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Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy

Outreach Report No. 55

**Establishments and Jobs in the  
Connecticut Agricultural System in 2017**

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## Establishments and Jobs in the Connecticut Agricultural System in 2017

This report updates the 2013 Zwick Outreach Report No. 11 (Warner and Lopez, 2013). Its main objective is to update that report by documenting the number of establishments and jobs in the Connecticut agricultural system and assessing trends in the changing structure of the Connecticut agricultural system.

### Number of Establishments

In 2017, the last year for which data is available, the number of establishments in the Connecticut agricultural system was estimated at nearly 6,900, with farms accounting for the greatest share. Because the 2012 Census of Agriculture changed how the number of farms was counted, the 1,061 “new” farms established between the 2007 and 2012 Censuses (representing a 21.58% increase in the number of farms) should be interpreted with caution. The highest growth rates in the number of establishments occurred in primary agricultural processing, followed by farms and wholesale distribution outlets. The number of establishments engaged in farm support services and primary forest processing declined by 2.6 and 9 percent, respectively. Bearing in mind the caveat that a change in measurement could affect our observations, the number of establishments was estimated to grow by approximately 19 percent between 2010 and 2017 (cf the numbers reported by Warner and Lopez 2013). If we hold the number of farms constant at the 2007 Census level, then the number of establishments in the agricultural system would have remained flat overall (0.063% growth), and the increase in establishments engaged in primary agricultural processing and wholesale distribution would just about overcome the loss of establishments in farm support services and forest processing. Under this scenario, there appears to be a shift from production agriculture to processing and distribution, with forest processing declining.

Table 1: 2017 Connecticut Agricultural System Establishments

Category	Covered Establishments	Non-employer Statistics	Total Establishments		% of Change 2010-2017
			2017	% of Total	
Farm support services <sup>1</sup>	69	522	591	8.57%	-2.64%
Farms (including nurseries) <sup>2</sup>	5,977		5,977	86.67%	21.58%
Primary agricultural processing <sup>3</sup>	80		80	1.16%	31.15%
Primary forest processing <sup>4</sup>	40		40	0.58%	-9.09%
Wholesale distribution <sup>5</sup>	208		208	3.02%	18.18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,374</b>		<b>6,896</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>18.81%</b>

Notes:

Notes:

1. The data source for categories with superscripts 1,3,4,5 is QCEW query, 2017, whereas the data source for the category with superscript 2 is USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012.

2. Each category (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) represents a combined industry in the agricultural system, collected from QCEW query, 2017. Appendix A, on page 3, lists all the components of all categories.

3. Last establishment report refers to Outreach Report No.11, released by the Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy in 2013. The data was collected from U.S Census BLS QCEW, query, 2010, and USA Census of Agriculture, 2007.

4. In consultation with the Department of Agriculture, we chose not to include retail food and garden center outlets in the assessment of the jobs and establishments in the agricultural system, although other states have done so in comparable analyses.

## Number of Jobs

In 2017, the number of jobs in the Connecticut agricultural system was estimated at 21,730. This represents an 8.27 percent increase since 2010. The greatest growth was experienced in primary agricultural processing, at 32.43 percent, followed by wholesale distribution at 17.77 percent. Farm jobs grew by 5 percent between 2010 and 2017, an increase primarily attributed to 652 additional workers being hired since 2010. At the same time, the greatest job losses occurred in primary forest processing, which lost nearly 5 percent of the jobs held in 2010, and farm support services, with a 2.24 percent drop in jobs. Note, for several reasons we do not include the number of farm operators as additional jobs, as did Warner and Lopez (2013), who added a job for each farm. First, since the methodology for counting farms changed between the 2007 and 2012 censuses, accounting for 1,061 reported “new” farms, including those farms would undoubtedly inflate the number of jobs in farming. Second, many of the farm operators are not full-time farmers, particularly those running small farms, which comprise the majority of farms in Connecticut. Third, it is more objective to rely solely on the official job numbers reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and avoid adding job numbers based on the assumption that each farm creates a job due to farm ownership which has not been counted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Overall, it is clear that despite modest job growth on farms, the emerging picture is that employment in the Connecticut agricultural system is shifting towards processing and distribution, that is, value added and post-farm gate jobs.

Table 2: 2017 Connecticut Agricultural System Jobs

Category	Total Jobs 2017 (Hired Labor and Nonemployer Establishments)	% of Total	% of Change 2010-2017
Farm support services <sup>1</sup>	831	3.82%	-2.24%
Farms (including nurseries) <sup>2</sup>	13,713	63.11%	5.00%
Primary agricultural processing <sup>3</sup>	2,581	11.88%	32.43%
Primary forest processing <sup>4</sup>	1,506	6.93%	-4.80%
Wholesale distribution <sup>5</sup>	3,099	14.26%	17.88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,730</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>8.27%</b>

Notes:

1. The data source for categories with superscripts 1,3,4,5 is QCEW query, 2017, whereas the data source for the category with superscript 2 is USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012.

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4. In consultation with the Department of Agriculture, we chose not to included retail food and garden center outlets in the assessment of the jobs and establishments in the agricultural system, although other states have done so in comparable analyses.

## Appendix

### NAICS codes included in QCEW queries

#### 1. Farm support services

Support activities for agriculture and forestry 115

#### 3. Primary agricultural processing

Frozen food manufacturing 31141  
 Fruit and vegetable canning and drying 31142  
 Fluid milk manufacturing 311511  
 Cheese manufacturing 311513  
 Ice cream and frozen dessert manufacturing 31152  
 Animal, except poultry, slaughtering 311611  
 Poultry processing 311615  
 Seafood product preparation and packaging 3117  
 Wineries 31213

#### 4. Primary forest processing

Sawmills and wood preservation 3211  
 Wood container and pallet manufacturing 32192  
 Paper mills 32212  
 Paperboard mills 32213

#### 5. Wholesale distribution

Dairy product merchant wholesalers 42443  
 Poultry product merchant wholesalers 42444  
 Fish and seafood product merchant wholesalers 42446  
 Meat and meat product merchant wholesalers 42447  
 Fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers 42448  
 Livestock merchant wholesalers 42452  
 Farm supplies merchant wholesalers 42491  
 Nursery and florist merchant wholesalers 42493

### Agricultural System's Shares of Connecticut Establishments

CT Covered Establishments	115,224
CT Nonemployer Establishments	277,699
CT Connecticut Establishments	392,923
CT Ag System Establishments	6,896
<b>CT Ag System Establishments as % of All Establishments</b>	<b>1.76%</b>

### Agricultural System's Shares of Connecticut Jobs

CT Covered Jobs	1,442,388
CT Nonemployer Establishments	277,699
CT Connecticut Jobs	1,720,087
CT Ag System Jobs	21,730
<b>CT Ag System Jobs as % of All Jobs</b>	<b>1.26%</b>

### A Note on Data Collection Procedures

Job and establishments data was collected from three sources: the *USDA Census of Agriculture* (USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012), the *U.S. Census Bureau's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Reports*, with data for 2017 (QCEW query, 2017; data for the fourth quarter of 2018 will be updated in early 2019), and the *U.S. Census Bureau's Nonemployer statistics* (NES, 2016). The data from these sources was collected at different time periods, so exact comparisons are not possible. The *USDA Census of Agriculture* collects data every five years and the latest data available is from 2012. The *Census Bureau's QCEW reports* select data collected quarterly. The *Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics* are collected annually, but there is a one-year time lag for release of the latest data (i.e., latest available dataset is from 2016). Because *Nonemployer Statistics* reports on sole proprietors or partnerships that have no paid employees, they have to be combined with data from the *Connecticut Department of Labor's Covered Employment and Wages (QCEW)* data to arrive at a more realistic picture of the number of jobs and establishments.

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