



Food Assistance Update and Food System Initiatives



**what's
good.**

GAINESVILLE + ALACHUA COUNTY
GUIDE OF EVENTS



RECENT FOOD ASSISTANCE

In response to the November 1, 2025 SNAP cutoff, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners approved the following actions at their November 4, 2025 Regular Meeting:

- Allocate \$100,000 to Bread of the Mighty Food Bank to support emergency food assistance through the purchase of healthy staple food items.
- Allocate \$100,000 to farmers markets to implement fresh food voucher programs and to family resource centers to purchase fresh produce and refrigeration units to prevent food waste.
- Authorize a Chair Letter to the City of Gainesville requesting a funding match for the Bread of the Mighty Food Bank allocation, and to the Children's Trust of Alachua County requesting a match for the fresh fruit and vegetable funding.



IMPLEMENTATION

Funding Matches:

- City of Gainesville: \$100,000.00
- Children's Trust of Alachua County: \$100,000.00

Bread of the Mighty Food Bank

- \$100,000.00 Purchase Order issued to support food pantries throughout the county

Farmers Markets

Authorized USDA EBT/SNAP Retailers

- **Grove Street Farmers Market:**
Requested \$5,000.00 for a voucher program
- **High Springs Farmers Market:**
Requested \$1,000.00 for a token program

Family Resource Centers

- \$94,000.00 allocated for fresh produce purchases and coolers
- **Frog Song Organics (Hawthorne)** aggregates produce from area farms and delivers to the centers
- **6 Family Resource Centers**

Partners with Children's Trust of Alachua County

1. Deeper Purpose Community Charities
2. Hawthorne Area Resource Center
3. Library Partnership Resource Center
4. One Community Resource Center
5. SWAG Family Resource Center
6. Willie Mae Stokes Community Center





Alachua County's Agricultural Landscape



**what's
good.**

GAINESVILLE + ALACHUA COUNTY
GUIDE OF EVENTS

ALACHUA COUNTY FARMS & FOOD SYSTEMS

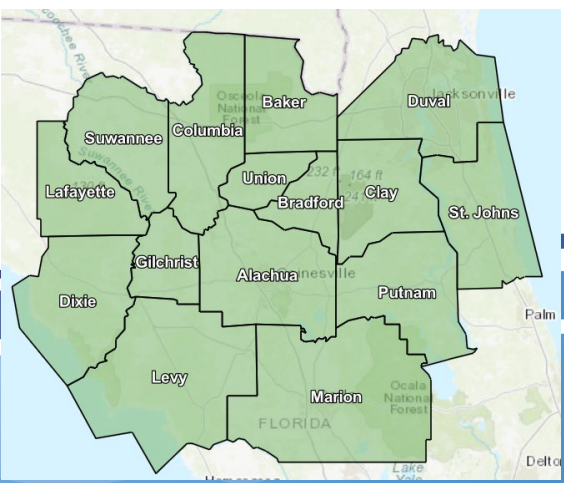
Alachua County's Food Shed Region

County	# of farms	% change since 2017	Total farm acreage	% change since 2017	Avg farm acreage
Alachua	1,712	6%	197,906	11%	116
Baker	330	1%	19,005	-43%	58
Bradford	418	-15%	61,282	4%	147
Clay	326	-10%	37,483	N/A	115
Columbia	867	-11%	89,621	-16%	103
Dixie	154	-34%	51,720	-8%	336
Duval	314	-14%	20,593	-31%	66
Gilchrist	549	-3%	106,752	30%	194
Lafayette	250	-3%	105,429	13%	422
Levy	993	-6%	198,497	6%	200
Marion	3,329	-16%	290,691	-12%	87
Putnam	539	-4%	134,803	59%	250
St. Johns	223	-12%	23,749	-31%	106
Suwannee	1,170	8%	184,350	9%	158
Florida	44,703	-6%	9,701,400	N/A	217

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2022 Agriculture Census

What is defined as a farm?
Any operation producing or expected to produce at least \$1,000 in agricultural products per year, no matter its size or location.

Alachua County is one of two counties in the region to **increase the number of farms**, due to growth of small and mid-size farms.



A foodshed is the geographic area that supplies the food for a community or region.





THE VALUE OF AGRICULTURE IN ALACHUA COUNTY

**Agriculture & Food System Direct Output:
\$2.615 Billion (2022)**

*Value includes economic contributions from Alachua County farms, food businesses, and agricultural industries**

**Alachua County Consumers spent \$145 million on produce, or
an average of \$1,194 per household/year.**

Census Business Builder, Census.gov (2024)

**"Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resource, and Food Industries in Florida in 2022."
Economic Impact Analysis Program, University of Florida-IFAS, Food & Resource Economics Department,
Gainesville, FL, 2024.*

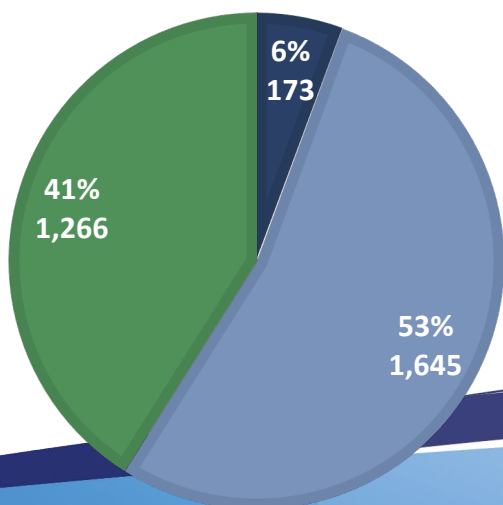


ALACHUA COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL PROFILE

An agricultural producer is the person(s) responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and decisions of a farm.

Total Producers in Alachua County: 3,084
USDA, Census of Agriculture (2022)

■ <35 ■ 35 - 64 ■ 65 and older



Top Commercial Produce Production:

USDA, FL Agriculture by the Numbers (2022)

- Blueberries
- Bush Beans
- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Squash
- Sweet Corn
- Watermelons

Livestock Inventory:

USDA, Census of Agriculture (2022)

Cattle and Calves: 44,902
Ranking 28th in Florida

Hogs and Pigs: 816
Ranking 6th in Florida

Meat-Type and Layer Chickens: 7,365
Ranking 26th in Florida



FRESH FOOD PATHWAYS PROJECT: FOOD HUB FEASIBILITY STUDY

30-Month Study – New Venture Advisors

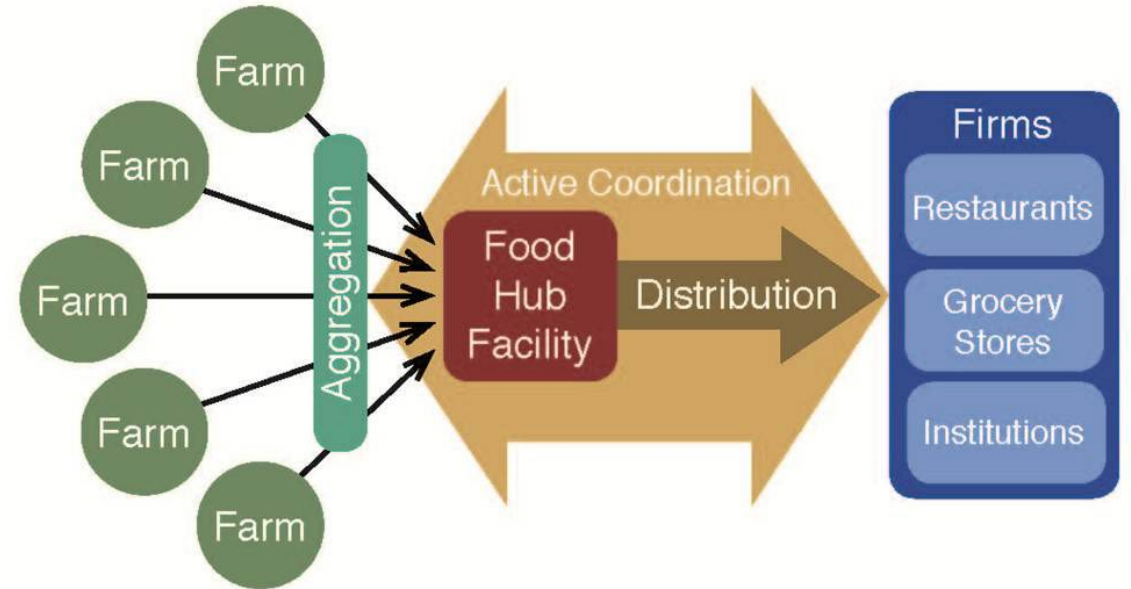
Develop a plan to create a Food Hub that benefits the community, local farmers, and institutional food purchasers

What is a Food Hub?

A food hub provides coordinated services, such as **aggregation, sales, distribution, and marketing, to connect small and mid-sized farms with high-volume buyers.**

Next Step: Pilot Project

Currently seeking proposals to test the primary function of a Food Hub: aggregating and distributing local farm products to institutional buyers. The project, running up to 10 months starting in March, will collect data to inform the food hub design and assess feasibility for scaling up the hub in the future.



Food Hub diagram courtesy of Craig Page.





**ALACHUA
COUNTY**
BICENTENNIAL

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM INITIATIVES

Alachua County Small Farmer Grant Program

Supports Alachua County residents operating small-scale commercial farms with annual gross cash income under \$250,000. Provides funding for capital and equipment needs.

Program Start: FY21 | **Total Funding:** \$394,387 | **Farms Supported:** 79

Farmers Market Survey Project

Completed 300+ surveys at eight established farmers markets in Alachua County, gathering input from vendors and shoppers to capture what motivates participation and identify opportunities to support local growers.

Survey results will be presented to the Alachua County BOCC in early 2026.

Workforce Development for Food Systems

Supports local non-profit, Working Food through an agreement to expand their commissary kitchen program, helping small farmers and food entrepreneurs enter the value-added market. Also supports youth programs that provide life skills, entrepreneurship training, and social development.

Funding Provided: \$249,969.48

New and Ongoing Initiatives:

- Local Food & Agriculture Destination Marketing
- Farms & Food Systems Quarterly Newsletter
- Fresh Food Pathways Project: Food Hub Feasibility Study
- National Agriculture Week (March 16 – 22, 2026)





**ALACHUA
COUNTY**
B I C E N T E N N I A L

COLLABORATIVE ALACHUA COUNTY EFFORTS

Environmental Protection Department: Agricultural Land Conservation

Protecting farmland and natural resources to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture, maintaining the foundation for a resilient local food system.

UF/IFAS Alachua County Extension

Providing research, technical assistance, and educational programs to help farmers and food businesses succeed, translating science into actionable support for the community.

Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

Advising the County Commission on issues affecting rural communities, ensuring that the perspectives and needs of farmers and rural residents are represented in County policies and programs.

Tourism & Economic Development

Strengthening Alachua County's food economy through initiatives that support local farmers, expand market opportunities, promote the county as a food destination, and provide educational resources.

