

Growing Specialty Crops for Ethnic Markets

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Sources of Information

<https://cefs.ncsu.edu/field-research/small-farm-unit/>

Family Farms

Ninety-six percent of U.S. farms are family-owned



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In 2017, 96% of U.S. farms were family-owned. Small family farms account for 88% of all U.S. farms, 46% of land in farms, and 19% of the value of all agricultural products sold. Large-scale family farms made up less than 3% of all U.S. farms, but produced 43% of the value of all agricultural products. Mid-size family farms accounted for 5% of U.S. farms, and produced 20% of the value of all agricultural products.

1,798,439
small family farms



108,304
mid-size family farms



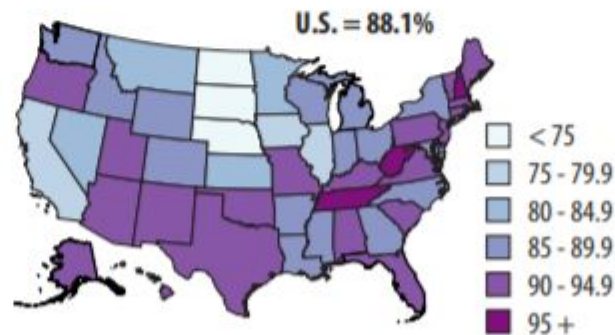
52,592
large and very large
family farms



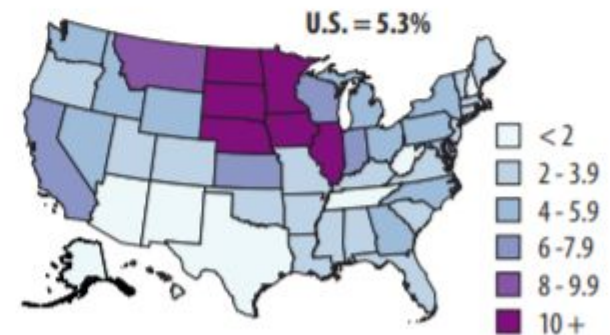
Number and Location

The 2017 Census of Agriculture questions for demographic data were revised to better capture the contributions of all persons involved in agricultural production. In response to detailed questions about farm decision making, more farms reported multiple individuals involved in farm operations. Because of the changes, the small farm

Small Family Farms as Percent of Total Farms, 2017



Mid-Size Family Farms as Percent of Total Farms, 2017



between census cycles as well as the other typology groups.

Family Farm Counts by Size

	2017	Percent Change Since 2012
Small	1,798,439	-3%
Mid-Size	108,304	-8%
Large	47,056	-13%
Very Large	5,536	-3%
All Family Farms	1,959,335	-4%

The number of family farms decreased from 2012 to 2017, down almost 80,000 farms or 4%. Larger decreases occurred for mid-size and large family farms, down 8% and 13%, respectively. There were 82,885 non-family farms in the U.S. in 2017, up 18% from 2012.

Farm Types

The 2017 Census of Agriculture farm typology report classifies all farms into unique categories based on two criteria – who owns the operation and gross cash farm income (GCFI). GCFI includes the producer's sales of crops and livestock, fees for delivering commodities under production contracts, government payments, and farm-related income.

Small family farms – GCFI less than \$350,000

Low-sales farms – GCFI less than \$150,000.

Moderate-sales farms – GCFI between \$150,000 and \$349,999.

Mid-size family farms – GCFI between \$350,000 and \$999,999.

Large-scale family farms – GCFI of \$1,000,000 or more.

Large family farms – Farms with GCFI between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999.

Very large family farms – Farms with GCFI of \$5,000,000 or more.

Non-family farms – Any farm where the producer and persons related to the producer do not own a majority of the business.



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

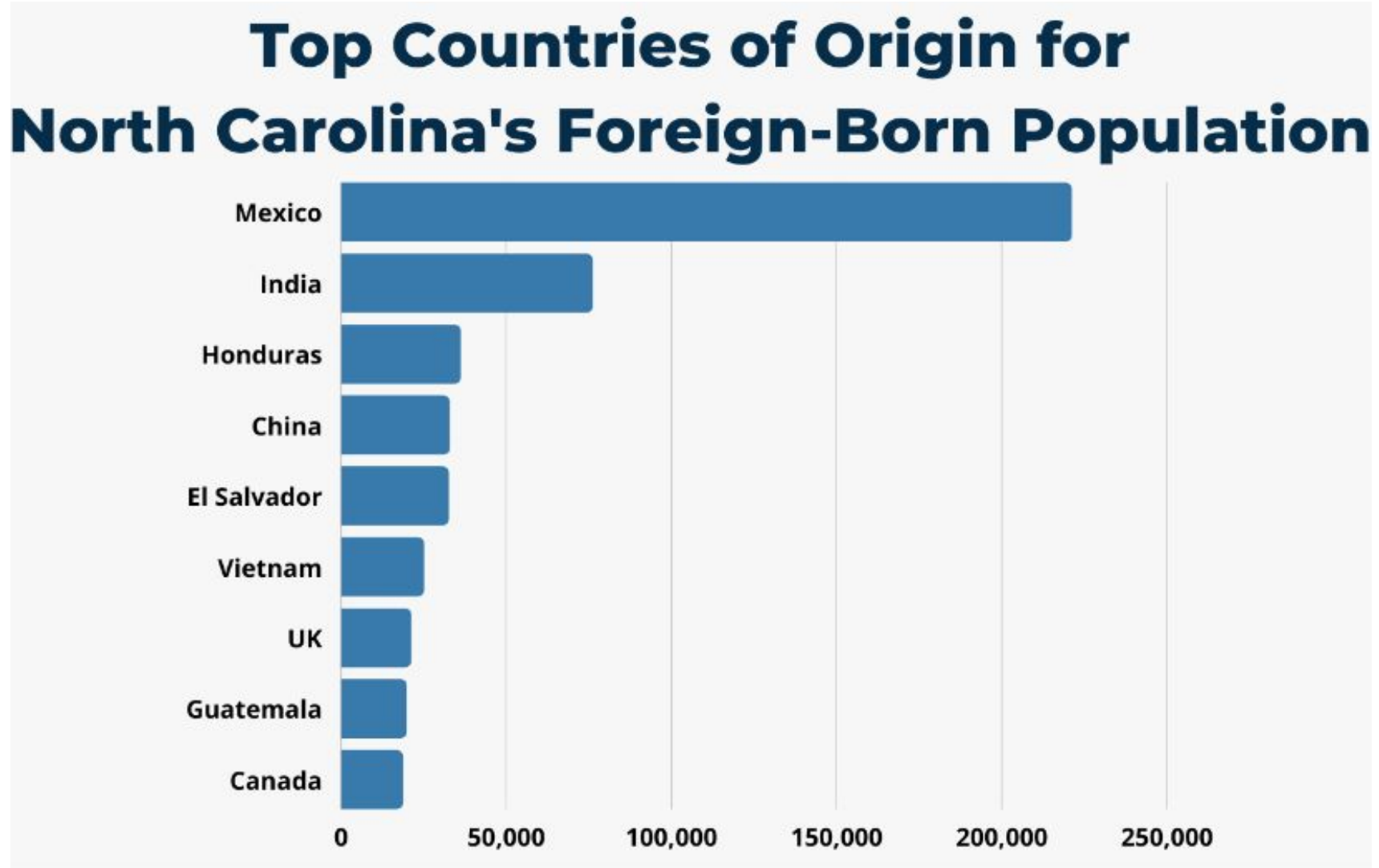
www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Why Specialty Vegetables (Product)?

Things are changing faster than we can imagine

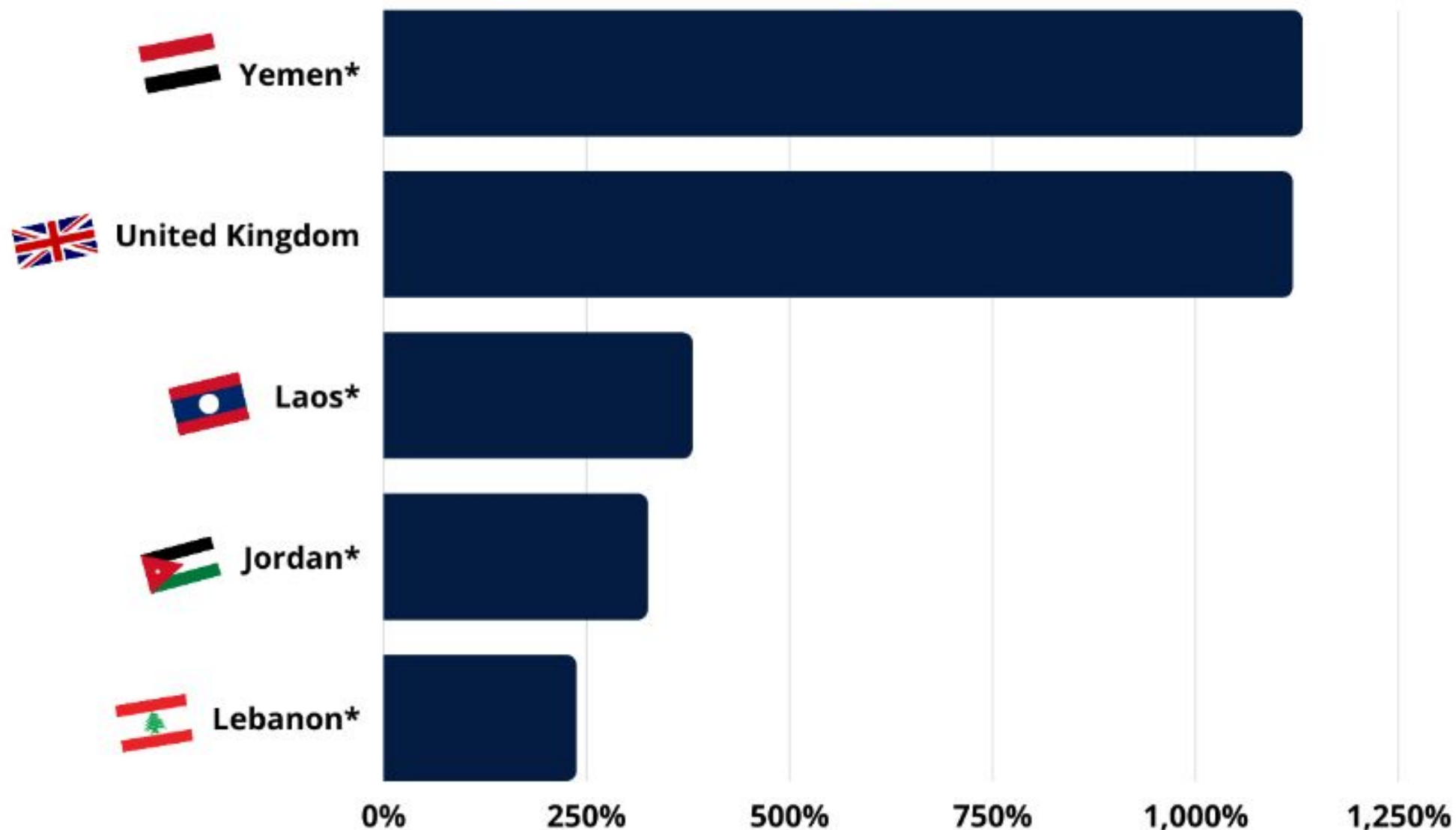
- 1. Customers – types, profiles, preferences, budgets (People)**
- 2. Climate – seasonality, growing capacity (Place)**
- 3. Resources – costs, input and output efficiency (Price)**
- 4. Information – how and where we buy grocery (Promotion)**

Why Ethnic Markets?



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-2020

Countries of Origin with Largest Percent Increase



*These countries each represent < 1% of the total foreign-born population

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-2020 compared to 2011-2015

How To Earn High Profit Margins?

1. **Grow high quality fruit and vegetables - organic**
2. **Grow few varieties and get the volume up**
3. **Grow the kind of fruit and vegetables that you can harvest multiple things and multiple times**
4. **Charge a reasonable price – know your overhead and average cost (RECORDKEEPING)**

Sunflower Shoots

Nutty, sweet flavor. High in protein, essential fatty acids, vitamins A, B complex, C, D and E!
Toss with fresh lemon juice, olive oil & sea salt, top a sandwich or snack!
8oz portions

\$12 for 1/2 lb

Radish Blend

A mix of different radish varieties, this blend is perfect to add a peppery spice to your meals!

\$8 - 1/4 lb

Pea Shoots

Crisp spring pea flavor. High in beta carotene, vitamin C, and fiber!

FOLD INTO AN OMELETTE OR WARM SALAD, STIR-FRY, OR SNACK ON FRESH!

8oz portions

\$10

Signature Shoot Salad Blend

Delicate and sweet mix of pea shoots, sunflower shoots, popovers shoots and radish microgreens.

GREAT AS A STAND ALONE SALAD OR SIDE DISH

\$12 for 1/2 lb

Cocktail Kits

Perfect for holidays or celebrations! Contains a different herbs and garnishes as well as edible flowers and nasturtium.

\$12

Lettuce special

! SALE !

1 for \$8

2 for \$15

Create a Sustainable Business Plan

- **Agroecological management practices** that emphasize diversity, heritage knowledge, agroforestry, landscape complexity, and water and soil management techniques, including cover cropping, composting and water harvesting – **conservation practices**
- **Adaptability and resilience** in responding to climate variations through community engagement - **Cooperative**

Step 1. I need to know these vegetables!

Restaurants

State-managed farmers markets

Specialty grocery stores



Step 2. I need to know how to cook these vegetables and actually try them!

Restaurants

State-managed farmers markets

Specialty grocery stores

Step 3. I need to understand the health benefits of eating these vegetables!



Step 4. I need to know where I can sell these vegetables!

Restaurants

State-managed farmers markets

Specialty grocery stores

Direct sale to customers (community organizations, vacation units)



Step 5. I need to know how to grow these vegetables!

Extension programs, online resources, USDA guides



Step 6. I need to know if I have the right environment and resources to grow these vegetables!

Soil tests, plot size, production systems, weather, labor versus machinery



Step 7. I need to know how to take care of the vegetables!

Nutrients, pollination, sun, water, pest, weeds, and other diseases



Step 8. I need to know if I can produce these vegetables in a sustainable manner!

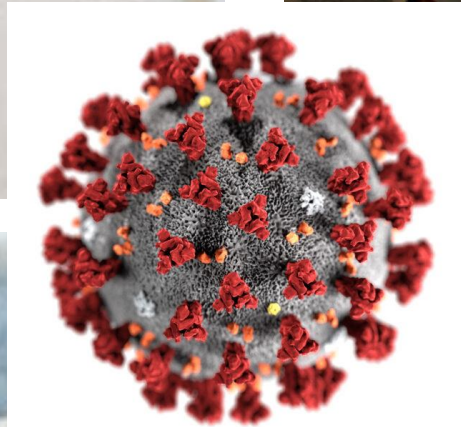
Pricing, cost analysis, returns on investment, and seasonal adjustments





Step 9. I need to know if I need more help to grow these vegetables if the demand increases! (or, what do I need to cut when demand is low?)

Labor, training, flexibility, customer relationships



Step 10. I need to have a risk management plan (or how to deal with failure?)



CEFS



NCSU | NCA&T | NCDA&CS

The Center for Environmental Farming Systems is a partnership of North Carolina State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.



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