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NEW ENGLAND FEEDING NEW ENGLAND

September - October 2024 | Issue 23

Announcement

This abbreviated issue focuses on our new [2022 Local Food Count reports](#) (5 state reports and 1 Regional report) and corresponding [Local Food Counts Data Dashboard](#) which are now live!

Over the past year, we have worked with our Partners in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut as well as a Regional research team to model Vermont's Local Food Count studies which have taken place since 2011. One of the chief initiatives of *New England Feeding New England* was to conduct Local Food Counts so that we can have a baseline estimate of how much local and regional food is being consumed in New England. Since Vermont is the only state to have a codified standard for local food, as detailed in [State Act 129](#), this served as the blueprint for local food in this project.

What we found was that total New England food spending was estimated at \$120.5 billion in 2022, while local/regional food spending was estimated at \$3.7 billion, or 3.1%. It is clear that sustained and collaborative action, along with significant and coordinated investment of resources, will be required to meet a goal of 30% consumption of regional food products by 2030.

Despite robust outreach and follow-up efforts from state research associates, this process highlighted the inherent difficulty of getting the attention of private business entities and generating the trust necessary for them to share their proprietary sales and purchasing data with us. We need to educate entities and businesses about the local food count and to encourage increased sourcing and tracking of regionally-produced foods.

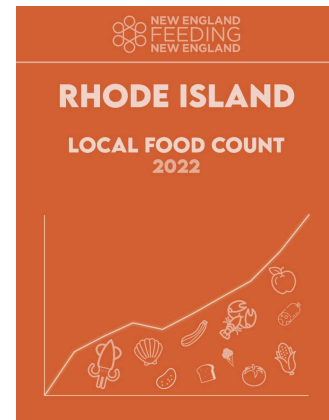
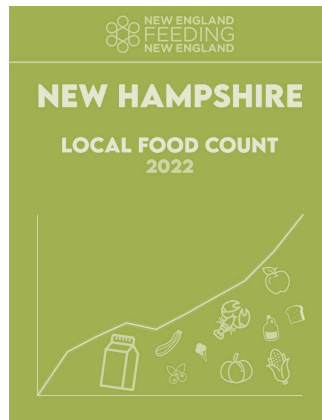
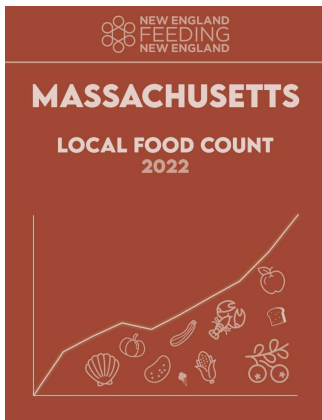
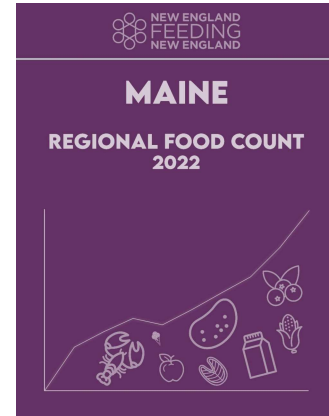
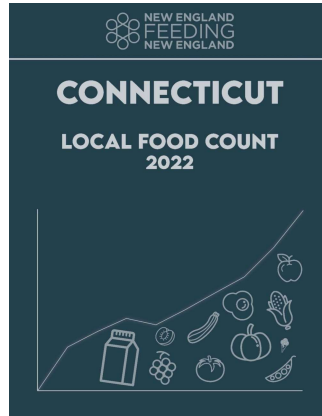
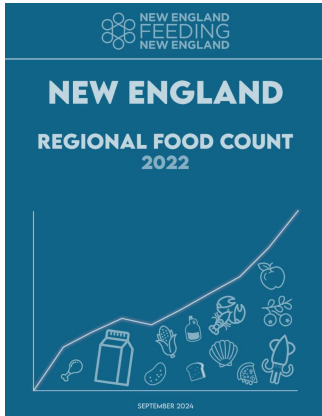
Every New Englander has a role to play to transition toward a more just, sustainable, and resilient food system. Everyone in our region - regardless of income, race, ethnicity,

gender, location, citizenship status, language spoken, or physical ability - should be able to enjoy healthy, culturally-relevant local food from trusted sources.

As we plan for the next count in January 2026 to collect 2025 data, it is critical we work together - only then can we better support our farmers and producers, offer a living wage to our food systems workers, get more New England grown, raised, fished and harvested foods in our markets and restaurants, and make our regional food system more self-reliant by 2030.

Leah

Director, New England Food System Planners Partnership



Local Food Count Data Dashboard

In August, we announced our Data Dashboard which allows you to visually navigate through regional, state and community level data from our New England Feeding New England report. We have added the data from the Local Food Counts as an icon in the dashboard. You can toggle between total and regional or local sales, navigate by state, see per capita food estimates and more.



NEW ENGLAND TOTAL FOOD COUNT, 2022

Total New England food spending was estimated at \$120.56 billion in 2022, which is equal to 4.8% of total U.S. food spending. Grocery stores, restaurants, and warehouse clubs/supercenters accounted for 63.5% of sales.

Toggle between

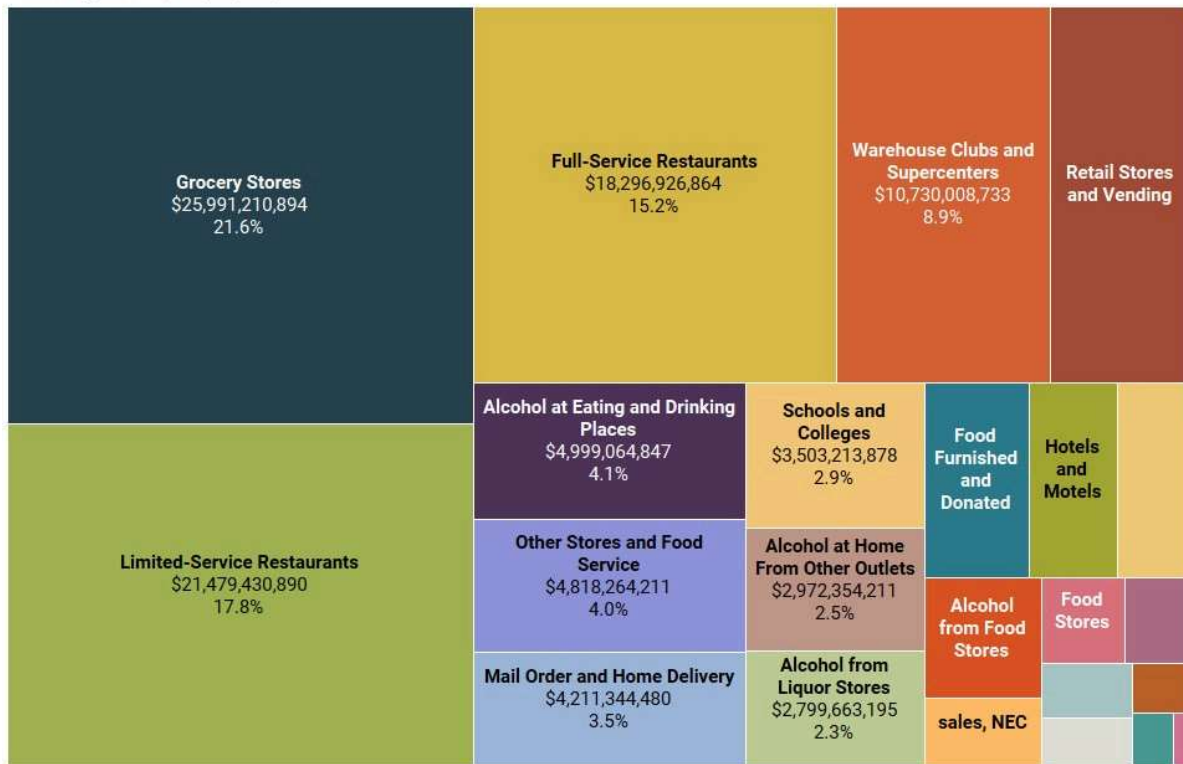
Total Regional



Navigate to a State >>



New England \$120,559,835,595



Source: New England Feeding New England, 2024, *New England Regional Food Count*, <https://nefoodsystemplanners.org/projects/local-food-counts-project/>

The graphic above shows that total New England food spending was estimated at \$120.56 billion in 2022, which is equal to 4.8% of total U.S. food spending. Grocery stores, restaurants and warehouse clubs/supercenters accounted for 63.5% of sales.



NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL FOOD COUNT, 2022

New England regional food spending was estimated at \$4.01 billion in 2022, which is equal to 3.3% of total New England food spending. Grocery stores, full-service restaurants, and direct sales accounted for 65.8% of sales.

Toggle between

Total



Regional



Navigate to a State



New England \$3,732,015,340



Source: New England Feeding New England, 2024, *New England Regional Food Count*, <https://nefoodsystemplanners.org/projects/local-food-counts-project/>

New England regional food spending was estimated at \$4.01 billion in 2022, which is equal to 3.3% of total New England food spending. Grocery stores, full-service restaurants, and direct sales accounted for 65.8% of sales.

This inaugural Local Food Count illustrates that we need to continue to build relationships with retailers, independent stores, buyers, food business owners, trade and industry associations and other key entities if we are to get more local and regional food into the market channels where most New Englanders buy their food.

Each State Has a Role to Play

Within New England, each state has a role to play in reaching 30% regional food consumption by 2030. Massachusetts accounted for the highest total (\$54.9 billion) and local (\$1.4 billion) food spending, while Vermont had the highest percentage of local food spending (10.1%). Connecticut's local food spending is at \$709 million followed by New Hampshire at \$421 million, Maine at \$432 million and Rhode Island at \$234 million.

Figure 4: Estimated Total and Local Food Spending in New England by State, 2022

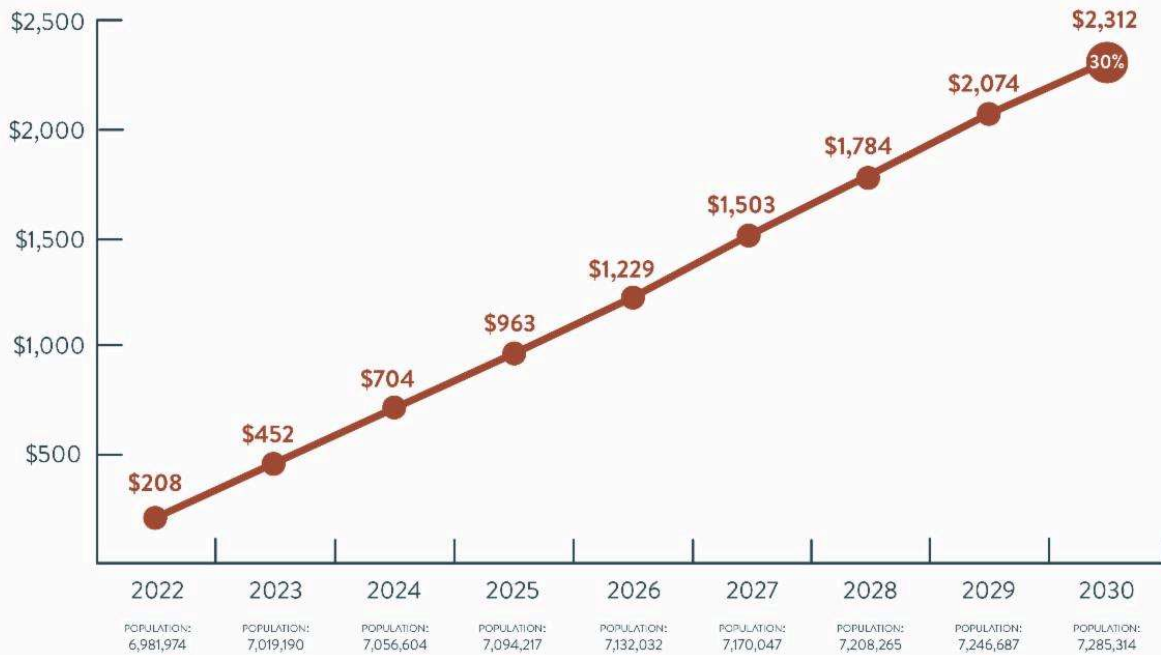


Vermont has been conducting Local Food Counts since 2011, with the most recent taking place in 2020. Vermont's count has utilized the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Series to estimate total in-state food expenditures. NEFNE's local food counts for the other New England states utilizes the USDA's Food Expenditure Series, which prior to 2023 was unavailable at the state level. Utilizing the State Food Expenditure Series increases the estimate for total food purchases within Vermont, and therefore changes the estimated percentage of local food purchasing in the state. In order to include Vermont's data for our regional percentage, our Research team used the local food sales data from Vermont's 2020 count, applied the total food expenditures from the USDA series for 2020 to recalculate the local percentage of the total, and then held that percentage constant and adjusted it to the 2022 USDA food expenditure data. As a result, the Vermont calculations and percentages for total and local food expenditures in this reporting reflect a 2022 estimate and do not match what is reflected in Farm to Plate's [Data Dashboard](#) from 2020.

Per Capita Local Food Spending

Our reporting outlines the role New Englanders can play in making the region's food system stronger and more self-reliant. In order to ensure that 30% of New England's food needs are met with New England products, the average New Englander would have to spend about \$1,760 of that total food expenditure on regionally-produced food. **By 2030, total food expenditures are projected to reach \$98.4 billion, or about \$1,890 per person to reach the 30% goal.**

Figure 9: Getting to 2030 – Hypothetical Changes in Per Capita Local Food Spending



Note: USDA State Food Expenditure Series data was updated after Volume 4 and the Massachusetts State Brief were published. This explains why the values shared here deviate from previously published analyses (i.e., the difference between \$2,312 here and \$1,872 in the Massachusetts State Brief reflect updates to the underlying data).

We outline this by state in the graphic above - seen here for **Massachusetts**. The key takeaway is that per capital local spending would have to grow from a couple hundred dollars to thousands of dollars; by 2030, total per capital food expenditures would grow to \$7,708 (from \$6,858 in 2022). Consumers in Massachusetts could then choose to spend \$2,312 on a per capita basis to reach the stretch 30% goal.

Local Food Count in the News

[Less than three percent of Rhode Island food is locally sourced, report finds](#)

The Brown Daily Herald, 9/29/2024

[From Augusta - Rooted in Maine: Prioritizing local agriculture](#)

Portland Press Herald, 9/27, 2024

[Effort Aims to Boost Local Food System in New Hampshire](#)

New Hampshire Bulletin, 9/23/2024

[Can Connecticut get from 2% to 30% local food consumption by 2030? That's the goal of a new initiative](#)

CT Insider, 9/23/2024

[Editorial: Make it, buy it](#)

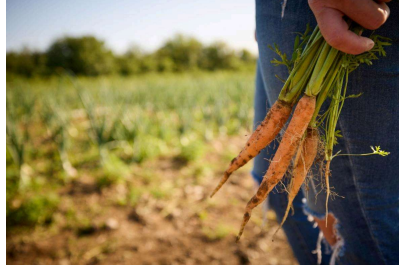
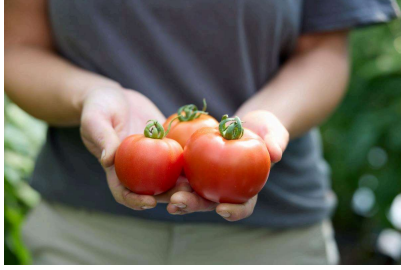
Times Argus, 9/14/2024

[Report: Just 3% of food sold in Maine is locally or regionally sourced](#)

Maine Public, 9/12/2024

[Room for growth needed in regional food consumption](#)

Vermont Business Magazine, 9/10/2024



Photos (left and middle): Courtesy of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.
Photo (right): Courtesy of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

The New England Food System Planners Partnership (NEFSPP) is a collaboration amongst seven state-level food system organizations, six-state agricultural, economic and environmental department representatives and Food Solutions New England (FSNE), a regional network that unites the food system community. Together, we are mobilizing our networks to impact local and regional food supply chains, in turn, strengthening and growing New England's food system. The Partnership works together to disseminate information on trends, challenges and opportunities in alignment with FSNE's [New England Food Vision](#), and with hundreds of groups and organizations involved in food systems development across the region.

To sign up for our monthly newsletter, [click here](#).

Read the Report - bit.ly/NewEnglandFoodReport

Visit us at nefoodsystemplanners.org

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