Agriculture works hard for Jackson County every day. Family-owned farms, food processors and agriculture-related businesses generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity while contributing to local income and tax revenues.

In west-central Wisconsin, Jackson County’s farms represent a wide diversity of agricultural businesses, large and small, including livestock, poultry, grains, forages, berry crops, Christmas trees and sphagnum moss. In fact, Jackson County leads Wisconsin in Christmas tree and woody ornamental crops, and is in the top ten in fruit, hogs and pigs, and broilers.

The county has about 860 mostly small to mid-size farms. Dairy herds average about 90 cows. Production of vegetables and fruits, particularly blueberries, apples, and strawberries, has grown, as farmers capitalize on demand for local products.

More and more Jackson County farmers sell directly to consumers from roadside stands, farmers’ markets, auctions and pick-your-own operations, with 45 farms generating $295,000 in local food sales.

Agriculture is important to Jackson County.

- Agriculture provides jobs for 2,295 Jackson County residents.
- Agriculture accounts for $376 million in economic activity.
- Agriculture contributes $137 million to the county’s total income.
- Agriculture pays $5.7 million in taxes. This figure does not include all property taxes paid to local schools.

Who owns the farms?

- 86.1% Individuals or families
- 6.1% Family partnerships
- 5.1% Family-owned corporations
- 2.7% Non-family corporations and other

Produced in 2014 by:
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

Economic data (2012) provided by:
Steven C. Deller, Professor, Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Community Development Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

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Agriculture provides 18% of Jackson County’s jobs
Jackson County agriculture provides 2,295 jobs, or 17.8 percent, of the county’s workforce of 12,924. Production jobs include farm owners and managers and farm employees. Agricultural service jobs include veterinarians, crop and livestock consultants, feed, fuel and other crop input suppliers, farm machinery dealers, barn builders and agricultural lenders, to name a few. Processing jobs include those employed in food processing and other value-added industries that support food processors. Every job in agriculture generates an additional 0.59 jobs in the county.

Agriculture contributes $137 million to county income
Jackson County agriculture accounts for $137.1 million, or 16.9 percent, of the county’s total income. This includes wages, salaries, benefits and profits of farmers and workers in agriculture-related businesses. Every dollar of agricultural income generates an additional $0.76 of county income.

Agriculture pumps $376 million into local economy
Jackson County agriculture generates $375.7 million in economic activity, about 22 percent, of the county’s total economic activity. Every dollar of sales from agricultural products generates an additional $0.41 of economic activity in other parts of the county’s economy.

Here’s how agriculture stimulates economic activity:
- The direct effect of agriculture equals $266.6 million and includes the sale of farm products and value-added products.
- Purchases of agricultural and food-processing inputs, services and equipment add another $74.8 million in economic activity. For example, this includes business-to-business purchases of fuel, seed, fertilizer, feed and farm machinery, as well as veterinary services, crop and livestock consultants and equipment leasing.
- This business-to-business activity then generates another $34.4 million in economic activity when people who work in agriculture-related businesses spend their earnings in the local economy.

Agriculture pays $5.7 million in taxes
Economic activity associated with Jackson County farms and agriculture-related businesses generates $5.7 million in local and state taxes. This figure does not include all property taxes paid to support local schools. If it did, the number would increase dramatically.

Table 1. Taxes paid by agriculture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Tax</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales tax</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax</td>
<td>$2.3 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property tax</td>
<td>$1.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$1.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5.7 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Jackson County’s top commodities (sales by dollar value, 2012)
1. Milk        | $52.4 million |
2. Grain       | $46.0 million |
3. Fruits & berries | $27.4 million |
4. Cattle & calves | $20.0 million |
5. Hogs & pigs | $4.0 million |

Dairy is a key Jackson County industry
Dairy farming is the major agricultural industry in Jackson County. On-farm production and milk sales account for $71.7 million. Processing milk into dairy products generates another $117.5 million.
- One plant in 2012 processed dairy products in Jackson County.
- On-farm milk production accounts for 391 jobs, and dairy processing accounts for 303 jobs.
- At the county level, each dairy cow generates $4,484 in on-farm sales to producers.
- At the state level, each dairy cow generates over $34,000 in total sales.