

# Farm to Food Bank Survey Results

Illinois Sustainable Technology Center  
November 2021



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# Farm to Food Bank Survey Intro

A voluntary survey was conducted with Illinois farmers to better understand current farming practices, available market channels, and barriers to working with food banks. Data used from this survey is intended to develop strategies to expand commodity markets available to farmers and increase the supply of fresh food at food banks and food pantries.

This survey was administered by the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center of the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois, in partnership with Feeding Illinois, Illinois Farm Bureau, and the Illinois Specialty Crop Growers Association. Not every survey respondent answered every question, so data are primarily shown as percentages.

Total Survey Respondents: 270. There were originally 295 total survey responses. After review, 25 were removed as they did not contain information relevant to the survey. Ex: a farmer that does not grow items for human consumption. Not all respondents filled out every question.

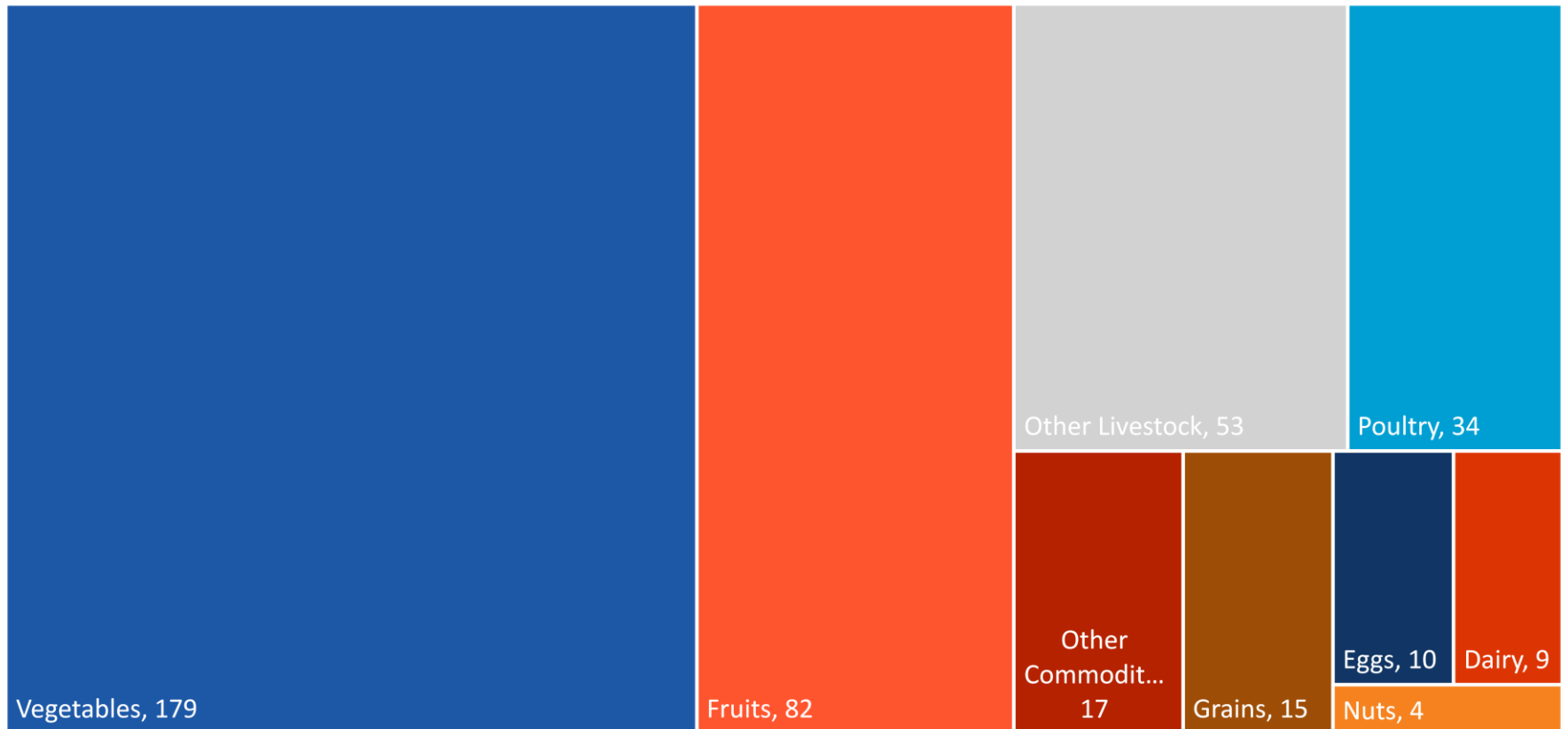


# Section 1: Current Practices and Existing Conditions on Farms

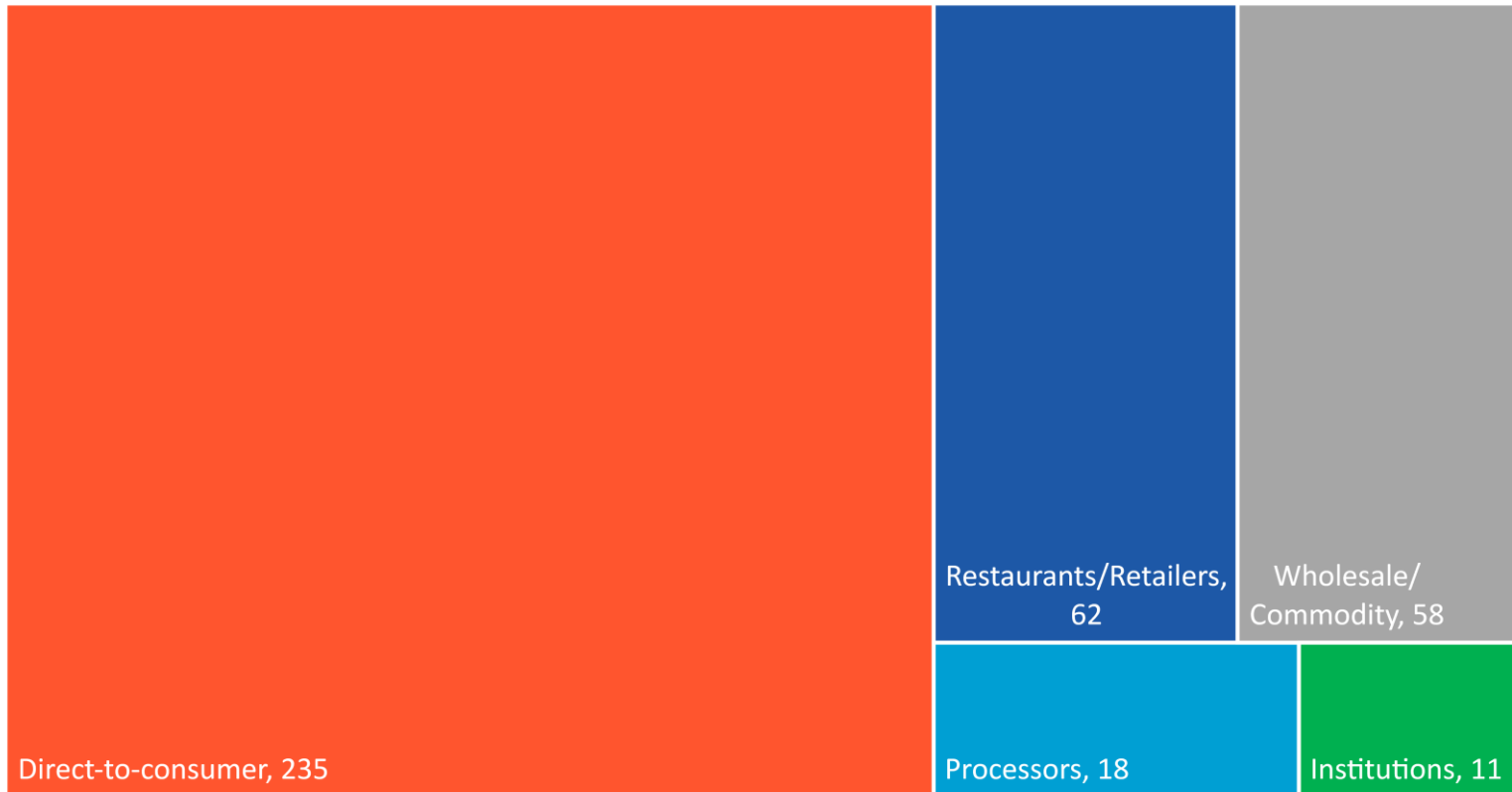
In this section of the survey, we will be gathering information on general practices and existing conditions on farms. Please select options that best reflect your current practices.



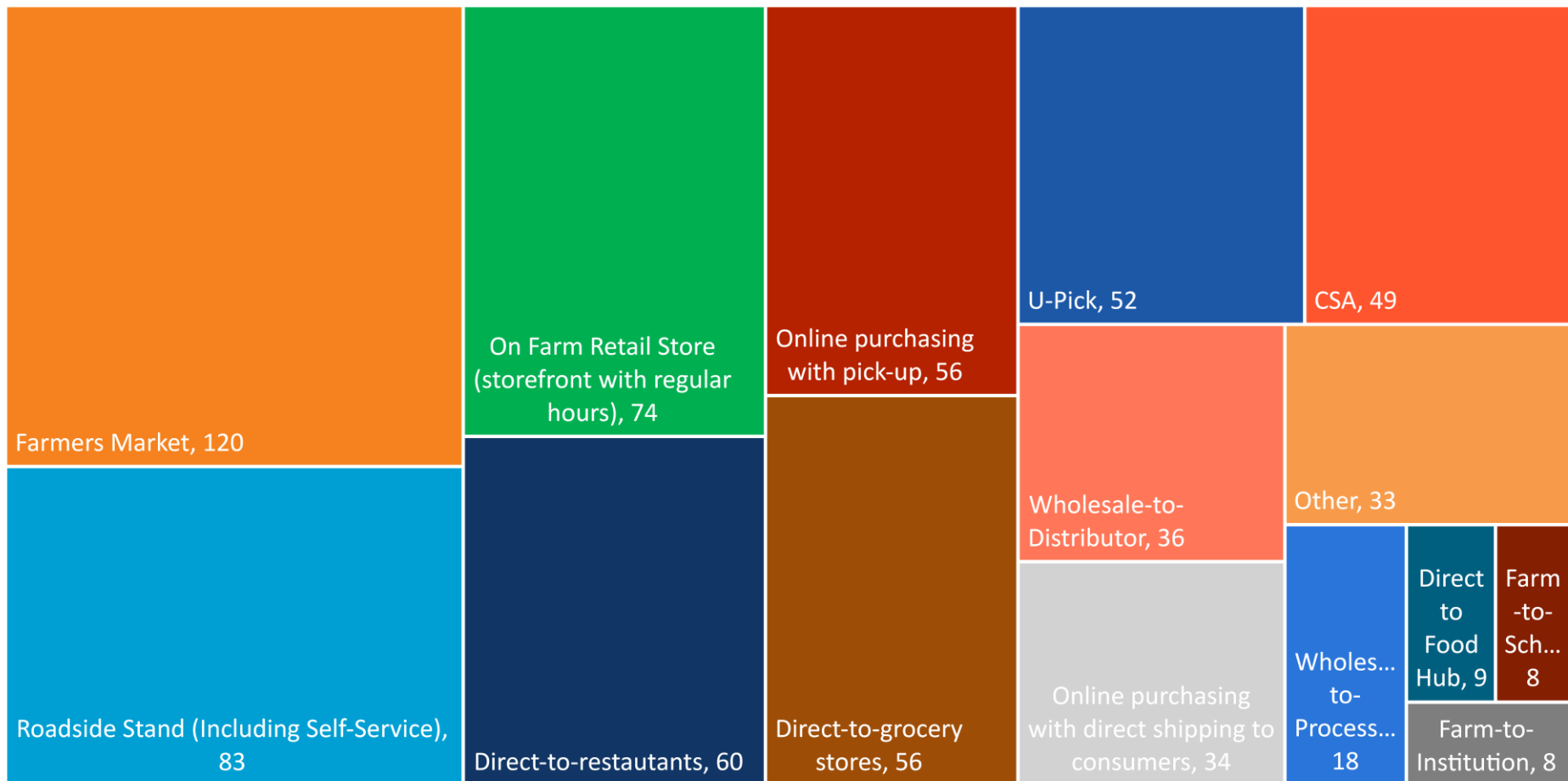
Current Practices: Please indicate specialty crop product types (products for direct human consumption), which make up more than 10% of your farm's yield (choose all that apply):



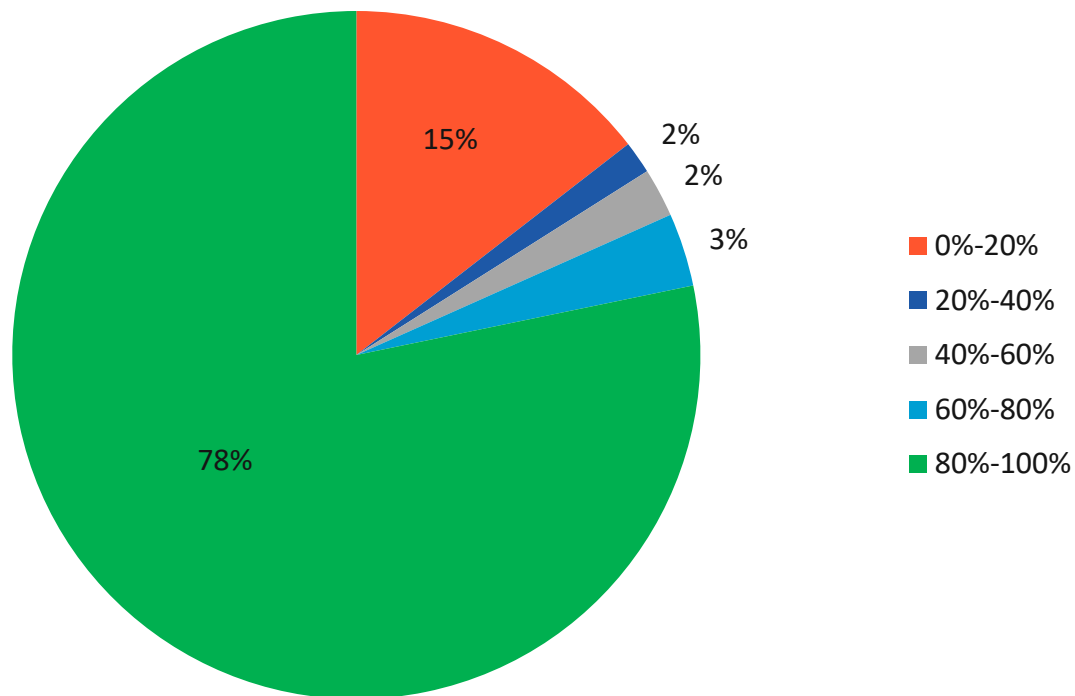
Current Practices: Which of the following is a primary market for at least one of the commodities you produce? (choose all that apply):



## Current Practices: What sales channels support your operation? (choose all that apply):



## Current Practices: What percentage of your production is harvested by hand (rather than mechanically)?



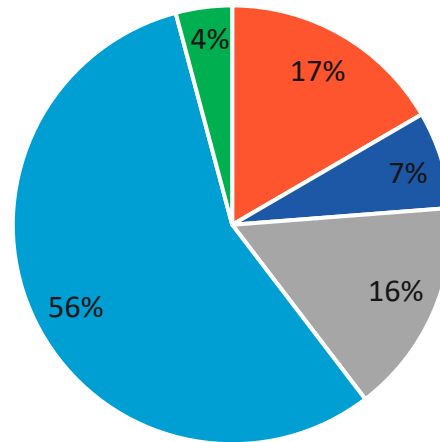
## Section 2: Market Channels

This section looks to understand current marketing channels and how surplus is distributed in terms of marketable edible and inedible food commodities.





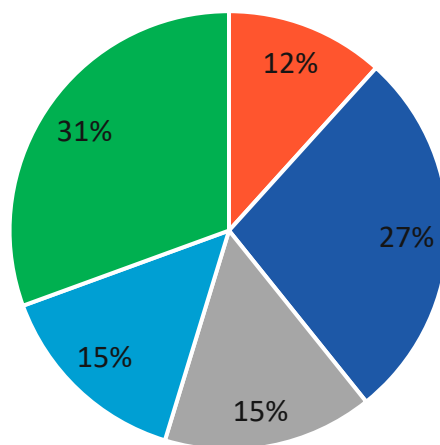
## Market Channels: Do you sell to commercial accounts that require your product to meet specific industry grading standards? Such as USDA grading standards or company specific standards set by retail grocery store chains?



- Yes—all commercial accounts served have such requirements
- Yes—only some of our commercial accounts served have such requirements
- No—none of the commercial accounts served have these requirements
- No—my operation does not sell to commercial accounts
- Not Sure



## Market Channels: How knowledgeable are your operation's staff about USDA grading standards for the commodity you grow?



- Not familiar at all
- We have limited knowledge
- We have significant knowledge
- We are very knowledgeable
- Not applicable - our operation does not utilize USDA grading standards



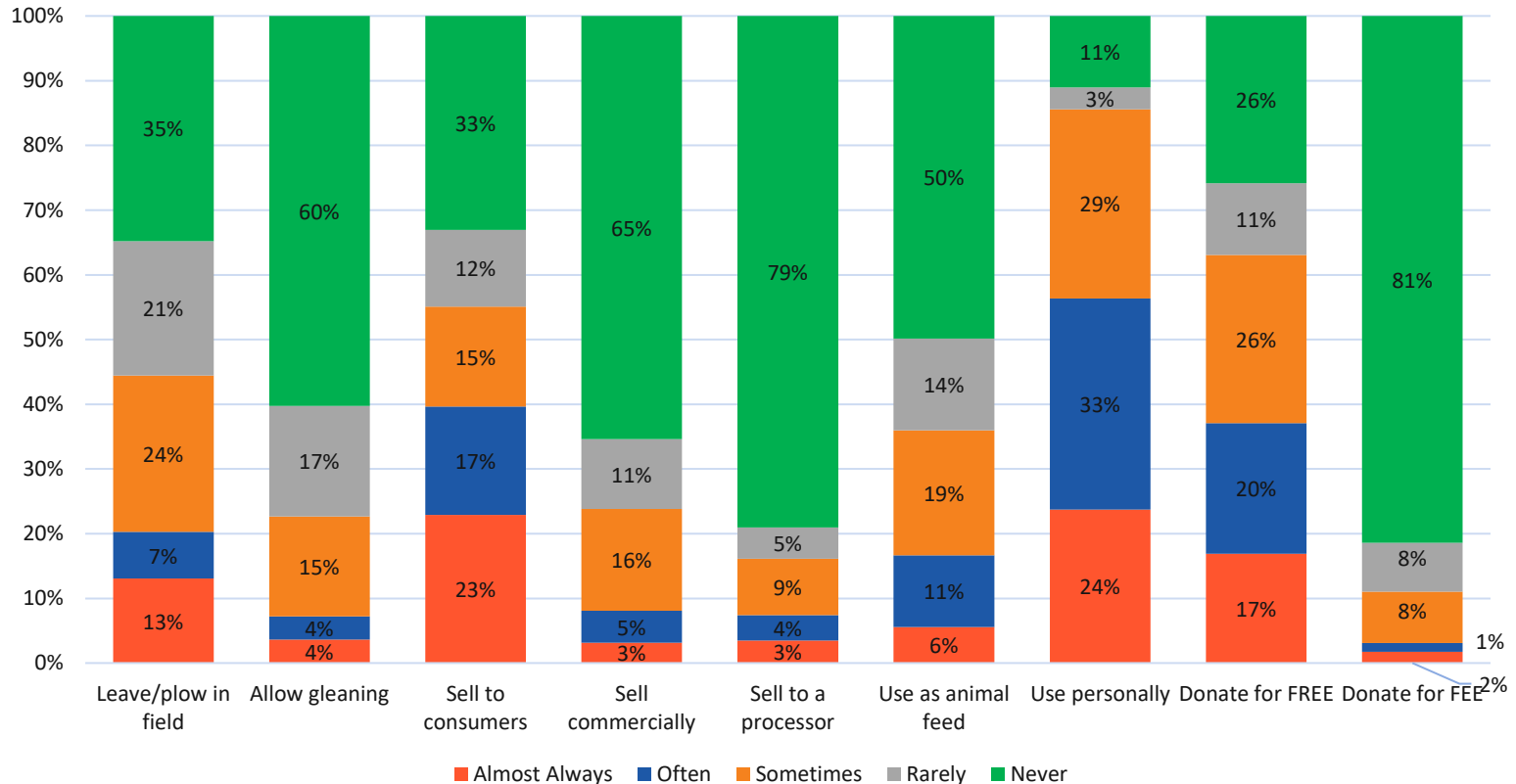
## Section 3: Market Alternatives and Unsuitability

This section relates to market alternatives and unsuitability to provide a better understanding of how food products flow through your operation. We are interested in better understanding and learning how surplus may be generated and how it is handled.

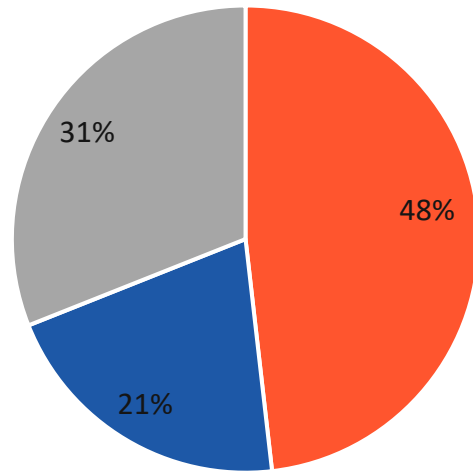
These responses will give us insight into the feasibility of creating a market for underutilized products, as well as what infrastructure or support would be needed to make that a possibility.



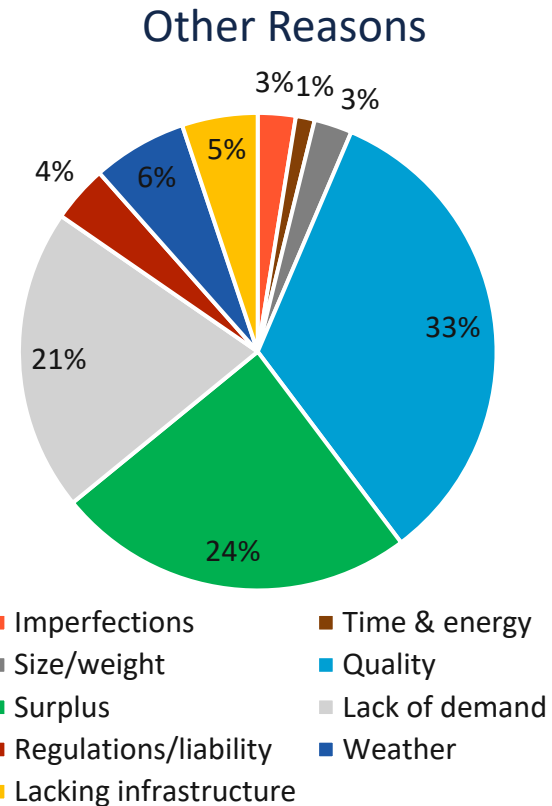
# Market Alternatives and Unsuitability: Please indicate what you currently do with products that are unsuitable for the primary market.



## Market Alternatives and Unsuitability: What customer related reasons prevent the sale of your commodities?



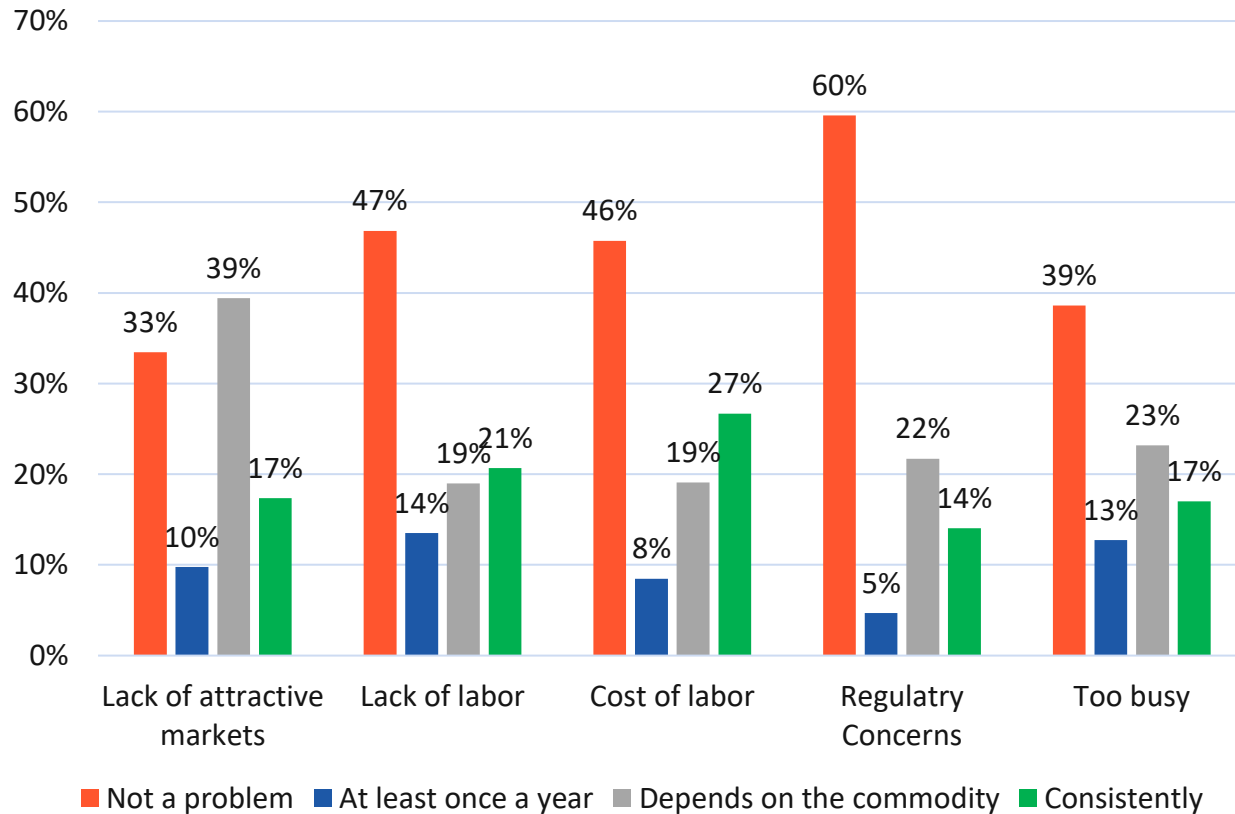
- Cosmetic imperfections
- Customer standards for size/weight
- Other reasons



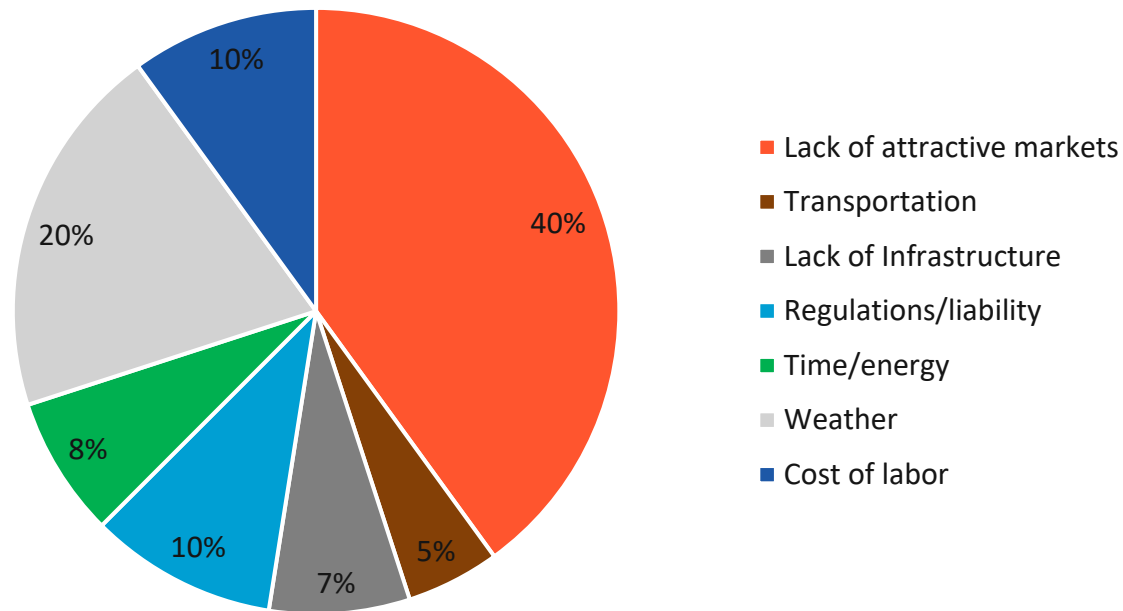
\*If the respondent indicated "Other reasons", a free field appeared for them to enter the reason. The ISTC team grouped responses into categories shown in the chart on the right.



Market Alternatives and Unsuitability: Consider barriers that stand in the way of generating income for commodities that are unsuitable for their primary market, as listed below. Please indicate if you experience these barriers and how frequently.



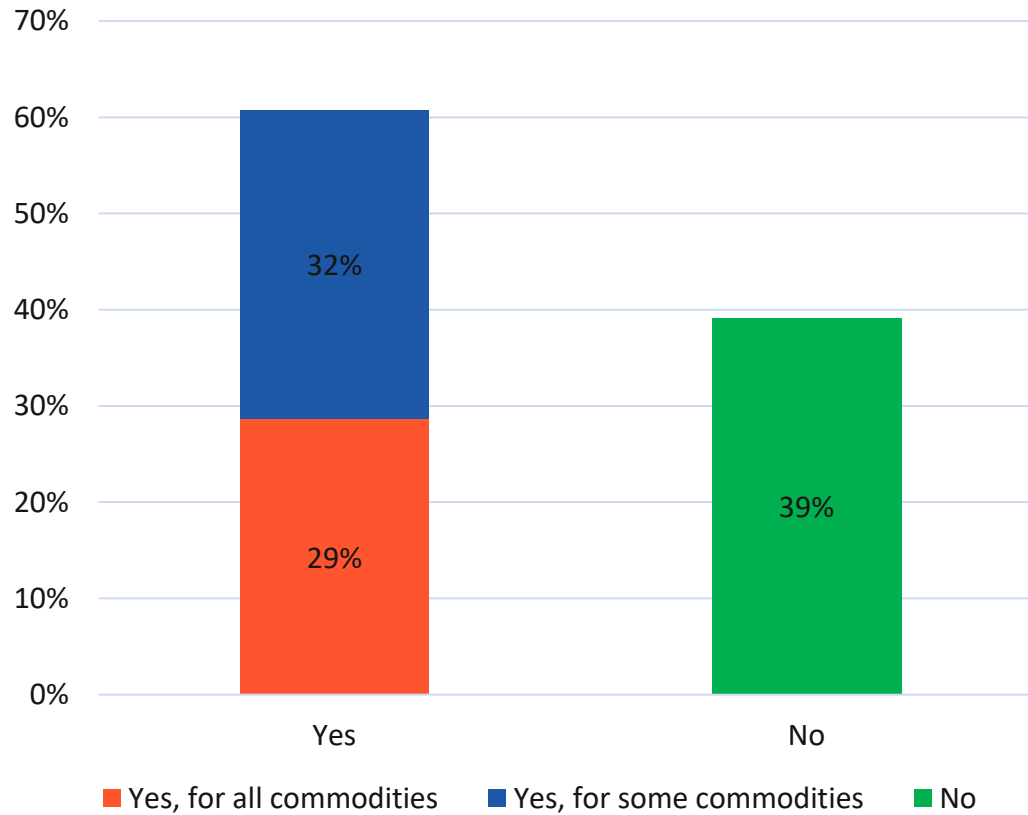
Market Alternatives and Unsuitability: Consider barriers that stand in the way of generating income for commodities that are unsuitable for their primary market. Are there other barriers not mentioned above (on previous slide)?



\*This question was a free field. ISTC grouped responses into categories as shown in the chart.



## Market Alternatives and Unsuitability: Are you interested in finding additional markets for any of your commodities?



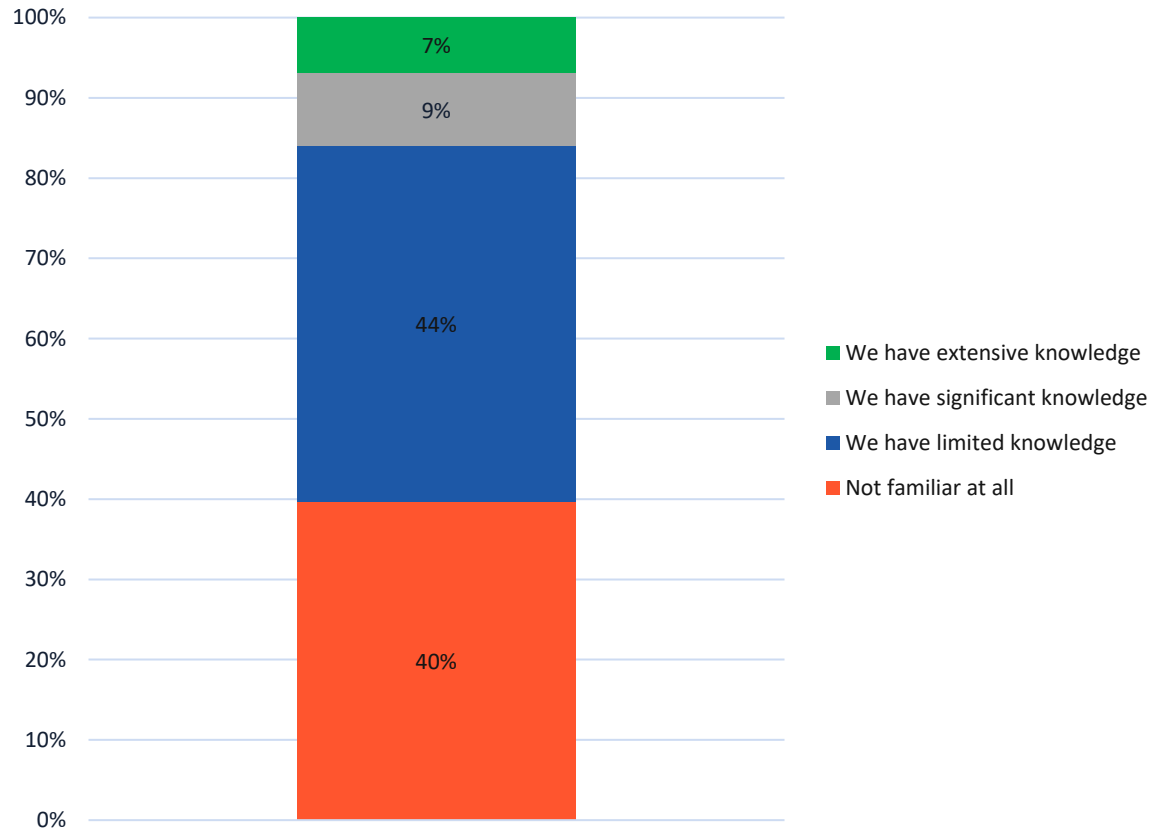


## **Section 4: Farm to Food Banks**

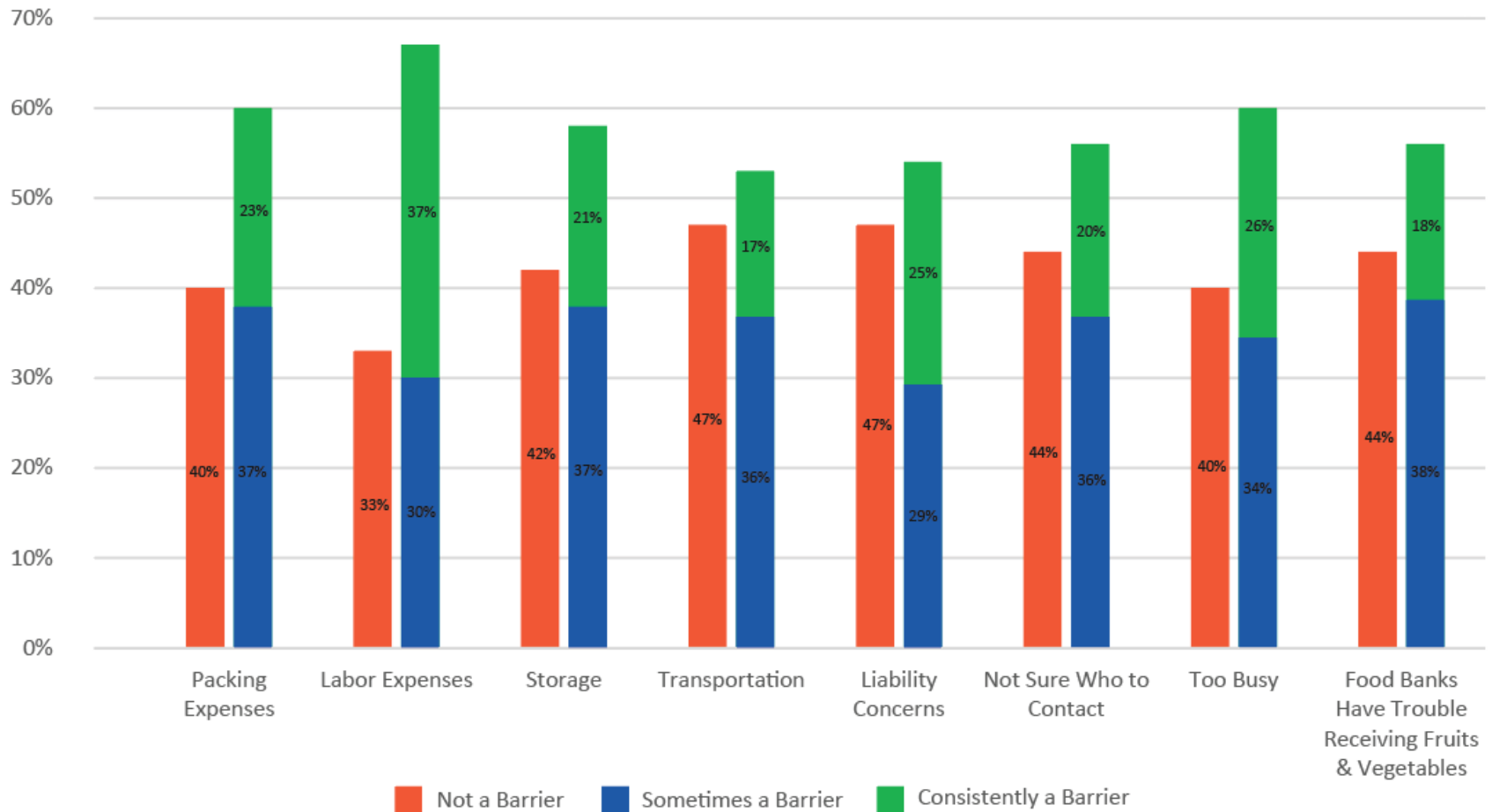
This section looks to understand the barriers and identify the opportunities to increase the movement of surplus food from farms to food banks and other hunger relief operations.



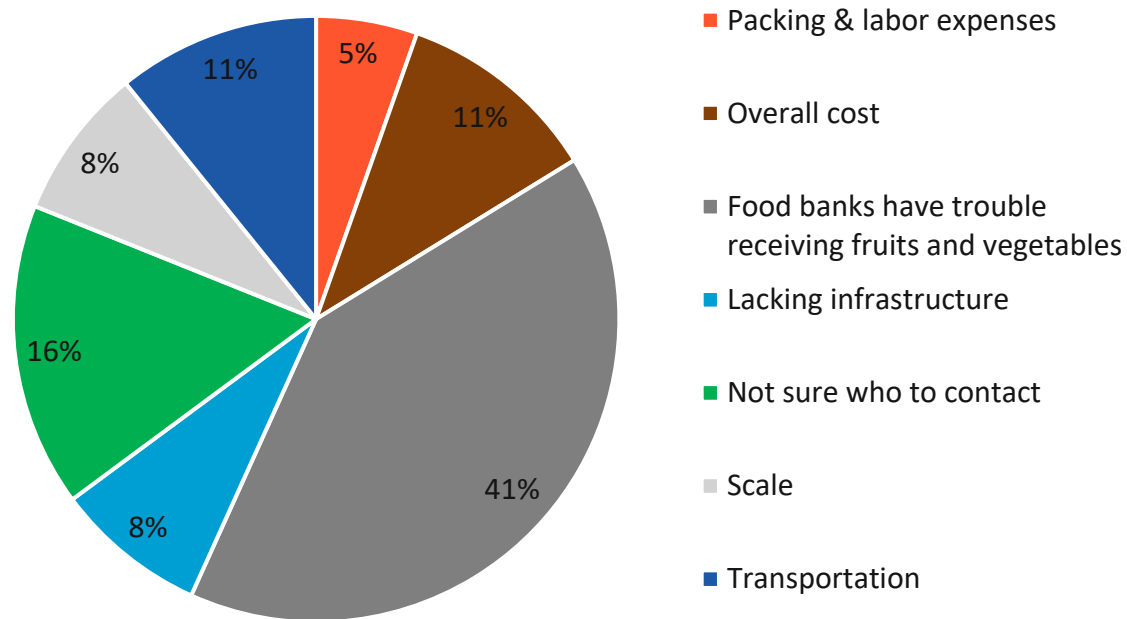
# Farm to Food Banks: How knowledgeable are you/your operation's staff about existing programs and incentives available for producers to donate food to food banks?



# Farm to Food Banks: What barriers stand in the way of selling or donating commodities directly to food banks?



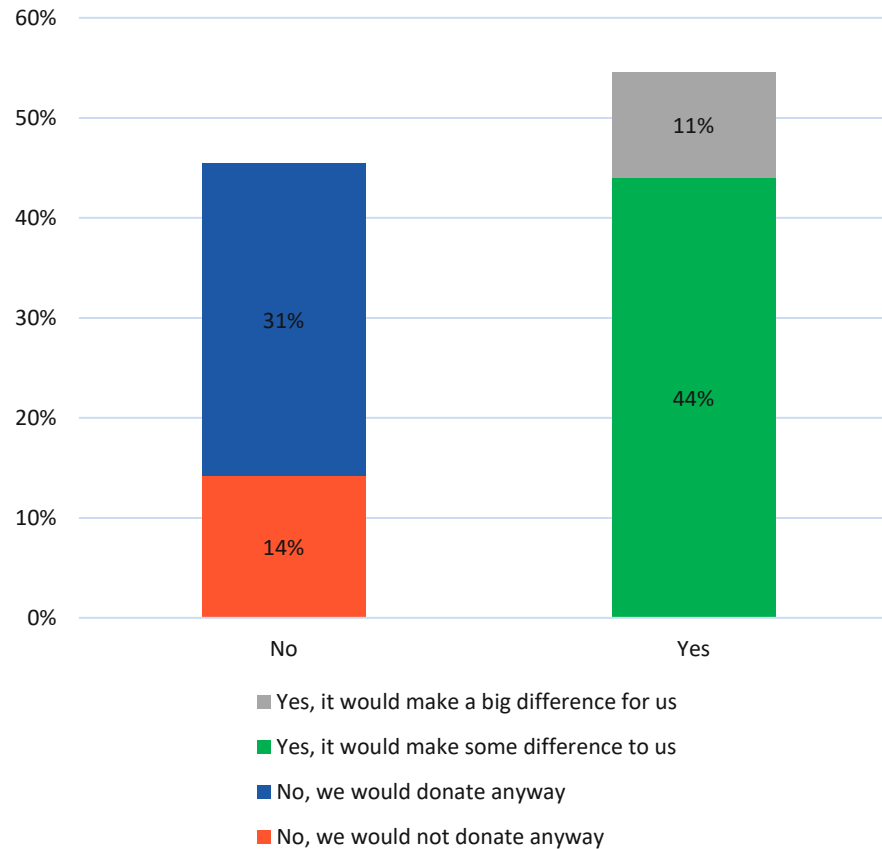
## Do you experience other barriers with donation that we didn't ask about above (on the previous slide)?



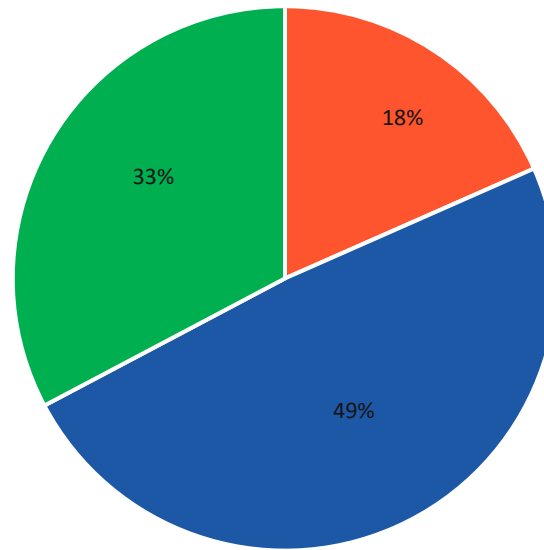
\*This question was a free field. ISTC grouped responses into categories as shown in the chart.



# Farm to Food Banks: Would receiving 5-30 cents per unit to offset costs make donating to food banks more appealing?



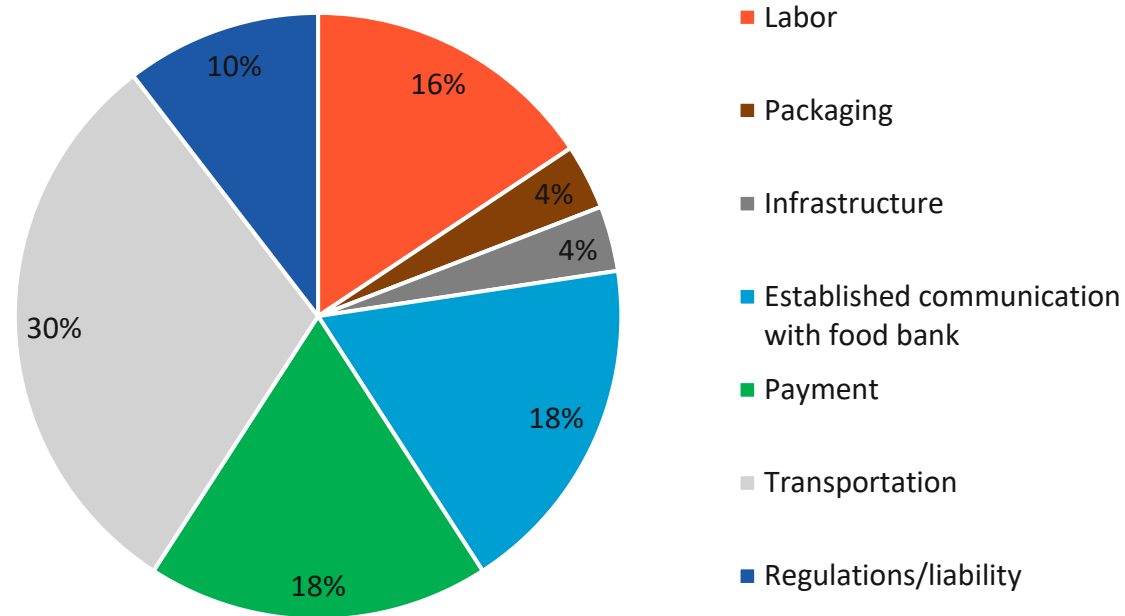
Farm to Food Banks: Of the following payment options, please select the minimum you would accept to donate to food banks.



■ Fair Market Price   ■ Pick and Pack Costs   ■ Indirect Payment



## Farm to Food Banks: Overall what would need to happen to make it easier for you to donate unsold produce/commodities? (please provide any feedback you have)



\*This question was a free field. ISTC grouped responses into categories as shown in the chart.



## Section 5: Product Marketability

In the next section, we're interested in the commodities you grow/raise and factors that negatively impact the marketability of those products. To simplify responses, please consider only the commodities you grew/raised in the calendar year 2019 (January – December 2019)







## Product Marketability: 2019 Commodity #1 (based on yield)

Commodity	# of Responses
Corn	40
Apples	26
Tomatoes	32
Beef	13
Lettuce, Pumpkins	9 Each
Eggs	7
Strawberries	6
Garlic, Greens, Pork	5 Each

Commodity	# of Responses
Asparagus, Peaches	4 Each
Milk, Peppers, Squash, Sweet Potatoes, Vegetables, Zucchini	3 Each
Beans, Beets, Carrots, Cantaloupe, Herbs, Microgreens, Okra, Potatoes	2 Each
Aronia Berries, Blueberries, Cheese, Chicken, Cucumber, Cucurbits, Dairy, Eggplant, Flowers, Grass, Hazelnuts, Honey, Mushrooms, Pecans, Radish, Rice, Rhubarb, Rye, Snap Beans, Syrup, Winter Wheat	1 Each



## Product Marketability: 2019 Commodity #2 (based on yield)

Commodity	# of Responses
Tomatoes	23
Peppers	14
Corn	13
Pumpkins	11
Melons	8
Beans, Pork, Soybeans, Strawberries,	7 Each
Cucumber, Eggs	6 Each
Apples, Squash	5 Each

Commodity	# of Responses
Greens, Kale	4 Each
Blueberries, Garlic, Lettuce, Wheat	3 Each
Beef, Broccoli, Chicken, Onion, Peaches, Pears, Potatoes	2 Each
Asparagus, Blackberries, Brassicas, Cabbage, Cherries, Christmas Trees, Cilantro, Dill, Fish, Fruits, Garlic Scapes, Herbs Honey, Raspberries, Red Clover, Spinach, Vegetables, Zucchini	1 Each



## Product Marketability: 2019 Commodity #3 (based on yield)

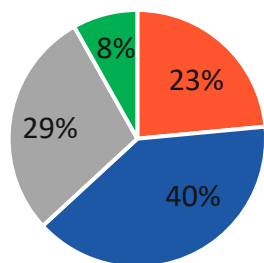
Commodity	# of Responses
Beans	14
Squash, Tomatoes	11 Each
Pumpkins	8
Peppers	7
Beef, Corn	6 Each
Greens, Melons, Peaches	5 Each
Hay, Eggplant, Potatoes	4 Each
Zucchini	3

Commodity	# of Responses
Apples, Basil, Blackberries, Butternut Squash, Carrots, Chicken, Cucumbers, Oats, Pork, Raspberries	2 Each
Arugula, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Dandelion, Eggs, Garlic, Herbs, Honey, Kale, Lettuce, Lamb, Microgreens, Nectarines, Okra, Onions, Radish, Rye, Soybeans, Spinach, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard, Tomatillos, Turkeys, Turnips, Wheat	1 Each



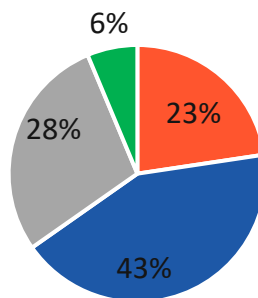
## Product Marketability: What is the growing season of your top 3 commodities in 2019? (select all that apply)

Commodity #1



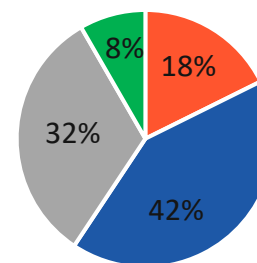
Spring Summer Fall Winter

Commodity #2



Spring Summer Fall Winter

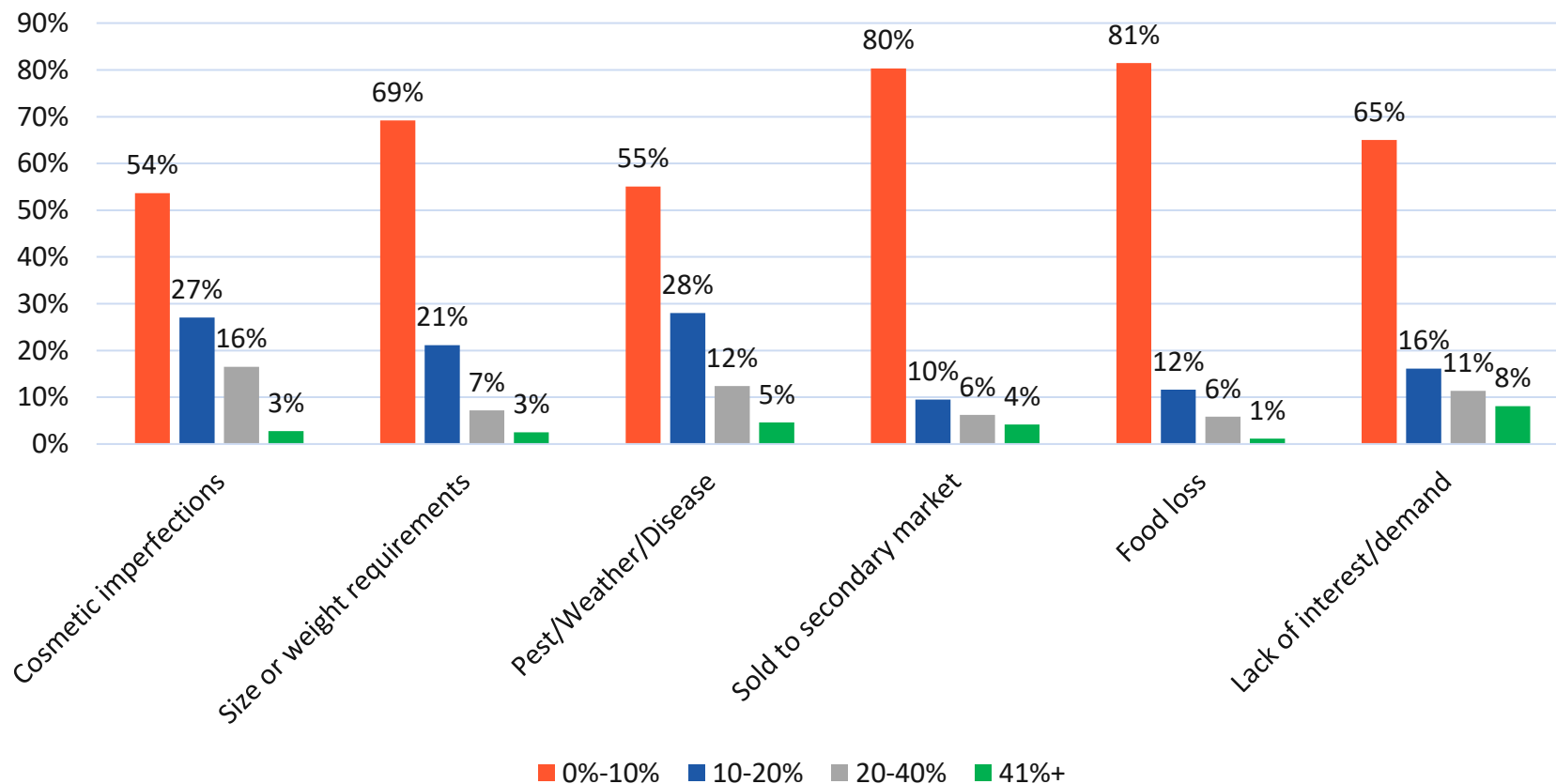
Commodity #3



Spring Summer Fall Winter



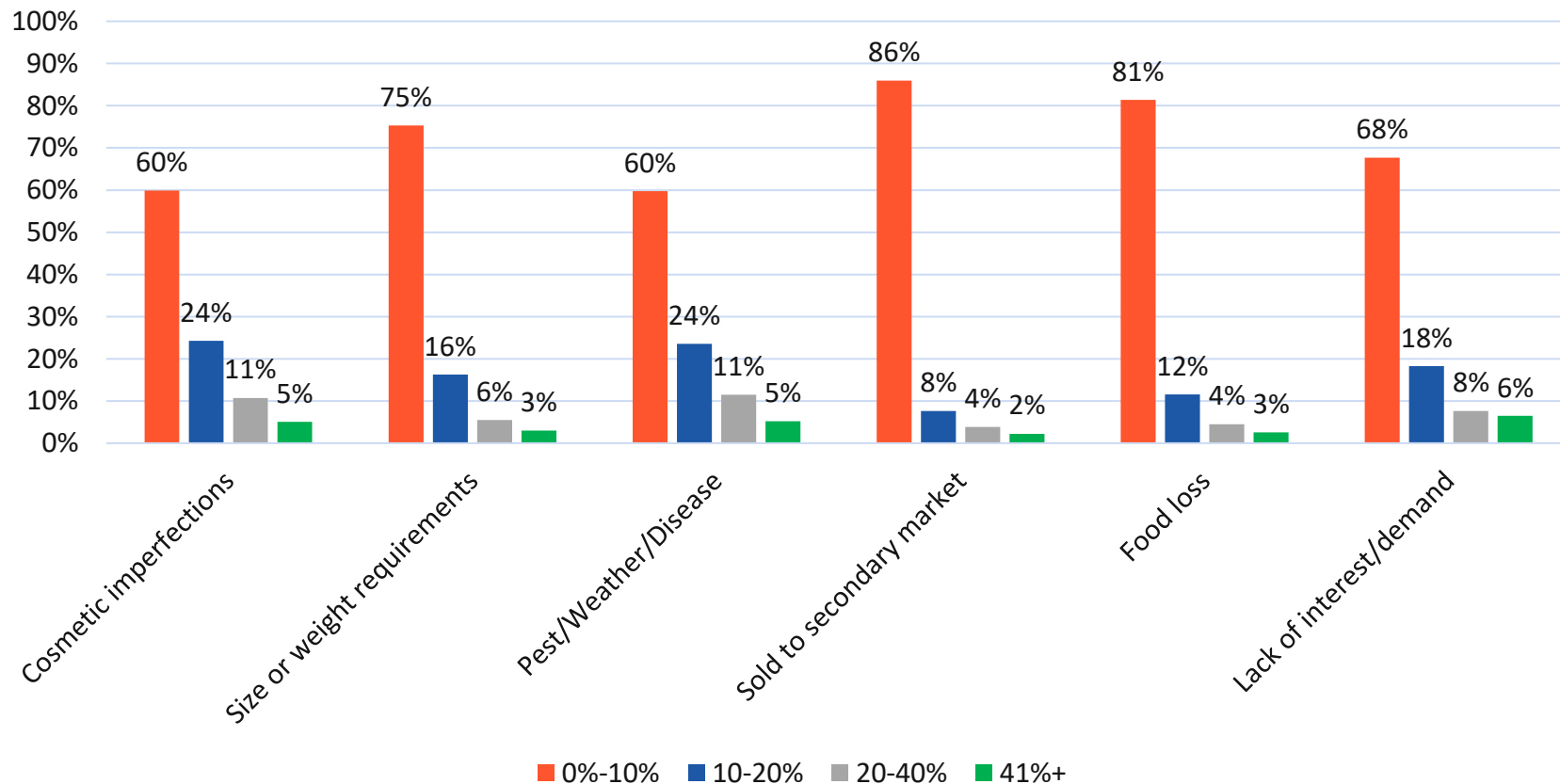
## Product Marketability: Please provide the percentage of 2019 commodity #1 that is not marketable in its primary market due to:



\*Food loss refers to spillage, spoilage, or other reduction in quantity before reaching the consumer, which might occur during production, post-harvest, processing, and/or distribution stages.



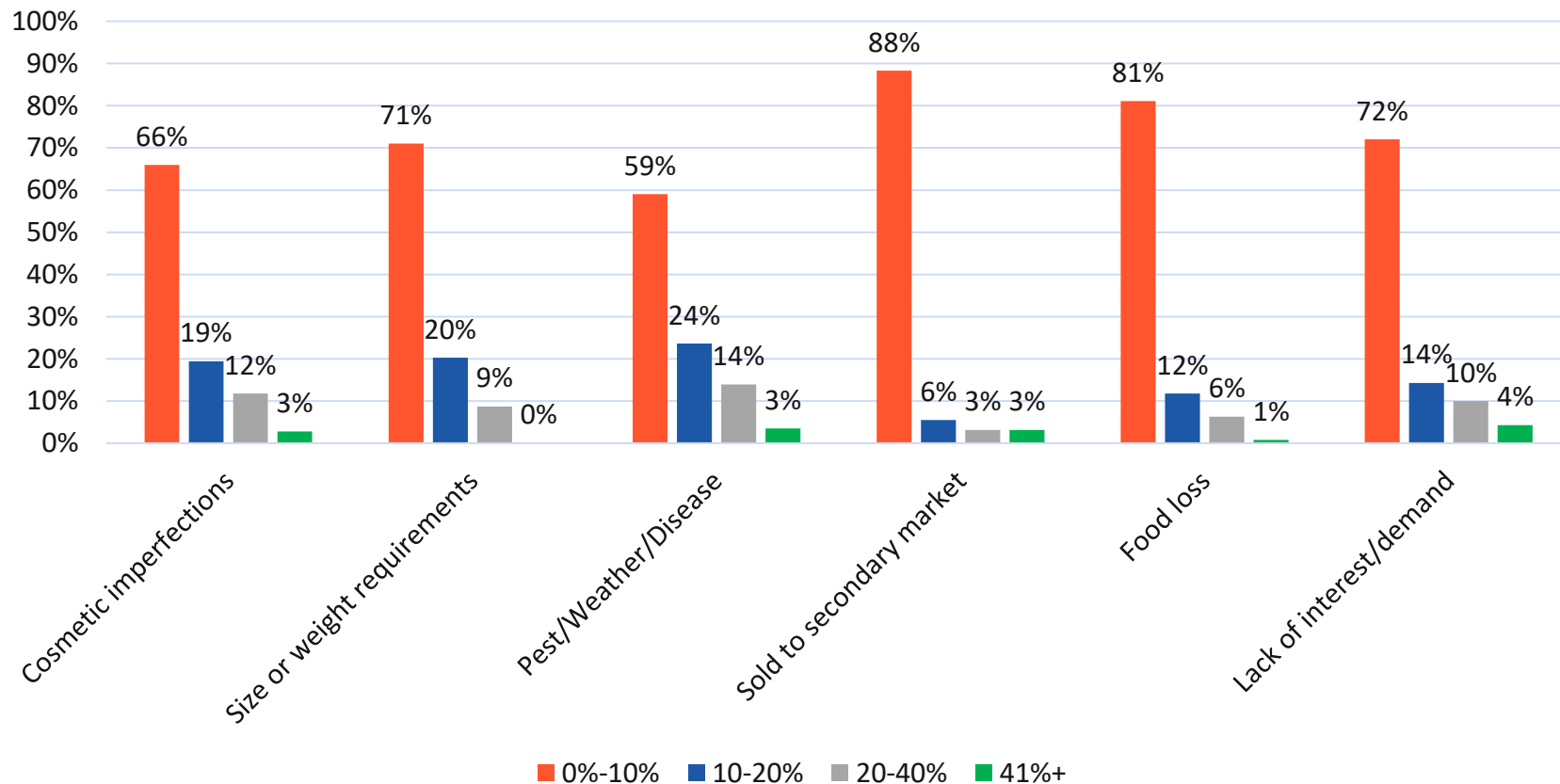
## Product Marketability: Please provide the percentage of 2019 commodity #2 that is not marketable in its primary market due to:



\*Food loss refers to spillage, spoilage, or other reduction in quantity before reaching the consumer, which might occur during production, post-harvest, processing, and/or distribution stages.



## Product Marketability: Please provide the percentage of 2019 commodity #3 that is not marketable in its primary market due to:



\*Food loss refers to spillage, spoilage, or other reduction in quantity before reaching the consumer, which might occur during production, post-harvest, processing, and/or distribution stages.





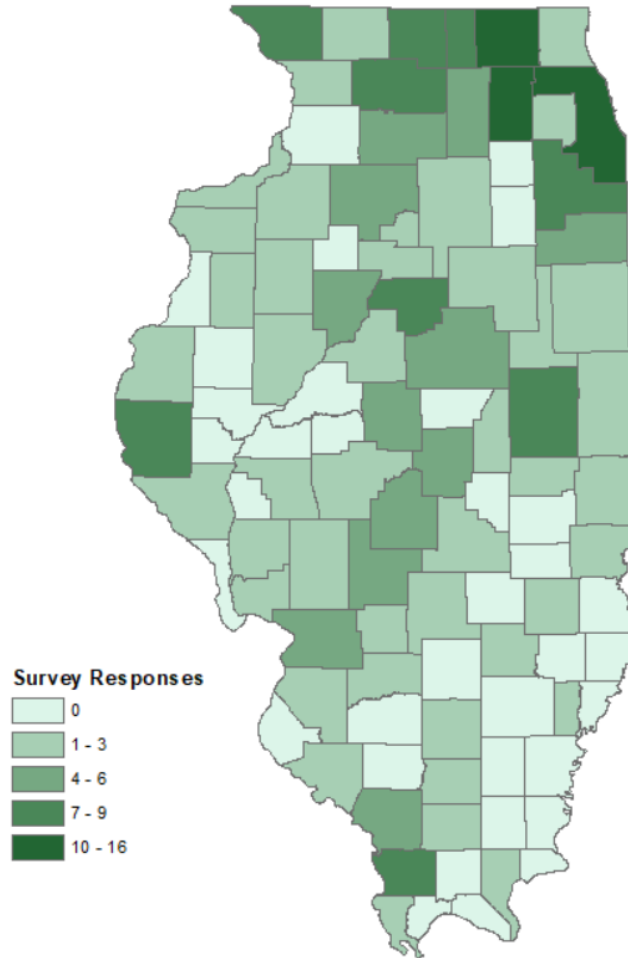
## Section 6: Demographic Information



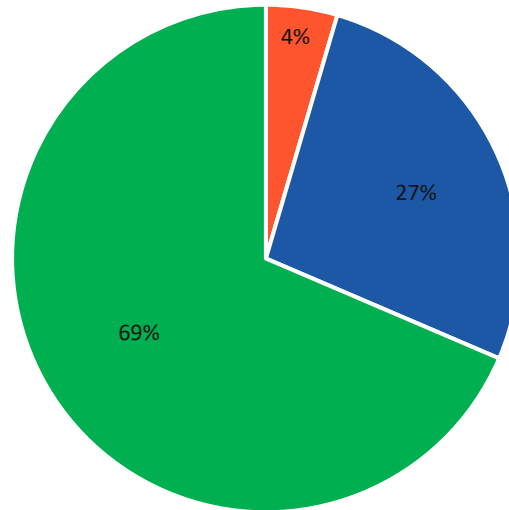
# Demographic Information: What county do you primarily farm in?

County	Responses
Adams	7
Alexander	1
Bond	1
Boone	8
Bureau	6
Carroll	2
Champaign	7
Christian	5
Clark	1
Clay	1
Clinton	2
Cook	11
DeKalb	5
Douglas	1
DuPage	3
Edgar	2
Edwards	2
Fayette	3
Ford	2
Franklin	2
Fulton	3
Greene	1
Hancock	1
Henry	2
Iroquois	3
Jackson	5
Jasper	2
Jefferson	3
Jersey	2
JoDaviess	7
Kane	12
Kankakee	5
Knox	1
Lake	3

County	Responses
LaSalle	2
Lee	6
Livingston	1
Logan	4
Macon	5
Macoupin	3
Madison	5
Marshall	1
McHenry	16
McLean	6
Mercer	1
Montgomery	5
Morgan	1
Ogle	7
Peoria	4
Piatt	3
Pope	1
Pike	1
Putnam	1
Randolph	3
Rock Island	2
Sangamon	3
Shelby	1
St. Clair	1
Stephenson	1
Tazewell	1
Union	8
Vermilion	3
Warren	2
Will	7
Williamson	2
Winnebago	7
Woodford	7



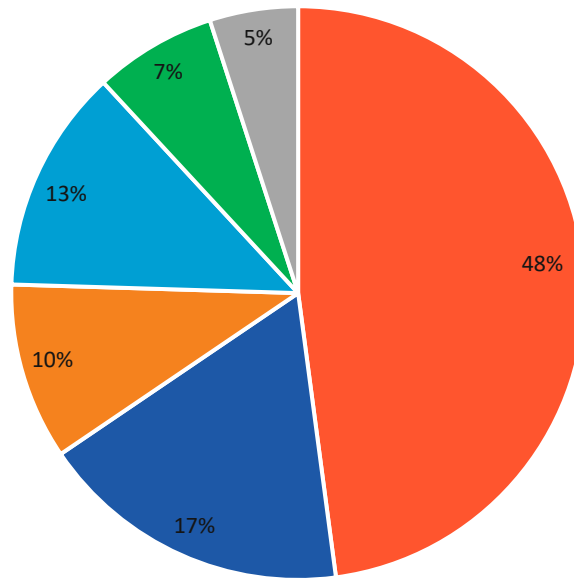
## Demographic Information: How many years have you been actively farming?



■ Less than 3 years   ■ 3-10 years   ■ More than 10 years



Demographic Information: Within your farming operations, how many total acres do you typically have in direct crop production (e.g. for fruits, vegetables, nuts, or other items that don't involve grazing, livestock housing, etc.)?



0-4 acres 5-14 acres 15-24 acres 24-99 acres 100-300 acres Over 300 acres



## Demographic Information: Are you registered as, or eligible to be registered as, one of these business types? (select all that apply):

