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Maine Agricultural Overview, September 5, 2023

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MAINE AGRICULTURAL OVERVIEW

SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

Nancy McBrady, Deputy Commissioner

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry



MAINE AGRICULTURE AT A GLANCE

- 7,600 farms – mostly diversified (537 organic)
- 1.3 million acres (58,774 acres organic)
- Average acreage/farm: 172 acres
- Land in farm by use (acres):
 - Cropland: 472,508
 - Pastureland: 62,369
 - Woodland: 685,529
 - Other: 87,207
- Share of Sales by Type (%):
 - Crops 61%
 - Livestock, poultry, and products 39%

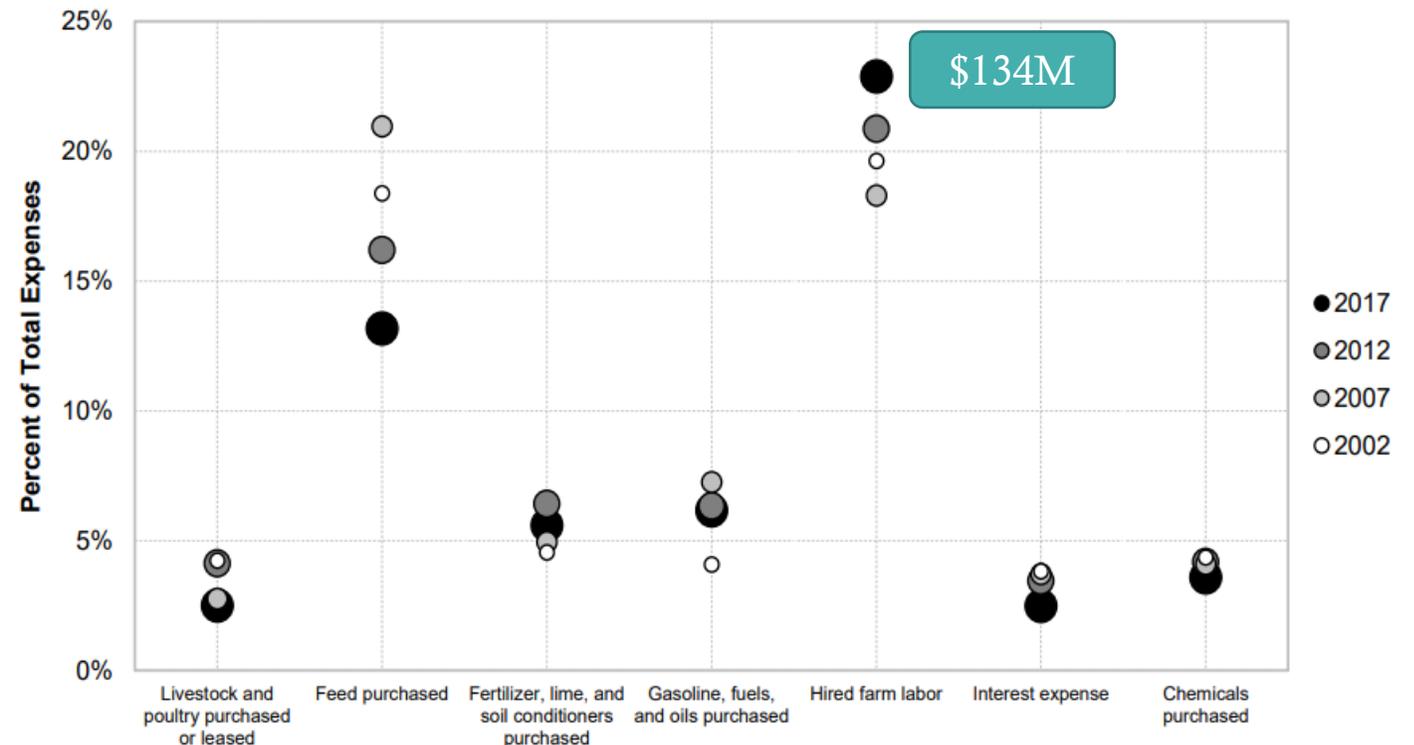


MAINE AGRICULTURE AT A GLANCE, CONT'D.

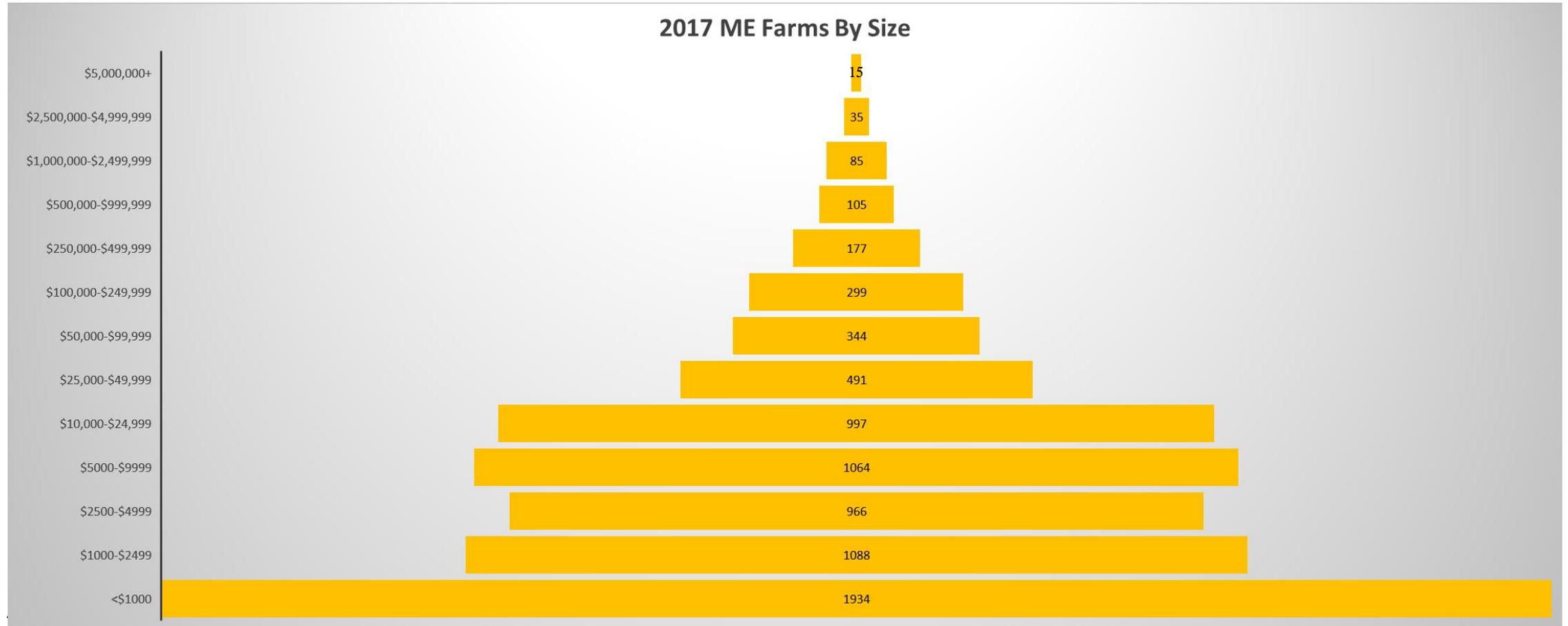
As of 2017:

- 96% family farms
- 27% direct to consumer
- 29% hired farm labor
 - 2,230 farms
- ~25% of farm costs = labor
- Farm inputs have drastically increased in recent years due to inflation, pandemic supply chain disruptions, etc.

Figure 7. Selected Farm Production Expenses - Percent of Total



MOST MAINE FARMS ARE SMALL (SIZE AND SALES)



Source: USDA NASS Census 2017

FARMS BY VALUE OF SALES/SIZE

Farms by Value of Sales

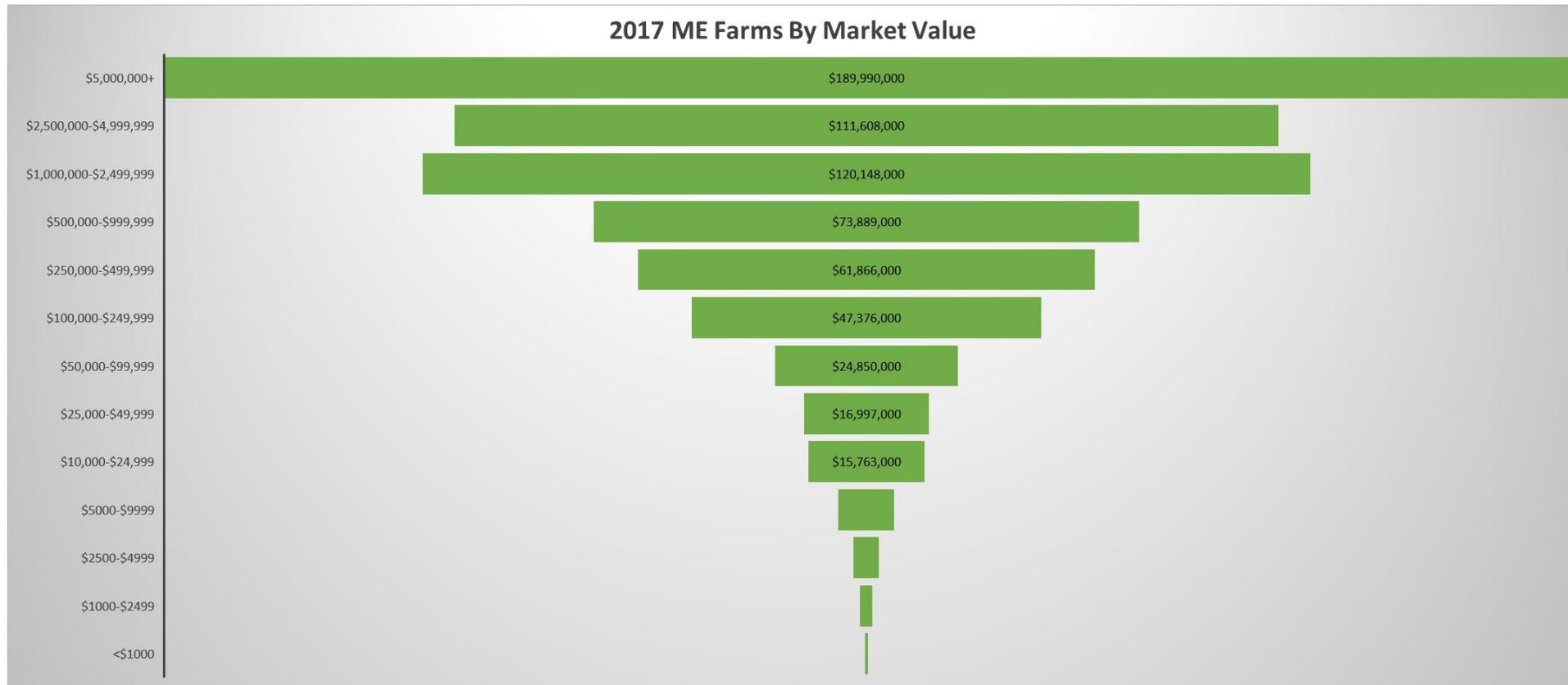
	Number	Percent of Total ^a
Less than \$2,500	3,122	41
\$2,500 to \$4,999	932	12
\$5,000 to \$9,999	1,058	14
\$10,000 to \$24,999	976	13
\$25,000 to \$49,999	479	6
\$50,000 to \$99,999	334	4
\$100,000 or more	699	9

Farms by Size

	Number	Percent of Total ^a
1 to 9 acres	1,427	19
10 to 49 acres	2,157	28
50 to 179 acres	2,410	32
180 to 499 acres	1,108	15
500 to 999 acres	313	4
1,000 + acres	185	2

- Two-thirds of farms (5,112) had market value of sales under \$10,000 in 2017.
- Of farms with less than \$10,000 in sales, the vast majority total less than \$2,500 in a year.
- On average, Maine farms had about \$2,600 of sales per acre in 2017.
- In 2017, average net income per farm was \$16,958. Average net income for producers was \$16,894.

10% OF THE FARMS PRODUCE 90% OF THE MARKET VALUE OF FARM PRODUCTS



Source: USDA NASS Census 2017

VALUE OF MAINE AGRICULTURE

SECTOR	DIRECT SALES	ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT
<i>AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION</i>	\$ Million	\$ Million	Jobs
Grain and Oilseed Farming	26.3	50.6	579
Vegetable Farming	231.9	438.8	5,552
Fruit Farming	63.9	125.1	3,075
Greenhouse, Nursery and Floriculture Production	72.3	125.2	1,731
Other Crop Farming	42.0	80.7	2,253
Cattle Production	23.5	35.0	849
Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	154.5	265.1	2,063
Poultry and Egg Production	15.4	25.8	258
Other Livestock Production	16.5	24.6	666
<i>PROCESSING</i>			
Grain and Oilseed Processing	89.8	151.2	450
Frozen and Canned Food Manufacturing	635.6	1,027.3	4,409
Milk, Yogurt, Butter and Cheese Manufacturing	336.4	640.5	2,473
Other Dairy Processing	56.4	86.2	296
Animal Slaughtering and Processing	262.7	381.7	1,904
Wineries	22.8	37.9	196
Ag Input Manufacturing	65.4	106.2	309
TOTAL FOR AG INDUSTRY	2,115.4	3,601.9	27,063

Source: Farm Credit East 2020 Northeast Economic Engine Report

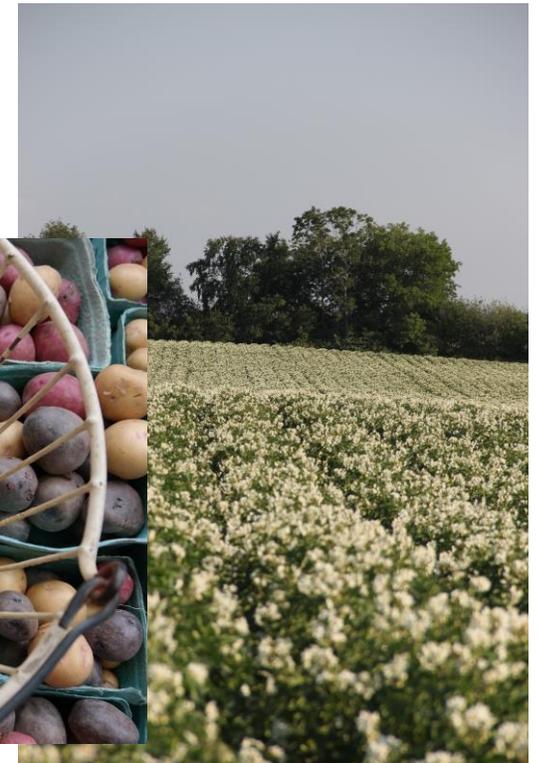
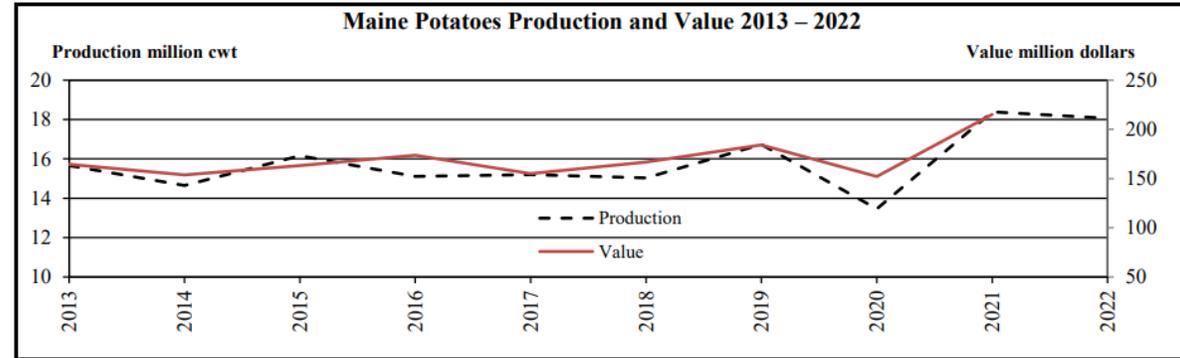
SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE AGRICULTURE – WILD BLUEBERRIES

- Maine grows 10% of all blueberries, and nearly 100% of all wild blueberries (low-bush) in the United States.
- 485 farms grow and harvest blueberries on over 39,000 acres across Maine—primarily in Washington County and other coastal counties.
- 5 year average production: 71.6 million lbs.
- 99% of the crop is frozen.
- H-2A and migrant workers
- Automation of harvesting



SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE AGRICULTURE – POTATOES

- Maine ranks in the Top 10 for potato production in the US.
- The total impact of the potato industry on Maine’s economy is \$540 million in sales, 6,100 jobs, over \$230 million in personal income, and over \$32 million in state and local taxes.
- 65% of Maine potatoes are used for processed foods like French fries and potato chips.
- The Maine Potato Board and UMaine potato breeding program: ex. Caribou Russet
- Maine has a certified potato seed program.
- Increasing usage of H-2A workers



SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE AGRICULTURE – DAIRY

- 156 farms across 15 counties (53 organic).
 - 25% decrease since 2019.
- 550M lbs. milk/yr. (50M gallons/yr)
 - 7% of milk produced is organic.
- ~26,000 cows. Milking herds range from <10 to >1,500.
- ~150 dairy processors
 - 4 packaged fluid milk. Over 90% of Maine milk is processed & packaged for drinking
 - 25 +/- ice cream & gelato
 - 7 creameries at commodity scale; remaining are artisanal
- Migrant worker utilization (H-2A not applicable b/c seasonality)



SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE AGRICULTURE – APPLES

- 449 farms with 2,668 acres
 - 84 farms produce ~ 1M bushels of apples on 2,000 acres.
- Average farm size of 20 acres (largest is 320)
- 4 organic apple farms
- 2021 price per bushel: \$37
- > 100 varieties grown in Maine.
- H2-A worker utilization



CLOSING THOUGHTS

Ongoing Challenges:

- Aging workforce
- Labor constraints & costs
- High costs of production & inputs
- Lack of control over pricing for some commodities
- Climate change (hotter/drier/intense rain intervals/growing season shifts)
- PFAS
- Cost of land/development challenges

Opportunities:

- Younger farmers
 - Strong support for local food (especially during pandemic) and growing direct-to-consumer sales
 - Infrastructure investment (federal and state)
 - Maine goal of consuming 30% of locally sourced foods by 2030
 - Maine food brand/reputation
 - Natural resource quality and quantity
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