



County and Local Agricultural Fairs

The Economic Impact and Benefits of the Agricultural Fair Industry in Pennsylvania

ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$1.14
BILLION

10,700
JOBS SUPPORTED

ECONOMIC IMPACT BY CATEGORY

DIRECT



\$585
MILLION

INDIRECT &
INDUCED



\$560
MILLION

EMPLOYEE
COMPENSATION



\$398
MILLION

TAX REVENUE IMPACT TO PENNSYLVANIA



\$21.2
MILLION



There are 107 county and local fairs held in communities across Pennsylvania every year, each with its own unique character and traditions.

2024 Economic Impact Analysis prepared by

ESICONSULT
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economics | strategy | insight



Anchors of Economic Activity within Farming Communities

Local Agricultural Fairs as Economic and Cultural Drivers

LOCAL FAIR ORGANIZATIONAL & CAPITAL SPENDING

\$40.1M	\$94M	410	\$0.9M
Direct Operating Footprint	Statewide Economic Impact	Jobs Supported Statewide	State Tax Revenue

ANNUAL IMPACTS FROM FAIR VISITORS

\$673M	\$1.05B	10,300	\$20.3M
Visitor Spending	Statewide Economic Impact	Jobs Supported Statewide	State Tax Revenue

Fairs in Pennsylvania serve as economic engines that generate revenue, create jobs, and promote regional development across the state. The fairs attract thousands of visitors, boosting local tourism and generating revenue for nearby businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and shops. Fairs create temporary employment opportunities for local residents, from event staff to vendors and performers. Farmers and agricultural producers benefit from the chance to showcase and sell their products directly to consumers, while also competing for prizes that can enhance their reputation and market value.

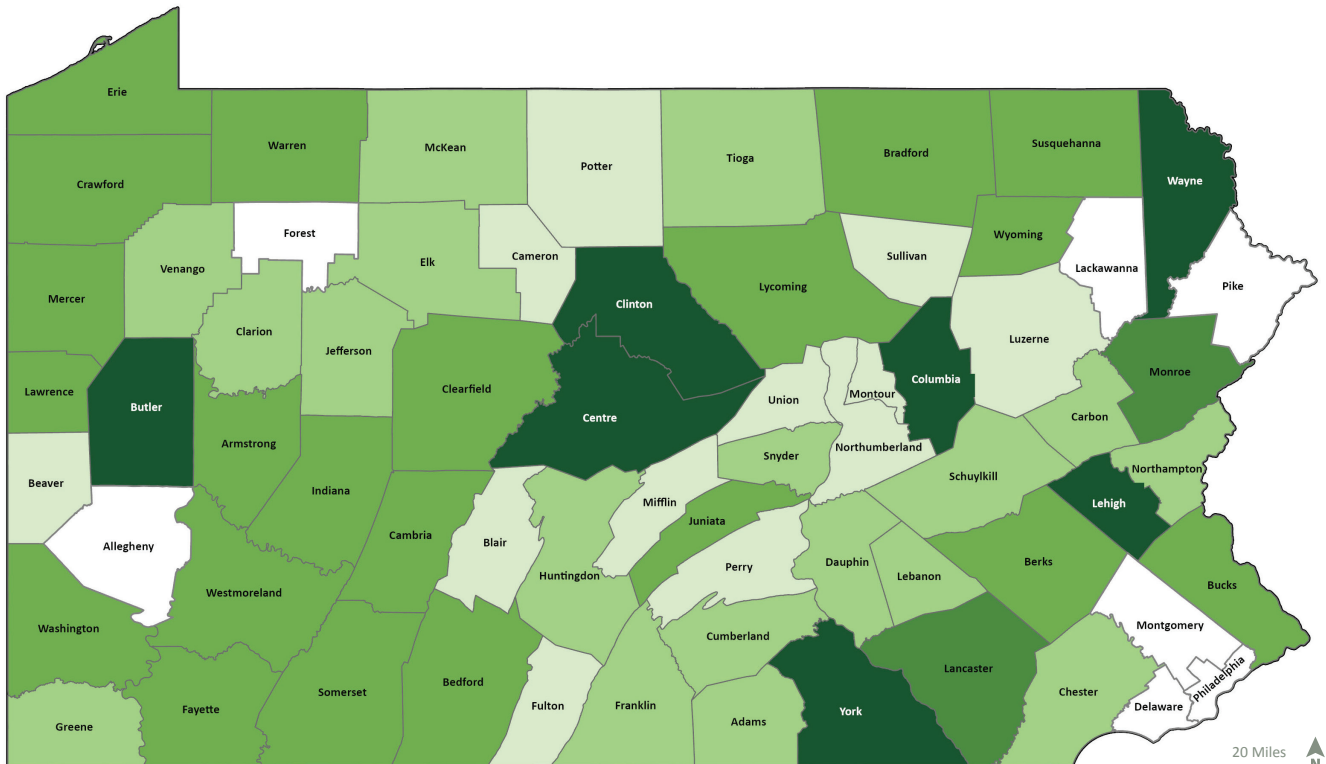
For every dollar invested by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in the state's county and local agricultural fairs, the Commonwealth sees \$286 in economic impact and \$5 in state fiscal returns. This investment drives significant benefits, showcasing the immense value of these events to Pennsylvania's economy and communities.

VISITOR SPENDING BY COUNTY

2024 (\$MILLIONS)¹



York State Fair, first held in 1765, is widely considered to be "America's First Fair."



¹Those counties with \$0 visitor spending do not host a county or local fair.



Statewide and Localized Impacts

Building Destination Awareness in Pennsylvania Communities

Beyond their economic impact, agricultural fairs serve to preserve rural and cultural heritage, educate visitors about farming practices, and foster a connection between urban visitors and rural life.

ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT OF LOCAL AND COUNTY FAIRS

Pennsylvania's agricultural fairs play a crucial role in building destination awareness and promoting agritourism. These events, which include festivals, competitive exhibitions, and shows, showcase local agricultural products, rural traditions, and innovations, attracting tourists and contributing significantly to local economies.

The growth of agritourism is evident, with revenue more than tripling between 2002 and 2017. The fairs offer diverse activities that appeal to a wide range of visitors, generating media attention and word-of-mouth promotion. These fairs draw tourists from within and outside the state, boosting local businesses through increased spending on accommodations, food, and local products.

THE RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE OF FAIRS IN PENNSYLVANIA

County and local fairs are cherished annual events in communities throughout the Commonwealth that showcase the state's rich agricultural heritage and community spirit. These fairs offer a diverse array of attractions, including livestock exhibitions, agricultural contests, craft displays, food stalls, and carnival rides. They serve multiple purposes: celebrating agricultural achievements, providing a platform for farmers and artisans to showcase their work, offering educational opportunities about farming and sustainability, and fostering community bonds. Organizations such as 4-H and FFA use these fairs to engage youth in agricultural projects.

ANCHORS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY WITHIN FARMING COMMUNITIES

The fairs provide a revenue base for local farmers and rural communities. Fairs serve as a vibrant marketplace for farmers, artisans, and entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their products. This direct-to-consumer platform is invaluable for small businesses and agricultural producers, offering them an opportunity to reach a broader audience, increase sales, and build brand recognition. From fresh produce and handmade crafts, to innovative agricultural tools and technologies, these fairs facilitate a significant exchange of goods and services, stimulating local economic activity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION

Agricultural fairs in Pennsylvania serve as vital hubs for community building, and cultural preservation. These events bring together people from diverse backgrounds to celebrate local agriculture, share experiences, and support local businesses. Fairs embody the values and traditions of their communities, offering more than just entertainment; they provide opportunities for youth development through programs like 4-H and FFA, teaching valuable life skills such as work ethic, leadership, and responsibility. The nostalgic appeal of fairs draws visitors annually, creating a sense of continuity and shared experience. For local residents, fairs become places of reunion and connection. Fairs foster networking, partnerships, and educational opportunities that strengthen the fabric of rural communities and promote Pennsylvania's agricultural sector as a key component of the state's economy and cultural identity. And agricultural fairs are venues for competition where locals vie for bragging rights to claim best dairy cow or apple pie.

Agricultural fairs in Pennsylvania are known for interesting local foods, such as funnel cakes, apple dumplings, and whoopie pies.