading.	
Management Services	Finance, Information technology services, Administration, and Laboratory services.	





State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Alabama	Department of Agriculture and Industries
A department commissioner is elected.	
Executive Division	Legal; Accounting; Personnel; General Services; Information Technology; News; Farmers Bulletin; Alternative Fuels; International Trade; and various grant and permitting programs.
Agriculture Compliance	Responsible for stockyards and brands registration and licensing/permitting of bonded livestock markets, livestock dealers, issuing livestock hauler trailer tags and livestock brands.
Animal Industries	Responsible for the administration of programs to prevent, eradicate, and control diseases among livestock and poultry with support from the Alabama Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory System to ensure quality of commercial meats.
Audits and Reports	Responsible for registering and licensing/permitting companies that manufacture or distribute commercial feed, commercial fertilizer, and agricultural liming materials; wheat & grain dealers; soybean dealers; and cooperative marketing associations.
Emergency Programs	Responsible for reducing the vulnerability to and the impact from disaster, disease, or terrorist attack on agriculture.
Farmers Market Authority	Established to assist in the marketing of agricultural products by providing information, leadership, and modern facilities.
Food Safety	Wholesale and retail food and milk establishment permitting and inspections.
Federal State Inspection Svcs.	Provides shipping point inspection services.
Gins and Warehouses	Issues permits and conducts audits for public warehouses, grain dealers, cotton merchants and cotton gins.
Legal	Represents the commissioner and ADAI in any legal matters, and regulatory, legislative affairs, economic development, and alternative energy functions; and oversees the Alabama Agricultural Mediation Program (AAMP).
Livestock Market News	Compiles and disseminates information that aids in the sale and purchase of agricultural products.
Mediation Program	USDA-state program that offers mediation services to farmers, creditors, and USDA Agencies including the inspection and enforcement of laws pertaining to feed, seed, fertilizer and agricultural lime; conducts feed manufacturing inspections.
Pesticide Management	Regulates individuals or companies that sell, use, or supervise the use of restricted use pesticides, engage in the commercial application of pesticides, and structural pest control or horticultural activities.
Petroleum Commodities	Focuses on specific commodity testing to ensure safety and compliance for both producers and consumers.
Plant Protection	Protects native and commercially grown plants, and the apiary industry, from harmful pests and diseases.
Seed Laboratory	Inspects seed samples from retail and wholesale establishments for the presence of weeds, inert material, and other quality factors. Inspects seeds that are grown by farmers to enforce "Truth in Labeling."
Veterinary Diagnostic Labs	Provides diagnostic services for livestock and poultry producers, veterinarians, animal owners, and apiary owners.
Weights and Measures	Inspects and regulates weighing and measuring devices used in agricultural commerce.





State - Division/Section		Oversight Responsibilities
Vermont		
Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets		
An agency secretary is appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. Each of the five divisions has a director.		
<u>Water Quality</u>		Responsible for administering the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, including farm water quality inspections and enforcement; education and outreach to the agricultural community about regulations and requirements; and technical and financial assistance to achieve state water quality goals.
<u>Agriculture Development</u>		Cultivates agriculture and food system through grantmaking, marketing, strategic collaboration, and connecting businesses and communities to vital resources.
<u>Public Health and Agricultural Resource Management</u>		Works to protect human, animal, and plant health, the environment, and consumers by providing fair regulatory programs, exceptional customer service, and in-depth technical assistance in a wide variety of agricultural topics.
<u>Agricultural and Environmental Laboratory</u>		Mastitis diagnostic and bulk milk quality; milk testing laboratory evaluation and licensing; pet food product guarantee analysis; water bacteriology; environmental and consumer protection; dairy products; animal health; and chemistry.
<u>Food Safety</u>		Works to protect the health and welfare of people and their livestock. Daily efforts revolve around advancing a safe and secure food supply within a marketplace that provides fair and equal access to consumers and processors while enhancing the working landscape, rural character and local economies.

Illinois		Department of Agriculture
The governor appoints a Director of Agriculture with consent of the senate. Any nomination not acted upon within sixty session days is deemed approved.		
<u>Consumer Services</u>		Egg Inspection; Meat & Poultry Inspection; Weights and Measurements Certification; and Motor Fuel Quality Testing.
<u>Marketing and Promotion</u>		Agricultural Statistics, Market News, and Marketing; State and County Fair Promotion; and Horse Racing Administration.
<u>Animal Industries</u>		Animal Health and Welfare; and Bees and Apiaries.
<u>Natural Resources</u>		Environmental Programs, and Land and Water Resources.
<u>Agricultural Industry Regulation</u>		Agricultural Products Inspection; Grain Dealer and Warehouse Inspection and Licensure; Fertilizer Program; and Medical Cannabis Pilot Program.

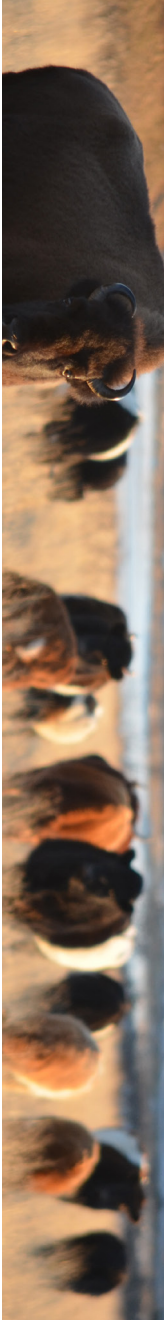




State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Maine	Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources - within Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
A department commissioner, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, appoints a bureau director. The commissioner shall give preference to an existing director.	
Agricultural Resource Development	Responsible for developing and implementing programs and policies to ensure that agricultural businesses remain profitable and sustainable. Programs focus on business development, market promotion, education and regulation to assure that agricultural practices are economically and environmentally sound.
Animal and Plant Health	Animal health; animal welfare; Help Fix ME; apiary; arborist; ginseng; horticulture; hemp; seed potato certification; agricultural compliance; compost; nutrient management program; Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS); Integrated Pest Management (IPM); and Board of Pesticides Control (BPC).
Harness Racing Commission	Provides oversight and support of the harness racing industry with a goal of promoting fairness and integrity of the sport.
Maine Milk Commission	A five-member consumer board to oversee the milk industry and support the viability of farms and the milk industry.
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Response	Dedicated to assisting farms impacted by PFAS contamination.
Quality Assurance and Regulations	Provides marketing assistance and consumer protection for agriculture, industry, and citizens.

Oklahoma	Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
The department is governed by the State Board of Agriculture, which is comprised of five members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. A member, designated by the governor, serves as president of the board and Commissioner of Agriculture. Eight directors oversee specific divisions.	
Agricultural Environmental Management	Develops, coordinates and oversees environmental policies and programs including licensing, registration and inspection of poultry, beef and swine growing and feeding facilities.
Animal Industry State Veterinarian	Responsible for protecting livestock from disease and assisting in livestock productivity; enforces restrictions to ensure the health of animals industries and the public; and administers rules and orders of the State Board of Agriculture.
Agricultural Investigative Services Unit	Investigates crime victimizing agriculture. Special Agents specialize in crimes of livestock theft, agriculture equipment theft, timber theft and wild land fire arson along with other criminal offenses.
Consumer Protection	Enforces quality standards for agricultural products, regulates pesticide use, and provides information and technical assistance to consumers.





State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Oklahoma (continued)	<u>Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry</u>
<u>Forestry Services</u>	Provides technical assistance to individuals and communities to increase active conservation management, and responsible for wildland fire detection, suppression, prevention, and investigation.
<u>Food Safety</u>	Enforces federal and state laws and rules relating to the production of food and food products derived from animals.
<u>Laboratory</u>	Tests samples to assure the quality of agricultural products sold, to protect the environment, to diagnose animal diseases and to assure the correctness of weights and measures.
<u>Market Development</u>	Works to increase agricultural literacy, increase consumer awareness of agriculture products, stimulate rural economic development and develop opportunities for producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers of products in domestic and international markets.
<u>Statistical Services</u>	Provides timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture; one of 46 Field Offices of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
<u>Wildlife Services</u>	Helps citizens, organizations, industries, and government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, other property, and natural resources, and to safeguard human health and safety; part of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
South Carolina	<u>Department of Agriculture</u>
A commissioner is elected. Each division has an assistant commissioner.	
<u>Agency Operations</u>	Consists of the Office of the Commissioner; Administration; Human Resources; Information Technology; State Farmers Markets; and Grants Administration.
<u>Consumer Protection</u>	Sections overseen include Produce Safety, Laboratory Services, Consumer Services (Metrology), Feed Safety & Compliance, Food Safety & Compliance, Federal-State Inspection Services, and the Hemp Farming Program.
<u>External Affairs and Economic Development</u>	Promotes and advocates for the growth of existing and new agribusiness opportunities throughout the state.



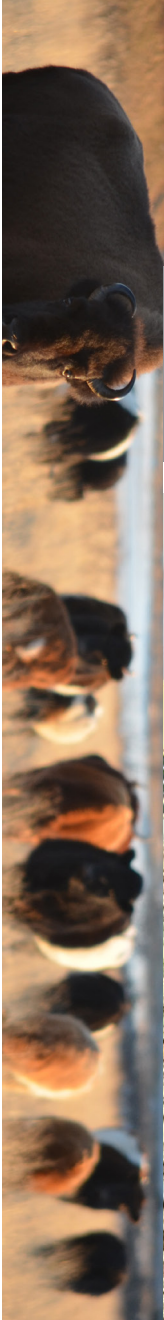


State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Alaska	Division of Agriculture - within Department of Natural Resources
A division director is selected by the commissioner of DNR from a list of two or more candidates submitted by the Board of Agriculture and Conservation, the members of which are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. The director administers the board and is responsible for the daily operations of the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF).	
Division Support Services	Administration functions; Board of Agriculture and Conservation; and Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund.
Agriculture Inspection and Market Services	Inspection and certification; Market Services Section; Agricultural Land Program; grant administration and management; and Invasive Plant and Pest Detection Program.
Plant Production and Environmental Services (Plant Materials Center)	Plant Production Services; Revegetation and Erosion Control Program; industrial hemp program; and Invasive Plant and Pest Management Program.

Tennessee	Department of Agriculture
A department commissioner, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, supervises, directs, and controls seven assistant commissioners.	
Administration and Grants	Provides budgetary, legal, human resources and communications support to achieve agency goals and objectives in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
Forestry	Provides professional, timely, up-to-date, science-based technical and financial assistance to family forest landowners, communities, non-government organizations, forest industry, and others with an interest in the conservation of forests.
Consumer and Industry Services	Monitors a diverse range of materials, products, and services to ensure quality, consumer protection, public safety, and a fair marketplace.
Business Development	Works with farmers, foresters, and agribusinesses to build rural economies and increase operation income.

Virginia	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Organizational Chart
A department commissioner is appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the general assembly. Each division has a director.	
Animal and Food Industry Services	Dairy and Foods; Laboratory Services; Meat and Poultry Services; and Veterinary Services.
Commodity Services	Fruit and Vegetable; Grain; Livestock; Peanut; and Poultry and Egg.
Consumer Protection	Charitable and Regulatory Programs; Pesticide Services; Plant Industry Services; and Weights and Measures.
Marketing and Development	Agriculture and Forestry Development; Domestic and International Marketing; Food Distribution; and Market News.





State - Division/Section	Oversight Responsibilities
Rhode Island	Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment - within Bureau of Natural Resources, Dept. of Environmental Mgmt..
A division chief reports to a department director, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, upon consent of the senate.	
Forest Environment	Stewardship; forest health; forest fires; urban and community forestry; and forest legacy.
Boating Regulations and Licenses	Administers the state's boat registration program as well as the issuance of licenses for commercial and recreational fishing/shell fishing.
Coastal Resources	Responsible for the development, management, and maintenance of the Port of Galilee, State Pier #9 (Newport), State Pier #4 (Jerusalem), and State Pier #5 (Narragansett).
Fish and Wildlife	Ensures that the freshwater and wildlife resources will be conserved and managed for equitable and sustainable use.
Law Enforcement	Protects natural resources and ensures compliance with all environmental conservation laws through law enforcement and education, while maintaining the health and safety of the public.
Marine Fisheries	Manages and enhances marine resources and habitats through sound science, informed decisions, and education.
Massachusetts	Department of Agricultural Resources - within Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
The Secretary of the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor. The department is headed by a commissioner who is appointed by the secretary, upon approval of the governor.	
Crop and Pesticide Services	Farm products and plant industries; pesticides; apiary; hemp program; and invasive pest program.
Animal Health	Prevents the introduction or spread of infectious and contagious diseases of domestic animals.
Agricultural Markets	Develops/supports innovative market venues, business expansion, grant opportunities, consumer, and industry outreach.
Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance	Offers agricultural business training courses and workshops to farmers at various stages of business development.



APPENDIX E:

Additional Resource Documents



1. CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE⁴³



ALASKA

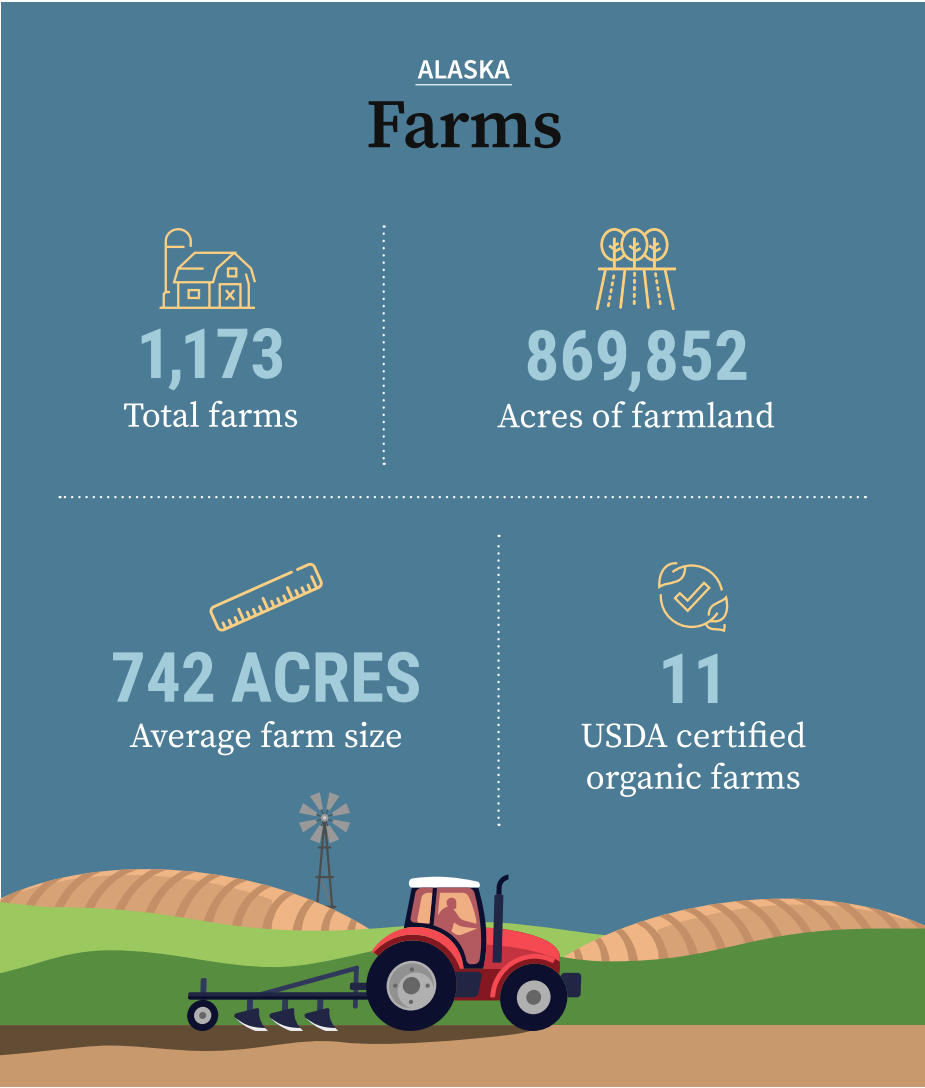
CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

The USDA Census of Agriculture provides a detailed picture of U.S. farms and ranches every five years. It's the leading source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every state. This infographic reflects the most recent census, which shows data gathered in 2022 and released in February 2024.



FARM FLAVOR

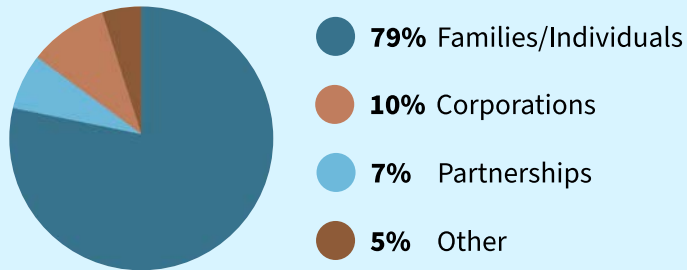
⁴³ [2024 Census of Ag Infographic Alaska Farm Flavor.pdf](https://eadn-wc01-4177395.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Census-of-Ag-Infographic-Alaska-Farm-Flavor.pdf) <https://eadn-wc01-4177395.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Census-of-Ag-Infographic-Alaska-Farm-Flavor.pdf>



ALASKA

Farmers

Who operates Alaska farms?



791

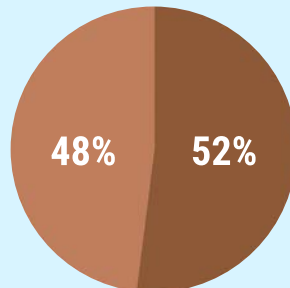
New or beginning farmers



212

Farmers with military service

974
Female farmers



1,071
Male farmers

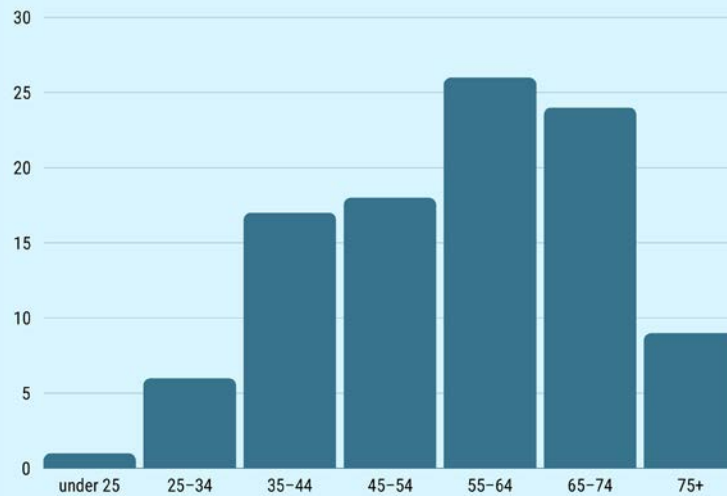


55%

Farmers who have a primary occupation other than farming



Percentage of Alaska Farmers by Age



58.7 Average Age (up from 55.2 years in 2017)



8

Number of Black Alaska farmers





ALASKA

Farm Products



\$91 MILLION

Market value of agricultural products sold

\$51 MILLION

Livestock

\$40 MILLION

Crops

Top commodities include:



**FLORI-
CULTURE**



HAY



**CATTLE &
CALVES**



597

Colonies of honeybees which produced
28,491 pounds of honey in 2022



For more about state agriculture,
visit farmflavor.com.

Illustrations: iStock.com/Faber14, Yulia_Malinskaya, pressura, Fourleaflover, cynthia, Wonderpup, daniessa, de-vooda, bsd studio, forikun, Waggon



FARM FLAVOR





2. FOOD SECURITY VERSUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Submitted and researched by Robbi Mixon, Alaska Food Policy Council, this analysis explores efforts throughout the world, some controversial and involving high levels of governmental controls, to address hunger, food production, and food access. The inclusion of this material does not indicate an endorsement of these organizations, movements, policies, perspectives or projects by the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force. This material is provided for reference, to raise awareness of efforts underway elsewhere, and to explain the difference between the two terms, “food security” and “food sovereignty”.

Food Security Definitions

The term “**food security**” is a complex concept, with various definitions depending on the focus of the discussion, as well as cultural, historical, political, and social context. Here are some of the most widely recognized definitions. Each of these definitions highlights different aspects of food security, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the issue, which spans agriculture, economics, health, and human rights:

a. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations):

The FAO defines food security as a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

b. World Health Organization (WHO):

The WHO considers food security to be built on four pillars:

- **Availability:** Sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis.
- **Access:** Having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.
- **Utilization:** Appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.
- **Stability:** The ability to access and utilize food that remains stable over time.

c. USDA (United States Department of Agriculture):

The USDA defines food security as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum:

- The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.
- Assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).





d. IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute):

The IFPRI focuses on the ability of individuals to obtain sufficient food on a regular basis and emphasizes the importance of access to food, its nutritional quality, and the stability of these factors over time.

e. World Bank:

The World Bank defines food security as access to sufficient food for all people at all times to maintain a healthy and active life. This definition emphasizes the interrelation between food security and poverty, agricultural production, and trade policies.

f. Public Health Perspective:

From a public health standpoint, food security is defined as the state in which all persons obtain a nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable diet at all times through local non-emergency sources.

Food Sovereignty Definitions

The term “food sovereignty” emphasizes the right of people and communities to control and define their own food systems, including production, distribution, and consumption. Generally, it prioritizes local and sustainable food production, respects cultural traditions, and tempts to ensure that food systems are equitable and just. “Food sovereignty” has been defined and interpreted in various ways by different organizations and scholars. Here are some of the most prominent definitions:

a. La Via Campesina:

La Via Campesina, an international peasants' movement, provides one of the most widely recognized definitions:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.

Key Principles include:

- *Focus on food for people.*
- *Value food providers.*
- *Localize food systems.*
- *Put control locally.*
- *Build knowledge and skills.*
- *Work with nature.*





b. Nyéléni Declaration (2007):

The Nyéléni Declaration is another significant source of a comprehensive definition of food sovereignty: Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

Key Principles:

- *The prioritization of local agricultural production to feed people.*
- *Access of peasants and landless people to land, water, seeds, and credit.*
- *The right of farmers to produce food and the right of consumers to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced.*
- *The right of countries to protect themselves from too low-priced agricultural and food imports.*
- *Agricultural prices linked to production costs and the prohibition of dumping (exporting at prices below the cost of production).*
- *People's participation in agricultural policy decision-making.*
- *The recognition of the rights of women farmers, who play a major role in agricultural production and in food.*

c. International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC):

The IPC offers a definition focusing on local control and ecological sustainability: Food sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food, and land policies, which are ecologically, socially, economically, and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances.

Key Principles:

- *Emphasizes local autonomy and empowerment.*
- *Prioritizes local food economies.*
- *Advocates for sustainable agricultural practices.*

d. Indigenous Perspectives:

Indigenous groups often have their own unique definitions of food sovereignty, which can include elements such as the spiritual relationship with the land and the importance of traditional ecological knowledge:

Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska (ICC Alaska): defines food sovereignty as the right of Inuit to define their own hunting, gathering, fishing, land, and water policies; the right to define what





is healthy and culturally appropriate food; and the right to obtain food by ecologically sound and sustainable means.

Key principles include:

1. **Self-Determination:** *Emphasizes the Inuit's right to self-determination and control over their food systems, including traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering practices.*
2. **Cultural Relevance:** *Ensures that food practices are culturally appropriate and rooted in traditional knowledge and customs.*
3. **Sustainable Practices:** *Promotes the use of sustainable and ecologically sound methods to obtain and manage food resources.*
4. **Community Health:** *Focuses on the health and well-being of Inuit communities, recognizing the importance of traditional foods for physical, mental, and cultural health.*
5. **Protection of Resources:** *Advocates for the protection of the natural environment and resources that are crucial for the survival and continuity of Inuit food systems.*
6. **Economic Viability:** *Supports economic practices that enhance the viability and sustainability of Inuit food systems without compromising traditional values and practices.*

e. United Nations:

Although the UN typically uses the term "food security," some of its agencies have acknowledged the principles of food sovereignty, particularly in discussions about sustainable development and human rights.

Summary: Differences between Food Security and Food Sovereignty

While food security focuses on ensuring that people have access to enough food, food sovereignty goes further by addressing the power dynamics and policies that influence food systems. It emphasizes local control by communities and households, prioritizes local production and consumption, and seeks to create lasting and accessible food systems that benefit people while practicing responsible stewardship of a region's land, water, and resources.





APPENDIX F:

Resource & Reference Links

- AFSTF White Paper: *Why a Department of Agriculture Makes Sense for Alaska*
https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=56155
- Bill Links
 - HB 298 <https://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/Bills/HB0298Z.PDF>
 - HB 251 <https://www.akleg.gov/PDF/33/Bills/HB0251Z.PDF>
 - SB 179 <https://www.akleg.gov/PDF/33/Bills/SB0179Z.PDF>
 - SJR 20 <https://www.akleg.gov/PDF/33/Bills/SJR020Z.PDF>
- Dunleavy Signs Bills Supporting Farming, Meat Processing Industries
<https://gov.alaska.gov/dunleavy-signs-bills-supporting-farming-meat-processing-industries/>
- Security of the red meat supply in Alaska
https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/research_pdfs/10_paragi_et_al_security_red_meat_supply_alaska.pdf
- Building Food Security in Alaska
<https://www.crcworks.org/akfood.pdf>
- Minnesota Department of Ag - Farm Opportunity Program
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/farm-opportunity-loan-program>
- Montana Wood Products Revolving Loan Program
<https://business.mt.gov/Business-Assistance/Wood-Products-Revolving-Loan-Fund/>
- Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
<https://iowaagriculture.gov/field-services-bureau/financial-assistance-conservation-practices>
- Tennessee Agriculture Enterprise Fund
<https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/businesses/aef.html>





- [Tennessee Agriculture Enhancement Fund](https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/farms/taep.html)
<https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/farms/taep.html>
- [64 FR 37666 - Designation of the State of Alaska Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1999-07-13/pdf/99-17737.pdf)
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1999-07-13/pdf/99-17737.pdf>
- [Meat Inspection in Wyoming](https://wyoleg.gov/InterimCommittee/2020/05-20200601MeatInspectioninWyoming-JointAgPPT.pdf)
<https://wyoleg.gov/InterimCommittee/2020/05-20200601MeatInspectioninWyoming-JointAgPPT.pdf>
- [State of Wyoming 2021-2022 Supplemental Budget Request](https://www.wyoleg.gov/InterimCommittee/2020/02-20201207010-DepartmentofAgriculture.pdf)
<https://www.wyoleg.gov/InterimCommittee/2020/02-20201207010-DepartmentofAgriculture.pdf>
- [Alaska Farm Bureau](https://alaskafb.org/)
<https://alaskafb.org/>
- [Alaska Food Policy Council](https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/)
<https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/>
- [Alaska Farmland Trust](https://akfarmland.com/)
<https://akfarmland.com/>
- [Alaska Farmers Market Association](https://alaskafarmersmarkets.org/)
<https://alaskafarmersmarkets.org/>
- [Alaska Association of Conservation Districts](https://alaskaconservationdistricts.org/)
<https://alaskaconservationdistricts.org/>
- [Alaska Village Initiatives - Ag Alaska](https://agalaska.org/)
<https://agalaska.org/>
- [Food Bank of Alaska](https://foodbankofalaska.org/)
<https://foodbankofalaska.org/>
- [Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Subsistence in Alaska](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=subsistence.main)
<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=subsistence.main>
- [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Services, Office of the State Veterinarian](https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/)
<https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/>
- [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Services, Food Safety & Sanitation](https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/)
<https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/>
- [Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture](https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/)
<https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/>
- [Alaska Agricultural Revolving Loan](https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm)
https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm





- [Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership \(MEP\)](https://alaska-mep.com/)
<https://alaska-mep.com/>
- [Alaska Department of Health, Food & Nutrition Programs](https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/help-food.aspx)
<https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/help-food.aspx>
- [UAF Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Extension](https://www.uaf.edu/ianre/index.php)
<https://www.uaf.edu/ianre/index.php>
- [UAF IANRE Cooperative Extension Services](https://www.uaf.edu/ces/)
<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/>





Rather than an academic discussion about interesting ideas, the report includes specific, workable strategies that list responsible entities, any required statutory or regulatory changes, proposed timelines, action steps, and metrics to be used to measure progress and success. The Task Force is not promoting boondoggles.

It is focused on actually increasing food production and access to locally grown foods over the coming years.



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Thank you to the volunteer members of the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force for your dedication and work on this report. Heartfelt gratitude is also extended to our faithful volunteer support staff who helped turn piles of documents into a coherent report. It is clear you all are committed to greater food independence and security in Alaska!

AFSTF Chair, Senator Shelley Hughes

