

2014

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

Prepared for:
Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs

By:
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Economic Impact of Illinois Agricultural Fairs

2014

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

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PROJECT OVERVIEW: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL FAIRS IN ILLINOIS

In cooperation with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs partnered with University of Illinois Extension to perform an economic impact study for the 2014 Illinois agricultural fairs.

The purpose of this project is to better understand the economic and social impact of agricultural fairs held in Illinois. To adequately assess such impact, a two-part study was conducted during the 2014 summer fair season. The study addresses 1) the economic impact of county agricultural fairs on both the state level and multi-county regions, and 2) the major community-level benefits provided by the local county agricultural fair. Data was gathered through intercept surveys and key informant interviews at 15 county fairs. Spending patterns of fair attendees and the associated local economic structure provide the necessary data for the economic impact analysis. Data gathered from the key informant interviews was aggregated to identify the most significant benefits of county agricultural fairs as identified by local community members.

To provide a comprehensive study and to accommodate the socioeconomic variations across the state, the analysis included four levels of geography, with the primary level being the state of Illinois. The next level of analysis combines counties using the Department of Agriculture regulatory zones, including: North, Central, and South. These zones serve as the secondary level of analysis in addition to other multi-county regions where appropriate. Within each zone, five fairs were selected using a stratified random sample to ensure equal distribution regarding fair size, type, and location. This method provided the 15 fair locations for primary data collection. In addition to the 15 selected fairs, a simplified questionnaire was provided to each non-selected fair which allowed those fairs to independently collect their own data.

Results from the study are provided in the following report.



Clark County Fair Carnival: 7/31/14



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 4,653 households responded to the economic impact survey which was administered at 15 county agricultural fairs across the State during the summer of 2014.
- The 2014 county agricultural fair program produced an estimated state-wide economic impact of \$90 million and supported a total of 1,000 jobs. In other words, if county agricultural fairs were eliminated, the state would see a loss of \$90 million in economic activity, as well as a loss of 1,000 jobs.
- In 2014 the Illinois Department of Agriculture appropriated \$5.1 million for county fairs. It is estimated the state's return is 18x greater than their original investment in 2014.
- During the summer of 2014, it was estimated that approximately \$170 million was spent as a result of the county fairs. Of that \$170 million, an estimated \$90 million in transactions occurred directly within the state economy.
- County fairs in the Northern Zone generated an estimated economic impact of \$44 million, an economic impact of \$17 million in the Central Zone, and an economic impact of \$12 million in the Southern Zone.
- Small fairs generate an average estimated economic impact of \$315,000; medium fairs generate \$900,000; and large fairs generate \$3,000,000.
- Illinois county fairs generated an estimated collective total revenue of \$90 million in 2014.
- It was found that county agricultural fairs provide non-monetary benefits to the local community. They serve as a catalyst for continuing local traditions, increasing unity within communities and families, and providing agriculture education for all ages.
- The primary challenges facing Illinois county fairs include: lack of state and local funding, diminishing appeal to the younger generation, and the challenge of keeping fairs relevant amidst trends of declining involvement in agriculture.



UNDERSTANDING ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Economic impact refers to the processes that account for how changes in spending, as a result of an economic shock—such as business openings or closures, industrial expansions, an increase or decrease in local production, or a major event/convention—affect the local economy. Economic impact studies can be conducted on a number of geographical scales, such as a city, county, region, state, or an entire country. For this study, the analysis is performed on the state level as well as six multi-county regions.

Economic impact studies produce value estimates detailing the total effect an economic event has on a defined region. For example, if a city wanted to understand the effect of building a major university within the city limits, an economic impact study could provide estimates of jobs created, increased tax revenue, and other pertinent economic factors important to decision makers.

Information provided through economic modeling organizes the economic impact into three main categories, including Direct, Indirect, and Induced Impact¹:

1. **Direct Impact** – The initial expenditures, or production, made by the industry experiencing the economic change.
2. **Indirect Impact** – The effects of local, inter-industry spending through the current economic structure.
3. **Induced Impact** – The results of local spending of wages from both the directly and indirectly affected industry employees.

The economic impact detailed in this report was generated using the industry-standard economic modeling software IMPLAN (IMpacts for PLanning). The IMPLAN program uses primary data collected and provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Bureau of Economics, to produce effective localized economic parameters. Because of this, the models and outputs provided in this study are unique to the State of Illinois and its counties. Moreover, the results provide quantitative data, specific to the complex economy of Illinois, enabling state and local officials to understand the direct effect of Illinois county fairs throughout the state. The data presented can better inform decision makers when considering policy and legislation changes regarding the future of county fairs.

A Clarifying Example:

Each transaction in an economy has a value, and it is understood that cumulative value is estimated. For example, if the same \$100 dollars was transacted five times, the economic impact would be greater than \$100 because the economy experienced \$500 worth of transactions, despite there being no additional money within the economic region.

¹ Day, Frances. Principles of Impact Analysis & IMPLAN Applications, First Edition



STUDY DESIGN

Within the state of Illinois there are multiple types of fair classifications such as Agricultural Fairs, Fairs & Expositions, and 4-H Fairs. The purpose of this study is to conduct an economic impact assessment of the agricultural fairs throughout the state. Although much of the data could be reasonably transferable to fairs of other types, all estimates, calculations, and results refer to agricultural fairs only. Throughout this report all references to fairs and/or county fairs should be understood as a reference to agricultural fairs, unless otherwise stated.

Traditionally, economic impact studies are used to understand a change in a specific industry. In this case it is assumed that the spending patterns observed in 2014 are relatively comparable to spending patterns experienced historically. Because of this, the results of the economic models illustrate the impact that the county fairs generate and presumably have been generating throughout previous years. Findings in this report are stated in terms of positive impact and/or loss; it should be understood that these differences in presentation are representations of the same information.

SURVEY DESIGN

The study was designed to assess two aspects of county fairs: 1) the economic impact, and 2) the community/social impact. To estimate the economic impact, data on the spending patterns of fair participants was needed to identify how much money was spent and on what type of goods and/or services. In addition to the financial data, interview data was required from community members and fair officials to understand the community and social benefits of the fair.

To make primary data collection possible, the two survey tools used in this study were developed following two focus group meetings in January 2014. Information gathered through the focus groups was refined into the Economic Impact Study questionnaire and the Key Informant Interview questions. Both survey tools were cleared for use and approved by the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board in May 2014 (see Appendix C for survey tools).

COUNTY SELECTION METHOD

To provide a comprehensive study, the data sample needed to represent the state-wide characteristics of county fairs. In 2013, 104 county fairs took place in Illinois, with an estimated attendance at each fair ranging from 500 to 195,000 people. Using this base-year data, 15 county fairs were selected for primary data collection.

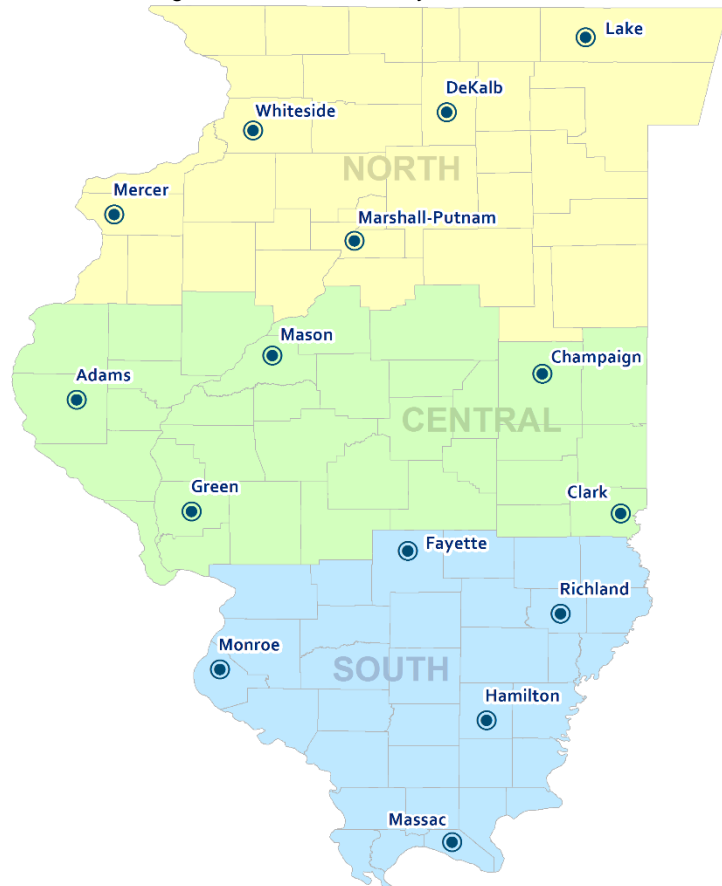
A technique known as stratified random sampling was used to ensure equal distribution regarding fair size, type, and location. For the selection process, the state was organized into



three regions using the Department of Agriculture (DOA) regulatory zones: North, Central, and South. Within each zone, all county fairs were sorted according to their 2013 estimated attendance and assigned to five categories unique to each zone. One fair was randomly selected from each category within each zone, resulting in a total of 15 fairs which collectively represented all sizes of fairs across all zones. The selection process was also influenced by geographical location and if the fair had a carnival or not, to provide equal distribution for location and fair type (see Figure 1).

This selection method produced a sample and data that would best represent all county fairs across the state. In addition to the 15 selected fairs, a simplified questionnaire was provided to each non-selected fair to independently collect their own data if they chose to do so.

Figure 1: Selected County Fairs



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Approximately 4,600 households responded to the economic impact survey (see Table 1). Responses were collected at all fair locations by 4-H youth volunteers under the supervision of University of Illinois Extension staff. Questionnaires were collected by a random intercept method and self-volunteering at fair gates, major events, booths, and by roaming survey staff. All staff and 4-H members were trained on appropriate survey procedures as dictated by the project team and the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board. All responses were confidential and no unique identifying information was gathered.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews were conducted primarily with the corresponding local Fair Board members, local sponsors, and key fair participants at each of the 15 selected county fairs. Interviews were conducted in person or over the phone by a member of the project team.

Each interview took approximately 60 minutes to complete. Findings of the interviews are presented in a later section of this report titled, *Community Benefits of Illinois Agricultural Fairs*.

DATA ANALYSIS

An initial analysis of the data set removed cases which included extreme outliers, in an effort to best represent the general fair attendee population. Fewer than 1% were removed before the final analysis. In addition to spending patterns, the data set includes basic demographic information for fair attendees, the reason(s) for attending the fair, as well as how many years the respondent had attended that particular fair throughout their lifetime. Demographic data is a representation of the sample and should not be assumed to match the general demographics of fair attendees as explained in the following section.

The economic impact data is organized and analyzed using the three categories described below:

1. **State** – Aggregated to the state level, this category details the estimated expenditures of fair participants and the associated state-wide economic impact.
2. **Zone** – Three zones—North, Central, and South—comprising approximately 1/3 of the state in each zone. This category details the estimated expenditures of fair participants and the associated impact for each portion of the state.
3. **Size** – Fairs are organized into three size distinctions based on estimated 2013 attendance: Small (< 20,000 attendees), Medium (20,000 – 50,000 attendees), and Large (> 50,000 attendees). This category details the estimated expenditures of fair participants and the associated impact for all fairs within the specified size.

Seven economic models were created using the economic modeling software IMPLAN. Each model represents one component of the data as described above. All economic impact

COUNTY	COUNT
NORTH	
DeKalb	966
Lake	332
Marshall	61
Mercer	509
Whiteside	11
Total	1,879
CENTRAL	
Adams	395
Champaign	574
Clark	288
Greene	207
Mason	303
Total	1,767
SOUTH	
Fayette	70
Hamilton	164
Massac	81
Monroe	482
Richland	210
Total	1,007
Total Count	4,653



estimates were generated by first estimating the total expenditures for each category. This was done by converting the estimated total attendance to total households by dividing by 2.6² (Illinois average household size), then extrapolating the total expenditures using average spending per household per category.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEYED FAIR ATTENDEES

The following section details the demographic profile of the sample—those who responded to the survey—including, age, gender, race, occupation, and income. Results represent only those individuals who chose to answer the associated questions. Although every effort was made to gather a random sample, the data provided in this section should not be applied to the general fair population because each case represents a head of household (who responded to the survey), NOT an independent individual.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2 illustrates the demographic profile of survey respondents including: age, gender, race, and income. Percentages were calculated given the total number of responses for each question.

AGE	
Under 18	8%
18 - 25	12%
26 - 29	6%
30 - 39	15%
40 - 49	19%
50 - 60	19%
Over 60	22%
GENDER	
Female	60%
Male	40%
RACE	
White	94%
Black or African American	2%
American Indian	1%
Asian	1%
Hispanic or Latino	1%
Two or More Races	1%
OCCUPATION	
Agriculture	23%
Professional/Business	16%
Education	12%
Construction	6%
Manufacturing	4%
Government	4%
Healthcare	4%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	3%
Other	27%
INCOME	
Less than \$15,000	8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	6%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	9%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	14%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	25%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	14%
\$150,000 and above	9%

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate

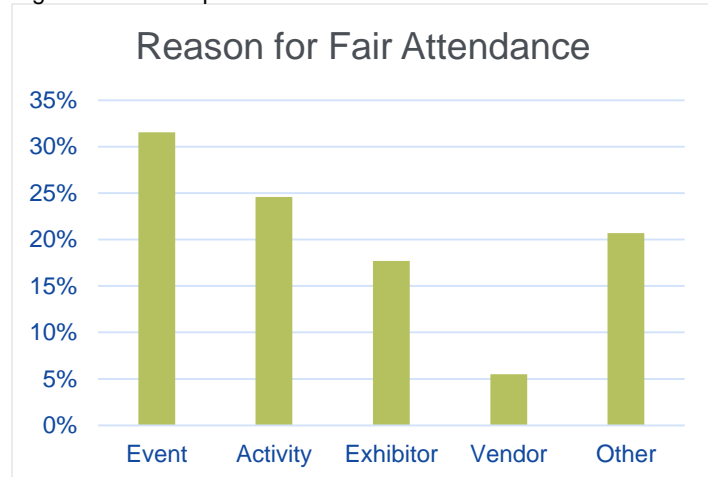


REASONS FOR ATTENDING THE FAIR

Figure 2 details the percent of survey respondents who visited the fair for a specific purpose. The selections below are defined as:

- **Event** – Fair event such as pageant, demolition derby, tractor-pull, rodeo, horse racing, concert, etc.
- **Activity** – Carnival, amusements, food, etc.
- **Exhibitor** – Those presenting animals, projects, produce, etc.
- **Vendor** – Those selling goods or services at the fair.

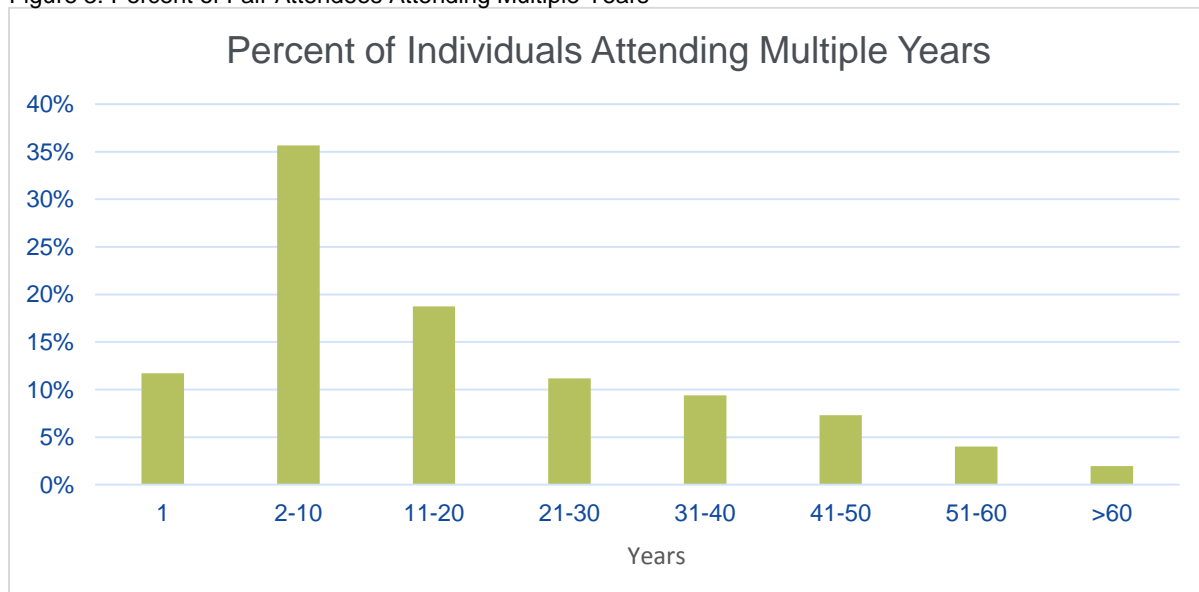
Figure 2: Percent per Reason for Fair Attendance



YEARS ATTENDED

Figure 3 illustrates the percent of survey respondents who have attended the fair for a given number of years. Respondents were instructed to report “1” if this year (2014) was their first year attending a county fair. For this reason, first year attendees are reported separately.

Figure 3: Percent of Fair Attendees Attending Multiple Years



ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL FAIRS IN ILLINOIS

This section details the total economic impact of agricultural fairs in Illinois using three different levels of analysis as described below:

1. **State** – Aggregated to the state level, estimated total expenditures of fair attendees and the associated state-wide economic impact.
2. **Zone** – Three zones—North, Central, and South—which comprise approximately 1/3 of the state each.
3. **Size** – Fairs are organized into three size distinctions based on estimated attendance: Small (< 20,000), Medium (20,000 – 50,000), and Large (> 50,000). This category details the estimated expenditures of fair attendees and the estimated impact of a given fair within each size classification.

Seven economic models represent one component of the economy as described above. All economic impact estimates were generated by first calculating the average spending per household per spending category. Data was gathered on seven spending categories described as:

1. **Fair** – Total spent WITHIN the fairgrounds including gate fees, event tickets, food, carnival passes, entertainment, etc.
2. **Food** – Total spent on food or drink including restaurants, bars, clubs, etc. OUTSIDE of the fair.
3. **Transportation** – Total spent on fuel, convenience stores, taxis, transit, rental cars, etc.
4. **Retail** – Total spent at retail stores including grocery, merchandise, hardware, etc.
5. **Lodging** – Total spent on lodging including hotels, motels, camp grounds, RV sites, etc.
6. **Commercial** – Total spent on commercial/professional services including laundry, mechanics, healthcare, etc.

It is important to note that all but the first spending category (Fair) reports money spent outside of the fair. This is an important distinction because to estimate the economic impact of an event such as a county fair, it is essential to estimate how much money is being spent on specific industries (i.e., food, fuel, lodging, etc.) throughout the local area. This spending occurs because people travel throughout the local area to attend the event. Money spent inside the fair is assumed to not be directly returned to the local economy because the majority of vendors and entertainers are not local residents or business establishments.



The economic models presented in this section provide three types of economic impact:

1. **Direct Impact** – The initial expenditures, or production, made by the industry experiencing the economic change.
2. **Indirect Impact** – The effects of local, inter-industry spending through the current economic structure.
3. **Induced Impact** – The results of local spending wages from both the directly and indirectly affected industry employees.

For each of the above three types of impact, four economic contributions are calculated:

1. **Employment** – The average number of total annual jobs supported by the economic event. This may include full-time, part-time, self-employed, and seasonal jobs.
2. **Labor Income** – The total value paid to local workers within the modeled region.
3. **Total Value Added** – The total of labor income, associated business taxes, and other property related expenditures.
4. **Output** – The total value of the change in sales or production as a result of an economic event.

The following section provides a detailed economic assessment for Illinois agricultural fairs. The assessment includes the observed spending patterns of county fair attendees, the total state-wide impact and associated job creation, and impacts by zone and fair size.



SPENDING PATTERNS

During the summer of 2014, it was estimated that approximately \$169 million was spent as a result of the county fairs. Of that \$169 million, \$80 million in transactions occurred directly within the state economy. This estimate excludes all transactions that occurred within the fair. Average spending data suggests that proportionally more money is spent on food than on any other economic industry. Those attending fairs in the Southern Zone spent approximately 17% more than the state average.

Table 3 details the average spending per household across the state and for each zone for all six spending categories. The averages were calculated using the sample data collected from the 15 selected fairs.

CATEGORY	STATE	NORTH	CENTRAL	SOUTH
Fair	\$ 92	\$ 95	\$ 76	\$ 113
Food	\$ 33	\$ 33	\$ 28	\$ 40
Transportation	\$ 21	\$ 18	\$ 21	\$ 27
Retail	\$ 17	\$ 13	\$ 18	\$ 20
Lodging	\$ 6	\$ 6	\$ 7	\$ 5
Services	\$ 3	\$ 3	\$ 3	\$ 3
Total	\$ 172	\$ 169	\$ 155	\$ 208

Table 4 shows the estimated total spending in each category for the state and for each zone. Total spending was calculated by multiplying the average spending per household by the estimated number of households attending county fairs throughout the state and zones.

CATEGORY	STATE	NORTH	CENTRAL	SOUTH
Fair	\$ 90,574,075	\$ 55,852,881	\$ 19,158,262	\$ 16,793,268
Food	\$ 32,515,230	\$ 19,502,754	\$ 7,175,339	\$ 5,983,222
Transportation	\$ 21,131,423	\$ 10,634,807	\$ 5,410,021	\$ 4,080,142
Retail	\$ 16,388,748	\$ 7,775,807	\$ 4,568,914	\$ 2,999,591
Lodging	\$ 6,111,820	\$ 3,426,826	\$ 1,872,266	\$ 693,782
Services	\$ 3,053,859	\$ 1,771,845	\$ 804,911	\$ 454,098
Total	\$ 169,775,155	\$ 98,964,920	\$ 38,989,713	\$ 31,004,104



STATE IMPACT

Across the state, county fairs produce an estimated \$90 million in economic impact and support 1,000 local jobs. In other words, without county fairs, the state would see a loss of \$89 million in economic activity, as well as a loss of 1,000 jobs. The direct economic impact of the county fairs is estimated to be \$49 million. This is interpreted as total value of the total transactions which are a direct result of the fairs across the state.

Table 5 details the economic impact generated by the state model and each zone model. The table includes jobs created/supported (employment) and the value for each type of impact across all models.

TABLE 5: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ILLINOIS COUNTY FAIRS					
IMPACT TYPE	EMPLOYMENT	LABOR INCOME	TOTAL VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT	
STATE					
Direct Effect	769	\$ 20,312,654	\$ 28,671,526	\$ 48,549,791	
Indirect Effect	102	\$ 6,581,867	\$ 10,969,966	\$ 18,100,383	
Induced Effect	167	\$ 8,431,792	\$ 14,400,280	\$ 23,152,192	
Total Effect	1,038	\$ 35,326,312	\$ 54,041,773	\$ 89,802,366	
NORTH					
Direct Effect	461	\$ 10,921,050	\$ 15,922,202	\$ 28,028,011	
Indirect Effect	49	\$ 2,693,431	\$ 4,772,592	\$ 7,723,993	
Induced Effect	67	\$ 3,003,257	\$ 5,378,309	\$ 8,551,484	
Total Effect	577	\$ 16,617,738	\$ 26,073,102	\$ 44,303,489	
CENTRAL					
Direct Effect	203	\$ 4,120,264	\$ 6,465,617	\$ 11,714,049	
Indirect Effect	18	\$ 812,657	\$ 1,504,205	\$ 2,590,229	
Induced Effect	25	\$ 908,687	\$ 1,735,398	\$ 2,854,995	
Total Effect	246	\$ 5,841,607	\$ 9,705,220	\$ 17,159,272	
SOUTH					
Direct Effect	151	\$ 2,967,482	\$ 4,522,164	\$ 8,411,885	
Indirect Effect	12	\$ 481,682	\$ 914,234	\$ 1,634,297	
Induced Effect	16	\$ 561,242	\$ 1,112,353	\$ 1,869,824	
Total Effect	179	\$ 4,010,406	\$ 6,548,751	\$ 11,916,007	

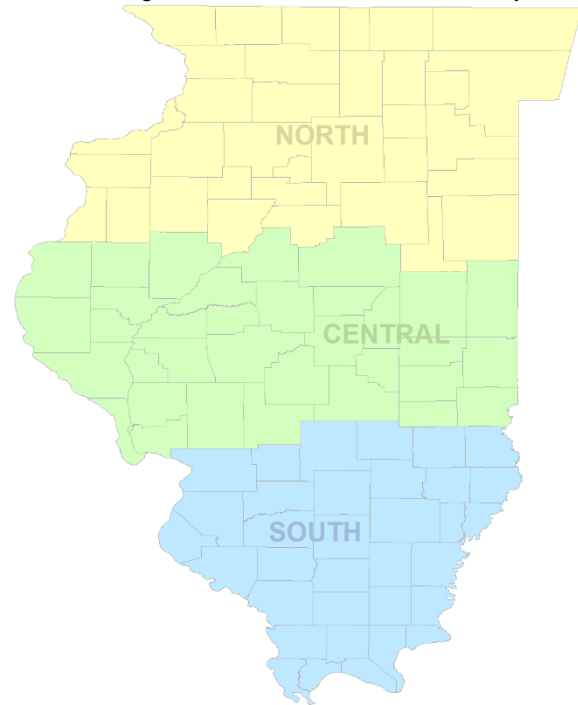


IMPACT BY ZONE

Models were created for each zone (see figure 4) using the average spending per zone provided in Table 3.

In comparison, the economic impact in the Northern Zone is significantly higher than the Central and Southern Zones (see Table 5). This is expected, because the fairs in the Northern Zone have a significantly higher estimated attendance than the other zones. However, due to the economic center of Chicago in the Northern Zone, it is likely that proportionally, the fairs in the Central and Southern Zones contribute a higher proportion of the total economic activity when compared to the North.

Figure 4: Illinois State Zones for Analysis



IMPACT BY SIZE

County fairs range significantly in regard to size as measured by attendance. In 2013 estimated fair attendance ranged from 500 to 195,000 people depending on the fair. Because of this disparity in size, it is helpful to understand the contribution of a specific fair. The above models are not tailored to describe a specific fair, rather they detail total economic impact across the region. The model described here effectively illustrates the average economic impact of a fair in a given size classification.

For example, if local officials were interested in the economic impact of the Knox County Fair (estimated attendance of 15,000), using the data provided in Table 6 it could be estimated that the fair would have a total economic impact of approximately \$300,000.

Table 6 details the average impact per fair by size as measured by attendance. The values presented were generated using the state average spending, applied to three separate models comprised of all counties which host a county fair in each of the given size classifications. The total output of the models was then divided by the total of fairs which contributed to the economic impact, effectively producing an average economic impact per fair.

TABLE 6: AVERAGE IMPACT PER FAIR BY SIZE

IMPACT TYPE	LABOR INCOME	TOTAL VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
< 20,000 ATTENDEES			
Direct Effect	\$ 77,859	\$ 123,941	\$ 227,652
Indirect Effect	\$ 12,540	\$ 24,458	\$ 43,070
Induced Effect	\$ 12,811	\$ 26,502	\$ 44,045
Total Effect	\$ 103,210	\$ 174,900	\$ 314,766
20,000 - 50,000 ATTENDEES			
Direct Effect	\$ 232,422	\$ 341,940	\$ 632,853
Indirect Effect	\$ 41,599	\$ 72,906	\$ 121,342
Induced Effect	\$ 51,027	\$ 93,714	\$ 152,229
Total Effect	\$ 325,049	\$ 508,560	\$ 906,423
> 50,000 ATTENDEES			
Direct Effect	\$ 757,097	\$ 1,096,635	\$ 1,905,461
Indirect Effect	\$ 185,504	\$ 325,953	\$ 518,378
Induced Effect	\$ 203,936	\$ 363,250	\$ 572,107
Total Effect	\$ 1,146,538	\$ 1,785,838	\$ 2,995,947

TOTAL FAIR REVENUE

The economic models described in this section draw upon the reported spending OUTSIDE of the fair. However, it is important to consider the amount of money spent within the fair because it has potential to affect the local economy directly or indirectly. Direct impacts may include sales tax, wages for fair employees, local vendors selling goods within the fair, event insurance, equipment rental, security, etc. These transactions are paid by the local fair through monies collected within the fair. It is beyond the scope of the study to estimate with any certainty how much of total fair revenue is spent locally, nor is it possible to effectively assume how that money is spent. Despite this, it is logical to assume that a certain percentage of total fair revenue circulates within the local economy.

Total revenue was calculated by extrapolating the estimated spending per household within each fair, just as in the other spending categories. It is estimated that Illinois agricultural fairs generated total revenue of over \$90 million in 2014, with an approximate 60/20/20 proportional contribution from the North, Central, and Southern Zones.



Table 7 presents three different scenarios for revenue returned to the local economy. Each scenario assumes that a high (30%), medium (20%), or low (10%) percentage of the total revenue is circulated back into the local economy.

TABLE 7: ESTIMATED FAIR REVENUE RETURNED TO LOCAL ECONOMY				
CATEGORY	STATE	NORTH	CENTRAL	SOUTH
Fair Revenue	\$ 90,574,075	\$ 55,852,881	\$ 19,158,262	\$ 16,793,268
High (30%)	\$ 27,172,223	\$ 16,755,864	\$ 5,747,479	\$ 5,037,980
Medium (20%)	\$ 18,114,815	\$ 11,170,576	\$ 3,831,652	\$ 3,358,654
Low (10%)	\$ 9,057,408	\$ 5,585,288	\$ 1,915,826	\$ 1,679,327

COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

In addition to the economic benefit county fairs bring to their local communities, there are many non-monetary benefits that should not be overlooked. In an effort to better understand these benefits, key informant interviews were conducted with corresponding local Fair Board members, local fair sponsors, and key fair participants at each of the 15 selected fairs. A total of 33 interviews were conducted. Responses were aggregated and analyzed in an effort to identify relevant themes throughout the state. It was found that the local community benefits from the fair, because it acts a catalyst for continuing local traditions, increasing unity within the community, and providing agriculture education.



Adams County Fair Gate: 7/24/14

This section discusses these major community benefits and gives examples of how they are facilitated by county fairs.

CONTINUING TRADITION

County fairs have a prominent place throughout Illinois's history. For many communities the county fair has been a landmark community event for generations and families are eager to maintain that tradition. Local families consistently return home to the fair, despite having moved away, to participate in the tradition of the fair with their children, as they did with



Mercer County Historic Register Certificate: 7/11/14

lose more than an entertaining event, they would lose part of their identity and history.

their parents. Many fairs provide camp/RV sites on the grounds and these sites are often used for annual family reunions. The reunion culture surrounding the county fairs unites both families and distant community members.

The local fair acts as the venue for many traditional community events such as 4th of July fireworks, community breakfasts, and other community-specific fair-games.

Without the fair many communities would

INCREASING UNITY

The county fair culture encourages community support and unity. Community members come to the fair to support local entrepreneurs as well as the local clubs and organizations in their fundraising efforts; local churches host food stands, 4-H and FFA groups sell goods and host activities, individuals and small business owners sell products, and local businesses promote their services. The local community and economy are strengthened as community members support one another.

Not only does the fair provide space for communities to rally around their local organizations and businesses, it also provides a safe place for the community to gather with activities appropriate for all ages. The county fair provides unique entertainment for many rural and urban communities and offers attractions that can only be seen at the fair. As a result the fair brings communities together and fosters friendship. Many interviewees suggested that there was no other event in the community that could offer such a service as effectively as the county fair.

PROVIDING EDUCATION

The fair promotes education through a variety of methods. Many local sponsors provide activities to educate fair-goers on topics such as electricity, public safety, wind energy, etc. Because of this many fairs are destinations for school groups and community organizations from neighboring communities.



Sandwich Fair Exhibit Hall: 8/5/14





Richland County Fair Sheep Show: 7/9/14

Agriculture education is a key component to all agricultural fairs. The fair provides space for 4-H youth and others to participate in agricultural shows. Many families who participate in showing animals or growing produce are now a generation (or more) removed from the farm. However, they continue to grow crops and raise animals so their children will gain life lessons while learning about agriculture.

Education is not limited to agriculture. Other 4-H and open

shows provide opportunities for community members to learn new skills by exposure to many different topics in science, citizenship, history, technology and more. Without the fair the community would be further limited in their efforts to educate the rising generation.

CHALLENGES FACING ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

Despite the numerous benefits that country fairs provide, interviewees also listed many challenges facing fairs today. The primary challenges include lack of funding, diminishing appeal, and the challenge of keeping the fair relevant. The following lists enumerate specific difficulties fairs face in overcoming these challenges.

1. FUNDING

- a. Diminishing state funding
- b. Increasing operating costs
- c. Aging physical facilities

2. APPEAL

- a. Declining attendance and competing with multiple summer activities
- b. Decreasing support from local and neighboring communities
- c. Difficulty recruiting volunteers

3. RELEVANCE

- a. Difficulty keeping the younger population interested
- b. Loss of interest in agriculture and livestock
- c. Lack of popular attractions and/or events



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In 2014 a study was conducted to assess the economic impact of Illinois agricultural fairs. A total of 4,653 households across 15 fairs responded to the economic impact survey. Seven economic models were created to estimate the economic impact for county fairs throughout the state.

It is estimated that in 2014 county fairs generated a state-wide economic impact of \$90 million and supported a total of 1,000 jobs. Moreover, if no county fairs occurred, the state would see a loss of \$90 million in economic activity, as well as a loss of 1,000 jobs. Total expenditures of fair attendees across all Illinois county fairs was estimated to be approximately \$170 million. Of that \$170 million, approximately \$90 million in transactions occurred directly within the local economy.

On a zonal level, Illinois county fairs generate an estimated economic impact of \$44 million in the Northern Zone, \$17 million in the Central Zone, and \$12 million in the Southern Zone.

County fairs range significantly in regard to size. In 2013, county fairs reported their estimated attendance which ranged from 500 to 195,000 people depending on the fair. Because of this disparity in size, county fairs were divided into three size classifications in order to understand their individual contribution to the economy. It is estimated that small fairs (attendance < 20,000) generate an average estimated economic impact of \$315,000, medium fairs (attendance 20,000—50,000) generate \$900,000, and large fairs (attendance > 50,000) generate \$3,000,000.

In 2014 the Illinois Department of Agriculture appropriated \$5.1 million for county fairs. Assuming a significant portion of the budget will be allotted to agricultural fairs, it is estimated the state will see a return 18x greater than their original investment in 2014.

In an effort to better understand the community and social benefits of county fairs, key informant interviews were conducted with local Fair Board members, local fair sponsors, and fair participants at each of the 15 selected fairs. A total of 33 interviews were conducted and analyzed. It was found that the local community benefits from the fair, because it acts a catalyst for continuing local traditions, increasing unity within the community, and providing agriculture education.

In addition to the benefits, interviewees identified challenges facing fairs today. The primary challenges include: lack of state and local funding, diminishing appeal to the younger generation, and the challenge of keeping fairs relevant amidst a trend of decline in agriculture.

Data detailed in this report provide quantitative evidence specific to the complex economy of Illinois, enabling state and local officials to understand the direct and indirect effect the Illinois county fairs have on the local economy. The data presented here can better inform decision makers when considering policy and legislation changes regarding the future of Illinois county fairs.



APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY DATA

The attached table details the calculated averages for each fair involved in the 2014 economic impact study.

Average Spending by County by Spending Category							
Spending per Household							
Source: 2014 IAAF Economic Impact Survey							
County	Fair	Spending Category					County Total
		Food	Lodging	Transportation	Retail	Services	
Adams	\$ 120	\$ 36	\$ 14	\$ 33	\$ 35	\$ 3	\$ 240
Champaign	\$ 58	\$ 23	\$ 8	\$ 15	\$ 11	\$ 5	\$ 120
Clark	\$ 56	\$ 26	\$ 4	\$ 13	\$ 13	\$ 2	\$ 114
DeKalb	\$ 105	\$ 35	\$ 6	\$ 18	\$ 10	\$ 2	\$ 177
Fayette	\$ 149	\$ 47	\$ 21	\$ 34	\$ 25	\$ 4	\$ 280
Greene	\$ 117	\$ 35	\$ 7	\$ 28	\$ 17	\$ 3	\$ 208
Hamilton	\$ 52	\$ 34	\$ 2	\$ 14	\$ 7	\$ 1	\$ 111
Lake	\$ 85	\$ 25	\$ 7	\$ 9	\$ 7	\$ 4	\$ 137
Marshall	\$ 52	\$ 25	\$ 2	\$ 10	\$ 6	\$ 1	\$ 96
Mason	\$ 44	\$ 28	\$ 2	\$ 23	\$ 15	\$ 1	\$ 112
Massac	\$ 141	\$ 58	\$ 28	\$ 83	\$ 67	\$ 11	\$ 388
Mercer	\$ 90	\$ 37	\$ 5	\$ 25	\$ 24	\$ 4	\$ 184
Monroe	\$ 115	\$ 40	\$ 1	\$ 22	\$ 14	\$ 3	\$ 195
Richland	\$ 130	\$ 37	\$ 1	\$ 26	\$ 23	\$ 1	\$ 218
Whiteside	\$ 55	\$ 18	\$ 9	\$ 13	\$ 7	\$ -	\$ 102
Average	\$ 92	\$ 33	\$ 6	\$ 21	\$ 17	\$ 3	\$ 172



COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FAIRS BY ZONE

CENTRAL

Adams	Dewitt	Macon	Pike
Brown	Edgar	Macoupin	Sangamon
Calhoun	Fulton	Mason	Schuyler
Cass	Greene	Menard	Scott
Champaign	Hancock	Montgomery	Shelby
Christian	Jersey	Morgan	Tazewell
Clark	Logan	Moultrie-Douglas	Vermilion
Coles	McDonough	Moultrie	
Cumberland	McLean	Piatt	

NORTH

Boone	Henry	LaSalle	Rock
Bureau	Iroquois	Lee	Stark
Carroll	JoDaviess	Livingston	Stephenson
DeKalb	Kane	Marshall-Putnam	Warren
DuPage	Kankakee	McHenry	Whiteside
Ford	Kendall	Mercer	Will
Grundy	Knox	Ogle	Winnebago
Henderson	Lake	Peoria	

SOUTH

Bond	Gallatin	Monroe	Wabash
Clay	Hamilton	Perry	Washington
Clinton	Jasper	Pulaski	Wayne
Crawford	Jefferson	Randolph	White
Edwards	Lawrence	Richland	Williamson
Effingham	Madison	Saline	
Fayette	Marion	St. Clair	
Franklin	Massac	Union	



APPENDIX B: INDEPENDENT SURVEY DATA SUMMARY

The below charts summarize data that was provided by the respective counties indicated within the data. The data was gathered via a simplified intercept survey comprising of questions 4-9 of the questionnaire provided in Appendix C. The data was gathered independently and cannot be verified through the survey methods described in the attached report. The results provided here were not included in the analysis presented in the 2014 Economic Impact of Illinois Agricultural Fairs report.

Average Spending per County by Spending Category							
Spending per Case							
Source: 2014 IAAF Economic Impact Survey: Independently Collected							
County	Spending Category						County Total
	Fair	Food	Lodging	Transportation	Retail	Services	
Boone	\$ 157	\$ 9	\$ 8	\$ 15	\$ 8	\$ 1	\$ 198
Champaign - Fisher	\$ 82	\$ 26	\$ 4	\$ 17	\$ 14	\$ 1	\$ 144
DuPage	\$ 125	\$ 54	\$ 54	\$ 58	\$ 72	\$ 16	\$ 380
Kankakee	\$ 120	\$ 47	\$ 27	\$ 58	\$ 42	\$ 26	\$ 319
Kendall	\$ 81	\$ 36	\$ 16	\$ 24	\$ 16	\$ 5	\$ 177
Logan	\$ 130	\$ 51	\$ 8	\$ 29	\$ 39	\$ 2	\$ 259
Madison	\$ 173	\$ 77	\$ 19	\$ 48	\$ 43	\$ 24	\$ 383
Marion	\$ 88	\$ 33	\$ 12	\$ 24	\$ 22	\$ 7	\$ 185
Okawville	\$ 103	\$ 4	\$ 2	\$ 1	\$ 0	\$ -	\$ 109
Scott	\$ 64	\$ 18	\$ -	\$ 24	\$ 23	\$ 1	\$ 129
Vermillion	\$ 96	\$ 32	\$ 7	\$ 35	\$ 27	\$ 5	\$ 203
Will	\$ 114	\$ 27	\$ 10	\$ 30	\$ 16	\$ 1	\$ 198
Winnebago	\$ 921	\$ 96	\$ 23	\$ 73	\$ 79	\$ 34	\$ 1,226
Average	\$ 134	\$ 33	\$ 14	\$ 28	\$ 26	\$ 7	\$ 242

Survey Count by County	
County	Count
Boone	233
Champaign - Fisher	125
DuPage	163
Kankakee	96
Kendall	162
Logan	280
Madison	67
Marion	200
Okawville	214
Scott	37
Vermillion	173
Will	44
Winnebago	46
Grand Total	1,840



APPENDIX C: SURVEY TOOLS

2014 IAAF Economic Impact Survey questionnaire and Key Informant Interview questions.



For office use only

ID # _____ Zone _____

Recorded: 1 2

Thank you for taking time to participate in this survey from the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs and University of Illinois Extension. We are gathering data to better understand the economic impact of county fairs throughout the state. *Your participation is voluntary. All responses are anonymous and confidential. It should take you less than 5 minutes to complete. If you have any concerns or would like to be notified when the results of this study are available, contact Carrie McKillip at mckillip@illinois.edu. For information regarding your rights as a participant, contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at (217) 333-1131 or e-mail, irb@uiuc.edu.*

<p>1. What best describes your primary reason for visiting the fair?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I am an exhibitor I am a vendor I am here to watch an event I came for the activities/carnival Other _____ <p>2. For how many years have you attended this event (including this year)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> _____ <p>3. What is your home County and State? County _____ State _____</p>	<p>For questions 10-14, circle the response that best describes you.</p> <p>10. What is your age?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Under 18 18 – 25 26 – 29 30 – 39 40 – 49 50 – 60 Over 60 <p>11. What is your gender?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Male Female <p>12. What is your household income?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Less than \$15,000 \$15,000 - \$24,999 \$25,000 - \$34,999 \$35,000 - \$49,000 \$50,000 - \$74,999 \$75,000 - \$99,999 \$100,000 - \$149,000 \$150,000 or more <p>13. What industry best describes your occupation?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture Construction Manufacturing Finance/Insurance/Real-estate Professional/Business Education Government Other: _____ <p>14. What is your race?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> White Black or African American American Indian Asian Hispanic or Latino Two or More Races Other: _____
<p>4. How much money do you plan to spend, total, WITHIN the fair, including event tickets, crafts, food, and entertainment, etc.? Please round responses to the nearest \$10 (i.e., \$10, \$20, \$30, etc.). \$ _____</p>	
<p>How much money do you plan to spend on each category described below, during your visit to the area? Please round responses to the nearest \$5 (i.e., \$15, \$20, \$35, etc.). Only include monies spent OUTSIDE of the fair.</p> <p>5. Food and drink (restaurants, bars, clubs, etc.) \$ _____</p> <p>6. Lodging (hotel, motels, camping, etc.) \$ _____</p> <p>7. Transportation (gas stations/convenience stores, taxi, rental fee, transit fare, etc.) \$ _____</p> <p>8. Retail Stores (grocery stores, hardware stores, department stores, big box stores, etc.) \$ _____</p> <p>9. Commercial Services (laundry, mechanics, healthcare, etc.) \$ _____</p>	



IAAF Economic Impact Study – Key Informant Interview Questions

What does the fair provide for your community that is unique, special, or important?

What would you list as the major benefits of your local fair?

How does your fair provide education, information, or a connection to agriculture?

How are nonprofits or other community-based organizations benefiting from the fair?

How are new trends in agriculture changing your fair? (local foods, for example)

What challenges to the success of your fair do you expect?

How important is state funding to the success and survival of your fair?

Is there anything else that we need to know?



Economic Impact of Illinois Agricultural Fairs

2014