Rural Economic Development Model

I-74 CORRIDOR AG REGION

AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

2023

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The I-74 Corridor Ag Region (the 'Region') is comprised of six primarily rural counties in southeastern Indiana: Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Ripley, Rush, and Shelby.

Task Force members reviewed relevant industry data, developed a uniform survey tool, and visited 34 local agribusinesses and allied industries. The survey results are included in **Appendix A.**

After listening to concerns of these regional businesses and exploring future opportunities, the Task Force identified ways local and regional economic development professionals and partners could support the long-term sustainability and growth of these and other businesses and the regional economy through an enhanced focus on value-added agriculture development. Key insights from the company interviews were shared by the Task Force members and the qualitative outcomes are included in **Appendix B**. Participating businesses were afforded a clearer view of the tools that local governments and economic development organizations possess to assist in promoting the agribusiness industry cluster, especially given the prominent agriculture presence in the Region.

The REDM Process

The Rural Economic Development Model ('REDM') is a framework developed by a partnership of agricultural organizations, including the Indiana Corn Marketing Council, Indiana Economic Development Association, Indiana Farm Bureau, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and Purdue Center for Regional Development, to guide communities in the development of agricultural strategies for rural regions. Self-selected regions analyze data to discover their major agricultural assets and work to attract value-added agriculture — agribusiness and food-processing facilities and their connected supply chains — that fit with the Region's capacity, vision and needs.

Agriculture, as a leading Indiana economic sector, is shaped by world-renowned agribusiness firms, strong trade and membership organizations, productive farmers and soil, thoughtful and skilled leaders in public and private arenas, and innovative entrepreneurs. Agricultural strength is prevalent in the Region, and the Task Force's goal in implementing the REDM is to identify the ag assets (raw materials) and resources that will help leaders to develop the policies, infrastructure, sites, and support needed to create long-term improvements in their rural economies.

The REDM process focuses on the following components:

- **Assets** – Understanding a region's core industry clusters, agricultural outputs, and supply chains are key for supporting, attracting, and growing investment.

- **Policy** – Agriculture processing may require specialized policy provisions such as changes to zoning standards or target-specific environmental provisions. Reviewing local zoning, development standards, and other relevant policies, and crafting responsible, flexible amendments as necessary is critical for facilitating the expansion of current industry or the attraction of new, targeted industry.

- **Infrastructure** – Agriculture and ag-based businesses may require a different infrastructure footprint than other industries. Verifying that local infrastructure can meet the needs of growing agribusiness operations and planning for development to allow these needs to be met is crucial for successful and sustainable growth.

- **Sites** - The development of sites that meet the unique needs of targeted industries in a way that protects existing uses in the community is necessary for growth opportunities that meet the needs of targeted industries and a region's communities.

I-74 Corridor Business Snapshot

A look at the I-74 Corridor business data provides valuable insights on why an ongoing focus on retaining and expanding existing companies in the region makes sense. There are two sets of data. The first examines changes occurring in the number of jobs and the factors that are fueling the growth and decline of jobs in the Region (see **Table 1**). The second reviews the distribution of existing firms in the Region by stages, from the self-employed to business enterprises that employ 500 people or more (see **Figure 1**).

Table 1. Changes in Jobs (2004 thru 2019)

Jobs	Factors	I-74 Region
Gained by	New Startups	53,097
	Expansions and Spinoffs	36,534
	In-migration	2,800
	TOTAL GAINED	**92,431**
Lost by	Closings	56,703
	Contractions	28,020
	Out-migration	5,053
	TOTAL LOST	**89,776**
Net change		**2,655**

*Source: YourEconomy.org: http://youreconomy.org/*

Over the span of the 2004 to 2019 period, the churning of jobs in the region has been rooted in a number of factors. The top panel of **Table 1** focuses on the components that were

instrumental in adding jobs to the local economy. Most of the job gains came from new startups (53,097 jobs, 57 percent) followed by expansion and spinoff activities of existing firms (36,534 jobs, 40 percent). The remainder came from the migration of firms into the region over the course of the last several years (2,800 jobs, 3 percent).

The bottom panel of **Table 1** highlights job losses occurring in the region between 2004 and 2019. Without question, business closures were the primary contributors to job losses (63 percent, or 56,703 of jobs lost) occurring in the region during this period. The downsizing of existing companies in the region accounted for 28,020 jobs lost (31 percent), while 5,053 jobs (6 percent) were lost due to the relocation of firms to another Indiana region or to another state. All told, the economic shifts taking place in the Region from 2004 to 2019 resulted in a net increase of 2,655 jobs in business establishments, the majority of which were gained through expansion of the existing businesses.

Jobs in the I-74 Corridor by Employment Stages

In reviewing job changes, it is useful to give attention to the size of firms that may be associated with jobs. This can be done by delineating the number of employees into five employment stages. The five stages are shown in the accompanying diagram (shown right).

Stage 0 { Self-employed

Stage 1 { 2-9 employees

Stage 2 { 10-99 employees

Stage 3 { 100-499 employees
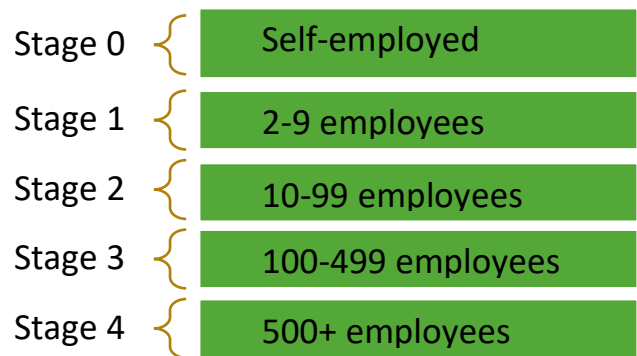
The second part of the analysis highlights companies and stages in the I-74 Corridor for 2019. (See Figures 1 and 2).

Stage 4 { 500+ employees

Figure 1 examines the number of establishments in the I-74 Corridor. Over 67 percent of companies are Stage 1 (5,308), 15 percent are Stage 0 (1,173) and 17 percent are Stage 2 (1,300) which, combined, reflects almost 99 percent of business establishments in the Region. The fourth largest number of establishments in the Region is Stage 3 companies at 1.1 percent (85), followed by Stage 4 companies at just 0.2 percent (16).

Figure 1. Companies by Stages (2019) – I-74 Corridor

Establishments by Stage

Stage	Value
Stage 0	1,173
Stage 1	5,308
Stage 2	1,300
Stage 3	85
Stage 4	16
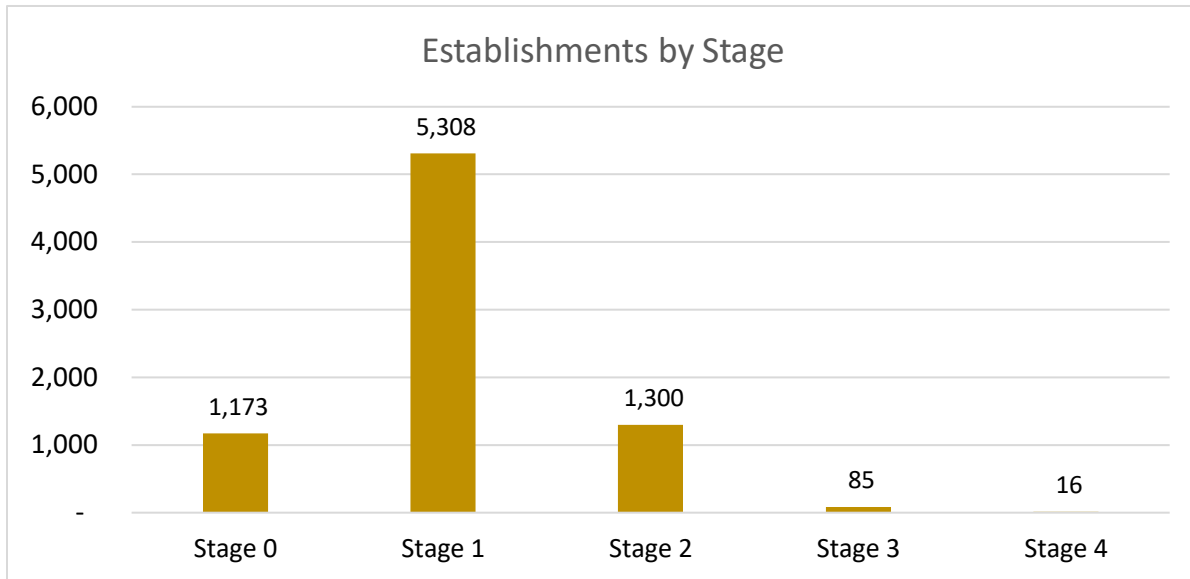
Figure 2 focuses on the number of jobs by company stage. In the Region, the largest number of people were employed by Stage 2 firms as of 2019 at 38.4 percent (30,929), followed by 25.3 percent (20,343) of people employed in Stage 1 firms. The Stage 3 firms comprised 18.4 percent (14,798) of total employees and Stage 4 firms were 16.5 percent (13,272). Lastly, 1.5 percent of those employed in the county were self-employed (1,173).

Figure 2. Jobs by Stages (2019) – I-74 Corridor

Jobs by Company Stage

Stage	Value
Stage 0	1,173
Stage 1	20,343
Stage 2	30,929
Stage 3	14,798
Stage 4	13,272
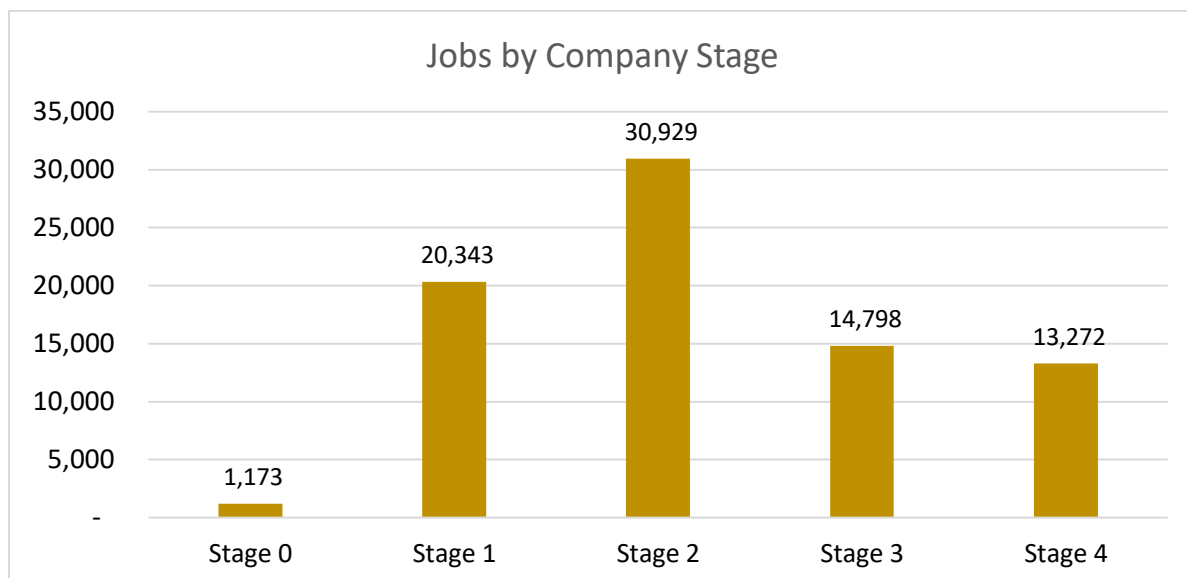
The Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program specifically targets Stage 1 and 2 firms. The data highlighted in **Figure 2** reveals, like many communities in Indiana, that Stage 1 and 2 firms are the key sources of jobs in the I-74 Region. As such, a BR&E program targeted to these two stages is a focus that makes sense for the Region. Not only could the attention be devoted to identifying factors that are limiting some Stage 1 and Stage 2 companies from growing, but also delineating the "red flags" (challenges that require immediate action) that are jeopardizing the ability of other Stage 1 and Stage 2 firms to survive over the near term.

Regional Data Overview

The I-74 Corridor includes six counties of which five counties belong to the Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (Region 11) and one county belongs to the Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (Region 15). Demographic and industry data were presented to the I-74 Corridor REDM Task Force to assist them in determining the focus of their efforts. A total of five industry clusters were identified as competitive with the following four having potential connections and providing support to the value-added supply chain of the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology Cluster:

- ✓ Advanced Materials
- ✓ Chemicals
- ✓ Glass and Ceramics
- ✓ Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing

Key Data Highlights (2021)

- ✓ Approximately **190,213** individuals call the I-74 Corridor home.
- ✓ The largest share of the population has a high school diploma or higher **(90 percent)** with **21 percent** of the population having a B.A. or higher degree.
- ✓ The top five occupations in the Region:
    - o **13.3 percent** Production
    - o **11.6 percent** Transportation and Material Moving
    - o **10.4 percent** Sales and Related
    - o **10 percent** Office and Administrative Support
    - o **9 percent** Management
- ✓ The median household income in 2019 was **$62,491.**
- ✓ The median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2019 was **$143,817.**
- ✓ Demographics:
    - o **95.8 percent** White
    - o **0.5 percent** Black or African American
    - o **0.02 percent** American Indian or Alaska Native
    - o **0.6 percent** Asian
    - o **0.04 percent** Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
    - o **2.2 percent** two or more races
    - o **2.4 percent** of the above races combined are of Hispanic or Latino Origin

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Headwaters Economics

Industry Cluster

Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) employs industry cluster analysis to determine economic competitiveness of a region. The I-74 Corridor has a unique set of industry clusters that are competitive. The Region had several STAR or competitive clusters, which included the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster; Chemicals; Glass and Ceramics; Advanced Materials; Mining; and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (see **Figures 3a** and **3b**). The emergence of Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology as a competitive cluster aligns with the project goals. The cluster had a Location Quotient of 2.4[1] and employment of 6,289 in 2019. Additionally, the cluster observed a growth of nearly 4% in Location Quotient between 2015 and 2019 rendering it as a STAR or a competitive cluster for the region. The cluster is defined by 69 NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) 6-digit industry sectors comprised of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; non-durable manufacturing (food processing and manufacturing); chemical manufacturing (fertilizers); durable manufacturing (farm and food product machinery); and wholesalers of grain, livestock, and farm supplies. In 2021, the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster had a Location Quotient of 2.52 retaining and expanding its competitiveness after COVID. The cluster employed 6,343 workers in 2021. In 2021, the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster had a GRP (Gross Regional Product)[2] of approximately $711M or slightly less than three-fourths of a $1B.

Figure 3a. I-74 Corridor Industry Cluster Analysis (2015-2019)
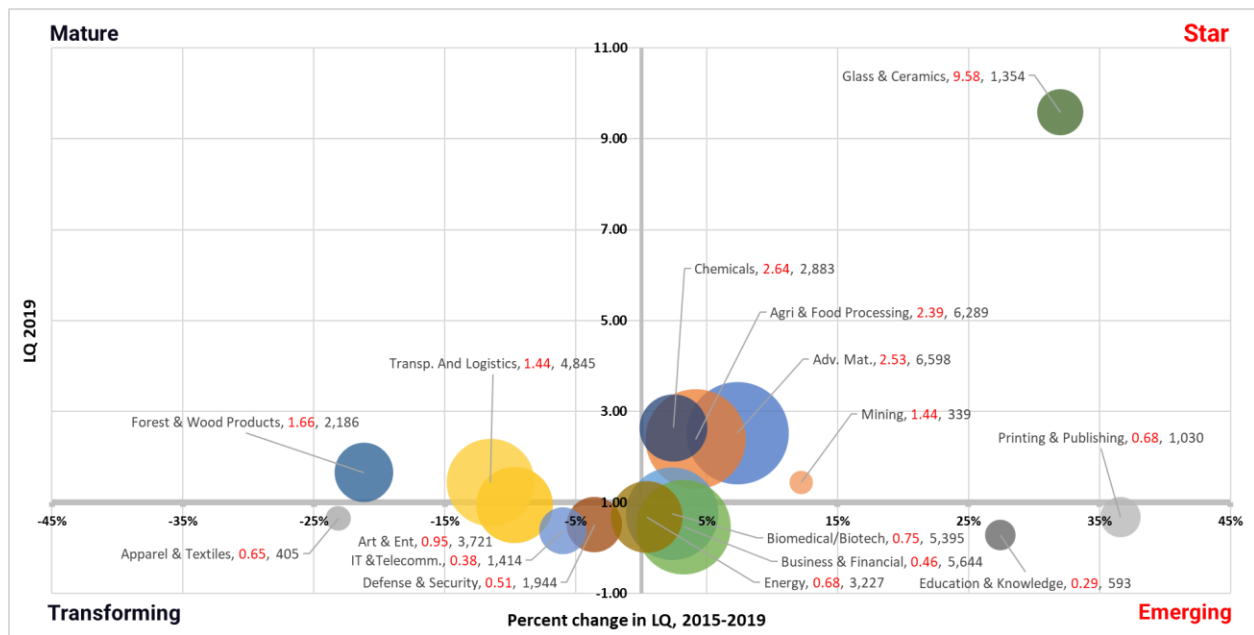
[1] The concentration of jobs in Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster was more than two times the national average indicating the capacity for exports.

[2] GRP shows the final market value of the goods and services produced in the cluster in I-74 Corridor. https://kb.emsidata.com/glossary/gross-regional-product-or-grp-i0/#:~:text=Gross%20Regional%20Product%20(GRP)%20is,in%20the%20region%20of%20study.

**Figure 3b. I-74 Corridor Industry Cluster Analysis (2015-2019)**
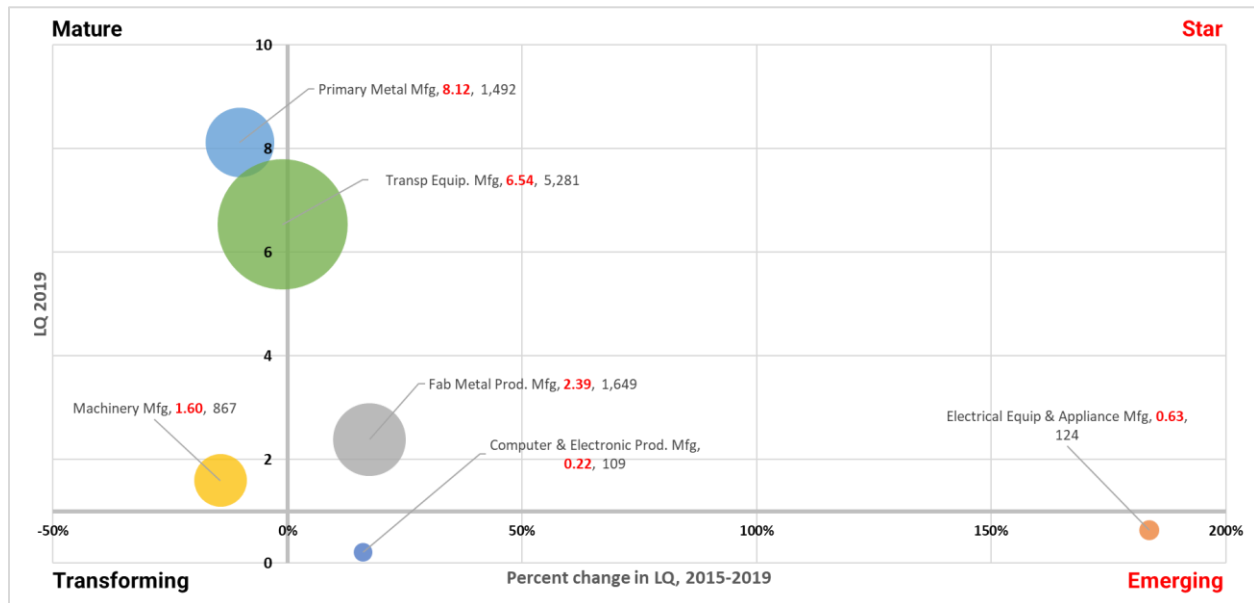
Shift-share Analysis

Shift-share analysis identifies industry sectors within a cluster that have unique competitive advantages and are able to counter the declining economic trends. For example, a particular industry sector might be declining nationally in terms of jobs, or the industry might be shrinking at the national level, but that particular industry sector might be growing jobs in the region. Such industry sectors are considered as having "competitive shift" or unique competitive advantages in the Region. Availability of raw materials, transportation linkages, skilled-labor availability, industrial legacy, etc., are considered to provide the unique regional competitiveness to these industries.

In the I-74 Corridor, crop production, rendering and meat byproduct processing, frozen specialty food manufacturing, soft drink manufacturing, farm machinery and equipment manufacturing, grain and field bean merchant wholesalers, other animal food manufacturing, post-harvest crop activities, farm and garden machinery and equipment merchant wholesalers, and soil preparation, planting and cultivating were competitive and outperformed other industry sectors within the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster. Refer to **Figure 4a** below for the listing of outperforming and underperforming industry sectors pre-COVID 19 within the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster. During the post-COVID period in 2021, the number of outperforming and underperforming industry sectors remained the same. Several industry sectors within the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster retained their outperforming status in 2019 as well as 2021. Crop production, rendering and meat byproduct processing, frozen specialty food manufacturing, soft drink manufacturing, and grain and field bean merchant wholesalers remained outperforming during the pre- and post-COVID periods. Farm supplies merchant wholesalers and perishable prepared food manufacturing changed from underperforming in 2019 to outperforming in 2021. Farm machinery and equipment manufacturing moved from

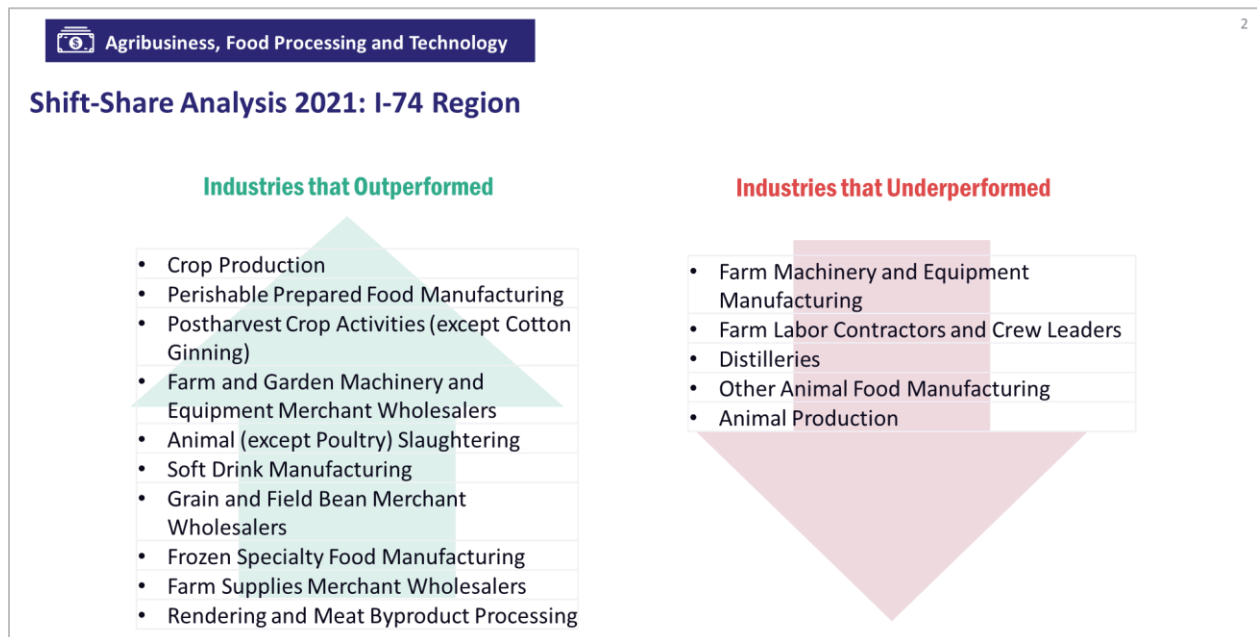outperforming in pre-COVID (2019) to underperforming in post-COVID (2021) period. Refer to **Figure 4b** for 2021 outperforming and underperforming industry sectors.

Figure 4a. Shift-Share Analysis (2019) Pre-COVID
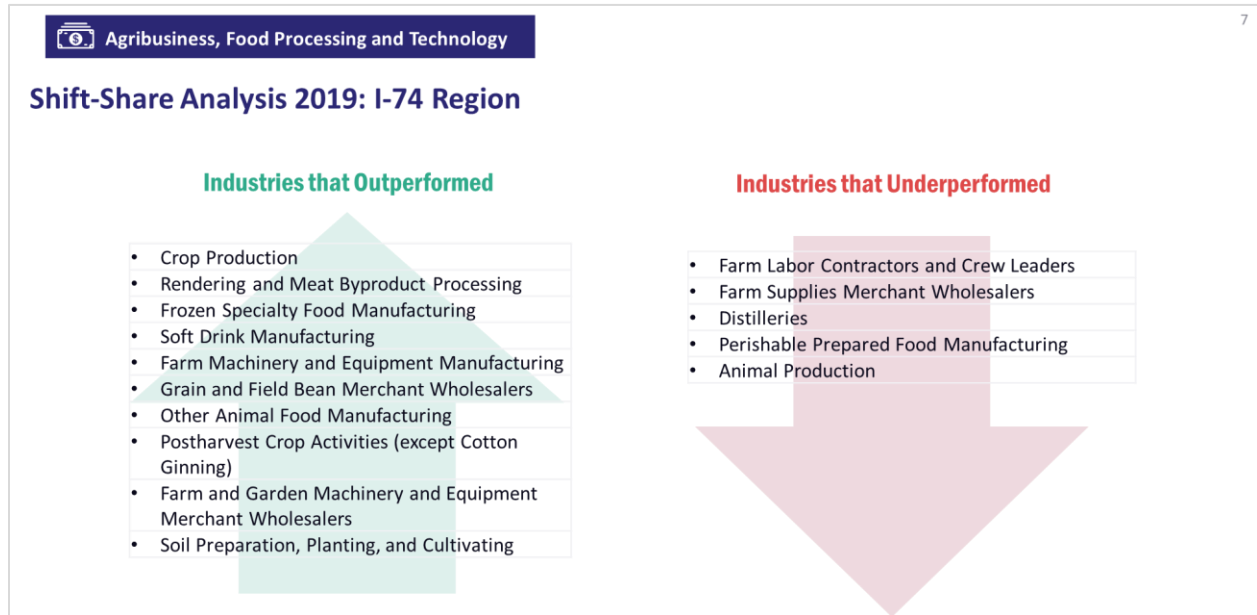
Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2021.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Figure 4b. Shift-Share Analysis (2021) COVID

Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2022.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Economic Leakage Analysis

Industries require supplies and raw materials for production. A region might not be self-sufficient in fulfilling all the requirements of an industry and hence, a supplier might be located outside of the region. The $ value of supplies and raw materials (goods and services) imported from outside of the region is known as economic leakages. The knowledge of economic leakages reveals the market $ value of demand available in the region.

In the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster, the I-74 Corridor is using inputs of $166 million for crop production, $108 million for animal production, and nearly $57 million for soybean and other oilseed processing. A large proportion of this demand is leaking and met by suppliers from outside of the region, either from Indiana, other U.S. states, or international imports. For example, crop production had leakages of more than $124 million and animal production had leakages of $85 million in 2019. Refer to **Figure 5a** below for the top leaking sectors related to the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster during the pre-COVID 2019. In the post-COVID 2021 period, the overall magnitude of purchases decreased. For example, crop production had slightly more than $160 million purchases in 2019 which decreased to slightly less than $140 million in 2021. The Region used inputs of $106 million for animal production, $41 million for other animal food manufacturing, and slightly more than $40 million for soybean and other oilseed processing in 2021. The leakages were in excess of $56 million in animal production, $36 million in other animal food manufacturing, and $19 million in soybean and other oilseed processing. Proportionately there were more supplies obtained from within the region in 2021 in crop production and animal production. The supply chain impacts during the COVID period of 2020 might have caused local producers to search for raw material suppliers within the region. Refer to **Figure 5b** for leakage analysis in the post-COVID 2021 period.

Figure 5a. Leakage Analysis (2019) Pre-COVID
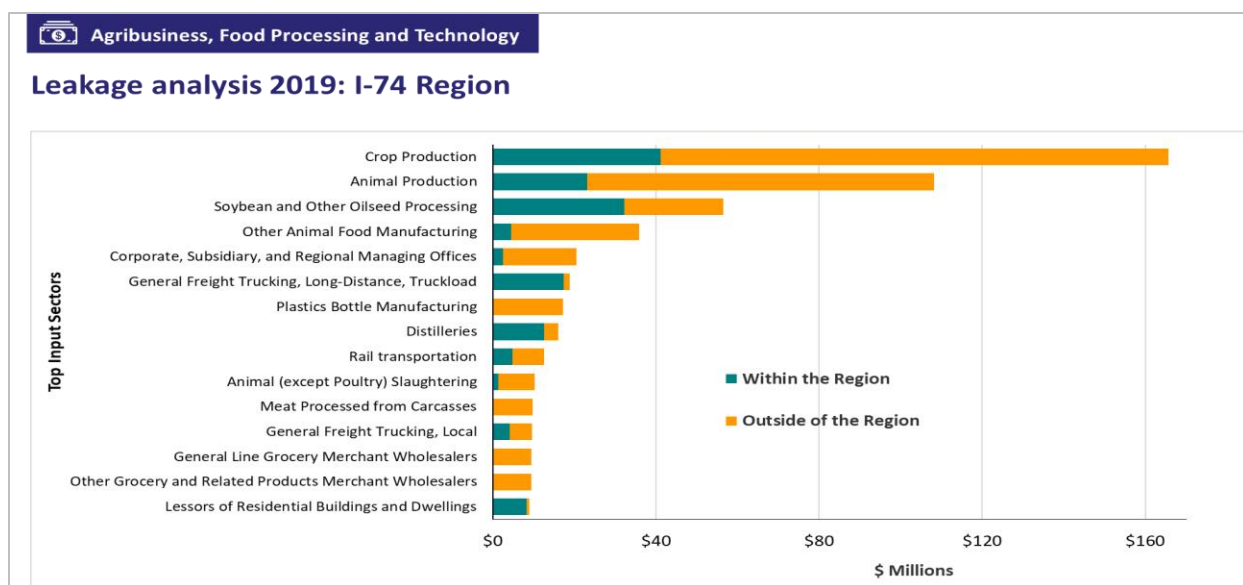
Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2021.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Figure 5b. Leakage Analysis (2021) COVID
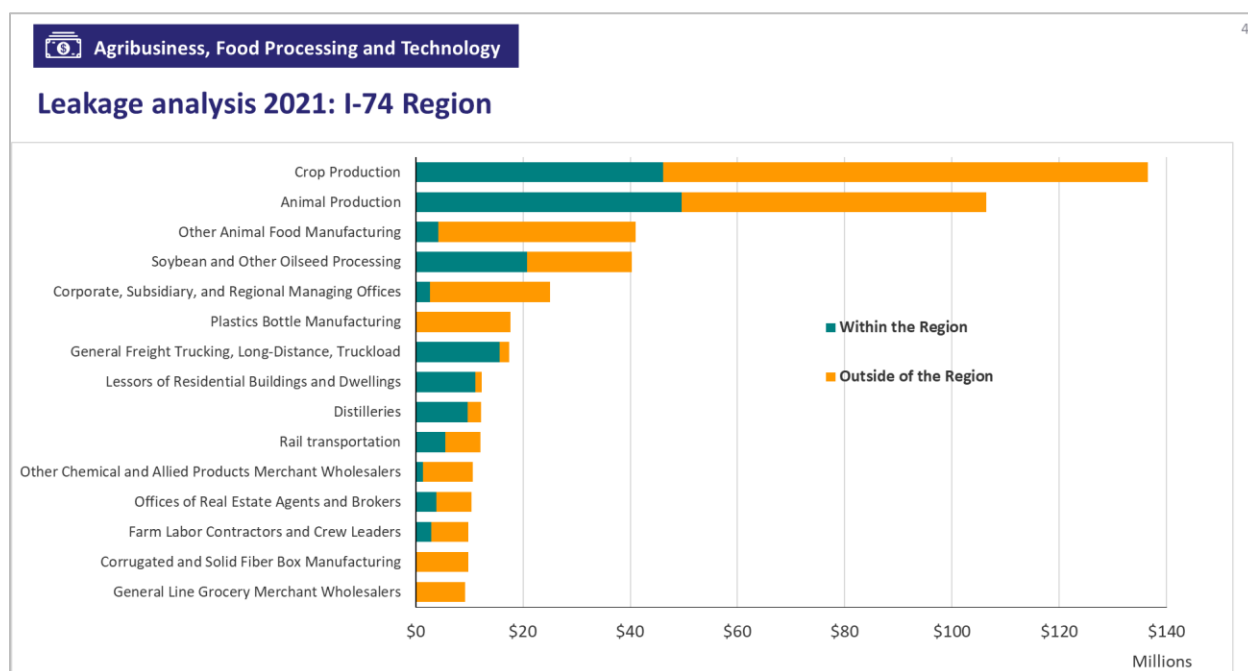
Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2022.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Occupational and Worker Demographics

The top occupations engaged within the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster include farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers; farmworkers and laborers in crop, nursery, and greenhouse; farmworkers in farm, ranch, and aquacultural animals; packaging and filling machine operators and tenders; laborers and freight stock and material movers by hand, etc. The median hourly earnings range from $10.50 for farmworkers in farm, ranch and aquacultural animals to $27.50 for sales representatives in wholesale and manufacturing except technical and scientific products. Most of the top occupations require either a high school diploma or on the job training with no formal educational credential. It is important to know that some of these occupations that require manual work and repetitive tasks have higher than average probability for getting automated. For example, packaging and filling machine operators and tenders have an Automation Index value of 117 or 17% higher probability for automation than the average Automation Index of 100.

More than one-third (36%) of the workers employed in the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster are matured (age 55 years or more). It is higher than the state average of 31% matured workers in the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster. The I-74 Corridor has less Hispanic workers (7%) compared to Indiana's average of 11% in this cluster. Similarly, the proportion of Black workers in the I-74 Corridor at 2% is lower than Indiana's average of 5%. In terms of gender, the I-74 Corridor has 21% female workers compared to Indiana's average of 25% female workers. In the I-74 Corridor, more than one-third of the workers are near retirement age and the proportion of younger workers (age 14-

24 years) is only 13%. Whereas automation might help in the future, but the region needs to consider the future pipeline of workers to replace the retiring workforce in this cluster.

Occupations

In 2019, the most common occupations in the I-74 Corridor were production (13.3 percent), transportation and material moving (12 percent), sales and related (10.4 percent), office and administrative support (10 percent), and management (9 percent) (see **Figure 6**).

Figure 6. Total Jobs and Top Five Occupations in I-74 Region (2019)
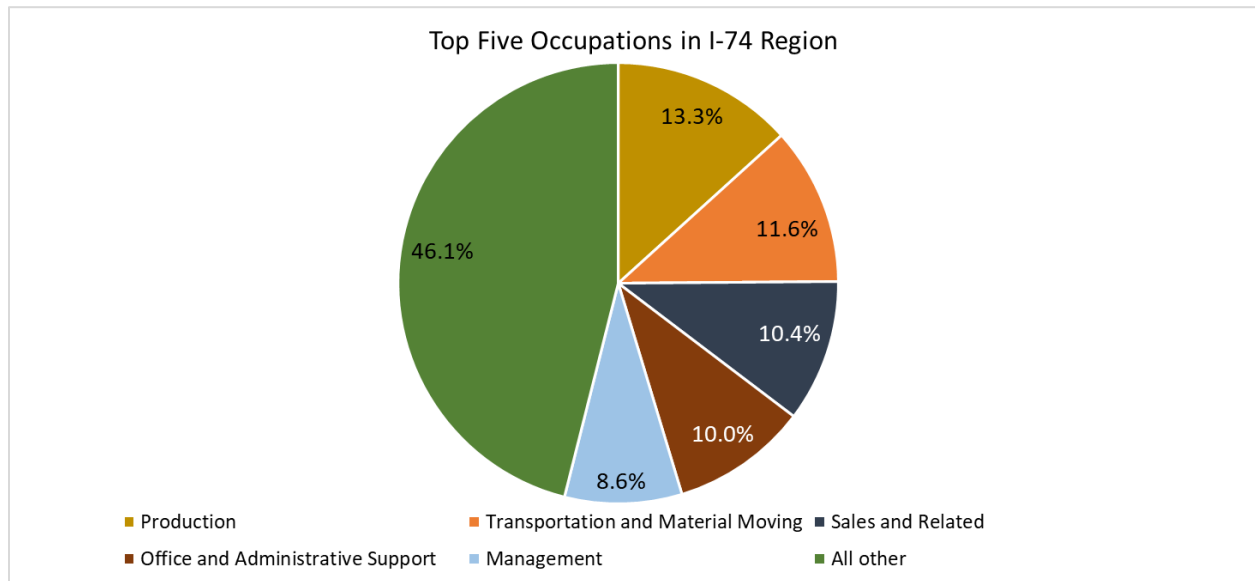
Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2022.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Next, we looked at occupations with the largest gains and losses in employment numbers between 2003 and 2019 (see **Figure 7**). Changes in employment levels are particularly of interest when they have occurred in sector related occupations where a high percentage of local employment is concentrated.

The largest percentage gained in occupations was farming, fishing, and forestry at 47 percent (1,058 jobs in 2019) followed by healthcare support at 46 percent (2,614 jobs in 2019). Occupation decreases were in educational instruction and library (-14 percent; 2,461 jobs in 2019) and construction and extraction (-14 percent; 4,409 jobs in 2019).

Figures 7a & 7b. Occupational Distribution and Change in the I-74 Corridor (2003-2019)

Occupational Distribution and Change Percentage in I-74 Region

Occupation	Change
Farming, Fishing, and Foresty	47%
Healthcare Support	46%
Educational Instruction and Library	-14%
Construction and Extraction	-14%
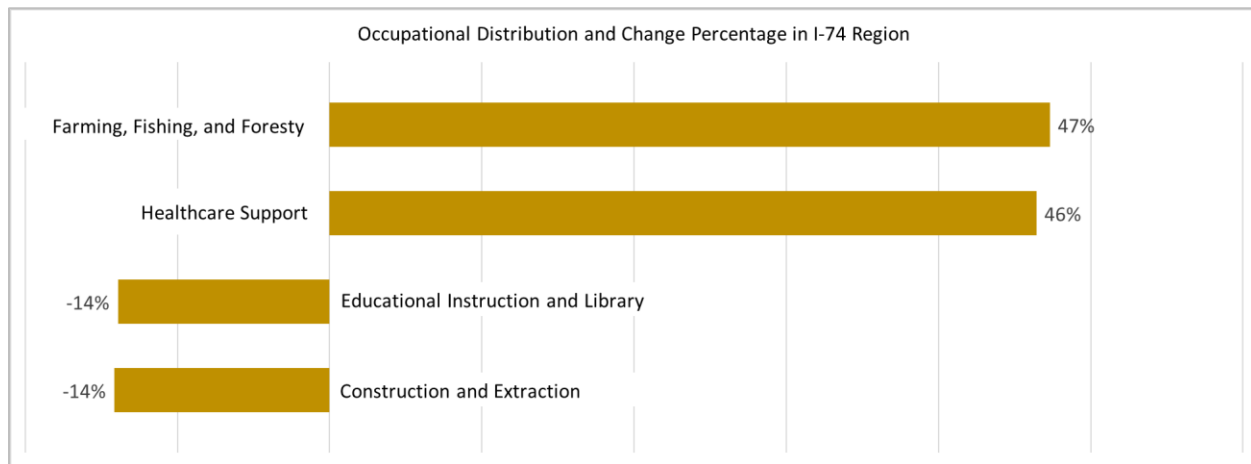
Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2022.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Employment numbers increased in transportation and material moving (1,418 jobs), healthcare practitioners and technical (1,273 jobs), and food preparation and serving (1,111 jobs), while they decreased in office and administrative support (-888 jobs) and production (-1,140 jobs) occupations.

Occupational Distribution and Change Employment in I-74 Region

Occupation	Change
Transportation and Material Moving	1,418
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	1,273
Food Preparation and Serving	1,111
Office and Administrative Support	-888
Production	-1,140
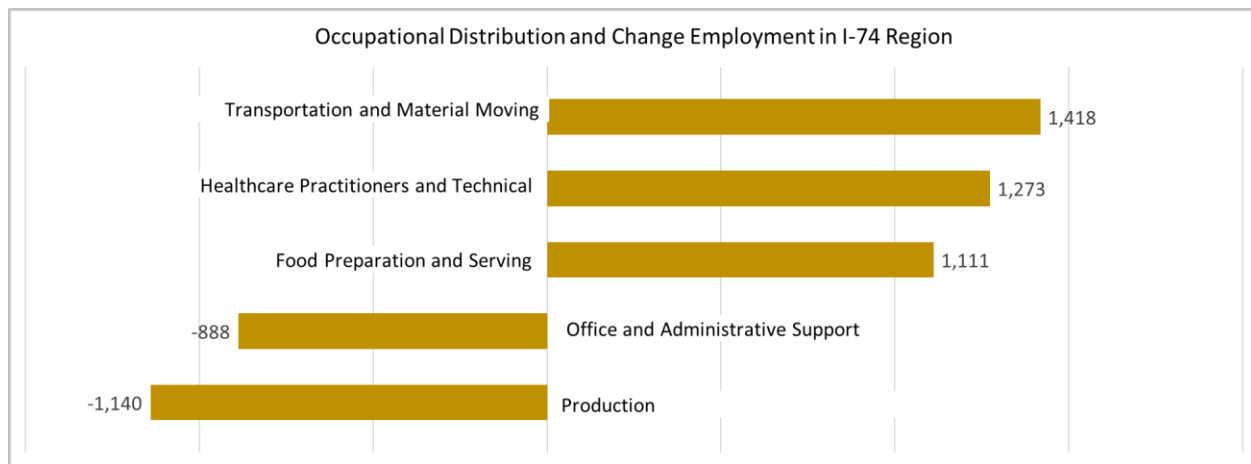
Source: Developed by PCRD by using EMSI 2022.4 Class of Worker (4) Data

Income and Poverty

The Census Bureau estimated a median household income of $62,491 in 2019 for the I-74 Region (see **Figure 8**.) The real median household income has decreased by more than one percent since 2001. Household income can include Labor Earnings, Social Security, Retirement Income, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Cash Public Assistance Income, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Figure 8. Income in I-74 Corridor (2001-2019)

Median Household Income in I-74 Corridor ($2019)
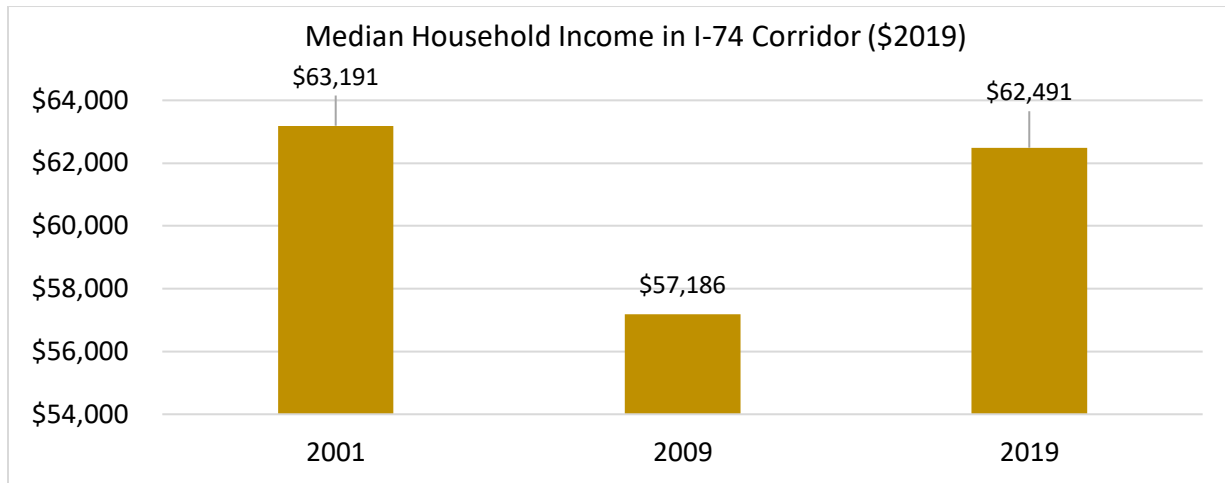
We further examined income by including poverty trends (see **Figure 9**). While the median household income decreased by more than one percent since 2001, overall poverty levels in the I-74 Region increased by more than two percentage points between 2001-2019.

Figure 9. Poverty Trends in the I-74 Corridor (2001-2019)

Poverty in I-74 Corridor

I-74 Corridor Ag Strategy

Analysis of current data and trends within the existing businesses was key to selecting prime targets for the I-74 Corridor Ag Region. The regional Task Force initiated a strategic community BR&E program to tap into existing businesses as key "barometers" of the target industry clusters' economic health. The process was intentionally focused on identifying gaps in the supply chain and regional leakages for the purpose of understanding and proactively responding to the threats limiting growth and, sometimes, even survival in today's economic climate.

Through the data analysis and company interviews, the I-74 Corridor Task Force identified five key strategies for Phase I and two strategies to be developed in Phase II:

Phase I Strategies:

- Develop a strong labor force for the agriculture industry.
- Promote and expand the food supply chain to better connect with consumers.
- Increase production and value-added processing of crops and livestock.
- Improve the region's transportation, broadband, and energy infrastructure.
- Enhance the regulatory and policy environment for agriculture and agribusiness.

Phase II Strategy:

- Support the expansion of agritourism in the region.
- Resurvey agribusinesses to track changes and new trends.

DEVELOP A STRONG LABOR FORCE FOR THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

1) Decrease the turnover rate for local employers and increase the quality of applicants.

   Action Steps:

   – Develop a team to help coordinate the implementation of a work ethic program in all schools and an Employer-Business Leadership Development program.
   – Research the Governor's Work Ethic Program and determine the viability of implementing it across the region.
   – Meet with school corporations and businesses to discuss the implementation of the Work Ethic program.
   – Begin implementing the program in the Fall 2024 Semester.

2) Utilize current resources to promote the use of a workforce database for ag and seasonal workers.

   Action Steps:

- Identify members to work with a statewide team to approach Indiana Career Connect and Department of Workforce Development.
- Meet with Indiana Career Connect and Department of Workforce Development to encourage the addition of a specific section for ag and seasonal workers. Work with other Rural Economic Development Model regions to promote the industry.
- Meet with AgriNovus to learn how to promote their Atlas Ambassador program in our schools.
  - Ensure that agribusinesses are aware of AgriNovus and that those who are interested are included in their email list.
- Review progress and determine if Indiana Career Connect will serve the needs of agriculture or if another route needs to be developed.

3) Develop a local program to help various cultures acclimate into the workforce and community.

   Action Steps:

   - Develop a regional committee to oversee the development of a local program.
   - Research the demographics for the region to identify the concentrations of various cultures.
   - Review and understand the Governor's Workforce Cabinet's 20 recommendations.
     - Schedule a meeting with the Workforce Cabinet to request support for developing a local program.
   - Identify and meet with companies who have a strong diverse workforce.
     - Schedule a meeting with Cass County leaders and other companies to understand their cultural inclusion programs.
   - Compile data collected and develop steps to implement a regional program that includes guidelines on obtaining proper visas.

4) Develop a pipeline of next generation ag workers.

   Action Steps:

   - Schedule a meeting with the FFA staff and ag students in the schools to discuss how to showcase the technology in agriculture today.
   - Reach out to FFA Chapters to set up a "Day on the Farm" for the region and invite all chapters to participate.
   - Schedule an AG DAY at the high schools to showcase what happens on the farm today, including workshops to discuss the economics of owning and working on a farm.
     - Host AG DAY at the high schools.
   - Set up a series of collaborative events for all chapters in the region.

5) Promote the development of Ag Education Centers at more high schools in the region.

Action Steps:

- o Schedule a regional team tour of the East Central High School's ag department to review their Ag Education Center.
- o Develop a proposal of how to implement ag programs in all schools.
- o Research the development of mini farms near school sites to raise livestock and grow crops.
- o Identify grant opportunities to assist with the development of mini farms at or near schools.
- o Schedule meetings and presentations at all schools to propose the ag programs and mini farms.

PROMOTE & EXPAND THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN TO CONNECT BETTER WITH CONSUMERS

1) Expand the opportunities for farmers to sell their products directly to the schools.

   Action Steps:

   - o Convene the County Extension agents to identify a lead person to drive this initiative forward.
   - o Convene meetings with Purdue Extension, Purdue Local Foods, Indiana Cooperative Development Center, schools, and other organizations to identify the information that needs to be shared with farmers.
   - o Research the Farm to School program with Purdue on how to provide local produce to the schools.
     - ▪ Meet with schools to identify which products or raw materials are needed in the area.
     - ▪ Work with farmers through Purdue Extension to determine which crops are needed, educate on the regulations and connect them to the schools.
   - o Assist in the development of guidelines for farmers on regulations, products needed, and how to approach schools.
   - o Share the process guidelines with farmers through previously scheduled meetings and workshops.

2) Schedule workshops for farmers to promote product diversification and the development of local markets.

   Action Steps:

   - o Work with the Indiana Small Business Development Center – Agriculture Initiative (ISBDC-AG) and Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to schedule workshops on local markets.
   - o Work with ISBDC-AG, Purdue MEP, and Purdue Extension to review the Ag Asset Maps as shown in **Appendix C** and soil analysis data to assist farmers in their pursuit to diversify or innovate.

- Schedule workshops with Purdue, Purdue MEP, ISBDC-AG, and others as needed.
  - Develop workshop flyers and disseminate them to the ag community.
- Develop material to help educate the community on agriculture, value-added processing, and the food supply chain.
- Hold several regional workshops.
- Schedule community education and awareness presentations with talks about economic development and agriculture. Prepare a generic presentation to be shared at workshops or breakfast meetings to help the community and farmers understand what economic development offices look at for development and the economic impact of supporting processing facilities.

3) Improve the local, small scale and niche food supply chain for meats, vegetables, and fruits.

   Action Steps:

   - Meet with Purdue Extension and the Diversified Farming & Food Systems team to understand the supply chain needs.
   - Provide support to counties applying for grants in this area.

4) Increase the number of beginning farmers and military Veteran farmers in the region.

   Action Steps:

   - Connect with Indiana Small Business Development Center – Agriculture Initiative (ISBDC-AG), Small Business Administration, and Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to develop a series of workshops focusing on beginning farmers, succession planning, and the next generation farmers.
   - Host workshops throughout the region for beginning farmers with a focus on connecting them with farmers who have no heirs.
     - Set the dates, identify locations, and prepare the invitations and marketing flyers for the workshops.
   - Begin the conversations about developing a program to connect the retiring farmer who has no heirs to the next generation who is interested in starting to farm.
   - Develop an "Incentivize-a-Farmer" program to encourage next generation farmers to participate in educational programs and workshops that will help them get started in farming.
   - Find an organization willing to take charge of the beginning farmer and "Incentivize-a-Farmer" programs.

INCREASE PRODUCTION & VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING OF CROPS & LIVESTOCK

1) Expand the distillery and whiskey industries in the region.

   Action Steps:

   - o Work with Indiana Small Business Development Center – Agriculture Initiative (ISBDC-AG) and Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to identify and map distillery companies and suppliers operating in the region and elsewhere.
     - ▪ Identify and meet with industry associations - wine, whiskey, and micro-brewery.
   - o Meet with mapped companies to determine their resource needs, understand their supply chain and identify their infrastructure needs.
   - o Meet with wood companies to determine if they can supply the resources for barrels.
   - o Develop specific local incentives for this industry.
   - o Select specific companies and invite them to expand or locate to this area.

2) Increase the capacity of regional meat processing by increasing the number of certified meat inspectors in the region.

   Action Steps:

   - o Develop a statewide committee to work on the shortage of USDA beef inspectors. Select one or two people to serve on the state committee.
   - o Meet with Indiana Board of Animal Health (BOAH) with other REDM regions to discuss the interest in increasing the number of inspectors.
     - ▪ Understand the Cooperative Interstate Shipping program that allows products to be sold across state lines by state-licensed cutters.
   - o Map the locations of current meat cutters in the region to identify eligibility and the current status of certification.
   - o Meet with Purdue to discuss the status of the grant for training meat cutters and how to implement a regional and state program.
     - ▪ Work with Purdue to establish a training program once the grant is awarded.
   - o Hold information workshops to discuss the opportunities.
   - o Look for other funding sources, including the possible use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
     - ▪ Continue training of current meat cutters for state licensing.
   - o Look for future growth opportunities for these facilities.

3) Create regional hemp processing facilities.

   Action Steps:

   - o Send a regional delegation to attend the Purdue Hemp Field Day annually.

- o Meet with Purdue University Hemp team to identify which seed grows best in this area and determine if hemp for fiber or oil is best.
  - ▪ Check with the Office of State Chemist to determine permitting and guidelines in the state and to identify all in-state processing facilities.
- o Meet with Indiana hemp processor Tomorrow Solutions on I-74
  - ▪ Identify and tour other existing processing facilities, even out of state or in Canada.
- o Work with Purdue, Indiana Economic Development Corporation, and the Midwest Hemp Council to identify the end-user / market for the product.
- o Once we identify the potential need, reevaluate our next steps to ensure we are on the right path.
- o Meet with Indiana Cooperative Development Center to identify best practices in forming a farmer co-op for hemp growing and processing.
  - ▪ Compile data collected from meetings, prepare a summary, and set up workshops.
- o Hold regional workshops to share information with the farmers.
  - ▪ Meet with farmers and entrepreneurs from the workshops to determine the interest in growing hemp and developing a regional processing facility.
- o Create a co-op of farmers to work together on growing and processing.
- o Identify locations in the region that are suitable for a processing facility.

4) Expand the capacity of cold storage warehousing in the region.

Action Steps:

- o Identify a regional team to work with a statewide committee to help address the need for expanding cold storage warehousing.
  - ▪ Meet with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to discuss the opportunity and put out a Request for Proposal.
- o Work with Indiana Small Business Development Center – Agriculture Initiative (ISBDC-AG) and Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to identify and map existing cold storage facilities in the region.
  - ▪ Meet with Adam Moody to discuss proprietary aging process for meat and storage capacity needs.
- o Meet with facilities (local packers) to determine their level of interest in expanding and their infrastructure needs.
- o Identify existing locations for potential facilities.
- o Prepare a proposal with incentives and locations to market the area for cold storage.
- o Identify trade shows and conventions to attend to showcase the area for additional cold storage facilities.

5) Increase crop and livestock diversification in the region to serve niche markets.

Action Steps:

- Meet with Purdue University Extension and Horticulture teams to study the soils in the region to determine what grows best and what areas are not suitable for growing crops.
- Meet with the respective Purdue teams to understand the process for developing greenhouses, hydroponics, aquaponics, and aquaculture facilities.
- Research diversification programs in Kentucky and Michigan.
- Meet with Indiana Small Business Development Center – Agriculture Initiative (ISBDC-AG) and Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to identify niche markets for various crops, such as specialty crops, cucumbers, wheat, mushrooms, and other high-value crops on small acres.
- Work with Purdue and ISBDC-Ag to develop workshops to help educate the farmers on niche markets and grant opportunities for expanding into new markets. Set dates and identify locations for the workshops.
- Schedule a series of workshops throughout the region, in coordination with Purdue Extension and County Fairs.

6) Increase availability of commercial kitchens and co-packers in the region.

   Action Steps:

- Tour Purdue's Food Science Lab and meet with their local foods team to discuss the need for training opportunities, including meats.
  - Meet with Indiana Small Business Development Center – Agriculture Initiative (ISBDC-AG), Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and Purdue Extension to identify resources.
- Research and map what is currently available in the region and identify gaps in current production and processing capacity, such as in a local food prep business.
- Review the regulations and develop a budget for creation and operations, which would include facility management.
- Work with Purdue Extension, Indiana Farm Bureau and Farm Service Agency to connect growers to end users for prepared meals.
- Identify viable facilities and funding sources through grants and loans.
- Schedule classes to teach cooking.

7) Expand wood mill working to decrease the amount of wood that is imported from outside the state.

   Action Steps:

- Meet with the Indiana Hardwood Lumberman's Association and Purdue Forestry Division to discuss the supply chain, sourcing, and networking opportunities for Indiana.
- Develop a list of facilities, in cooperation with industry associations and Purdue Center for Regional Development, currently in need of sourcing wood.

- Meet with the small mill working business that just started to identify their current supply source and what is needed locally to meet their needs.
- Identify Amish woodworking businesses in the region to determine the amount of product they need and the current source.
- Develop an ongoing communication network for the suppliers and users in the wood industry.

IMPROVE THE REGION'S TRANSPORTATION, BROADBAND & ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

1) Improve rail infrastructure and increase rail transportation in the region.

Action Steps:

- Meet with INDOT's Rail Team to determine which crossings are on the list to be updated or removed.
  - Meet with the Southeast IN Regional Port Authority to discuss their plans.
- Develop a regional map of usable rail sidings that can be used by others.
  - Determine potential locations for adding more spurs to allow for the better utilization of rail service.
- Develop a list of companies currently utilizing rail or who are in need of rail.
  - Meet with companies currently using rail to encourage them to work together to meet the minimum quota of rail cars.
- Propose a Midwest Logistics Facility in the region to increase the use of rail-to-barge traffic.
- Continue ongoing planning and promotion of a Midwest Logistics Facility.

2) Increase the number of drivers with CDLs.

Action Steps:

- Identify the local training and inspecting facilities, and trucking companies with a need for training.
- Meet with Ivy Tech, Vincennes University, and other providers to determine how to improve eligibility and participation in the program.
- Understand the state testing requirements and testing facilities and what is needed to serve the demand.
  - Ensure the programs support the skills for driving refrigerated and temp-controlled trucks.
- Work with INvets to develop a pipeline to help fill the need.
- Identify opportunities to promote the program to the current workforce and high schools.

3) Increase the region's road infrastructure and capacity.

Action Steps:

- o Meet with the local and state highway departments to identify which projects are on the active list for work to be completed, and understand the issues related to capacity, width, and bridges for transporting ag products.
- o Support the LINK 101 Project, which provides an extension of Highway 101 as an ideal truck route to link I-74 to Highway 129, and a better link to I-71 in KY between Cincinnati and Louisville.
- o Support adding and converting lanes to Highway 3 to connect I-70 to I-74, to show support for the strategy listed in the Regional CEDS.

4) Make broadband / high-speed internet more accessible to residents across the region.

Action Steps:

- o Meet with Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission to provide support to their Broadband Plan, including sharing information about what is happening in other counties.
- o Promote the Indiana Broadband Office survey and speed testing site at https://connectingindiana.com/ to the community and encourage involvement to show the demand for expanded broadband service.
    - ▪ List the information and provide a link to the survey and speed test on each county's website.
- o Work with Dearborn County to turn their Broadband Awareness Week for public outreach into a regional initiative for 2024.
- o Set up a regional convening of all those working in the broadband area, including electric co-ops.
- o Share information and news about the Indiana Broadband office and their broadband ready communities on county economic development websites and during events.

5) Evaluate solar energy as an opportunity for farm diversification.

Action Steps:

- o Meet with renewable energy organizations to better understand the benefits of solar energy and farm diversification.
- o Schedule organizations to present information to the elected officials on renewable energy projects.
    - ▪ Identify locations, set dates, develop invitations and promotional flyers, and announce workshops.
- o Host workshops for the farm community to better understand solar energy, including the use of specialty crops, sheep grazing, and honeybees among solar fields.

6) Encourage the development of biomass energy.

Action Steps:

- o Schedule a tour of other anaerobic digesters in the state to understand the process and infrastructure needed.
- o Meet with Indiana Farm Bureau and commodity groups to investigate cooperative ownership of an anaerobic digester.
- o Research how to permit and incentivize anaerobic digesters and how to utilize the byproducts.
- o Identify grant opportunities through the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

ENHANCE THE REGULATORY AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS.

1) Encourage the development of local and state incentives that support agriculture, agribusiness, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Action Steps:

- o Identify team members from the region to serve on a statewide committee.
  - ▪ Meet with Indiana Farm Bureau and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to discuss the promotion of ag incentives at the state level and with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC).
  - ▪ Review the economic impact models supplied by utility companies.
- o Develop an economic impact model for agribusiness that identifies the economic multiplier and determines the impact to the region, taking into consideration the value-added component.
  - ▪ Propose an incentive model to IEDC that encourages state support of agribusinesses based on the local impact to the farm community and not on the number of jobs and state average wage.
- o Develop the criteria to calculate the eligibility of projects to receive tax abatements that takes into consideration the scalability of projects, decreased costs of transportation, and impact on crop basis with goals and benchmarks.
  - ▪ Create a local tax incentive or abatement for farmers willing to rent land to a next-generation farmer.
  - ▪ Meet with county elected officials as a region to encourage the adoption of local incentives for agribusinesses.
  - ▪ Attend local tax abatement hearings for agribusinesses, including confined feeding operations, to show support for the development and expansion of the ag industry.

2) Improve the local regulatory environment and permitting processes for agriculture, agribusiness and food processing.

Action Steps:

- o Schedule a regional meeting to start the conversation with county ag committees, develop consensus and identify who will drive this initiative.
- o Research other states that have an ag focus or Ag Corridor, such as Kansas City.
- o Review county comprehensive plans to understand the focus of each county's ag development.
  - ▪ Identify which counties do not have designated Ag Corridors currently.
  - ▪ Identify target areas within each county to locate an Ag Corridor and review the current ordinances and permitting processes for each county.
- o Develop an inventory of industry targets we feel are important, then cross-reference with county ordinances to ensure compliance.
- o Review the policies in the counties that currently have Ag Corridors and develop a process to propose to all counties.
- o Meet with the area planning directors in the counties without Ag Corridors to determine if they are receptive.
- o Develop a regional zoning and permitting guide sheet / checklist for agribusiness expansion and creation.
- o Begin the process of adopting Ag Corridor designations in every county.

3) Ensure each county in the region has a Right-to-Farm policy that supports the State Code.

Action Steps:

- o Review State legislation and compare with current local policies.
- o Identify which counties need to adopt a Right-to-Farm policy.
- o Review current Right-to-Farm policies from other counties around the state and develop a policy suitable for the region.
- o Meet with area planning directors to propose a Right-to-Farm policy be adopted in every county.
- o Promote the adoption of a Right-to-Farm policy in each of the counties by attending the appropriate county meetings.

PHASE II:

1) Agritourism - After the prior steps are implemented the core team will review information regarding the expansion of agritourism and determine if the timing is right to consider developing and implementing an agritourism initiative.

2) Agribusiness Survey – The Region will repeat the survey to agribusinesses on a regular basis to identify changes in the supply chain and new trends in the target industries.

Priority Steps

The I-74 Corridor's Regional Task Force believes that the Ag Strategy is a change in economic development philosophy and that this work is the beginning of an ongoing and ever-evolving process in and for the Region.

Realizing all steps are important to the overall success of the Ag Strategy, the Task Force believes it is important to identify the initial steps needed to set the stage for successful implementation. Following are the priority steps to begin the implementation process:

1. Select a chairperson to coordinate the implementation of the ag strategy.
   a. Review the possibility of hiring an individual as ag coordinator to lead this initiative and discuss with regional planning councils and Purdue Extension.
   b. Develop a job description and budget.
   c. Determine which entity will house the position.
   d. Review funding sources and identify a fiscal agent.
2. Determine the schedule and timing of meetings.
3. Set a regional rollout of the ag strategy, including:
   a. setting the date, time and location,
   b. developing the invitation list,
   c. preparing the invitation, and
   d. setting the agenda.
4. Set initial implementation meeting to:
   a. discuss the strategy and action steps and identify a responsible party for each,
   b. include Purdue Extension and regional planning council members in the discussions, and
   c. review the Gantt Chart and timing of the action steps.
5. Identify specific strategies to implement early in the process to show a quick win.

Implementation Timeline

I-74 CORRIDOR AG STRATEGY

	Project Start:	7/1/2023

TASK	START	END
DEVELOP A STRONG LABORFORCE FOR THE AG INDUSTRY		
1. Decrease employee turnover and increase quality of applicants		
Form a team to develop a work ethic and leadership program	9/1/2023	9/30/2023
Research the Governor's Work Ethic Program	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Meet with school corporations and businesses	1/1/2024	5/31/2024
Implement a program in the Fall 2024 semester	8/1/2024	12/31/2024
2. Promote the workforce database for ag workers		
Identify members to work with statewide team	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
Meet with IN Career Connect and Workforce Development	9/1/2023	9/30/2023
Meet with AgriNovus to discuss the Atlas Ambassador program	10/1/2023	10/31/2023
Ensure that everyone is on the AgriNovus email list	10/1/2023	10/31/2023
Review progress and determine if on the right path	11/1/2023	12/31/2023
3. Develop program to acclimate various cultures into the workforce		
Develop a regional committee to develop a local program	8/1/2023	8/31/2023
Research the demographics for the region	9/1/2023	10/31/2023
Review Governor's Workforce Cabinet's 20 recommendations	9/1/2023	10/31/2023

Request support from the Workforce Cabinet	11/1/2023	11/30/2023
Meet with companies who have a diverse workforce	11/1/2023	12/31/2023
Schedule meetings with companies to discuss their programs	12/1/2023	1/31/2024
Compile data to develop and implement a regional program	2/1/2024	5/31/2024
4. Develop a pipeline of next generation ag workers		
Schedule a meeting with the FFA programs and ag students	8/1/2023	9/30/2023
Work with FFA Chapters to set up a "Day on the Farm"	9/1/2023	11/30/2023
Schedule an AG DAY and workshops at the high schools	12/1/2023	1/31/2024
Host AG DAY at the high schools	2/1/2024	3/31/2024
Set up a series of collaborative events for all chapters	4/1/2024	12/31/2024
5. Develop Ag Education Centers at more high schools		
Tour the Ag Education Center at East Central High School	9/1/2023	9/30/2023
Develop a proposal to implement ag programs in all schools	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Research the development of mini farms near school sites	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Identify grant opportunities	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Schedule meetings and presentations at all schools	4/1/2024	5/31/2024
PROMOTE & EXPAND THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN TO CONSUMERS		
1. Expand opportunities for farmers to sell to schools		
Convene the County Extension agents and identify a leader	1/1/2024	2/29/2024
Collect data from Purdue and other entities	3/1/2024	5/31/2024

Research the Farm to School program	6/1/2024	11/30/2024
Meet with schools to identify which products are needed	6/1/2024	11/30/2024
Work with farmers & Purdue Extension on crops needed	11/1/2024	2/28/2025
Assist in the development of guidelines and regulations	1/1/2025	6/30/2025
Share the guidelines with farmers	6/1/2025	8/31/2025
2. Schedule workshops for farmers to promote diversification and local markets		
Work with ISBDC-Ag and Purdue MEP on workshops	8/1/2023	8/31/2023
Review Ag Asset Maps with ISBDC & Purdue MEP	9/1/2023	10/31/2023
Schedule ag workshops	10/1/2023	11/30/2023
Develop workshops flyers and disseminate	10/1/2023	11/30/2023
Develop material for community education	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Host workshops	1/1/2024	8/31/2024
Schedule community education and awareness presentations	1/1/2024	8/31/2024
3. Improve the local food supply chain for meats, veggies and fruits		
Meet with Purdue and Diversified Farming & Food Systems	8/1/2023	9/30/2023
Provide support to counties applying for grants	8/1/2023	Ongoing
4. Increase the number of beginning and military Veteran farmers		
Set dates, identify locations and schedule workshops	9/1/2023	11/30/2023
Host Beginning Farmer and succession planning workshops	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Promote ISBDC AG / SBA / Purdue MEP programs	1/1/2024	3/31/2024

Develop program to connect retiring farmers to future farmers	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Develop an "Incentivize-a-Farmer" program	4/1/2024	7/31/2024
Find a lead organization interested in running program	4/1/2024	8/31/2024

INCREASE PRODUCTION & VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING OF CROPS & LIVESTOCK

1. Enhance the distillery and whiskey industries in the region

Identify and map companies operating elsewhere	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Identify and meet with industry associations	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
Meet with mapped companies to determine their needs	9/1/2023	12/31/2023
Meet with wood companies as a provider	11/1/2023	1/31/2024
Develop specific incentives for this industry	1/1/2024	2/29/2024
Invite companies to expand or locate to this area	3/1/2024	3/31/2024

2. Increase the capacity of regional meat processing

Develop a statewide committee	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Meet with Indiana Board of Animal Health	8/1/2023	8/31/2023
Understand the CIS program requirements	8/1/2023	9/30/2023
Map the locations of current meat processors	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Discuss the training grant for meat cutters with Purdue	12/1/2023	12/31/2023
Establish the training program once grant received	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Hold information workshops	3/1/2024	6/30/2024
Look for other funding sources	7/1/2024	12/31/2024

Train current meat cutters for state licensing	12/1/2024	Ongoing
Look for growth opportunities for current facilities	1/1/2025	1/31/2025

3. Create regional hemp processing facilities

Send a regional delegation to Purdue Hemp Field Day	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Meet with Purdue University Hemp Team	9/1/2023	10/31/2023
Check with Office of State Chemist on permitting guidelines	9/1/2023	10/31/2023
Meet with Indiana hemp processor	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Identify and tour other processing facilities	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Identify the end-user / market for the product	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Reevaluate our plan to ensure we are on the right path	1/1/2024	2/29/2024
Meet with Indiana Cooperative Development Center	2/1/2024	2/29/2024
Compile data collected and set up workshops	2/1/2024	2/29/2024
Hold regional workshops for farmers	3/1/2024	5/31/2024
Meet with farmers and entrepreneurs to discuss opportunities	6/1/2024	8/31/2024
Create a co-op of farmers for growing and processing hemp	9/1/2024	12/31/2024
Identify locations suitable for a processing facility	9/1/2024	12/31/2024

4. Expand the capacity of cold storage warehousing

Identify regional team to work on statewide committee	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Meet with IEDC to discuss the opportunity	8/1/2023	8/31/2023
Identify and map existing cold storage facilities	9/1/2023	11/30/2023

Discuss proprietary aging process for meat		10/1/2023	10/31/2023
Meet with local packers to discuss expanding		12/1/2023	3/31/2024
Identify existing locations for potential facilities		1/1/2024	2/29/2024
Prepare a proposal with incentives and locations		3/1/2024	3/31/2024
Identify trade shows and conventions to attend		3/1/2024	8/31/2024
5. Increase crop and livestock diversification			
Meet with Purdue team to study the soils in the region		10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Meet with Purdue on greenhouses, aquaculture, etc.		10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Research Kentucky and Michigan State programs		12/1/2023	1/31/2024
Meet with ISBDC-AG and Purdue MEP on niche markets		1/1/2024	1/31/2024
Develop workshops on niche markets		1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Schedule a series of workshops		3/1/2024	8/31/2024
6. Increase commercial kitchens and co-packers in the region			
Tour Purdue's Food Science Lab		8/1/2023	8/31/2023
Meet with Purdue teams to identify resources		9/1/2023	9/30/2023
Research and map current assets and identify gaps		9/1/2023	11/30/2023
Review the regulations and develop a budget		11/1/2023	1/31/2024
Work to connect growers to end users for prepared meals		1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Identify viable facilities and funding sources		3/1/2024	5/31/2024
Schedule classes to teach cooking		6/1/2024	6/30/2024

7. Expand wood mill working and source product locally

Meet with hardwoods and forestry organizations	1/1/2024	2/29/2024
Develop list of facilities in need of sourcing wood	2/1/2024	3/31/2024
Meet with the small mill working business	3/1/2024	5/31/2024
Identify Amish woodworking businesses	3/1/2024	5/31/2024
Develop a communication network for suppliers	6/1/2024	8/31/2024

IMPROVE THE REGION'S TRANSPORTATION, BROADBAND & ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Improve rail infrastructure and increase rail transportation

Meet with INDOT's Rail Team to review list of crossings	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Meet with Southeast IN Regional Port Authority	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Develop a regional map of usable rail sidings	1/1/2024	1/31/2024
Determine potential locations for more spurs	1/1/2024	2/29/2024
Develop list of companies currently utilizing rail	2/1/2024	2/29/2024
Meet with companies currently using rail	3/1/2024	4/30/2024
Propose a Midwest Logistics Facility	5/1/2024	5/31/2024
Planning and promotion of a Midwest Logistics Facility	5/1/2024	Ongoing

2. Increase the number of truck drivers with CDLs

Identify the local training and inspecting facilities	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Meet with Ivy Tech, Vincennes, and other providers	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
Understand the state testing and facility requirements	8/1/2023	9/30/2023

Program to include the skills for driving refrigerated trucks	8/1/2023	9/30/2023
Work with IN-Vets to develop the pipeline and need	9/1/2023	10/31/2023
Promote the program to high schools	11/1/2023	12/31/2023
3. Improve the region's road infrastructure and capacity		
Meet with the local and state highway departments	9/1/2023	10/31/2023
Support the LINK 101 Project	9/1/2023	Ongoing
Support adding and converting lanes to Hwy 3	9/1/2023	Ongoing
4. Make broadband / high-speed internet more accessible		
Meet with SIRPC to provide support to their Broadband Plan	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Promote the Indiana Broadband Office survey and test	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
List the information and link to the survey on websites	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
Work with Dearborn County on their Broadband Awareness Week	9/1/2023	12/31/2023
Set up a regional convening of agencies working on broadband	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Share information and news about broadband ready communities	10/1/2023	Ongoing
5. Evaluate solar energy for farm diversification		
Meet with renewable energy organizations	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Schedule speakers to present to the elected officials	8/1/2023	10/31/2023
Identify locations, set dates, develop invitations for workshops	8/1/2023	10/31/2023
Host workshops for the farm community	11/1/2023	3/31/2024
6. Encourage the development of biomass energy		

Schedule a tour of anaerobic digesters	6/20/2023	6/20/2023
Investigate cooperative ownership of anaerobic digesters	10/1/2023	12/31/2023
Research how to permit and incentivize anaerobic digesters	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Identify grant opportunities through the USDA-REAP	3/1/2024	4/30/2024

ENHANCE THE REGULATORY AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR AGRIBUSINESS

1. Encourage local and state incentives that support agriculture & agribusiness

Identify team members to serve on statewide committee	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Meet with IN Farm Bureau and State Department of Ag	8/1/2023	8/31/2023
Review economic impact models supplied by utility companies	8/1/2023	9/30/2023
Develop an economic impact model for agribusiness	9/1/2023	12/31/2023
Propose an incentive model to IEDC	9/1/2023	12/31/2023
Develop criteria to calculate eligibility for tax abatements	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Create local incentives for next-generation farmers	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Encourage County Elected Officials to adopt local ag incentives	4/1/2024	5/31/2024
Attend local tax abatement hearings to show support	4/1/2024	Ongoing

2. Improve the local regulatory environment and permitting for ag and food processing

Schedule regional meeting to identify lead for initiative	12/1/2023	1/31/2024
Research other states that have an ag focus or Ag Corridor	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Review county comp plans to understand the focus on ag	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Identify which counties do not have designated Ag Corridors	1/1/2024	3/31/2024

Identify target areas within each county for an Ag Corridor	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
Develop an inventory of industry targets	3/1/2024	5/31/2024
Review the policies in the counties with Ag Corridors	5/1/2024	9/30/2024
Meet with area plan directors to discuss Ag Corridors	10/1/2024	12/31/2024
Develop a regional zoning and permitting guide sheet for ag	1/1/2025	3/31/2025
Begin the process of adopting Ag Corridor designations	1/1/2025	7/31/2025
3. Ensure each county in the region has a Right-to-Farm (RTF) Policy		
Review state legislation and compare to local policies	7/1/2023	7/31/2023
Identify which counties need to adopt the RTF policy	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
Review RTF policies and develop a policy for the region	9/1/2023	12/31/2023
Meet with area plan directors to discuss RTF	1/1/2024	1/31/2024
Promote the adoption of an RTF policy in each county	1/1/2024	3/31/2024
PHASE 2: EXPAND AGRITOURISM & RESURVEY AGRIBUSINESSES		
Support the expansion of agritourism in the region	7/1/2025	6/30/2026
Resurvey agribusinesses to identify changes	7/1/2025	12/31/2025

Strategic Goals & Outcomes

The Goal for the I-74 Corridor's Ag Strategy is to Build Strong Partnerships Between Economic Development and Agriculture.

We will deem our Ag Strategy a success when we:

- Obtain $200 million in new ag investment in the region.

- Create one new meat processing facility or expand an existing facility to serve the I-74 Corridor in the next two years.

Outcomes for the first two years:

1. Add one new cold storage facility in the region.
2. Increase meat processing capacity by 10%.
3. Increase the number of state-certified meat inspectors in the region.
4. Create one new hemp processing facility in the region.
5. Increase the number of individuals attending CDL training by 10% in the first year.
6. Offer two ag workshops for farmers and agribusinesses in the next year.
7. Create a central database of facts and resources for agribusinesses.
8. Support the Indiana Economic Development Corporation in establishing a statewide incentive program in support of agriculture and agribusiness.
9. Increase the net export of ag products by 10% from the region.
10. Resurvey agribusinesses at the end of year two.

Marketing Plan

The development of a coordinated regional marketing plan is important to the success of fully developing the food supply chain for the Region. The plan will be used to showcase the agricultural benefits of the I-74 Corridor as a prime location for meat processing, cold storage facilities and hemp processing.

BUSINES ATTRACTION & EXPANSION:

1) Develop regional marketing material on the I-74 Corridor Ag Region, including key data points and the following:
    a. Sites suitable for the target industries that are currently available today.
    b. The crops and livestock, as referenced in the Ag Asset Maps shown in **Appendix C,** which can provide sources of raw material for value-added processing,
    c. A formal request for the business to expand or locate in the region.

2) Ensure all marketing material is branded to identify the I-74 Corridor Ag Region.

3) Disseminate the regional marketing pieces at trade shows and mail them to existing companies and prospects in the target industries.

4) Schedule meetings with local meat packers, livestock farmers, cold storage facilities, and hemp processors to share the Region's Ag Strategy and identify potential interest in expansion.

5) Contact Food Export Midwest and the US Chamber of Commerce Commercial Services Export Assistance to identify opportunities to market the Region internationally.

6) Schedule attendance at trade shows, such as:
    a. American Association of Meat Processors – July 2023
    b. Southern Hemp Expo – August 2023
    c. Food Automation & Manufacturing Conference & Expo – October 2023
    d. Global Cold Chain Alliance Conference & Expo – November 2023
    e. Winter Fancy Food Show – January 2024
    f. Sweets & Snacks Expo – May 2024

7) Send out regional marketing pieces as follow-ups to the trade shows.

8) Identify key site selectors in the food and beverage industries to contact and provide information on the region and invite them to the Region for a tour. Site selectors to consider include:
    a. Deane Foote, Foote Consulting Group, LLC (FCG), Glendale, AZ
    b. Jay Garner, Garner Economics, LLC., Fayetteville, GA
    c. Tracey Hyatt Bosman, Biggins Lacy Shapiro & Company, Chicago, IL
    d. Mike Mullis, J.M. Mullis, Inc., Memphis, TN
    e. Don Schjeldahl, DSG Advisors, Cleveland, OH

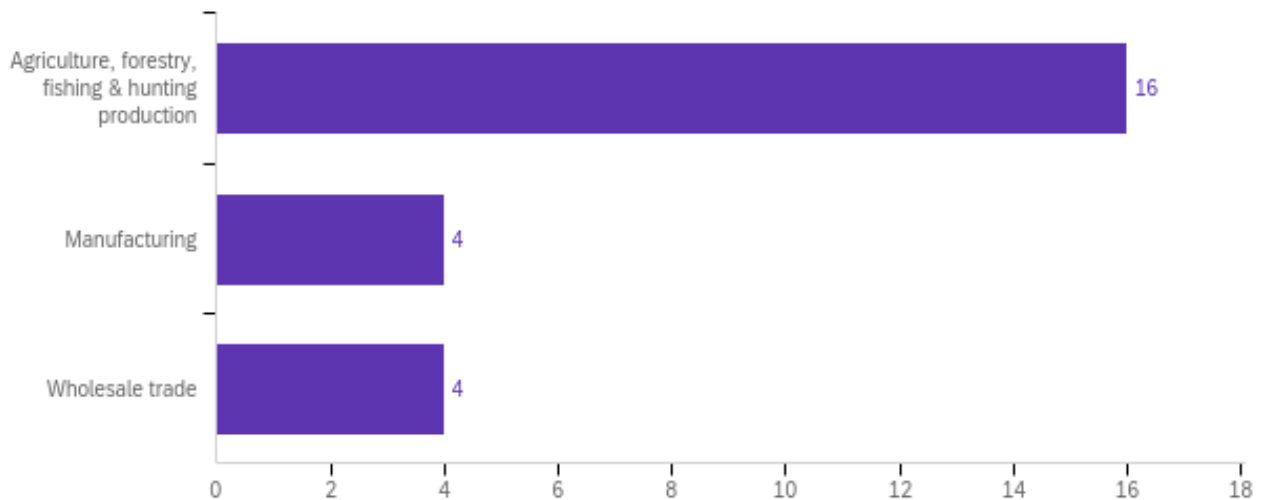**APPENDIX A**

I-74 Corridor Agribusiness Survey Results

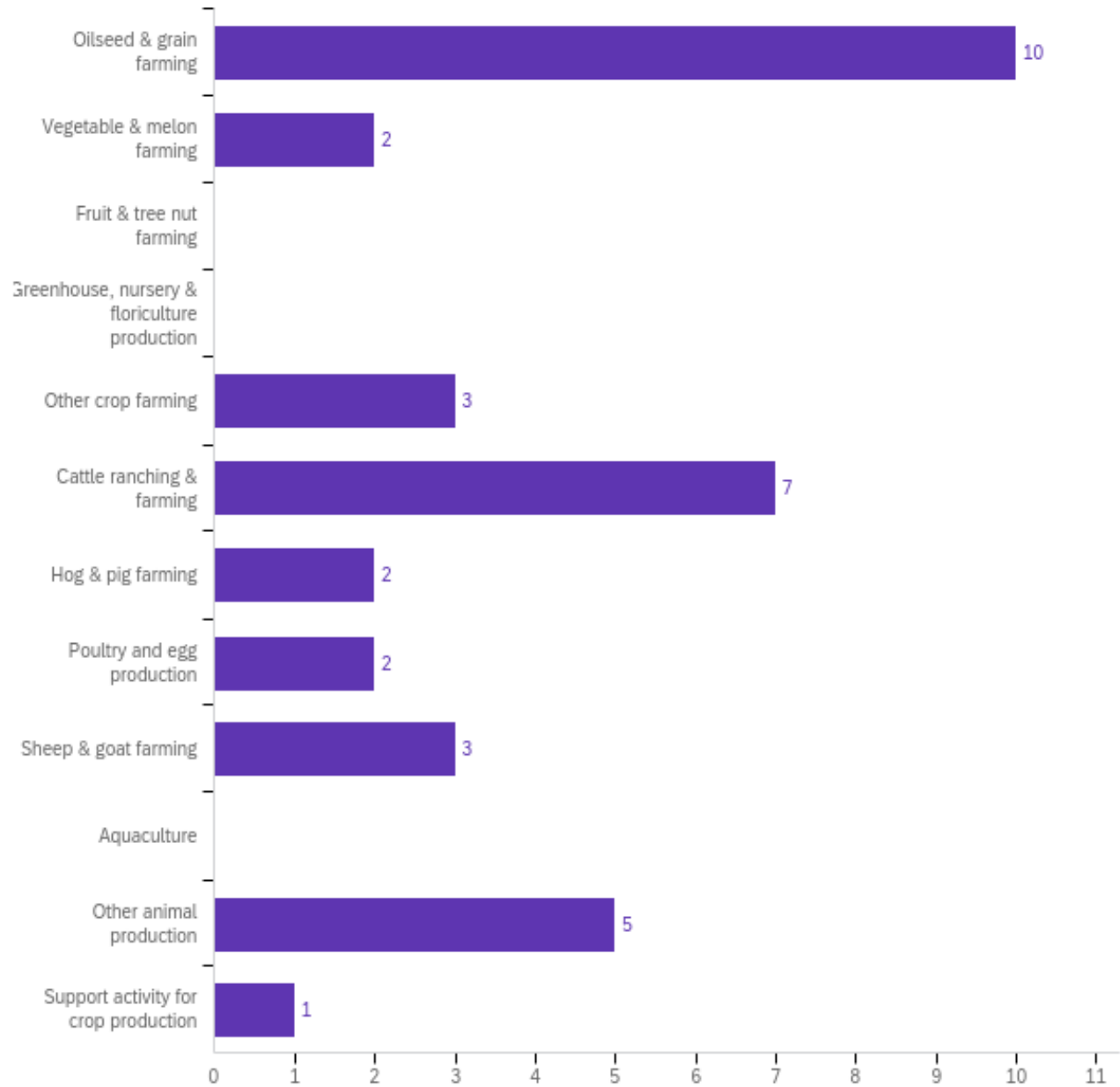*REDM - Targeted BR&E Agribusiness Questionnaire*

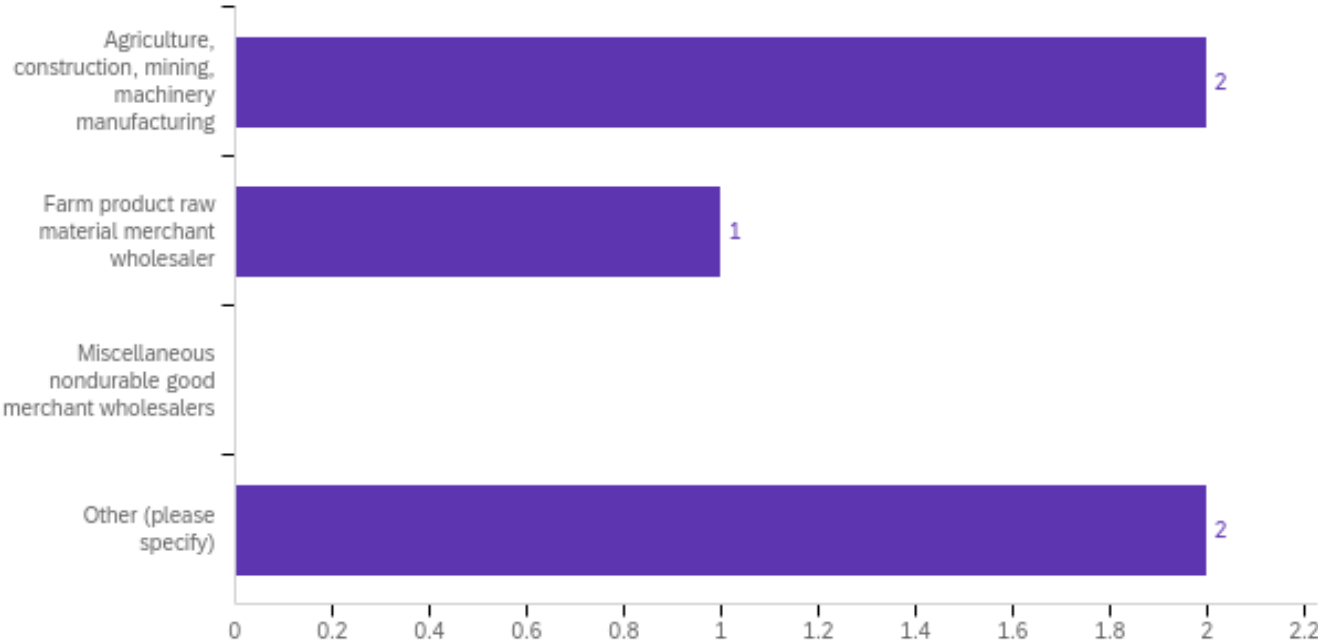**Qa - In which county is your company located in?**
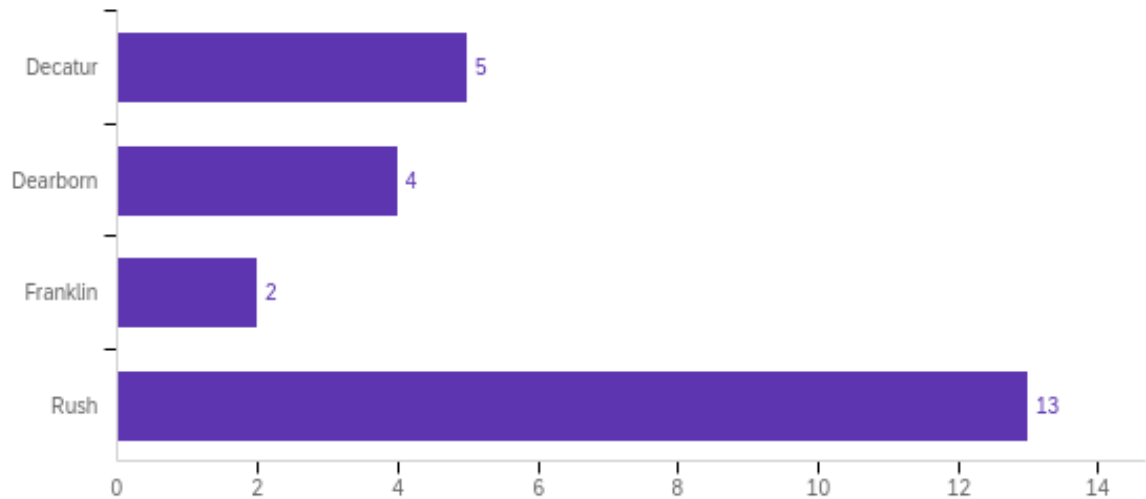
**Q1 - Which of the following best describes your farm/agriculture business?**

Q1a - Which of the following best describes your AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING, & HUNTING PRODUCTION business? Select all that apply.

Category	Count
Oilseed & grain farming	10
Vegetable & melon farming	2
Fruit & tree nut farming	
Greenhouse, nursery & floriculture production	
Other crop farming	3
Cattle ranching & farming	7
Hog & pig farming	2
Poultry and egg production	2
Sheep & goat farming	3
Aquaculture	
Other animal production	5
Support activity for crop production	1

Q1b - Which of the following best describes your WHOLESALE TRADE farm/agriculture business?

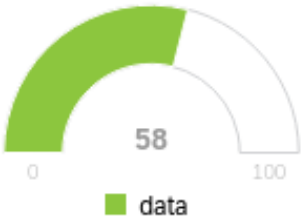**Q2 - Including owner-operators, how many employees work at this location?**

Category	Count
1-4 employees	6
5-9	2
10-14	2
15-19	3
20-29	1
30-49	5
50-99	2
100-299	
300+ employees	
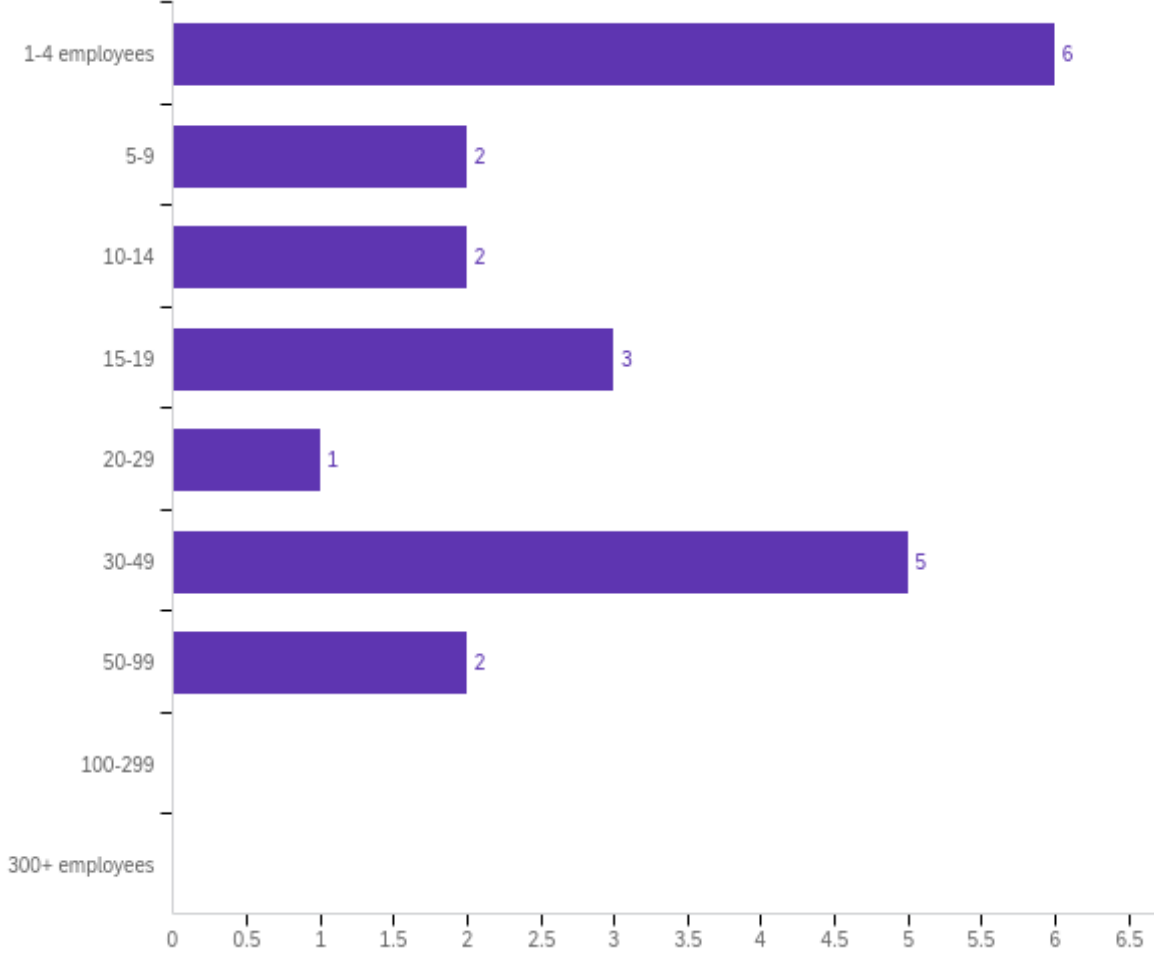
Q3 - What percentage of your employees live (should add 100% across all three categories):

% Within your city/town

38.2
0   100
◼ data
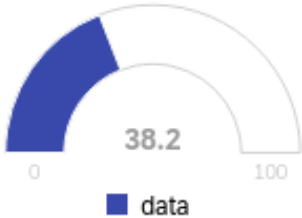
% Outside your city/town, but within county

58
0   100
◼ data

% Outside county

30.29
0   100
◼ data

Q4 - During the past 3 years, has the number of employees in this business...?

Category	Value
Increased	11
Decreased	2
Stayed the same	8
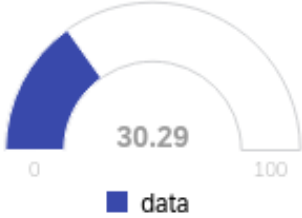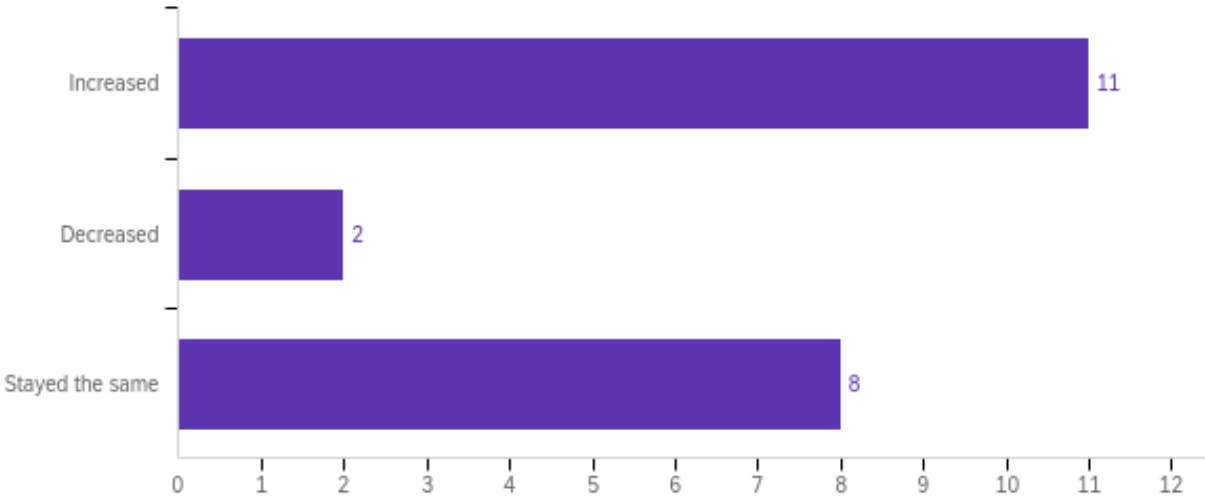
Q5 - What factors are responsible for this change? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.
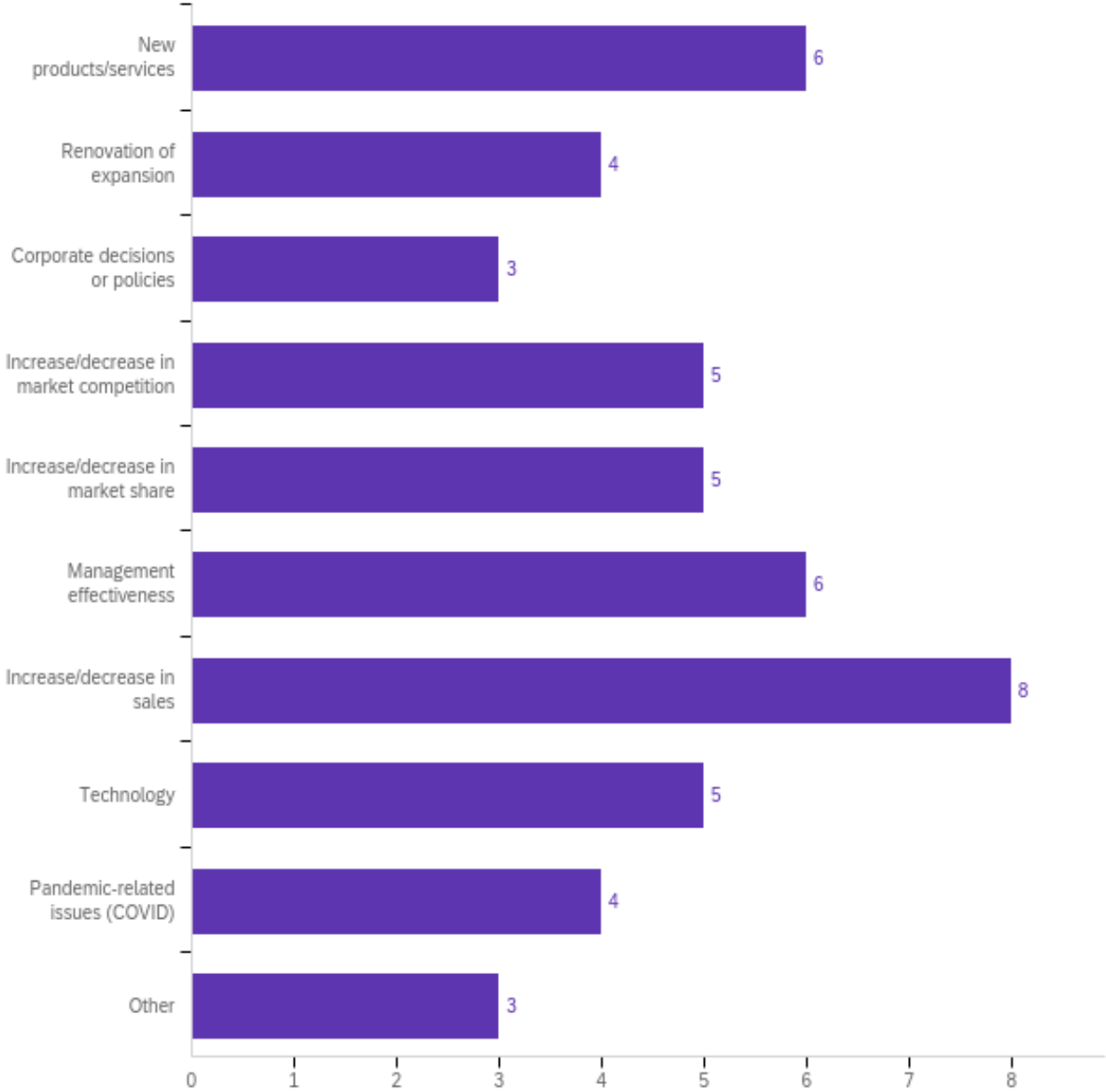
Q6 - How do you rate the availability, quality and stability of the workforce in this area for your business?

Legend:
- Availability
- Quality
- Stability

Rating	Availability	Quality	Stability
Excellent	3	3	2
Very Good	3	1	3
Good	4	6	4
Fair	4	10	7
Poor	7	1	5

Q7 - Are you able to recruit sufficient qualified employees for your business?

Response	Count
Yes	9
No	12
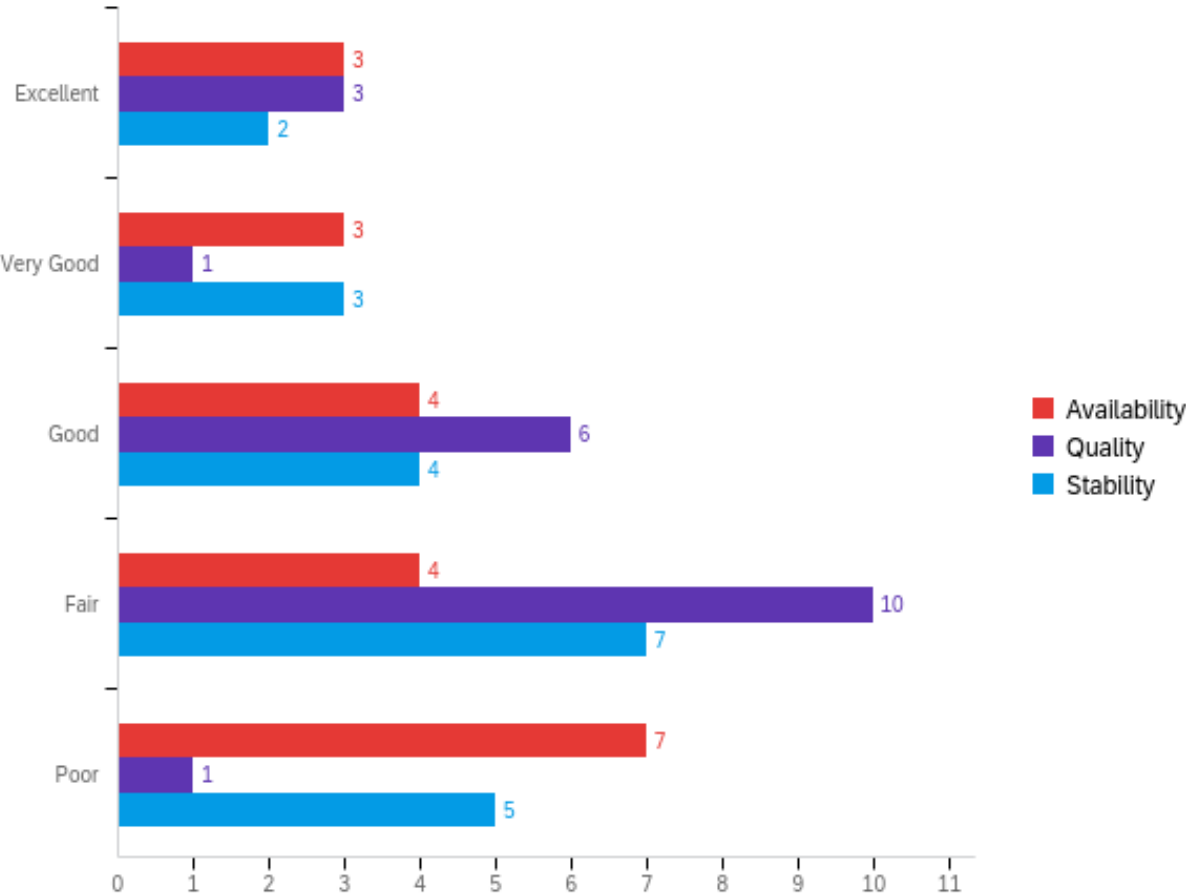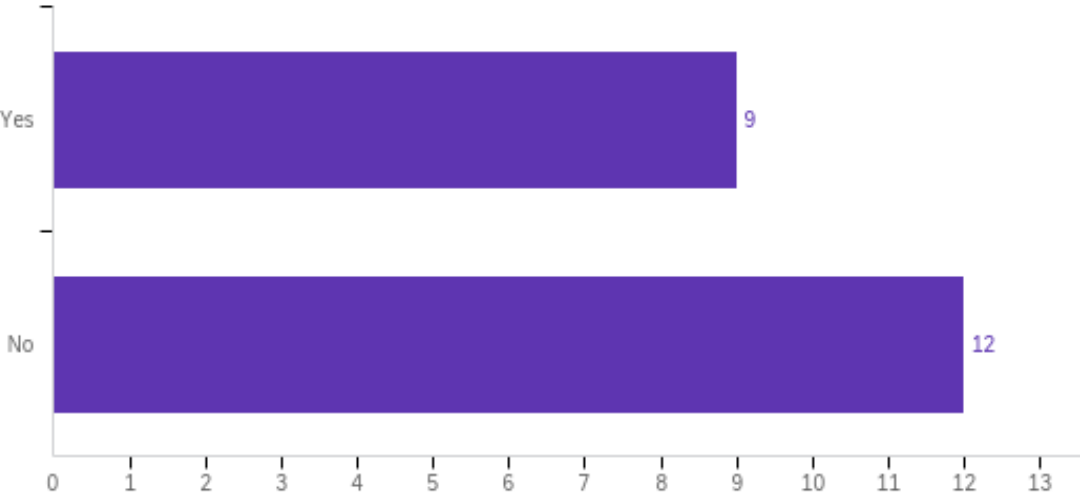
Q8 - On a scale of 1-5, 1 being less skilled to 5 being highly skilled) how would you rate the skill profile of your company's workforce?

Category	Value
Very low skilled	2
Less skilled	2
Uncertain	1
Skilled	13
Highly Skilled	3
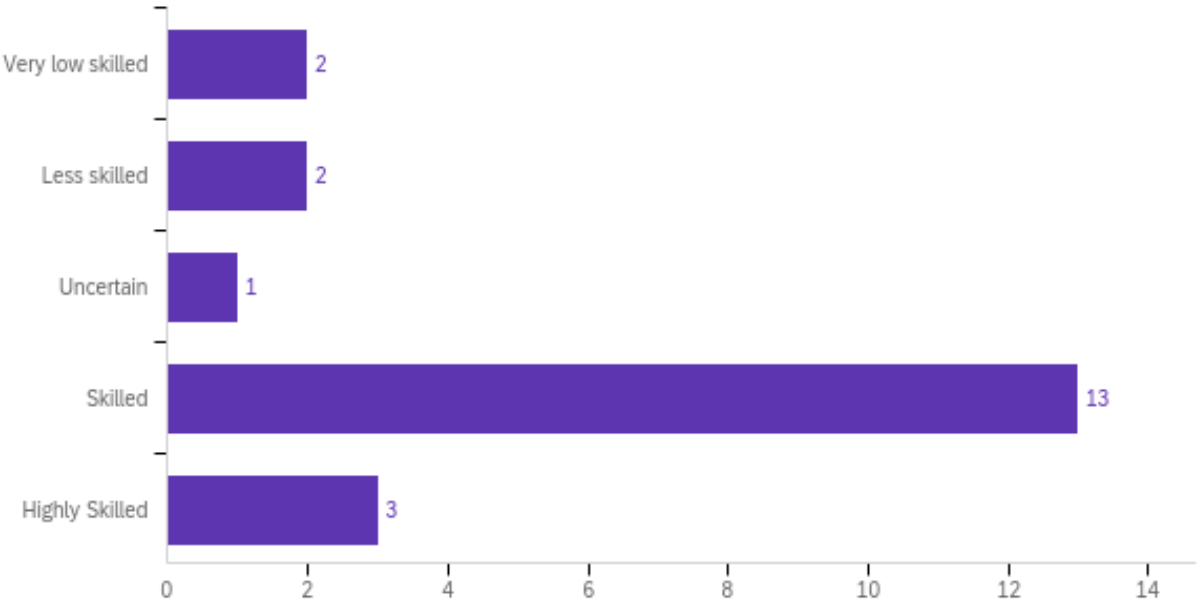
Q9 - Where do you purchase the majority of your agri-business supplies? Check all that apply for each supply. Please specify the county if different from your own county using the text box provided.

Within the county
- Farm inputs: 2
- Wholesale trade: 1

Within the region
- Farm inputs: 7
- Manufacturing supplies: 7
- Wholesale trade: 3

Within the state
- Farm inputs: 3
- Manufacturing supplies: 3
- Wholesale trade: 7

Other state
- Farm inputs: 4
- Manufacturing supplies: 8
- Wholesale trade: 7

Other country
- Farm inputs: 1
- Wholesale trade: 1

Legend:
- Farm inputs (i.e. supplies, raw materials, parts, materials, equipments)
- Manufacturing supplies related to agriculture
- Wholesale trade (agriculture, construction, mining, machinery manufacturing...

Q10 – What inputs are you in need of and what, if any, bottlenecks do you have today?
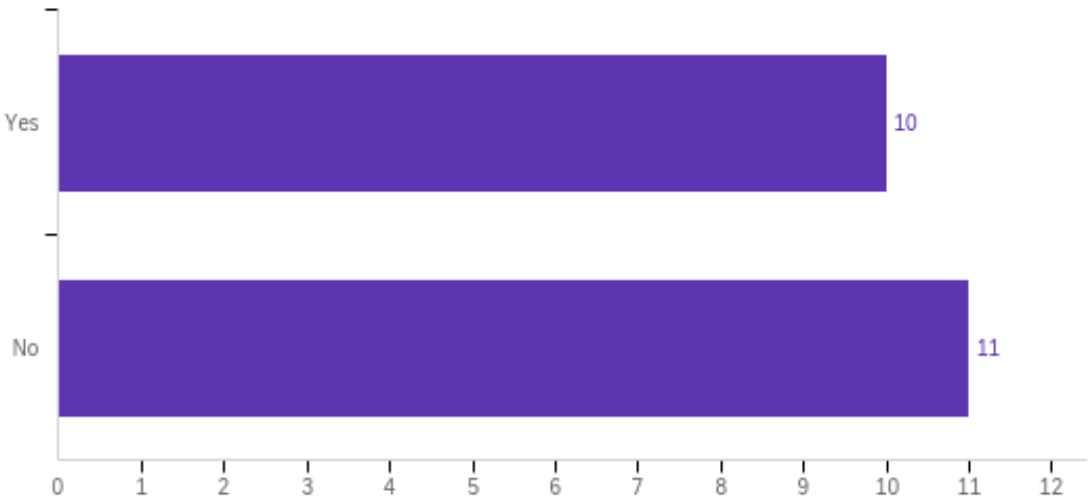
- No responses provided.

Q11 - Do you currently import/export products? If yes, please specify the corresponding country(ies) in the text box provided.
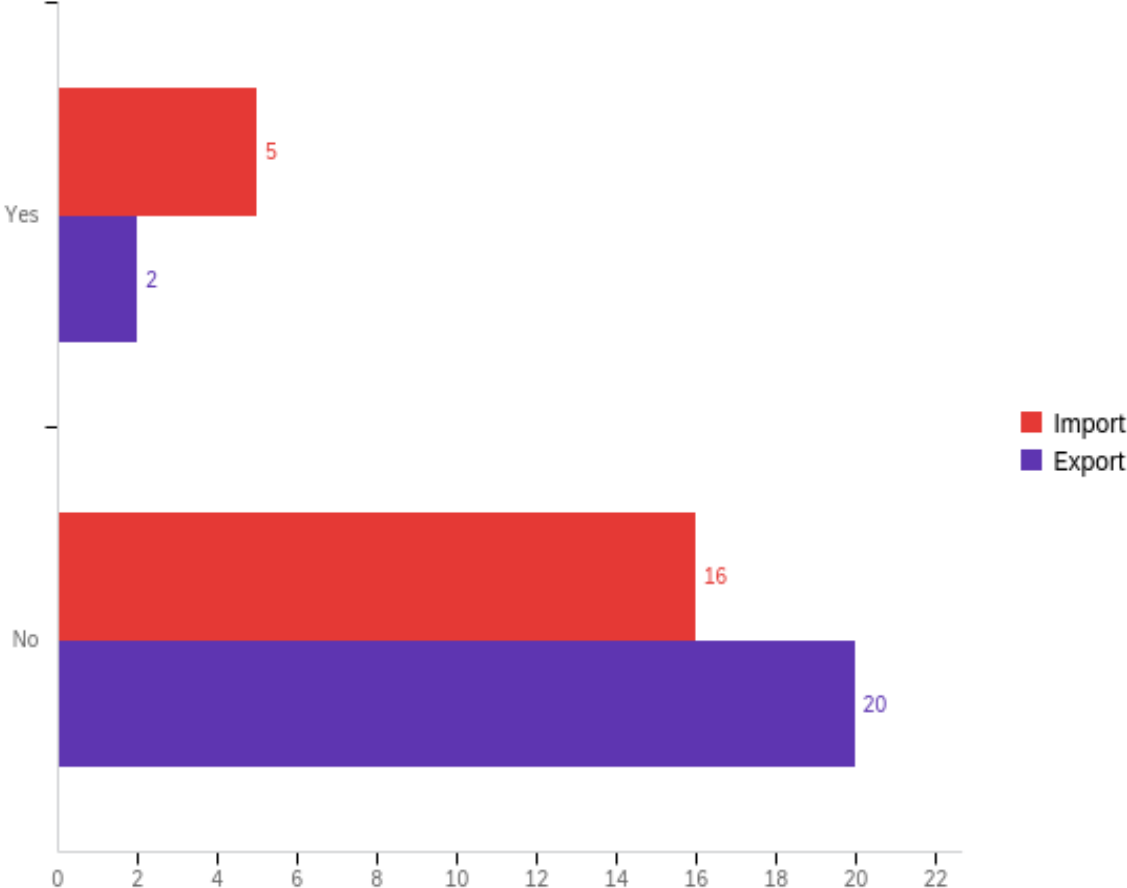
Q12 – What products do you import / export?
   – **No responses provided.**

Q13 - Have you considered pursuing any new niche market or value-added opportunities? If yes, please elaborate.

Q14 - Would you be interested in supplying local markets (retailers/institutional) if the distribution and management systems were in place?
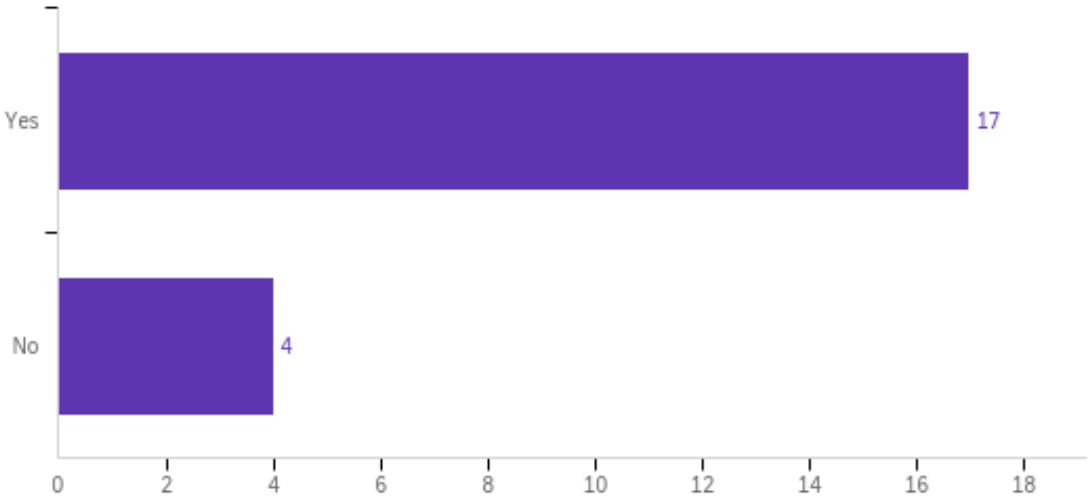
Q15 - Do you have the capacity to increase production to supply local markets if additional buyers were identified?

Yes — 16
No — 4

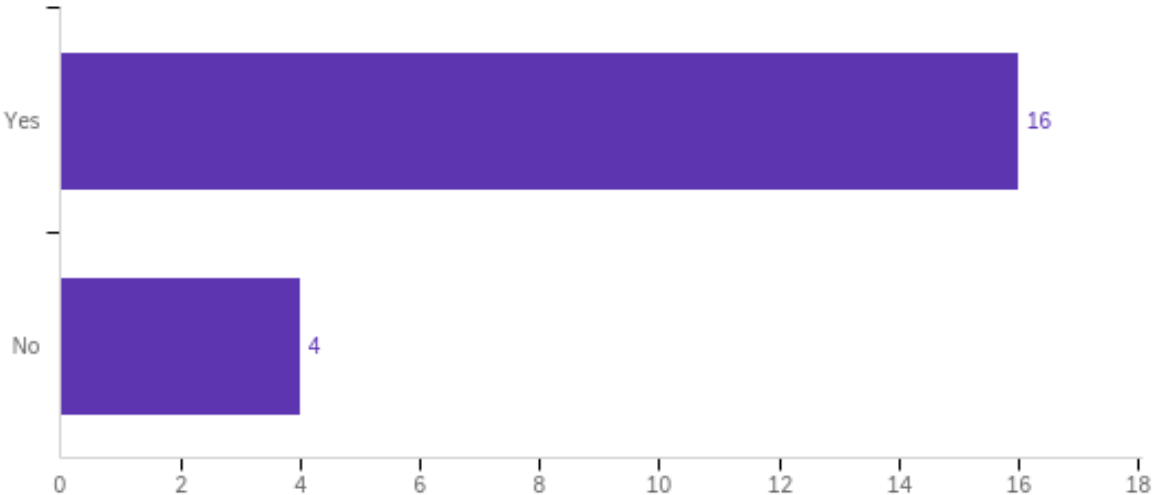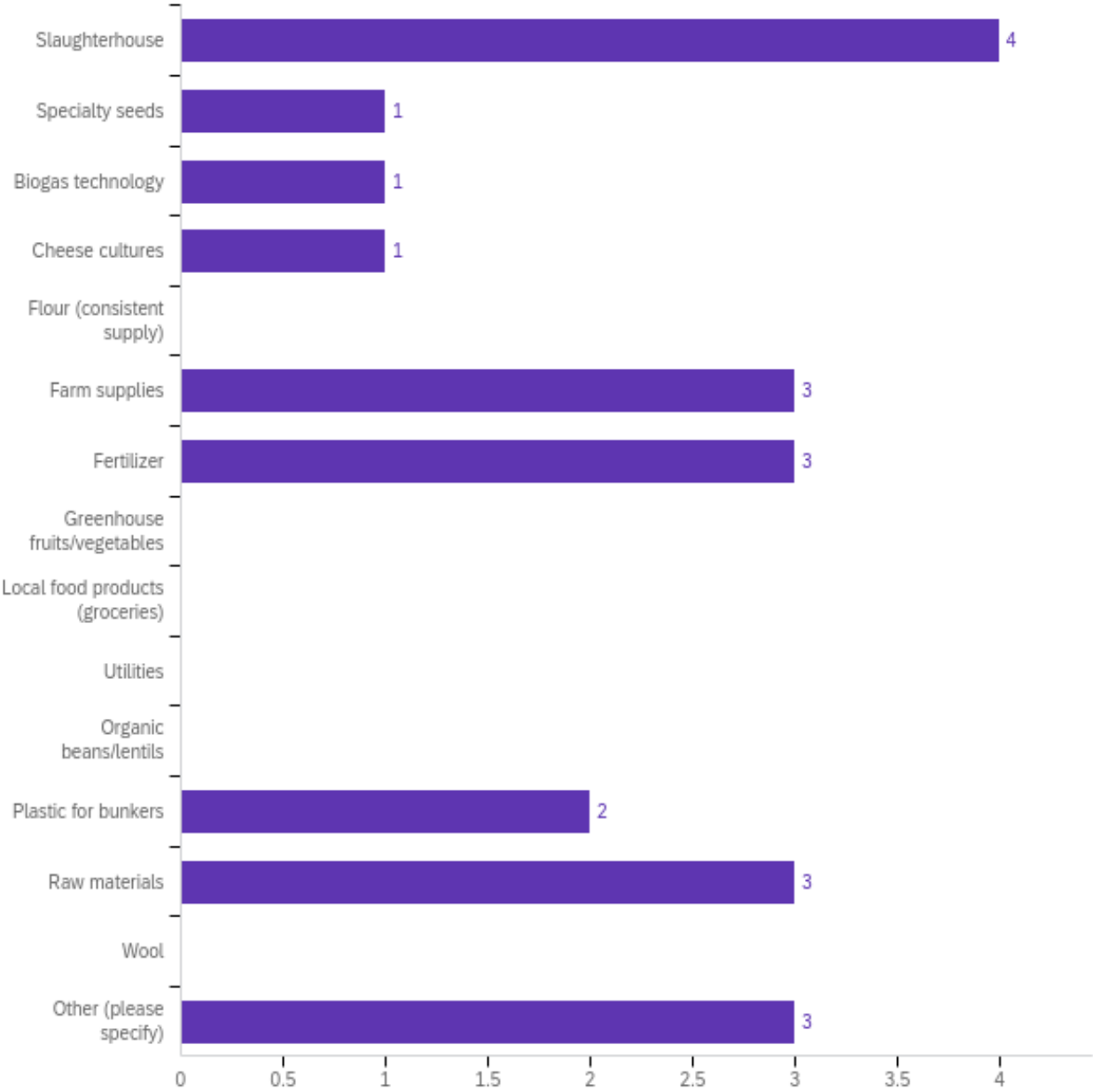**Q16 - What inputs, products, or services would you like to purchase locally that are now being purchased outside the area? Check all that apply.**

| Category	Value
Slaughterhouse	4
Specialty seeds	1
Biogas technology	1
Cheese cultures	1
Flour (consistent supply)	
Farm supplies	3
Fertilizer	3
Greenhouse fruits/vegetables	
Local food products (groceries)	
Utilities	
Organic beans/lentils	
Plastic for bunkers	2
Raw materials	3
Wool	
Other (please specify)	3

Q17 – What could be done in the community to improve the marketing of your agricultural products?
- No responses provided.

Q18 – Is lack of access to markets affecting your agri-business?
- **No responses provided.**
-

Q19 #1 - Which would best describe your plans for your business over the next 3 years? Select one answer. - Plan in 3 years
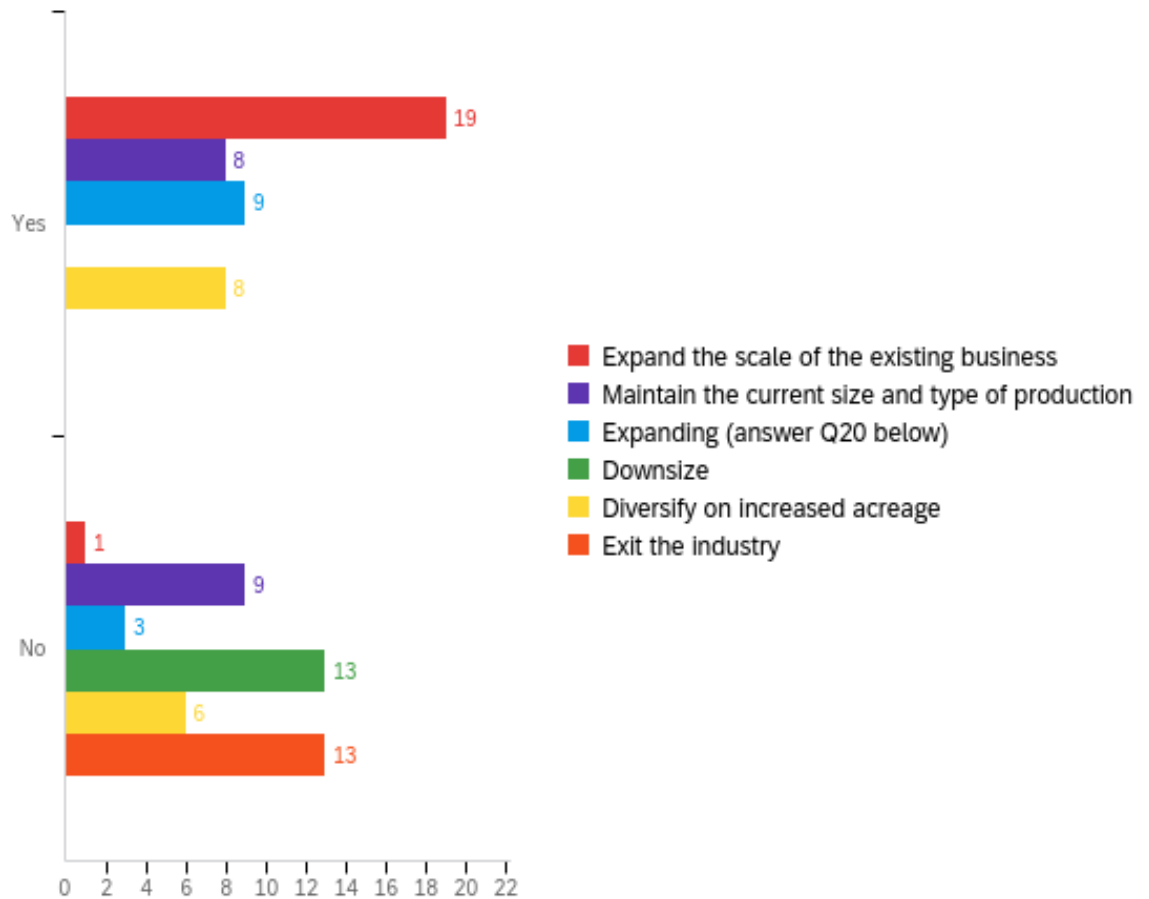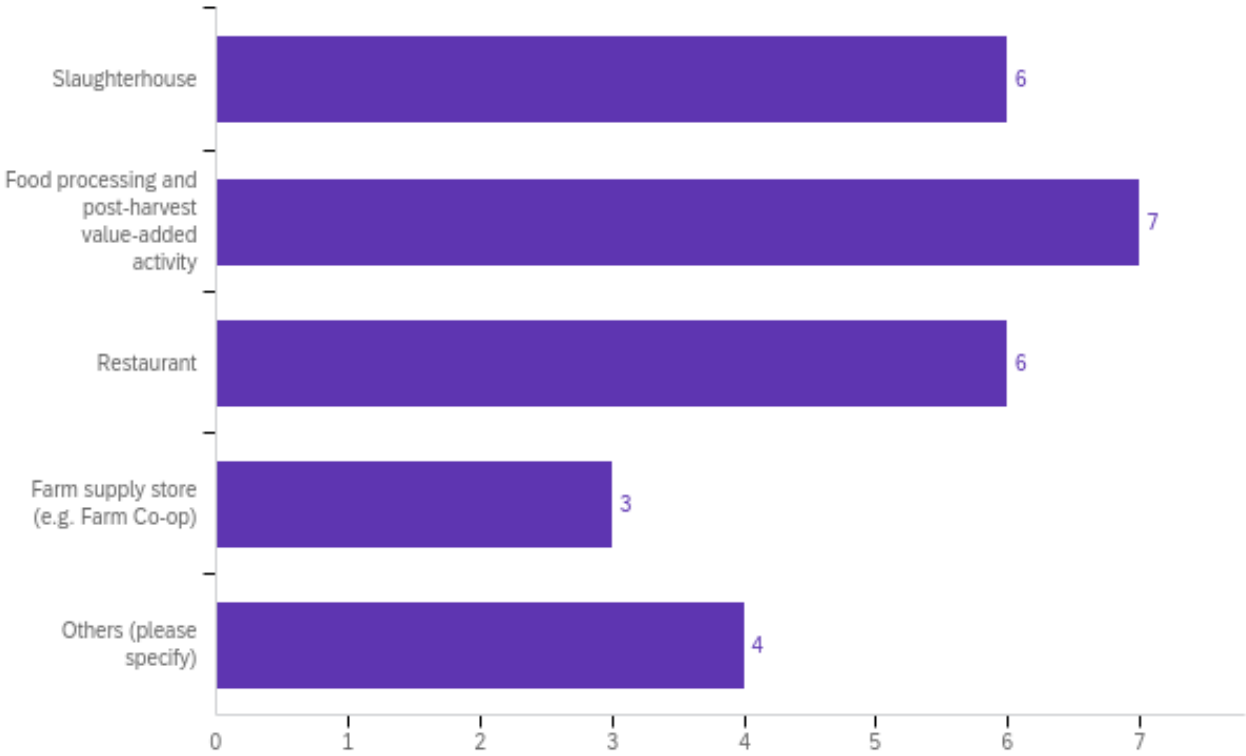

Q20 - If you are planning to diversify or expand the scale of your business, will your expansion lead to an increase in the following? Select all that apply.
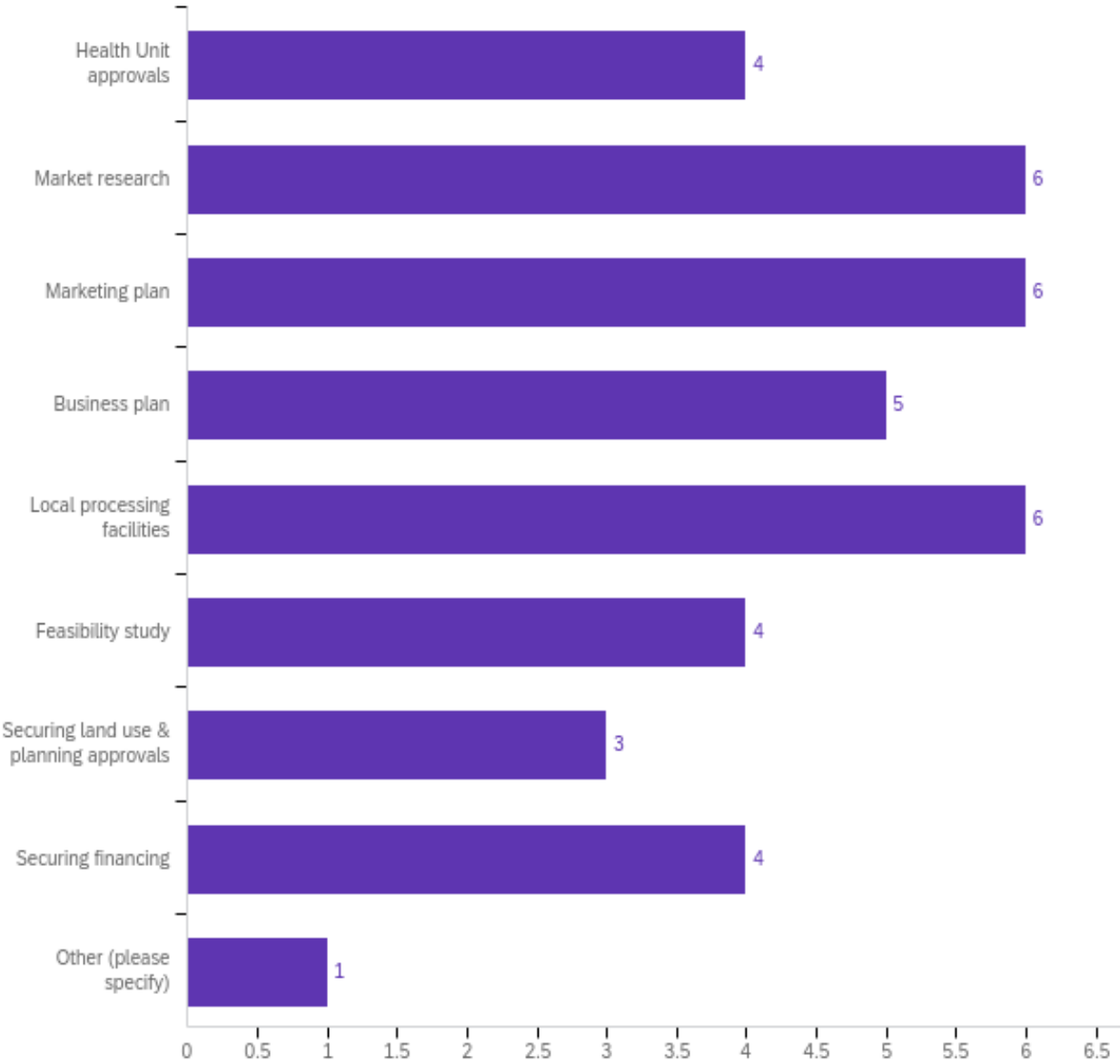
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Demand for skills training	8.76%	12
2	Process improvements	5.84%	8
3	Exporting	2.19%	3

4	Importing	0.73%	1
5	Investment in equipment/technology	9.49%	13
6	Services for customers	5.84%	8
7	Expand product lines	6.57%	9
8	Floor space	5.84%	8
9	Workforce	10.22%	14
10	Opening another location	3.65%	5
11	Licensing your product	0.73%	1
12	Offering your business as a franchise or business opportunity	0.73%	1
13	Forming an alliance or cooperative	1.46%	2
14	Sell complementary products or services	2.92%	4
15	Import or export yours or other products	1.46%	2
16	Introduce new products or services to existing customers	3.65%	5
17	Win a government contract (have the federal government as a customer)	0.73%	1
18	Selling more of the same products or services to new customers	8.76%	12
19	Targeting other markets	2.92%	4
20	Customer retention	9.49%	13
21	Expand globally	0.00%	0
22	Develop or enhance website	3.65%	5
23	Use social media	4.38%	6
24	Others (Please specify)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	137

Q21 - Which new businesses, services or products would you like to see added to your community? Select all that apply.

Bar chart values:
- Slaughterhouse: 6
- Food processing and post-harvest value-added activity: 7
- Restaurant: 6
- Farm supply store (e.g. Farm Co-op): 3
- Others (please specify): 4

Q22 - What information/assistance do you need to include processing as part of your farm business? Check all that apply.

Category	Value
Health Unit approvals	4
Market research	6
Marketing plan	6
Business plan	5
Local processing facilities	6
Feasibility study	4
Securing land use & planning approvals	3
Securing financing	4
Other (please specify)	1

Q23 - What are the biggest challenges facing local businesses in this community? Check all that apply.

Q24 - What are your specific recommendations to improve the local business climate? Check all that apply.

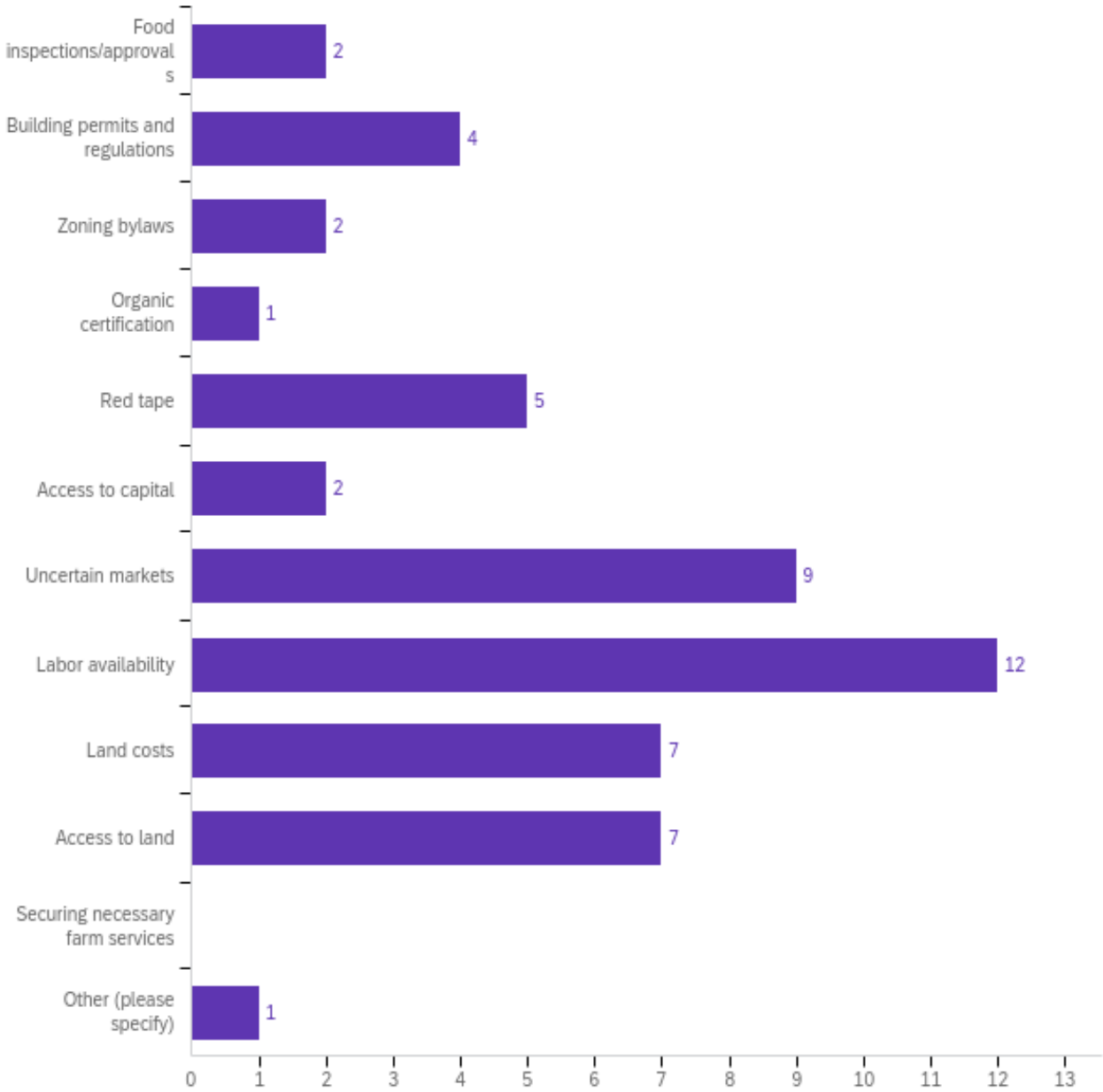| Recommendation	Count
Local food movement/reduce red tape/lessen regulations	6
Promote local food and products	6
Improve local marketing/customer service	6
Public education about food and farming	9
Legislative support for agriculture	9
Government support and assistance for local business	8
Attract/develop/support value-added agriculture	8
Encourage diversification	6
Environmental protection and awareness	1
Other (please specify)	2

Q25 - What are the barriers to your agri-business operation? Check all that apply.

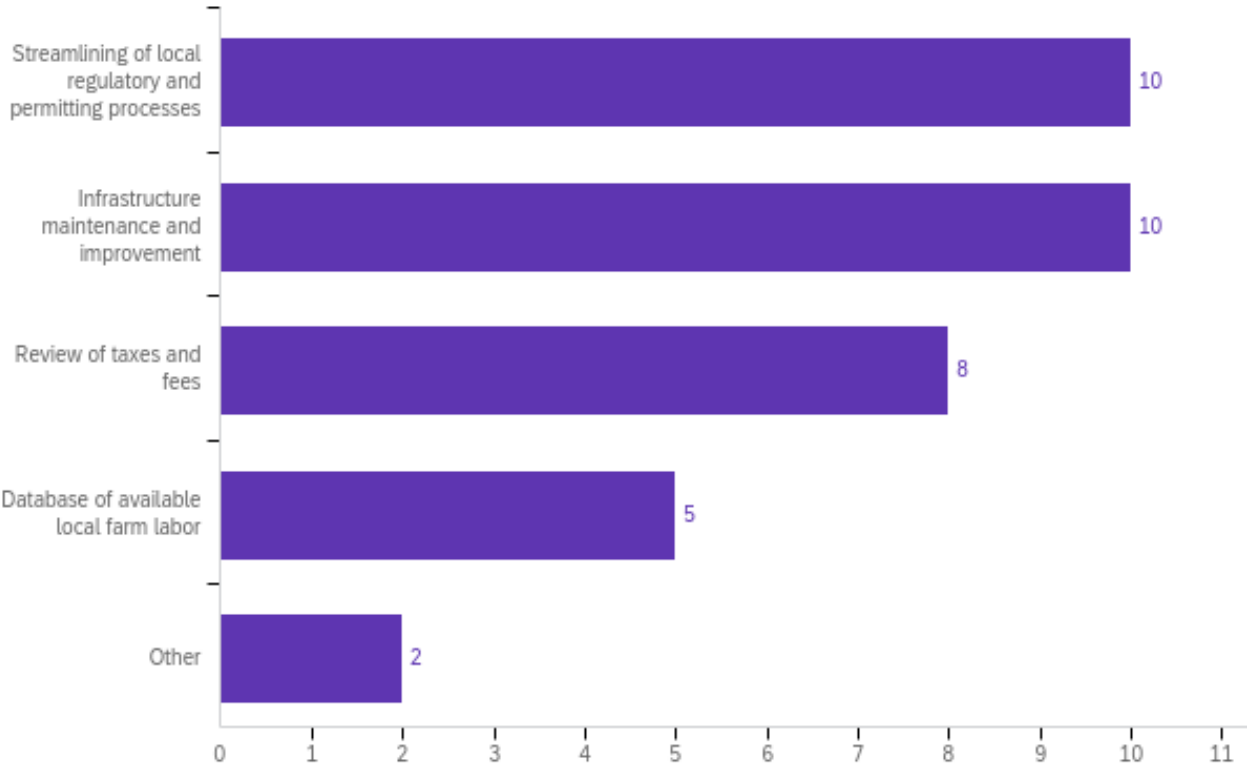| Barrier	Count
Food inspections/approvals	2
Building permits and regulations	4
Zoning bylaws	2
Organic certification	1
Red tape	5
Access to capital	2
Uncertain markets	9
Labor availability	12
Land costs	7
Access to land	7
Securing necessary farm services	
Other (please specify)	1

Q26 - Please indicate which of the issues will be considered barriers to the expansion of existing businesses and to the development of new businesses in the community. Check all that apply.
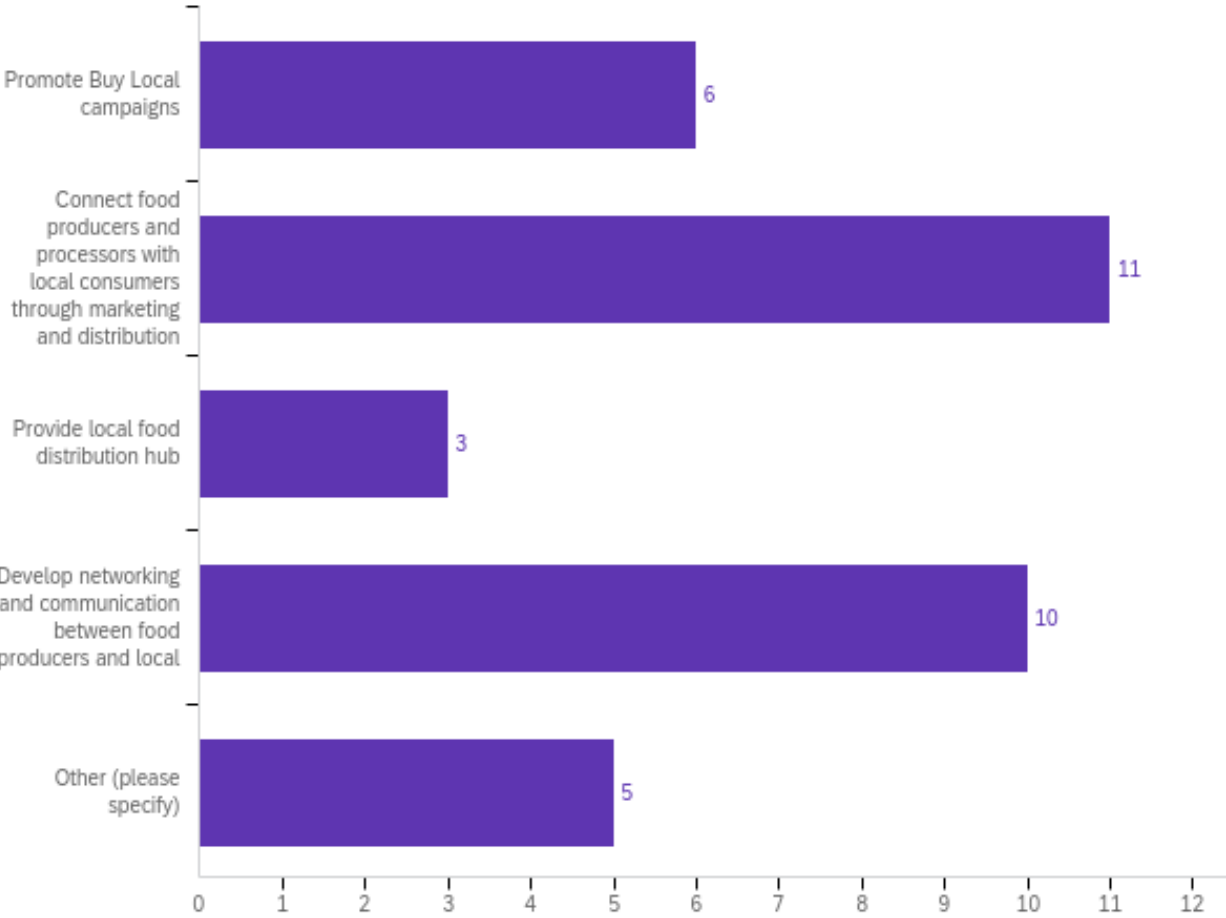
Expansion of existing business

11.76%
9.80%
9.80%
5.88%
19.61%
15.69%
27.45%

Development of new business

13.33%
11.11%
6.67%
8.89%
6.67%
15.56%
24.44%
13.33%

■ Approval processes   ■ Availability of skilled labor   ■ Availability of unskilled labor

■ Availability of natural gas   ■ Availability of financing or access to capital

■ Information technology capacity   ■ Availability of properly zoned land

■ Transportation and distribution

Q27 - Which of the following factors related to your use of information technology/internet are barriers to your business? Check all that apply.
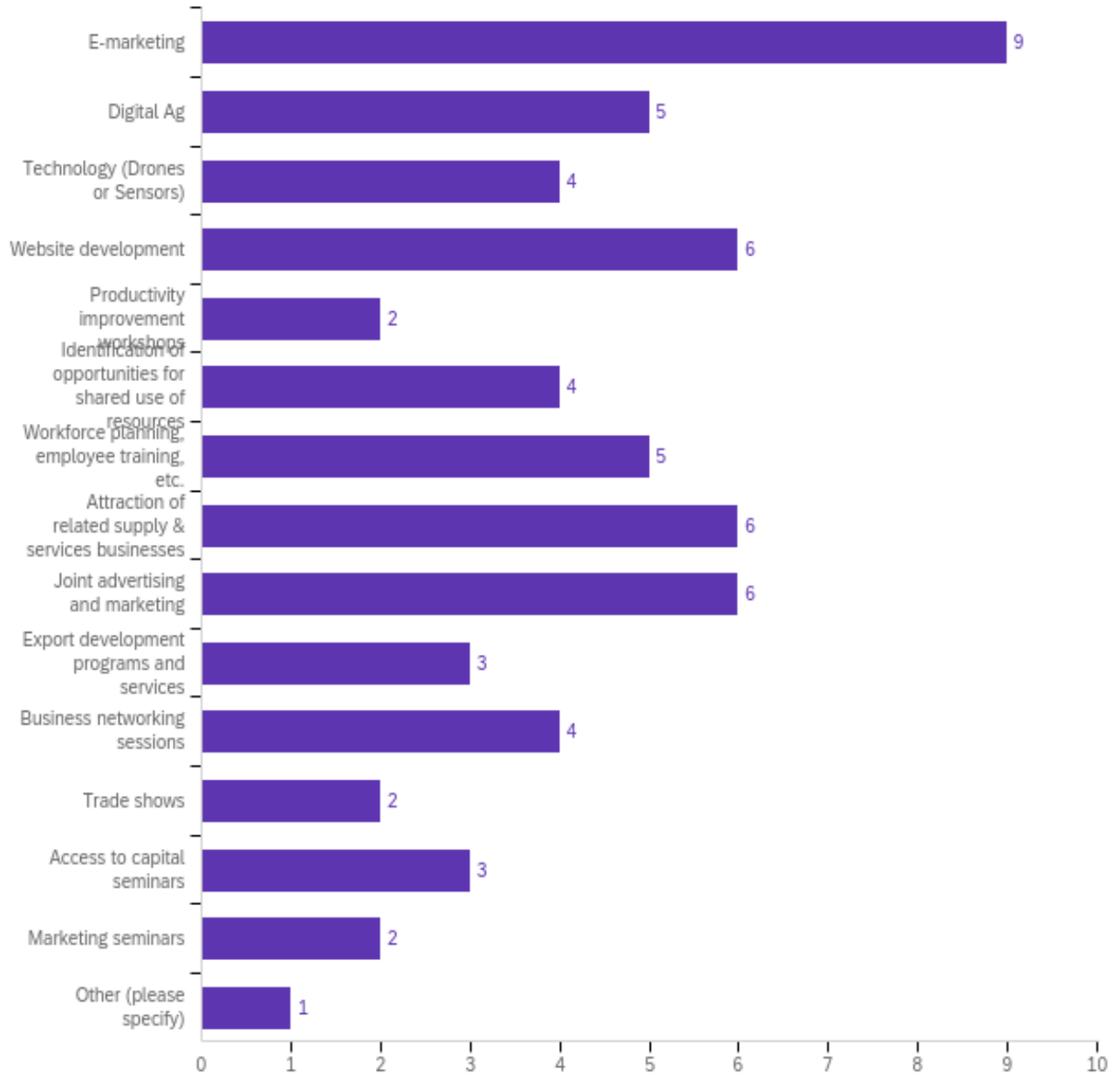
Factor	Count
No barrier	6
Internet speed	7
Internet access	3
Internet cost	2
Knowledge	4
Staff training	3
Market development	2
Online sales	2
Time to learn and stay current	3
Privacy	2
Trouble shooting	2
Other (please specify)	1

Q28 - In what ways could local government assist the agriculture sector in your area?

Category	Value
Streamlining of local regulatory and permitting processes	10
Infrastructure maintenance and improvement	10
Review of taxes and fees	8
Database of available local farm labor	5
Other	2

Q29 - In what ways could local/regional economic development organizations assist in increasing local food supply, demand and distribution? Check all that apply.


Category	Value
Promote Buy Local campaigns	6
Connect food producers and processors with local consumers through marketing and distribution	11
Provide local food distribution hub	3
Develop networking and communication between food producers and local	10
Other (please specify)	5

Q30 - What assistance, if any, could the community, local government or economic development organizations give to support your business? Check all that apply.

Category	Count
E-marketing	9
Digital Ag	5
Technology (Drones or Sensors)	4
Website development	6
Productivity improvement workshops	2
Identification of opportunities for shared use of resources	4
Workforce planning, employee training, etc.	5
Attraction of related supply & services businesses	6
Joint advertising and marketing	6
Export development programs and services	3
Business networking sessions	4
Trade shows	2
Access to capital seminars	3
Marketing seminars	2
Other (please specify)	1

I-74 Corridor General Survey Results

REDM- Targeted BR&E: General Business Questionnaire

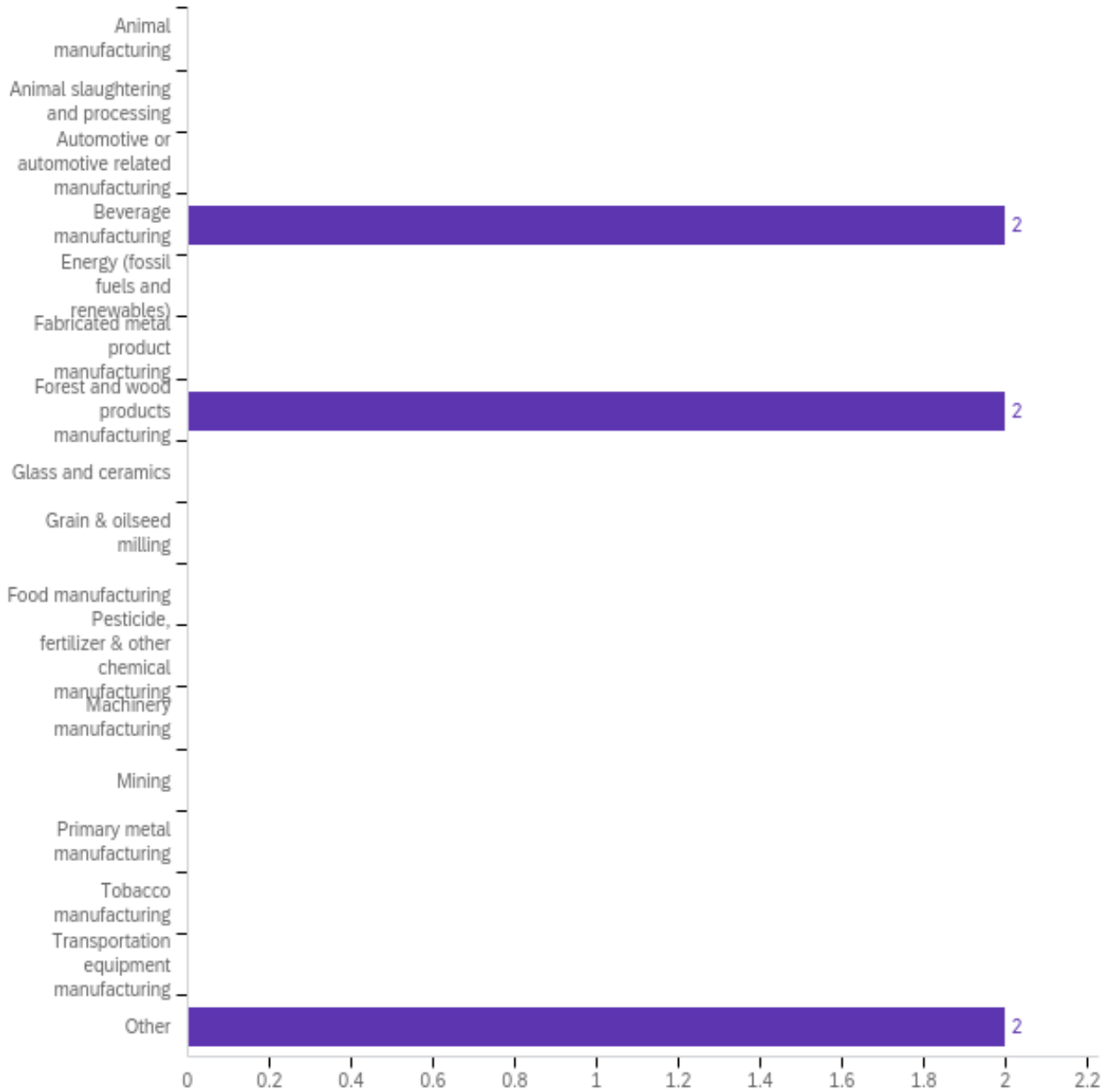## Qa - In which county is your company located in?
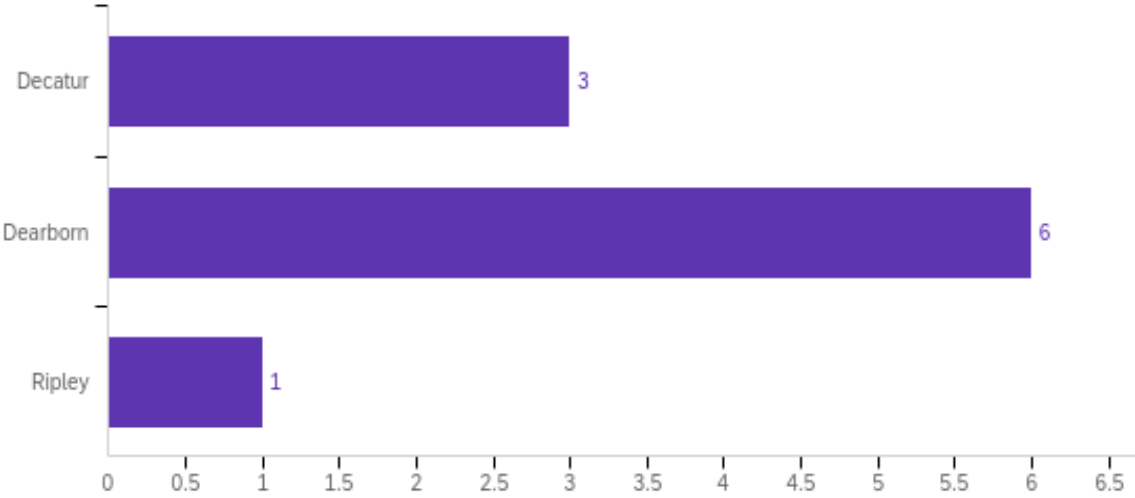
Q1 - Which of the following best describes your business?
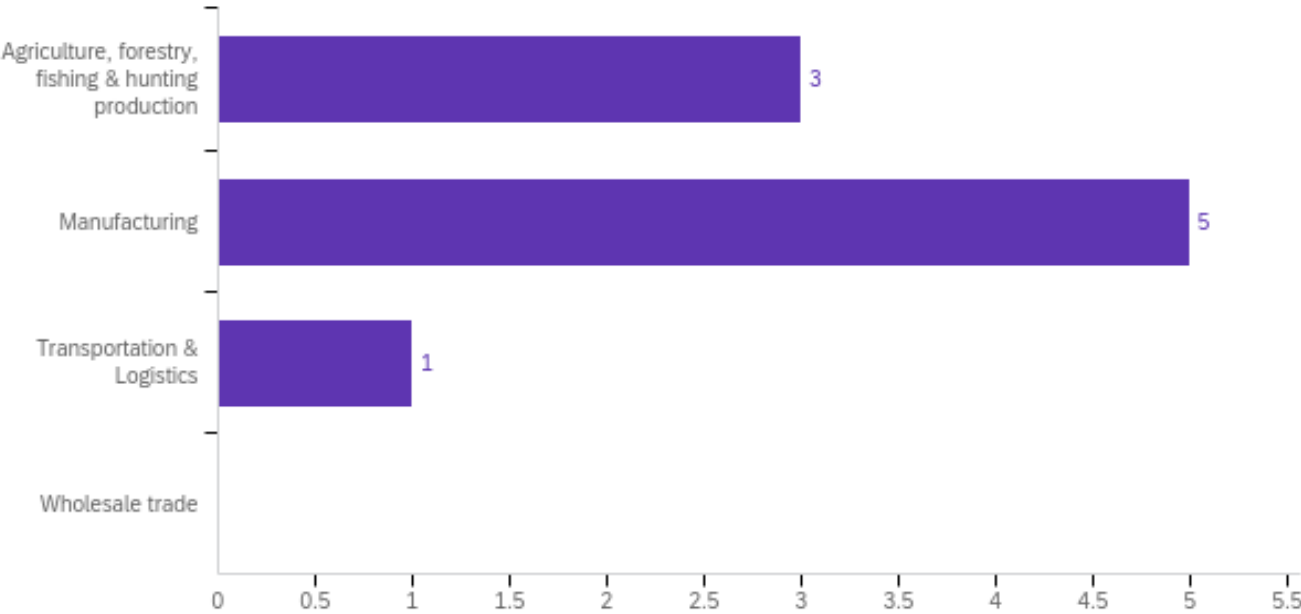
Q1a - Which of the following best describes your AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING, & HUNTING PRODUCTION farm/agriculture business? Select all that apply.
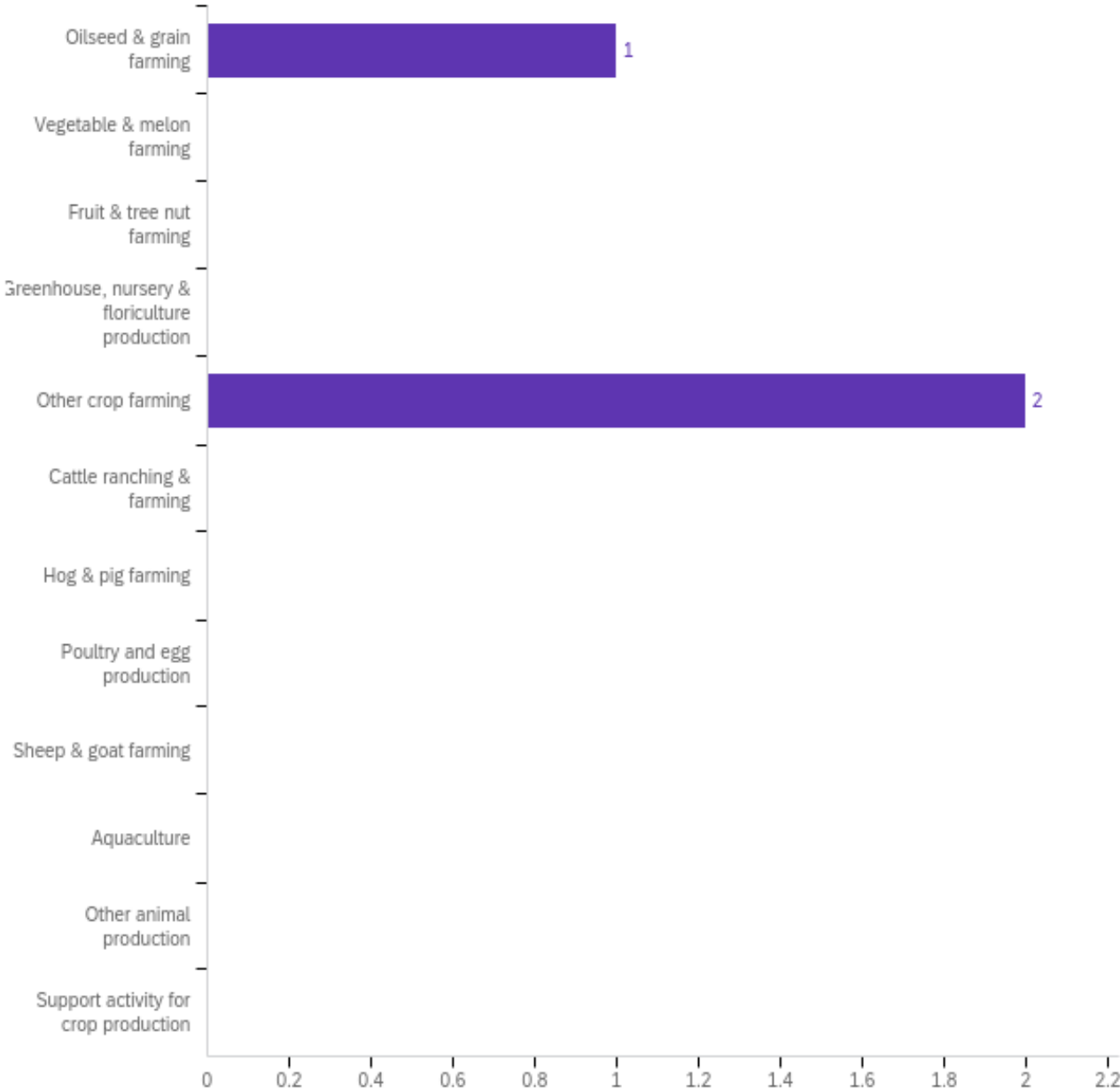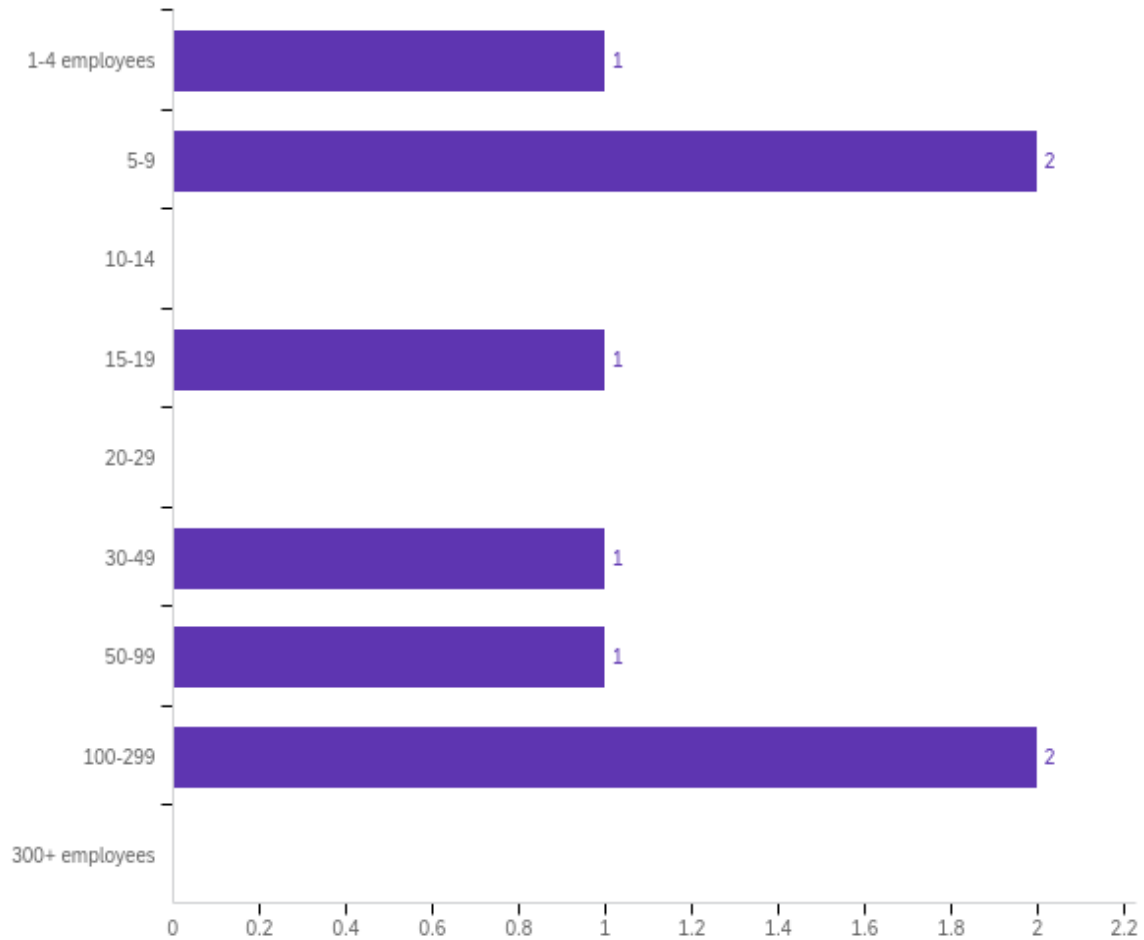
Q1b - Which of the following best describes your MANUFACTURING business?

Q2 – If you know your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code, please provide it.

- **No response provided.**

Q3 - Including owner-operators, how many employees work at this location?

Q4 – What percentage of your employees live within or outside of community?
- **No response provided.**

Q5 – During the past 3 years, has the number of employees in this business changed?
- **No response provided.**

Q6 – What factors are responsible for this change?
- **No response provided.**

Q7 – How do you rate the availability, quality and stability of the workforce in this area for your business?
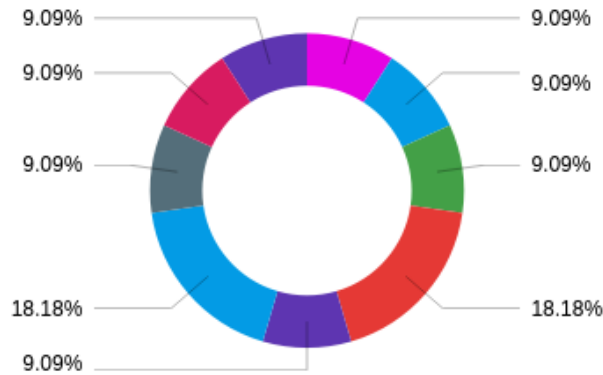- No response provided.

Q8 – Are you able to recruit sufficient qualified employees for your business?
- No response provided.

**Q9 – On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the skill profile of your company's workforce?**
- No response provided.

Q10 - What are the major products or services produced at this establishment?

Legend:
- Agricultural Services
- Apparel & other textile products
- Chemicals & allied products
- Coal, oil, gas
- Construction
- Electric & Electronic equipment
- Electric, gas & sanitary services
- Fabricated metal products
- Food services
- Furniture & fixtures
- Glass and ceramic products
- Health services
- Instruments & related products
- Iron, bauxite, ores, etc.
- Leather products
- Lumber & wood
- Machinery, except electric
- Motor vehicles & equipment
- Paper & allied products
- Petroleum & coal products
- Processed fats/oils
- Processed grains, fruits, etc.
- Processed meat products
- Renewable Energy
- Rubber & misc. plastics
- Soft drinks/liquor
- Stone, clay products
- Textile mill products
- Tobacco manufactures
- Transportation services
- Warehousing/Storage
- Wholesale trade
- Other

Q13 - If your business buys materials, supplies, and services from outside this 6-county region, could some of these items be produced in the area?
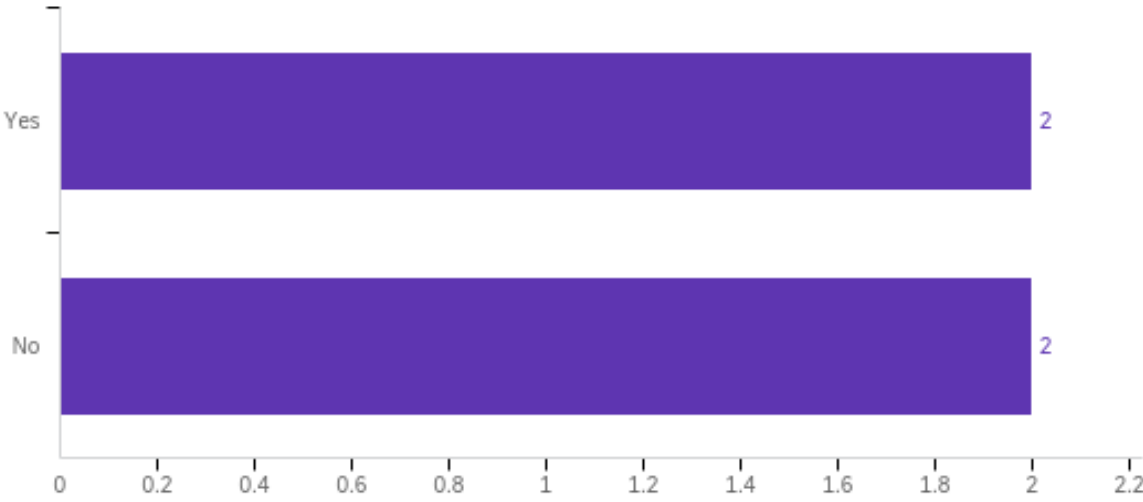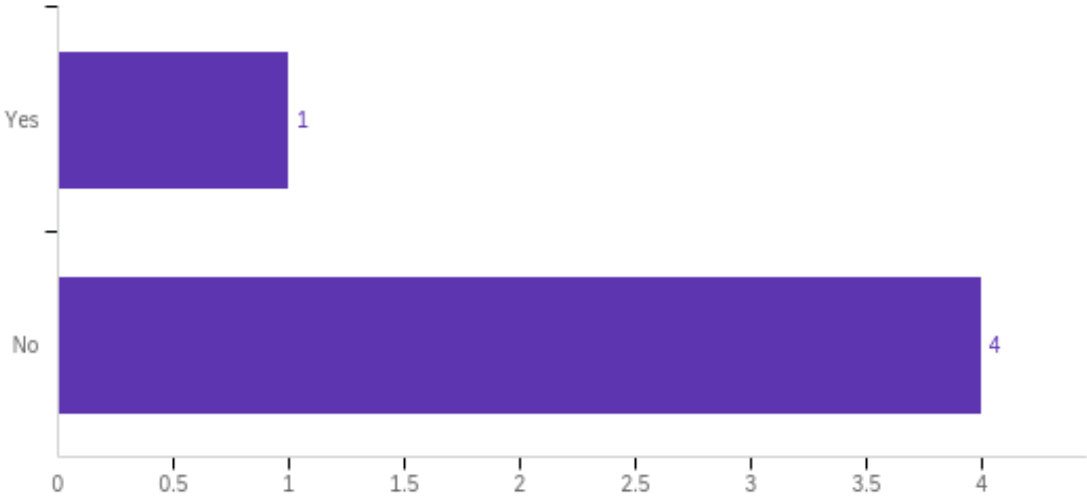

Q14 – If yes, please help us identify materials, supplies, or services that could be produced locally.
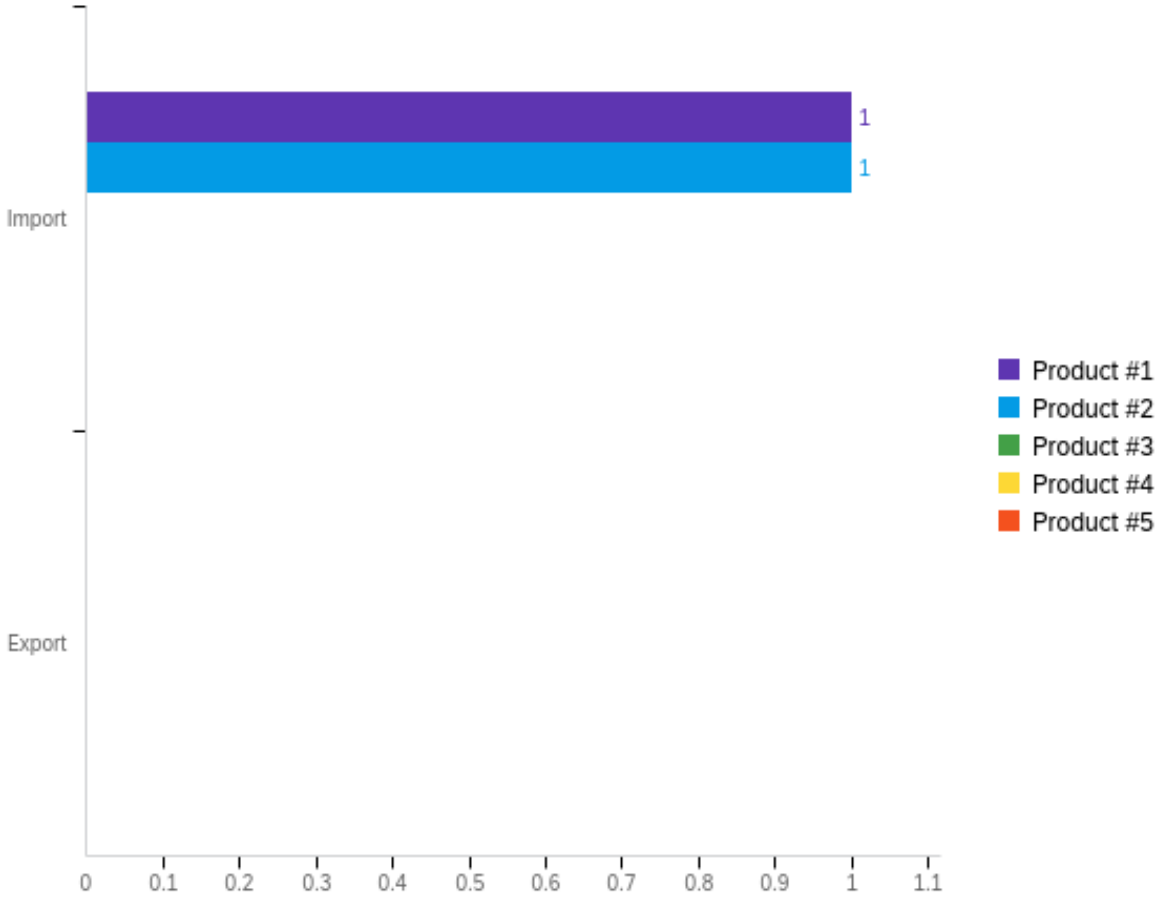- **No response provided.**

Q15 – What bottlenecks are you currently experiencing in obtaining your needed inputs?
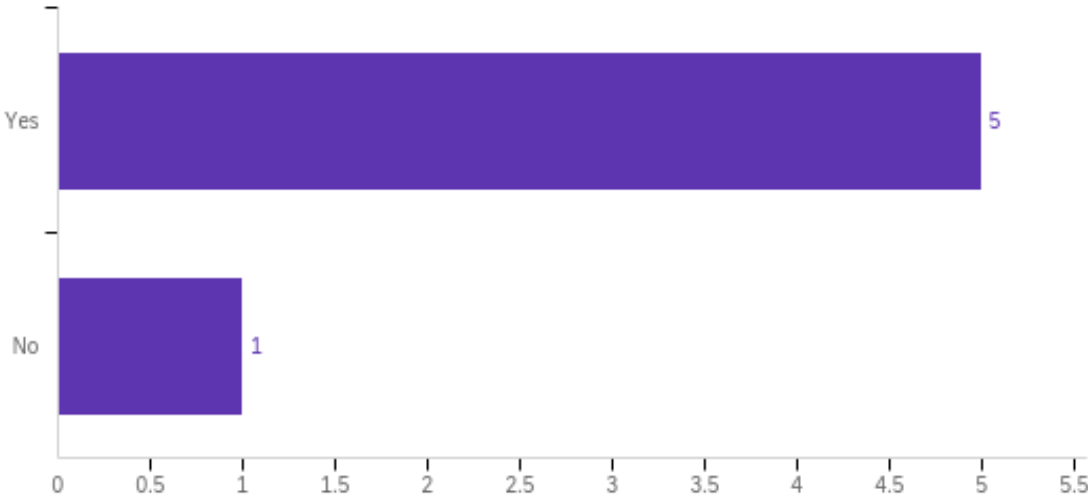- **No response provided.**

**Q16 - Do you currently import/export products?**

Q17 #1 - If yes, please specify the product and country for your top five (5) inputs: - Import or Export?

Q18a - Have you considered pursuing any new or niche market or value-added opportunities?

Q19a - Would you be interested in supplying local markets (retailers/institutional/wholesale buyers) if the distribution and management systems were in place?
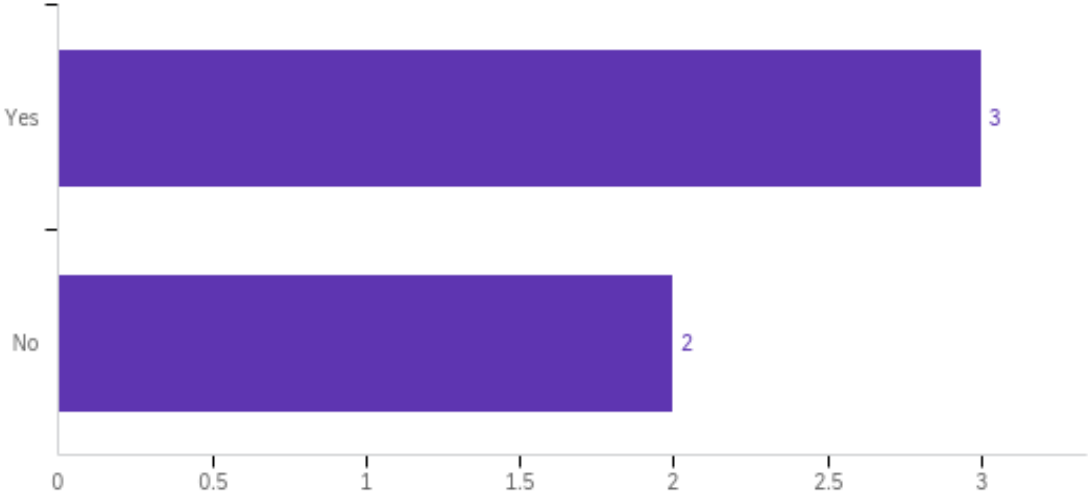
Q20 - Do you have the capacity to increase production/business to supply local markets if additional buyers were identified?
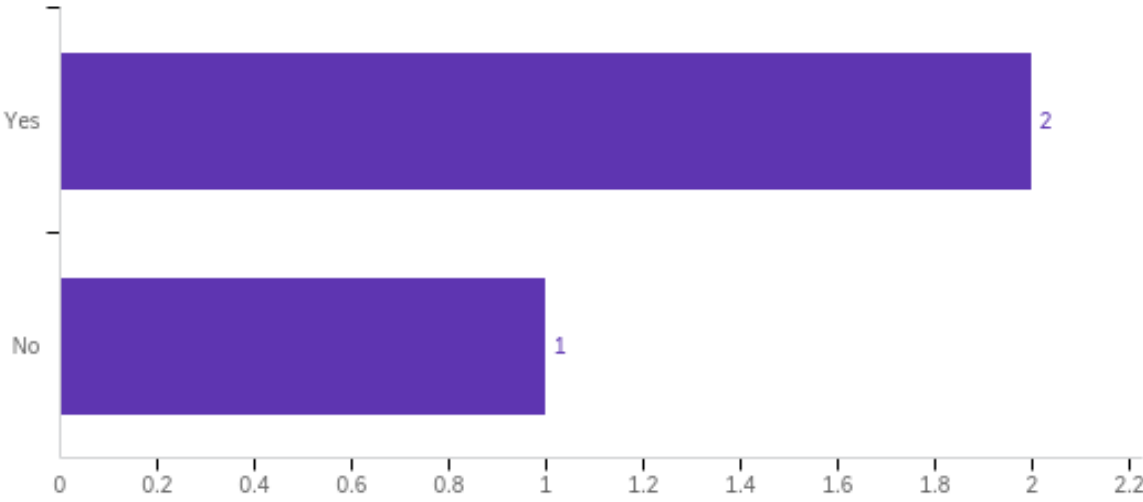
Q21 – What inputs, products or services would you like to purchase locally?
-   **No response provided.**

Q22 – What could be done in the community to improve the marketing of your products/services?
-   **No response provided.**

Q23 – Is lack of access to markets affecting your business?
-   **No response provided.**

Q24#1 - Which would best describe your plans for your business over the next 3 years? Select one answer. - Plan in 3 years

Legend:
- Expand the scale of the existing business
- Maintain the current size and type of production
- Expanding
- Downsize
- Diversify on increased acreage
- Exit the industry
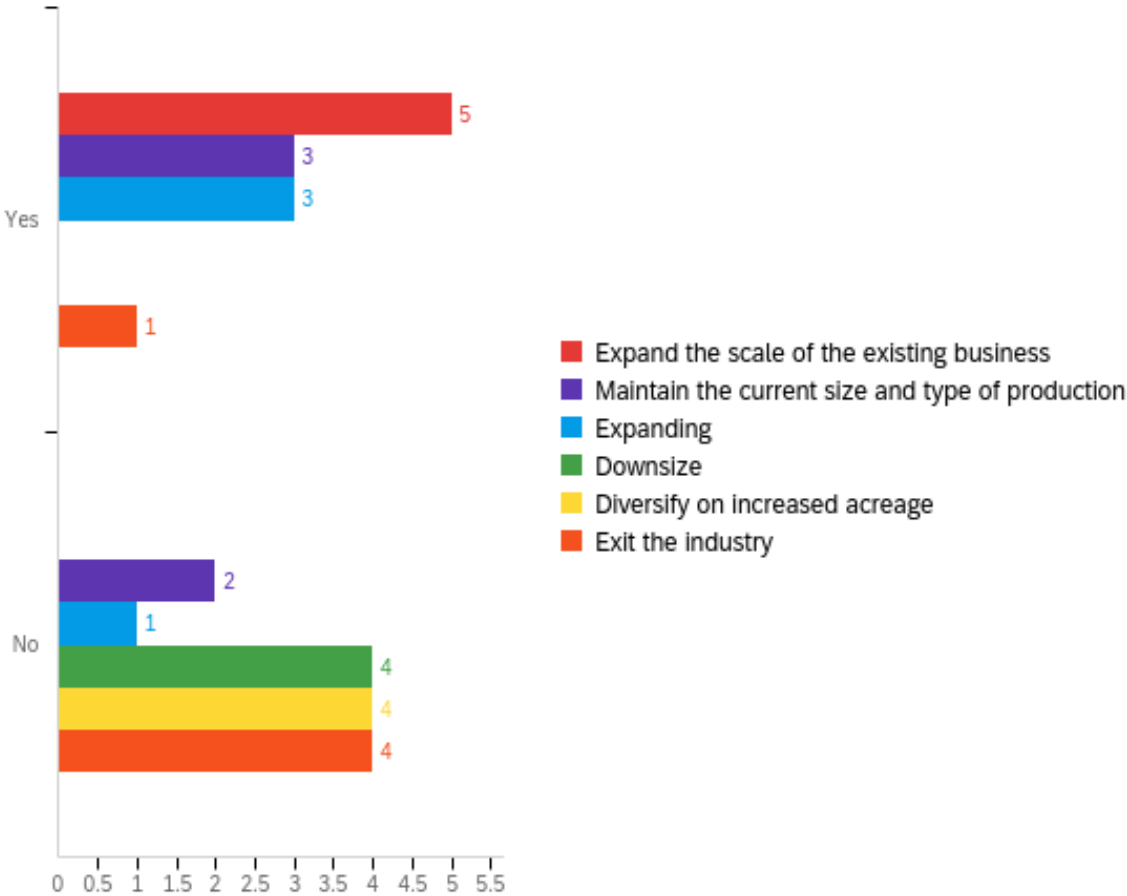
Q25 - If you are planning to diversify or expand the scale of your business, will your expansion lead to an increase in the following? Select all that apply.
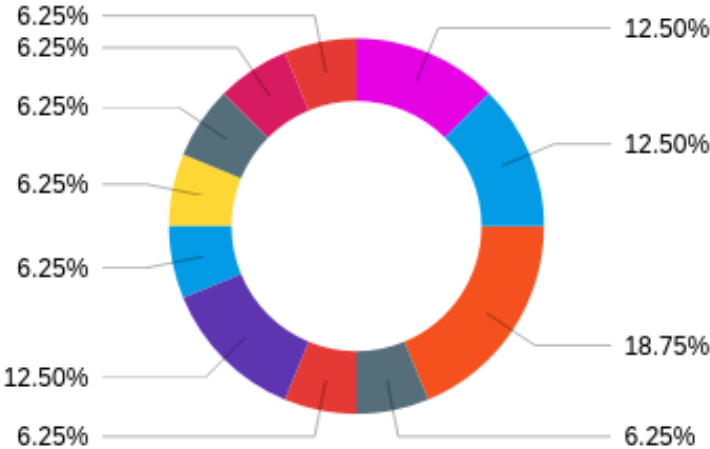

Legend:
- Demand for skills training
- Process improvements
- Exporting
- Importing
- Investment in equipment/technology
- Services for customers
- Expand product lines
- Floor space
- Workforce
- Opening another location
- Licensing your product
- Offering your business as a franchise or business opportunity
- Forming an alliance or cooperative
- Sell complementary products or services
- Import or export yours or other products
- Introduce new products or services to existing customers
- Win a government contract (have the federal government as a customer)
- Selling more of the same products or services to new customers
- Targeting other markets
- Customer retention
- Expand globally
- Develop or enhance website
- Use social media
- Others (Please specify)

Q26 – Which new businesses, services or products would you like to see added to your community?
- No response provided.

Q27 - What are the biggest challenges facing local businesses in this community? Check all that apply.
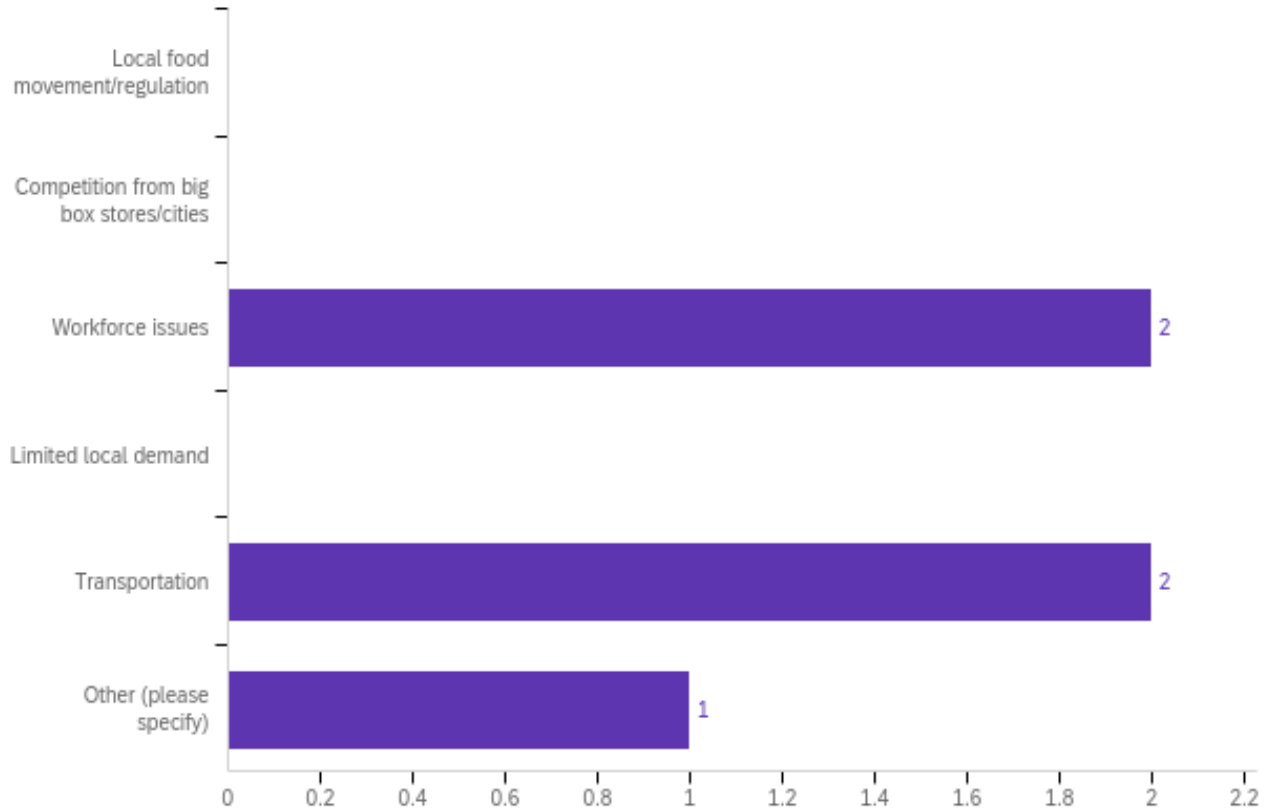
Q28 - What are your specific recommendations to improve the local business climate? Check all that apply.
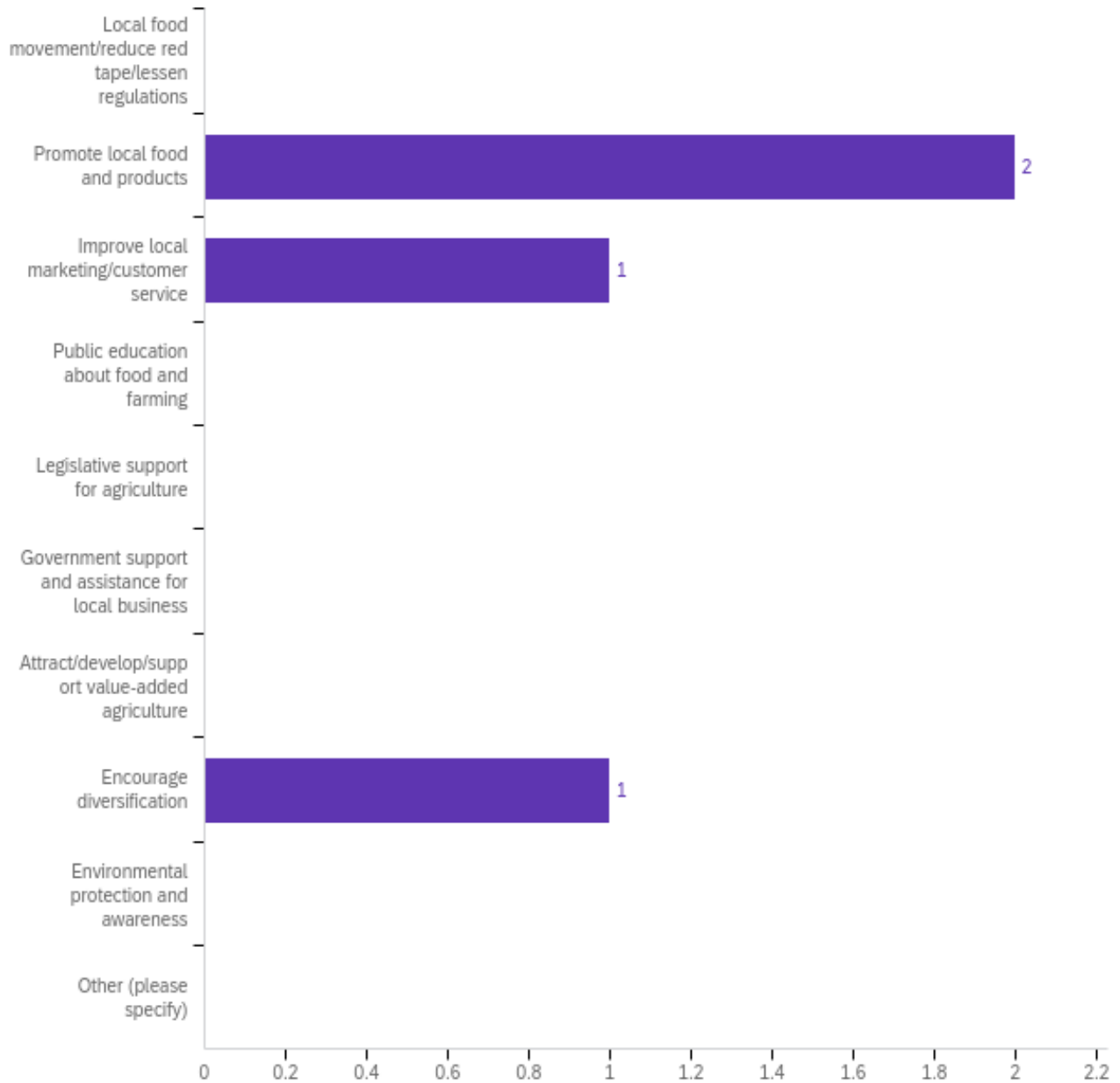
Q29 - What are the regulatory barriers to your business operation? Check all that apply.

Category	Value
Inspections/approvals	
Building permits and regulations	1
Zoning bylaws	
Red tape	1
Access to capital	
Uncertain markets	1
Labor availability	1
Land costs	
Access to land	
Securing necessary services	1
Other	1
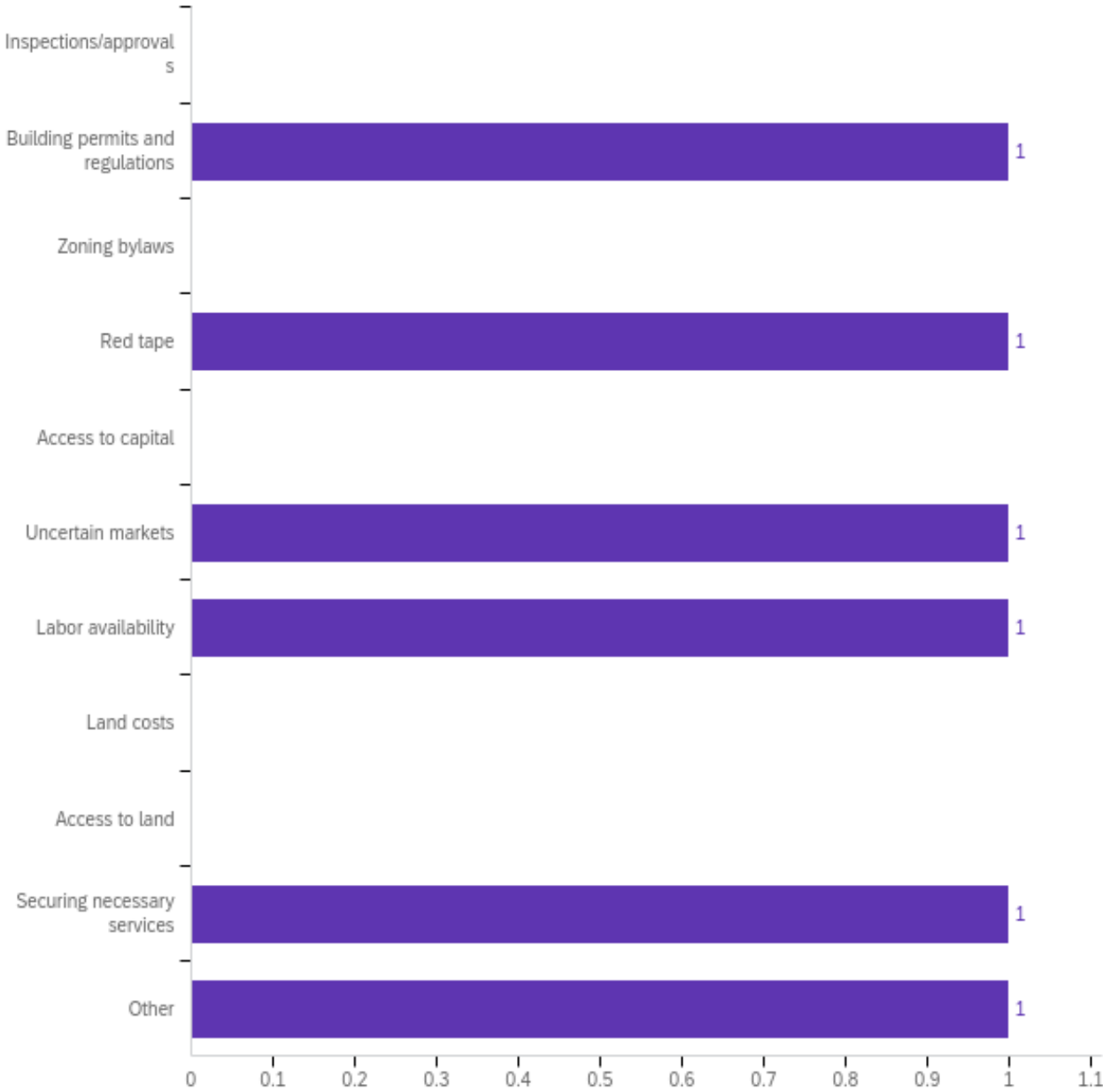
Q30 - Please indicate which of the issues will be considered barriers to the expansion of existing businesses and to the development of new businesses in the community. Check all that apply.

| #	Question	Expansion of existing business		Development of new business		Total
1	Approval processes	50.00%	1	50.00%	1	2
2	Availability of skilled labor	50.00%	2	50.00%	2	4
3	Availability of unskilled labor	50.00%	2	50.00%	2	4
4	Availability of natural gas	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
5	Business insurance	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
6	Availability of financing or access to capital	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
7	Information technology capacity	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
8	Business taxes	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
9	Development charges	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
10	Availability of properly zoned land	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
11	Road and highway system	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
12	Availability of space for rent or lease	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
13	Lack of proactive new business	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
14	Transportation and distribution	33.33%	1	66.67%	2	3
15	Utilities (cost)	33.33%	1	66.67%	2	3
16	Utilities (capacity and access)	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
17	Availability of training opportunities	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
18	Public transit	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
19	Availability of serviced land	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
20	Resistance from local business	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
21	Security/policing and fire service	0.00%	0	100.00%	2	2

22	Uncertain markets	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
23	Health and medical services	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1

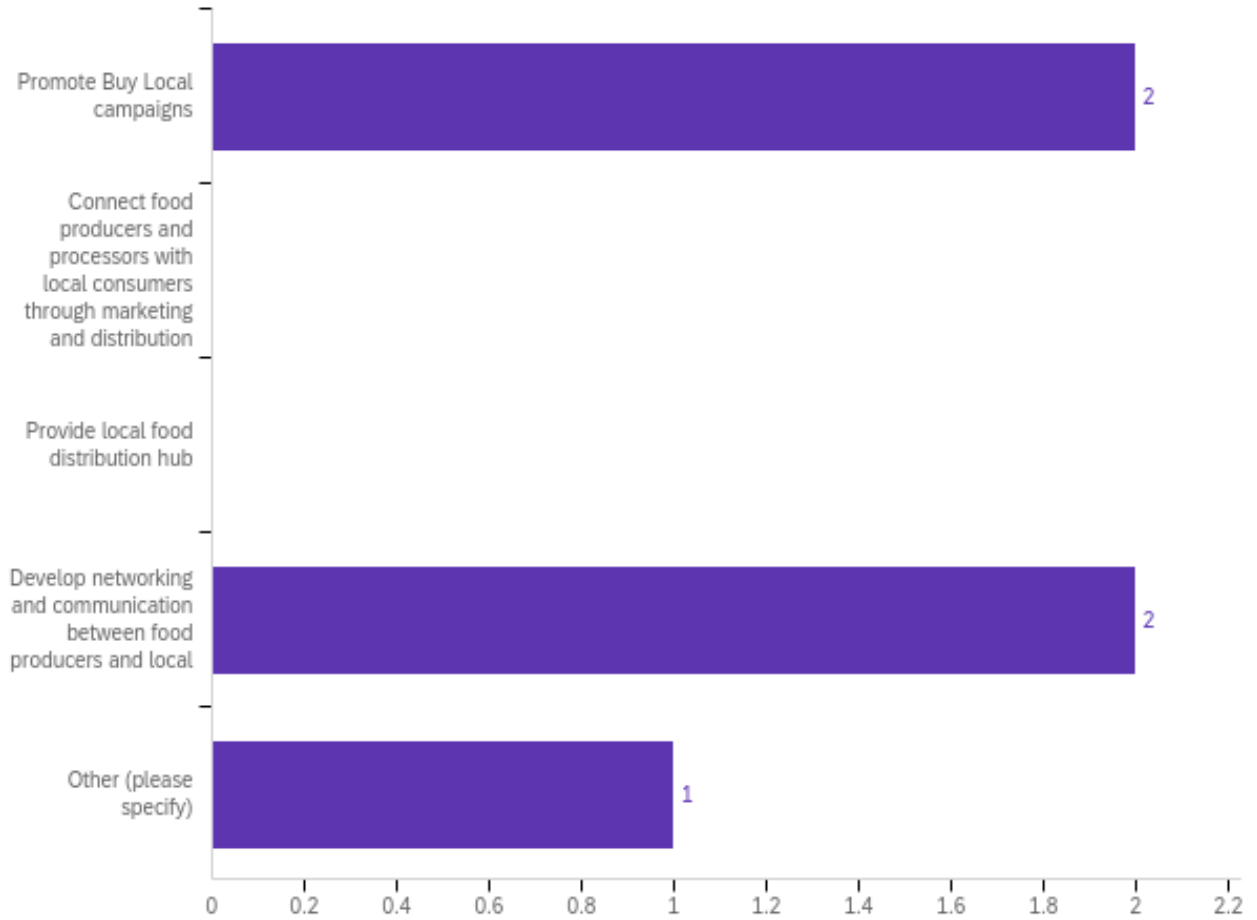## Q31 - Which of the following factors related to your use of information technology/internet are barriers to your business? Check all that apply.
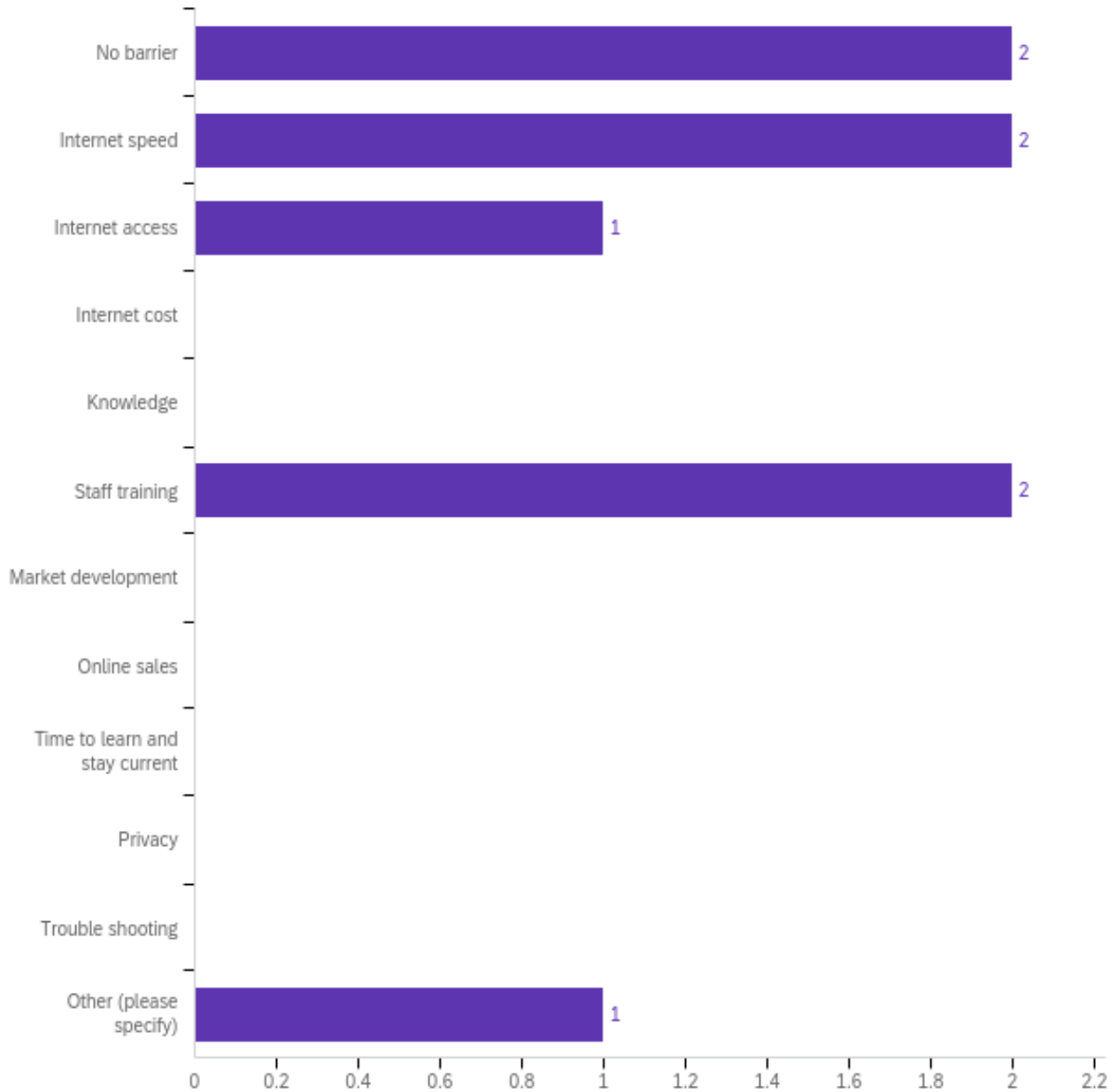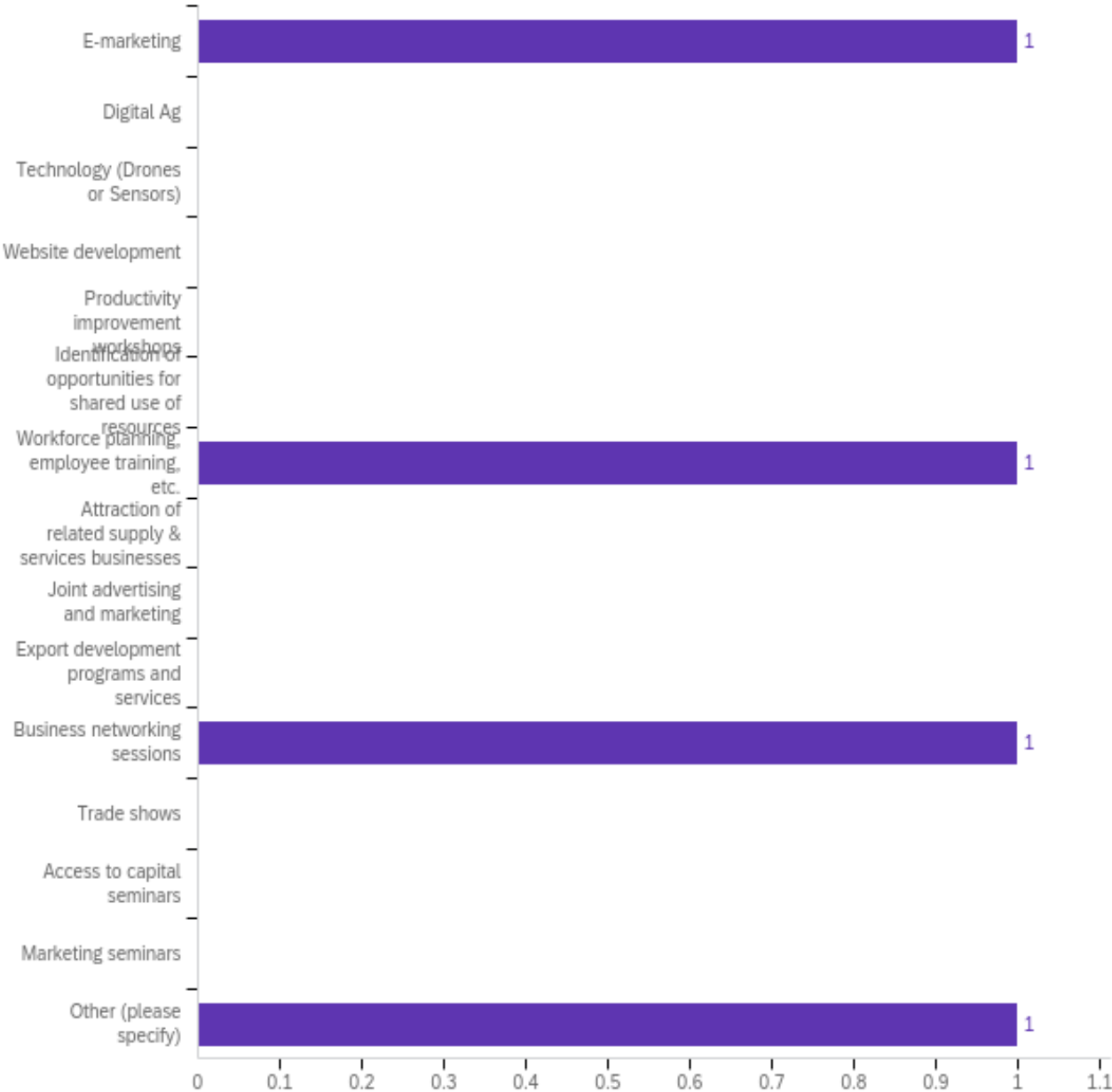
Q32 - In what ways could local government assist the businesses/industries in your area?
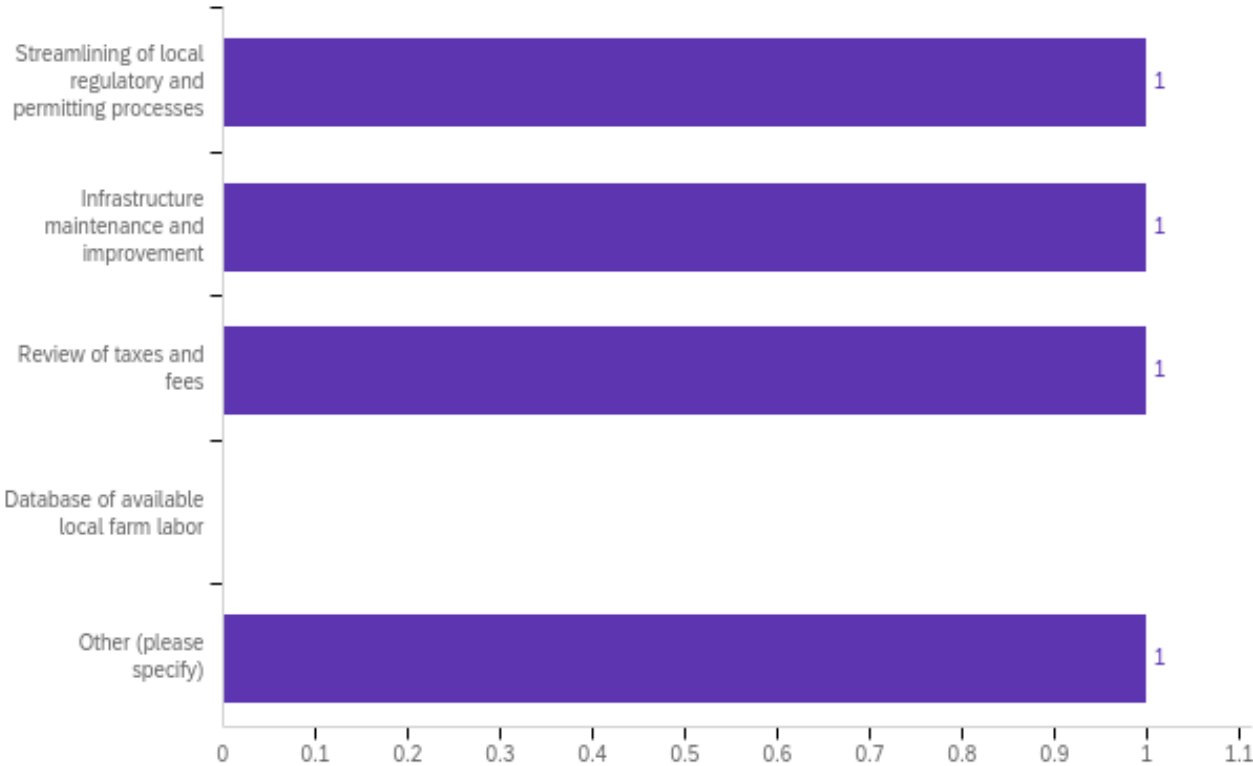
Q33 - In what ways could local/regional economic development organizations assist in increasing local food supply, demand and distribution? Check all that apply.

Q34 - What assistance, if any, could the community, local government or economic development organizations give to support your business? Check all that apply.

Category	Value
E-marketing	1
Digital Ag	
Technology (Drones or Sensors)	
Website development	
Productivity improvement workshops	
Identification of opportunities for shared use of resources	
Workforce planning, employee training, etc.	1
Attraction of related supply & services businesses	
Joint advertising and marketing	
Export development programs and services	
Business networking sessions	1
Trade shows	
Access to capital seminars	
Marketing seminars	
Other (please specify)	1

APPENDIX B

Site Visit Qualitative Outcomes

The team leaders from each of the six counties in the I-74 Corridor Task Force shared their "takeaways" and "ah-ha" moments from the site visits they conducted. Following are some of the key insights they shared, organized under the following themes that emerged from the conversations the regional local economic development officials (LEDOs) had with businesses:

Local/State Government Support for Agribusiness

"Farmers don't see the IEDC (Indiana Economic Development Corporation) as actively working to assist agribusiness (although the Indiana SBDC Agribusiness Initiative is backed by the IEDC)."

"The IEDC has a requirement for a certain wage level & number of jobs – and agribusiness isn't meeting either criteria in many cases."

"Could rural communities consider tax abatements for CAFOs and other agribusinesses? Look at the increased tax evaluation – and how that impacts the county."

"Given the Right to Farm policy, residents can't remonstrate against any agriculture activities in an ag-zoned area."

Zoning & Permitting

"A survey was recently completed in Rush County re: zoning/permitting (came up as a high level of concern in conversations with agribusinesses)."

"Farmers are worried about the approval process, as well as their perception/receptivity in the community."

"LEDOs need to look into utility rates – came up as a 'red flag' during agribusiness visits."

Broadband Capacity

"Broadband is an issue for ag across the six counties."

"Should consider adding a rural broadband mapping project as one of the plan's strategies, if it isn't already being done."

Transportation

"Infrastructure is a priority – particularly, the capacity of roads and bridges for transportation of agriculture products."

Width of Roads

Rail Crossings being removed

Guarantee on # of rail cars – how can we guarantee a number of cars, maybe with multiple users, co-op/partnership of mixed ag businesses.

A couple of sites were looked at for potential development – John / Rush County

3 large storage facilities (Fisher Seeds) new rail siding / food grade in Shelby County

✓   Develop a regional map of usable rail sidings that could be used by others*

LINK 101 project – extension of Hwy 101: funded project with environmental studies taking place now – need to list this in the strategy document – may be a good link to I-74 (Markland to Hwy 50) check on ideal truck route

Converting / adding lanes to Hwy 3 – just starting the process as an INDOT project to connect I-70 to I-74

Transporting products on roads causes lines of cars

Recruiting Agribusiness Labor

"Indiana Career Connect or DWD doesn't look at ag workers (there needs to be a specific section for ag workers, and even seasonal ag workers."

Is there a pipeline of High School FFA into the workforce?

Immigration Process – need assistance in navigating the process. Need to work past the distrust issues. (Governor's Workforce Cabinet has 20 recommendations) Workforce Board was focusing on this.

Also need to work on acclimating the various cultures into the communities and the workforce.

Access to Land

"LEDOs want to know what 'access to land' means – is that for spreading manure or planting or other purposes?"

Beginning Farmers needing access to land

Could be there an incentive program to offer ag entrepreneurs a tax incentive to rent to a qualified next generation farmer?

How to make the connections between the farmer who needs to have someone take over the farm and a new / beginning farmer.

How do we show the youth what else happens on the farm, not just detasseling?

Manufacturing Day – what about an Ag Day – take high school students out to the farm for the day to see the whole farm operation and new technology

Money was driving many of the students to detassel, how do we show them the economic side of farm

Food processor expressed a desire to expand, but needs access to land

Another needs to expand into Cold Storage

Farmers won't sell their land to industries wanting to expand. Undevelopable ground – ag ground, economic development – need to have a greater understanding of what ED looks at for development

There is an ag corridor in Decatur County that limits what is or is not placed in the area

Look for land that could be used in an exchange

Help farmers understand what products/raw material might be needed in the area and that they have an immediate market if they grow a different product

Niche markets for small plots of land – high value crop of small acres within industrial parks, etc.

What to do with the infrastructure if they want to transition out of CFOs – vertical farming / greenhouses – vegetables or ornamental flowers – look at the next generation farming as it relates to the type of farming

Hydroponics – mushrooms – aquaponics – aquaculture

Dearborn has good water resources

Educational Training Needs

"The Indiana SBDC Agribusiness Initiative could offer Ag Asset Research Workshops (either in-person or online) to assist farmers in their pursuit to diversity or innovate."

- ✓ Ins & outs of working with migrant workforce
- ✓ Exporting
- ✓ Beginning Farmer
- ✓ Succession Planning (combine with beginning farmer)

"Purdue Extension (locally) could offer educational workshops on-demand as needed by the agribusiness community."

- ✓ Extension educators

Innovation Grant Opportunities

"Could investigate cooperative ownership of an anaerobic digester (need biological engineers as part of farm workforce, which can be a very expensive addition for one farmer)."

"How could the byproducts be used? Would county LEDOs be interested in incentives or help with permitting for an anaerobic digester?"

"There is a possibility of up to $500,000 in grants for an anaerobic digester (per farmer) – need to ask drill-down questions regarding the approval process & labor availability before pursuing a grant opportunity."

APPENDIX C

Ag Asset Maps

The Ag Asset Maps assist a community in understanding and documenting the agricultural outputs of a region and helps identify where there is a critical mass, what the existing supply chain looks like, and if the area has an agricultural output that could be promoted for a unique market. A sampling of the data in the Ag Asset Maps for the I-74 Corridor Ag Region is shown below and the detailed mapping program is available at: https://pcrd.purdue.edu/ruralindianastats/.

Figure 11. Major Crops in the I-74 Corridor
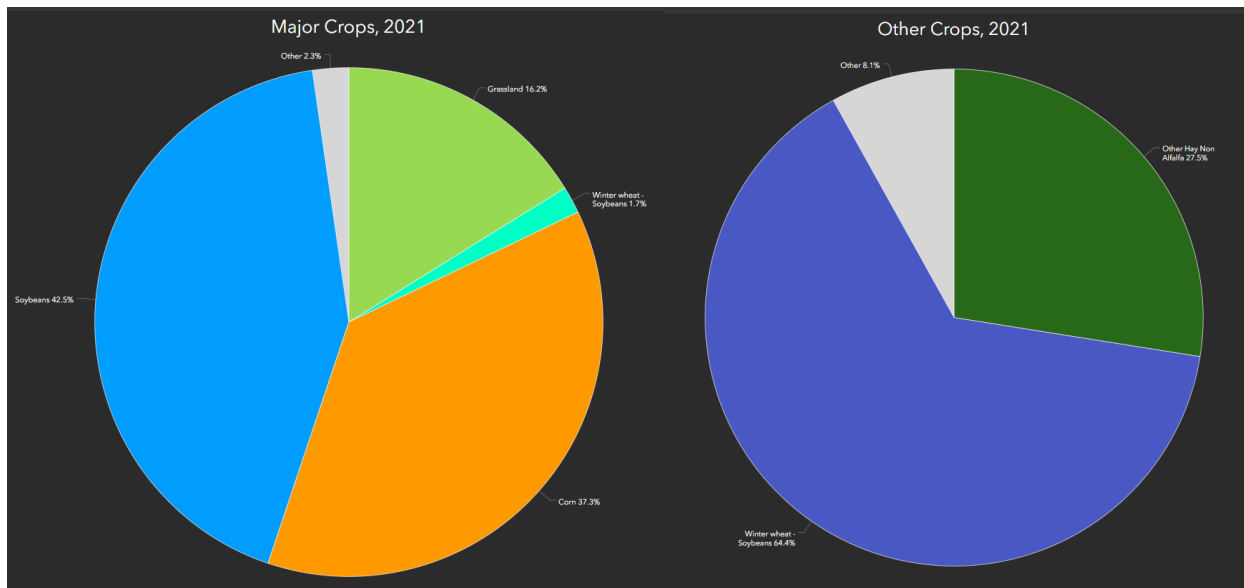
Figure 12. Crops & Livestock in the I-74 Corridor

DIVERSITY OF CROPS & LIVESTOCK IN THE I-74 CORRIDOR

Alfalfa	Hay	Sorghum	Ducks
Asparagus	Herbs	Soybeans	Geese
Barley	Lettuce	Squash	Goats
Beans snap	Melons	Sunflower	Hogs
Blueberries	Millet	Sweet corn	Honeybees
Broccoli	Mint	Tomatoes	Horses
Brussel sprouts	Oats	Tomatoes	Llamas
Cabbage	Onions	Turnip	Mules/Burrows/Donkeys
Carrots	Peppers	Vegetables	Peafowl
Clover, wildflower	Popcorn	Watermelon	Rabbits
Corn	Potatoes	Wheat	Sheep
Cucumbers	Pumpkins	Alpacas	Turkey
Dry beans	Radishes	Cattle	
Garlic	Rye	Chickens	
Grassland pasture	Sod grass seed	Deer	

Regional Task Force

I-74 Corridor Regional Task Force Members

City of Batesville ....Sarah Lamping, Economic Development Director

City of Batesville

Dearborn County.. Mike Perleberg, Executive Director

One Dearborn, Inc.

Decatur County..Bryan Robbins, Executive Director

Greensburg – Decatur County Economic Development Corporation

Franklin County... John Palmer, Commission Member

Franklin County Economic Development Commission

Ripley County .... Gary Norman, Executive Director

Ripley County Economic Development Corporation

Rush County.. John McCane, Director

Rush County Economic & Community Development Corporation

Shelby County ....Brian Asher, Executive Director

Shelby County Development Corporation

Acknowledgements & Contact

Grant Award

The Indiana Economic Development Association and Purdue Center for Regional Development were co-applicants in the request for funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program to assist the counties of Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Ripley, Rush, and Shelby in developing the I-74 Corridor Ag Strategy.

Local Match

The economic development offices in the counties of Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Ripley, Rush, and Shelby provided the local match required by the US EDA grant.

Regional Contact

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