



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

WSDA UPDATE: EQUITY AND FARMING

Nicole Johnson, Equity Policy Advisor

Kelly McLain, Legislative Liaison

House Agriculture and
Natural Resources Committee Work Session
January 10, 2023

Photo credit: Haki Farmers Collective

About Washington Farms

35,500

Total number of farms.
About 95% family-owned.



300+

Number of crops grown in Washington



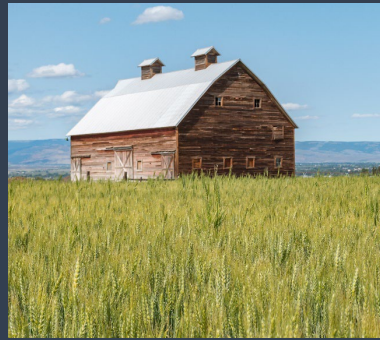
\$10.2 billion

Market value of crops and livestock



\$2.19 billion

Dollar value of apples – State's top crop



89%

of Washington farms are small farms

82% - less than 180 acres
67% - less than 50 acres



164,000

People employed in ag and food industry

Washington's Top 10 (2021)



1

APPLES

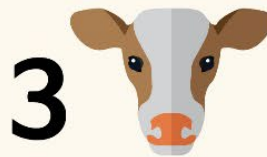
\$2.185 billion



2

MILK

\$1.209 billion



3

CATTLE

\$801.5 million



4

WHEAT

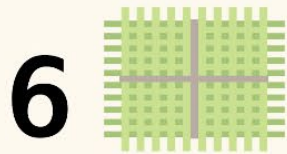
\$756.8 million



5

POTATOES

\$712.4 million



6

HAY

\$601.7 million



7

HOPS

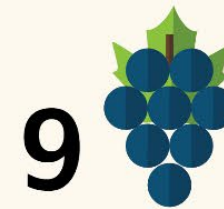
\$482.2 million



8

CHERRIES

\$476.4 million



9

GRAPES

\$300.7 million



10

BLUEBERRIES

\$228.3 million

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, unless otherwise noted. *USDA statistics exclude cannabis.

Washington's Top Export Destinations and Export Products (2021)

Top Export Destinations

Canada	\$1.4 billion
Japan	\$1.2 billion
China	\$994 million
South Korea	\$541 million
Mexico	\$457 million

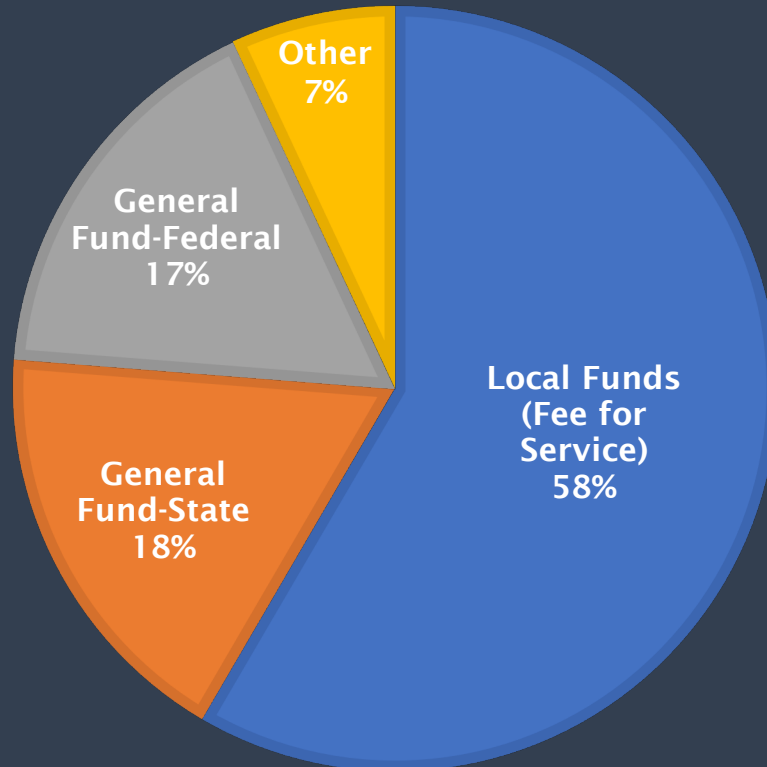
Top Export Products

Fish and Seafood	\$1.2 billion
Wheat	\$960 million
Frozen French Fries	\$847 million
Apples	\$643 million
Dairy	\$627 million

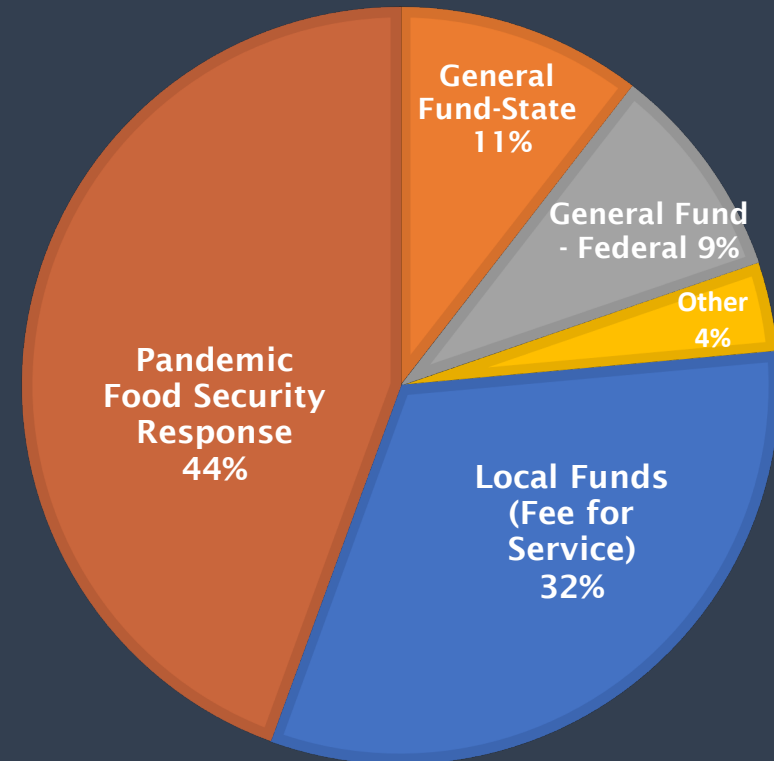


WSDA Statistics Pre-COVID and Post-COVID

WSDA 2019 Pre-COVID Expenditures: \$108 million



WSDA Expenditures w/ Pandemic Food Security Response 2020: \$202 million



2023-2025 Biennial Operating Budget

- **WSDA SUBMITTED:**

- Two legislative proposals to Bill Enrollment and Agency Request System
- Two supplemental requests
- Twenty-three budget decision packages

2023-2025 Governor's Budget Inclusions

- Governor Inslee included 18 of 23 proposals submitted by WSDA.
- More than half specifically target advancing equity and reducing disparities within Washington agriculture.
- Examples:
 - Implementing Equity Strategies for Underrepresented Farmers and Ranchers
 - Meat and Poultry Assistance Program and Grants
 - Organic Materials Reimbursement
 - Local Infrastructure Grants and Technical Assistance
 - We Feed WA Food Box program

Challenges to Agricultural Viability

MAJOR PRESSURES ON AGRICULTURE:

- Land access and availability
- Increasing input costs
- Labor
- Market infrastructure and support services
- Technical/research support
- Stress/Mental Health
- Water availability
- Regulations
- Weather/climate
- Pest pressures (Little Cherry disease)



Photo credit: Dr. Andrea Bixby Brosi, WSU

WSDA Equity Efforts

- **EQUITY IN FARMING**
 - Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR)
 - Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act
- **FOCUS ON FOOD INITIATIVE**
 - We Feed Washington
 - Food Assistance
 - Local Food Systems Infrastructure Grants
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Suicide Prevention (Farm Stress and Suicide Prevention)



Equity in Farming



OBJECTIVE: Identify the barriers and challenges underrepresented farmers and ranchers face and opportunities to enhance diversity within Washington state agriculture.

COMMON BARRIERS:

- Obtaining farmland
- Accessing capital resources
- Climate resiliency
- Accessing business support and marketing opportunities
- Regulatory compliance, certifications, and costs of licenses
- Lack of support for culturally significant foods
- Distrust and negative experiences with organizations meant to help farmers and ranchers
- Chronic stress and barriers within the environments where they live
- Inflation

Photo credit: Haki Farmers Collective

Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR)

OBJECTIVE: WSDA strives to advance equity and reduce disparities by incorporating and collaborating with all communities on agency processes, activities, and priorities.

ACTIONS

- Create an equity-driven framework.
- Center anti-racism in our policies, strategic plan, and agency operations.
- Partner with the Office of Equity to establish metrics for assessing progress, conduct equity impact reviews, develop a PEAR Strategic Action Plan, and ensure transparency through regular reporting.

Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act

OBJECTIVE: WSDA seeks to create transformational change through our policies and procedures so that we can eliminate environmental and health disparities and improve the health of all people across Washington state.

WE WILL DO THIS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES:

- Incorporating environmental justice into significant agency operations.
- Ensuring equitable community engagement and public participation across WSDA through meaningful involvement.
- Promoting intergovernmental coordination and collaboration to address concerns in Washington's tribal lands.
- Tracking, measuring, and reporting WSDA's progress towards HEAL implementation goal.

Focus on Food Initiative

- Launched in 2019 to coordinate policy and programs within WSDA that enhance Washington State's food system and ensure food access for all Washingtonians.
- **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:** to ensure access to a safe and nutritious supply of food to support a healthy and thriving Washington population.
- **KEY STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS:**
 - Increase the economic viability of farmers and food businesses, with resources prioritized for historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers.
 - Bolster infrastructure, ensure adequate food supply, and pursue access improvements within the WSDA Food Assistance contractor network.
 - Reach outside of the existing Food Assistance network to support hunger relief organizations that serve Black, Indigenous, and people of color and socially disadvantaged communities that did not historically participate in Food Assistance programs.

We Feed Washington Pilot Food Program

- A state alternative to the federal Farmers to Families Food Box program.
- Launched the pilot food program in May 2021 after the federal program abruptly ended.
 - 6-million-pound gap in Washington's emergency food system.
- **PROGRAM WAS DESIGNED TO:**
 - address identified access gaps in the emergency food safety net.
 - procure and distribute emergency food from Washington-based farms and food businesses.
- **PROGRAM SUCCESSES:**
 - \$86 million issued in 56 contracts to Washington-based businesses.
 - Distributed more than 20 million pounds of food in first year.
 - Partnered with Office of Equity to hire an Evaluation and Equity Specialist to make recommendations for final round of funding.

Food Assistance

- Includes state and federal programs that provide food and funding to a network of hunger relief organizations across the state that provide food to over one in six (1:6) food-insecure Washingtonians.
- Working in partnership with our hunger relief network, WSDA's programs have been able to mitigate the impacts of:
 - food supply disruptions and shortages.
 - rising operating costs.
 - increased community need.
- **RESULTS FROM 2022*:**
 - Multiple core Food Assistance programs
 - \$33.7 million worth of food distributed
 - \$17.8 million in funding allocated to support critical local operational costs
 - Multiple Food Assistance grants
 - \$24.3 million awarded to organizations for necessary network resilience and to meet increased demand

** 2022 values are based on a combination of state, federal and calendar year, as applicable.*

Local Food Systems Infrastructure Grants

WSDA REGIONAL MARKETS PROGRAM WORKS TO:

- strengthen the economic viability of small and direct-marketing farms and ranches.
- increase the availability of healthy, locally-grown foods for all Washingtonians.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES WITH EQUITY COMPONENTS:

- Farm-to-School Purchasing Grants
- Local Food System Infrastructure Grants
- Equity for Underrepresented Farmers and Ranchers
- “Profiting from Your Pivot” bi-lingual business coaching program

Farm Stress and Suicide Prevention (FSSP)

WA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

- Integrate Suicide Prevention into Existing Training
- Manage the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY:

- Farm Financial Literacy: Workshop Series and One-on-One Farm Financial Technical Assistance
- Behavioral Health Support
- Coordinate proposed activities within Regional FRSAN efforts

WA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:

- Mental Health Vouchers program and Suicide Prevention Specialist



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QUESTIONS?

CONTACT US



WEB

agr.wa.gov



TWITTER

[@WSDAgov](https://twitter.com/WSDAgov)



PHONE

360-359-8091



EMAIL

kmclain@agr.wa.gov



FACEBOOK

facebook.com/WAStateDeptAg



AG BRIEFS BLOG

wastatedeptag.blogspot.com

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