



# Ag Horizons: Le Sueur County

## A Rural Stress Task Force Offering

### Overview

Agricultural leaders and stakeholders from Le Sueur County participated in the University of Minnesota Extension's Ag Horizons workshop on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 in Le Sueur, Minnesota.

During the four-hour workshop, participants

- Learned about agriculture's impact on Le Sueur County's economy
- Analyzed data tailored to Le Sueur County's agricultural industry
- Generated ideas for supporting agriculture in the county
- Created action items that were specific to Le Sueur County's needs.



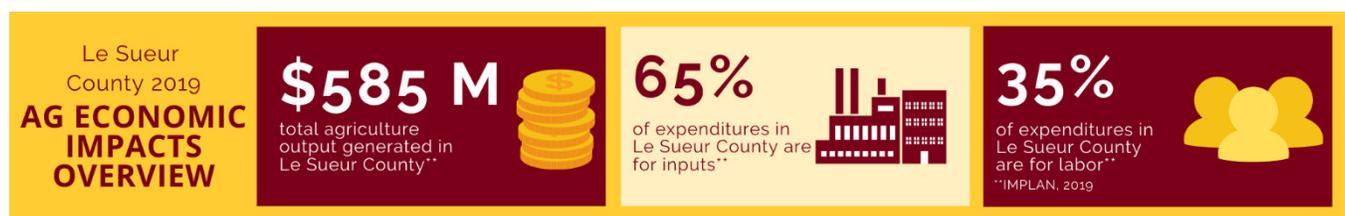
This report summarizes the workshop.

### Agriculture's Impact on Le Sueur County's Economy

To kick off the workshop, participants learned about the overall role of agriculture in the county. In 2019, Le Sueur County's agricultural-related industries generated \$585 million of sales, representing 29 percent of the county's total sales (Chart 1).<sup>1</sup> Agriculture-related manufacturing (particularly food processing) drives a significant portion of agricultural activity in the county.

The three non-agriculture industries that benefit the most from Le Sueur County's agricultural industry are manufacturing, real estate and rental and leasing, and wholesale trade. The average annual earnings for an employee working in an agricultural-related business in Le Sueur County is \$50,851.

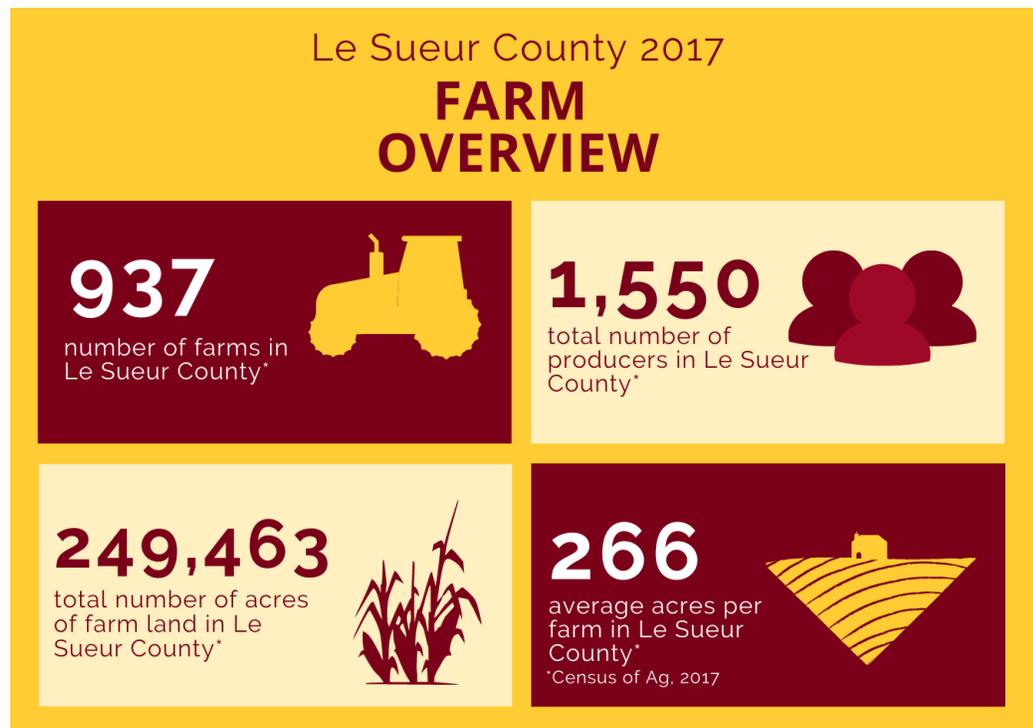
**Chart 1: Le Sueur County Ag Economic Impacts Overview**



<sup>1</sup> Source: IMPLAN, 2019 is the most current data available. [www.implan.com](http://www.implan.com).

In 2017 (the most recent census), Le Sueur County had a total of 303,000 acres of land, 82% of which was farmland (Chart 2).<sup>2</sup> Major agricultural production sectors include corn growing, hog production, and beef production.

**Chart 2: Le Sueur County Farm Overview**



### Data Tailored to Le Sueur County’s Economy

After learning about the overall role of agriculture in the county, participants discussed ten agricultural sectors, their economic impact, and ideas for supporting each sector. Participants discussed the ten sectors listed below. The data provided for each of these sectors is included in this report’s appendix.

**Table 1: Industries Explored: Le Sueur County Ag Horizons Workshop**

Cheese manufacturing	Wholesale-farm supplies
Vegetable production	Dairy cattle and milk production
Grain and oilseed farming	Beef production
Canned fruit and vegetable manufacturing	Wineries
Hog production	Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production

<sup>2</sup> Source: Minnesota USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, 2017. [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov).

For each of the sectors, a group of participants addressed the following four questions:

1. What surprises you about this data?
2. What factors favor this industry in the region? What economic, natural resource, and/or socioeconomic strengths benefit this industry?
3. What factors work against this industry in the region? What economic, natural resource, and/or socioeconomic stressors, if any, affect this industry?
4. What could be done to support this industry in Le Sueur County?

The small groups reported out to the full group their summary thoughts and considerations.

## Ideas for Supporting Agriculture in Le Sueur County

**Table 2: Ideas by Industry: Le Sueur County Ag Horizons Workshop**

<p><b>Hog Production</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain infrastructure/roads</li> <li>• Address environmental issues               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Media portrays hog producers as negative impact on lakes</li> <li>-Working hard to mitigate, but hard to control the narrative</li> <li>-Ordinances</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Build awareness among youth               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Hogs exist</li> <li>-Job opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Grain and oilseed farming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct outreach               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lake groups/homeowners' education</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Address technology use               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Connected all the time, even in field</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work on transportation/infrastructure</li> <li>• Educate merchants               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Local communities/cities</li> <li>-Outreach to rural</li> <li>-Only promote ourselves "think regionally"</li> <li>-Stuck on postal codes/zips</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Canned fruit and vegetable manufacturing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit labor               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Open doors at manufacturers-see the work</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bring community in               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Booth at fair</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Beef production</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage farms to add cover crops               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cattle are a part of that</li> <li>-MDA has cropland exchange</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support adding more cattle</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put a regional vs. city focus on outreach and education               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Plug rural residents into activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop promotional/education efforts around environmental/manure management practices               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tax base-role of ag</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Educate new homeowners moving out of cities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-AIR B&amp;B-short term rentals</li> <li>-Opportunity-expose</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop a portal for animal products</li> </ul>	<p><b>Wineries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage local bars/stores to feature wines</li> <li>• Partner with other wineries – weekend getaway               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Next Chapter-camper weekend</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Connect local industry and small businesses</li> <li>• Connect "local" foods people               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Oldenthal, Next Chapter, Pizzeria 201, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Wholesale-farm supplies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain infrastructure</li> <li>• Create a small farm co-operation to own equipment</li> </ul>

## Action Items for Supporting Agriculture in Le Sueur County

After generating ideas to support agriculture, workshop participants voted on projects to move forward into implementation. Three ideas emerged.

**Action Item 1: Publicity.** Le Sueur County faces negative publicity around animal agriculture—especially its effects on water quality. While there are great stories of progress, such as the Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District’s (SWCD) project near Middle Jefferson Lake, negative perceptions from lakeshore owners remain. UMN Extension and Le Sueur County SWCD can help provide speakers to lake associations to help inform them about these activities.

**Action Item 2: Transportation (infrastructure).** Adequate transportation routes are critical to agricultural production. Farmers need safe routes to move their production to market. Maintaining and improving infrastructure remains an important priority.

**Action Item 3: Economic development.** Agriculture is an important part of Le Sueur County’s economy, but it also has partners a step or two beyond the farm that are assets – wineries, breweries, meat markets, and restaurants. The county’s strategic location near the Twin Cities offers even more opportunity. As Le Sueur County moves forward with exploring the potential for a county-based economic development position, agriculture will be included in the discussions. In addition, the Le Sueur County Parks Board will explore partnership opportunities with the wineries to connect campers with local entertainment options. Finally, on the workforce side of the equation, many of the school districts offer FFA programs. In conjunction with Extension’s 4-H program, these offerings give students opportunities to engage with the farm community.

## Workshop Details

Individuals in the following groups participated in the workshop.

- Farmers – pork, row crops, sheep, beef
- Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners
- Agribusiness
- K-12 Schools
- Region Nine Development Commission
- Le Sueur County Parks Board
- Le Sueur County Broadband Initiative

The following University of Minnesota Extension staff participated in the planning, preparation, and presentation of the Ag Horizons workshop in Le Sueur County.

- Brigid Tuck, Senior Economic Impact Analyst
- Shane Bugeja, Extension Educator
- Megan Roberts, Extension Educator
- Joleen Hadrich, Associate Professor
- Madelyn Wehe, Student

## APPENDIX ONE: DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The workshop analyzed ten of Le Sueur County's industries to measure their economic linkages. The results of the analysis are presented in this appendix. To allow for comparison, the analysis considers the economic impact of 100 jobs in each industry. This allows one to compare and contrast the types of impacts each industry has in the county. The IMPLAN model used in this analysis is linear; therefore, if a person wanted to consider the economic linkages of 10 jobs, it could be done by dividing the results for 100 jobs by 10.

Interpreting the results requires knowing several definitions. Those are included here.

### Output

The IMPLAN model measures output in dollars and is equivalent to total sales.

### Employment

The model measures employment in annual average jobs and includes full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers. In other words, one job is one job regardless if it is full-time, part-time, or seasonal. Total wage and salaried employees as well as the self-employed are included in employment estimates in IMPLAN. Because employment is measured in jobs and not in dollar values, it tends to be a very stable metric.

### Direct Impact

The direct impact is equivalent to the initial change in the economy. For this workshop, the direct impact is 100 jobs.

### Indirect Impact

The indirect impact is the summation of changes in the local economy that occur due to **spending for inputs** (goods and services) by the industry or industries directly impacted. For instance, if employment in a manufacturing plant increases by 100 jobs, this implies a corresponding increase in output by the plant. As the plant increases output, it must also purchase more of its inputs, such as electricity, steel, and equipment. As it increases its purchase of these items, its suppliers must also increase their production, and so forth. As these ripples move through the economy, they can be captured and measured. Ripples related to the purchase of goods and services are indirect impacts.

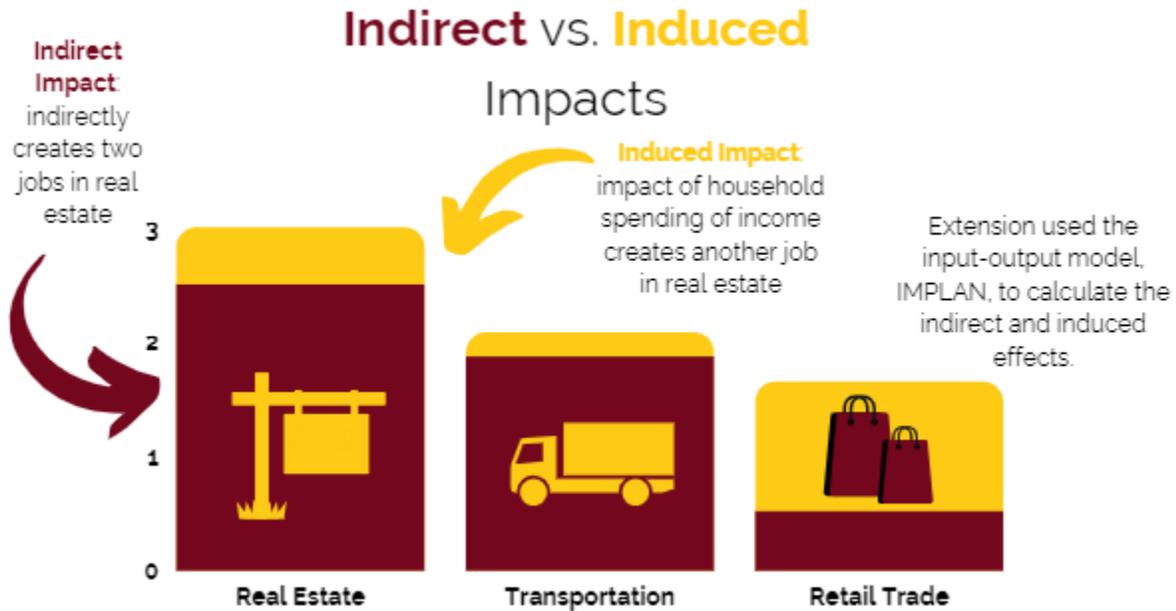
### Induced Impact

The induced impact is the summation of changes in the local economy that occur due to **spending by labor** – by the employees in the industry or industries directly impacted. For instance, if employment in a manufacturing plant increases by 100 jobs, the new employees will have money to spend to purchase housing, buy groceries, and go out to dinner. As they spend their new income, more activity occurs in the local economy. This can be quantified and is called the induced impact.

## Total Impact

The total impact is the summation of the direct, indirect and induced impacts

## Indirect vs Induced Impacts Graphic



## APPENDIX TWO: INDUSTRY ANALYSIS SLIDES

### Cheese Manufacturing- Le Sueur County

- 140 employees\*\*\*
- 1 establishment\*\*\*
- \$84 million in Total Output\*\*
- 87% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Dairy Cattle & Milk Products, Cheese, and Wholesale - Grocery
- 13% expenditures: labor\*\*



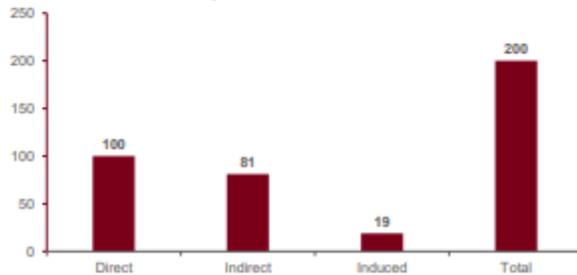
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

\*\*Census of Ag, 2017  
\*\*\*IMPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

27

27

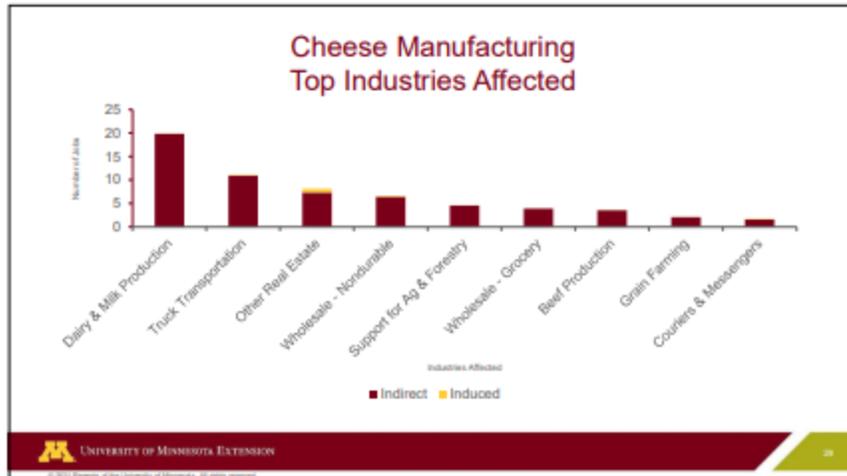
### Cheese Manufacturing Impact of 100 Jobs



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

28

28



29

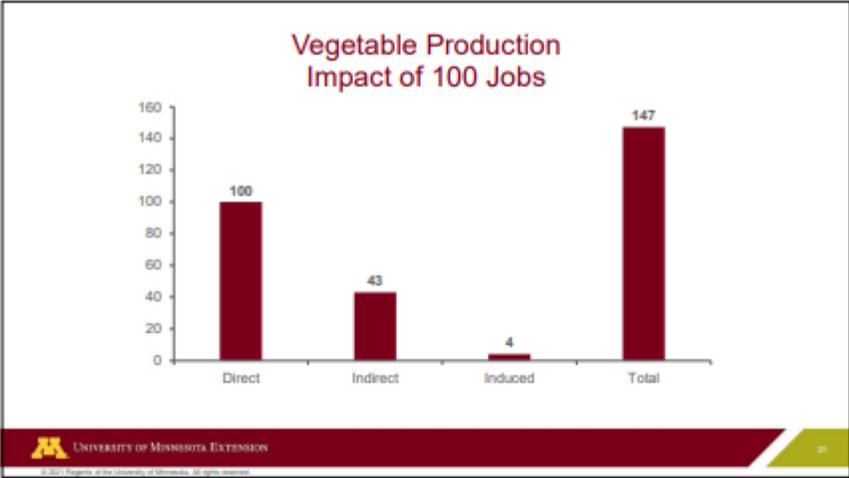
### Vegetable Production- Le Sueur County

- 36 farms\*
- 2,173 acres of harvested cropland\*
- \$3 million in Total Output\*
- 67% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Support Activities for Agriculture & Forestry, Other Real Estate Services, and Pesticides & Other Agricultural Chemicals
- 33% expenditures: labor\*\*

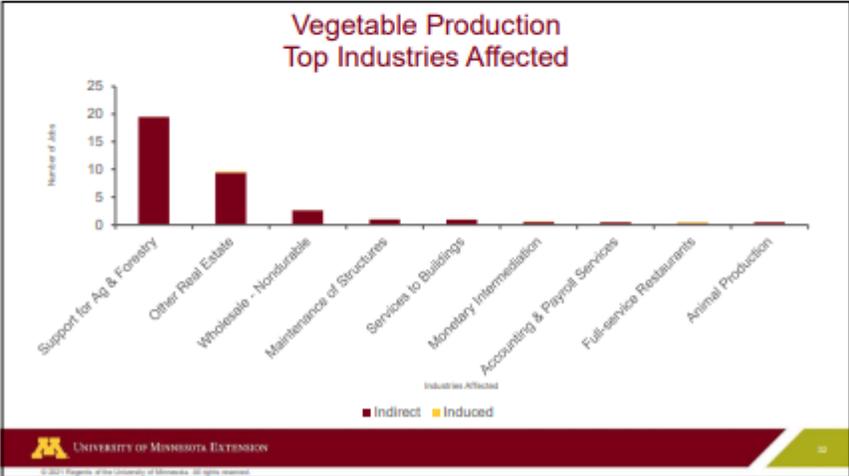
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION  
© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

\*Census of Ag, 2017  
 \*\*IMPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

30



31



32

## Grain and Oilseed Farming- Le Sueur County

- 469 farms with harvested cropland\*
- 221,014 cropland acres\*
- \$111 million total sales\*
- 72% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Support Activities for Agriculture & Forestry, Other Real Estate Services, and Pesticides & Other Ag Chemicals
- 28% expenditures: labor\*\*

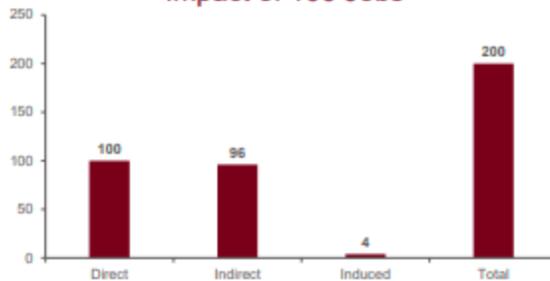


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

\*Census of Ag, 2017  
\*\*MPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

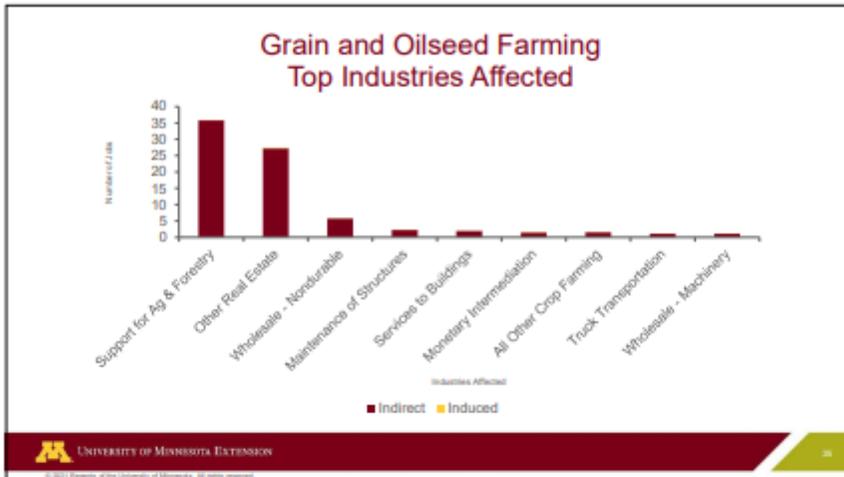
33

## Grain and Oilseed Farming Impact of 100 Jobs



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

34



35

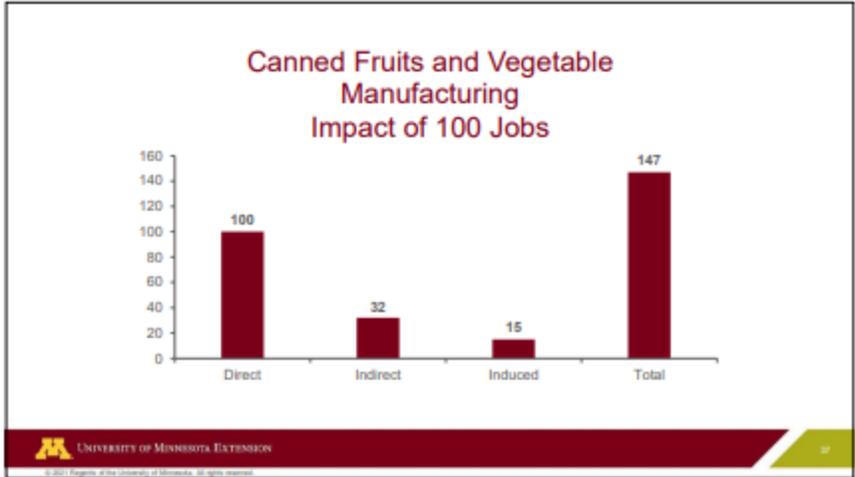
## Canned Fruit and Vegetable Manufacturing- Le Sueur County

- 400 employees\*\*\*
- 2 establishments\*\*\*
- \$175 million in Total Output\*\*
- 74% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Wholesale - Grocery, Metal Cans, and Flavoring Syrup & Concentrate
- 26% expenditures: labor\*\*

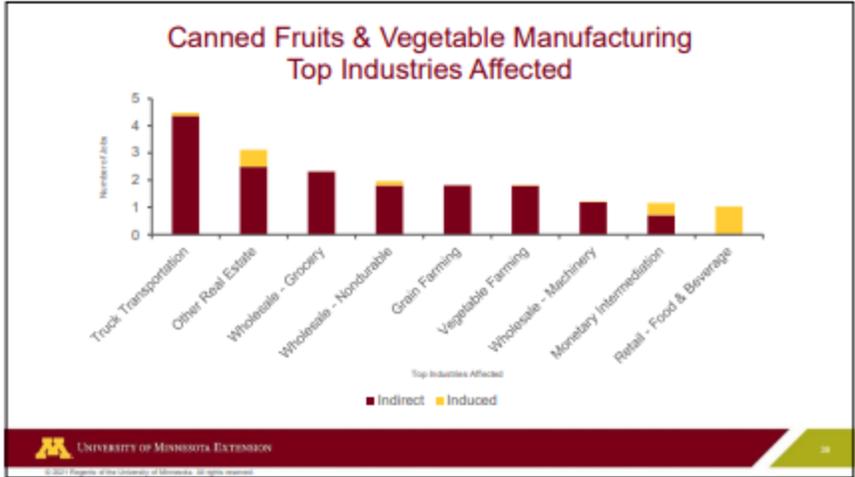
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION  
© 2022 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

\*\*Census of Ag, 2017  
 \*\*\*EMPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

36



37



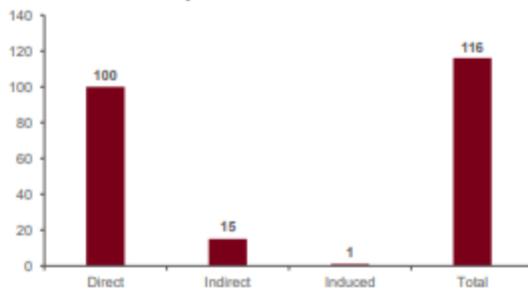
38

## Hog Production<sup>+</sup>- Le Sueur County

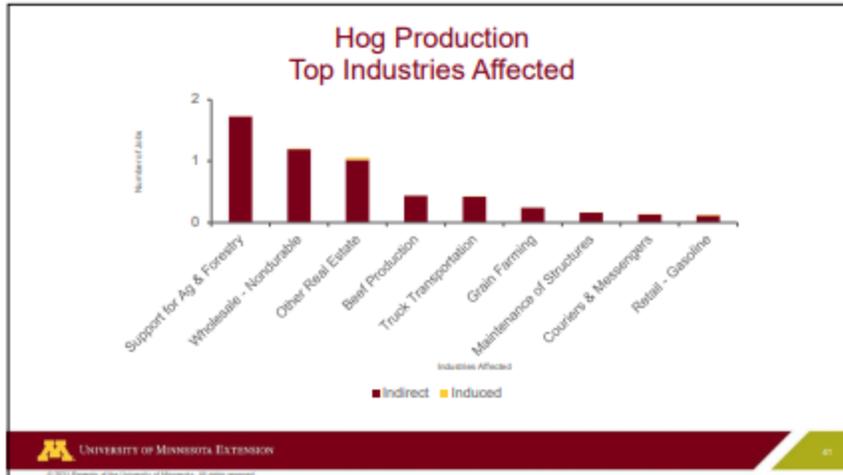
- 85 hog farms<sup>\*</sup>
  - 415,315 hogs and pigs sold<sup>\*</sup>
  - \$35 million in total sales<sup>\*</sup>
  - 42% expenditures: inputs<sup>\*\*</sup>
    - Other Animal Food, Wholesale-Nondurable, and Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry
  - 58% expenditures: labor<sup>\*\*</sup>
- <sup>+</sup>IMPLAN Data also includes goats and sheep in this category

39

### Hog Production Impact of 100 Jobs



40



41

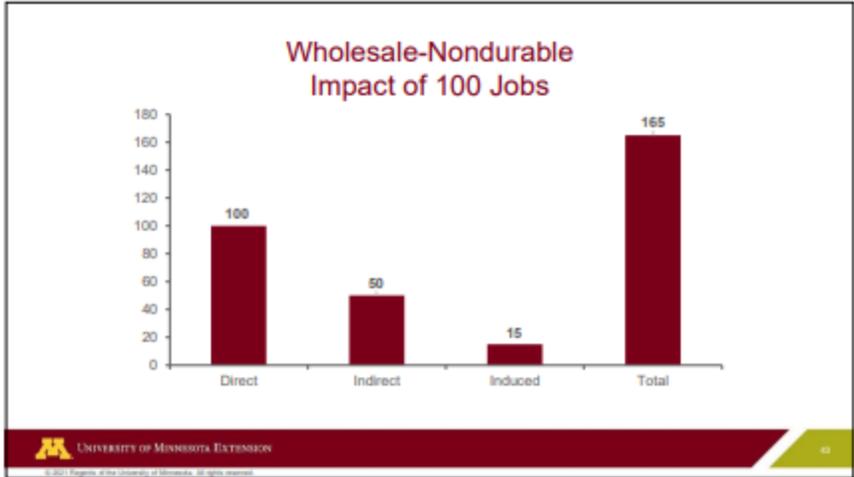
## Wholesale, Farm Supplies - Le Sueur County

- 80 employees\*\*\*
- 4 establishments\*\*\*
- \$37 million in Total Output\*\*
- 47% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Management of Companies & Enterprises, Real Estate Services, and Advertising, Public Relations, & Related Services
- 53% expenditures: labor\*\*

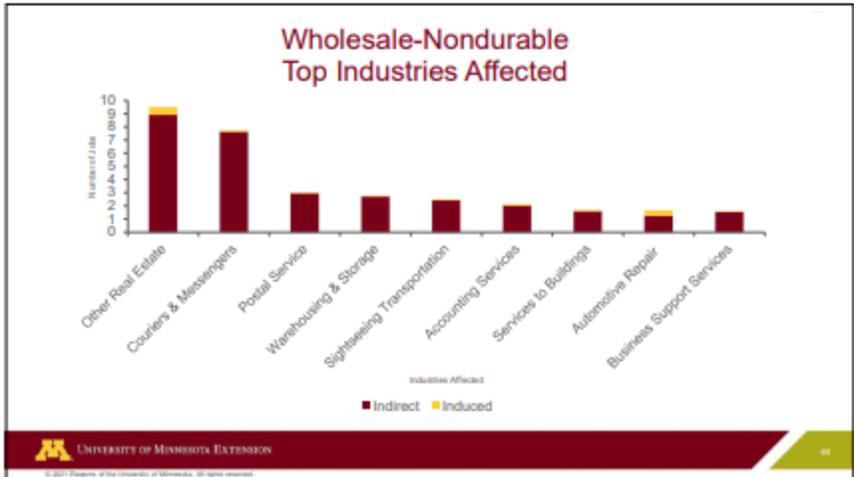
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION  
© 2022 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

\*\*Census of Ag, 2017  
 \*\*IMPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

42



43



44

## Dairy Cattle and Milk Production- Le Sueur County

- 24 farms\*
- 2,973 dairy cows\*
- \$11 million in milk sales\*
- 88% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Other Animal Food, Wholesale-Nondurable, and Other Real Estate Services
- 12% expenditures: labor\*\*



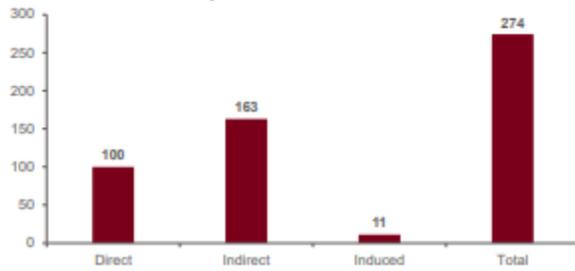
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

\*Census of Ag, 2017  
\*\*IMPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

45

45

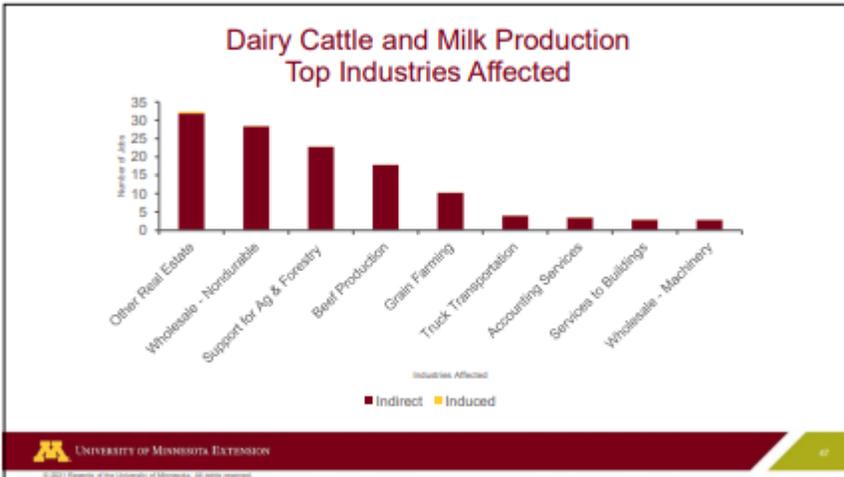
## Dairy Cattle and Milk Production Impact of 100 Jobs



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

46

46



47

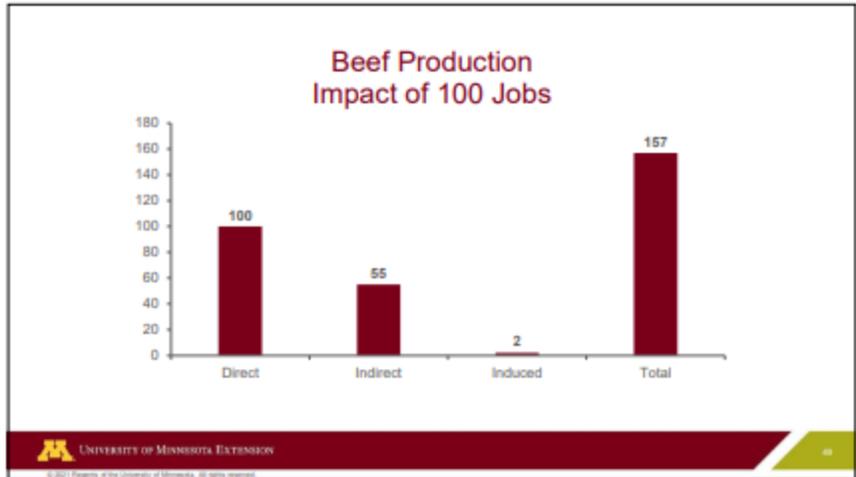
### Beef Production- Le Sueur County

- 67 farms\*
- 1,147 cattle sold\*
- \$13 million in sales\*
- 76% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Beef cattle, Other Animal Food, and Wholesale - Nondurable
- 24% expenditures: labor\*\*

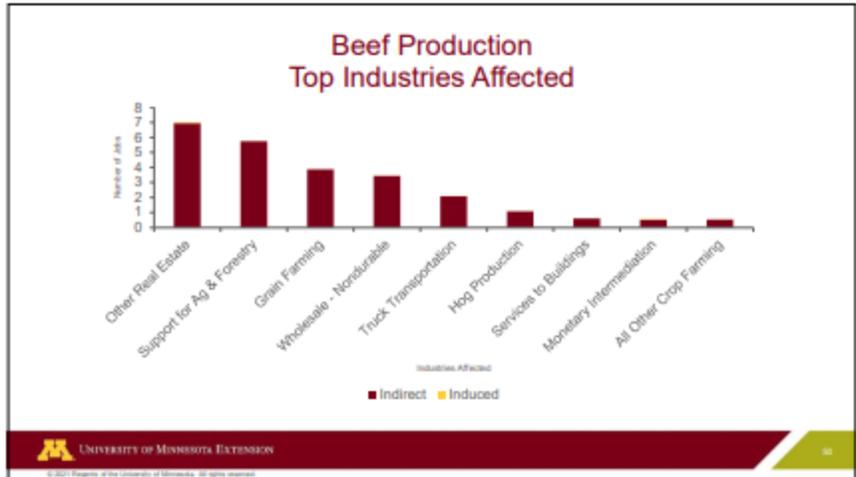
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION  
© 2022 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

\*Census of Ag, 2017  
\*\*WPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

48



49

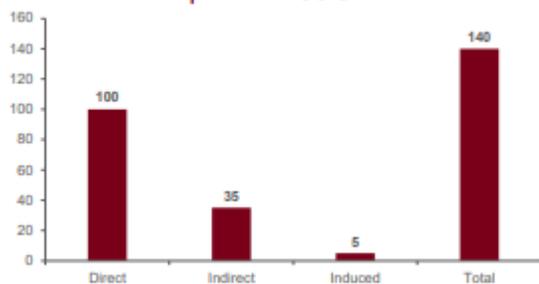


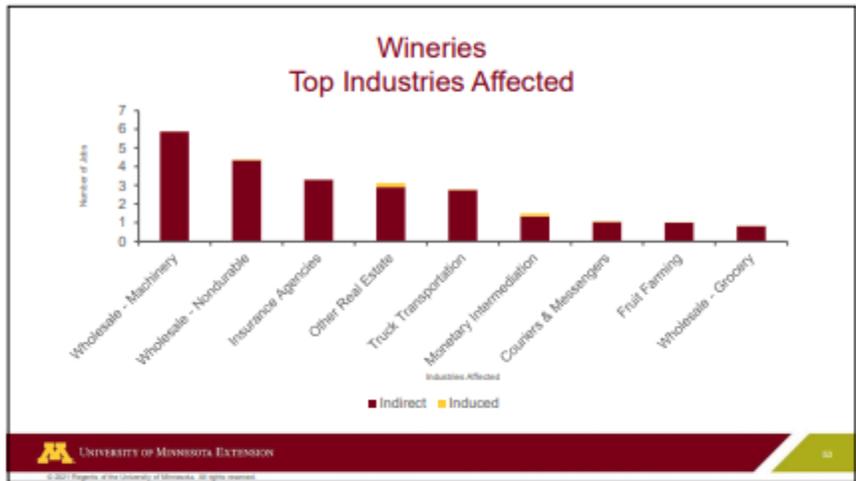
50

## Wineries- Le Sueur County

- 50 employees\*\*\*
- 2 establishments\*\*\*
- \$8 million in Total Output\*\*
- 87% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Fruit, Wine & Brandies, and Wholesale - Grocery
- 13% expenditures: labor\*\*

## Wineries Impact of 100 Jobs





53

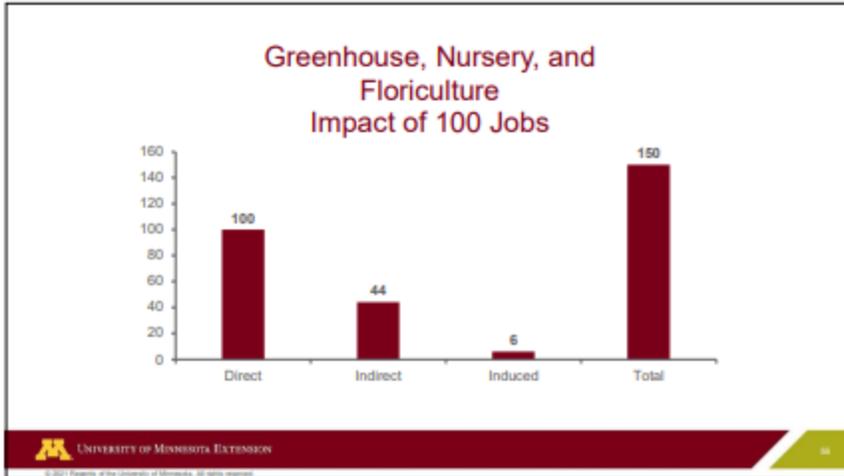
## Greenhouse, Nursery, and Floriculture- Le Sueur County

- 16 farms/entities\*
- \$7 million in sales\*\*
- 64% expenditures: inputs\*\*
  - Support Activities for Agriculture & Forestry, Wholesale-  
Nondurable, and Other Real Estate Services
- 36% expenditures: labor\*\*

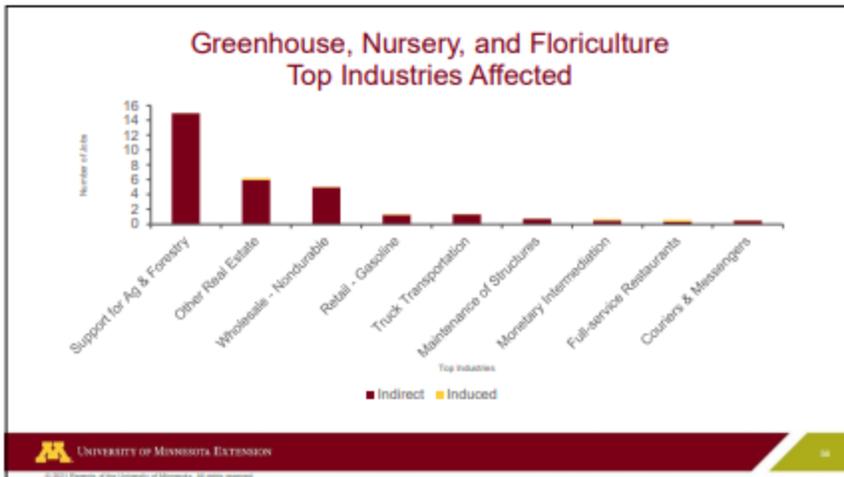
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION  
© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

\*Census of Ag, 2017  
 \*\*MPLAN, 2019 \*\*\* EMSI

54



55



56