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TOWARD THE CONSTRUCTION OF "KENTUCKY FOOD" IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: FOOD LOCALISM AND COMMODIFICATION OF PLACE IDENTITY UNDER POST-TOBACCO AGRICULTURAL RESTRUCTURING, 1990-2006.

Taro Futamura
University of Kentucky, tfuta2@uky.edu

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Taro Futamura

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2007

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Taro Futamura

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Karl B. Raitz, Professor of Geography

Lexington, Kentucky

2007

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This study examines the concept of “local food” and the discourses surrounding the concept, both of which have played a significant role during Kentucky’s agricultural restructuring. Since the mid-1990s, Kentucky farmers who were dependent on tobacco production began to struggle financially after the substantial reduction of quota allotments, and they were encouraged to diversify their agricultural production. Subsequently, practices of producing, marketing, and consuming “locally-grown” food were implemented.

Drawing primarily on qualitative data, this study investigates the meanings of Kentucky’s “local food” discourse development in four dimensions: 1) the political economy of tobacco production and the structural change of Kentucky’s agriculture; 2) the role of diverse actors who prompted the adoption of “local food”; 3) the construction of “local” scale and micro-scale politics for marketing “local food” at farmers’ markets; and 4) the symbolization of “local food” at county food-related festivals.

Kentucky’s tobacco production declined not only because of the national anti-tobacco movement, but also because of a constellation of causes including the influence of a free-trade ideology that decreased American burley’s competitiveness with global markets, and the increase of part-time farmers that led local tobacco farms to struggle with labor shortages and meeting production demands. Farmers’ opposition to tobacco controls and their discourses were transformed to attract supporting small food-producing farms, which ultimately merged with societal interests in the production and the consumption of “local food.” Commoditized “local” brands at increased direct-sale venues such as farmers’ markets, however, became political entities as regulations and surveillance were required to maintain their definition of “local food.” Semiotic interpretation of county food-related festivals in Kentucky shows changes in *how* people attach their place-identities to agricultural products and *how* they understand “local food.”

Although the distribution of venues is spatially uneven, the production and the consumption of “local food” have gradually been adopted throughout Kentucky’s landscape over the last decade. To maintain the success of localized markets, this study proposes three potential requirements: 1) the credibility of and the transparency for understanding “local food”; 2) the resource investment to support future producers; and 3) the expanding adoption of community food security ideals.

Key Words: Agricultural restructuring, food, Kentucky, localism, tobacco.

Taro Futamura

November 30, 2007

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By

Taro Futamura

Karl B. Raitz
Director of Dissertation

Richard H. Schein
Director of Graduate Studies

December 14, 2007

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The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1) Preface

Students who study the agricultural geography of the United States are likely to be reminded at first that American agriculture operates as large-scale, mechanized, capital and land-use intensive production, and is the leading source of commodities for the world's food supply. Students will also understand the distinctive agricultural regions that cover the continental United States, such as the Corn Belt in the Midwest, the Cotton Belt in the South, and commercial horticultural production in Florida and California. Within this context, Kentucky is often understood as an area between the Burley Tobacco Belt in the Upland South and the Midwestern Corn Belt. The state's history and geography of agriculture was long dominated by—unlike many regions of the United States—small-scale tobacco and feeder cattle production because of physiographic limits and political-economic conditions.

Over the last ten years or so, however, more and more Americans are beginning to express interest in consuming locally-grown food—which I broadly term “local food” in this dissertation. Such a shift of discourse is a significantly different path from how American agriculture and agrifood industries have developed themselves to become global agricultural producers. Kentuckians' access to local food also increased since the late 1990s. What is unique about this change, however, is that it overlapped the period when Kentucky tobacco farmers and their production struggled against the national anti-smoking movement, followed by federal deregulation of production and price controls. Today many Kentucky cities have farmers' markets, and despite concerns about reselling and market management, an increasing number of people are benefiting from

the opportunity to obtain quality food products.

What is less critically understood, however, is the meaning of “local food.” What is it? Where does it come from? How is it the same or different from other ordinary food products? For all human beings, food is one of the essential requirements for life. Available food changes according to where, when, and the situation the producers and consumers are in. The basic question that we seek to address that concern consumption of food in contemporary America lead us to recognize that our consumption practices are strongly defined or normalized by socio-cultural and spatio-temporal conditions that are physically and culturally distant from where agricultural products and foods originate. In other words, attempts to define “local food” involve not only a geographical understanding of food production and consumption but also various issues that impact production, marketing, distribution, and consumption. Therefore, one thing that can be said to define the meaning of “local food” in Kentucky today is as follows: “local food” did not suddenly or innocently emerge, but was a product of a socially constructed process that has begun to dominate the understanding of Kentucky’s agriculture and farm community under post-tobacco agricultural restructuring settings.

Place is a portion of geographic space “in which social relations and identity are constituted” (Duncan 2000) and simultaneously “materially and imaginatively constructed by many different types of people” in both normative and descriptive ways. One way to understand place through food, therefore, is to examine what is produced, marketed, sold, and consumed in that portion of space. Coming from a country outside the United States where localized food production and consumption is well-known, embedded, and often discussed in relation to “identities of place,” my goal in this

dissertation is to address Kentucky's transitional place identities through production, marketing, and consumption of "local" food that have emerged over the last fifteen years of post-tobacco agricultural restructuring.

2) Background and Study Objectives

For anyone who studies the history and basic geography of the United States, the development of American agriculture is something that everyone should understand. Agricultural activities, no matter how small the farm or large the agribusiness corporation, were embedded in every aspect of historical change in the United States. Just as Thomas Jefferson believed that small subsistence farms constituted a major strength of the nation, as the land was settled and the frontier retreated most Americans were farmers. Every aspect of the evolution of agriculture in the United States is reflected in the larger scheme of American history: From the time of European migrants' settlement in the Atlantic colonies to the western expansion subsequent to the Louisiana Purchase; from the industrialization of cities that led to mass-production of commodities, through capitalist control and government intervention in commodity production.

Since the end of World War II, American agriculture has dominated world food production, both in variety of products and volume of production, thereby becoming the most important contributor to the world's food supply (Pillsbury and Florin 1996). Above all, capital and labor investment by corporations through agribusiness has played a key role in production increases (Smith 1980; Goodman and Watts 1997; Hurt 2001). Today, the food produced by U.S. farmers not only supports the nation's domestic needs but also yields sufficient surplus to meet part of the worldwide consumption demand (Atkins and

Bowler 2001; Hart 2003; Millstone and Lang 2003). Thus, the capacity of U.S. agricultural production to meet human food consumption demand has surged from a national scale to a global scale.

The jump of spatial scale in the capacity of U.S. agricultural production also brought about competition among domestic producers (Pillsbury and Florin 1996; Saito et al. 2001; Hart 2003). The increase of agricultural production, in turn, brought more competition among producers, enlargement of farmland in cultivation per farm, stabilization of the national food supply, a growing commodity surplus, and concerns about environmental impact (Nihei et al. 2000; Curran 2002). While the expansion of American agriculture productivity and its ability to produce food reached an extraordinary level both in terms of quantity and quality over the past half-century, the number of farms declined 65 percent from 1940 to 1995 while the total population of the U.S. increased 88 percent in the same time period (USDA 1997; U.S. Bureau of Census 2000). In other words, in 1940 there was one farm per 20 people in terms of population, but today there is one farm per more than 100 people. This transformation eliminated smaller farms that were inefficient in mechanization or capital investment. American agricultural land, including cropland, pastureland, and rangeland, which constitutes nearly 48 percent of the country's total land use, is now maintained by fewer than three million farms (USDA 2002). In order to remain competitive and meet the demands of agribusiness companies, contemporary American agriculture and the rural society that supports agriculture, face increasingly competing and tangled influences, as they are constantly required to expand their scale of production.

The growing dominance of corporate agribusinesses has favored large-scale

production and controlled distribution of agricultural products (Saito et al. 2001), and this process also influenced the internal transformation of local-scale production. The transformation forced part-time farmers, whose primary income is from sources other than farming, and small-scale full-time farmers, who have limited landownership but still rely upon income from farming, to convert their operation to more profitable commodities or abandon farming. It is still important to examine small farms, however, not only because they hold the majority of the nation's farm population, but also because they ceased to be competitive with large farms and yet have a significant role in maintaining production at spatially limited scales. Their role has become critical to re-defining a smaller scale of food production and consumption at the "local" or "community" level (National Commission on Small Farms 1998; Lapping 2004).

Over all, when summarizing the process of post-World War II economic development in the United States, the modernization and expansion of agriculture paralleled that of industry. In fact, as a result of rapid increases in agricultural productivity and capital investment, migration from rural areas to urban areas increased. Agricultural production developed rapidly while the number of farms and farm population decreased substantially. Unable to compete with high production farms, smaller family-based farms dropped out of competition. This process tested the limits of Thomas Jefferson's agrarian ideals. As agriculture became more industrialized, the quantity and efficiency of production concentrated in the most fertile and productive lands. These changes narrowed farm trajectories: ironically fewer and fewer farms became larger and more productive, especially those worked by a full-time farmer. On the other hand, those who could not rely on farm income because of small size and low profitability started to take more

non-farm work, thereby keeping their farms as small scale, part-time operations.

This national-level context is interesting to compare to an area that remained far apart from agricultural expansionism for many decades. In Kentucky, since the 1790s, tobacco was a significant component of farm production. In addition to several acres of grain and a few hogs and chickens, farmers raised tobacco as a valuable cash crop. Reliance on tobacco expanded by the 1860s after major corn production shifted northward to the Midwestern corn belt states (Cochrane 1994). After the tobacco price support program was launched during the New Deal in the 1930s, the role of tobacco in Kentucky's agriculture became more important. The federal price support program set the rights to cultivate tobacco and allocated or controlled the quantity that each grower could grow (quotas), thereby offering a stable income to growers as an economic "safety-net" and simultaneously controlling overproduction. Because the price support program set a fixed price on controlled commodities produced and brought to sale, the program assured that farm produce would be sold at an adequate price that provided sufficient income. Thus, farmers who relied on tobacco production were placed in different circumstances from mainstream agriculture in the United States that constantly faced competition and change in the global market. When the quota was reduced to much lower numbers in the late 1990s and federal price support was eventually abolished as a form of buyout in 2004, it was obvious that Kentucky's agriculture had to restructure substantially. The question was *how* and *what* to restructure.

What is unique about agriculture in Kentucky, compared with the history of agricultural development in the United States, is that the size and scale of the average farm was too small to be competitive with the major traditional crop production areas of

the Midwestern grain producers or ranches in the Great Plains. The federal price support system ensured tobacco producers' income, and as long as they followed quota restrictions, they did not have to worry about market prices. On the other hand, because the federal program limited the quantity of tobacco they could grow, there was less need to increase management efficiency through increasing farm size or mechanization.

Kentucky's agriculture, in general terms, can be divided into five producing areas according to differences in physical environment (Raitz 1998): 1) the Jackson Purchase, west of the Tennessee River, constituted of alluvial floodplains of the Mississippi River which is largely a grain and industrial poultry producing area; 2) a southern extension of the Corn Belt in western part of the state, which corresponds to the Ohio River counties of the Western Coalfield; 3) the Pennyroyal region of western Kentucky which is constituted largely of limestone (Sauer 1927); 4) the burley belt and mixed livestock and horticultural production in the greater Bluegrass region of central Kentucky; and 5) the Appalachian Coalfield where steep hills and lower soil quality makes difficult to operate large scale commercial farms. The development and scale of tobacco and non-tobacco agricultural production progressed differently in each region; hence the impact of tobacco production and post-tobacco agricultural restructuring varied accordingly.

When the future of agriculture had to be considered without a tobacco price support program, there were several options: continue to raise the same traditional crops (including tobacco) under a free market system (productionist approach), shift the focus of production to both traditional and non-traditional products from the past (diversification approach), or simply quit farming as a source of income. Even though the number of farms has declined substantially over the past five decades, Kentucky still had

nearly 47,000 farms in 1997 (USDA 2004) that relied on tobacco. The choice of options is up to each producer, but one thing that became evident for non-traditional agricultural production was the need of clear and reliable markets for which they produce. Unlike tobacco which only required producers to send quality leaf to the auction warehouse, other commodities require producers to find a market. Furthermore, since few Kentucky tobacco farms were large enough to increase their income by increasing the scale of production, they had to increase the value of what they produced. Changing the type of crop produced did not mean that farm income was guaranteed.

Meanwhile, societal focus on, and interest in, food in general has been increasing dramatically (Schlosser 2001). Factors such as concerns about health and nutrition, increasing cost of food products and processed foods, and the quality of food products have influenced consumers' views of their food supply (Adkins and Bowler 2001; Klonsky 2000; Mansfield 2003; Schlosser 2001; Winter 2003). This process has brought the food concerns of consumers to the fore, and now their voices and demands are much more influential than they were a few decades ago. Some of these concerns are linked to what I refer to as "local food."

It was in this transition period that "local" food started to attract attention in Kentucky—local farmers, local stores, locally grown, local communities, local food, local markets. Various researchers and community leaders advocated the importance of "local" for reasons such as economic support, quality, affordability, accountability, reducing environmental stress, sustainability, equity and equality, social justice, and more. But there were two questions that were not seriously considered: first, what is "local", and second, how does this concept of "local" impact and shape the bigger picture of

post-tobacco Kentucky agricultural restructuring?

There are two distinguishing characteristics of “local food” compared with other food products such as “imported food.” First, locally produced food products are likely to be (or thought to be) fresher and superior in quality than food products that are stored, processed, shipped long distances, and then distributed and sold in grocery retail chains. Second, and more importantly, while the origins of food products sold by grocery retail chains tend to be unknown and the producers anonymous to the majority of consumers, locally produced food products are much more visible in terms of where they were produced and who produced them. The consumption of local products combines with the notion of “local economy support,” which encourages and protects local farmers and producers. While contemporary American corporate-style agriculture and retailing is increasing its influences at various scales, the protection of local food producers and their interaction with customers will be significant issues when working toward supporting a long-term, small-scale food supply and agriculture. Moreover, “local” food brings additional attention to the site of production and/or processing. In other words, when geographical scale is emphasized, locally produced food becomes embedded in or associated with the identity of the place of production. Compared with imported products such as “made in Mexico” or “Canadian maple syrup,” consumers can easily become familiar with local products and producers, and producers can take advantage of this local place association by selling products as “local.”

The idea of “local” scale in food production, however, requires critical examination. First, “local” does not specify whether it is the site where the raw food product is produced, or the site where it is processed or prepared for home or commercial

consumption. I will term the latter as “cuisine.” Second, theoretically, local can be defined by the relative position of producers and consumers; or it can be fixed in quantitative values of distance, density, and economies of land rent; or in terms of socially-linked groups and individuals in proximal space. In general, however, consumers associate geographical scale with the particular name of a community, city or town, county, or state. Some consider “local” as the space within a state boundary. This can be interpreted as macro-local. On the other hand, others consider “local” as the county of the producers or consumers’ residence and within a community. This can be interpreted as micro-local. Furthermore, some food products are considered “local” based on the specific places where they are processed, even though in some cases the food products do not necessarily originate at that place (Hodgson and Bruhn 1992). In short, compared with a city or state where a boundary is clearly delineated, “local” is a socially constructed but also highly mobilized scale that ranges from macro to micro space (Smith 1993). Therefore what “local” means will vary from person to person and place to place. With the rise of food quality awareness among consumers, it is important for everyone to not only understand the site of production and processing, but also the relation of mobilized spatial scale between production, distribution, and consumption of “local” food.

With the change of governmental policies that ensured production for many decades, traditional tobacco producers are in a struggle for economic survival. Unlike vegetable or fruit production, domestic consumption of tobacco products is decreasing rapidly, and producers are facing the need to convert to other products. The state of Kentucky, the second largest tobacco producer in the United States, searches for alternatives by

focusing on the integration of production and consumption of food products “locally.” For example, the Community Farm Alliance, the grassroots non-profit organizations in Kentucky, advocated for “Locally Integrated Food Economies (LIFE)” and demanded that state agricultural leaders establish stronger relationships between production and consumption of food products within a “local” scale (Community Food Alliance 2003). This issue needs further critical examination of “local,” however, because while there is already a handful of popular “local foods” produced in Kentucky, the scope of “local food” remains unclear. Furthermore, if new agricultural practices are pursued in place by small-scale farmers who emphasize that their production and consumption is based on the appeal of the “local” to consumers, their strategic adoption of localism in food production requires careful consideration of geographical contexts and the relationship between place and scale, and production and consumption.

Therefore, this study examines how the concept and discourse of “local” are being produced, consumed, and reproduced through recent agricultural restructuring and food supply in Kentucky. My dissertation primarily focuses on “local food” because the “local” is the more critical component of non-traditional agricultural commodities, most of which are food products, and by focusing on food the “local” is also reshaped in variety of ways. “Local food” became not simply a material object, but also a concept and a discursive commodity embedded in the food system, including several interlinked processes such as production, storage, distribution, marketing, consumption, and disposal. In this dissertation I use the term “localism” to describe the condition in which producers and consumers prefer “local” scale production and consumption over a larger scale such as “national” or “global.” I define “localism” as a discourse-driven “local” preference and

distinguish it from “localization,” the term that refers to the processes and activities that are “‘grounded’ in specific places” (Dicken 2000). I use the term “localism” to explain philosophical and discursive tendencies that prioritize (both critically and uncritically) the role of the “local.” Unlike “slow food” (Pettrini 2001) or other local food movements, Kentucky’s food localism came into practice in conjunction with tobacco-based agricultural restructuring. This study, therefore, examines the localism of food and agriculture in Kentucky that emerged with the agricultural transformation in former tobacco production areas.

3) Research Questions

Given the complexity of the issues, research questions for this dissertation concern the social, economic, and political relationships that link the localism of agricultural production and food consumption. To begin, I raise two primary epistemological research questions: First, how has the concept and discourse of “local food” been constructed in Kentucky within the context of post-tobacco restructuring? Second, how has Kentucky’s local food movement shaped or modified the landscapes most affected by the state’s post-tobacco agricultural restructuring? (See Figure 1.1, Table 1.1)

These two questions may seem similar, but each represents a substantially different perspective. The first question addresses the understanding of “local food” as not only a material consumable commodity but also a discursive notion that emerged in a specific political and economic context that is different from that in other states in the United States. The second question explains the larger scheme of Kentucky’s agricultural restructuring not just in terms of the “decline of tobacco which is then replaced by

something else,” but also the driving force that led to the transformation of cash-crop dependent economies.

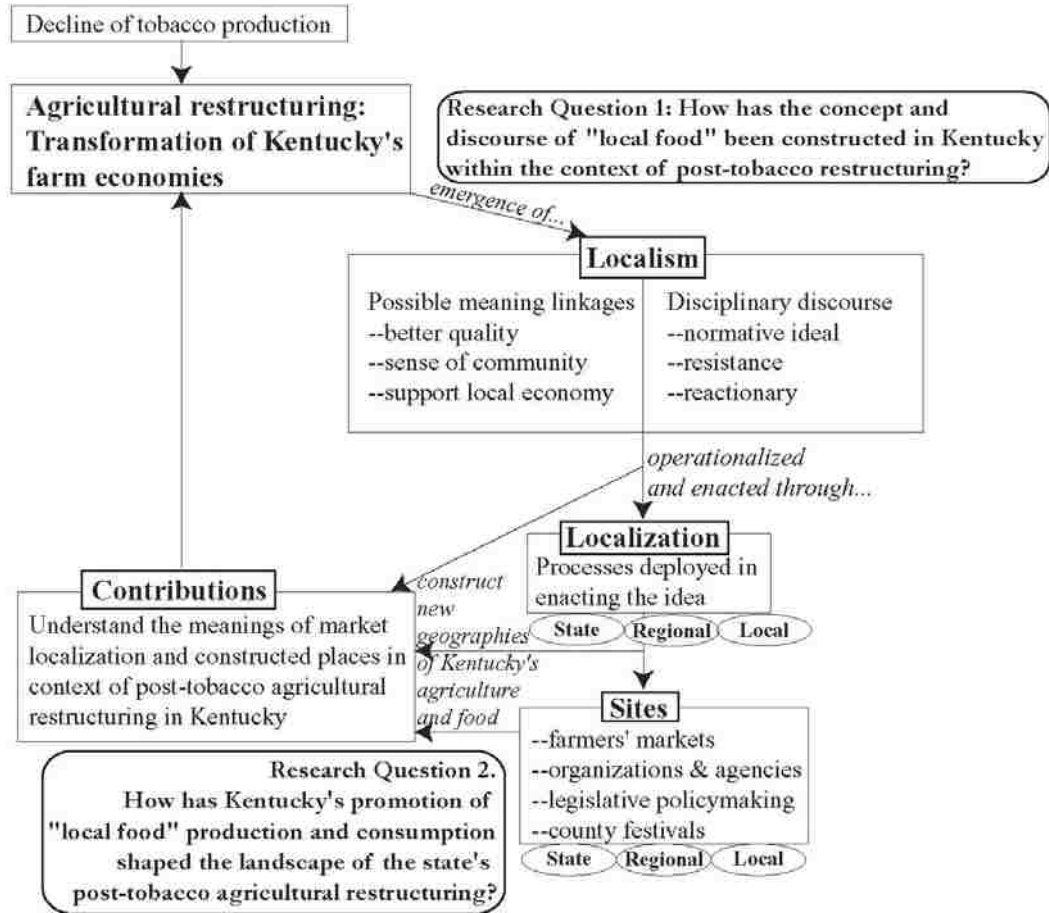


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework.

Table 1.1. Framework of Study Research Questions.

Research questions

1. How has the concept and discourse of "local food" been constructed in Kentucky within the context of post-tobacco restructuring?
2. How has Kentucky's promotion of "local food" production and consumption shaped the landscape of the state's post-tobacco agricultural restructuring?

Epistemological Issues		
	"local" as a scale	Food as "local"
What: Clarify what is being commodified as 'local' food	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does "local" mean in the context of Kentucky's agricultural development? → Ch. 3, 4, 5 2. What kind of relationships do producers and consumers build? How are new identities constructed through emerging food localism? → Ch. 4, 5, 6 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are food commodities different from agricultural products such as Kentucky-grown tobacco? → Ch. 3, 4 2. How does "local food" challenge the dominance of the corporate agro-food system in Kentucky? → Ch. 3, 4, 5
Where: Analyze how and where the construction of localism becomes associated with the sites of production, the sites of marketing, or the sites of consumption	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where is "local" with regard to agricultural products? → Ch. 5 2. How does the meaning of "local" become mobilized and/or fixed within places under agrifood commodity chains and global neoliberalism? → Ch. 3, 4 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At what places do foods gain "local" status: site of production, consumption, and marketing? → Ch. 5
Who: Identify who develops, produces, and commodifies localized foods and the "local" scale through their "local" food products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who defines "local"? → Ch. 4, 5 2. Do consumers initiate a demand for localism? Do producers initiate the process by creating images of the local? Or do other actors construct localism strategically? → Ch. 4, 5, 6 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is involved in constructing, producing, and consuming "local food"? → Ch. 4, 5, 6 2. Who benefits from food localism in Kentucky? → Ch. 3, 4 3. Who has and who does not have access to "local food"? → Ch. 5
How: Explain how places become commoditized and spatial identities are attached through agrifood products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the concept of "local" developed in Kentucky's agricultural restructuring? → Ch. 3, 4 2. How has localism functioned to form a new phase of agricultural production in Kentucky? → Ch. 4 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do producers and/or consumers' identities commodify places within the context of "local food" and/or specific products? → Ch. 5, 6 2. How has "local food" been constructed? → Ch. 4, 5

This perspective leads to secondary and more ontological research questions. My secondary questions seek to identify the major actors; the spaces and material objects that localism creates through scale manipulation, and the impacts that contribute to the

construction of localism. How localism is manifested will likely vary across different products and spaces, because each possesses its own circumstances and each was influenced differently by post-tobacco restructuring. Influential circumstances and factors include: types of products (i.e., raw, processed, vegetable, fruit, meat); conditions of locale (physical environment, small-farm community, access to urban markets, dependency on tobacco income, dominance of large retail chains); and major actors who construct circumstances (i.e., farmers, agricultural extension services, farm organizations, policy makers, state officials, media, community groups, and consumers) (see Table 1.1).

I argue that the concept of “local food” is based in complex and abstract social relations that are deployed in the process of agricultural restructuring. The research questions concern several dimensions of social relations that constitute the concept and materialized discourse of “local food.” This study addresses a further understanding of the localism trends found in Kentucky and provide a broader context for theorizing the transformation of traditional agricultural geography to a “Geography of Food” (Bowler and Ilbery 1987).

4) Chapter Structures

Chapter Two reviews the theoretical and empirical context of American agricultural change over the past six decades. American agriculture has undergone enormous change and adjustment during this period, but not without negative consequences. I will briefly review those changes that provide context for Kentucky’s case in later chapters. I will also review how recent works on food and agriculture in geography and other disciplines has influenced changes in research foci such as production, consumption, and marketing.

Chapter Three traces historical changes in declines of Kentucky's tobacco production within a political economy context. In general, the decline of Kentucky's tobacco production is understood as an outcome of the national anti-tobacco movement in the 1990s. I reject this common assumption by explaining the multi-scalar processes that occurred, especially 1) A global neoliberal political environment that forced uncompetitive American tobacco from international markets and 2) increased the proportion of part-time farmers that led local tobacco farms to cope with labor shortages and their shortfalls in meeting production demands. This chapter is critically important to this dissertation because it addresses the context of *how* and *why* Kentucky farmer's economies began to shift to localized agricultural production and food supply.

To address these questions, I conducted a content analysis (Rose 2001) of Kentucky state government documents, published magazine articles, and newspapers for the 1990 to 2006 period. In particular, I examined four major newspapers in Kentucky, *The Kentucky Post*, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*, as well as *Farmer's Pride*, the only independent farm paper published in Kentucky. The goal of this analysis was to trace debates between anti-tobacco groups (mostly national-level, but also including health advocates at the state-level) and pro-tobacco groups (American tobacco companies and farm organizations in tobacco producing states), and to examine the processes of Kentucky's agricultural restructuring from historical and geographical perspectives. *The Lexington Herald-Leader* covers the Inner Bluegrass and the central and eastern parts of the state. *The Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer* covers Owensboro and western part of the state. *The Kentucky Post* serves northern Kentucky and the *Louisville Courier-Journal* fills the area

between *the Lexington Herald-Leader* and *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer* (Ulack, Raitz and Pauer 1997). In addition, *Farmer's Pride*, a weekly paper (bi-weekly since July 2003) published at Columbia, Kentucky, since 1989, covers a broad area of the state. *Farmer's Pride* readership extends statewide and into surrounding states. The paper carries frequent essays by various contributing individuals and agencies including the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and farm-related groups such as the Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB), the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA), and the Community Farm Alliance (CFA).

The discourse on agricultural production and local food changed dramatically beginning at the same time, although the public discussion is only lightly documented and not yet critically examined. My analysis of published documents was supplemented by data from semi-structured interviews with persons who were central to the tobacco debates in Kentucky. Key interviewees included former state administrators in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), and former leaders of farm organizations such as the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) and Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB). Questions put to these individuals focused upon their role in transforming Kentucky's agricultural production, and their strategies in negotiating with anti-tobacco groups at the state and the federal levels. This conversation led me to examine processes that resulted in successful (and unsuccessful) experiences in directing the promotion of localism of food and agriculture. I will discuss this in-depth in Chapter Four. In addition to a review of published documents and interviews, I followed the transition of Kentucky's agriculture by examining how production patterns have changed over the years through an analysis of commodity combination systems. In his classic

study, Weaver (1953) applied quantitative analysis to the ratio of county-level planted acres as tabulated by the Census of Agriculture to identify the commodity crops that dominated each county's agricultural production. By mapping the changes of commodity combinations for the years 1987, 1992, 1997, and 2002, I adapted Weaver's method to illustrate and to analyze how combinations of major agricultural commodities have changed and how these changes have taken place spatially and temporally.

Chapter Four illustrates the process of constructing food localism by examining how the discourse about "local food," part of the state's overall agricultural diversification strategy, emerged and developed in Kentucky's agricultural and sociopolitical context especially after the mid-1990s. This analysis will suggest *how* "local food" was constructed discursively, and *what* food products were marketed *where* and *by whom* in Kentucky. Here again I conducted document analysis and interviews to address these questions. Interviewees included former state administrators in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA); personnel in non-profit organizations such as Partners for Family Farms, Community Farm Alliance, and Heifer International; farm organizations such as the Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) and the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA); and wholesale auction organizers, extension agents, along with several others. Questions put to these individuals focused upon their role and thoughts in transforming Kentucky's agricultural production, and their successful (and unsuccessful) experiences in directing the promotion of localism of food and agriculture.

In addition to printed documents mentioned earlier, I paid special attention to changes in funding approved by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (ADB), which was a crucial group in making decisions for allocating the large volume of capital that

originated from the Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies after the state legislature passed House Bill 611 in 2000. This capital investment became crucial to producers and farm organizations who were working through post-tobacco restructuring in several ways: assisting in innovating new forms of agricultural production; enhancing current production to be more competitive and efficient; and expanding opportunities to market agrifood products. Among these, increasing and developing market venues for state-grown products were the most important changes for Kentucky agriculture. Adopting the concept of “local food” was essential to these processes. The adoption of “local food” meant increasing ties or links between producers and consumers, and utilizing information technology to provide the intermediate connections between them. To establish such connections, various Kentucky organizations worked to promote state-grown food products, and in 2004 launched the logo termed “Kentucky Proud” to identify such products. I will establish where producers that sell “Kentucky Proud” products are distributed, in what categorical groups and commodities, and whether these products reflect the trends relating to “local food” in Kentucky. Supplemental interviews were conducted with those in farm organizations who were part of the “branding” and marketing processes. I will interpret the conceptual connection between producers and consumers by examining the meaning of “Kentucky Proud.” Specifically, I am concerned with the following questions:

- What kind of information and products are being advertised, marketed, and sold to promote state-grown food products?
- Where do these products come from, and where are they sold?
- To what degree, and how, did the “Kentucky Proud” campaign become

embraced by the state's populace such that they were aware of food localism?

- Can a place name (such as Lebanon, Casey County, or Kentucky) suggest superior food product quality, or do place names conflate local identity and perceived product value?

By analyzing the connections between producers, market people, consumers, and processors, this research will establish how key people deal with long-term development plans for localized food production. I will also provide information on Kentucky's food localism producers and speculate about its future.

Chapter Five examines the politics of negotiating definitions of "local food" at farmers' markets (Hinrichs 2000; Brown 2001) which, I argue, are constructed spaces where localism is produced and reproduced not only by vendors (growers, resellers, bakers, and microprocessors), but also by market managers, market board members, and finally consumers. A case study will focus upon the farmers' market in Owensboro, the third largest city in the state which is located along the Ohio River in western Kentucky. After illustrating the historical debates and recent increases in the number of farmers' markets in Kentucky the case study will analyze the relationships between market function and economics in a spatio-temporal context through a detailed participant observation method. Among various forms of information collected, the study will focus on:

- increase of the number of direct sales venues and their growth based on census data;
- dynamics of farmers' markets and changes in seasonal products offered;

- influence of and connection with tobacco farming;
- politics of vendors (between growers and resellers, within growers, newcomers and veterans, and many more); and
- relationship between vendors' labor needs, household structure, gender, work status, products that they produce, and sales.

The study is based on several methods: participant observation (Jackson 1983; Libby 2002) of dialogues between vendors as well as vendors and consumers; a semiotic analysis of products and signs of place origins which are individually displayed by vendors (Javis et al. 2002; Hodgson and Bruhn 1992); and an analysis of published documents. The focus here is on how places and scales are represented in the sale of food products by observing products themselves and the signs on display that link product and place. Specifically, I will address the following questions:

- How and where is “local” defined by vendors and consumers?
- Does localism change by types of products that vendors sell and consumers purchase?
- Is localism a marketing strategy created by producers, or demand arising from consumers?
- Does a place name associated with a product express superior quality, or do signs expressing “localness” add perceived value to a product?
- What are the successes or advantages and deficits or limits of food localism at a farmers' market?

These questions represent key ideas in understanding the politics, management, success and struggles, and future potential of farmers' markets, and may suggest meanings and

roles of place-specific food localism practices in Kentucky's future agrifood supply.

Chapter Six focuses on specific examples of food products that represent the qualities associated with being "local" through their site of production or consumption. To do so, I will examine the role of agriculture and food-related tourism in Kentucky, with special attention paid to various food-themed county festivals, which I consider as the implementation of the promotion of "local food consumption" by a potential purveyor of locally grown products by local consumers. The range of cases here is reflected in changes that have taken place in agricultural festivals in Kentucky and how the idea of "local" is differently produced, reproduced, and consumed by degrees in celebrating foods as cultural icons. Analyzing documents and making observations at various festivals that include informal conversations with vendors will establish how these activities relate to the construction of localism (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Berg and Mansvelt 2000). This chapter, then, asks two questions:

- How are place identities being constructed and commodified by selling and buying food products at festivals?
- What roles do agricultural and food products play in the maintaining of relationships between festival organizers and local communities?

I will examine food-related festivals in Kentucky by focusing on the relationship between themed-products and the location of actual producers that sell them, the commodities or themes that are favored for festival promotion, and whether these products and county festivals reflect trends relating to promoting "local food" in Kentucky.

Chapter Seven is a synthesis discussion and concluding chapter. Building upon the

analysis of agricultural restructuring and “food localism”, I will summarize this dissertation’s findings and make an argument about what is important and what is lacking as topics for ongoing research. Next, I point out several insights gained through this work that may be useful for future research, and offer three explanatory factors that are potentially important for the future of Kentucky’s agrifood localism: credibility and transparency; labor supply strategy; and community food security. I will then list several shortcomings of this work and additional questions that should be addressed in future research. A brief personal reflection will conclude this dissertation.

I shall clarify two things at this point. First, this dissertation is not intended to make direct policy recommendations to government agencies and other institutions. Important and worthwhile issues will be addressed, and some ideas may be useful to some readers, but it is not my goal to recommend policy. Rather, it is my hope that this dissertation will be a reflexive resource to assist in understanding “place” in Kentucky—spaces that people interact with and negotiate in the process of “becoming” (Schein 1997)—through agriculture and food.

Second, the author’s positionality must be understood reflexively as this dissertation is a work completed by a non-American student. Just as many colleagues conduct research at overseas locations for their dissertations, this study represents research conducted in the United States by a student who looks at this work as part of an international research experience. Therefore, what may seem obvious to American citizens may not be as clear to an outsider and not interpreted in the same way. Sheila Hones, an American Studies scholar of European origin who works in Asia, discusses the difficulty that representations create in the interpretation of her positionality at the

International Critical Geography Conference (Hones 2004). While teaching in English at a university in Japan as an American Studies scholar, she acknowledges the troubling relationship between the Anglophone hegemony in which she is being positioned based on nationality, and her daily struggle with Japanese. Likewise, throughout this study I often found myself in the unique position of being an international student and conducting research in the United States that has nothing whatsoever to do with my nationality. Hence, I consider this study a monograph and a contribution not only to the discipline of American geography, but also for scholars in Geography and American Studies in Japan and other non-American countries who have an interest in agriculture, food, and the places of Kentucky and the United States.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background and Literature Review

1) A Summary of the Transformation of American Agriculture: From the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Century

For European migrants who settled and established new lives in the United States, agriculture was at once a rationale for migration and a fundamental entry point to participation in the nation's economy. Thomas Jefferson believed that small family farms were an essential component to the formation of the new American state. Given the abundant land that attracted thousands of immigrants, Jefferson insisted that the lands should be divided and distributed to small farmers equally (Cochrane 1994). After achieving Independence in the eighteenth century, westward expansion followed the frontier leading to a governmental pronouncement that the frontier was closed by the end of nineteenth century. During America's inaugural century (1776-1890) agriculture and rural life was a common experience for settlers and immigrants.

American agriculture began a radical departure from the Jeffersonian ideal during the twentieth century, especially after World War II. As agriculture industrialized in the first three decades of the twentieth century, thousands of farm families abandoned or sold their lands, and tenants and sharecroppers quit farm operations. Farmers with access to capital and land stayed, invested in, and expanded operations, thereby increasing their farm size, scale of production, and their output. With the increasing use of manufactured inputs (agricultural chemicals, fossil fuels, machines, etc), the human labor requirements on many American farms have declined substantially while both labor and land productivity have increased dramatically, creating a cost barrier to entry into farming by future would-be farmers (Penson Jr, Capps Jr, and Rosson III 2002).

Growth of American agriculture and the food supply after World War II was accomplished through a number of changes. These include

- the enlargement of cropland acreage (Smith 1980; Hudson 1994; Hart 2003),
- additional inputs of capital (Fitzsimmons 1986; Page and Walker 1991; Roberts 1996; Boyd and Watts 1997; Zabin 1997; Martin 2003),
- mechanization (Aiken 1978; Hart 1978; Gardner 2002),
- transportation (Harris 1954; Cochrane 1993; Vance 1995),
- and development of chemicals and biotechnology (Kloppenborg 1988; Goodman and Redclift 1991; Ransom et al. 1998).

Above all, farm-level and corporate capital investments have played an increasingly important role in production increases (Smith 1980; Goodman and Watts 1997; Hurt 2001). Furthermore, agribusinesses—many of them transnational—have lobbied for neoliberal trade policies and financial investments. They have made every effort to market their produce and dominate their industry nationwide and beyond. Agribusiness policy has created extreme agricultural industrialization, leading to the establishment of governmental compensation programs through stabilizing controls and subsidies, and thereby enabling farmers to maintain or further develop ongoing production systems. Thus, the capacity of American agricultural production to meet human food consumption demand has been transformed from a national scale to a global scale.

Corporate agribusiness policies have favored large-scale production and have controlled various dimensions of food commodity chains such as distribution, storage, processing, marketing, advertising, and retailing (Wallace 1985; Pillsbury and Florin 1996; Hart 2003). Increasingly grains produced in the United States are consumed by

livestock such as cattle, pigs, and poultry, leading commodity producers to exert greater influence on production and consumption of meat products (Millstone and Lang 2003). Such mass production and mass consumption, in turn, have brought various negative consequences: competition among producers at the scale of production, a growing commodity surplus and low market price, and concerns for environmental impact through topsoil erosion, chemical component runoffs, and excessive manure production (Nihei et al. 2000; Millstone and Lang 2003).

In this process, smaller, inefficient farms were eliminated as industrialization and governmental policy favored mechanization and capital investment. From a labor productivity perspective, the transformation has increased the number of part-time farmers, whose primary income is from sources other than farming. Furthermore, small-scale full-time farmers, whose landownership is limited, nevertheless rely on farm income to continue farming, while being marginalized and forced to convert their operations to more profitable commodities or abandon operations. Because prices for major commodity crops such as corn, wheat, soybeans and cotton have remained low for many decades in spite of increasing production costs and consumer goods varieties, the ways to increase profits from farming have been limited to a very few options.

Gladwin and Zulaluf (1989) pointed out that the disappearance of mid-size farms in the United States is creating an increase in the part-time farming sector, meaning that dependence upon off-farm work is increasing. From a somewhat different perspective, Hart (1992) pointed out that the decline in the a number of American farms continued partly because of an inadequate or inappropriate definition of farms, and inclusion of a substantial number of what he called nonfarm farms—“a variety of undersized, part-time,

low-income, weekend, retirement, and hobby operations that, even in the loosest sense, cannot be considered authentic agricultural enterprises” (Hart 1992: 166). He provided the following four indicators as a measure of nonfarm farms and compared their distribution in the United States: farms that had less than fifty acres of land; farms that sold less than \$5,000 worth of farm products; principal farm operators who worked off-farm for one hundred days or more; and principal farm operators that admitted that farming was not their principal occupation.¹ Based upon these criteria, he found that each type of nonfarm farm in the above category had a particular spatial concentration because of their agricultural practices and the influence of nearby large cities. While Hart denies the possibility of these farms’ contribution to the country’s ability to feed and clothe its residents compared with larger farms, it is interesting to point out that he acknowledges that the relatively slower decline of such nonfarm farms over the decades “hint that nonfarm farming associated with off-farm employment has become an accepted way of life” (Hart 1992: 179).

If the number of small farms persists, what are those farmers doing? What are they producing? If traditional small-scale farming is to continue, producers must either increase their acreage of production or produce higher-valued commodities for a high demand market to establish and maintain an acceptable income. Therefore, many

¹ While the methodology of this research seems somewhat non-critical, I consider Hart’s (1992) work as potentially interesting because it examines changes in American agriculture and food production in comparative spatio-temporal perspectives. The current outlook on American agriculture continues to expand the dichotomy between commodity growers (or productionist farmers) and nonfarm farmers, but the latter cannot be ignored in the context of food localization and strengthening community food security. Furthermore, as Cross (2006) points out, small scale producers such as Amish dairy farms are becoming significant in such a way that their numbers and food supplies to localized markets cannot be ignored. In order to understand national trends of small farm characteristics, Hart’s (1992) quantitative mapping does provide valuable insights.

small-scale farmers have begun to distinguish themselves from larger corporate farms in various ways. They have created their own markets by selling high-quality products. There are three important questions that pertain here, however: What kind of market exists for producers? How do producers create their markets? How do producers construct “high-quality” products to meet market demand? One could assume that these farmers would choose to deal directly with consumers, but this scheme needs a more critical examination.

As American agribusinesses have expanded their domination over the methods of food supply, their influence has extended to the transnational and global scale. Such globalization of food has impacted the current American food system both positively and negatively. While off-season fresh produce and aesthetic food products (such as tropical fruits, seafood, and specialty meats) have become more accessible despite the location and time of year (Cook 1994, Friedland 1994), many negative aspects of food globalization are apparent. First, increasing availability of world food products also has meant that shipping processes simultaneously have expanded food mileage, meaning that more and more food must be transported over greater distances. Second, while increasing availability of particular food products has been beneficial in terms of overcoming the time-space frictions for consumption, it also has been accompanied by a loss of the sense of seasonality for growing and consuming products. Considering this point more critically, global food product availability has blinded consumers to cheap labor—much of which is often provided by women, children, and migrants—and exploitative practices eventually adopted by the food industry and large agricultural organizations. These same conditions have led some consumers to advocate for fair trade and ethical trade. Third, increasing

global food product availability has brought homogenization not only of food consumption patterns (such as patronizing fast food chains, less home cooking and more dining out, consuming pre-processed food adjusted to everyday work schedules), but also in terms of materials consumed (frozen food, processed food, ethnic cuisine, and many more). Furthermore, the increasing cost of some food products has created various social inequalities; divisions between cheap food and expensive food have limited people's access to quality food based upon income and accessibility. Social scientists and nutritionists are increasingly aware of the emergence of a food desert in various spatial settings (urban ghettos, remote rural villages, communities that consist of those who are less-mobile or elderly (Wrigley 2002)). On the other hand, those who have been able to afford the intake of calorie-rich foods face obesity problems. Guthman and DuPuis (2006) bring up suggestive discussion by critiquing one-dimensional approaches to obesity studies and arguing instead that obesity is an embodied form of global neoliberalism, in which industries produce a greater variety of food products and marketing strategies encourage consumers to eat more food.

2) Shifting Disciplines and Emerging “Agrifood” Studies

Historically, American geographers have focused their studies of agriculture on production (Harris 1957; Whatmore 2002). Many geographical studies have examined the formation of agricultural regions by explaining how they were formed, developed, and maintained, with reference to physical conditions, and based upon methodologies that focused upon mapping information from archives, censuses, and field research (Baker 1921; Hart and Mather 1961; Hart 1968).

The term “agricultural region” (Baker 1926, 1927a, 1927b, 1927c, 1929; Durand

1939, 1940, 1946, 1947; Durand and Bird 1950; Kollmorgen 1941; Prunty 1951), was a central concern of geographers in the first half of the twentieth century. The study of food and agriculture were not often separated, but took similar patterns in disciplinary history. The term “agricultural regions,” however, referred solely to the “site” of production, and seldom examined larger issues such as linkages with other agribusinesses or the basis of agricultural product consumption. Reflecting general disciplinary trends, research on the geographies of food and agriculture were based heavily on pattern description. Methods that included mapping, archival analysis, and interviews were used to narrate stories of food and agricultural location. The rural population still made up a significant proportion of American society, and understanding how people lived in certain commodity production areas through detailed mapping and description attracted geographers’ interests.

To some extent, selected agricultural regions (e.g. the Corn Belt, Dairy Belt, or Cotton Belt) that geographers examined in the first half of the twentieth century are still present (Prunty and Aiken 1972; Pillsbury and Florin 1996), but the concept of the agricultural region requires refinement through acknowledging the multiple economic, social, and political dimensions that agribusiness exhibits. This type of analysis will yield more useful understandings of modern agricultural production systems and those systems that link production to consumers. In addition to analyzing the geography of agriculture and food based upon delimiting agricultural regions, examination of “local” processes of food production and consumption will refine our understanding of the role that agribusinesses play in food production as well as provide a greater awareness of how agribusiness influences societies and communities.

Many previous studies on agriculture and food in geography were concerned with issues of production by examining specific crop production systems (Durand 1942, 1955, 1964, 1967; Prunty 1950; Johnson 1957; Lord 1971; Raitz and Mather 1971; Hart 1977; Aiken 1978, 1998; Hart and Chestang 1996; Algeo 1997), land use patterns (Baker 1923; Prunty 1952; Hart 1968, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1986; Harvey 1966), and their relationships (Hart 1972; Mather 1972). Although the transformation of the rural countryside and its attendant material landscape has been extensively reviewed (e.g., Durand 1943; Mather and Hart 1954; Prunty 1955; Gregor 1965, 1969; Hart 1991b, 1998; Hudson 1992), few researchers have investigated the complex connections between production, consumption, rural economy, and rural social change. Part of this disparity comes out of the paradigm wherein geographical studies on agriculture and food focused their ontological perspective on questions of productivity and distribution. Not until after the ‘cultural-turn’ in the 1980s and 90s did geographers begin to extend their questions into areas that required critical analysis. Holloway and Kneafsey (2004) point out that the ‘cultural turn’ within rural studies was generated with “a shift from a concern with the material world towards an interest in including consideration of the immaterial dimensions of social life.” It is important to integrate a critical perspective, because recent changes in American rural societies cannot be explained only by agricultural production. For example, to understand the beef cattle industry in Kansas, examining commodity chains of beef from ranchers to feedlots to processing plants to consumers became much more meaningful than mapping the number of beef cattle and the distribution of feedlots. As agribusinesses assumed greater importance after World War II (Wallace 1985), the studies that focused solely on the space of production became less

useful in understanding how the overall system of agricultural production, processing, and consumption works.

Whatmore (2000) argues that more attention to the wider organization of capital accumulation in the agro-food system and regulatory infrastructure of this system is needed. Watts (2000) also emphasizes the “industrial” aspect of agriculture and claims that American agricultural regions need to be redefined not only in terms of production but also from the standpoint of related industries (also see Fitzsimmons 1986; Friedland 1994). The industrial dimension of agriculture in geography has been further emphasized and strengthened since the 1980s, and focused primarily on political economy approaches (i.e., Wallace 1985; Page 1996). As agribusiness companies developed over the past five decades or so, they moved increasingly toward vertical integration (Saito and Yagasaki 1998; Saito et al. 2001), which had the effect of accumulating control over agricultural products from farm production to processing and distribution. As agribusiness’ influence has become more evident, the study of agriculture in geography has shifted to a political economy approach (Marsden et al.1996; Le Heron and Roche 1996; Buller and Morris 2004). Currently in the United States more research has been published as the result of a similar shift in rural sociology (e.g., Bonnano et al. 1994).

Further concerns reside in the phrase “geography of food” which has various interpretations (Atkins 1988; Crang 2000; Winter 2003a, 2004). To some scholars it is the “geography of where food products are produced” (i.e., Gregor 1957; Jumper 1970; Smith 1980; Hart 1986), as examined by traditional approaches in rural and agricultural geography. To others it is a “geography of where food is consumed” (i.e., Bennett 1941; Shortridge and Shortridge 1983, 1989; de Wit 1992), which relates to regional tastes and

cultures of consumption (Bell and Valentine 1997; Pillsbury 1998; Shortridge and Shortridge 1999, Shortridge 2003). These dichotomies tend to be acknowledged as separate elements, but because both production and consumption of food products involve places, they should be considered as continuous relationships which mobilize at different scales.

While geographers have long focused their interest on patterns, processes, and the formation of food production space (Winsberg 1980; Hart 1991; Pillsbury and Florin 1996) and consumption space (Bell and Valentine 1997; Shortridge and Shortridge 1983, 1989, 1999), their analyses seldom included an examination of how geographical scale relates to understanding a complex food system. While global agribusinesses expend enormous effort to promote the variety of food products globally (Cook 1994), a new emphasis on the importance of the actual sites of food production and integrating them in consumption—exemplified by concepts such as “Slow Food” (Petri 2003)—offer an objection to the separation of food production and consumption from the local scale. In a sense, the local food movement is a form of resistance (Pile 1997) against expanding separations between agricultural production and food consumption at the global scale.

Considering that many small, traditional farms are currently economically marginalized, a critical strategy for small-scale farmers will be to explore how to market their products under the limited conditions of land, climate, labor, and capital (Community Farm Alliance 2003). Applying selective farming methods such as organic farming (Guthman 2003), free range animal husbandry, or direct sales at direct market venues are recent examples of how small farms have begun to alter and maintain their small-scale businesses in successful ways through various political struggles (Hinrichs

2000). These strategies have been largely neglected or overlooked in the discipline of agricultural geography in the United States. Perhaps this is a methodological limitation. Such examinations are necessarily at the micro scale and cannot be retrieved from the census and other standard or published forms of detailed statistical data, but instead require field-acquired information and a more careful and detailed analysis of individual producers' decision-making processes.²

² I would also like to add my personal observation on American geographic studies of agriculture and food from a genealogical perspective. In the first half of the twentieth century, geographers who focused on agricultural issues were some of the leading actors in the discipline. Scholars such as Oliver Baker, Derwent Whittlesey, Walter Kollmgren, and Merle Prunty had highly regarded publication records between the 1920s and 1950s and were frequently cited. They were key contributors to geographic thought. This tradition continued in the mid twentieth century when researchers such as Cotton Mather, Howard Gregor, John Fraser Hart, and Terry Jordan continued to publish work on agricultural and rural geography between the 1950s and 1970s. At this time, however, the discipline was going through a paradigm shift and a methodological change that included the "quantitative revolution" in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by subsequent perspectives in radical, Marxist, and humanistic geography in the 1970s to early 1980s. American agricultural geographers, however, seemed to resist change and continued to publish traditional studies. In my view, this continued until John Fraser Hart took over the editorship of *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (1971-1976) followed by editor John Hudson (1976-1981). Their own published works, and much of the research published in the *Annals* during their terms, were characterized by mapping information and providing description enriched from findings in the "field," but lacked critical views that were based upon theoretically grounded research questions. At the same time, very little, if any, research on agriculture based upon a political economy perspective or critical theory was published in the *Annals* in the 1970s and 1980s. Those who were interested in geographical studies of agriculture and food in the United States were situated in a difficult position, not able to construct his/her own niche between traditional and newer approaches. This situation continued until breakthrough publications by British geographers in the late 1980s and the 1990s were imported and influenced American geography, simultaneously connecting to works by rural sociologists and new Berkeley School students who studied under the direction of Michael Watts.

3) Theorizing Scale and Food: Localization, Localism, and Why Place Matters for Food

Before I discuss what “local” means as an alternative source for quality of food, I shall first briefly trace the theorization of the concept of “alternative.” After the political-economy approach was widely adopted in human geography in the 1980s, the discipline of Geography experienced a so-called ‘cultural turn’ (Cloke 2000), bringing questions of culture into the sub-disciplines. Rural geographers and/or agricultural geographers became keenly interested in the food networks that were both within and outside the mainstream, often characterized in words such as ‘alternative,’ ‘short-supply chain,’ ‘quality,’ and/or ‘local’ (Murdoch et al. 2000). In addition, increasing interest in ‘organic’ food became part of this trend. Whatmore et al. (2003) point out that these new interest foci share “their constitution as/of food markets that redistribute value through the network against the logic of bulk commodity production; that reconvene ‘trust’ between producers and consumers; and that articulate new forms of political association and market governance” (Whatmore et al. 389). Similarly, Holloway and Kneafsey (2004) suggest that the term ‘alternative’ implies two inter-related things: food production-consumption that is “undertaken within an ethical framework contrasting with those networks regarded as ‘conventional’, and spatialities that distinguish the role of ‘alternative networks’ from the conventional. These trends turned to focus on the relationship between production and consumption more critically (Goodman and DuPuis 2002). Goodman (2003) has pointed out the paradigm of the ‘quality turn’ in research on alternative agrifood networks, and he advocates “closer interaction with economic sociology and economic geography” as well as “analytical attention on consumption and

consumers.”

As a geographer, I am concerned with the question of the “local” as the most fundamental yet critical question that must be continually asked; therefore I focus my analysis on the “local” scale and “food.” These two words seem easy to connect, but they must be examined separately. To begin, the idea of “local” scale in food production requires close examination. First, “local” does not specify whether it refers to the site where a raw food product is produced, or the site where it is processed or prepared for home or commercial consumption (Hodgson and Bruhn 1992). For example, depending upon context, the “local apple pie” can be understood as apple pie made of apples grown ‘locally’ or apple pie made at a ‘local’ establishment. Second, people associate “local” with different geographical scales—with a particular community, city or town, county, or even state. Some consider “local” to be the space within a state boundary. Others consider “local” as the county of the producers’ or consumers’ residence, or their home. In short, compared with a city or state where a boundary is more or less clearly delineated, “local” is an epistemological category that is socially constructed and represents a highly mobilized scale that ranges from macro to micro space (Smith 1992; Jones 1998; Marston 2000; Smith 2000). When considering the issue of labeling food as “local,” it is important not only to understand the site of production and processing, but also to consider interactions of mobilized spatial scales between production, distribution, and consumption of “local” food.

Producers and consumers tend to construct food localism differently. From the producers’ point of view, localism is practiced when their products are locally produced or sold. The producers’ intent is to provide credible products to consumers that are

competitively priced, and in the process to also sell an image and create an identity for the commodity that includes the place of production. Thus, the site of production as “local” becomes part of the commodity, and in a sense, place becomes part of the value added to the product.

From the consumers’ point of view, localism is realized when producers (and their products) are local. Because food product marketing and distribution has expanded to a global scale, in developed countries it is not uncommon to have food products available for purchase that have been transported in from national or even international sources (Arce and Marsden 1993; Bonanno et al. 1994). In this context, local food represents a sense of assurance and credibility for consumers when buying products from local individuals or people they know (Enticott 2003). When consumers have a direct relationship with producers, consumers assume that producers are “local” people who reside in or near the place of production. Such assumptions are not necessarily true, however, because some “local producers” may provide products from “non-local” sources through an out-of-state consignment system or direct self-transport. Hence, “local” food perception promotes additional attention to the site of production and/or processing. In either case, it is clear that some type of social relationship between producers and consumers is critical to constructing localism. The term “local food” therefore not only refers to the commodities produced by small-scale farmers in proximate sites, but it also implies that consumers are aware or perceive that locally produced food products are linked to desired qualities.

Significantly, “local food” has become a critical commodity for alternative food production. The emerging emphasis on local food serves as a counterpoint to the

dominance of corporate farming. When questioning the ontological nature of such “local” foods (“What do we know about “local food”?), processes of localization must be examined. Similarly, when asking about the placement of “local” food in epistemological space (“How do we come to know ‘local’ food, and how do we come to know it as good (or bad)”), the discourse of localism must be examined.

The difference between localization and localism lies in stages and processes of movement caused by complex social relations. Localization is a process of enacting the ideal of local and transcending scale, an establishment of social relations within “local.” On the other hand, localism is a discursive ideal that favors local when binary relations of global-local are compared. Localism is a normative ideal, a defense against the influence of domination from homogeneity usually caused by those in economic or social power (Winter 2003; DuPuis and Goodman 2005). Both are often considered a resistance movement or strategy against social/economic/political powers, often associated with globalization.

Localization is a dynamic social process including production and consumption that is spatially structured and deeply embedded in place (Dicken 2000). Dicken suggests that localization facilitates three processes: 1) face-to-face contact; 2) social and cultural interaction; and 3) enhancement of knowledge and innovation. These factors involve questions of how places are constructed and structured with comparison to other larger powers. From the perspective of economic geography, localization is an act of agglomeration, the association of production-related activities that are proximate to each other within specific spatial destinations (Smith 2000). Theoretically, interdependence of the world at various scales contributed to and benefited from exchanging a variety of

materials and ideas, including commodities, information, knowledge, technologies, and financial capital. As this interdependence continued to evolve, gradually shifting towards the construction of a hierarchical structure, however, local conditions (including culture, tradition, economy, and social relations) are increasingly neglected or marginalized. Localization is therefore constructed to form benefits within a locality as a reaction to globalization or a dominant power, but also to preserve, maintain, imagine, and concentrate the identity of local. In short, localization emerges as a counterpoint reaction to how globalization or power is being enforced, emphasizing a resistance to global hegemony (McMichael 1996). The concept of strategic localization suggests that localization must not only seek consistency with the local environment that it relates to production, but also to do so in a way that is consistent with the corporate or state's strategy and operations in other regions of the world (Mair 1997).

On the other hand, localism is an act of favoring local as an object. In other words, both are part of a constructed movement to promote conceptual beliefs that the local scale is better than or preferred to a larger scale such as global or regional. Localism describes trends that emphasize or value what is held in spatially small-scalar activities. This emphasis prefers or stands against large dominating frameworks or units of homogeneity. Localism is not necessarily limited to a geographical context. The Slow Food movement (Miele and Murdoch 2002; Petrini 2003) is a good example, where consumption of food products that are grown and raised in a "local" area is suggested as a favorable action, compared with corporate-directed dominance of fast food consumption. This does not exactly define the location of the local as it interchanges in micro-scale. Rather, localism fosters a consciousness which reflects back to the actuality of place.

Localism is a process of constructing local, in which the many ideas and materials that are produced, shared, and consumed are seen to reside in the local. Hinrichs (2003) warns, however, that construction of scale through localism is never an innocent matter: instead, it frequently involves politics of power and identity relations. Through the case of providing food localism in Iowa, she argues that social relations between production and consumption that are seeking alternative food constructs the localism movement, but their goal and achievement varies significantly between actors in each group. As Swyngedouw (1997; p. 140) argues, “spatial scale is what needs to be understood as something that is produced; a process that is always deeply heterogeneous, conflictual, and contested.”

Theoretically, there are two ways to consider how localism is deployed. The first is “localism as a process,” where localism is produced through negotiation between producers and consumers. Examples include farmers’ markets (Pyle 1971), roadside farm stands, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and sales to restaurants (Hinrichs 2000). Place identity can become associated with superior products by consumers, and producers can take advantage by promoting their products as “local.”

A second form is “manifested localism,” where practices are already established by producers and accepted by consumers. Producers embed geographical scale or the site of production with products that are associated with their localized traditional background or culture, and consumers recognize and practice localism of products through this manifested scale. Examples include California wines, Cajun gumbo, and Wisconsin cheese. Place branding and labeling are critical to these practices. de Wit (1992) examined place-names on food labels and found that California, Texas, Vermont, Oregon,

and Louisiana are the states most often connected with specific food products. He also notes, however, that many processed products, especially from Texas, did not actually originate in the places named on their labels. This means that manifested localism may be manipulated by processors and marketers. Drawing from more than 2,000 responses on a consumer survey, Hunter (1992) suggests that three-quarters of consumers believe that food labels should specify only the site of product origin, and that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should be more concerned with accurate place labeling. This literature suggests that although “food localism” may be practiced with various types of places and scales, when it is practiced as a strategy to promote and adopt “local food” it requires careful attention to the “geography of food,” both in terms of producers’ and consumers’ perspectives.

Because the concept of local is often used to specify activities occurring at various scales (e.g., from community to nation-state), in some cases, the policies introducing localism can increase control of the economy by communities and nation-states (Hines 2000). In some cases, localism is purposely intended to protect and rebuild local economies worldwide (Hines 2000). In that sense, again, localism is used as a normative concept: it manipulates thoughts and customs as they are influenced by globalized cultures and social relations.

Global processes link to particular places, while local places steer global processes, hence global-local dialectics continue to operate (Thrift 2000). Dicken (2000) also argues that globalization should be conceptualized as a complex of interrelated processes rather than an end-state. Such tendencies are highly uneven in time and space. Because the exchanges of global and local issues are practiced widely and simultaneously,

Swyngedouw (1997) argues that neither global nor local should be understood independently. Alternately he proposes the concept “glocalization,” which specifies the coexistence of local and global issues and struggles. It is important to consider that defensive and diversity-receptive localization does not constitute a static binary of global and local (Hinrichs 2003).

Additionally, I should point out that the idea of “local” scale in food as a commodity—not in the process of production—also requires critical examination. Hence, there are two distinguishing characteristics of “local food” as a commodity compared with other food products such as “imported food.” First, locally produced food products are likely to be (or thought to be) fresher and superior in quality compared to food products that are stored, processed, shipped long distances, and then distributed and sold in grocery retail chain stores. Second, and more importantly, while the origins of food products sold by grocery retail chains tend to be unknown and the producers anonymous to the majority of consumers, origins and destinations of locally produced food products are much more visible in terms of where and by whom they were produced. Moreover, “local” food brings additional attention to the site of production and/or processing, allowing locally produced food to seemingly become embedded in or associated with the identity of the place of production. Consumers can readily become familiar with local products and producers, and producers can take advantage of this place association by selling products as “local” (Futamura 2007). Therefore, examining “local food” provides not only an understanding of the site of production and processing of agricultural products, but also helps to recognize the connection between their production, distribution, and consumption.

The characteristics of “local food” permit small-scale producers to market their products and to profit through the principle of value-added. Producers eventually promote a kind of “food localism” that can be manifested at the site of production, through distribution and marketing, or the site of consumption. For example, if the production of particular food products is strictly limited within a certain territory (e.g. Vidalia onions, California raisins), specialization of production can lead to creation of a brand or label associating place with product, and consumers’ preferences for the food product can be directed to specific production sites (Hunter 1992). “Food localism” offers alternative choices to the ordinary, mass-produced products typically found in retail grocery chains or restaurant chains. Although the globalization of food was achieved in order to obtain food security in a neoliberal context and thereby provides additional choices to consumers (Bonanno et al. 1994; Goodman and Watts 1997; Murdoch et al. 2000; Atkins and Bowler 2001), like so many publications on food started to appear in academic and non-academic outlets, more people are influenced to seek food product choices that exhibit, or are thought to possess, unique and safe qualities that are associated with local production (Halweil 2003; Salatin 2003, Pollan 2006).

When local-global dialectics (Thrift 2000) are contextualized in the case of food, the following binaries are raised which are concerned with dominance by globalization and strategic management maintained by localization (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Attributes of food associated with “Global” and “Local”

Global	Local
Market Economy	Moral economy
An economics of price	An economic sociology of quality
Corporate profits	Community well-being
Large-scale production	Small-scale production
Monoculture	Bio-diversity
Relations across space	Relations of proximity
Commodities across space	Communities in place
Homogenization of foods	Regional palates

Source: Hinrichs (2003)

The table shows how, on the one hand, global attributes seemingly expand in size and homogenize in production; the local attributes, on the other hand, remain small and versatile. None of the individual attributes can permanently signify global or local, however, because there can be local monocultural production (e.g., fruit and nut production) as well as global bio-diversity actions (e.g., grassland conservation). While the discourse of “local” assumes superior quality or better environmental stewardship, the “local” needs critical attention, as technical and scientific availability can challenge such designations. Therefore, both localization and localism should be understood as a matter of strategy that has emerged from social relations contested through complex scales. The success of localism and localization may not necessarily hold true, however, depending upon *who* and *what* is involved with their deployment in a particular situation.

Construction of “local” food through localization can be contextualized from various on-site locations that have access to them, such as farmers’ markets, cooperatives, and roadside farm stores, sites where face-to-face contact between food producers and consumers are established. Discursive branding that emphasizes “local” through advertisement and labeling also strengthens the identity of localization. By facilitating

farmers' markets, community organizers of farmers' markets offer various opportunities for social and cultural events. Examples include an art gallery, used book sale, gardening seminar, hospital advertisement, and public radio talk show, to name a few. Customers who come to shop at a farmers' market can join and interact with these social and cultural activities. Finally, those who sell food products in farmers' markets are "specialized" people: they want to share knowledge with customers by personally distributing their products (Community Farm Alliance 2003). More importantly, through spatial practices of localized food-systems, both producers and consumers develop better ways of facilitating locally based markets. In other words, the existence of farmers' markets as a site of localization brings additional opportunities to enhance their knowledge and to innovate locally-based agrifood systems. Hinrichs (2003) pointed out that the definition of "local foods" has subtly shifted from food raised in "this country or one nearby" to food raised "in Iowa."

As social relations among individuals expand spatially and temporally, so too are the meanings of local being contested. Contributions of agencies that created the ideal of local cannot be ignored. The development of social interaction has brought changes in negotiations to create local at different scales, as well as emergence of key agencies during these interactions (Table 2.2). Neither localization nor localism occurs from nowhere: they are a result of social interaction practiced historically in many different scales. As mentioned earlier, when societies have moved toward homogeneity and globalization, the importance of local also becomes evident. Consciousness of the local increases as influence of homogeneity and global capitalism begins to dominate. It is also important to consider how local was constructed as a contrast to global. Although local is

often based on a specific place, its scale is often subjected to fluctuation and manipulation (Marston 2000).

Table 2.2. Conceptual Models of Processes and Agencies That Create the Local.

Types of interaction	Scale, Site of interaction	Agencies	Emergence of Localization	Emergence of Localism	Time ↓
Isolation/independent	Body, home	Self, kin, nature	None	None	
Emergence of social interactions	Neighborhood, community, city,	Middlemen, buyers, market	Weak, or none	Weak, or none	
Formation of hierarchies and interdependence	City, region, nation-state,	Government, politician, policies	Emerging awareness, strategy	Weak	
Resistance to globalized society	Nation-state, global	TNC, NGO, International organizations	Strategically stronger	Begins to be active	

Possible agencies that help to create the idea of “local” may include government, politicians, activists, transnational companies, producers and consumers. It is not necessarily the individual that changes the entire structure of localization, but the group of agencies that influence formation of the local and the processes of localization. Instead, social relations of agencies in various space and time configurations (Thrift 1983) contribute to our understanding of not just binaries of global-local, but also the context of how local concepts are constructed and mobilized. This, in the long run, connects in part to understanding the social process of localization through space and time, thereby providing an alternative view of a new regional geography (Pudup 1988; Holmen 1995).

Localization in a global perspective may create the impression that everything that can be produced locally should actually be produced locally. This proposal would help poor people by permitting them to be self-reliant and by reducing trade’s contribution

(Monbiot 2003). Overcoming inequality becomes the key to success.

To localize food is to produce food that can be eaten as a distinctive, but coherent local cuisine (Hinrichs 2003, p. 42). In other words, construction of local food does not necessarily mean that consumers are preparing local dishes or following traditions. Therefore, processes of localization and localism both involve multiple dimensions. As Hinrichs (2003) emphasizes, “Food system localization may involve defensive, perhaps subtly exclusionary protection of a region constructed as discrete, homogeneous, static and beleaguered. But on the other hand, the very experience of localization can foster social and gustatory exchanges that demand new receptivity to difference and diversity.” (Hinrichs 2003, p.34)

One important thing is missing here, however. If the proposition ‘all food is local’ is accepted, this means that food is taken as an ontological matter. In other words, if ‘all food is local because it is produced somewhere and by someone,’ this indicates that we *know* what the food is about, and therefore knowledge of food, including where, who, when, and how food is produced becomes the “known world.” In this case, scale and agency is not involved with matters of food. When spatial relations between production, distribution, and consumption of contemporary food are considered, however, an understanding of the mobility of food transport including analysis of food’s origins and destinations becomes a problematic concern. If everyone in the world grows, raises, and consumes his/her own food, then the locale of the food does not matter. This is not the reality, however, as production and consumption of food have temporally and spatially separated significantly since global capitalism began to dominate in contemporary society (Goodman and Watts 1997). As I noted in the earlier statement, while ‘all food is local,’

all food can also be ‘global’ because it can be circulated over transnational boundaries, and in fact we see many of such cases everyday (Bonanno et al. 1994; Schlosser 2001). Considering the binaries of global-local and contextualizing the basis of the local food movement, I argue that this movement understands food as an epistemology. To put it another way, transitions from the descriptive statement on food that ‘all food is local’ to the normative ideal (Schein 2003) of the local food movement can be considered as providing a more critical analysis of food, in the sense that such a movement is a representation of an epistemological process of grounding facts on the origins of food.

The idea of a local food movement originates in numerous concerns and purposes; some examples of this include 1) demanding better quality (freshness, organic, free-range, chemical-free, etc.); 2) providing sustainable production systems; 3) supporting local community and economy; 4) exploring better taste; 5) searching for visibility of where food is coming from and going to, or what Kloppenburg et al. (1996) suggests knowing about the “foodshed.” Each type of concern is trying to make sense of what we want to be produced and consumed. When these concerns are contextualized in the local scale, in some cases they, as a whole, form a case for defensive localism, namely that ‘all food is local’ but production and consumption should also be situated “within the local” (Enticott 2003; Winter 2003). Constructions and actors of localism, however, differ in their perspectives: producers may be emphasizing local food movements to establish a niche market, while consumers may want to pursue dedicated-specialized quality (Murdoch et al. 2000). Furthermore, it is important to be aware that politicians may be deploying this normative ideal to explain and define characteristics strategically.

Monbiot’s (2003) argument brings critical concerns to the validity of the localism of

food. On the one hand, localism is the normative ideal that promotes self-sufficiency and strength of food production and consumption without inequality in the world. On the other hand, it rejects interdependence with other parts of the country or world and shuts itself off from any interdependence. Because scale is an epistemological factor (Jones 1998), each case needs critical examination to stretch the understanding of the epistemology of food.

Transition of the proposition 'all food is local' to a normative ideal of a local food movement and the practice of localism has to do with how globalization is conceptualized within the scheme of food and scale. A local food movement and the practice of localism would not have emerged if there were no globalized industrial agri-business oriented food economies, or complexities of scalar hierarchies. By questioning food as an epistemological matter, understanding food spatially expands from “everything is local“ to “local is important.” Furthermore, as food is a social construct of our daily dietary requirement and therefore can be localized to the personal level, “all food is local” can be transcribed as “all place is local,” as the place is also historically produced somewhere by someone (Pred 1984). Because place is a subjectively defined matter, intensity of attachment to place varies among people with changing historical conditions. The progressive concept of place is normative as well as descriptive. Any given place is materially and imaginatively constructed by many different types of people (Duncan 2000). In this sense, place also becomes epistemology. Emergence of place as part of local is a reflection of contesting over scale and space. Therefore, a geography of food (Crang 2000) can further contribute to understanding place as not just examining what is produced or consumed and where, but also by examining the role that food plays

in constructing place and social relations through space.

The emergence of the local food movement can emphasize significant location-specific qualities in some cases. This means that the “relocalization” process has not yet advanced to the point where either producers or consumers associate food with place (Atkins and Bowler 2001). Local patriotism of food (Bell and Valentine 1997) is another example of how scale is modified and place is emphasized by producers, market specialists, and consumers to attach to identities.

When considering the global perspective, food is a critical object which is subjected to constraints by regulation, nation-states, and production and markets. Localism and regionalism is a growing process in the search of new forms of political organization transcending the national-level (Bonanno et al. 1994). As Bonanno et al. (1994) emphasize, “...what is less important than the fixed spatial location of production and consumption is that both now occur on a world-wide basis.” In other words, geography, and specifically place, begin to be more critical matters to understand food production and consumption by taking the local food movement as a normative ideal.

4) Reflecting Kentucky’s Food and Agriculture Through a Global and Local Binary Context

The theoretical background and literature so far reviewed leads me to address the applicability of these issues to Kentucky, the focus of study in this dissertation. How is agricultural production and/or food production and/or food consumption characterized in the United States? What are the significance of “local,” “food,” and “local food” in Kentucky, and how and why does it matter? Here I will briefly explain these points and

outline the direction for the next chapters of this dissertation.

First, Kentucky's agricultural transition was not representative of national trends. Kentucky was nationally known for its burley tobacco production, but because tobacco production created such an economically dependent structure within agriculture, Kentucky farmers did not experience the expansion of farm size and scope of operations that occurred in many other states. It was only after the demise of tobacco-dependent agriculture in the late 1990s that the production of food products attracted attention. Coincidentally (or perhaps fortunately), multiple discourses that spoke about "locally produced food" began to arise in the midst of a period when the federal government appointed a national committee to address support for small farms. At the state level, many participants were involved in various dimensions of agriculture and food (production, processing, distribution, consumption, marketing, and policy decision making) to construct "local food" and their concern for product qualities associated with localism. When the state is examined at the micro scale, however, "local" and "local food" cannot be simply defined in Kentucky because of spatial diversity. In addition to a general classification of eastern, central, and western Kentucky, there are 120 counties in the Commonwealth and the focus of their development has inevitably been uneven. Thus, the process of constructing "local food" started in post-tobacco agri-"cultural" economies.

Current concerns over issues dealing with globalized food and agriculture have raised many questions regarding health, sustainability, economic support, community, equality and equity, history, and tradition in the United States. Various actors such as academics, policy makers, and non-profit organizations are serving as critical driving forces to resist

these globalized trends. In the recently published bestseller book, journalist Michael Pollan (2006) asks the simple question, “What should we have for dinner?” by examining what American people are eating, and where these foods have come from. His arguments provide answers to many concerns raised above, but what is missing is the context of understanding “*where*” in relation to “*what*.” Because agriculture has evolved to highly industrialized levels, farm products have created a dichotomy between commodity and food. Alice Waters’ call for consumption of produce that is grown in adjacent areas and the Slow Food movement certainly helped many people realize the importance of “local food,” but is that what we all have to look for?

My interest in this study is that while some may advocate for “locally grown produce” which will certainly help provide markets for small producers, such nationwide advocacy may lead to an undervaluing of the creativity and diversity of what “local” food and agricultural products mean within a spatio-temporal perspective. While the local food debate is often developed around a nutritional or social justice perspective, I argue that the socio-cultural meaning of connections between “local” and “food” should also be considered. Will Roma tomatoes that are produced in California’s San Joaquin Valley and Central Kentucky carry the same meaning? Why do people in western Kentucky pride themselves on barbeque, especially in Henderson and Owensboro, despite a decrease in the quantities of meat produced such that meats for barbeque must be purchased from out-of-state? Who are the producers and consumers of these foods? What we put into our mouths and ‘eat’, I argue, should be examined to understand embedded meanings and this relationship will also consider to comparisons between local food produce and local food cuisine.

Thus, putting my concerns into the context that I have explained in this chapter, the next questions are, how is “Kentucky food” and “Kentucky’s local food” being produced and consumed? What constitutes “Kentucky food” and “Kentucky’s local food”? These questions contain the primary theme of this dissertation, and addressing them is the subject of the following empirical chapters. To do so, before asking any questions about Kentucky’s “local food,” I will first examine the collapse of Kentucky’s tobacco production and changing structure of Kentucky’s agriculture in the next chapter. The loss of tobacco sales influenced many farmers’ income, but it also introduced the discourse of localized food supply and agricultural production as a driving force in changing Kentucky’s agriculture. Understanding the context of the loss of tobacco will inevitably provide context for a more thorough consideration of whether “local food” is an important issue in Kentucky.

Chapter 3: Addicted to a Cash Crop: Restructuring Tobacco Production and Transformation of Agriculture in Kentucky, 1990-2006

1) Kentucky Tobacco in a Global Context: The Rise of Neoliberalism and Demise of King Burley

a) Background and Sustenance of Kentucky's Tobacco Program

Since Franklin D. Roosevelt oversaw the passage of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) during the New Deal period of the 1930s, burley tobacco production had been under federal government control (Cochrane 1994). Prior to that time, tobacco growers suffered low prices that originated from the American Tobacco Company's monopoly of the tobacco business. Growers responded by forming the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) in the 1920s. Establishing a safety net for their leaf during the New Deal was a major improvement for growers (van Willigen and Eastwood 1998). In return for a guaranteed price per pound, growers' production was highly regulated by quotas. Initially the quota was allocated per acreage, but it later became apparent that acreage-based quotas resulted in overproduction. In 1971, therefore, the quota was changed to allocate production by weight (van Willigen and Eastwood 1998). Each year the USDA used its own quantitative formula and determined the burley quota based on projections of tobacco manufacturers' needs, international supply trends, and predictable availability of domestic supply. This program regulated production more tightly than other crops such as grains and cottons.

The benefit of the tobacco price support program was that farmers could depend upon how much income they could make from tobacco (Table 3.1). Because the lowest price was fixed before they brought their leaf to the market, tobacco farmers did not have

to worry about a market glut and low prices. Like fresh produce that was also produced on smaller acreage with intensive labor but without price support, growing tobacco under price supports encouraged farmers to maintain their operation on a smaller acreage. If farmers overproduced their allocated quotas, the excess would be carried over to the next year with a reduction in the allotment farmers would receive. Alternately, if farmers did not produce enough pounds, the shortage would also be carried over to the next year and allotments increased (van Willigen and Eastwood 1998). On the other hand, the downside of the tobacco program was that farmers had difficulty in expanding production because exchanges or sales of individually allocated quotas were prohibited. Quota leases existed for many years, and those with larger quota holdings or capital to invest could manage to increase production through a tenant system, but purchase or transfer of quota ownership was limited. Additionally, unlike wheat or corn that are highly managed by mechanized processes, the expansion of tobacco production was substantially limited because of its manual labor requirement (Cochrane 1994).

Table 3.1. Characteristics of Tobacco Economies and Comparisons with Other Major Agricultural Commodities in the United States

	Cash crops (including tobacco)	Grains	Fresh produce
Impacts of subsidy and price support	Large	Depends on farm size	None
Governmental quota (production control)	Large	Some/none	None
Required farm size	small	Large	Small-medium
Net income per acre	Large	Small	Medium-large
Labor requirement	Large	Small	medium
Major buyers	Warehouse, manufacturing plant	Elevators	Wholesale distributors, retailers, other direct sale
Dominance of US Products in the international market	Moderate to small	Large	varies
Impacts of direct sale for agricultural sales	None	Small	varies

Source: Bonnanno et al. (1994); Cochrane (1994); Penson, Jr., Capps, Jr., and Rosson III (2002).

As the concerns about health risks from tobacco consumption increased, however, health advocates and the public in general became more critical of the relationship between tobacco farming and the USDA's production control system. It was widely understood that the USDA was "subsidizing tobacco farmers" through price support programs. Such an understanding was inaccurate, given that it was the buyers—cigarette manufacturing companies—who pay for tobacco and the USDA's role was only to set the price and quota every year (Burton 1998). Growers and other supportive groups actively explained that price supports were not the equivalent to "subsidizing" farmers.

By the late 1980s, those involved with tobacco production, manufacturing, and marketing were aware that tobacco did not have a bright future in Kentucky agriculture

(Mansfield 1987). The decline of tobacco in the following decade, however, took place with impacts that occurred at multiple scales. I argue that there were three scalar contexts that influenced subsequent declines of Kentucky's tobacco production: International (especially the rise of trade neoliberalism), national (anti-tobacco movements and contradiction of federal tobacco agricultural regulation), and the state (labor shortage and failure to produce tobacco to its quota limits).

Internationally, the trade and sale of tobacco was shifting to a broader scale because of the neoliberal political perspective. Until the Reagan administration encouraged a free trade policy in the early 1980s, the American agricultural economy was sluggish. During this period neoliberalism progressed as an economic policy for many developed countries (Watts 2000). David Harvey explains neoliberalism as follows:

“Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. ... [I]f markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit.” (Harvey 2005, p. 2)

Putting this into economic context, neoliberalism brings strong benefits if one has an advantage in export trading. By adopting neoliberal economic policies, exporters would not only expand their potential markets to increase profits economically, but also provide more political freedom and social individualism through less state interventions (Watts 2000). For those who have weaker shares of the market, adoption of neoliberal policies

would weaken their domestic industries. Being forced to open up the domestic market to stronger imports would threaten current economies.

The Reagan administration led the wave of free trade and pressured many countries to participate in free trade agreements. The Uruguay Round in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, from 1986 to 1994, in particular led the dialogue to expand free trade (Berry Jr. 2006). Since 1947 international trade liberalizations were negotiated in a series of GATT 'rounds' (Dicken 2000), but unlike previous rounds, agricultural commodities were brought up as a topic for trade liberalization in the Uruguay Round for the first time (Tokoyama and Egaitso 1998). Agricultural trade issues, predictably, created a heated discussion. Each country at the Uruguay Round had its strength and weakness; therefore mitigating threats was one of the most challenging tasks for agricultural trade interests. One of the specific goals was to reduce agricultural export subsidies and reduce tariffs, but they only agreed to a minimum import requirement in 1994.

For many years a number of major agricultural products such as corn, soybeans, and beef produced in the United States had significant global market shares, and the US government pressured many countries to open up their markets (Bonnano et al. 1994). For example, free trade agreements on oranges and beef between Japan and the United States in the late 1980s was the product of Reaganomics that opened up Japan's barriers on agricultural trade (Lee 1994). This lowered the beef and citrus orange price in Japan significantly, and at the same time Japanese domestic producers had to start dealing with international competitors, which eventually decreased the number of beef cattle producers. Such neoliberal policies pushed stronger sectors to make others open up for their advantages, and that was the strength of US agriculture. Not only did US agriculture

maintain the leading amount of agricultural production through subsidizing and forcing expansion, but it also managed its trade policy to continuously develop marketing of its products.

This neoliberal agricultural policy, however, brought many challenges to the tobacco trade environment in the United States. Unlike other agricultural commodities that had a strong position in foreign export markets, American tobacco started to experience an international market struggle. Other countries including China, Turkey, Brazil, Malawi, and Zimbabwe were also producing burley tobacco. American producers faced higher production costs, particularly in labor costs, and could not compete with foreign low prices. On the other hand, American cigarette manufacturers who were purchasing primarily the domestic crop were frustrated that farmers had not been growing enough tobacco to meet their demand. The upshot was that manufacturers could choose to increase their purchase of imported tobaccos. Burley farmers failed to grow the maximum amount of tobacco allowed every year except one in the 1980s, and the warehouse auction system did not give buyers an opportunity to purchase greater quantity even if they paid a higher bid price. This provided an excuse for manufacturers to buy more foreign burley, meaning a further loss of domestic demand (Stroud 1988).

For US agricultural policy, there were several options for dealing with the international tobacco market. First, tobacco manufacturers could abandon importation of foreign tobacco, so that tobacco products made by cigarette manufacturing companies would become 'pure American' products. Corporations, however, found it more profitable to import cheaper foreign tobacco than to purchase from domestic growers. A second strategy was to liberalize trade completely so that cheaper tobacco garnered the

most sales. But this also meant that American tobacco would lose its market. Tobacco farmers resisted liberalization of trade—namely tobacco imports—by arguing, “...that U.S. leaf is the highest quality in the world” (Osborn 1992).

To address this problem, Congress put in place an import restriction policy and regulations to protect domestically produced tobacco from foreign competition. Wanting to avoid losing domestic and international market share, tobacco grower groups lobbied the House of Representatives and Senate to regulate importation of foreign tobacco. The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) actively lobbied key Congressmen such as Senator Wendell Ford to regulate the import of foreign tobacco (Burton 1993). The result was the passage of the 1993 Budget Act, which said cigarettes produced in the United States may contain no more than 25 percent of imported tobacco, thereby forcing cigarette-manufacturing companies to use at least 75 percent domestic leaf. This secured the tobacco growers’ sales market.

This was an awkward issue for the federal government in part because other major American crops such as wheat, corn, soybeans, and cotton, were dominant in the international market and had enjoyed that position for many decades. Grain and livestock industries were vital to domestic food security and agribusinesses. Another heavily subsidized crop, cotton, beginning its decline in the 1970s, was still raised in the southern states. Grains, livestock, and cotton did not have a quota allotment restriction, and growers raised as much acreage as they liked. Although the international market price changed year by year, there were no immediate threats to these agricultural products. Although tobacco received strong protection by the federal program for decades, tobacco was also exceptionally susceptible to changes in commodity supports when it came to

international market competition.

What was most efficient about the tobacco price support program was that it controlled both production and price. By controlling production through limits on poundage, the market did not have to struggle with oversupply. Similarly, by setting the price producers could calculate the income they could expect to make. Farmer Oscar Richards explains this clearly:

“... This is one of the government projects that has worked because they control both ends of it. They control the amount that you grow, which has to be done before they can put a price on it. That’s what got them in trouble with this milk. They only had ahold of one end it, the price support, and the government got stuck with a whole lot of extra milk and cheese and they couldn’t do nothing with it, only just give it away. But now, on this tobacco, they got ahold of both ends of it and we’ve got a wonderful program, ...” (Quoted in van Willigen and Eastwood (1998)).

In this way, unlike other major protected crops in the United States that went through market price changes, the tobacco production system remained relatively the same way for nearly 60 years. Tobacco farmers’ reliance on price supports could be ridiculed as “welfare farming”, given the limited acreage and high cash returns to producers (Wright 2005). Southern voters reelected representatives who gained seniority and key leadership positions on Senate and House committees, including the Agricultural Committee. These officials then oversaw the protection of a predominantly southern industry. Politicians, both US congressmen and state governors, were careful to make sure that their supporters’ rights to grow tobacco in some quantity were assured. For politicians receiving votes from farm communities, this was vital to win elections. In Kentucky’s case, one’s stance on tobacco policy was critical if one expected to receive support. “Welfare farming” in Kentucky, however, did not have a bright future. While the quotas remained fairly stable in the early 1990s, already in 1990 and 1991 labor shortages for

tobacco production was becoming a concern, and invention of harvesting machines and pooling money for hiring migrant labor were seriously discussed, long before the anti-tobacco movement intensified in the following years (*Farmer's Pride* 1990, 1991, 1992).

b) Emerging Multi-Scale Impact and Transformation of Tobacco Production

Within Kentucky, tobacco was still the dominant agricultural product in the 1980s and 1990s. According to the US Census of Agriculture, between 1982 and 1997 Kentucky's burley and dark tobacco production was 20 to 30 percent of state agricultural sales (Figure 3.1). For Kentucky farmers, raising beef cattle and growing tobacco were two indispensable agricultural sectors that they relied upon for decades.

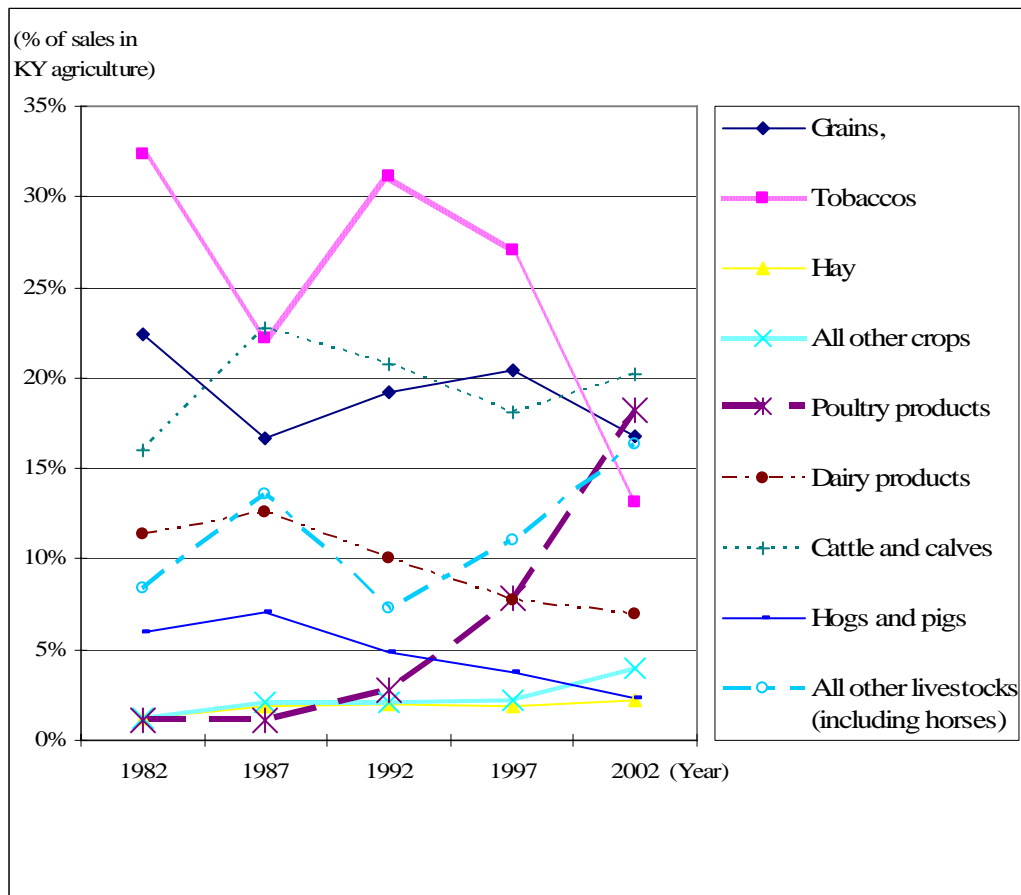


Figure 3.1. Changes of Major Agricultural Commodity Sales in Kentucky, 1982-2002.
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

During the 1990s, the tobacco economy began to destabilize with quotas shifting frequently (Figure 3.2). Unlike grain crops where producers harvested a maximum amount and sent their crops to a grain elevator for storage and eventual sale, tobacco producers maintained the right to produce leaf but were limited in the quantity of production by a quota. The USDA set the quota each year, depending on market prices and the amount of tobacco held in storage by cigarette manufacturing companies. If the quota was expanded, producers could plan to grow more and sell larger amounts of leaf. On the other hand, if the government reduced the quota, growers were permitted to sell

less tobacco, resulting in reduced income. Overall, with the exception of several years, tobacco was not produced to meet the quota limit. For some years when crop diseases or weather problems occurred, Kentucky tobacco producers could manage only 80 percent of quotas (Figure 3.2). This made tobacco manufacturing vulnerable to an insecure domestic supply.

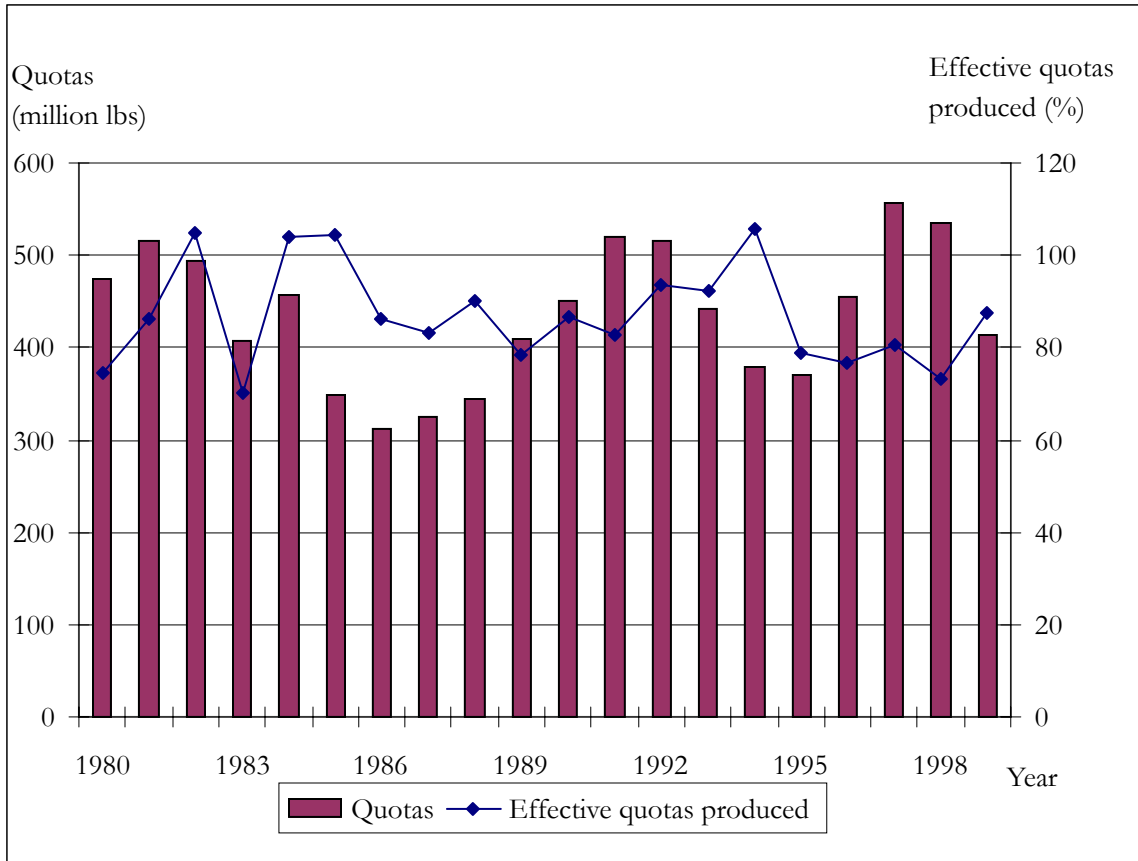


Figure 3.2. Changes of Burley Quota Allotments and Effective Quotas Produced in Kentucky, 1980-99.

Source: University of Kentucky Tobacco Economics Online
 (<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/TobaccoEcon/>)

In 1992 Breerton Jones became Kentucky’s governor. He was a Democratic candidate from Woodford County who owned a horse farm. His wife, Libby Jones, was an activist in environmental issues. Governor Jones tried to collect taxes from cigarette

sales, 3 cents a pack, and to use the money for health care and preventing underage smoking. While his policy plans were innovative to Kentucky at the time, this drew a heated reaction from the tobacco industry, both burley growers and manufacturers. In order to support his tax policy, he later told the press that he recommended that President Clinton “plow back” a portion of a federal tobacco tax to tobacco producing states (Burton 1994), but this proposal was not positively received either.

The year 1992 was also a critical year for national politics (Table 3.2). The Democratic candidate Bill Clinton won the presidential election over Republican George H. W. Bush and took office as the first Democratic administration since 1980. One of Clinton’s goals was to implement a nationwide publicly funded healthcare program. To run the program financially, Clinton targeted tobacco industries for taxation. Even though Kentucky was a historically Democratic State (Pearce 1992), the president’s policy was strongly resented by Kentuckians, causing him to win the state electoral vote by a very narrow 3.2 percent (Geiger 1992).³

³ Geiger (1992) pointed out that making a candidate stop at Paducah, KY, on the eve of Election Day had a strong impact on Bill Clinton’s winning the election in Kentucky. In this article, Clinton was quoted as saying that: “[I]t [Paducah] touches southern Illinois, where we’re strong, Tennessee. It touches Indiana. It touches Missouri, even -- and you know, multistate impact.”

Table 3.2 Chronology of tobacco restructuring in Kentucky, 1990-2006.

Year	Events in Kentucky	Key Actors	National & Int'l Events
1990	Direct sale of dark tobacco begins		1990 Farm Bill passed
1991	Quota increased, storm in KY		
1992	Burley quota decreased Hiring migrant labor started	Brereton Jones elected as governor	Import tobacco increased Clinton elected as President
1993	Burley quota decreased 10% Jones discuss taxation of cigarettes, strong criticism		Import limitation imposed Mississippi River flood's Youth smoking concerns rise
1994	Industrial poultry plant launched Rally over tobacco taxation	John M. Berry Jr. resigns the BTGCA	Elimination of tobacco program discussed in Senate
1995	Storm and floods in KY	Rod Kuegel becomes President of the BTGCA	Burley's management passed to FDA's authority
1996	Burley quota increase, 15% Ohio River flooded	Billy Ray Smith elected as Commissioner of Agriculture	FDA is to regulate nicotine; anti-tobacco movement
1997	Quota increase, Flood in spring idea of compensation endorsed		Senator Lugar (R-IN) proposes tobacco buyout plan
1998	Burley quota increased Clinton comes to KY, endorse tobacco	Governor's Commission on Family Farm established	Ford and Lugar propose buyout bill, but fails MSA reached agreement
1999	Burley quota decreased 28.8%		
2000	HB 611 passed, contract farming	Agricultural Development Board (ADB) appointed	
2001	ADB began approving proposals		Commission's report submitted
2002	Debates on buyout		buyout bill introduced to House
2003	Phase I money endangered	J-M Hack resigned GOAP	
2004		Richie Farmer elected as Commissioner of Agriculture	Tobacco buy out passed in congress

Source: Compiled from *Farmer's Pride*, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*.

In 1993, the United States joined the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). The Community Farm Alliance (CFA) opposed the plan of the United States to participate in NAFTA, but other organizations in Kentucky did not protest and launched pro-NAFTA campaigns (*Farmer's Pride* 1993a, 1993b). Kentucky farm communities' favorable

reaction to participating NAFTA was another sign of the accelerating acceptance of free trade in the global economy. Those who supported NAFTA emphasized that it would create further access and better prices for Kentucky's agricultural products. Bill Sprague, president of the Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) at the time, said that annual tobacco exports to Mexico would increase to \$100 million through NAFTA, which would amount to ten times more than they would have gotten without the trade agreement. The CFA, on the other hand, raised four concerns on NAFTA: loss of safeguard for quality and quantity of traded commodities, possible loss of market access (which contradicted Sprague's argument), the US's agreement on Section 22 to abandon the president and secretary's intervention action, and loss of farm income (*Farmer's Pride* 1993a, 1993b).

Ironically, in the same year the burley tobacco quota was cut 10 percent. This was also the time when tobacco-manufacturing companies started to increase importation of tobacco from overseas. These trends seriously concerned burley growers; hence they lobbied to establish federal restrictions on importing burley. When reviewing the history of American agriculture, I argue that this was an often overlooked yet critical turning point.

For the USDA, there were cases when the global market ran short in the supply of certain commodities and as a result prices increased for American products that flooded into the international market. But, among major agricultural products in the United States there were very few crops other than tobacco that were required to limit imports. This was because for most cases the United States produced more than other countries did, and had to look to other countries as markets to sell their products. There are several factors to consider to understand why such changes occurred. First, domestic consumption of

tobacco products had started to decline significantly during the 1980s. Various health advocates criticized tobacco industries' marketing practices and the domestic market was shrinking. Second, as global commodity chains expanded spatially, tobacco manufacturing companies sought to obtain cheaper products to increase their profits. Search for cheaper leaf resulted in the increased use of foreign tobacco, and fewer domestic purchases, increasing concerns among tobacco growers, and motivating politicians to find ways to help their supporters.

The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) did not shy away from voicing an opinion. John Berry Jr., the president of BTGCA at the time, voiced fierce opposition to governmental control and taxation. BTGCA was established in 1941 (Van Willigen and Eastwood 1992), and John Berry Sr., father of John Berry Jr., was one of its founding members. John Berry Jr. served as a Kentucky senator from 1973 to 1981 and president of BTGCA since 1987. For most tobacco growers, the national threat to cigarette manufacturing companies was also a threat to growers. Farm organizations such as the Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) and BTGCA ran frequent advertisements to fight taxation, and actively campaigned against control of the industry and to maintain their status.

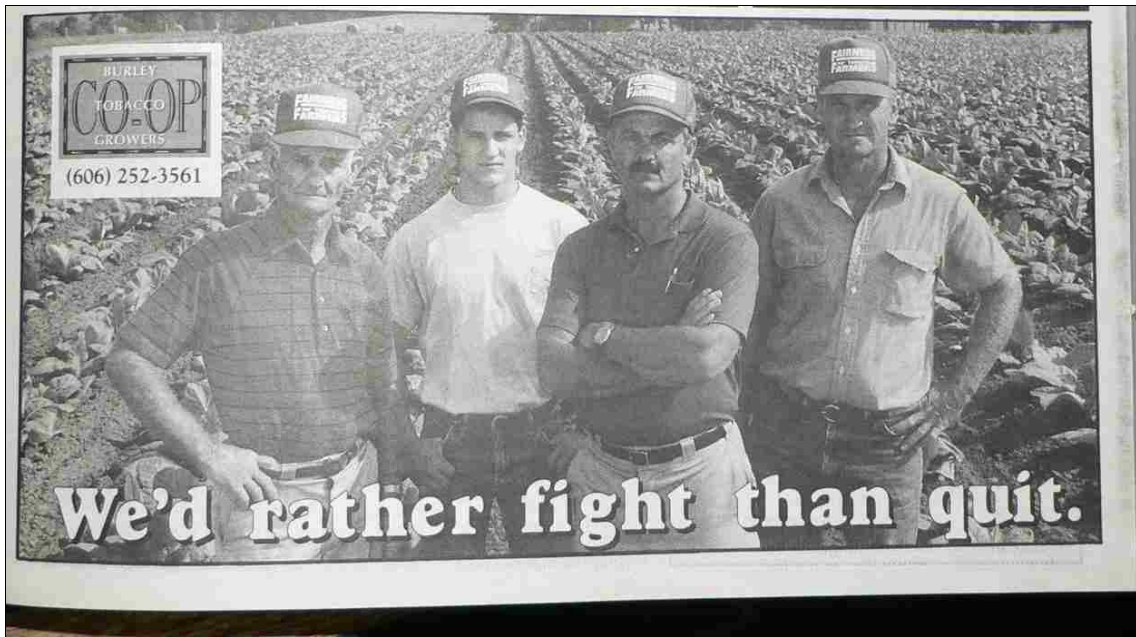


Figure 3.3 Advertisement by the BTGCA, protesting taxation of cigarette sales.
(Source: *Farmer's Pride*, April 10, 1994).

After suffering a heart attack, however, John Berry Jr. resigned the presidency in 1994. In his resignation speech he made what turned out to be rare criticism of tobacco industries and insightful comments regarding Kentucky's agriculture at the time. *The Lexington Herald-Leader* reported the following:

“John Berry Jr. told the co-op board in an emotional farewell speech that cigarette companies had ‘forsaken’ tobacco growers by encouraging them to grow as much as they could and then turning to cheaper foreign tobacco. ‘In other words, they confirmed that they are what we always have known them to be,’ he said.” “John Berry said the co-op—the state organization that helps run the federal tobacco price-support program—must not only defend tobacco but must work to preserve rural communities by helping farmers find markets for other products.” (Stroud 1994a)

There are several important arguments embedded in this statement. First, Berry spoke about the Kentucky growers' need for diversification in the future to adjust to a possible transition away from tobacco. This recommendation for diversification was done in the midst of a burley producing era, where the majority of growers were content with producing burley tobacco as their main cash crop and diversification was considered

unnecessary. Second, the call for diversification was simultaneously a very rare criticism that was directed toward cigarette manufacturing companies from the growers' standpoint. By saying "... they (cigarette manufacturing companies) confirmed that they are what we always have known them to be," he was commenting on the exploitative relationship between the manufacturers and growers.

The Berry speech attracted significant attention, but the appeal was not immediately taken up by growers. For them, no crop was as significant and profitable as tobacco, and diversification simply meant a loss of income. It took a few more years before the need for diversification was understood and practiced.

In 1994, a very interesting event, though it was yet not-directly-related to Kentucky, occurred on Capitol Hill. On March 25, 1994, David Kessler, the commissioner of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), spoke at congressional hearings and explained the possible health risk that nicotine had, and that cigarette manufacturing companies manipulated the quantity of nicotine in cigarettes to make smokers more addicted to tobacco. At the time in Congress there was a strong concern for youth smoking, and several Congressmen were trying to submit a bill to regulate cigarette sales. There was nationwide skepticism that tobacco consumption would lead to health problems, but until then cigarette manufacturing companies vehemently refused to recognize the relationship between tobacco consumption and risk to the human body. Kessler's presentation at Congress and his subsequent appearance on ABC's program *Day One* brought critical attention to cigarette manufacturing companies (Snell 2005). When cigarette company CEOs were invited to another hearing, they testified and spoke about the relationship between cigarettes, nicotine, and health, but all denied that

“nicotine is addictive” to humans, thereby arguing that cigarette sales were legal. Conflicts between cigarette manufacturing companies and the FDA continued for several years, and in the end the Supreme Court ruled that the FDA did not have the constitutional right to regulate tobacco companies. Federal authority and power to control tobacco, therefore, virtually ended in 2000 (Snell 2005). Still, the impact of what happened on Capitol Hill was immensely important to the subsequent diversification process in tobacco growing states, including Kentucky.

Meanwhile, after John Berry Jr. stepped down from his Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) presidency, and a brief stint of leadership by Joe Wright, Rod Kuegel of Owensboro became the new president of the BTGCA. He was a third generation farmer who grew grains, beef cattle, and tobacco. Initially Kuegel was not in favor of diversification strategies, but he was soon influenced by John Berry Jr. (Kuegel 2007), and led the BTGCA toward preparations for a post-tobacco economy.

Kuegel worked not only for the BTGCA, but also the chair of the Burley Tobacco Council, which was President Clinton’s advisory board. There Kuegel met with various groups of people, from tobacco growers to tobacco control advocates, and discussed solutions to their issues. The biggest point of contention was the relationship between tobacco control and economic support of tobacco farmers. For health groups and anti-tobacco advocates, the goal was not only to reduce underage smoking, but also to regulate smoking as much as possible. Theoretically, that meant the reduction of tobacco consumption, which would be damaging to tobacco growers because they would lose markets and profits. On the other hand, the tobacco growers’ focus was on “surviving”: while they acknowledged the danger of underage smoking and agreed that they would

fight against it, they also emphasized that reducing domestic consumption or loss of market would bring quotas down, resulting in a loss of farm income and other related employment opportunities.

c) Tobacco Buyout: End of Regulated Production

Through negotiations with health groups, Kuegel realized that some kind of soft-landing policies were necessary (Kuegel 2007). It was inevitable that tobacco consumption must not be encouraged, but farmers' reduction of tobacco production could not be accepted without some form of assistance for tobacco growers and communities that were dependent on tobacco income. Since no other crops were economically feasible to replace the income that came from tobacco, BTGCA had to find the best way to support members' needs. An addiction to tobacco was actual, in the case of consumers, and metaphorical for producers who were dependent upon tobacco sales to support their farm-related income stream. Therefore, the compromise that resulted was to propose reduction of economic dependence on tobacco and offer economic opportunities, while promising to strongly commit to protect public health. The final report, titled *Tobacco at a Crossroad: A Call for Action*, submitted by the President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production While Protecting Public Health in May 2001, specifically proposed that the President and Congress reform federal tobacco policy in six ways:

1. Replace quotas with production permits
2. Compensate quota owners and growers who a) elect to stop growing tobacco and b) choose to continue producing tobacco
3. Provide technical assistance to tobacco farmers and communities for

diversification

4. Support state tobacco prevention and cessation programs
5. Regulate manufactured tobacco products to improve the public health
6. Ensure the quality of US grown tobacco and imported foreign-grown tobacco

Of all the recommendations that the Committee proposed, the first and second recommendations were most important. The Committee proposed a tobacco buyout program that the Phillip Morris Company endorsed (Womach 2004b).⁴

After two years of negotiation between senators and congressmen and submission of somewhat different bills, the federal tobacco buyout program was implemented and signed into law in 2004. The House Bill proposed that active producers receive \$7 per pound of what they actually produced in 2002, and \$3 per pound for the quantity of tobacco they were allowed to produce. The Senate Bill, on the other hand, suggested quota owners receive \$8 per pound and growers to receive \$4 per pound (Womach 2004b). This meant that quota holders who also grew tobacco would receive \$10 per

⁴ While I did not encounter any sources that explained why Phillip Morris supported the federal buyout, my understanding is that this had to do with the tobacco companies' successful adoption of contract-based production. In 1999 Phillip Morris developed a plan to begin contract purchases of tobacco directly from tobacco growers. This process eliminated the grading of tobacco at the auction warehouse. The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) voiced opposition to contracting. Despite opposition, contract tobacco purchase progressed over the years, and as a result many auction warehouses had to shut down their businesses. Tobacco companies benefited from direct contracting by not only cutting the middleman costs of warehousing and auctioning, but also contracting enabled companies to "count" production and control the supply they needed. Thus, the quota system that federal government imposed to control production was taken over by tobacco companies to manage their own supply needs. By the time the federal buyout was signed into the law in 2004, Phillip Morris and the other tobacco companies had already instituted a contract purchase agreement with growers, and they could legitimize their strategy and comply with congressional edict by paying compensation to growers and quota holders, and still making a profit through reduced costs.

pound according to the House bill (or \$12 in the Senate bill), and absentee landlords who held quotas would receive \$7-8 per pound. Since many tobacco farmers were leasing quotas in addition to the quotas they owned, these plans would yield substantial financial compensation for growers. For the source of funds, the House bill proposed to use federal treasury funds, while the Senate bill demanded tobacco manufacturers and importers pay for the buyout (Womach 2004b).

The final bill, officially designated Title VI of P.L. 108-357 which was known as the Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004, was the result of a compromise between the House and the Senate. The House plan was chosen for its compensation price, while the Senate plan was adopted for the source of funds. In addition, despite the Senate bill's call for stronger regulation, the FDA's regulatory authority to control tobacco products was not included in the final buyout bill.

What this extensively debated bill brought to tobacco farmers was the end of the quota-based tobacco production control and price support system in exchange for monetary compensation. With the elimination of quota allocation and federal price support, tobacco became a commodity crop that no longer carried federal restrictions on growers, quantity, and location of production: a unique and ironic result of liberation. Thus, tobacco fell in compliance with the neoliberal ideology of the US agricultural policy. At the same time, the loss of price support meant that growers could not expect the profit that they formerly made. The burley market price declined after the buyout, and with the loss of auctioning warehouses, growers under contract had nowhere else to sell their tobacco. Such changes were disadvantageous to growers who had little land and capital resources, and many growers voiced an intent to quit tobacco farming after the

buyout (Patton 2004). On the other hand, the elimination of production controls meant that one could expand the scale of tobacco production if he/she met their contracts and were able to support production through access to land and labor. The outcome of the tobacco federal buyout in Kentucky, therefore, was a class division among tobacco farmers between those who could choose to expand their production and those who were forced to reduce income or quit farming. The latter condition also became a driving force for farmers who sought to diversify or transform their farm production away from tobacco.

d) Shift of Power: From Federal to States

While the tobacco buyout was finally signed in 2004, what impacted Kentucky's agricultural policy even more was an event that took place in 1998 led by the state government, instead of the federal government that led production and price control for decades. After months of court debates, in 1998 representatives of industries and groups of attorneys general signed the Master Settlement Agreement, a compromise between tobacco industries and individual states regarding compensation of health costs for tobacco-related diseases. The tobacco industry agreed to pay state governments \$250 billion paid over 25 years in exchange for dropping all lawsuits that were related to tobacco smoking and state Medicaid costs.⁵ While states were encouraged to use the money for tobacco control and underage smoking regulations, states were given the right to decide how to use the funds.

Austin and Altman (2000) and Snell (2005) examined states' tobacco payment

⁵ Snell (2005) pointed out that not everyone was supportive of MSA. David Kessler, former FDA Commissioner, concerned that by the limiting opportunities for future lawsuits and not granting federal authority to regulate tobacco, "the settlement would likely benefit the tobacco industry in the end."

spending, and they pointed out that these new financial resources were not adequately funding health-related issues. Some states used the funds to supplement their general budget deficits, while others used the money to fund programs not related to tobacco control or instituted tax reductions. For example, Louisiana, Michigan, and Nevada have used tobacco payment funds for college scholarships for state residents, while some other states simply set aside payments in “rainy day” accounts (Snell 2005).

For tobacco growing states, however, the main focus was in allocating resources for tobacco-dependent areas. Kentucky was one of the few states that specifically used its funds to both reduce underage smoking and invest in agricultural development. The funds were initially reallocated from the tobacco companies to the governor’s office and were later re-distributed as follows: MSA funds from tobacco companies to states (Phase I of the National Tobacco Settlement), and compensation funds for tobacco growers who suffered loss of income with reduction of tobacco quotas (the National Tobacco Grower Settlement Trust fund, often called Phase II) (Hall, Snell and Infanger 2000). Governor Paul Patton suggested a policy that would divide 50 percent of Phase I funds for the first three years to agriculture, and allocating another 25 percent each to early childhood development programs and health care initiatives (Patton 2000). While this plan was widely accepted, the most critical questions were *how* to distribute 50 percent of the agricultural development funds *to whom* and *for what purposes*.

When Governor Patton established the Agricultural Development Board to distribute Phase I funds, John-Mark Hack became the executive director of the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP). He was initially hired as a liaison to Governor Patton in 1997, but quickly stepped up to lead the Governor’s office. Later on he became the leading decision-maker for the distribution of agricultural development funds.

Various actors negotiated and lobbied to make tobacco settlement funds widely available, and the Kentucky legislature debated for months to decide funding allocation methods resulting in House Bill 611. The Senate, led by Joey Pendleton (D-Hopkinsville), initially proposed to establish a statewide Agricultural Development Board (ADB) that would evaluate project proposals and control fund distribution. On the other hand, the House, led by Pete Worthington (D-Ewing), would hand the decision-making processes "...into the hands of county boards to dole out according to a formula based on the amount of tobacco each county grows" (Patton 2000). The Senate's plan was based on the idea of using funds as collective investments rather than dealing with individual needs, while Worthington argued that a statewide board would not have the trust of the producers, and handing power to a county board would help tobacco farmers exclusively, especially for smaller counties. Indeed Governor Patton expressed sympathy, as he said: "I can understand that why the farmers in small counties feel like they are dealing with a great big state board and they might not be treated fairly" (Patton and Brammer 2000). In the end, however, compromises on House Bill (HB) 611 were made between the two groups that 35 percent of the funds would be allocated to specific county projects and the rest would go for projects that would be evaluated by the statewide board (Estep and Brammer 2000). Details of HB 611 and subsequent funding allocations by the ADB will be discussed in the following chapter.

What was most important in this transition was that the main power authority that monitored, and regulated tobacco-related policies had shifted from the federal level to the state government. Kentucky's agriculture had been under federal control for many decades, resulting in a lack of independence, but the transition from a dominant

tobacco-based agriculture to non-tobacco brought both an economic structural transformation and a shift of power from federal to state. This also meant that, as other states had already experienced, the role of the agribusiness corporations, commodity groups, non-profit organizations, and consumers became more influential in agricultural policies. In that sense, tobacco restructuring brought not only a shift of power from the federal to the state but also brought a neoliberalized structure to agricultural production and marketing strategies, opening up a path for various agencies to compete for power and control of discourse.

2) Spatial Changes of Commodity Combination Systems, 1987-2002

While tobacco production declined rapidly in the late 1990s, changes in Kentucky's agricultural production over the years, both statewide and county-level, cannot be understood just by following changes in agricultural statistics and numbers. Here I will examine how the decline of tobacco production and overall agricultural activities has transformed spatiotemporally at the micro-scale. The discussion will be based on an examination of USDA Census of Agriculture data, with an application of a modified Weaver Method (Doi 1970) and what I call "commodity combination systems."

In his classic study, John Weaver (1954) attempted to identify the characteristics of agricultural economies in unit spaces by employing census data. He used harvested acreage to measure what crops dominated the production of certain unit spaces. Theoretically, if all of one county's cropland were used for corn production, then that county displays 100 percent corn farms, reflecting an expected value of land use as complete monoculture production. Likewise, if the cropland in a county was equally

divided between cultivating ten different crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, oats, sugar beets, potatoes, hays, and rye), although there will be implied combinations, there are too many crops to represent a salient characteristic of agricultural production in that county. Such cases are rarely seen, however, and therefore multiple variables must be considered. To compare the difference between the theoretical percentage of crop production and its actual percentage, he calculated variance in the following way.

$$\theta^2 = \sum (X_i - \bar{X})^2 / n$$

Where X_i is the percentage of crop i , \bar{X} is the theoretical percentage, n is the number of crops counted for a given combination, and θ^2 is the variance of harvested acreage under the given number of crops. He determined crop combinations by county by the number of combinations that provided minimum value for θ^2 . In some cases, however, Weaver's calculation method failed to show the minimum value, especially when actual percentages of crops are very close, and combinations keep increasing without reaching the minimum value (Saito et al. 2000). Doi (1970) modified the formula by calculating variance as follows:

$$\theta^2 = \sum (X_i - X)^2$$

Doi's formula occasionally shows fewer crop combinations compared with Weaver's method, but it addresses the weakness of Weaver's method by always determining combinations.

Weaver (1954) identified crop combination regions in the upper Midwest and discussed the land use patterns and comprehensive agricultural production in that area. His contribution was, in a contemporary sense, to deconstruct delineated agricultural regions that were often represented by single crop (i.e., the Corn Belt, the Winter Wheat

Region). Indeed, his statistical method is useful when one tries to understand the mixtures of land use patterns or spatial characteristics of crop production. When seeking to understand the spatial characteristics of agriculture, however, there are at least two issues that cannot be addressed by his method. First, his methods focused upon harvested cropland acreage; hence variables of a livestock economy, however large or small they might be, are not included and so do not allow examination of the bigger picture of agricultural production in that space. Second, the different size of planted land acreage does not necessarily indicate the economic importance of crops in that area. For example, an acre of corn may yield \$300, while an acre of dark tobacco is likely to provide more than \$2,500. If corn and tobacco are harvested on equal acreages in a county, theoretically these two crops' shares are of equal importance in terms of land use, but when considered as economic revenue it is clear that tobacco will be much more important than corn.

The benefits of Weaver's statistical method is that a large area can be measured and identified by using similar statistical data, and its spatial application (from state level to county level) is fairly flexible as long as the data is available. Having 120 counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Weaver's method is useful to compare the micro-scale characteristics of agricultural production. At the same time, as mentioned above, examining only harvested land acreage will not be helpful in correctly identifying and comparing characteristics of a county's agricultural production. In order to overcome these problems, I used variables of a commodity's "total sales" for each county from the Census of Agriculture. This allows one to grasp which commodity contributes the most to that area's agricultural economy, no matter if more than 10,000 acres were planted or 100,000 head of animals are in that area. This is a more appropriate measure to identify

important commodities in that county.

Over the 15-year period between 1987 and 2002, Kentucky's agricultural commodity combination system went through a drastic transformation (Figure 3.4—3.7, Table 3.3). There are several significant changes. First, the most common commodity combination system has gradually shifted from BTD (beef cattle, tobacco, dairy) to BT (beef cattle and tobacco) (Table 3.3). Kentucky had a considerable number of dairy farms in 1987, but this number has decreased substantially after many dairy farms struggled with perennially low prices. Especially since the late 1980s, Kentucky's dairy industry continued to struggle through a nationwide trend of low milk prices. The number of dairy farms declined more than 4,000 from 1987 to 2002, and the number of dairy farms in 2002 was roughly 40 percent of what the state had in 1987.

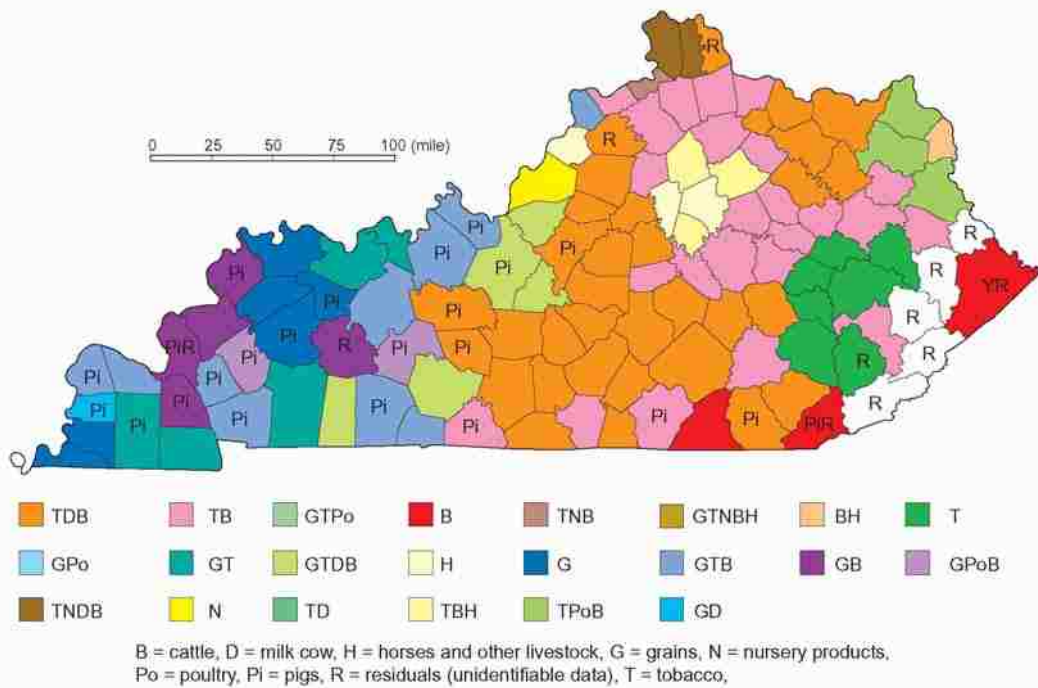


Figure 3.4. Commodity Combination Systems in Kentucky by County, 1987.

Source: US Census of Agriculture 1987

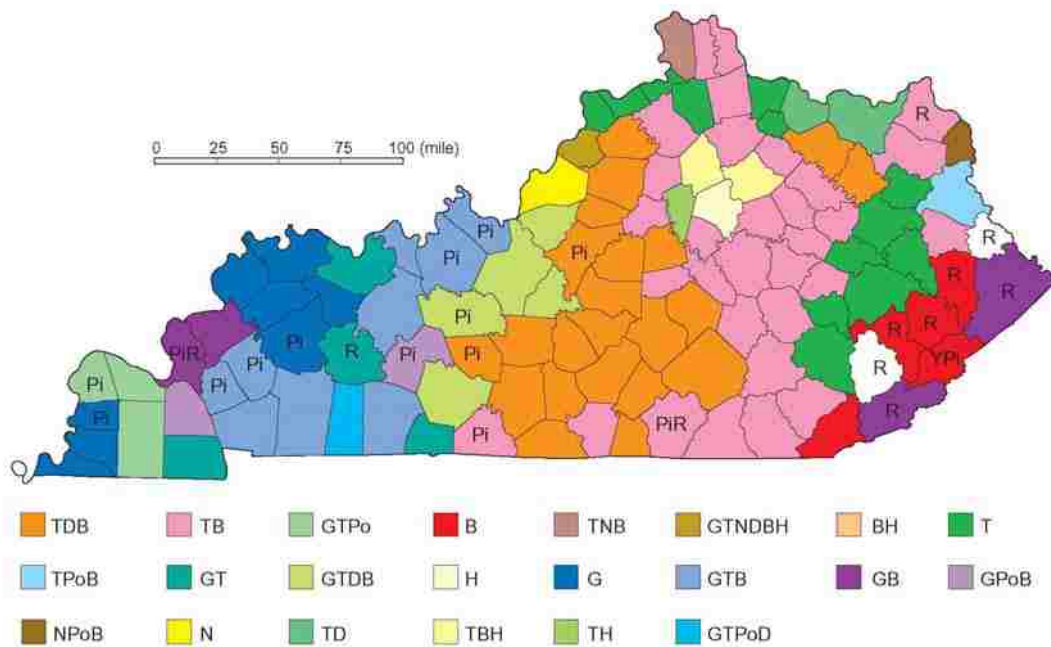
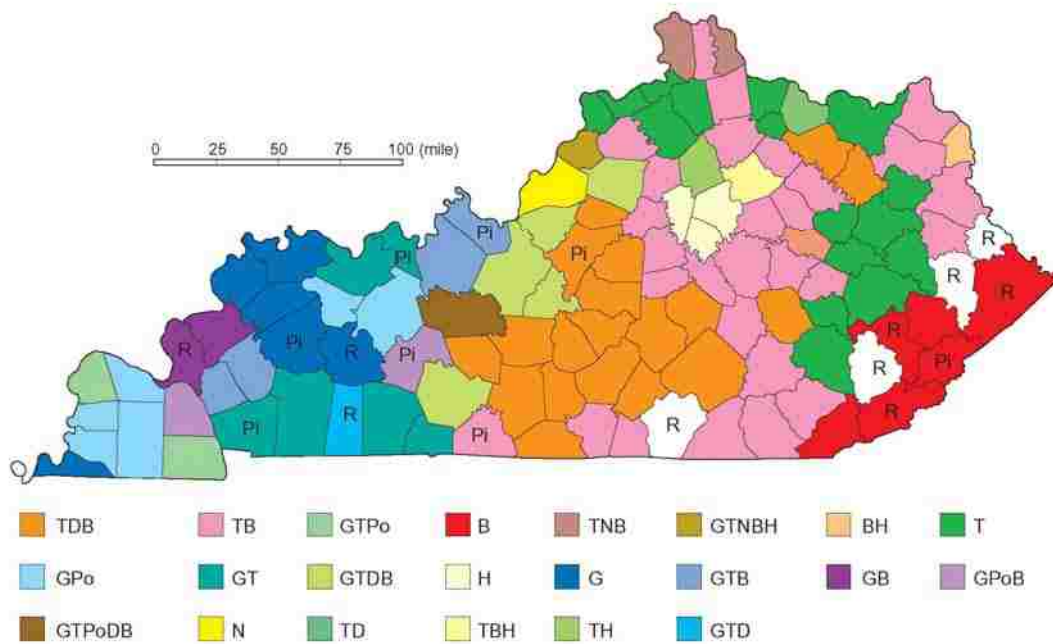


Figure 3.5. Commodity Combination Systems in Kentucky by County, 1992.

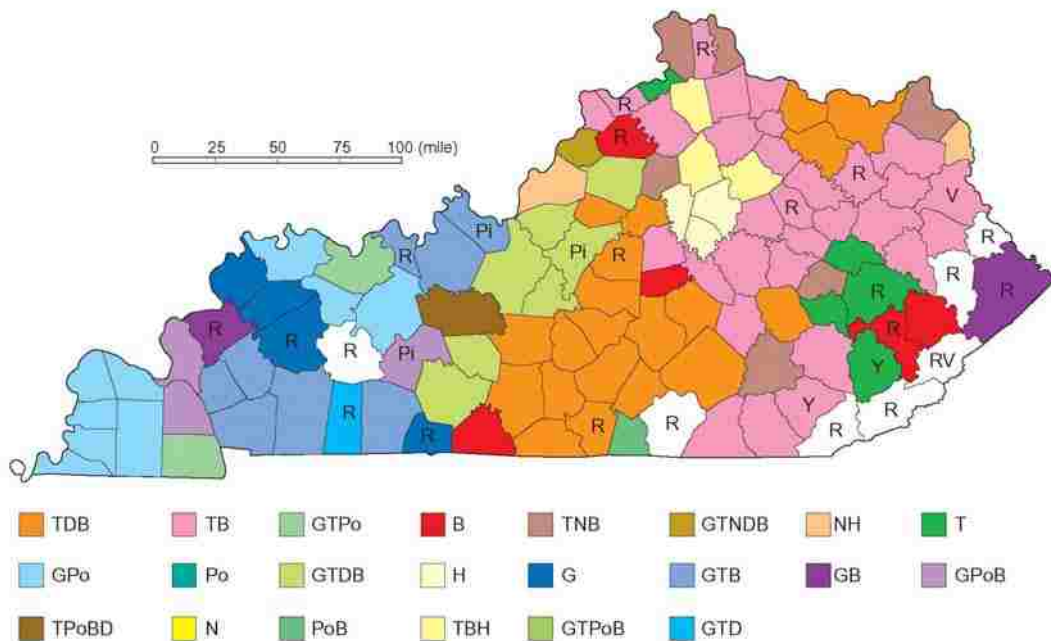
Source: US Census of Agriculture 1992



B = cattle, D = milk cow, H = horses and other livestock, G = grains, N = nursery products, Po = poultry, Pi = pigs, R = residuals (unidentifiable data), T = tobacco.

Figure 3.6. Commodity Combination Systems in Kentucky by County, 1997.

Source: US Census of Agriculture 1997

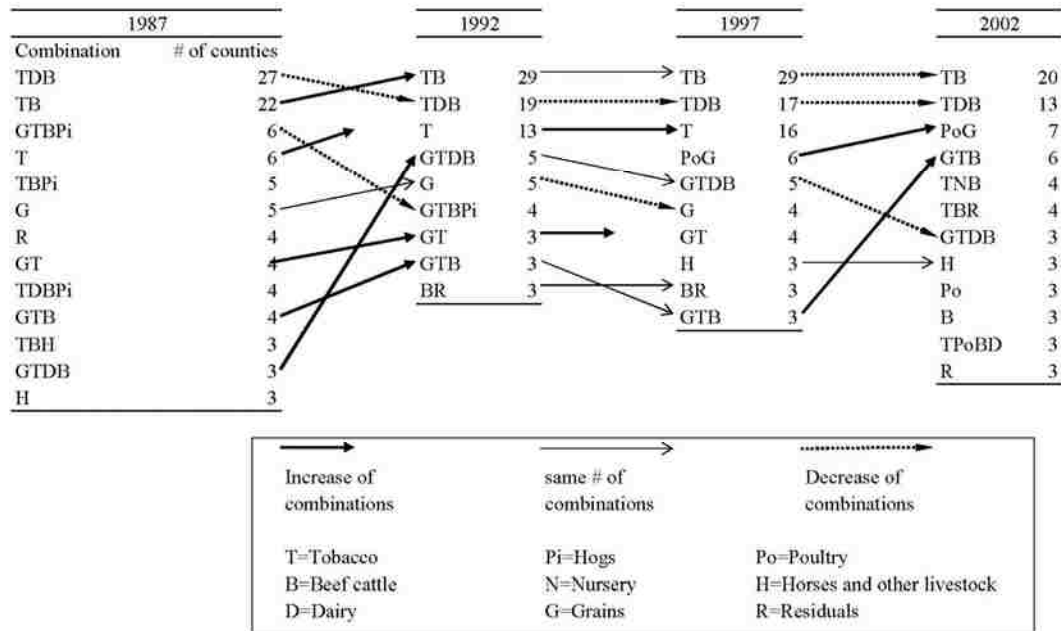


B = cattle, D = milk cow, H = horses and other livestock, G = grains, N = nursery products, Po = poultry, Pi = pigs, R = residuals (unidentifiable data), T = tobacco, Y = hay & silage

Figure 3.7. Types of Agricultural Commodity Combinations in Kentucky (2002).

Source: US Census of Agriculture 2002

Table 3.3 Changes of County-Level Commodity Combination Ranks in Kentucky, 1987-2002.



Source: US Census of Agriculture (2004).

The decrease of dairy farm numbers can be partially attributed to the shift in tobacco production. Based on an analysis of phone surveys and in-depth interviews, Garkovich et al. (2000) points out that more dairy farmers in Kentucky tend to raise tobacco, and “investing in tobacco production provides a greater level of economic certainty [for dairy farmers] than investing in their dairies.” Similarly, though less recognized in commodity combination systems, the number of counties that had hogs in commodity combinations declined from 22 in 1987 to 3 in 2002.

Second, despite decreases of dairy farms and hog farms, the number of poultry farms increased rapidly and substantially, as is seen in the inclusion of P (poultry) in western Kentucky counties’ commodity combinations. In 1987 there was no county that had poultry in its commodity combinations, but by 2002 the number of counties increased to

13. This change has two related causes: first, Purdue Inc. built a poultry processing facility in the middle of Ohio County in 1996, creating a demand for chickens from nearby farms. Poultry is one of the most vertically integrated animals produced in US agriculture (Boyd and Watts 1997), and many farms in western Kentucky signed contracts to raise chickens with the facilities and equipment that were provided by processors. For the western part of the state, the demise of tobacco income was partially supplemented by raising chickens through a contract system (Stull 2000). In article published by *the Farmer's Pride*, the Associated Press quoted the plant manager as follows: "Farmers are concerned about the future of tobacco," he [Terry Ashby] said. "They see poultry as an increasing market. There's more demand for chicken, not less" (Associated Press 1997). Second, Governor Paul Patton signed a bill to accept confined animal feeding operations (CAFO) in 2000, accelerating the expansion of livestock production, including poultry farms in western Kentucky (Curran 2002). Just as beef cattle feedlots expanded on the Great Plains where feed crops and water were available, the poultry industry increased in western Kentucky attracted by 1) cheap land and labor; 2) available feeds; 3) cheap energy costs; and 4) distance from major urban areas. Thus, western Kentucky followed mainstream American agriculture's trends of expansion and industrialization.

Third, beef cattle remained one of the most popular commodities throughout the time period. While Kentucky is known for producing the largest number of beef cattle east of the Mississippi River, the distribution of many commodity combinations that involve B (beef cattle) and their contribution are not spatially equal. Most of beef cattle operations are located in the central and eastern part of Kentucky, particularly west of Interstate 65.

A string of border counties that include B in commodity combinations are Jefferson, Bullitt, Hardin, Grayson, Edmonson, Warren, and Simpson Counties. West of this area are major producers of grain (G), tobacco, beef cattle, and poultry. On the other hand, east of this line are predominant producers of beef cattle, tobacco, and dairy cows. Other than a portion of eastern Kentucky, and the Jackson Purchase region of western Kentucky, tobacco production was included in most commodity combinations.

When contextualizing these spatiotemporal changes, several points can be made. First, the agricultural changes that Kentucky experienced in this rather short period of years were not limited to tobacco restructuring, but were also influential by other commodity changes, most notably dairy and poultry. This was therefore the period when Kentucky's small farm majority had to respond to the challenge of transforming from agrarianism to industrial agriculture. Federally supported tobacco was removed from the subsidy safety net and would yield reduced income. Small dairy farms could not continue in the face of low market milk prices. Both changes partially stemmed from neoliberal agricultural policies of the federal government, and low commodity prices (except tobacco) were put into competition against increasing scale of production. On the other hand, utilizing cheap labor and lax environmental regulations, industrialized livestock industries began to move into the western part of the state and introducing new contract relationships to producers. Because Kentucky's farms were significantly smaller than the national average, the scope of expansion was limited.

While Doi's modification of Weaver's method provides spatial comparisons of certain variables by analyzing spatial data quantitatively, it also points out the limits of grasping the salient agricultural characteristics of places. The most significant problem is

that the modified Weaver's method selects few commodities to represent agricultural production. This, in turn, masks commodities that are not produced in large market values but are important to individual counties. For example, the commodity combination in Trigg County, known for country ham production, does not reveal pigs in the representative commodity count, partly because swine sales are not comparable to corn production. Furthermore, commodity combinations hide many producers the run small-scale farms and earn decent incomes. Farmers who produce fruits and vegetables in Bluegrass region counties (Jessamine, Madison, Clark, Franklin, Scott, and several others) sell fresh produce to direct market venues such as urban farmers' markets or roadside farm stands, but because their cumulative sales are not as high as tobacco or horses, in the Census data these producers remain invisible. More qualitative data, therefore, is necessary as a supplement to understand micro-scale agricultural changes in Kentucky.

3) Summary

The demise of Kentucky's tobacco farming tends to be understood from a binary perspective: decline of domestic cigarette consumption resulted the reduction of production, which was forced by the increase in imported tobacco. While either one is correct, they will not offer the primary explanation that is required to understand the bigger picture. The changing forces are more complex and came from mainly three scales: global, national, and local.

Globally, the rise of neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s and the subsequent trade agreements such as GATT and NAFTA opened up the market for cigarette

manufacturing companies to expand their import of foreign leaf. Of course, tobacco produced in the United States was becoming more expensive than foreign tobaccos purchased by cigarette manufacturers, and it was a legitimate direction for tobacco companies to go to expand imports to increase profits. On the other hand, Kentucky tobacco growers, who were historically exploited by manufacturers, strongly resisted import increases and pressured the legislature to pass an import restriction bill. While Kentucky tobacco growers were proud that they “produce the best tobacco,” in the context of international competition and market supply, domestically produced tobacco was situated as a “loser crop” that required less governmental protection.

Nationally, the anti-tobacco movement led by health advocate groups brought general attention to the negative aspects of tobacco products. Initially concerned with underage smoking, the focus of discussion shifted to nicotine’s role in tobacco use, making the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) argue that cigarette-manufacturing companies manipulated the quality of tobacco products to enhance smokers’ addiction to tobacco. Although the FDA did not achieve full control over tobacco in subsequent court decisions, public disappointment, including the Clinton administration’s accusations against the tobacco industry, and states’ class action suits against the cigarette manufacturing companies resulted the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) that provided billions of dollars to each state as a compensation for the health care costs associated with cigarette consumption. While each state chose different ways to utilize the huge financial gains realized from the MSA, their general consensus was a desire to reduce overall tobacco production. For growers’ organizations, the focus was to reduce the loss of income to a minimal level and simultaneously cooperate with changing public

opinion, including that of health groups. Such negotiation processes brought a solution that might be termed a soft-landing.

Locally, Kentucky's tobacco production became fragile in several ways. A labor shortage had been developing since the early 1990s, resulting in a growing demand for migrant labor. The federally controlled quota system did not allow growers to expand their management scale as they would have liked. Furthermore, because quota limits changed every year, tobacco growers were dependent upon market prices yet occupied destabilized agrarian economic positions. This led many farm households to enhance earnings through off-farm employment, as reflected in the ratio of Kentucky's farmers with agriculture as a primary occupation, remained much lower than the national average (USDA 2004). The MSA that brought monetary compensation for quota owners and growers, and the federal congress's subsequent decision on a tobacco buyout program provided decision-making opportunities to farmers as to whether they should continue tobacco production.

As these analyses suggest, the decline of tobacco-based agriculture in Kentucky came about as a result of the complex interplay of several factors. The transformation was not a simple equation that introduced a new commodity to replace tobacco. On the other hand, Kentucky's agriculture continued to transform with new connections to other industrial agricultural trends. The dairy industry declined as a result of low market prices, while the expansion of the beef cattle business and integrated poultry farms increased. Thus, corporate agriculture's dominance came to the fore simultaneously with Kentucky tobacco farmers' introduction to a free-trade agricultural economic environment.

Contextually, all of these changes could have been understood as one "rise and fall"

of industries, something that we tend to take granted as commonplace in the contemporary world. For example, California was once one of the world's largest wheat-producing areas (McWilliams 1946), but the current situation is vastly different. Similarly, Kentucky was at one time the sixth largest vegetable producer in the United States (Glasscock 2002), although very few people seem to care about this historical change. If such macro change is commonplace, what makes Kentucky's tobacco and agricultural restructuring so important and interesting to examine? Why is this situation so different from other historic agricultural changes such as wheat in California? I argue that there are three reasons. First, in spite of scalar disadvantages (farm size, labor availability, infrastructure, and many more), very few people considered the decline of tobacco as a turning point leading to a decline of agriculture overall. Second, with the emergence of MSA capital inflows and the subsequent passage of Kentucky House Bill 611 in 2000, availability of capital investment put many actors face to face with transformation. Third, and most importantly, while Kentucky farm communities went through the process of tobacco's decline and attempted to support farmers going through transitions, discourse of "diversification of tobacco farms" have converted to "'local' food production" for ideological and marketing strategies. Because no single crop could replace tobacco's income, however, agricultural production had to have a variety of new ways to add value. How multiple actors tried to construct value in the process of "diversification"—localization was a part of the strategy—and the consequences of implementing agricultural and food localism in Kentucky is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Under the Name of “Kentucky”: Politics of Branding and Scale Construction

"When you think of Kentucky Fried Chicken, for example, or the Kentucky Derby, when you think of Kentucky products worldwide, people relate very positively to that. ... I would see that we could not only reduce imports and have an impact on our economy, but we could also export more and have an even greater impact on our economy."
Brereton Jones, Lt. Governor of Kentucky (Quoted in Osbourn 1990)

"The first mistake a lot of farmers make is to figure out what they can grow and grow that ... which is a really big mistake. The first thing they need to figure out is what they can sell."
Jim Cochran, an organic strawberry and vegetable grower on the coast north of Santa Cruz (Quoted in Lochhead 2007)

1) Emergence of “Food Localism” in the Context of Agricultural Diversification

In my opinion, Brereton Jones’ quotation best characterizes the images of Kentucky that Kentuckians have about ‘others’ regarding their own ‘Kentucky products.’ While there are various products that can be considered as typically ‘Kentucky’, when contextualizing ‘Kentucky products’ as consumable food products Jones’ quotation is blind to some basic questions that must be addressed: What foods are grown, produced, or seen as ‘Kentucky products’? How have these foods become icons of ‘Kentucky food’? Are these foods distinctively consumed as ‘Kentucky foods’? And most importantly, what are the connections between the production of food products and tobacco, the traditional farm product that yielded more than a quarter of Kentucky’s agricultural sales over the last several decades?

There is a significant binary between what is produced on the farm (traditional grains and cash crops, including tobacco, and non-traditional farm products) and what is sold and consumed. In contemporary agriculture, in some sense such a binary is inevitable because farm production in general will exceed the quantity used for human consumption,

and many edible crops are now consumed for purposes (such as processing for manufactured goods and feeding for animals) other than human consumption. Furthermore, because of its long history of tobacco farming, Kentucky farmers, farm leaders, and state agricultural policy makers never seriously counted food production as part of their agricultural tradition. Today, Kentucky prides itself in having the largest beef production east of the Mississippi River, but the consumption of beef is seldom discussed. The loss of tobacco and the following post-tobacco agricultural transformation led people to see food crops and livestock as new agricultural products to supplement farm income.

As I explained in the previous chapter, what happened to Kentucky's agriculture in the last twenty years, in summary, was that 1) tobacco production has declined significantly, and therefore 2) many farms transformed their farm management strategies. The receipt of large monetary payments from the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) as a result of the settlement of a lawsuit against several major tobacco companies in 1998 remarkably influenced changes in agriculture and food production in Kentucky (Snell 2004). To examine the transition between 1) and 2), however, one must critically analyze what, when, where, who, why, and how these changes occurred. This chapter, therefore, discusses how people in various organizations such as government agencies, non-profit organizations, farm producers, private businesses and industries, and consumer groups in Kentucky responded to tobacco quota reductions in the late 1990s and inaugurated a subsequent shift of their agricultural production practices. Here, I ask two core questions: First, how have actors in Kentucky responded to post-tobacco agricultural changes? And second, how did the meaning of "places" actively contribute to the post-tobacco transition (i.e. economic development, cultural icon, site of production, exchange, and

consumption)?

Before I explain post-tobacco agricultural restructuring in Kentucky, I will examine the cultural meanings that are associated with food, agriculture, and places. Kentucky has traditionally produced agricultural commodities such as burley tobacco and distilling grains for making bourbon whiskies (Ulack, Raitz, and Pauer. 1998). Although more than half of Kentucky farmers were involved in burley tobacco production in 1997, their products seldom contributed to or promoted localism. This was in part because Kentucky burley was processed and mixed with flue-cured tobacco, and also in part because consumption of tobacco was dependent on personal choice. In addition, because tobacco became a less desirable product from the perspective of the general American public in the last two decades, valuing this commodity for its “local” quality was not the best strategy for growers.⁶ As a result, tobacco growers had no way to confirm who was consuming their products and vice versa. Bourbon whiskey, on the other hand, can be considered as a product that is closely associated with “local,” since most of the distillers are highly localized within the Commonwealth.⁷ Distillers also specify that they produce

⁶ There is one exception to this statement. Kentucky’s Best, a cigarette manufacturing company in Cynthiana, KY, prides itself on producing its own brand that is “... the only cigarette made by lifelong tobacco farmers and warehousemen who know quality tobacco when they see it. ... Producing great tobacco has been a proud heritage in our family and in Kentucky for hundreds of years and we continue that tradition of craftsmanship.” (Kentucky’s Best Cigarettes. 2007. <http://www.farmerstobacco.com/> (last accessed: February 18, 2007))

⁷ While today’s young consumers in Kentucky (and in the United States) may assume bourbon as a Kentucky’s localized branded whiskey without doubt, it was only after 1960 that bourbon was recognized as an “American bourbon whiskey” by the European distillers and vintners in the same brand standing as Scotch whiskey and French cognac (Nally 1992). Pollan (2006) points out that the birth of bourbon is also a historical landmark which resulted from corn overproduction. Whiskey was distilled in Kentucky to add value to overproduced corn in the eighteenth century. Since crossing the Appalachian Mountains was very difficult at the time, the expanding market for corn was limited.

“Kentucky bourbon whiskey” to distinguish themselves from products such as sour mash corn whiskey or Tennessee Whiskey (Jack Daniels is the best example). These examples suggest that discussions of localism must be flexible in geographical scale, because while every commodity is produced at a local site with the embedding of specific places, the scale of consumption or the marketing shed does not always link directly to local spaces. Furthermore, for modern agribusinesses, localism—discourse that leads one to prioritize ‘local’ instead of a larger scale such as national or global—is not a primary concern unless it makes substantial gains or deficits in profit. How and when, then, should we construct and promote food localism within agricultural production and food commodity chains?

In the meantime, in the national-level, it has been since the early 1980s that sustainable agriculture emerged in contrast to mainstream agriculture. Although Wendell Berry’s seminal book *The Unsettling of America* was published in 1977, it was not until the early 1980s when farm loss, environmental degradation, intensive overproduction, and resource exploitation brought the concern about sustainability into the context of contemporary American Agriculture (Allen 2004). Discussions on different techniques and approaches of agricultural production such as organic farming, biodynamic agriculture, and agroecology were considered for future alternatives. Patricia Allen suggests that this trend toward a greater interest in “‘sustainable agriculture’ has emerged as the most prevalent, in part because it has been accepted by national and international agricultural agencies” (Allen 2004, 35).

Eventually, participants in agriculture and food production such as farm leaders,

Farmers distilled corn to make bourbon whiskey, aged it in the barrels, shipped it via river transportation, and sold it at New Orleans and other distant cities.

extension agents, university researchers, consumers, community organizers, and policy makers across the United States led their push on sustainable agriculture to the level of a social movement in the 1990s. In this context, the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture (NCSA) was launched in 1994 to discuss future directions and policies that supported sustainability of small farms across the United States. The NCSA is a nationwide coalition of individuals and organizations that work at the “grassroots level” to “engage in policy development processes that result in food and agricultural systems and rural communities that are healthy, environmentally sound, profitable, humane and just” (NCSA 2007). The organization’s focus is primarily on federal policy, and it worked with regional groups to advocate policy solutions that would lead to participation and practice of sustainable agriculture (Allen 2004). NCSA has five branch regional working groups: California, Northeast, Midwest, Southern, and Western. Kentucky is part of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG), which hosts an annual meeting in January. The NCSA was one of the strong advocates for small farmers and called for implementation of sustainable agriculture, and often voiced their concerns at various meetings. The NCSA’s actions provide a crucial background context given the discourse of “sustainability” that first arose at the national-level would later influence Kentucky’s post-tobacco transitions.

Many burley producers were aware that there was no single and guaranteed crop that could immediately replace the income that tobacco farming was bringing in (Swanson 2001). Although some farmers persisted in growing tobacco because of its familiarity and tradition, many producers, especially those who were not close to retirement, had to seek directional changes on their farm management, namely diversify production to include

something other than tobacco. What does diversification mean? Kohls and Uhl (2002) define diversification as “...performing more than one unrelated market activity or producing more than one product; the opposite of *specialization*” (italic original). Tobacco production in Kentucky may not be considered significantly specialized compared with other agricultural production because of its limited acreage and the high proportion of part-time farmers engaged in production. But, because income yielded from tobacco was disproportionately higher than any other crops on a per acre basis, diversification in Kentucky did not mean simply converting from tobacco to some other crop(s). That is, ‘diversification’ was not contextually the same as monoculture corn farmers adding soybeans and alfalfa for rotational cropping. Instead, it meant increasing the variety of products grown, changing the method of sales and marketing, and adding different types of infrastructural facilities. After all, producers were stuck in the middle of a major transformation within the larger economy: to earn higher profit from a given resource, one must either produce higher yields per acre, or add value to a limited quantity product to make the products more profitable. Everyone had to find his or her own way.

This is easier imagined than accomplished for many reasons. First, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, Kentucky’s farm operators have much smaller per farm acreages than the national average. This means crops that require a large acreage to generate profits (such as corn, soybeans, potatoes, or wheat) would not be suitable for alternative diversification unless one operates more than a few thousand acres. Second, products are priced high because they require specialized skill, special equipment, and high labor costs to produce. Tobacco remained at a profitable level simply because the government

regulated production with high market prices. As a farm labor shortage was already apparent in the early 1990s, agricultural diversification in Kentucky would not translate to labor-intensive production systems such as plantation farms or wage-labor-based farms. Thus, the strategy of diversification was limited by the availability and scale of land and capital. This is important because if farm scale had already been large enough, selling products to county farmers' markets, for example, would not likely have existed. Third, although Kentucky is located in fair proximity to a number of mid-to-large sized cities with potential markets (Chicago, St. Louis, Atlanta, Detroit, Nashville, and many more), Kentucky has few large cities (Louisville, Lexington, and Cincinnati metropolitan area) that would immediately impact the supply of produce markets. Furthermore, Kentucky's per capita income is lower than the national average; hence, the state could not immediately depend upon citizens to consume large quantities of non-traditional agricultural products unless they change their shopping behavior and consumption choices. To sum up, there were not many opportunities for increasing profit by expanding yield and scale of production. Rather, adding value to a limited range of produce and selling that to a broader consumer group was a more practical direction.

This leads to the next question: What factors best serve to establish the best value for Kentucky's food production? Is the value equal to quality, brand and labeling, personal relationships, or trust? When we observe the produce section in grocery stores, we see that there are many key words that the grocers and advertisers use to promote food products: fresh, safe, tasty, delicious, local, personal, humane, organic, homegrown, natural, heirloom, traditional, country-style, farm-raised, environmentally friendly, locally grown, sustainable, premium, and the list goes on. Each term evokes a potentially valued

characteristic, but no term seems to stand out as the best descriptor. Because Kentucky's agricultural transformation was not suitable for a land use-intensive production system for physiographic reasons, values that justify the role of small-scale productions are likely to be preferable. In that context, I argue that the concept of place and 'local' became one of the keys to the diversification process. These changes required not just an opportunity by farm producers to market new products, but also required positive stimulation to encourage consumers to buy the products and related agricultural organizations to support the entire process.

I wish to further examine how the localism of food production in Kentucky was constructed and influenced by strategically planned introduction of local scale production through the post-tobacco state agricultural development program. People in various organizations, including government officials, non-profit organizations, individual farm leaders, and many others contributed to the search for ways to support farmers who were in difficult economic circumstances. Their relations were complex; therefore I tentatively classified my study focus into four time periods: foundations of the Commodity Growers Cooperative and the search of "something other than tobacco" (1993-1995); market expansion and efforts led by the Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Billy Ray Smith and other non-tobacco groups (1996-1999); Passage of Kentucky House Bill 611 and the politics of power relations (2000-2003); and the empowering discourse of "Kentucky Proud" and its effect upon agriculture and food production (2004-2006) (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Chronology of non-tobacco "local food" issues in Kentucky, 1990-2006.

Year	Events in Kentucky	Key Actors	National & Int'l Events
1991	"Pride of Kentucky Produced by Kentuckians" logo approved		
1992		Ed Lodgson elected Commissioner of Agriculture	
1993	Northern KY Farmers' Market plan emerged (failed in next year)		
1994	KY First Buying Club started in Lexington	John M. Berry Jr. re-build CGC	Elimination of tobacco program discussed in Senate
1995	Vegetable sales arranged through CGC with limited success	Karen Armstrong-Cummings leads CGC	Burley's management passed to FDA's authority
1996	Fairview Auction opened Certified Roadside Market program started by the KFB Marketing Dev. Board requests funding to strengthen marketing	Billy Ray Smith elected Commissioner of Agriculture Marketing Development Advisory Board created	Freedom to Farm bill (1996 Farm Bill) passed; anti-tobacco movement
1997	Specialty products (shiitake mushroom, winter vegetables) being tried		MSA debate, Senator Lugar (IN) proposes buyout plan
1998	New logo "KY--Where Quality Grows" created funds distributed for marketing	Governor's Commission on Family Farm launched	MSA reaches agreement
1999	Discussion on use of MSA		
2000	New Crop Opportunity Center opened, House Bill 611 passed	Governor appoints members for Ag. Development Board John-Mark Hack leads GOAP	
2001	Mobile Processing Unit explored		
2002	ADB sets aside \$13 million for marketing, "Kentucky Fresh" logo created		
2003	House Bill 391 passed	John-Mark Hack resigns GOAP	
2004	"Kentucky Proud" succeeds "Kentucky Fresh", expands advertising	Richie Farmer elected Commissioner of Agriculture Michael Judge, Mac Stone hired at KDA	Tobacco buyout passed Congress
2005	House Bill 669 passed		
2006	Number of farmers' markets in Kentucky pass over 100		

Source: *Farmer's Pride, Lexington Herald-Leader, Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer.*

In what follows, after briefly explaining the fundamental challenges that Kentucky's agriculture originally had, I will discuss these four periods in different subsections and explain how agricultural transformation proceeded over the transitional period, resulting in the homogenization of scale and territorialization of food localism. These changes did not occur without problems or conflicts, hence I will critically analyze some of the pitfalls encountered during Kentucky's agricultural transformation, some of which will be further explored in the following chapter.

The primary source of information for this chapter comes from an analysis of diverse printed documents (including *Farmer's Pride*, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*, and *Kentucky Ag News*), government publications, semi-structured interviews with key persons, and informal conversations and participatory observation at a number of meetings and conferences that I attended. Because of the nature of the topic this chapter tends toward description and narration, but my focus is to critically examine discourses beyond the events and changes that occurred during the process of Kentucky's post-tobacco agricultural restructuring.

2) Challenges and Strategies of Food Localization in Kentucky

a) Fundamental Obstacles for Kentucky's Agriculture

One of the biggest challenges that farm producers and state government officials faced during the transition of agricultural restructuring in Kentucky was the marketing of their products. For burley growers, their shipping process was fairly simple: all they had to do was grow and cut tobacco, hang it in the barn to cure, and bring it to a warehouse for auction. Once their product was auctioned and purchased by buyers, no additional effort was required. Payment checks were soon forthcoming, and it was common for growers to say that “tobacco money was used to send the kids to college” (Ward 2007). This production-marketing process is radically different from that of grain producers, because the income on harvested grains is based not only on yield but also to a large extent on the grain market price and government subsidy payments. A change in market price is something over which producers had no control. In 1973, when the former Soviet Union decided to purchase grain from the United States, the grain market price soared (Saito et al. 2000). Subsequently, within a few years and until the early 1980s, grain prices remained low and many producers faced financial difficulties, a situation that is now collectively known as the “farm crisis.” For tobacco farmers, however, what determined their crop income were federal quota allotments (amounts of tobacco that owners were allowed to grow), the quality of their produce, and hundreds of different grading prices set by the federal government. Of these variables, annual quota allotments were the most critical because they provided an estimate of annual income from a tobacco crop. Quotas changed slightly every year, depending upon supply and quantity in storage held by domestic companies. Quota allotments were not radically reduced until

the mid 1990s. Because producers knew the price and quota prior to planting, unless they suffered bad weather or a disease infection of their crop, the production process tended to be stable and predictable.

In the case of non-traditional crops, however, growing and marketing conditions were different. Perishable products have peak ripeness periods, and harvesting before or after that point would deteriorate quality significantly. Furthermore, improper handling immediately after harvest could seriously affect quality, and thus product sales. Burley growers who started producing tomatoes or cantaloupes quickly realized that they needed to know the market: where they could sell, to whom they could sell, and the optimal time when a product should be sold. If any of this information was misunderstood or incorrectly addressed, farmers risked the loss of their crop and therefore their income. Consequently, there was a substantial gap between producing non-perishable and perishable products (Smith 2007).

b) Re-establishment of the Commodity Growers Cooperative Inc. and Attempts to Demonstrate the Importance of Non-tobacco Agriculture (1993-1995)

Prior to the 1990s there were very few market outlets for non-traditional commodities in Kentucky. The number of commodity wholesale cooperatives was limited and their location was far from major city markets.⁸ That does not mean, however, that access to non-traditional agricultural commodities was non-existent for consumers. In

⁸ One exception was Cumberland Farm Products Inc, located in Monticello, Kentucky. There, many producers formed cooperatives for vegetable production such as cabbage, tomatoes, and bell peppers, and constantly supplied any market where there was a demand. Their business was known from the early 1970s and had income levels roughly equivalent income to tobacco production (*Farmer's Pride* March 17, 1992).

fact, attempts to introduce Kentucky’s food products were already taking place in the early 1990s. In 1990, Lieutenant Governor Brereton Jones and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) launched a contest to establish a logo that would promote and label Kentucky grown farm products (Osborn 1990). The winning logo, titled “Pride of Kentucky—Produced by Kentuckians” (Figure 4.1), was approved by the legislature with a budget around \$150,000 and was used by producers and processors to certify their items as Kentucky-made products (Hobbs 1991).



Figure 4.1. “Pride of Kentucky Produced by Kentuckian” logo.
Source: *Farmer’s Pride* (February 14, 1996).

At the time products promoted with this logo tended to be processed products, especially country ham. This logo continued in use for several years, but the success of this campaign was not very significant, as I could not find clear evidence that suggested growth of “local product” sales related to this logo. Furthermore, Governor Jones asked the General Assembly to fund \$3 million to assist development of the Northern Kentucky Regional Farmers’ Market in 1994, aiming to expand direct fresh produce sales. Against

the governor's request, however, funding was eliminated from the state budget (Boese 1994). A group of organizers who advocated to establish the Northern Kentucky Regional Farmers' Market insisted that the state commit funds to support its program. Governor Jones, however, eventually excluded the market plan from the funding consideration, in part because "political reality dictated the decision to pull the request," which faced opposition from the state Senate (Stroud 1994c). Although state Agriculture Commissioner Ed Logsdon recognized the need for funding this marketing-related program, he and the Governor were not able to convince legislative members to establish financial support.⁹ State governmental funding for the marketing effort was scarce in part because of the dependence on tobacco—production and price was controlled by the federal government—which caused the governor and state Department of Agriculture to underestimate the need to take the initiative to institute changes. Thus, the authority that controlled Kentucky's major agricultural production was federal because of the long-standing tobacco program; hence the Kentucky General Assembly lacked a basis for farm program decision-making. Few people in Kentucky thought it was necessary to invest in non-tobacco agricultural production.

Meanwhile, leaders in tobacco growing communities were not blind to the need for changes in farm product marketing. Before John M. Berry Jr. stepped down as the president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) in the summer of 1994, he made an important contribution to the future. In 1993, he re-started

⁹ One other reason that caused Jones to eliminate the funding priority for the Northern Kentucky Regional Farmers' Market was that he had three other construction projects at the time: convention centers in Louisville and Northern Kentucky, each estimated to cost \$25 million, and the Frankfort History Center, that would draw \$17.5 million from the state budget (Stroud 1994).

the Commodity Growers Cooperative Inc. (CGC) as an affiliate of BTGCA. The CGC formerly was a part of the BTGCA, an institution that marketed hemp products, but after hemp production and marketing was regulated in the 1940s, the CGC had not functioned for several decades. Berry re-started the CGC to assist BTGCA members in producing and marketing their non-tobacco products, primarily vegetables.

In addition, in 1993 criticism toward the tobacco industries began to garner nationwide attention, especially after the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a report saying that “tobacco smoke can cause cancer in non-smokers” (Pack 1993a). Although BTGCA was against the regulation of tobacco, it was not in their interest to defend underage smoking. CGC, therefore, also worked on preventing youth smoking. CGC’s campaign for both public health awareness and tobacco growers’ assistance was called “Family Farm Homegrown Products” (Austin and Altman 2000).

In 1994, with financial support from the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) and Mothers and Others for a Livable Planet, the CGC organized vegetable pilot projects, connecting a group of tobacco producers who grew vegetables and sold them in boxes to members of a buying club, the “Kentucky First Organic Vegetables Buying Club” (see Table 4.1). The project promoted selling organic produce to consumers in Lexington, Louisville, Versailles, and Frankfort. Twenty-one farmers agreed to supply vegetables, and more than 100 consumers were sought to join buying clubs for \$20 a week from May through October (Bishop 1994). Members who were in the buying club were primarily consumers interested in the process (Kreimer 1994). This program was very similar to today’s Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA). The objective of this pilot project was to provide tobacco farmers a chance to diversify, and at the same time enable consumers

to purchase fresh organically grown vegetable crops (Bishop 1994). Eventually, growers formed their own association, Kentucky Organic Growers Association, which included both those who concentrated on vegetables as well as those who also produce tobacco (Kreimer 1994).

The project was experimental in several ways. Given office space and access to a phone and copier (Berry 2006), Pam Clay, the director of CGC, arranged the vegetable program, but had to overcome many obstacles. Her budget of \$70,000 was not sufficient to run the program throughout the full season (Stroud 1994b). Compared with other organizations, the BTGCA, both members and the board, were most reluctant to give financial backing to this vegetable project (Berry 2006). Additionally, several producers dropped out during the season for a variety of reasons; this made the remaining producers' supply insufficient for the contracted consumers, and the volume was not enough to cover liability insurance (Stroud 1994b). Although Clay was reportedly optimistic about the future of the buying club (Stroud 1994b), this project experience offered lessons to producers, organizers, and consumers. Producers learned that vegetable marketing strategy was significantly different from tobacco, and would require a much larger labor commitment. This disillusioned some producers about continuing vegetable production. Consumers, on the other hand, found that there was a way to receive fresh, high quality products from in state producers, although it requiring an up-front financial investment (\$500 per member). Organizers running the program needed to be knowledgeable in various aspects of marketing and administration (such as negotiation, paper work, advertising, and much more).

Of considerable interest in this process was the binary discourse of evaluating

tobacco. Those who resisted introducing non-tobacco products cited profitability as a reason, arguing that nothing can replace tobacco (Stroud 1994b). Specialists in agriculture at UK who were quoted in printed articles also admitted that vegetables yielded lower profits compared with tobacco, thereby not necessarily providing leadership in advocating for diversification (see Carlton 1994). For avid tobacco supporters, their most important concern was to keep the federal tobacco program as it had been. Hence, any groups or individuals that were ‘anti-tobacco’ were a threat. On the other hand, those who participated in selling for the Buying Club were producers who either quit tobacco completely for ethical or other reasons, or producers who had an interest in changing their crops and income base. For them, tobacco profitability was not the most important decision-making factor. Thus, producers who had broader interests and were concerned about tobacco’s future were the leaders in the initial shift toward post-tobacco agricultural transformation, and no single farm organization was particularly influential in this change.¹⁰

When Rod Kuegel of Owensboro became the president of BTGCA in January 1995,

¹⁰ In 1994 the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) and UK College of Agriculture received a grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation for finding ways for Kentucky farmers “to enhance [their] agriculture’s environmental and economic sustainability” (Community Farm Alliance Newsletter 1994). The project, Kentucky Leadership for Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability (KLAES), was funded to enable farm community groups to develop projects that would help their local issues. One of the projects that were done through KLAES was the Harrison Beef Project, which launched the beef cattle network, including a telephone hotline, to provide information on a trading exchange (Sachdev 1995). The CFA is a non-profit organization that was launched in 1985 to protect small farmers from marginalization. The CFA was also active in assisting Farm Labor Hotlines, which connected growers who were in need of additional labor. Given that the CFA was a long supporter of small farms, it would not be surprising to see members of the CFA taking a role in introducing non-tobacco production. Throughout the informal conversations I heard many people speak about their leadership and commitment, but as far as materials that I read, I could not say that the CFA was “the only leading organization” at the earlier stages of agricultural diversification.

the CGC's vegetable buying club was about to start its second year. Although Mr. Kuegel was initially skeptical of growing non-tobacco crops, soon he was "sold" on Mr. Berry's idea of diversification and started to actively promote CGC's project (Kuegel 2007). Karen Armstrong-Cummings, former environment official who served as deputy secretary at the Kentucky Natural Resource Cabinet, was hired as an executive director of the CGC in December 1995. Because Mr. Berry and Ms. Armstrong-Cummings worked together to regulate toxic waste in Eastern Kentucky in 1980s (Dias 1990), they knew each other well. She had also been active in farm communities for many years, and soon took a role in assisting tobacco farmers by providing information and technical assistance. Armstrong-Cummings, Clay, and Kuegel worked together to expand CGC's vegetable projects and encouraged more producers to become involved in the project. Specifically, among dozens of smaller projects, they launched three major programs (Lucke 1996b):

- "Buy Kentucky," what we presently call institutional purchases, which encouraged public institutions such as schools or state parks to purchase produce grown in Kentucky;
- "Consider the Connections," which encouraged urban residents to purchase locally grown produce more directly and support farmers; and
- "Growing for the Future," which encouraged producers to examine what will be best for their economy.

These projects were beneficial in part because they were primarily involved with tobacco farmers. Because the CGC was a subsidiary of the BTGCA, most burley growers who were also members of the BTGCA had access to learn more about ongoing diversification programs. Despite such potential success, however, the CGC was not

always financially lucrative. Although the CGC was funded by BTGCA, they also had to seek additional resources to run their program, and Armstrong-Cummings needed to raise their own funds to support their organizations (Armstrong-Cummings 2006).¹¹ Furthermore, there were still significant numbers of BTGCA members who were critical of the CGC's emphasis on diversification, and that prevented the BTGCA from deciding to allocate larger investments/funds. With limited resources, Ms. Armstrong-Cummings and the CGC pushed tobacco-based farm communities to seek something to produce other than tobacco. In addition, the CGC also led pilot programs for aquaculture, produce, nursery greenhouse, and goat marketing. Overall it took several years to figure out the best replacement for tobacco.

c) Market Expansion Effort and Struggles of by the State Government and Non-tobacco Actors (1996-1999)

While non-governmental organizations worked to assist burley producers' diversification, the state legislature and political leaders transitioned at a slower pace. When Paul Patton was elected Governor of Kentucky in 1995, he pledged that helping agricultural sectors was one of his high priorities. Similarly, Billy Ray Smith, elected Commissioner of Agriculture, specifically announced that the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA)'s efforts for marketing Kentucky-grown products must be strengthened (Vaishnav 1995). Once Smith took office in 1996, he reorganized the KDA to five divisions: animal health, consumer affairs, environmental regulation, planning, and agricultural marketing. Prior to his election, the KDA's agricultural marketing and product promotion, headed by Gene Royalty, employed only three marketing specialists,

¹¹ Because of a financial shortfall, unfortunately, Clay was dismissed from the CGC in September, 1996 (Lucke 1996).

none of whom had degrees in marketing (Lucke 1996c). It was estimated that Kentucky spent less than \$300,000 in marketing activities. Smith's establishment of the Division of Agricultural Marketing, therefore, was a radical change for the KDA.¹²

Commissioner Smith was quick in taking action. In 1996, he organized the Marketing Development Advisory Board to determine the direction of marketing, and Smith put horticulture as a first initiative on marketing plans (Skillman 1997a). In the same year, he and the KDA started to promote state-produced products to large retailers such as Kroger, using the "Pride of Kentucky" logo to promote state produce in 16 store locations (Lucke 1996a). A year later, the KDA hired Jim Mansfield as a Director of the KDA Office for Agricultural Marketing and Plant Production, followed by the hiring of Terry Garmon (Director of the KDA Office for Agricultural Marketing and Product Promotion) and Mark Straw (Director of the KDA Value-Added Animal & Aquaculture Production) (Smith 2007).

In 1997, Mansfield launched "Kentucky: Where the Quality Grows" logo to promote in-state products. The former logo, "Pride of KY Produced by Kentuckians," was replaced to emphasize the agricultural products (Sharp 1997). His idea was to increase the purchase and consumption of products grown in the Commonwealth, thereby providing cash flow to producers. This logo worked best in direct sale venues such as farmers' markets, where identification of produce characteristics was clear (Mansfield

¹² In the meantime, the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture also hired marketing specialists. Brent Rowell, specialist in commercial vegetable crops, was hired in 1994 and is currently extension specialist in the Department of Horticulture. Similarly, Tim Woods, specialist in horticultural marketing, was hired in August 1995 and is currently extension associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Woods particularly became instrumental in commercial agricultural marketing in Kentucky. Unfortunately, however, interview requests with Rowell and Woods were not granted as of this time of writing.

2006). This, however, could not be called a complete success, because major conventional retailers such as Kroger and Meijer did not demonstrate loyalty to Kentucky-grown produce and did not participate in this program as much as Mansfield and the KDA had hoped for. With lack of quantity, space for sales, and special treatment for produce, labeling local produce as “Kentucky: Where the Quality Grows” was not as successful as hoped. Mansfield recalled his experience; “They were expensive things to do” (Mansfield 2006). Thus, those who had access to “Kentucky grown” or “local” products were limited to those who came to the direct marketing venue (such as consumers who shop at farmers’ markets), therefore visibility of “local food” was much narrower. In order to expand both marketing venues and commodity quantities for sale, investments in other production and marketing segments were still necessary.

Meanwhile, in addition to works by the KDA, led by Commissioner Smith and the Commodity Growers Cooperative (CGC), other non-tobacco organizations were starting to address the need for a commitment to marketing. One such group was the Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB), the largest farm organization and one that had considerable influence on many aspects of Kentucky’s agricultural policies. While the KFB had a voice in many commodity groups (such as corn, wheat, soybeans, cattle, hogs, and many others), they were not strongly associated with tobacco producers; therefore, the struggles and criticisms that tobacco farmers received did not immediately influence KFB’s activities. The KFB members, however, approached them to assist in promoting direct marketing, especially after a member saw a similar practice by the Farm Bureau in South Carolina (Carlagno 1996).¹³ In 1996 the KFB launched the Certified Roadside Farm

¹³ It was Trudie and Dana Reed, operators of Reed Orchard in Georgetown, KY, who

Market Program (CRFMP). Under this program, KFB charged participating members a \$250 fee, and in turn it advertised members' farmstand locations and contents in various printed publications, including *Kentucky Monthly*, *All Around Kentucky*, *Farm Bureau News*, *Back Home in Kentucky*, and *Buz Bid Trader*. They placed an ad in *Farmer's Pride* (Figure 4.2). In addition, these maps were distributed at a variety of automobile travel sites, including welcome center stops along Interstate 24 and Interstate 64 (Henshaw 2006). In its first year, the CRFMP started with 25 participating markets, but as the group's reputation spread to those who were seeking advertising opportunities, membership of the Program became larger. While more than 30,000 programs were printed in the first year, only a handful were left over and not distributed (Skillman 1997b).

introduced to the KFB information about South Carolina's direct marketing effort (Carlagno 1996). The Reeds' produce is currently available both at the farm onsite and Lexington Farmers' Market, and they continue to be one of the successful orchards in Central Kentucky.



Figure 4.2 List of Kentucky Roadside Farm Market Program participants. (Source: *Farmer's Pride*, 1998).

As the Roadside Market Program started to see success, in 2000 the KFB also started to host farm and marketing tours to its interested members. The purpose of these tours was to introduce vendors to successful producers or markets (Henshaw 2006). Tour destinations included both farms and large retailers (Jungle Jim's in Fairfield, Ohio, for example). While the KFB was not necessarily the immediate impact factor upon tobacco growers in Kentucky, given the organization's popularity, it was not difficult to predict

that their program's success would bring positive attention and encouragement to those who were interested in diversification. Because the KFB worked with both large and small producers (Henshaw 2006) and participants' requirements were standardized regardless of scale of production (a \$250 fee and producing high-quality clean produce), the Certified Roadside Farm Markets Program provided opportunities for grower-driven markets. As of 2006, the program has increased its membership to include more than 70 vendors, and their information is now posted on the KFB's web site.

Another approach in diversification and marketing, although from a somewhat different standpoint, came from the committed work by the members of the Heifer International, a non-profit organization that assists economically marginalized small farmers by providing appropriate animals (cows, pigs, goats, chickens, and many more). Based upon the concept of "passing on the gift," Heifer operates with the hope that each participant who receives animals will eventually become a donor of animals to others who struggle in similar situations (Heifer 2007). Heifer operates within the United States and a range of developing countries, with the US's project primarily focused on helping small farmers supplement their income (Learn 1996). In Kentucky's case, its branch projects focused on assisting farmers in eastern Kentucky.

In the fall of 1996, Heifer's Appalachia field branch started to introduce pasture poultry, raising chickens on outdoor open fields and selling them as "free range chickens" for higher prices to interested consumers.¹⁴ Steve Muntz, the representative of the

¹⁴ It is widely understood that the person who innovated pasture poultry was Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm in Swoope, Virginia (Pollan 2006). In 1993 he published a book titled *Pastured Poultry Profits*, explaining efficiency, quality, and profitability of raising poultry on grassland. This caught wide attention nationally. In addition to Heifer's project that started in 1996, the Community Farm Alliance's Summer 1997 Newsletter

Appalachia field office, found this to be a niche market with a relatively small capital operation. By encouraging pasture poultry, however, he soon realized that a processing facility was missing. This was a critical issue because, unlike vegetables or fruits that producers could sell directly to consumers, animals had to be processed before sale. Since the USDA inspection system did not accept home processing, and since major poultry processors operated on a contract basis, small pasture poultry producers could not locate the appropriate venues for processing.

For leaders in Kentucky, including Muntz, the solution to this problem was to establish the Micro Processing Unit (MPU). The unit had to be mobile so that producers from diverse areas could share the facility. Because both the USDA and the KDA did not have specialized knowledge in micro-scale meat marketing, they had to develop their own processing system (Muntz 2006). After connecting with Partners for Family Farms, specialists at the University of Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Public Health, the KDA, Berea College, Morehead State University, and Kentucky State University, formed a project group called “Safe Meat Marketing Alternatives through Research and Technology” (SMMART) (Caudill et al. 2002). With the financial support from a Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant, they built the MPU following a rules exemption made by the KDA. When they were about to operate the

encouraged producers to introduce raising chickens on grassland. Today “pasture poultry” is widely accepted as higher quality, though sometimes it is misunderstood and associated with “free range.” Strictly speaking, pasture poultry is not free-range because wired nets protects chickens from predatory animals. Because the range of space given to poultry is wide enough, however, the degree of freedom for poultry raised in pastures is no comparison to poultry raised in industrial farms. Because of his innovative works and numbers of farm-related publications (for example, see Salatin 2003), Joel Salatin is nationally known as a diversified farmer who established strictly localized market with sufficient profit.

facility in 2000, however, the MPU was targeted for scrutiny under the USDA's inspection regulation (Muntz 2006). Therefore, Partners for Family Farms and Muntz had to negotiate and lobby to get their MPU exempted from the USDA's regulation. It finally got approval in 2002, and later came into operation. Because Heifer International found that maintaining the MPU by Heifer was problematic for the organization's insurance liability, however, they sold the rights to Kentucky State University (Muntz 2006). Unlike industrial processing plants, the MPU is a "do it by yourself" facility and is therefore very difficult to expand (Caudill et al. 2002).

Muntz's experience suggests that, in addition to the efforts in produce marketing that Commissioner Smith emphasized, produce processing could also be insufficient. In other words, despite having enough consumers and demand for locally raised meat products, the supply system and its regulatory settings were not efficiently institutionalized to support producers who were about to begin new production modes. For producers to diversify from tobacco, they had to learn about many existing regulatory practices. At the same time, however, I argue that this process also indirectly assisted in connecting producers and consumers. It was true that consumers had to wait for completion of a processing unit to secure access to high quality poultry products, but those involved also had to standardize procedures for processing, shipping, and selling pasture poultry products instead of making each producer conduct home butchery followed by transporting processed meat to the consumers' backdoors. This does not mean that I support strict regulations that stand against producers to complicate their efforts. Instead, because Kentucky did not have in place a program of shared knowledge of processing and marketing (in addition to basic information such as food safety, equipment

management, and inspection control), I claim that diffusion of pasture poultry and subsequent installation of mobile processing units systematized how producers in Kentucky could provide their products to consumers and vice versa.

Finally, as the case of the micro-scale mobile processing unit shows, Kentucky's regulatory setups came from both within the state (the KDA and Kentucky Department of Public Health) and the federal level (USDA). What was important about the role of agencies outside Kentucky was that there were actors who were committed in both federal and state level discussions in the context of Kentucky's post-tobacco agricultural restructuring processes. When Commissioner Smith took office, although a search for "something else" had already been conducted, tobacco still was one of the most important cash crops for the Commonwealth. At the same time, the focus on a national agricultural policy did not directly target assisting tobacco states, including Kentucky. Instead, small farmers across the nation focused on implementing sustainable agriculture (as represented by the establishment of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture (NCSA)) as part of agricultural policy, and they strongly advocated the need for support in the process of constructing the 1996 Farm Bill (Allen 2004). In particular, women and ethnic minorities took a critical role in standing up and supporting the NCSA.

When the federal Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, appointed a 30-member National Commission on Small Farms (NCSF) in July, 1997, to examine the condition of small farms and address a role that the USDA should take, for the first time in many decades voices from small farms were directly brought to the federal level and a nationwide audience. What was important to Kentucky in this case was that Karen Armstrong-Cummings, also the executive director of Commodity Growers Cooperative

Inc., was appointed to be a part of the membership of the NCSF. There she expanded diverse networks with groups of people who were active in issues such as sustainable ranching (Kathleen Sullivan Kelly) and community food security (Mark Winne), both of which were irresolvable under GATT and free-trade dominant American agriculture (Armstrong-Cummings 2006). In 1998, the Commission submitted a final report, *A Time to Act*, demanding more financial and other forms of assistance from President Clinton. In addition to suggesting eight major policy goals (Recognize the importance and cultivate the strengths of small farms; create a framework of support and responsibility for small farms; promote, develop, and enforce fair, competitive, and open markets for small farms; conduct appropriate outreach through partnerships to serve small farm and ranch operators; Establish future generations of farmers; emphasize sustainable agriculture as a profitable, ecological, and socially sound strategy for small farms; dedicate budget resources to strengthen the competitive position of small farms in American agriculture; and provide just and humane working conditions for all people engaged in production agriculture), a report included a specific recommendation for reviewing the long-existent tobacco program and encouraging community-led local assistance to support tobacco-dependent areas (USDA 1998).

d) Master Settlement Agreement and Scalar Politics (2000-2003)

In the midst of transitions from a tobacco-oriented economy to “something else” in Kentucky’s agriculture, dramatic changes were progressing at the federal level. As I explained in Chapter 3, the Master Settlement Agreement was signed by tobacco companies and Attorneys General from 46 states. While many states used their funds to strengthen public policies that were not related to tobacco consumption, the Kentucky

legislature passed House Bill 611 which would assist a variety of agricultural and rural development projects.

The MSA brought several influences to Kentucky's agriculture and food production. First, it provided capital resources—such a large amount that it could hardly be budgeted by local taxation—to invest in a variety of projects. Prior to that, many agricultural development projects that the KDA proposed were dependent on legislative and the Governor's decisions, hence the KDA could not take their own initiatives to make changes. Second, the MSA funds gave legitimate and practical ways to directly assist tobacco producers who began to face difficulties associated with lower quota allocations and eventually the buyout program. This does not mean, however, that everyone received funds: unlike Phase II where quota owners, growers, and tenants all received portions of compensation funds based upon the quota they produced, to receive additional funds they had to apply for certain projects that were convincing to proposal reviewers. Therefore, it can be said that the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (ADB)'s decision-making had huge impacts on what could be approved and what could not.

Interestingly, it is in the state legislatures where the micro-scale politics of agricultural policy development took place. As I explained in the previous chapter, funds allocated to each state by the MSA were not attached to prescribed modes of spending. What was unique about this fund was, unlike tax revenue that would be managed through legislatures and the Office of the State Budget Director, the funds went straight to the Governor's control. John-Mark Hack, executive director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP), was the person who took the primary responsibility with the distribution of the MSA funds in Kentucky. The GOAP organized the Agricultural

Development Board (ADB) to discuss how the funds might be spent, and in that process they decided that funds were to be allocated for county-based projects. At the same time, each county was ordered to organize an Agricultural Development Council (ADC). County councils consisted of 8 members: two members each selected by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource and Conservation Service, County Extension board, and additional 2 members who were age 18 to 40 and selected by the above 6 members. Both individual farmers and organizations, including those in the ADC, were encouraged to submit proposals for funding. Each proposal was first reviewed by county ADCs, who decided whether or not to recommend these proposals to the state ADB. Each county ADC took a different stand: some county ADCs approved all proposals and distributed funds with equal priority, while some other county ADCs limited the number of approved proposals and tried to distribute funds in larger amounts to fewer recipients. Because the total fund allocations for each county was determined based on the tobacco quotas that each county had, some uneven fund allocations was evident between tobacco growing counties and non-tobacco counties and subsequent success of development.

After the Agricultural Development Councils (ADC) recommended proposals, the state Agricultural Development Board (ADB) discussed each proposal and approved or rejected funds. Proposals were selected for approval based upon necessity and whether they met the criteria for application (Smith 2007). Because each county and producer had different needs, it was critical for the ADB to acknowledge levels of need and fund them accordingly. On the other hand, not all proposals were fully appreciated. For example, Hack recalled that he tried to approve proposals that would reach out broadly to different groups of people and encourage their participation. In that respect, he found it

challenging that many proposals did not have innovative programs that would have involved as many farmers as he would have preferred (Hack 2006). Furthermore, proposals were viewed differently at the state and county levels, and contentious political power struggles over funding moved from the counties to the state legislature. At the same time, because of the variety of proposals generated at the county level, the Agricultural Development Board created a "Model Programs," a criteria model that established several categories within which applicants could apply (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Types of County Model Program Investments and their Objectives.

Types of Model Program	Description of the Program
Agricultural Diversification Program	This program invests in the development and expansion of new agricultural products as well as working with existing agricultural commodities. Examples: commercial horticulture, herbs, sweet sorghum, ornamentals, greenhouse conversion, aquaculture, silviculture, equine, direct-to-consumer value-added livestock sale & dairy.
Cattle Genetic Improvement Program	This program increases the genetic quality of cattle (both beef and dairy) in Kentucky through the selection of superior sires, either through purchase /lease of sires or semen.
Cattle Handling Facilities Program	This program promotes best management and health practices that augment efficient production and marketing opportunities of beef and dairy cattle in purchase of handling facilities & equipments.
Fencing Improvement Program	This program improves pasture quantity, quality, and efficient use for livestock producers. It provides 50 percent cost-share funds up to \$5,000, for the development and construction of perimeter fencing on farms.
Forage Improvement and Utilization Program	This program invests in improving forage quality, quantity, and efficient use. It also encourages science-based forage management decisions.
Goat Diversification Program	This program assists diversified goat producers by promoting animal health and improving the genetic base of Kentucky's goat herds.
Hay, Straw and Commodity Storage Program	This program invests in employing best practices related to storage and utilization of feed, hay, and straw, thus improving feed and straw quality and animal nutrition.
On-Farm Water Enhancement Program	This program provides farmers the opportunity to adopt a proactive and systematic approach to expand existing water supplies or to develop alternative water resources.
Revolving Loan Program (Started FY 2003)	This program enables a sustainable source of below market financing at the county level through the long-term development of a revolving loan fund to benefit producers and value-added agricultural entrepreneurs.
Dairy Diversification Program (Started FY 2004)	This program assists existing and new dairy producers in renovating and modernizing dairy facilities.
Swine Diversification Program (Started FY 2004)	This program assists farmers to begin a swine enterprise and allow producers already engaged in swine production to expand the scope of their enterprise and/or modernize their facilities.
Share-Use Equipment Program (Started FY 2004)	This program assists producers and community organizations to access technological equipments necessary to improve their operations.

Timber Production Utilization and Marketing Program (Started FY 2005)	This program supports farmers who grow and utilize existing and new natural resources and to promote timber production and processing on farm land not suitable for crop or livestock production.
Technology Program (Started FY 2004)	This program offers cost-share on technology to improve farm operation efficiency by assisting producers in exploring use of technology in their operations.

Data source: Kentucky Agricultural Development Board.

The Model Programs included financial assistance targeted at the diverse production found amongst the state's farms: Agricultural Diversification, Cattle Genetic Improvement, Cattle Handling Facilities, Fencing Improvement, Goat Diversification, Forage Improvement and Utilization, to name a few. These models represented the most common issues for which that producers or farm organizations sought financial assistance. Smaller investments such as sheep or pasture poultry for local sales were categorized as part of the Agricultural Diversification program. Those proposals that did not fit in any of the Model Programs were classified as non-Model Programs and were encouraged so as to contribute a wider range of options in state agricultural re-development. In this case, if an applicant's activities were predicted to impact beyond county boundaries, additional funds were allocated from state funds and the related counties (Table 4.3). The tendency that emerged was that individual farmers and small business owners made more applications to model programs, while larger businesses or non-profit organizations (including commodity groups) applied for non-model programs.

Table 4.3 Funds approved by Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, 2002-2006.
(Unit: dollars)

	Type of Programs	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Model Program	Agricultural diversification.	\$2,840,687	\$2,607,172	\$1,773,837	\$1,070,281
	Dairy diversification			\$432,200	\$925,670
	Revolving loan		\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
	Cattle genetic improvement	\$1,517,087	\$1,488,032	\$1,713,205	\$1,970,253
	Cattle handling facilities	\$3,483,932	\$2,757,621	\$2,431,284	\$3,018,895
	Fencing improvement	\$566,000	\$2,865,375	\$2,779,747	\$3,165,455
	Forage improvement and utilization	\$2,195,634	\$2,709,873	\$2,236,975	\$3,968,546
	Goat Diversification	\$807,895	\$851,457	\$460,157	\$479,394
	Hay, straw and commodity storage	\$4,395,399	\$5,978,321	\$3,495,225	\$3,909,670
	On-Farm water enhancement	\$53,550	\$617,157	\$359,730	\$338,524
	Swine diversification			\$20,000	\$36,500
	Shared-use equipment			\$84,902	\$158,007
	Timber production utilization & marketing			\$53,805	\$142,150
	Technology			\$237,527	\$651,547
		Total	\$15,860,184	\$19,975,008	\$16,178,594
Non-Model Program	County funds	\$2,038,371	\$2,076,165	\$2,033,615	\$5,704,301
	State funds	\$10,282,919	\$36,014,233	\$5,166,151	\$4,678,807
	Total	\$12,321,290	\$38,090,398	\$7,199,766	\$10,383,108
Total		\$28,181,474	\$58,065,406	\$23,378,360	\$30,218,000

Source: Kentucky Agricultural Development Report Annual Report (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006).

Hack acknowledged that there were not significant considerations given to the geographies of Kentucky, or to the scale of the “local” embedded in their work at the time (Hack 2006). “Cultivating Rural Property” was the goal for the Agricultural Development Board (ADB), but the Board did not necessarily emphasize place-specific development plans. Hack’s reluctance to invest in localized food systems, which Berry, Armstrong-Cummings, and the Community Farm Alliance had been doing for several

years, was partly based upon concerns that very few farmers make money (and sustain a living) through localized food sales. That was the advice which he received from Ray Goldberg, Professor at Harvard University, whom Hack met at a workshop in previous years. Goldberg was later hired to oversee Kentucky's agricultural restructuring plans (Hack 2006). On the other hand, making divisions between state and county programs put clear accountability into each proposal. Hack tried to craft a program that would benefit consumers, but it did not work out well because of struggles with retailers (Hack 2006).

The funding allocation for agricultural development changed every year, but there is no doubt that the financial investments made by the Agricultural Development Board (ADB) far exceeded what the Kentucky legislature and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) had allocated in previous decades (Table 4.3). The governor's hesitancy to spend more than \$1 million for establishing markets 10 years ago, for example, illustrates how "financially" the MSA and House Bill 611 contributed to agricultural re-development in Kentucky. At the same time, when we look more closely at the degree of investment, the new investment programs have several distinguishing characteristics. First, the ADB's funding was primarily concentrated on livestock-related proposals, especially cattle production (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Shares of county model programs by funds approved by Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, 2002-2006.

(Unit: Percentages)

Type of Model Program	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Agricultural diversification.	18	13	11	5
Dairy diversification	0	0	3	5
Cattle genetic improvement	10	7	11	10
Cattle handling facilities	22	14	15	15
Fencing improvement	4	14	17	16
Forage improvement and utilization	14	14	14	20
Goat Diversification	5	4	3	2
Hay, straw and commodity storage	28	30	22	20

Source: Kentucky Agricultural Development Report Annual Report (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006).

The ADB's monetary distribution had the effect of reducing economic dependence of tobacco and gave choice opportunities to each farmer, but the result was focused on a greater reliance on beef cattle (Hack 2006). This did not mean that the ADB had a strong interest in maximizing Kentucky's cattle industry in an attempt to compete with other states such as Texas. Rather, the focus was more on improving the infrastructures of production. Model Programs such as Cattle Genetics Improvement, Cattle Handling Facilities, Fencing Improvement, and Forage Improvement and Utilization directly impacted the expansion or refinement of the cattle industry. This was important in part because the cattle industry was well established in Kentucky, but the physical plant was not refined for supporting production, hence support funding could make an immediate impact (Smith 2007). Horticultural or vinicultural production and marketing was different, because in many cases these producers had to start from scratch and go through extended learning and investment curves to eventually succeed (perhaps) in making a profit.

Such tendencies were clearly reflected in changing funding patterns. The Agricultural Diversification Program, under the Model Program, had a roughly 18 percent share of total funding in fiscal year 2002-03. By 2005-06, however, it had dropped to about 5 percent, much lower than programs such as Forage Improvement and Utilization or Fencing Improvement (Table 4.3). This change suggests that the Agricultural Development Board's funding approval, while directed at developing cattle industries, at the same time offered few opportunities to producers trying to establish non-livestock agricultural operations. Therefore, speaking strictly about monetary effort, it is ironic that what Berry, Armstrong-Cummings and the Commodity Growers Cooperative (CGC), Kuegel and the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA), and the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) supported to underwrite tobacco producers' diversification took a somewhat different direction from their priorities.¹⁵

Meanwhile, outside the Agricultural Development Board (ADB) and the legislature, diversification infrastructures were gradually organized. At least two major changes in production and marketing assistance occurred. First, under the leadership of Commissioner Smith, the KDA continued its traditional method of marketing Kentucky-grown products. In the summer of 2002, the KDA launched their "Kentucky Fresh" program to attract consumers to consider purchasing state-grown products. After

¹⁵ I argue that more studies must be done to analyze the politics of this funding, such as relationships between state ADB and county ADCs, funding priorities and their alteration, and discourses described in proposals. For example, as far as I understand GOAP has been releasing funded projects (model and non-model programs) every month, but they have not released data regarding how many proposals were submitted and rejected, how many applicants were there for each model and non-model programs, and which county's proposals were rejected. To my knowledge there have not been any academic studies that examine Kentucky's funding of agricultural policies. I predict this is in part because each university researcher had a lot of commitments to make ADB's work. Analysis of ADB's funding will remain future research topic.

receiving a grant from the USDA, the KDA spent \$150,000 to create a new logo by hiring a Lexington advertising firm and using the phrase, “Taste Kentucky Fresh. Nothing Else is close” (Goetz 2002). Unlike the previous production-oriented “Pride of Kentucky—Grown by Kentuckians” campaign, the “Kentucky Fresh” program targeted the retail and consumption side with their new slogan and logo. Specifically, 98 Kroger stores and 41 Wal-Mart stores and supercenters participated in this program to promote state-grown products to store customers (Mayse 2002). Furthermore, restaurants that consumed Kentucky-grown products were eligible for state assistance to purchase those products covered by the “Kentucky Fresh” advertising slogan. This prompted mid-to upper-scale restaurants that were interested in promoting Kentucky products to fully utilize and engage in using the advertising logo to reflect their commitment.

One other infrastructural addition to the agricultural re-development process is the opening of the New Crops Opportunity Center (NCOC) in 2000. This is part of the UK College of Agriculture’s organization, but was achieved mainly through a USDA grant to the UK. Establishment of the NCOC came largely in connection with the potential tobacco buyout program. The NCOC focused upon supporting innovations in horticulture and specialty grains production. Particularly, they published numerous reports and brochures that instructed in methods of growing a diverse group of horticultural crops, their marketing strategies, and profitability measurements. Because there are regional differences in informational needs for agricultural re-development such that growers in western Kentucky seek more information on specialty grains, while growers in central/eastern Kentucky want horticulture information, the NCOC’s efforts to supply information were critical (Cassady 2006). In this sense, the NCOC succeeded in doing

what Armstrong-Cummings was attempting in her efforts to diversify production in the mid to late 1990s. One important difference was that the NCOC Program tried to assure that producers had markets to which they could sell, with or without a direct market (Cassady 2006). Because the NCOC receives information from both producers and county extension agents, their publications provide comparative information to producers statewide. Most NCOC information is distributed online, and producers have an access to their information through the Internet or can obtain hardcopies at county extension service offices.

In the end, Hack resigned from the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy in 2003. His effort to balance county and state needs as well as manage the state's initiative to develop innovative projects thus gradually declined, and was replaced by programs that focused larger investments in agribusinesses. In 2004, Republican Ernie Fletcher was elected Governor and Richie Farmer was elected Commissioner of Agriculture, thus bringing new direction to Kentucky's agricultural policies.

e) *Kentucky Proud: Homogenization of "Place" by the State (2004-2006)*

Upon taking office, Republican Richie Farmer stressed the need for increasing marketing opportunities for Kentucky farmers. In an interview with *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*, Farmer was quoted as follows: "Four years from now, I'd like people to be able to go into the grocery store and identify what is a Kentucky-grown product and what is not" (Mayse 2004). Farmer thus announced his intent to follow the path that former Commissioner Smith had established. Because Farmer was a renowned former University of Kentucky basketball player but lacked experience in agricultural

industry, he received both positive and negative reviews upon taking the office.¹⁶ In fact, several key KDA officials resigned in early 2004 in apparent protest of Farmer's election (Burton 2004). His work and leadership of the KDA, however, gradually attracted positive attention through his hires of key personnel in important positions, most notably two leaders in 2004: Michael Judge, former professor of agriculture and farm director at Eastern Kentucky University, was hired to lead the Office of Agricultural Marketing and Product Promotion; Mac Stone, former farm manager at Kentucky State University, was hired to serve under Judge and lead the Division of Value-Added Plant Production, a group that oversaw both horticultural and viticulture production (Wingo 2004). Both were experienced and knowledgeable in the transformation processes underway in Kentucky's agriculture, and their work pushed forward Kentucky's post-tobacco agricultural restructuring.¹⁷

Because the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA)'s work is still ongoing, perhaps it is not appropriate to evaluate their work at this point. Several important

¹⁶ The 2003 Election for Commissioner of Agriculture position was a competition between Farmer, Republican, and Alice Baesler, Democrat. Farmer was a investment manager in Clay County and had no experience in farm communities (except that he had BA in Agribusiness Management from the University of Kentucky), while Baesler was a wife of Scotty Baesler, former US House Representative, and tobacco farmer in Fayette County. She tirelessly campaigned and demonstrated her experience in farming communities and was heavily supported in news media. In fact, major newspapers in Kentucky such as *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Kentucky Post*, and the farm paper, *Farmer's Pride*, all endorsed Baesler for the Commissioner's position. Despite his lack of qualification, Farmer won the election by a large margin, ironically making *Kentucky Post's* criticism come true for he was successful while he "has practically sat this campaign out, relying on his reputation as a much beloved University of Kentucky basketball player to win him support." (*Kentucky Post* October 21, 2003).

¹⁷ I consider this particularly important, because prior directors had been hired who were not heavily committed to Kentucky's agriculture. Mansfield, for example, received his MA in Agricultural Economics from UK in 1985, but prior to the job at the KDA he was managing various private farms in states outside Kentucky. On the other hand, both Judge and Stone had roots in Kentucky, and the state farming community at large knew both.

changes were made, however, that are worth attention. First is the continuous marketing effort, most notably by adopting the “Kentucky Proud” slogan and logo. Reflecting the past experiences of previous slogan promotions, “Kentucky Proud” advertised products that were grown or processed in Kentucky to attract both producers and consumers. As long as this requirement is met, any products that are eligible for qualification can be branded with the “Kentucky Proud” logo for sale. The program received substantial financial assistance from the Agricultural Development Board (ADB), which totals more than \$1 million per year, allowing the KDA to aggressively market Kentucky agricultural products. For producers and retailers, the logo enabled them to easily identify their produce as grown in Kentucky (Figure 4.3). “Kentucky Proud” is also unique in the sense that the program positively links retailers and consumers, something rarely seen in other states (Kindrick 2006). By using the “Kentucky Proud” slogan, producers were given a cost-share offer for their advertising costs. Furthermore, restaurants that used the logo and purchased Kentucky-grown products were paid up to \$1000 per month incentives under the “Restaurant Reward” program (KDA n.d.). For consumers, an established logo enabled them to select where and from whom to buy products that they wanted. Such changes allowed producers, restaurant owners, and consumers all evaluate “Kentucky Proud” as a strategic choice to their marketing and consumption.



Figure 4.3 Kentucky Proud display used by farmers' market vendors, 2006.
Source: author's photo archive.

Second, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 669 in 2006. The bill, introduced by Representative Adrian Arnold (D-Mount Sterling), requires state agencies—including state parks, government offices, educational institutions, and prisons—to purchase agricultural products that were grown in Kentucky whenever they are available (Lexington Herald-Leader 2006). What is influential about such institutional purchases is that it addresses the problem of access to markets for small farmers. For the educational institutions, this helps to address the concerns of childhood nutrition, including increasing obesity (Allen 2004). While many states and school systems are beginning to implement such institutional purchasing, the enforcement measures that the bill instituted were a valuable assistance to producers seeking to identify reliable markets.

3) Place and Placelessness of Kentucky Agriculture: Limits on Localization

So far I have discussed how multiple key persons and organizations arrived, however directly or indirectly, at a response to the loss of tobacco-quotas and the subsequent agricultural diversification. In the process of shifting from tobacco to non-traditional products (such as vegetables, fruits, and small scale animal production), new geographies emerged that had a critical impact upon changes in production and consumption. This includes, but is not limited to, access to market, distribution and concentration of farmland, place names and branding, and power relations between the state and the counties. Over all, Kentucky's farmers seem to have captured their marketing direction by expanding localized markets. Given that the Agricultural Development Board's fund will last for at least several more years, this localization trend is likely to continue for some time.

The agricultural transition that has been underway for the last 10-15 years in Kentucky, however, was not a simple path. There are still many issues that must be addressed. In this section I will point out several concerns that have emerged or continue to exist in agricultural restructuring. In particular, as a geographer, I will examine the context of localization of non-traditional agricultural production, including the "Kentucky Proud" program that present concerns over the role of scale and place. Specifically, I will point out the limits of localization originating from binaries between wholesale and direct marketing, and a placelessness that "Kentucky Proud" created discursively.

To examine localization settings, we must first understand several advantages that Kentucky enjoys for producing and marketing non-traditional agricultural products.

Although Kentucky's climate is not as warm as Georgia or Florida, it is not as cold as Michigan or Pennsylvania, and very few restrictions existed for agricultural production in a mid-latitude climate in which the growing season was sufficient for most products. This enabled many buyers from out-of-state to purchase agricultural products grown in Kentucky. Furthermore, because it was common to own and manage gardens in addition to tobacco patches, for many tobacco producers growing non-traditional products—particularly vegetables—was not a radical departure from established practices. Instead, they struggled with managing labor requirements, quality control, and marketing practices. Additionally, while there are a limited number of large cities in Kentucky, there are plenty of small towns with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 that are fairly evenly distributed; thus consumers find that producers are not remote or isolated. To sum up, there is plenty of potential for a non-traditional agriculture sector, large and small, to develop in Kentucky.

The more non-traditional agricultural products growers produce in Kentucky, however, the more competitors appear. For part-time farmers whose main income source was a non-farm occupation and farming provided a supplementary income, they could not afford to invest a lot of effort and thus their choices of products to raise and market were limited. Unlike tobacco, selling at wholesale prices cannot be an option for those who grow a small amount of produce. On the other hand, for full-time producers who were previously reliant on tobacco, their alternative operation must be both diverse and large enough to facilitate straightforward farm management. In that case, they have to seek outlets that are not limited to direct marketing.

Such conditions create a binary between marketing a wholesale business and

concentrating on direct marketing. This distinction is articulated as the scale of production changes. As I emphasized before, because so many farms in Kentucky were significantly smaller than the national average, the transformation from tobacco to alternative crops inevitably required direct marketing as a strategy for economic survival. Therefore, strengthening direct marketing venues and securing them were essential policies for Kentucky farmers. For those involved in direct marketing, they put in place a variety of regulations upon themselves and forced others to obey them, thereby institutionalizing their ‘own’ market, and securing additional values associated with “Kentucky Proud” products.

Promoting place-based value-added products for wholesale, however, does not carry same premium value compared with promoting products for direct sales. If both buyers and sellers know each other as in-state residents, maintaining the value of a “Kentucky Proud” product is possible because buyers and sellers can trace the origins of each product to assure that it was grown in Kentucky. The reality of selling products at wholesale markets, however, is that wholesalers are likely to target a wider range of markets beyond state boundaries, and thus defining the quality and value associated with a brand such as “Kentucky Proud” becomes less important. For example, Cumberland Farm Products Inc., Kentucky’s oldest farm cooperative, sold the majority of their produce to buyers from outside Kentucky (Snell 2006). If wholesale businesses proceed to limit their business relations to those who maintain the “Kentucky Proud” production values, they will find business extremely difficult. On the other hand, the wholesale food business requires quantity to run the business, which many produce auctions have been struggling to maintain. Therefore, depending upon the marketing strategies producers

choose (direct, wholesale, others), the meaning of place-based branding varies significantly.

There are several grower cooperatives and produce auctions in Kentucky, though the produce auctions are running their business more successfully. While cooperatives search for buyers and negotiate for profitable deals, produce auctions are the sites where buyers and sellers come together to bid for and sell produce. For Kentucky wholesalers, the most important concern is a low produce supply, meaning that there is constantly more demand than supply. Three produce auction managers and one former wholesale manager whom I interviewed all pointed out that they needed more growers. For auction businesses, as long as the produce is of good quality, there were enough buyers to buy them out. Wholesale buyers' market sheds extend beyond the Kentucky state boundary, and therefore the "Kentucky Pride" logo becomes meaningless when it is contextualized within wholesale settings.

There are four major produce auctions in Kentucky: Fairview Produce Auction in Fairview (Christian County); Buffalo Trace Auction in Maysville (Mason County); Lincoln Produce Auction in Stanford (Lincoln County), and Bath County Produce Auction in Owingsville (Bath County). Of the four, the Fairview Produce Auction is the oldest and largest auction in Kentucky. It started in 1996 after group of Amish and Mennonites migrated to this area. They were producing good products, but they were not knowledgeable in marketing. They therefore focused on wholesalers instead of retailing (Sauder 2006). What was positive about the auction was that they could sell #2 products (lower quality produce), which is not possible at cooperatives. Currently there are more than 1,000 ID holders (registered buyers and sellers) in the Fairview Auction. Sellers

come mostly from Christian County and its surrounding area, while many buyers come from out-of-state areas, some as far as Chicago, IL and Guntersville, AL (Figure 4.4). Not only do retail businesses come to bid at the auction but also farmers' market vendors participate. Because produce can be sold at farmers' markets for higher prices with minimal cost increases, farmers' market vendors tend to bid higher prices compared with grocery stores (Sauder 2006). This creates competition and binaries between indoor grocery stores and outdoor direct sale venues.

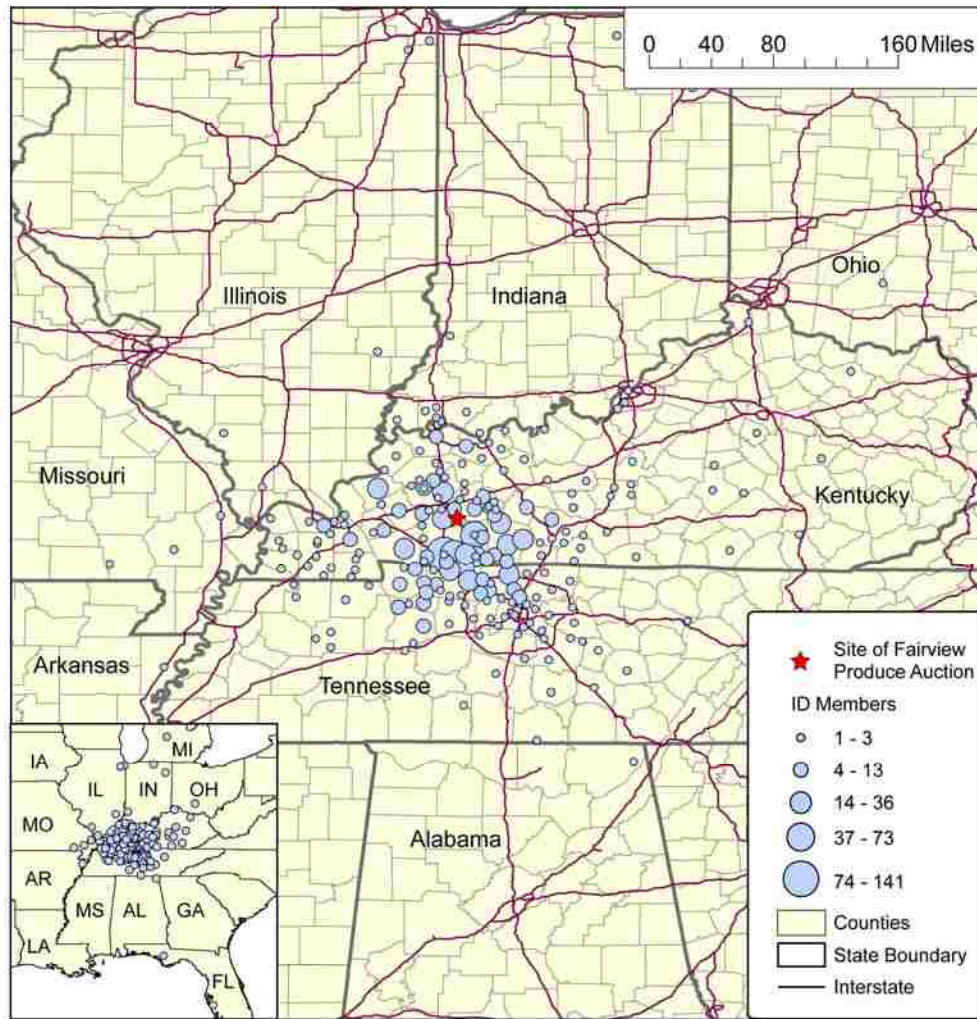


Figure 4.4 Distribution of Fairview Produce Auction ID Members, 2006.

Data source: Courtesy of Fairview Produce Auction.
 (Note: Data available only in aggregate level)

On the other hand, the Bath County Auction, which started in 2003, remained small for several years. The Bath County Produce Auction has issued 170-180 IDs for membership to date. Because this auction is located in a somewhat remote area, there are not enough growers / sellers that attend the auction, and thereby the demand outnumbered supplies (Hamilton 2006). Although the site of the Bath County Produce Auction is also the site of a farmers' market, those who come to sell their produce are leaning toward the auction, because it is easier to sell their produce at an auction than selling at in the farmers' markets (Hamilton 2006). From the producers' standpoint, the biggest difference between a produce auction (wholesale) and a farmers' market (direct sale) is that vendors do not have to deal and negotiate with customers. Produce may sell at lower price at the auction, but this does not involve any negotiation, and usually all produce will be sold out (Hamilton 2006). On the other hand, produce can be sold at higher price at the farmers' market but there may be a case when produce would not sell out. Therefore, producers need to make decisions about marketing venues based on factors such as profitability, produce quality management, labor requirements, stress, and personal preference.

This brings us back an earlier question: How does the "Kentucky Proud" program impact the state's non-traditional agricultural production? The larger the scale of production and the reliance on wholesale outlets, the fewer producers will be concerned with proving that their produce is a Kentucky-grown product. It is mostly direct sales venues or retailers that utilize the "Kentucky Proud" logo to boost their sales. In that sense, the more direct sale venues or retailers selling "Kentucky Proud" goods increase, the more success the program will have. Increasing direct sales seems to strengthen the internalization of commodity chains within the state, or the "local." But there are at least

two limits to this tendency. First, the more producers increase their scale of production, the more at some level they must utilize the wholesale outlet, and therefore the “Kentucky Proud” brand becomes less meaningful to them. This conceptually detracts from “agricultural development” because the values of “Kentucky Proud” are sustained through large numbers of mid-to-small scale producers who are not positioned to expand their farm management.

Second, localization must involve a fuller understanding of “local” or place, but localization without that understanding results in a loss of the sense of place, or the creation of placelessness in commodity sales. By branding state-grown products as “Kentucky Proud,” the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, retailers and direct sale vendors succeeded in fixing spatial scale such that it also embeds quality and value, simultaneously decentralizing the actual ‘site’ of production, thereby constructing placelessness. But consumers choose to purchase “Kentucky Proud” products for several reasons: freshness, quality, connecting with producers, supporting farm communities, and many more. Consumers’ commitment to buy the “Kentucky Proud” branded products inevitably requires learning product details, such as where one can buy particular products and where these products are coming from. Such knowledge will extend the meaningful understanding of “Kentucky Proud” brand, but the reality is that product details are seldom recognized or shared by consumers. Lack of consumer attention to product place of origin does not also mean that the authenticity of places needs to be revived. Rather, the complex social relations linking each place to others (Duncan 2000) are blinded by the homogenized value of “Kentucky,” thus the logo contains not only spatial but also discursive meanings.

4) Summary

When the future of Kentucky's tobacco-dependent agriculture became uncertain, it was initially the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) that took initiatives to establish a new direction. Because tobacco was managed under a federal program, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) had limited impact upon state agricultural policy and was lacking financial power to make changes. The BTGCA rebuilt the Commodity Growers Cooperative and adopted the goal of diversification. Changes were still difficult, however, partly because of the profitability of tobacco and social resistance to changes by tobacco producers, and partly because of a lack of funds sufficient to make all growers change at once.

The leadership change in the political sphere brought a new direction to marketing. After Billy Ray Smith took office, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) built its own marketing strategies and immediately took action. Various other groups took their own initiatives to assist producers: these include the Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) establishment of a Certified Roadside Farm Market Program, the Commodity Growers Cooperative (CGC)'s organization of a Buying Club and promotion of 'local food', The Community Farm Alliance (CFA)'s commitment to support small farms, and Heifer International and Partners for Family Farms' attempt to facilitate Micro Processing Units (MPU). A sustainable agriculture movement diffused across the United States and criticism against the tobacco industries was increasing. These varied action groups viewed Kentucky's small farms as ideal settings for transformation. Although federally regulated tobacco programs were the target of buyout discussions, they were still

contingent on funding. Given the small scale of the state's farms and the prominence of part-time farming, however, tobacco producers' options for diversification strategies were limited, and one of the few options available was to increase direct marketing and localize farm-related industries.

The successful outcome of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) had a substantial financial impact on the state that heretofore had limited opportunity for capital investment. While tobacco producers, including quota owners, growers, and tenants, received financial compensation (Phase II) for the loss of tobacco income, a commitment to alter farm strategy would transform the state's agricultural future. Governor Patton and the state legislature's passage of House Bill 611 and the Agricultural Development Board (ADB)'s initiative brought the state government, not the federal, into a leading role to transform post-tobacco agriculture through investment of Phase I resources. Funds were spent for agricultural diversification, but more funds were invested in improving cattle industries and launching agribusinesses. As a result, producers who were successful in receiving Phase I assistance that they utilized to develop their production, while those who did not remain at the same or smaller operational scale. Therefore, the loss of tobacco income and subsequent financial assistance (Phase I) given to selected proposals separated the producers who developed farm management from those who remained hobby farmers or quit production. On the other hand, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture led initiatives to promote state-grown produce as having high quality. As a result, the value assigned to agricultural products produced in Kentucky were localized so that products carrying the "Kentucky Proud" brand contained special meaning.

Separating producers, then, had the effect of extending agricultural practice into two

distinct dimensions: farmers who diversified their crop production and marketing channels, including wholesale, and farmers who secured their production through direct marketing and embracing the apparent value of localization, which became enfolded within “Kentucky Proud” branding. Development of the “Kentucky Proud” idea became a critical factor in retailing and small business, while it became slightly less meaningful for producers and businesses that expanded their markets. “Kentucky Proud,” after all, blended scale and value, and micro-scale places were rendered placeless by the dominance of state-led branding.

These transitions appear to deemphasize the importance of the “site” of production and consumption. Producers may understand that “Kentucky Proud” has become a valuable brand that originated in the process of Kentucky’s post-tobacco agricultural restructuring. Consumers can see “Kentucky Proud” products in many grocery and specialty stores. At the same time, an understanding of *how* producers and consumers value the origins of “Kentucky Proud” products, that is raw agricultural produce, seems to be missing. Where are the places that stand behind “Kentucky Proud” products? Where do these branded products come from? Who is producing them? How do we assign value to them, and why? The examination of the ‘site’ of production and consumption of localized food products is the foci of the next two chapters.

Chapter 5: Where the Food Is Handed Over: Examining Politics and Limits of Food Localism in Kentucky's Farmers Market

*"Nobody has to cut and smoke tobacco, but everyone's got to eat!"
--A vendor at the Owensboro Farmers' Market*

*"When we started selling [in 1984], there were only about three or four vendors.... Since then, market got better, but (the number of) customers outgrew us (vendors) and produce...."
---A vendor at the Owensboro Farmers' Market*

1) Introduction

When the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) began to brand Kentucky-grown food products in the mid 1990s, the key concern was not only the effectiveness of advertising to broaden public familiarity with Kentucky food products but also to increase access to products, knowledge, and awareness of "local" food. Thus, the KDA sought to enhance agricultural change by increasing the number of 'sites' where consumers could see, learn about, and purchase Kentucky-grown products. The question then emerges: Where are Kentucky-grown food products sold? What are the benefits and problems of selling Kentucky-grown products? There was no doubt that large retailers contributed to the distribution of state-grown produce, but not all retailers were active in selling state-grown produce. To deal with the problem of major retailers' reluctance to expand their marketing and sales of more state-grown food products, both Kentucky's farm producers and "local food" shoppers adopted a direct-sales approach.

Direct sale is the marketing method where sellers and buyers are directly connected through the commodities that they exchange. Because direct sale does not involve the middleman's costs (such as distribution, storage, and shipping), this method increases sellers' profit margins. Farm producers are the primary sellers who sell to primary buyers—consumers—without using the facilities of any intermediate markets or

marketing agencies (Kohls and Uhl 2002). Not only will this method yield for the seller more profit, but also it provides opportunities for both producers and consumers to see each other “face-to-face”, thus introducing personal relations into the sales-purchase process.

As I explained in the previous chapter, direct sales developed in Kentucky for certain farm management reasons. When former tobacco producers decided to divert their farm production away from tobacco, major grain crops such as wheat, corn, and soybeans were priced too low to generate sufficient profit per acre given the small size of arable or tillable land on the average Kentucky farm. On the other hand, producing tomatoes or cabbages at a large scale for the wholesale market required intensive labor, which was not manageable for farmers who had been raising tobacco on several acres of land as a part-time enterprise with limited family labor. Thus, the Kentucky farmers’ management base (such as land, labor, and capital) was too small to commercialize at a large-scale (including selling to wholesales and retailers), and even lacked potential labor availability to expand operations. Therefore, growing fresh produce and selling it at direct-sale outlets that maintain high returns per acre became a critical process in operationalizing the post-tobacco agricultural transition.

Among various direct-sale outlets such as on-site farm direct markets (U-Pick and roadside farm stands), Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmers’ markets, and direct sale to restaurants, it is the farmers’ market that holds the largest share of direct sales.¹⁸ Based on survey response analysis, Woods et al. (2006) showed that more than

¹⁸ The University of Kentucky’s Cooperative Extension Service has a number of theme-based guidance publications: Topics include “Marketing Options for Commercial Vegetable Growers,” “Agritourism,” “Community Supported Agriculture (CSA),”

half the produce growers in Kentucky (63 percent in 2005) were selling their products at farmers' markets. For many consumers who live in urban areas, unless they have subscribed to CSA in advance, farmers' markets have been one of few places where they can purchase fresh quality products directly from producers. Farmers' markets were, therefore, where "local food" moved from farm producers to consumers. In many ways, studying farmers markets provides various insights into how Kentucky's food localism is actually practiced by producers, state government, farm organizations, market managers, and consumers.

In this chapter, therefore, I examine the growth of Kentucky-grown food production and sales, specifically focusing upon direct-sale venues with special attention paid to farmers' markets. I argue that initiatives by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and adjustments by former tobacco producers resulted in many changes to traditional production systems to attempt to maintain profit margins through the strategy of food localism. At the same time, I also argue that Kentucky's farmers' markets were sites of struggle that both sellers and buyers discursively negotiated to define the meaning of "local food" and commodifying production. Through various published sources, interviews, and participatory observation at a farmers' market in Owensboro, this chapter explores the multiple responses made by those who were involved in operating and developing farmers' markets while maintaining profit margins through the strategy of food localism as a part of Kentucky's post-tobacco restructuring.

"Pick-Your-Own (U-Pick) Marketing," "Marketing at Produce Auctions," "Grower Cooperatives (Co-ops)," "Marketing Fresh Produce to Restaurants," and "Marketing Fresh Produce at Farmers' Markets." The New Crop Opportunities Center, a branch of the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, was established in 2000 and is currently a major information clearinghouse to assist the needs of producers and extension agents.

I begin this chapter by explaining the development of farmers' markets in Kentucky and the process of their localization toward marketing agricultural products. Next, I examine how spatial scale is fixed or mobilized for implementing direct sales at farmers' markets by analyzing farmers' market operation rules. This is followed by an analysis of direct sale practices from a case study site, the Owensboro Regional Farmers' Market. Through a narrative, I point out the benefits and problems of food localism as practiced in farmers' markets which acknowledge a complex context because of the interrelating factors of farm management structure, household economics, and labor availability. Finally, I discuss potential possibilities and concerns that food localism carries for post-tobacco restructuring and the future of Kentucky's small-scale agriculture.

There were several reasons why I chose farmers' markets as an object of analysis. First, among all outlets of state-grown food products—including Kentucky Proud branded products after 2004—farmers' markets were one of the most popular sites at which to obtain them. Large grocery stores sold state-grown food products, but it was very difficult to examine the significance of their sales, and their data is proprietary; hence they were not appropriate as a study focus. Second, because farmers' markets were sites where producers and consumers are in direct contact, it was the suitable site to observe producer-consumer relationships and discourse exchanges. Finally, unlike retail chains where management standardizes food displays, visibility, price, and quantity of products, every farmers' market is unique in terms of sellers, available products, location, and consumers groups. Such characteristics often reflect micro-scale locale conditions (i.e. availability of certain products because of soil and climate, the distinctive group of people who live there, preferences for certain products). The site within which each

farmers' market operates provides a relational context for "local food" that cannot be readily examined in grocery stores. In short, farmers' markets offer a suitable example to analyze that illustrates how "local foods" were adopted, understood, and reproduced through relationships between producers, consumers, market managers, and materialized products.

The reason that I chose the Owensboro Regional Farmers' Market (hereafter Owensboro Farmers' Market) as a case study site was primarily based on "local" characteristics. Owensboro is Kentucky's third largest city after Louisville and Lexington, but unlike these two cities Owensboro has only one farmers' market. The single market limits consumers' choices, forcing them to target their purchasing to one set of fresh "local produce" producers. Furthermore, this market began to implement a "grower-only" marketing rule in 2005, which allowed me to narrow or restrict the focus on the meaning of "local food" in advance. For example, the Lexington Farmers' Market has not yet transformed into a "grower-only" market, and this situation has been creating tensions between grower-vendors and reseller-vendors.¹⁹

Data analyzed in this chapter is derived from various published materials, government documents from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), interviews, and my own fieldwork at the Owensboro Farmers' Market in 2006. The field work consisted of participatory observation and informal interviews at the market twice a week over the

¹⁹ Additionally, Owensboro is known for barbeque: thus I sought to explore the relationship of conceptualizing "local food" in terms of raw products that are sold at the farmers' market and prepared cuisine sold at restaurants. In the end, since barbeque was never served at the farmers' market because of public health regulations, the relationship between the farmers' market and regional cuisine did not directly influence my fieldwork. The relationship between 'produce' and 'cuisine,' however, did provide insights into the complexity of defining "local food."

2006 market season from May until mid October.²⁰ I participated in the Owensboro Farmers' Market as a researcher, observer, and frequent helper. The market began in the first Saturday of May (May 5, 2006) and continued every Saturday until mid October (October 14, 2006). Additionally, weekday markets were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from June to mid September. I participated in all Saturday markets except two²¹, and every other Tuesday and Thursday market.

2) Development of Direct Sales and Farmers' Markets in Kentucky

Before tracing the development of farmers' markets in Kentucky, I will briefly explain how farmers markets have evolved in the United States. From ancient times, markets were focal points of early retail centers. Early American cities included farmers' markets that were initially part of city public markets, and functioned as a major element in the distribution and retailing of fresh produce and meat (Pile 1971). Since the late nineteenth century, public markets have changed their common name to municipal markets or farmers' markets. They have also diversified their functions to wholesale markets, retail markets, shipping-point markets, and courthouse-square markets (Pile 1971). Markets, however, transformed substantially in response to changing societal

²⁰ Before the market season started, I had planned to conduct a questionnaire survey as part of this study. After going through several unsuccessful days, however, I struggled to identify a sufficient number of cooperative respondents. There were various reasons why I was not successful in collecting survey data (choice of location; strategies to ask questions that were not matching consumers' behavior; the way I communicated with consumers; my lack of credibility as a researcher; and finally, I was the only Asian person in the market for the most of time), but given the situation I changed my strategy by extending conversations with consumers while helping vendors' work. Given the relatively small number of these informal interviews, there was not a sufficient sample to conduct a statistical analysis. Therefore, what I learned from consumers is embedded in this chapter as part of a descriptive narrative.

²¹ These were July 30 and August 6, 2006, when I returned to Japan for family events.

settings: these factors include improved transportation, spatial divisions of urban land use (commercial and residential areas), evolution of food processing and storage technology such as canning, emergence of specialized retailers (including supermarkets), and price competition. After the development of large-scale retailers and economical-high speed truck delivery systems, however, the role of the urban central market, including downtown farmers' markets, declined significantly, especially by the late 1960s (Brown 2001). With the exceptions of historical central urban markets in cities such as Lancaster, PA, Cincinnati, OH, and Indianapolis, IN, traditional functions and importance of urban public markets have almost vanished over the past several decades.

American public markets, however, did not disappear. In fact, the number of farmers' markets in the United States has increased tenfold within last three decades. What has changed over the years to stimulate the re-emergence of farmers' markets? Contemporary farmers' markets are not selling products distinctively different from what they sold 50 years ago. Instead, the farmers' markets resurgence has been in response to the situation where "most people are fed up with tasteless food" (Osborn 1991). Globalization of food production that enabled Americans to purchase tomatoes and apples 365 days a year prompted consumers to search for 'real' food products. For consumers who live in cities, farmers' markets became the special place to look for food products that met their tastes.

According to Brown (2002), the first major change in American farmers' markets occurred after the passage of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976. The Act enabled extension service agents to legally access direct marketing and assist farmers in organizing markets. Based on archival research, Brown argues that the most rapid growth period in the number of markets occurred during the 1970s, which is contrary to

popular notions that farmers' markets developed very recently. Overall, the number of farmers' markets in the United States has increased from some 300 in the early 1970s to more than 3,000 in 2000 (Brown 2001, 2002).

Is the change in number of farmers' markets in Kentucky mirror the national trend? While agriculture occupied an important part of the state's economy, because Kentucky's agricultural sales were dominated by burley tobacco and beef cattle for many decades, producing and selling produce was never highly valued. As with other American cities, farmers' markets did exist in Kentucky cities. Their significance and numbers, however, were very low. Brown (2001) counted that there were only five farmers' markets in Kentucky in 1976.

This does not mean that the public ignored farmers' markets. To the contrary, local newspapers annually reported conditions at their local markets during the growing season, and continually stressed produce quality and affordable price (for example, see Skillman 1990; Osbourn 1991). The Agriculture Commissioner, Ed Logsdon, frequently discussed his plans to expand farmers' markets in Kentucky (Skillman 1992), and he negotiated with the General Assembly to secure funding for the state Department of Agriculture.

One of Logsdon's objectives was to establish farmers' markets to promote an agricultural economy that was different from tobacco. Upon taking office Logsdon frequently cited North Carolina as an example of a state that established its own non-tobacco regional agricultural marketing center. Under the leadership of Agriculture Commissioner James Graham, and beginning in 1964, North Carolina gradually diversified its agriculture, actively diverting from a dependency upon tobacco (Geiger 1994). Graham remained in office for three decades and expanded hog production and

built farmers' markets in North Carolina. The result was two fold: a rapid expansion of hog and poultry production, and establishment of large-scale farmers' markets that enabled both wholesalers and retailers to sell fresh farm produce. This process allowed the small town of Asheville, North Carolina, to generate \$44 million from its farmers' market (Harden 1993). From the perspective of agricultural development, North Carolina had several advantages over Kentucky in terms of 1) larger average farm size (and thus farmers could afford to make larger investments), 2) extensive "flat" topography suitable for vegetable production, and 3) a strong state economy. Still, the rapid increase in fresh produce sales was the result of state government policy and producers' efforts over many years enabling the state to firmly establish a non-tobacco agriculture economy (Geiger 1994).

Kentucky's move toward a non-tobacco economy has been comparatively recent. In 1993, Agriculture Commissioner Logsdon announced plans for building a farmers' market—costing approximately \$3 to \$5 million—along Interstate 75 in Boone County, that would serve northern Kentucky and part of the greater Cincinnati metropolitan area (Harden 1993). Judging from the many comparisons that Logsdon made with the Asheville market, his idea was to establish a market that would be accessible to both retailers and wholesalers, which was somewhat different from localized food markets. He was quoted as saying, "There is a place for the greenhouse industry.... The floral business in the state was over \$1 billion last year" (Skillman 1992). Although Logsdon acknowledged that the market's success would not occur overnight, it was necessary to take immediate action on behalf of farm communities whose primary product, tobacco, had come under nationwide attack. As I explained in Chapter 3, during this time many

tobacco farmers began to see a decline in their quotas, and manufacturers became more reluctant to buy leaf because of concerns over federal excise taxes (Pack 1993b).

Despite Commissioner Logsdon's efforts and support by Governor Brereton Jones, the Northern Kentucky Farmers' Market was not funded by the General Assembly. Both in 1994 and 1995, the Senate Appropriations and Revenue Committee did not approve funding to facilitate the farmers' market (Stroud 1994c, Harden 1995). This was indeed an ironic outcome, considering that local newspapers such as the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, the *Kentucky Post*, and the *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer* were constantly reporting the successes of farmers' markets and suggesting that they offered an alternative to tobacco farming. In contrast, from the General Assembly's perspective, the importance of farmers' markets was a matter of whether or not to fund them, and farmers markets were not seen as providing an immediate impact for re-developing the state's agricultural industry. One can thus argue that the success of Kentucky's farmers' markets—and the eventual popularity of “locally grown” produce—occurred from as a result of “bottom-up” initiatives, rather than “top-down” policy. Successful direct sales marketing was the product of varied, even diffuse experiments and decision-making rather than a more government-controlled, singular-purpose model that they would have obtained if imposed from the state level.

Considering that the development of Kentucky's farmers' markets did not evolve as state-led projects but rather was the result of organic community-level activities, I have experienced difficulty in grasping the depth and meanings of Kentucky's statewide growth of farmers' markets in printed documents. To assess the progress made by direct sales over the last several decades, I reviewed data on Kentucky farmers' markets

provided by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA).²² In the state's 120 counties, eight farmers' markets operated across the state before 1980. Most of these markets were located in larger cities such as Louisville, Lexington, the Ashland-Huntington Tri-State area, and Bowling Green. The number of farmers' markets increased dramatically in the late 1990s (Table 5.1). This increase occurred largely during the transition period when producers had to respond to the loss of the Federal Tobacco Price Support Program and eventual tobacco quota buyout by the federal government. As of 2006 there were 108 farmers' markets in Kentucky (Figure 5.1).

²² Hereafter I will use data from the 2006 Farmers' Market Database managed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA). This consists largely of survey responses from each market across the state. General agreement was that, by responding to the KDA's survey, each market will receive various information resources, will be registered in the KDA's directory, and will be advertised on a website and other printed materials. The farmers' market survey asks a variety of questions: name of market, location (including whether it is permanent structure or not), number of vendors, year the market was established, market operational schedule (days and hours), contact person's information (including list of paid/unpaid managers and sponsors), products sold (vegetables, dairy, cheese, crafts, wood products, certified organic products, fruits, eggs, baked goods, mushrooms, firewood, wines, herbs, nursery greenhouse products, meats (and their types), Christmas tree products, wool products, and processed products made at certified kitchen (approved after House Bill 391 was passed in 2003)), type of farmers' market nutritional programs they participate (Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) and Senior Farmers' Market Nutritional Program (SFMNP)), type of payments they accept (credit cards, electrically-paid food stamps (Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT))), availability and restriction of reselling, and gross sales. I rely on the information derived from this database, but there are several pitfalls. For example, in the category "year the market was established" 26 out of 108 markets did not answer this question, making it difficult to trace farmers' markets historical development accurately. Even if it was answered, the information may be incorrect. For example, according to this database the Owensboro Farmers' Market started in 1978, but as far as I establish, the year that the Owensboro Market opened was 1982. There are two ways to interpret such contradictions: either the survey respondent had inaccurate information (or made it up), or the markets were run independently by a small number of vendors and therefore the 'official' year of opening was not the same year that someone started selling vegetables. I fully acknowledge that these problems pertain in this dataset, but given that no other sources have accurately traced the development of farmers' markets in Kentucky, I use this data with caution.

Table 5.1 Number of Farmers' Markets in Kentucky by Year of Establishment.

Year	New markets	Cumulative
--1970	2	2
1971--1975	2	4
1976--1980	4	8
1981--1985	4	12
1986--1990	6	18
1991--1995	8	26
1996--2000	14	40
2001--2005	35	75
2006--	8	83
Unknown	25	108
Total	108	108

Data Source:
Kentucky Department of Agriculture

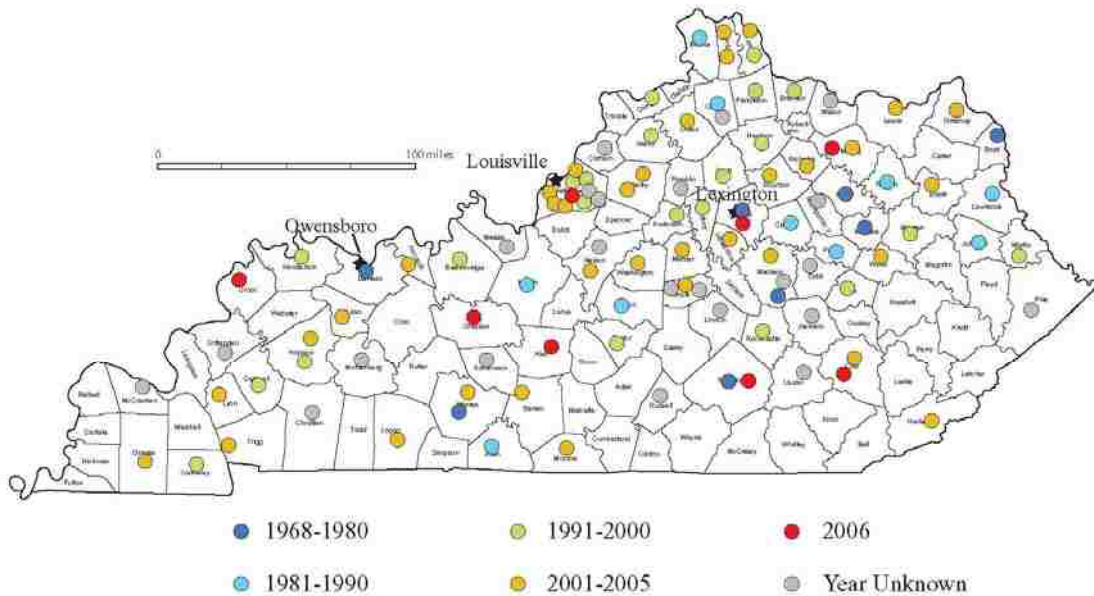


Figure 5.1 Distribution of Farmers' Markets in Kentucky by Years of Establishment.

Source: Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Many new markets emerged in the central and western Kentucky, and each market had different rules that governed their operation (Figure 5.2), which I will discuss in depth later. The emerging distribution of farmers’ markets reveals an expansion into rural counties with smaller populations.

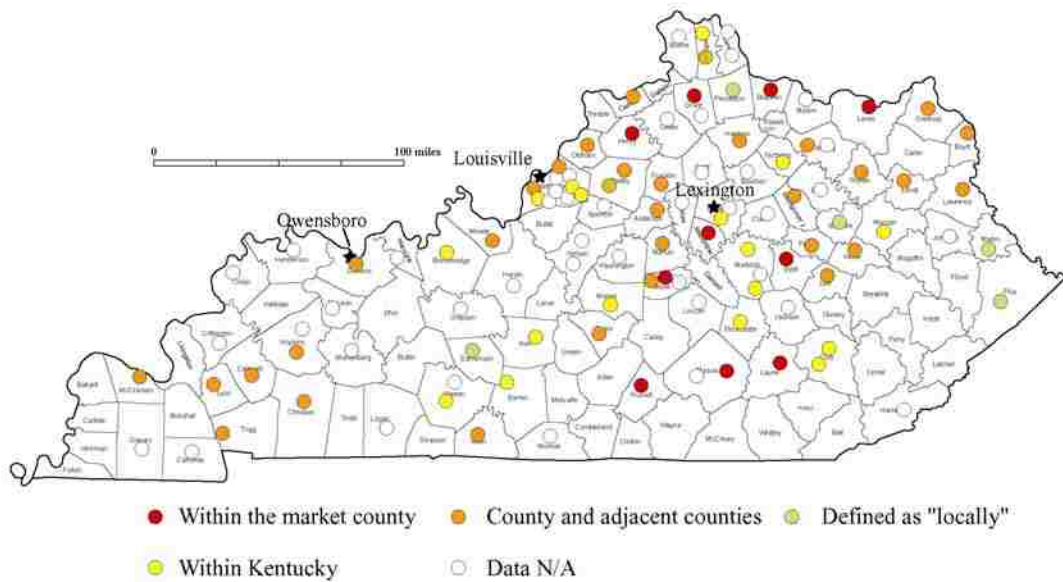


Figure 5.2 Types of Farmers' Markets Boundary Settings in Kentucky (2006).

Source: Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

While farmers’ markets began to emerge organically, independent of any state orders, the state government’s involvement in promoting Kentucky-grown agricultural products cannot be ignored. As explained in Chapter 4, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (ADB) was formed under the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP), and they actively invested tobacco settlement funds to promote Kentucky-grown agricultural products. Since 2004, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) has provided financial assistance for promoting and branding state producers’ quality products with stickers and cardboard signs that include the logo “Kentucky Proud” (see Figure 4.3). The Logo Guidelines state that the logo “may only be used by licensed,

qualified applicants on agricultural products grown and/or process [sic] in Kentucky,” meaning that “origins of product major ingredients, including the farm(s) where the ingredients are grown, processing/production facilities, or corporate headquarters shall be located in Kentucky” (KDA n.d.). In this sense, the KDA was indirectly enforcing a spatial presumption that food produced within the state boundary was of higher quality, and agricultural products are prescribed to the state territory, but not beyond. One can easily point out that this type of market localization is an irony compared with the international trade agreement such as NAFTA that open national borders for free passage of manufactured goods or fresh produce.

But this raises a new set of questions: how did the branding of agricultural and food products based on spatial scale—led and configured by the state government agencies—influence producers’ and consumers’ “sense of scale”? Do people who live in counties, cities, hamlets, and other forms of community use political boundaries to determine food quality? What makes food products that are “Kentucky Proud” better or worse than other labels, such as “home grown,” “locally grown,” “artisan,” “sustainably grown,” and “heirloom”? At what point do these notions develop? To answer these questions I examine discursive exchanges between producers and consumers over food products that take place at farmers’ markets.

3) Formation of Territorial Boundaries and the Normative Scale

This section compares boundary settings of farmers’ markets in Kentucky. As of 2006 there were 108 farmers markets in Kentucky, but the way markets set up their membership qualifications, operational rules, and other general principles vary by each

market (Table 5.2, Figure 5.2). Through an analysis of farmers' market rules, government documents, and follow up interviews, I examine how and why boundaries are created to delineate the "local" from the "non-local."

Table 5.2 Number of Farmers' Markets in Kentucky by Territorial Restrictions, 2006.

Requirement	Number of markets	
	Origin of vendors	Origins of produce
Must be from county of market location	13	12
Must be from neighboring counties	35	26
Must be from parts of Kentucky	1	0
Must be from Kentucky	3	10
Must be from Kentucky and (portion of) adjacent state	3	4
Growers (with no indication to location)	10	13
Must be from within --- miles	2	3
Not specified	21	10
Market with no rule	19	26
Unreliable data	11	4
Total	108	108

Restrictions of sales	Number of markets
Rules specify availability of reselling	26
Rules prohibit reselling	16
Total	42

Data source:


Farmers' Market Rule File compiled by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

One must understand that that farmers' market rules operate as a disciplinary power to define their territory. More specifically, the condition of being a "local" market depends on how the market rule is articulated. Normally each market establishes its own rules regarding available products which are approved by the market board and/or its

members. The rules generally regulate the fundamentals of market operation: when and where the markets operate; where vendors can come from; what kind of products are acceptable for sale; and how vendors specify product origins. Localization of markets is set through locally established regulations that prescribe various spatial attributes such as the vendors' farm and residence locations and product origins. Other policies include exclusion of out-of-state sellers from coming into a county's farmers' market, limiting produce to be sold to that were grown or produced only in certain areas. These rules have influenced market character significantly. For example, some markets define marketable produce to be "anything that is grown in Kentucky," while other markets limit the source of their produce to be from a specific location. The Adair County Farmers' Market rule specifies that "only growers residing in Adair County with produce grown in Adair County" can apply as members (Figure 5.3). This means that there will be farmers from adjacent counties who are not allowed to sell his/her products at the Adair County Farmers' Market, and no residents of the county are allowed to purchase products from adjacent counties for resale.

Such locally-sensitive rules are critical because, depending upon how loosely or strictly rules are enforced, a market can be open to a wider or narrower range of vendors (and/or producers), including resellers. Otherwise, markets can be very defensive and normative. Each market sets their rules delimiting acceptable produce origins (see Table 5.2). Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) used its "Kentucky Proud" program to promote "Kentucky producers and their quality products that are grown, processed or hand-crafted here in the Commonwealth" (KDA 2006). For markets that define availability based on county boundaries, however, branding produce as "Kentucky

Proud” is a prerequisite condition, or the produce will not hold special meaning that might otherwise relate to presumptive local conditions.

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**
University of Kentucky – College of Agriculture

Lexington, Kentucky
40546

Adair County Farmer’s Market Association Guidelines

1. Membership
Only growers residing in Adair County with produce grown in Adair County. A \$25.00 setup fee per year must be paid, or \$5.00 per day up to five day, and a Vendor Application for membership filled out before a vendor can participate.
2. Location
Adair County Cooperative Extension Service parking lot located at 409 Fairground Street in Columbia.
3. Days and Hours of Operation
Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Advertised starting times will be 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. each day. Setup may occur anytime prior to starting time.
4. Spaces will be provided on a first come/first served basis.
5. Produce shall be priced and sold by bunch, ear, dozen, bushel peck, etc., or otherwise sold by use of a scale provided by the seller.
6. All sellers will be responsible for their own garbage receptacles, will clean up their own selling space, and will remove their garbage at the end of the selling day.
7. Items for sale are:
 - ▶ Fresh produce
 - ▶ Jams, jellies, breads, fruit pies, cakes and cookies – vendor must be registered with the Cabinet for Health Services and proof must be provided.
 - ▶ Other canned goods – vendor must be registered with the Cabinet for Health Services and certified as a Home-based Microprocessor. Proof must be provided.
 - ▶ Flowers, bedding and potted plants may be sold.
8. No live animals of any type may be sold.
9. No meat, fish or poultry may be sold.
10. Pricing will be determined by the seller.
11. Neither the Adair County Farmer’s Market Association or the Adair County Cooperative Extension Service is responsible for any accidents or theft. You operate at your own risk.
12. Failure to meet these guidelines will result in a vendor being asked to vacate the premises.

Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND KENTUCKY COUNTIES, COOPERATING

Figure 5.3 Rule of Adair County Farmers’ Market, 2005.
(Source: Kentucky Department of Agriculture.)

Why are such rules and enforcement necessary? There are several reasons why farmers' markets prefer to restrict their sales by enacting locally sensitive rules. First, such rules avoid competition with larger retailers and resellers. Second, such rules meet customers' demands for "local food." Customers come to farmers' markets expecting to purchase fresher, better quality products. This expectation is associated with products that are grown 'locally' instead of being shipped in from thousands of miles away. To meet such customer demands, vendors assure that they are accountable for where market products originate, which results from defining who is permitted to sell and what can be sold. By enforcing a strictly fixed notion of localization, market members enforce a kind of locational surveillance.

One important principle behind the local food movement is an ideal or romanticized notion that supplying food products that are grown 'locally' will help customers obtain fresh products. Furthermore, it is assumed that spending money to purchase local food at local markets instead of products imported from overseas is beneficial to its communities, tying to their identities (Enticott 2003). These principles seem positive, but such changes are linked to consequences, both intended and unintended. How are "local" scales fixed, mobilized, and enforced? Can direct farmer-to-consumer sales be successful over the long term in Kentucky agriculture? With the significant decline of farm income resulting from the loss of tobacco, it is true that direct sales offer significant potential for Kentucky farmers. At the same time, market localization trends, or what I call 'food localism,' must involve understanding the role of place and the practical limits of providing "local" produce to meet consumer demands.

Over all, defining local products ultimately enforces vendors and markets to follow

what their definition of local is, regardless of inconsistency in setting spatial boundaries. Within the same county, surrounding counties, or within state boundaries people subconsciously define what local produce is, and their rules construct subjectivities of markets and vendors. Simultaneously, rules construct exclusions of others who do not belong to that subjectivity. I argue that processes of forming subjects are also processes of how “local food” is represented as becoming. Subjects (local food) will not be constructed just by vendors: they are also influenced through discourse (rules) and practices (surveillance, daily sales, and many more). Those who recognize and practice discourse (vendors, market managers, consumers, and printed advertisements) are the main actors that contribute to form subjectivities of “local food.”

It must be noted, however, that the stricter rules become, the more enforcement is required on the part of member market vendors. For example, the more vendors’ participation and breadth of sellable food products is restricted, the more vendors and their products must be scrutinized to assure things are done properly. Often, if someone sells products that are attractive to consumers but not yet in season locally (tomatoes, cantaloupes, green beans, sweet corn), many other vendors in the same market eye the vendor suspiciously and ask whether they comply with the market’s rules. In order to assure that vendors are compliant, someone must be in charge of monitoring group members; thus surveillance by market managers as well as market members is required to insure enforcement. Rule enforcement may include farm visits, specification of signs, and selections of committee or board members to review participating member applications. “Farm visits” is not casual, but involve critical observation and checks of what vendors grow and, therefore, what they are permitted to sell. Though such visits seem legitimate,

many market board members are reluctant to conduct them, perhaps because they recognize that they are nothing other than the practice of surveillance (Foucault 1977).

Market restrictions may seem legitimate, especially from a localist viewpoint, but can also have pitfalls. First, growers have to be patient if sales are slow and they cannot meet customers' demands until the growing season advances and enough local products are available. Popular products such as tomatoes, green beans, and sweet corn usually do not mature until late June or early July, but if no consignment reselling is accepted, vendors may not retain customers who come to purchase tomatoes before the local crop is ready. Second, by strictly regulating market members, the market may lose the opportunity to attract producers who raise different products in adjacent counties. For example, a farmer who owns an orchard in different county may not be allowed to sell peaches in an adjacent county market even though the orchard and market are only a few miles apart. Thus, regulating "local" markets based on a political boundary brings both a safety net for local producers and a sense of defensiveness or "turf" to the market.²³

Historically, farmers' markets consisted of a mix of farmers and resellers. Farmers brought what was produced on their farms, and resellers provided food products through their own distribution channels that may not be available to adjacent farmers. As farmers'

²³ It is indeed interesting to consider that majority of markets use a political boundary or distance to delineate their market territory, while academics tend to understand them in broader terms. Glasscock (2003) defines the territory of the local based on bioregions. Kloppenburg et al. (1996) call for the concept of a "foodshed" as a potential conceptual and methodological unit of analysis to understand where food is coming from and how it moves to market. It is my interpretation that the reason why many farmers' markets use a political boundary rather than a soil category or watershed area is that it is easier for members to define. Most grower-vendors know each other well and they know the physiographic conditions of one another's farms, but they use this knowledge to direct crop choice and husbandry techniques instead to eliminate certain vendors from market participation.

markets began to develop and support small farms over the years, more and more markets limited vendors' participation to growers-only, or resellers who only dealt with Kentucky producers. The Lexington Farmers' Market, for example, began in 1972 with a mix of growers and resellers, and has since remained that way. For some grower-vendors, however, this did not seem fair, and they demanded rule changes. This move ultimately resulted in a group of producers who established a new "grower-only" market, the Bluegrass Farmers' Market, located on the outskirts of Lexington on Richmond Road (Fortune 2006). Such market separation is not rare in Kentucky. In 2004, Bowling Green also began to support two separate markets, as their new "grower-only" market became independent from the former non-restrictive market (Miller 2004). Such divisions do not mean that one can no longer buy tomatoes or sweet corn, but rather that the meaning attached to tomatoes and sweet corn that one can buy at a farmers' market becomes different. Thus we must ask these questions: How do the restrictions that markets placed upon themselves shape the meaning of "local food" in Kentucky's farmers' markets? How are farmers' markets influencing Kentucky's post-tobacco agricultural restructuring? I aim to answer these questions through examining the everyday practices of the Owensboro Farmers' Market in 2006.

4) Some Meanings Linked to Being "Local": Benefits and Risks of Operating Farmers' Markets Locally by Sellers, Producers, and Buyers

a) Characteristics of the Owensboro Farmers' Market

Through an ethnographic case study at the Owensboro Farmers' Market for the 2006 market season, I analyzed how producers, vendors, consumers, and managers perceive

and construct the meaning of “local” and its importance to their market activities. I observed not only who sells what products and who buys them, but also their relationships and their contrasting views over the meaning of “local” food.

Located along the Ohio River in western Kentucky, Owensboro is Kentucky’s third largest city with a population of nearly 55,000. The Owensboro Farmers’ Market was established in 1982, and is a relatively old market in Kentucky, although vendors at the market change every year, and there were only two producers who have continued sales at the market since the first year until 2006. There are many reasons why vendors could not or did not continue sales at the market: manpower (including age and health issues), labor requirements, personal conflicts, and profitability. During the 1980s when tobacco production quotas were substantial, it was clear to most producers that there was more profitable in growing tobacco than tomatoes or sweet corn.

Ever since the market’s initial opening, the Owensboro Farmers’ Market has operated in the downtown area. But because the downtown location had problems with a lack of vendors’ space and available customers’ parking, the site had frustrating limitations. In 2002, a Festival Market was held in downtown Owensboro to promote local tourism (Campbell 2002), and Downtown Owensboro, Inc. attempted to keep the farmers’ markets downtown, but farmers’ market members refused the plan. Finally, in 2003, the market moved to its current location, the Owensboro Christian Church parking lot, which is located along US 231 and is approximately a mile and one-half south of downtown Owensboro. The move to the suburbs was motivated by the availability of a more spacious location (Vied 2003).

The Owensboro Farmers’ Market operates from May through October. In 2006, the

market began the first Saturday in May and continued every week, with Tuesday and Thursday market days added in June and continuing until September. Vendor membership was limited to Daviess and surrounding counties (Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Muhlenberg, Hancock, and Breckenridge, in KY and Spencer County, IN, which is located just across the Ohio River).

According to the 2006 market vendors, the market began to implement a “grower-only” market system in 2005. While published documents did not clearly state the difference, some vendors who also sold produce at retail outlets in Owensboro were expelled from membership. In 2006, the market accepted product resells from the beginning of the season through July 10, and after July 11, all products sold in the market had to be produced on the vendors’ own farms (Figure 5.4). The reason behind this requirement was that vendors could resell products that were not grown on their farm or were purchased from elsewhere to extend their sales season back up the calendar. Vendors decided to set the date of July 11 because they were concerned they would not have enough products available for sale by the July 4 holidays. Only two years ago they adopted a “grower-only” policy. Before that, the market had both growers and resellers, but the concerns of grower-vendors ultimately led to banning resale-only vendors from participating in the market. In this way, a vendor who resold produce from Amish communities had to quit selling at the market.



OWENSBORO REGIONAL FARMERS' MARKET

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Revised March 2006

1. The market will be located at the Owensboro Christian Church. Trucks may only park in the area in a manner determined by the Market Board.
2. The market will setup at 6:30 AM. Selling can start immediately after setup is complete and until sell-out on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays. Opening day will be set by the Board of Directors and dependent upon available produce. Anyone setting up or selling before the appointed time will be asked to leave the premises immediately.
3. Selling spaces will be assigned by the Market Board.
4. Each seller must be a member of the Owensboro Regional Farmers' Market. membership is open to growers of Daviess, Ohio, Hancock, Breckinridge, Henderson, Warrick, McLean and Muhlenberg counties in Kentucky & Spencer IN.
5. Dues are \$25 per year per family living under the same roof.
6. Exceptions to membership restrictions which are consistent with the objectives of the Market will be considered by the board on a case-by-case basis.
7. Honey or sorghum offered for sale *must* be labeled to meet the Food Control Branch requirement.
8. Sales should be made by bunch, ear, head count, or volume. Hanging or platform scales are required to meet the present state standards.
9. Processed foods, such as candy or baked items, may be sold when made in "permitted kitchen" approved by the Health Department. Copy of permit must be displayed prominently in booth.
10. No live animals or items requiring refrigeration may be sold without meeting federal and state regulations.
- 11 All produce sold after July 11, 2006 must be grown by vendor.
12. Each seller shall be responsible for their own garbage receptacle, cleaning their own selling space, and removing their garbage each day.
13. Each seller shall provide sacks or containers for their produce.

Figure 5.4 Rule of Owensboro Farmers' Market, 2006.
(Data Source: Market Manager, Owensboro Regional Farmers' Market)

Therefore, when the Owensboro Farmers' Market began its season in May 2006, very few vegetable products were available (Figure 5.5). Products that were brought to market,

such as strawberries, green onions, and asparagus, were quickly sold out, often within an hour of the market's opening. To supplement their income, many market vendors brought in flowers and vegetable plants for sale. While flowers and plants were not as popular as food products, they actually sold well and constituted an important part of the vendors' income. Hence, vendors who came to the market at the beginning of the season in May 2006, were those who specialized in spring crops (such as strawberries) or pot plants, vegetable farmers that also had plants to sell, a meat vendor who raised his own animals, and farmers who had processed food products (baked food or processed jars of canned products such as jams and salsas).

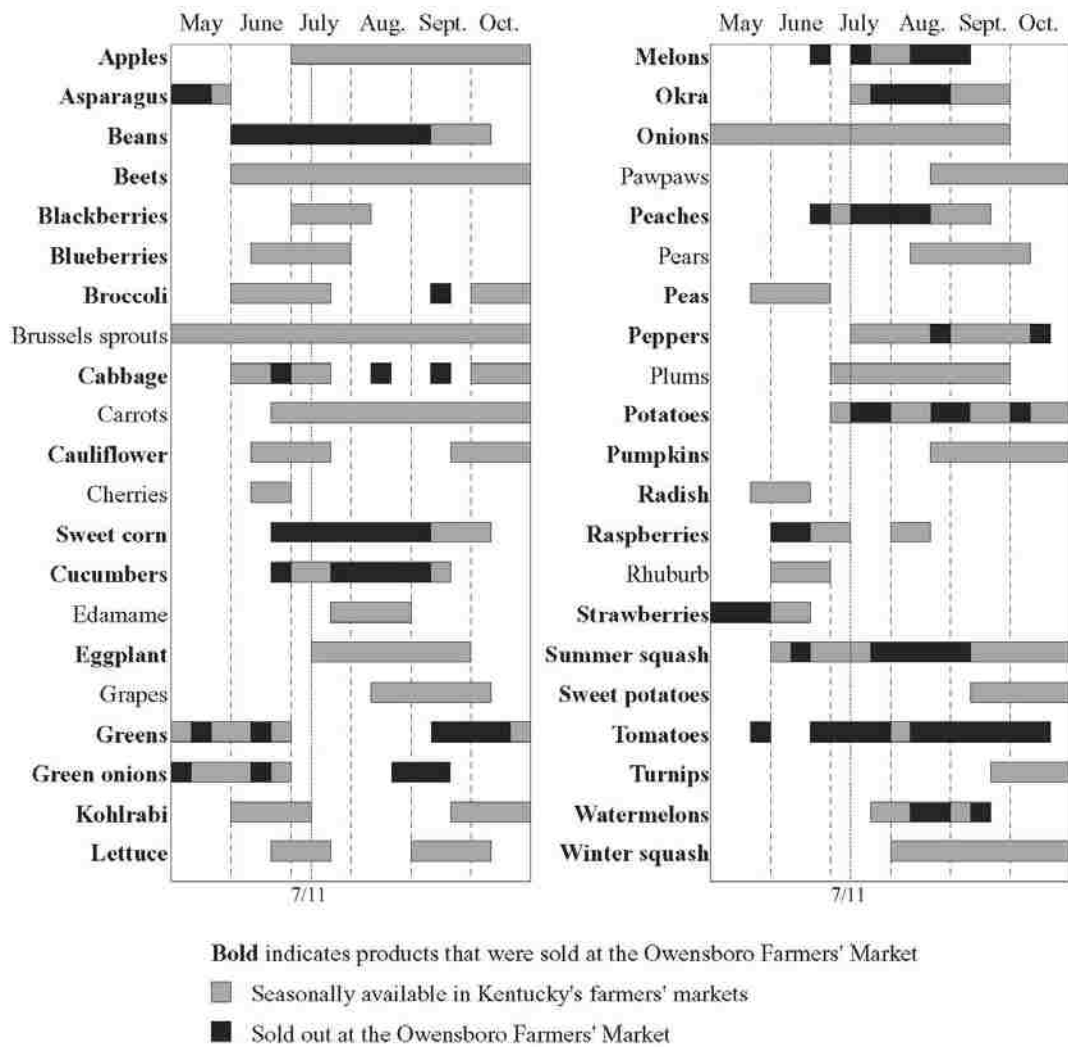


Figure 5.5 Availability and Seasonality of Farmers' Market Produce in Kentucky, 2006.

Data source: Crop schedule based on Kentucky Dept. of Agriculture, modified with author's field notes.

The Owensboro Farmers' Market operated from 6:30 am to noon. People who come to buy their products early enough—around or before 6:30 am—tend to be the same group of customers every week. Even if customers arrived before 6:30 am, to be fair and allow all vendors for set up time and preparation, market rules do not allow selling before 6:30 am.

b) Customers and Vendors Profile

The majority of customers were women, whose ages ranged from the 40s to the 60s. Male customers often involved their spouse or children in market shopping. Many younger customers included those who wanted to purchase commodities with coupons from the Women, Infant, and Children (hereafter WIC) Farmers' Market Nutritional Program (FMNP).

Twenty-three vendors enrolled for membership before the market season began, and eight more vendors signed up after the season started. Of these thirty-one vendors, four never showed up at the market and seven vendors came to the market very sporadically. While there are differences between vendors in terms of frequency that they came to sell at the market, the remaining nineteen vendors constituted the Owensboro Farmers' Market's primary vendors group (Table 5.3). Therefore in this study these nineteen vendors will be the market's primary actors and informants.

Women were critical in operating the farmers' market: all vendors except two couples and two other vendors (one of which was headed by a high school student) were operated by women. Additionally, only three vendors were involved with tobacco farming. While some vendors predicted a division of labor between husband and wife (for example, the husband was primarily a tobacco and commodity grower and the wife was a horticultural grower), all women vendors except one who came to sell at the Owensboro Farmers' Market sold produce at the market as their primary source of income.

Table 5.3 Membership of the Owensboro Regional Farmers Market, 2006.

#	Residence (County)	Age	Major products sold at the market	Other farm income	Grow tobacco?	Land Ownership	Full Time / Part Time	Family and hired labor availability	Current and former jobs
1	Pleasant Ridge (Daviness)	50s	flowers, vegetables	tobacco, corn, soybean	yes	own	FT	husband, occasionally son	farming for whole life
2	Reynolds Station (Hancock)	50s	flowers, bottles, vegetables	teach German	no	own	FT	husband, son (seldom)	Accountant
3	Philpot (Daviness)	70s	vegetables	tobacco, grain?	yes	own	FT	family	farming and manufacturing
4	Owensboro (Daviness)	50s	flower plants	crafts	yes	own	PT	no	craft making
5	Fordsville (Ohio)	70s	bakery products	towels	N/A	N/A	PT	herself	GE plant
6	Owensboro (Daviness)	40s	flower pot plants	nursery goods	N/A	own	PT	couples	teacher and hospital worker
7	Owensboro (Daviness)	50s	fresh flowers	no	N/A	own	FT	husband?	retired
8	Owensboro (Daviness)	20s	vegetables, fruits	orchard	no	own	PT	family and hired labor	student
9	Calhoun (McLean)	70s	vegetables	no	no	own	PT	no	manufacturing
10	Union Star (Breckenridge)	40s	meat (beef, pork, bison, chicken, ostrich), dairy	crafts made by animal goods	no	own	FT	no	migrated from Pennsylvania
11	Utica and Livermore	40s, 10s	strawberries, vegetables	no	no	own	PT	student with mother	HS teacher, student

Table 5.3 Membership of the Owensboro Regional Farmers Market, 2006. (cont.)

#	Residence (County)	Age	Major products sold at the market	Other farm income	Grow tobacco?	Land Ownership	Full Time / Part Time	Family and hired labor availability	Current and former jobs
12	Livermore (McLean)	40s, 10s	vegetables and fruits (5 acres),	tobacco	yes	own	PT	entire family	PT farmer and FT teacher, students
13	Pleasant Ridge (Daviness)	50s	vegetables,	beef cattle	no	own	PT	no	employed at school system
14	Ohio County	50s	vegetables	N/A	no	own	PT	wife	retired state road manager
15	Pleasant Ridge (Daviness)	50s	vegetables	beef cattle	quit after buyout	own	FT	daughter	former tobacco warehouse manager
16	Utica (Daviness)	30s	vegetables, mostly sweet corn	corn, tobacco	yes	own	FT	several hired labor	operate roadside store
17	west of Owensboro	30s	vegetables, herbs	no	yes	woodland	PT	sister, sister-in-law	office work
18	Rockport (Spencer, IN)	50s, 10s	fruits, (peaches and apples)	orchard, processing	no	own	PT	student, hired labor	family owns orchard
19	Utica (Daviness)	50s	honey, vegetables	lease land	no	own	FT	partnership	active in community

Data source: field notes, informal conversation

Trauger (2004) pointed out the important role that women farmers had in developing sustainable agricultural practices through a case study of Pennsylvania's agriculture, and the farmers who participated in the Owensboro Farmers' Market were not different from that standpoint. Many small-scale produce growers were part-time producers and either husband or wife had two jobs. Many vendors have their own dedicated customers who come to buy from them. All vendors emphasized using very minimal, if any, spraying on their products. Four vendors either quit or reduced their production of tobacco, while two vendors increased tobacco acreage after the buyout. The latter were both headed by male farmers.

c) Operation of Farmers' Market and the Role of "Local" During the Season

When the market season opened in May, most food products were still maturing, so the market could not operate in the same way that grocery stores did. This meant that produce that was not yet of sufficient maturity to harvest could not be sold. To supplement the lack of local produce, vendors offered many other products such as flowers, plants, and berries. Additionally, many markets have vendors that specialize in non-agricultural products such as baked goods or nursery plants. There were two exceptions, however: a vendor that had a hothouse on her family farm brought fresh tomatoes, and a reseller vendor had a variety of produce raised elsewhere.

What was most interesting about this "first season" was the subconscious tension between producers who bring all they have (whether home-grown or not) and consumers who come with selective attitudes about what they wanted to buy. It is this time of the year when "locally grown" becomes the signified symbol of value-added branding.

Consumers want to make their shopping experience distinctive by coming to the market and buying something special, namely “local” and “fresh” products. For producers, however, there are limits to what they can bring to sell because of availability, personal philosophy, and other reasons. Theoretically, if vendors want to increase the variety of commodities they offer, they can bring in whatever products that they wish to sell, no matter how many and how different. Because the market has a restriction of allowing only “home-grown” products, however, what they sell must be what they grow and harvest.

At the Owensboro Farmers’ Market, several vendors also chose to sell products that were purchased from elsewhere, taking the part of a reseller-vendor. In one sense this was beneficial to customers, because it would add variety to the market’s products. There are, however, many consumers who do not know the produce growing season schedules. Hence, it was not uncommon to see some customers asking vendors about the availability of tomatoes or squash before the harvest began. In this way, consumers learned that this farmers’ market was a “grower-only” market. A market manager and several other vendors brought in both their farm products as well as purchased products with the risk of being blamed for not being “local.” They placed themselves in a chaotic situation: customers would ask vendors whether products were “home grown,” “locally grown,” or “who grew them,” and most of the time vendors are forced to answer honestly, including where products were coming from, their answers varying from “South Carolina” to “my garden in Daviess County.” From the vendors’ standpoint, not only do they want to increase their sales, but also keep diversity in the variety of products which they believe is important to the prosperity of the market. Product diversity is especially important for

the market manager. Thus, until July 10, vendors who re-sell products produced elsewhere took the risk of not selling “local” products.

Place names make a difference in justifying the “localness” of products. Instead of answering out-of-state locations, some vendors responded to the question of produce origins by saying “Fairview, Kentucky.” Located in Christian County, Fairview, Kentucky is 105 miles south of Owensboro, and the nearest produce auction. Obviously, only vendors know whether products shipped into the Fairview auction were from South Carolina, Florida, or southwest Kentucky. Most consumers, however, did not know Fairview, Kentucky’s location; hence the place name of Kentucky would offer consumers’ some assurance of “locality.”

A good example that explains the distinction between “local” products and reselling products at the farmers’ markets was the recipients of the Women, Infant, and Children (hereafter WIC) Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). The US Department of Agriculture established FMNP to encourage qualified citizens to purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables that can be obtained at farmers’ markets (Joy et al. 2001). The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) adopted a policy to provide WIC recipients an opportunity to purchase fresh produce from farmers’ markets (Armstrong 1994). For WIC recipients the coupons are part of the welfare program that offers opportunities to obtain nutritional food products. Each qualified participant would receive a total of \$20 in coupons (each coupon worth \$4) and could purchase fruits and vegetables at participating farmers’ markets.

What was most interesting about WIC in the “local food” context is that WIC coupons can only be used for a variety of products that were “fresh, nutritious,

unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs” (Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, n.d.). Therefore, products that were purchased at a produce auction were not eligible for WIC participants to purchase with coupons. Thus, many customers would ask vendors, “Do you take WIC?” Vendors would put up a sign that stated that they were eligible to accept WIC coupons (Figure 5.6), or make a distinctive sign that states that certain products were not eligible for purchases by using WIC coupons (Figure 5.7).



Figure 5.6 Signs showing acceptance of WIC coupons.
(Photograph taken by author, May 2006)



Figure 5.7 Signs showing ineligibility of WIC coupons for certain products.
(Photograph taken by author, June 2006)

These coupons can only be used at farmers' markets, and only vendors that have registered in advance can accept WIC coupons for sales. No cash changes were allowed, so in most cases vendors will adjust the price or hand the recipient extra produce to match the value of WIC coupons that the consumers possess.

WIC users tend to buy more fruits (such as peaches and cantaloupes) rather than vegetables (onions and potatoes). Perhaps there is a psychological rationale operating here that the coupons are like free money and recipients can buy what they want. Vendors, however, are sometimes reluctant to sell because their sales must match exact multiples of \$4. Although vendors can cash their WIC checks at any time, they did not see WIC as stable revenue. In fact, one vendor told me that sales income that resulted from WIC runs

a little more than a hundred dollars. Over all, it is a ‘win-win’ situation for both growers and consumers to increase the consumer base and product availability. The only difference this Program had from food stamps was that purchase was limited to “locally grown” products.

Therefore, until July 10 the Owensboro Farmers’ Market was operated by a mix of grower-vendors and reseller-vendors. While everyone understood the manager’s point of view, most grower-vendors were critical of vendors who sold shipped-in products. By looking at kinds of products that were available for sale, distinctions between growers and resellers were clear. Growers knew their growing schedules and the progress of their products, hence the display of products became an exercise in surveillance with vendors seeking evidence of whether other vendors’ products were home grown or shipped in. In June, for example, the most recognizable products were tomatoes and watermelons (see Figure 5.5). Unless growers had hothouses or hydroponic cultivation systems, tomatoes were not mature in June. For grower-vendors whose products are yet to mature, they had to emphasize that they were “growing” and provide approximate estimates of when their products would be ready.

Market vendor tensions were not limited to negative attitudes between growers and resellers, but also functioned in positive competition. If a grower brought in seasonal products before anyone else, that would give that grower a significant advantage over other vendors. This is not to say that all growers were moving toward forcing early production, but even within the local grower group forcing production would have the effect of changing market energy and market attraction. When the first green beans of the year arrived in mid June, they sold out almost immediately. Once the local growing

season arrived at maturity, “local” produce in the market was an immediate attraction that resellers could not match. Similarly, when the first sweet corn arrived in late June, it was provided by only one grower-vendor. Although she sold corn at a slightly higher price (\$4 per dozen), it sold out quickly, usually within just a few hours. Over all, while reseller-vendors’ products play an important role in keeping the variety of products and the market attractive for wide range of consumers, the products that grower-vendors bring in as a first crop is what increased the sense of “local” at the farmers’ market, something which could not be seen at grocery stores.

After July 11, a vendor who specialized in reselling stopped coming to the Owensboro market. Likewise, grower-vendors who had pre-purchased products stopped bringing them. Vendors that had used signs indicating “home grown” or “locally grown” no longer needed to identify their products and distinguish themselves from reselling-vendors because the market rules now forbid outside products. An irony here, however, was that a majority of customers did not know the details of these restrictive market rules and July 11 was a turning point for the market rules change. For customers, expectations of “locally grown” was translated as “home grown”, though they seldom knew where vendors’ farms were located unless they asked. Many vendors, too, did not post their farm locations, often relying on signs of “home grown” or using a Kentucky Proud advertisement board.

Locally grown products such as tomatoes, sweet corn, squash, and green beans appear in abundance in the market after July 11 (see Figure 5.8). There were nearly twenty-five vendors coming to sell at the Owensboro market during the peak weeks. Despite an increase of vendors after July 11, major products such as sweet corn, green

beans, and tomatoes were quickly sold out in every Saturday market. As long as vendors had adequate amounts of produce, both customers and producers were satisfied. It was not uncommon to see customers who came to the market after 9:30 am leave with their hands empty after being told by vendors that their products had been sold out long ago. Hence, from June to mid July sales were going well for vendors at the Owensboro Farmers' Market. Most of their crops were starting to mature, and especially at Saturday markets, popular products such as sweet corn, green beans, and tomatoes were selling out within few hours after the market opened at 6:30 am.



Figure 5.8 Crowded Owensboro Farmers' Market on Saturday (July 15, 2006).
(Photograph taken by author)

On Friday July 21, 2006, strong summer thunderstorms hit Owensboro and the western Kentucky area, dropping more than 2.25 inches of rain accompanied by 60 mph

wind gusts (Blackburn and Covington 2006). Producers suffered substantial crop damage. Moreover, a series of severe thunderstorms occurred later during the summer, and many producers lost much of their sweet corn that lodged or fell over. Crops that were maturing rotted from excessive moisture. Many vendors were forced to stop coming to the market for several weeks because they ran out of products to sell. Under such circumstances, market board members met on August 19 and decided to tentatively change the rules so that vendors could bring up to twenty-five percent of their products for consignment reselling to keep the market in operation and customers coming.

Weather-related shortages put vendors into a difficult position. On one hand, the rule change enabled some vendors to resume bringing in a constant flow of cantaloupes and tomatoes for sale. This was especially important to vendors whose sales at the farmers' market constituted a substantial portion of their household's income. On the other hand, for vendors who believed in a 'grower-only' market, purchasing commodities for resale to continue their vendor income was not an acceptable option. As a result, these vendors stopped coming to the market for several weeks until their late summer products were ready. Ironically, very few consumers recognized the immediate impact of bad weather until they noticed fewer and fewer vendors coming to the market. By this time of the year, few customers noticed the potential for changing produce quantity as it related to whether products were "locally grown" or purchased at a produce auction for reselling.

Nevertheless, during the market's busy days, such as Saturday, popular products continued to sell out within a few hours. Vendors who remained to sell both their produce and purchased products had to explain to customers that their supply was short because of recent weather damage. Bad damage also resulted in fewer vendors coming to the market.

Ironically, those vendors that did come to the market could offer a mix of homegrown and resold products and they had far better sales than those with only locally grown products, in part because the latter had fewer products available for sale. Once school started in August, vendors who had children or worked in the school system stopped coming to the market. Some other vendors also stopped coming at the start of tobacco harvesting (Figure 5.9a). On one day in late August, there were only two vendors at the market, even though the growing season was ongoing (Figure 5.9b).



Figure 5.9a Sparse Attendance of Owensboro Farmers' Market (August 19, 2006).
(Photograph taken by author)



Figure 5.9b Sparse Attendance of Owensboro Farmers' Market (August 24, 2006).
(Photograph taken by author)

Therefore, even though the rules of operation were changed to enable increased supply,

because of crop failures as well as growing schedules or health issues and other non-farm factors, vendors' participation and the quantity of products began to decline.

Poor weather continued to plague farming in the Owensboro area in late summer. Thunderstorms brought two heavy rains and strong winds on August 10 and 27, followed by gusty winds on September 13 and more than 5 inches of heavy rain between September 22 and 23.²⁴ As the Owensboro Farmers' Market vendor numbers declined each week, so did the customer base gradually decline as well. After the last vegetable vendor quit in the second week of October, the 2006 farmers' market season ended.

5) Discussion: Examining Kentucky's Farmers' Markets Beyond Food Localism; Matters of Food or Space?

After reviewing the Owensboro Farmers' Market experience during the 2006 season, there are many questions that can be raised. For example, do market rules function to construct producer-consumer relationships and "local food" at the farmers' market? Do customers want "homegrown" food, or do they want "local" food grown by and sold by local producers? Is disciplining the market through regulation meaningful to provide equity among vendors? This chapter examined the developing dimensions of what I call "food localism" as practiced at various scales in Kentucky within the context of post-tobacco agricultural restructuring. "*Coming Home to Eat*," as Brian Halweil's (2004) book title suggests, can certainly be a pleasure, but as this case study of a farmers' market

²⁴ Data on precipitation was derived from www.wunderground.com. There were also heavy rains in Lexington area on evening of September 22 and 23, 2006. Part of Nicholasville Road south of Alumni Drive in south Lexington was flooded that evening, and two young women were tragically drowned while attempting to cross the flooded street (Mead 2006).

shows, one encounters practical limits when attempting to fix the scale of food availability. Sociologists Melanie DuPuis and David Goodman (2005) critique the seemingly obsessive direction toward preference for home and local-scale products, and call for more “reflexive localism.” In the case of many farmers’ markets that define themselves as “grower-only” markets in Kentucky, we may be able to characterize their move toward food localism as what Michael Winters (2003) calls “defensive localism,” where prioritization of a fixed scale is conducted uncritically through the notion that “local” is better.

My case study showed how direct marketing at Owensboro Farmers’ Market operates. It may be similar to many other markets within and outside Kentucky. The case study provides several important insights into the possible benefits and shortcomings of food localism (Figure 5.10).

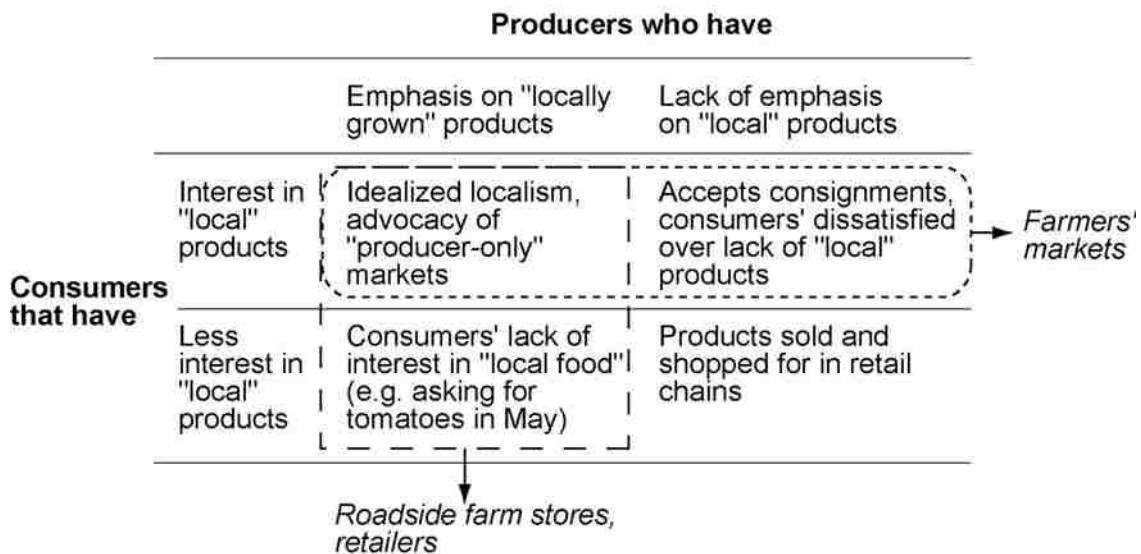


Figure 5.10 Conceptual Model of “Local” Value in Producer-Consumer Relationship.

First, the “local” scale may seem both ambiguous and fixed, but if vendors insist upon privileging the “local,” the market must be strictly monitored to remain in business. The

more vendors and customers demand “local” products, the more the market must define *where* local is and *how* the concept is to be put into practice. Political boundaries such as county boundaries are often applied to the definition, which seems to fix scale, but what customers really care is about is the quality of products available, and not necessarily restricting vendors to those within the county boundary. Not all vendors are willing to accept that role, however. A vendor once said to me, “I don’t want to police people’s farms. Somebody can do it, but I won’t do it.” In general it tends to be the third-party manager, independent of supplying products, who assumes the task of surveillance, as many vendors already know each other and thus it is difficult to challenge their assertions that they are “local.” But even if there was no market manager, most grower-vendors know what products were raised locally and which were obtained elsewhere; surveillance, therefore, functions both within the abstraction of the rules as well as the reality of the market.

Second, as my case study revealed, the more markets try to confine the definition of “local”, the more potential risk for vulnerability a market will be taking (Figure 5.11). Risks include variable weather, sudden crop failure, market instability, inconsistent labor supply, and many more. What needs to be stressed is that, if producers are suffering from poor weather or other threats, consumers may not realize that these conditions exist at the farm until they come to the market. Consumers would not know that corn and tomatoes were missing because of weather damages if they don’t come to the market. What is more, the lack of tomatoes and sweet corn at the market does not necessarily mean that consumers are no longer interested in buying them, including “non-local” products. Some may still wish to purchase these products, and it is the market’s decision whether to

continue the market with outside supplies by relaxing the rules or abandon the season because of bad local crops. Vendors, including the market manager, who also bring in products for resale, stressed this issue. One vendor's words describe this sentiment: "We have a responsibility to serve customers. If we don't have produce, they're not going to come to the market."

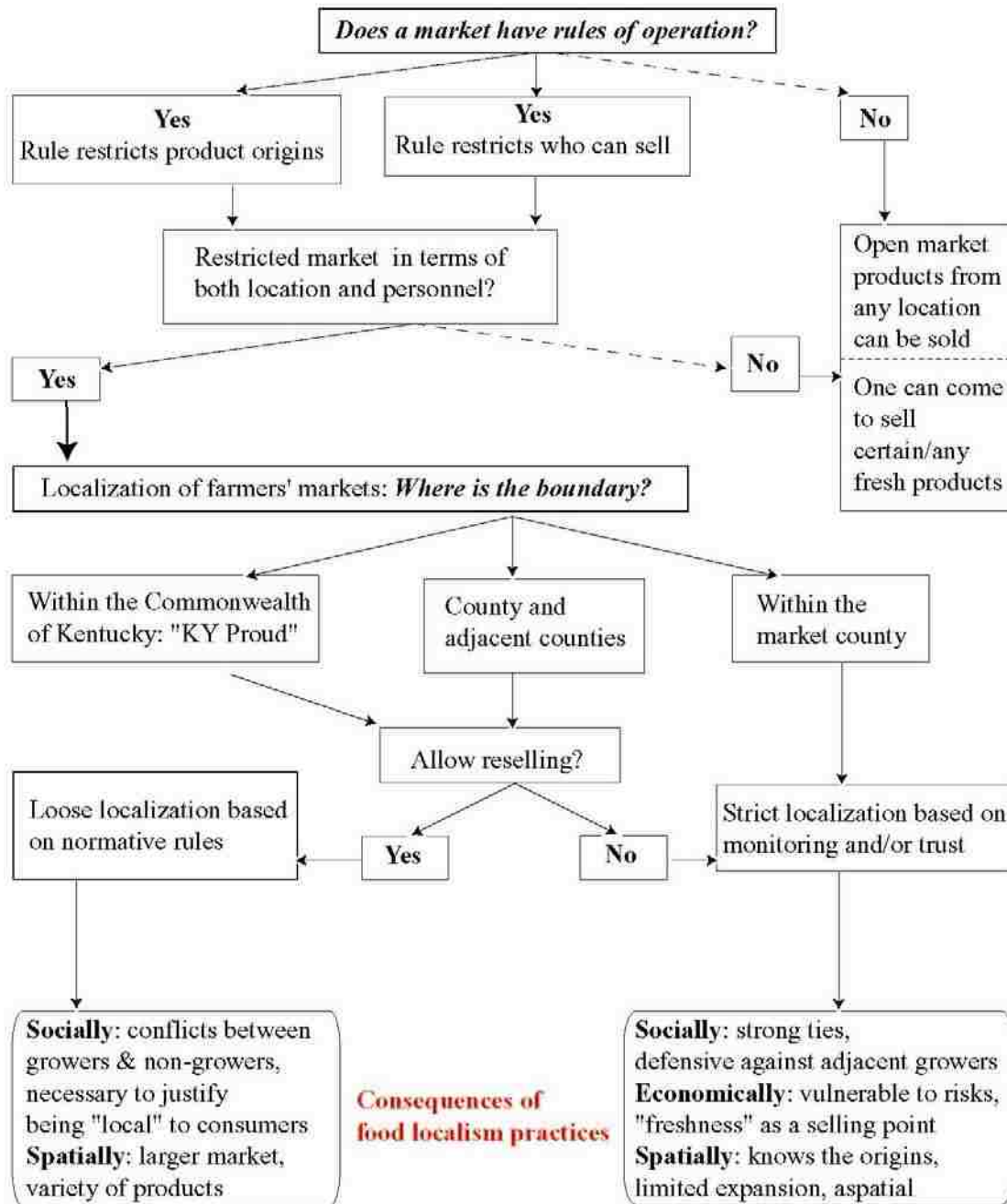


Figure 5.11 Conceptual Model of Food Localism after Adopting Rules and Regulations at Farmers' Markets in Kentucky, 2006.

Third, negotiations between rules and actual practices must also be considered in the context of vendors' household income and socioeconomic conditions. For those vendors who are already retired (with or without receiving pensions) and sales from farmers'

markets may not comprise the critical component of their household income, they can terminate participation after a bad crop year. They may also strongly advocate for a “grower-only” market. For others, however, especially vendors who started selling produce in the context of post-tobacco agricultural transitions, a bad crop year was not a sufficient reason to give up on the marketing season, because their livelihood depended upon sales at the farmers’ market (Table 5.4). They may not be willing to expand their operation by reselling products and absorbing the complaints of other vendors that they were guilty of selling “non-local” produce. Unless the entire community understands the “grower-only” marketing concept includes the risk of losing the entire crop season, there will emerge inequalities by implementing strict localism. Allen (2004) cautioned complacency of localization in the food system, and while a “grower-only” market may seem to foster equity among vendors at the market, there may be a moment of crisis where equality cannot be perfect. To make the issue more complicated, “grower-only” policies may ignore consumers’ interests and threaten shopping opportunities at the market. In sum, food localism as a constructed policy may not be innocent and may lead to unequal participation by vendors and consumers.

Table 5.4 Characteristics of Kentucky's Farmers' Market Vendors' Farm Management in Post-Tobacco Settings.

Type	Characteristics	Labor	Longevity at "local" market
A	Post-tobacco transition: continue tobacco production Growing commodity crops, livestock, and/or non-traditional produce	High requirement for farm production (hire labor)	"Local" market becomes not the most important market
B	Post-tobacco transition: reduce or quit tobacco production Growing commodity crops, non-traditional produce (direct sale)	High requirement for farm and market (hire labor)	"Local" market becomes critical to expanding opportunities Direct sale becomes equal or higher importance than tobacco
C	Post-tobacco transition: reduce or quit tobacco production Growing non-traditional produce, targeted for direct sale Have off-farm employment income	Labor availability limits expansion of production	"Local" market becomes critical to major farm incomes Gradual or complete shift to growing produce
D	Growing non-traditional produce, targeted for direct sale Have off-farm employment income	Family-labor	"Local" market continues to be major outlet
E	Growing non-traditional produce, targeted for direct sale retired, social security	Family-labor	"Local" market continues to be major outlet

Data source: author's field notes, interviews.

Many frequent shoppers at farmers' markets prefer purchasing "local" products, and

there is no doubt that the increase of farmers' markets has enriched the consumer's access to fresh produce. In 2003, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) hired a farmers' market specialist, Janet Eaton and, thanks to her work, information regarding the promotion of farmers' markets and guidance of market operations have spread statewide since then. The result has been that there were more than 100 farmers' markets statewide by the end of 2006. The Kentucky legislature assisted in increasing the popularity of farmers' markets by passing House Bill 391, which accepted micro food processors (who make processed foods such as jams, salsa, jelly, and many others) and bakers while requiring vendors to attend a workshop in order to sell these specialty products at a market. Most recently, House Bill 120 was passed, allowing farmers' market vendors to provide samples of their processed products to consumers (see Appendix B). With the aggressive financial investments made by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (ADB), increasing numbers of farmers' markets, and promotion of the "Kentucky Proud" logo for local products, current trends of increasing interest in "local food" is not likely to wane anytime soon and both vendors and consumers will benefit from that.

But expanding popularity does not mean that the future is bright for Kentucky's farmers' markets. As illustrated by the case of the Owensboro Farmers' Market, many vendors are over 50 years old and their population is aging—like that for American agriculture in general—and this is a concern to market participants. Adding to this concern is the issue of economic independence and sustainability. Unlike tobacco farming, managing a farm that sells produce at a farmers' market require significant labor inputs, a demand that may be greater than tobacco. For vendors who reduced their dependency upon tobacco and expanded produce, they have found that they cannot treat produce as a

part-time effort in the same manner that they did tobacco. To increase sales returns, the scale of production and time spent in marketing must also be increased, but this will, in turn, also require additional labor. This represents a new struggle for small farmers who are making the transition from tobacco while trying to make a sustaining income from direct sales. Their scale is too small to switch to a “productionist” farm size, while expanding their marketing also increases labor demand. While consumers’ interest in “local” food and successful farmers’ advocacy are certainly moving markets toward localization, this transition cannot be continued without critical reflection. Unless vendors are satisfied to remain as part-time farmers, and unless the number of grower-vendors increases at farmers’ markets, it seems that direct sales—at least in farmers’ markets and Community-Supported Agriculture—will continue to experience more demand than supply, and “local food” may continued to be romanticized. “Local food” will be treated as something that consumers find valuable and attractive to purchase, all the while without consumers knowing the politics that vendors deal with or how they work hard to maintain supply.

Many social scientists have argued that community food security (Winne, Joseph and Fisher 1997) or community foodsheds (Kloppenber et al. 1996) are required for sustainable agriculture in the future. This approach has certain potential benefits, and Kentucky’s trend toward food localization partially fits this premise. To extend the trend by promotion of Kentucky’s state-grown products, I propose a further dimension for consideration, which is locational flexibility of production with the corresponding development of traceability. Given that consumers are interested in “locally grown” products, including products labeled with the “Kentucky Proud” logo, specification of

production location would continue to be critical. On the other hand, because “local” is such an ambiguous term, specifications of places—acknowledging the politics of place—would serve better by tracing the locations of products that people demand. By mixing specialization and diversification of production followed by information transparency, production is not fixed as “local” but rather maintained through multiple scalar ties in terms of farms, producers, auctioneers, vendors, market managers, and consumers. For example, several grower-vendors at the Owensboro Farmers’ Market had their own arrangement to conduct custom sales for those who wanted to continue farm work during market hours. Products sold by these vendors may not be their own, but they were still grown in Daviess County (and therefore meet the “local food” premise), and customers would still have an access to these products. This system will easily collapse if vendors are allowed to sell only products that were grown at their farm, but the alternate question is whether defining “local food” at the farmers’ market must be defined by vendors’ profiles. A system making production spatially flexible with traceable information would continue to supply “local food” to interested consumers without each market territorializing itself, and at the same time, avoid the risks that food localization (such as crop failure and loss of labor) may have in the future.

6) Summary

This chapter examined the development of Kentucky’s farmers’ markets—sites where I contend Kentucky’s concept of “local” food was constructed and negotiated—and analyzed how the increasing numbers of farmers’ markets have shaped Kentucky’s localized food supply and the concept of “local food.” While farmers’

markets have existed in Kentucky since the 1960s, it was after the early 1990s that farmers' markets were recognized as one of alternatives to tobacco farming given its uncertain future. At that time, farmers' markets were compared to that of Asheville, North Carolina, where facilities included both wholesale and retail. Despite strong advocacy of Agriculture Commissioner Ed Logsdon, the Northern Kentucky Farmers' Market—the permanent facility investment—was not funded by the General Assembly.

Increase in the number of Kentucky's farmers' markets came in two ways. On the one hand, many former tobacco farmers sought alternatives to tobacco by beginning to grow fruits and vegetables, and they chose a direct marketing venue—most frequently at farmers' markets—to sell their products. Because their scale of production was too small for wholesale, retail outlets such as farmers' markets were critical. Thus, many farmers organized to start local farmers' markets. On the other hand, because of increasing concerns over healthy diets and adequate nutritional intake, many consumers began to search for fresh, high quality food products and started to patronize farmers' markets. Such demands by both vendors and consumers have more than doubled the number of farmers' markets to 108 in 2006. While it is difficult to define whether it was primarily vendors or city residents who organized Kentucky farmers' markets primarily because of the data limitations, it can be said that for Kentucky farmers the processes of transformation required to create new markets were rightly met by consumers who sought access to “local” food produce.

In the process of increasing farmers' markets, producers set their own rules to regulate who can sell and what can be sold at the market. Such rules ultimately drew clear divisions between growers and resellers, but also delimited the acceptable attributes

of sellers and products based on spatial scale and boundaries (home, community, county, region, state, out-of-state). Many farmers' markets became "grower-only" markets and prohibited vendors from reselling products that were raised elsewhere. Each market had somewhat different rules that constructed its own meaning of "local food" as supplied at that market. These rules met the consumers' interests in purchasing "local food," and making "local" scale into a valued strategic commodity. Ironically, however, an emphasis upon "local" can have vague meanings. Unless markets clearly specified their rules, the definition of "local" geography remained invisible to consumers, who tend to believe that place matters more in terms of defining the location of vendors' homes and farms. The "locally grown" brand basically required vendors to specify their responsibility as sellers (who are also assumed to be growers); subsequently, an understanding of home and farm based on their locations became necessary. Thus, the specification of farm locations or produce origins became crucial to their own justification as "local."

Farmers' markets brought in not only fruits and vegetables, but also a variety of food products (i.e. baked goods, meat, eggs, dairy products, and micro-processed canned products such as salsas and jams) and non-food products (i.e., crafts, flowers, and plants). Thus, in some sense the increase of farmers' markets in Kentucky brought a resurgence of what had formerly been public community markets. What made farmers' markets different from the traditional public markets was the existence of rules that enforced a variety of restrictions upon vendors and commodities. Despite regulations, there are certain popular food products (mostly tomatoes, sweet corn and green beans) that sell extremely well at farmers' markets, and if production is successful, through direct marketing farmers might earn enough income that would provide a profit competitive

with the tobacco income they had formerly. By selling products at farmers' markets, vendors provided justification to consumers for what they produced, building stronger producer-consumer relationships that are not available at grocery chains. Thanks in part to the USDA's WIC Farmers' Market Nutritional Program, popular and committed local farmers' markets also provided access to fresh quality products and thus fostered a stronger sense of community-regional food security.

Excessive localization such as a "grower-only" policy, however, would not be free of problems (Figure 5.11). Such a policy would be vulnerable to external threats such as weather and insect problems, and few consumers would share the same level of concern as producers would. Because many farmers' markets tend to attract greater demand than supply, once the commodity supply runs out consumers would quickly turn to alternatives such as grocery stores. Furthermore, this vulnerability would not be felt in same way across the range of vendors. Those vendors who have a secure non-farm income would be less affected than those vendors who rely upon direct-sale venues for a significant portion of their income. This condition is further divided between vendors who are retired (or close to retirement) and have independent status, and vendors who are still raising families and are vulnerable to farm income which stands as a threat to household income. While "grower-only" markets secured members from large reselling businesses, not all could withstand the damages they might suffer. Additionally, because many tobacco farmers in Kentucky ran their farm work as part-time, their transition from tobacco to produce required adjustments in labor requirements. For small farmers, the possibilities for expanding production were limited because of labor needs and farm size. It is extremely difficult to maintain household income by selling only at farmers' markets, and

to accomplish this task managing farm diversification and expanding labor inputs is necessary. But this is also a difficult task, as women farmers comprise the major of operating vendors at the farmers' markets, and help is always scarce unless family members live adjacent to the sales location. The emergence of localized farmers' markets is important to Kentuckians for both internal (the need of alternatives to tobacco farming) and external (the need for fresh, high quality food) demand, but an ongoing trend toward localization would be not without problems because of internal (addressing labor requirement concerns) and external (bad crop years) impacts.

The development of Kentucky's farmers' markets is likely to continue, as more and more emphasis is placed on "local food" by consumers, activists, academics, and mainstream media. Given the increasing popularity of farmers' markets, unless farmers succumb in their struggle against uncontrollable environmental factors (such as frost, hail, wind, rain, drought, and insects), they will continue to meet the demand for fresh produce as best they can. Because of labor demands and the lack of a support system for small farmers, it is likely to take sometime to completely match labor supply and demand. It is easy to say "more growers are needed," but this issue won't be solved unless the labor demand issue is addressed. Given this situation, in addition to the ongoing demand for "local food," wholesale outlets such as produce auctions should be incorporated to assist in supplying "local food." The missing link between the demand for "local food" and the non-grower vendors' supply seems related to available information on production, discourses of which are locationally inflexible because of difficulties or inconsistencies in trying to define "local." Thus if the marketing process develops traceability in production and distribution of products, Kentucky farmers are likely to do a better job

accommodating the need for “local food.”

Because not all markets have the same type of vendors and products available, mobile ties beyond the political boundaries imposed upon “local” products are likely to allow both producers and consumers’ access to what they want, while remaining within in the context of “local” food. With 120 counties and more than 108 farmers’ markets established, Kentucky’s post-tobacco agricultural restructuring challenge has many dimensions. Perhaps other farmers who have yet to adopt vegetable production will contribute to supplying quality products directly to consumers. The struggle over food localism is a critical dimension of the larger transition underway in Kentucky’s agriculture that must be carefully considered beyond the romanticized advocacy of “local food.”

Chapter 6: Revisiting Constructed Place Identities of “Local Food” through County Food Festivals

1) Introduction

During Kentucky’s agricultural restructuring underway, since the 1990s, two changes took place simultaneously. On one hand tobacco farmers were forced to reduce production as a result of decreased quota allotments. On the other hand, many farm operators sought to supplement incomes that they lost with the decline of tobacco farming. Because cash receipts from Kentucky’s agriculture had historically included a heavy dependence on tobacco, the production decline has structurally altered Kentucky’s basic agricultural profile. Many farmers have shifted to an increased feeder cattle production and non-traditional horticultural production.

Meanwhile, substantive change in traditional agricultural production and farm management and a decline of tobacco production impacted Kentucky’s society and culture more broadly than the state’s residents might have generally thought. Beginning with Lexington in 2004, many Kentucky municipalities adopted a smoking ban, a significant political accomplishment in a state where tobacco production was the second largest in the nation (Futamura 2005). In addition, while the number of farmers’ markets has increased statewide, traditional recreational activities held at the county or municipality level relating to tobacco production (including tobacco harvesting contests and county tobacco festivals) diminished over the last 10 years (Kocher 2005). At the same time, to bolster the local economy, many counties and municipalities began to consider hosting tourist and cultural events and activities, including festivals. Festival themes included history and ethnic heritage although many communities chose to utilize familiar agricultural products or unique cuisines produced or consumed in their locale as

an event theme (Shortridge 2004). In this process, “food” and market scale became important attributes of the commodity, and direct sales became the key method by which sales could be increased. Other farmers have facilitated customer visits to their farms through school fieldtrips, u-pick, and bed and breakfasts. The growth of agritourism is a recent innovation that many farmers are initiating as they seek to increase profits (Lockwood 1997). Such economic transformations, including changing production and consumption of traditional and non-traditional agricultural products, played a role in constructing new identities of places that were experiencing agricultural restructuring. In particular, “new traditions” were being invented in the areas of economic development and agritourism context.

What qualifies as “local food” in Kentucky, after all? What methods can be successfully deployed to market “local food” in Kentucky? In the previous chapters I have provided several insights to these questions with particular focus on the role of organizations, policies, and farmers’ markets, but one thing that also must be addressed is that the connections between materialized food, place, and identity are crucial to conceptualizing “local food” and its constituency (Humphrey et al. 1988). Kentucky has been long associated with bourbon whiskey and perhaps food sold at Kentucky Fried Chicken. While it is true that these products are produced and developed in Kentucky, their attachment to sense of place is limited to small portion of the state’s population, and their site of production is largely ignored. Contextualizing this circumstance, we must ask two questions: First, how do food and agricultural products attach to identities of place through the marketing process? And second, what is required for sellers to link a place identity to the foods that they are selling? Most every place has some kind of connection

to food that links identity and its spatial attribution. This can be specialized products and sites, such the famous restaurant in town, winery, dominating food industries (such as Hershey, PA and chocolate or Lexington, KY and JIF peanut butter), well-known farms, or perhaps county festivals. A consideration in successful ways to sell “local food” is the extent to which such identities are advertised, consumed, and reproduced in order to market products grown in Kentucky, especially within specific locales.

As illustrated above, over the past decade the Kentucky Department of Agriculture has made a significant investment in promoting in-state products. State-grown products have increased popularity through the heavily promoted *Kentucky Proud* program. But the more such top-down changes are imposed, the more micro-scale place characteristics become invisible. What makes foods that were produced in Kentucky better or more desirable than others? In that context, do Kentuckians know what is being produced at different areas in Kentucky, such as the different agricultural production patterns between western and eastern Kentucky? In what ways can we associate characteristics of place with food and agriculture traditions?

This chapter will examine how the concepts and commodities of "local food" are being produced, consumed, and reproduced spatially and socially in Kentucky, with the special attention paid to the role of county food festivals as a representation of place identities in Kentucky's post-tobacco agricultural restructuring. As discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, Kentucky farmers' production and sales of food products through branding them as "local food" is a strategic social practice of localism, which in turn provides stronger social relations between "local" producers and consumers. While the relationship between food and festivals has been studied in other parts of the United States (Griffith 1988;

Lewis 1997; McAndrews 2004), there has been very little research in Kentucky that has reflexively examined connections between “local food” and place and identity. In this context, I argue that county food festivals are noteworthy representations of place identity formations, and will potentially contribute as a critical tool in Kentucky’s rural economic development.

My focus on county food festivals is based on iconographic and representational concerns. James Duncan writes that contemporary geographers “replace unitary representations with plural and complexly intersecting understanding” (Duncan 2000). Many county food-related festivals have themed products or cuisines—however local or non-local they may be—that distinguish them, one from another, and their representational meanings are not homogeneous (Table 6.1). Festivals are essentially booster activities that tend to emphasize tradition, competition against others, and defensive localism. While I examined the role of fresh produce and direct sales at a farmers’ market in Chapter 5, market foci are very inclusive; any approved fresh food that meets consumers and producers’ demands or stimulates their interests are accepted at the market. In turn, there are no place-based characteristics linked to materialized “food” in farmers’ markets. As of 2006 there were 108 farmers’ markets in Kentucky, but aside from grower-reseller debates and territorial definitions, no markets are trying to represent themselves with certain products.²⁵ At the same time, many Kentucky counties iconize a variety of agricultural and food products at their festivals.

²⁵ In another example, the recently launched portal map web site, the Kentucky MarketMaker (www.marketmakerky.com), allows users to find available agrifood products and their location, but it is unlikely that they influence people’s notions of Kentucky’s places regarding food and agricultural commodities.

Table 6.1 Major county festivals in Kentucky that thematize agricultural and food

#	Name of Festival	County	City	Products	Types and origin of products
1	Adairville Strawberry Festival	Logan	Adairville	strawberry	raw, local?
2	Anderson Co. Burgoo Festival	Anderson	Lawrenceburg	burgoo	processed
3	Barbeque on the River	McCracken	Paducah	barbeque	processed, non-local
4	Beaver Dam Strawberry Festival	Ohio	Beaver Dam	strawberry	raw, local?
5	Benton Tater Day	Marshall	Benton	sweet potato	raw, local?
6	Blackberry Festival	Nicholas	Carlisle	blackberry	raw, local
7	Breathitt Co. Honey Festival	Breathitt	Jackson	honey	raw, local?
8	Carter Co. Sorghum Festival	Carter	Grayson	sorghum	raw, local
9	Casey Co. Apple Festival	Casey	Liberty	apple	raw, local & non-local
10	Chocolate Festival	Mason	Maysville and Washington	chocolate	processed, non-local
11	Edmonton Co. Pumpkin Festival	Metcalfe	Edmonton	pumpkin	raw, local?
12	Gingerbread	Knott	Hindman	gingerbread	processed, local
13	Green River Catfish Festival	Butler	Morgantown	catfish	raw, local & non-local
14	Hancock Co. Sorghum Festival	Hancock	Haweville	sorghum	raw, local
15	Icecream Festival	Grayson	Leitchfield	ice cream	local?
16	International Bar-B-Q Festival	Daviess	Owensboro	barbecue	processed, local & non-local
17	Kentucky Apple Festival	Johnson	Paintsville	apple	raw, local
18	Kentucky Bourbon Festival	Nelson	Bardstown	bourbon	processed, local
19	Logan Co. Tobacco Festival	Logan	Russellville	tobacco	raw, local
20	Marion Co. Country Ham Days	Marion	Lebanon	country ham	processed, local & non-local
21	Mayslick Asparagus Festival	Mason	May's Lick	asparagus	raw, local?
22	Monroe Co. Watermelon	Monroe	Tompkinsville	watermelon	raw, local?
23	Mountain Mushroom Festival	Estill	Irvine	mushroom	raw, local

Table 6.1 Major county festivals in Kentucky that thematize agricultural and food products, 2006. (cont.)

#	Name of Festival	County	City	Products	Types and origin of products
24	Morgan Co. Sorghum Festival	Morgan	West Liberty	sorghum	raw, local?
25	Poke Sallet Festival	Harlan	Harlan	greens "poke plants"	raw, local
26	Powell Co. Corn Festival	Powell	Stanton	sweet corn	raw, local
27	Spoonbread Festival	Madison	Berea	spoonbread	processed, local?
28	Trigg Co. Ham Festival	Trigg	Cadiz	country ham	processed, local
29	Trimble Co. Apple Festival	Trimble	Bedford	apple	raw, local
30	Washington Co. Sorghum and Tobacco Festival	Washington	Springfield	sorghum	raw, local
31	World Chicken Festival	Laurel	London	chicken	processed, non-local products

Source: kyfestivals.com, *the Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Kentucky Living*, and *the Louisville Courier-Journal*.

My focus here is to consider how materialized representations (such as food products in festivals) play a role in constructing local identity, and at the same time, depending on how one defines local and non-local, how “local food” will eventually play a role in reconstructing or misidentifying the identity of places.

This chapter begins by tracing the changing development of county festivals in Kentucky. There have been a variety of themed festivals held in Kentucky, but I will primarily focus on festivals that were themed around agriculture, food, and drinks.²⁶

²⁶ As I discuss in detail later, there are a number of festivals that are difficult to categorize. For example, while harvest festivals are technically festivals that celebrate the success of agricultural production, they do not have particular commodities that are represented as topical theme. Similarly, heritage festivals may have an interest in promoting historical and cultural traditions of agrarian lives, but representation of materialized themes in heritage festivals are not clear. Festivals such as harvest festivals, heritage festivals, and Oktoberfest, therefore, will not be examined in this study.

What is interesting in these cases is that while many renowned festivals have diminished over the years, equal or larger numbers of festivals have also emerged across the Commonwealth since the 1990s. Next, I examine the relationship of themed commodities and their “localness” to clarify what themed commodities are produced or consumed locally, and their relative importance to communities that host such festivals. Particular attention is paid to Owensboro, Kentucky, known for mutton-based barbecue and International Bar-B-Q Festival. Most of Kentucky’s county food festivals were what Lewis (1997) called the “rationally constructed food festivals.” Finally, I briefly explore the possibilities of linking themed food and agricultural products to Kentucky’s recent development of agritourism, with consideration paid to potentials for culinary and gastronomic tourism. Lucy Long defines culinary tourism as “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other—participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own” (Long 2004, p. 21). She argues that this definition will provide a role for both tourists and food; tourists will construct meanings within their experience, and food will be part of people’s experienced aesthetics. Meanwhile, in the edited book *Tourism and Gastronomy*, Greg Richards admits the difficulty of defining gastronomic tourism and only defines gastronomy as “the reflexive cooking, preparation, presentation and eating of food” (Richards 2002, p. 17). I consider culinary tourism as part of gastronomic tourism so that food and foodways that are not only “others” but also “one’s own” can be reflexively experienced through tourism participation.²⁷ I will contextualize these processes within Kentucky’s county

²⁷ If I follow Long (2004)’s definition, when looking at food-related festivals in Kentucky,

food festivals and discuss them in the larger scheme of “local food” promotion and the eventual role of future tourism development.

All data collected for this chapter is based on academic publications as well as Kentucky newspapers and other published resources such as *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*, *Bowling Green Daily News*, *Farmer’s Pride*, and *Kentucky Living*. In addition, the Internet online resources such as kyfestivals.com (portal site) as well as various web pages on county Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Bureaus, and the festivals’ own domain websites are examined. They are followed by qualitative data that I collected through participatory observation and on-site informal conversations at a number of festivals that I attended between 2003 and 2007.

2) Historical Relationships between Agriculture and Food in Kentucky’s Festivals

Many scholarly works on American festivals have been published by historians, anthropologists, and folklorists (Shemanski 1984; Humphrey and Humphrey 1988; Lewis 1997; West 1998; Wilson and Gillespie 1999). Geographers, however, remained relatively invisible in festival studies, with the exception of Kniffen’s (1949, 1951) study on the historical development and patterns of American agricultural fairs (mostly state fairs), and Janiskee’s (1983, 1991) study of festivals in South Carolina. Janiskee (1991) pointed

perhaps visiting Marion County Ham Days or the Trigg County Ham Festival can be my culinary experience, because I do not use country ham for my daily cooking at all. This experience, however, can also be a gastronomic tourist action too, since I am likely to reflexively examine cultural meaning, nutritional roles, origins, and tastes of country ham. Therefore, in this study I combine both and call them “gastronomic tourism” with consideration paid to culinary aspects.

out several reasons that make collection of festival data extremely difficult. First, many festivals are held in very small municipalities, and are therefore rarely publicized in mainstream media. Second, even if these events are publicized, because many festivals are held by community organizations (which are often constituted of volunteers) rather than top-down institutional approaches, statewide data collections on festivals have not been adequately conducted. Finally, because many festivals change their contents over the years, it is difficult to trace down all information thoroughly.

While American society is experiencing a large increase in the number of new festivals, Zelinsky (1992) pointed out that there are three attributes that set the current regional revivals apart from earlier festival modes; these are 1) the phenomena among participating people who are self-conscious and choose to do something special, 2) inclusiveness in sharing experiences with outside members rather than exclusiveness, and 3) commercial exploitation of regional attractions. Zelinsky's argument rightly fits with many agricultural products that are produced in Kentucky and are sold and seen at various county festivals and state fairs. The Kentucky State Fair, with a history that dates back more than 100 years (Kniffen 1951), has been hosted every August in Louisville, KY, and numerous products, from vegetables to livestock to country ham, are evaluated at the fair site. Various small-scale festivals are held in communities throughout the state, many of which are known for special agricultural and food products (Table 6.1). In his book which may be the first comprehensive study of American festivals, Meyer Jr. (1950) listed topical festivals that were popular in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to festive events such as the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky State Fair, festivals topics included cattle (Fat Cattle Show in Louisville), music (American Folk Song

Festival in Ashland), tobacco (Tobacco Festival in Shelbyville), cultural history (celebrating Dr. Thomas Walker at the Mountain Laurel Festival in Pineville), homecoming (Laurel County Annual Homecoming), boat ride (Tennessee Valley Ho! Cruise, which traverses from Paducah to Knoxville, TN through nine major TVA lakes), and fishing (Davies County Fishing Contest). Shelbyville's Tobacco Festival, however, vanished many decades ago. On the other hand, the Fat Cattle Show has expanded into the North American International Livestock Exposition.

Subsequent to Meyer Jr. (1950), one of the later but more thorough contributions to understanding trends in American festivals was an edited volume entitled *Festivals Sourcebook* by Paul Wasserman and others (Wasserman et al. 1977; Wasserman 1984). In this reference guide, authors classified festivals to seventeen categories and introduced each of them with a brief description. Their categories include: Agriculture, Antiques, The Arts, Theater and Drama, Arts and Crafts, Community, Dance, Ethnic Events, Film, Folk, Food and Drink, History, Indians, Marine, Music, Seasons, and Wildlife. Festivals were also indexed by chronological listing, event names, geographic location, and subjects. Because federal and state governments (including Kentucky) did not maintain these types of records, the two volumes of *Festivals Sourcebook* were the most comprehensive resource to examine patterns of American festivals from the late 1970s to mid 1980s.

These publications, however, were not without several faults. First, the thematic classification of festivals was inconsistent and not defined clearly. Therefore, many festivals were not listed in an appropriate category. For example, Kentucky's agricultural festivals that were listed in the first edition were the Iris Festival (held at Cynthiana),

Audubon Festival of the Dogwoods (Louisville), Mountain Laurel Festival (Pineville), and Lincoln County June Dairy Day Festival (Stanford). The first three festivals seem more suited to the term “seasonal festival” than to agricultural. On the other hand, festivals such as the Morgan County Sorghum Festival were listed under the Community Festivals category. Thus, one must pay careful attention to event names and themes rather than the author’s classification. Second, only a few festival descriptions specify the year they started, hence it is difficult to trace the historical origins of each festival. Finally, although it was understandably inevitable, there were many omissions in the festival listings. To address these problems, I examined newspapers and magazine articles to follow any historical changes in Kentucky’s festivals.

There are several clarifications that should be pointed out in the development of agriculture and food-related festivals in Kentucky. First, among the list of festivals in the Agriculture, and Food and Drink categories, there were very few festivals that existed in Kentucky in the 1970s (Wasserman 1977). Many county festivals were themed on community gatherings or folk events. In addition to agriculture and food festivals that I mentioned above, the 1977 *Sourcebook* included the International Banana Festival in Fulton, KY and the Morgan County Sorghum Festival in West Liberty.²⁸ The reason that communities do not initiate many agriculture and food-related festivals (compared with folk festivals or community festivals) is not clear. Perhaps it relates to the county and state fairs, which are bigger attractions and have a basic form—agricultural themes—and hence communities did not consider conducting additional agricultural-themed festivals.

²⁸ Another possible addition to this list is the Logan County Tobacco Festival, which was held in Russellville. According to Wasserman (1984) the Logan County Tobacco Festival began in 1958, but it was not mentioned in the first edition of the 1977 *Sourcebook*.

Another possibility is that local-scale tourism was not actively pursued by Kentucky's small towns, and therefore a community's advocacy for agricultural-themed festivals did not widely exist. The number of festivals increased gradually, however, especially in the late 1970s, followed by a surge in the early 1990s (Figure 6.1).

Second, when comparing festival themed products, many older festivals used products that were commonly grown and were sometimes consumed locally. Indeed, Harlan County's Poke Sallet Festival has continued for more than four decades (West 1998), and Benton's Tater Day in Marshall County is said to have begun in 1843 (Mofield 1992).

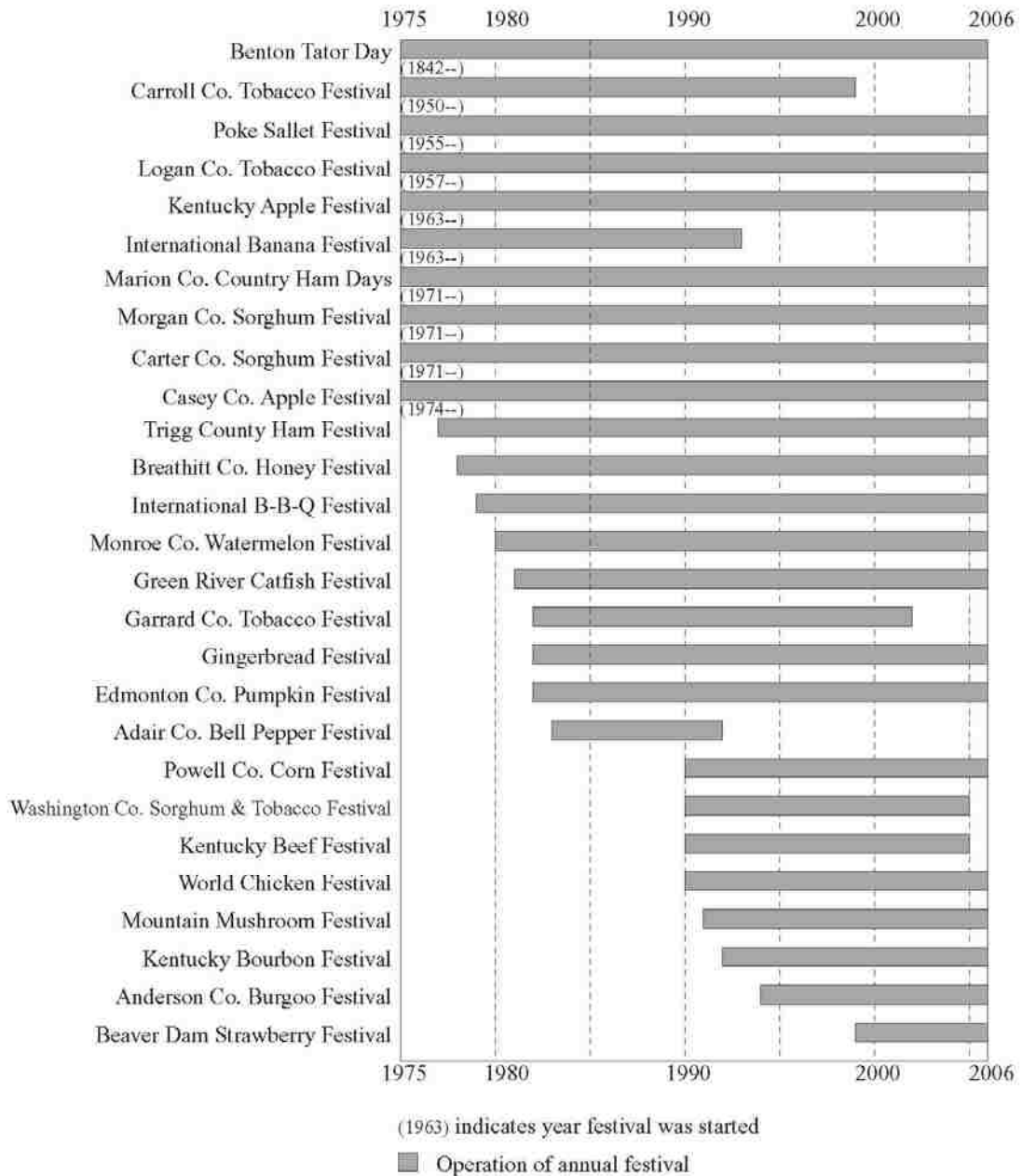


Figure 6.1 Chronological development of major county festivals in Kentucky, 1975- 2006.

Data source: Wasserman (1977, 1984). *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Kentucky Living*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*, *Kentucky Post*

In these older festivals, there was more than one festival in Kentucky that used the same products as themes. For example, since the 1970s there were two apple festivals (Paintsville in Johnson County and Liberty in Casey County) and two sorghum festivals

(West Liberty in Morgan County and Grayson in Carter County) in Kentucky (see Figure 6.1). In addition, there were at least five tobacco festivals in Kentucky during the 1980s. These include Logan County (began in 1957), Carroll County (began 1949?), Garrard County (1982), Bloomfield (Nelson County), and Washington County, which changed its festival name from Sorghum Festival to Sorghum and Tobacco Festival in 1990. This suggests that the sense of competition between festivals was rather minor, perhaps indicating that their place identities did not have to be individual and distinctive. Additionally, these festivals reflected what local residents have consumed in their everyday diet for many years.

Festival themes that were initiated since the 1990s, however, have been more diversified. One of the most significant changes is that many non-traditional agricultural products were chosen as a theme. This includes strawberries in Beaver Dam (Ohio County), asparagus in Mayslick (Mason County), and wild mushrooms in Irvine (Estill County). These products were historically grown in these counties (Williams 1998; Vied 1999), but unlike other food festivals in Kentucky they were not cited for celebration until very recently.

Another notable change in Kentucky's festivals since the 1990s is the increasing involvement of corporate sponsorship. In this case, companies that sponsor festivals were not local small businesses but the global corporations. The World Chicken Festival in Corbin, for example, is sponsored by Tyson Foods Inc. (Figure 6.2). Similarly, distilling companies sponsored the Kentucky Bourbon Festival since 1991, and this brought bourbon-loving tourists around the world into Bardstown (Watson 1993). Such sponsorships are likely to make festivals more lucrative to operate since corporations

often provide large capital donations and additional vendors with logo signs advertising company products, such that the festivals became sites of corporate publicity (Figure 6.3). Hence, traditions and uniqueness of place characteristics are obscured or usurped by the involvement of corporate sponsors.²⁹



Figure 6.2 Display of Tyson Foods sponsorship at the World Chicken Festival.
Source: author's photo archive (October, 2003).

²⁹ According to Kocher (2005), Philip Morris pledged a couple of thousand dollars each year for the Sandy Hook Tobacco Festival in Elliott County, but their involvement ended when tobacco companies signed the Master Settlement Agreement with 46 states' Attorneys General. The year that Sandy Hook started their Tobacco Festival could not be found as of this writing.



Figure 6.3 Display of Wild Turkey Distillery's sponsorship at the Kentucky Bourbon Festival. They do not provide free samples of bourbon, though souvenirs such as cup coasters and bookmarks with the company's logo are provided for free. In addition, an outdoor "saloon" is attached to the festival site for visitors who are in legal drinking age. Source: author's photo archive (September, 2006).

To summarize, there are several patterns of development of agricultural and food festivals in Kentucky. The early food festivals were based on products that were produced locally and were integrated into the everyday diet. Festival-based foods can be divided into processed food products (such as sorghum for syrup, honey, pumpkins, catfish, and country ham) and raw food products (apples and watermelons). In addition, some places chose to feature cuisines that were commonly consumed in that area. These include Owensboro's barbecue and Hindman's gingerbread.³⁰ These festivals co-existed with tobacco festivals in various counties. Unlike agricultural fairs that were held to

³⁰ The Gingerbread Festival theme originated not only from a food that is consumed, but also the historical custom of politicians distributing gingerbread during election time (Thompson 1987).

competitively evaluate agricultural and food products, county food festivals function as an opportunity for citizens to participate in or reinforce a shared group identity. In most cases, county festivals function as important fundraising opportunities and an aid in economic development.³¹ Therefore, promotion is heavy and the event is deemed important. Especially after the 1990s, however, new festivals with different themes emerged. Many chose non-traditional agricultural products that were not necessarily part of the local everyday diet. Newer festival organizers chose different types of products that were not celebrated anywhere else in Kentucky but had some connection to each place. In such cases, whether products were locally produced or not became less important.

3) Analyzing Identity of Places through Food Festivals

County food festivals must be understood as growing out of different motivational rationales. First, unless state government is involved (which is rarely the case), county festivals are planned, organized, and managed within that county or city by its own people. Many communities form volunteer-based festival organizing committees or non-profit organizations to facilitate festivals, spending very little public money in the process. While some festivals have commercial sponsors to organize festivals, this may fall into excessive commercialization and may not reflect the community's interest. As a

³¹ In 1995, Kentucky Department of Travel Development conducted a market and economic survey of the International B-B-Q Festival in Owensboro. They found that two-day event contributed nearly \$2.4 million to the state's economy, including over \$247,000 to local and state tax revenues (Kentucky Department of Travel Development 1995). Since the study was conducted more than ten years ago, the economic impact for Owensboro's International B-B-Q Festival—as well as other popular festivals in Kentucky—are likely to be even stronger today.

result, it is very difficult to coordinate festivals each year.³²

Second, county festival themes are likely to emphasize material objects or practices (production, consumption, distribution, performance, and unique markets) and are a reflection of the local heritage. They are formed by generations of traditions. Because county festivals are a shared experience, whatever themes they may be based on (music, food, art, crafts, ethnic traditions, and so on), they represent the identities of places to both organizers and participants. Thus, county festivals are one example of a temporal site where place, commodities, and identities seem to meet together.

Third, festival practices are framed within the political boundaries of that county. This means that, through the sale of food products and other material representation, county festivals distinguish themselves from others spatially and link their identities to place. Festival participants, including vendors and consumers, may reflect a statewide or even nationwide audience, but their ideal primary participants are those who are supposedly “local” to the festival site or county.

Fourth, as I mentioned earlier, food-related festivals can be divided into two types. The first type is a festival that involves celebrating raw products that are (or are likely to be) produced in that county (Table 6.1). Examples include the Sorghum Festival in Hancock County, the Apple Festival in Casey County, and the Pumpkin Festival in

³² Fulton, KY, the town that borders South Fulton, Tennessee, hosted the International Banana Festival beginning in 1963. Fulton was a railroad hub that received shipped bananas from New Orleans, and after checking, icing, or heating, they were sent from Fulton to various Midwestern cities (Jenkins 1999). The Banana Festival celebrated bananas and different cultures (particularly that of Central America) where the bananas were grown. Fulton’s International Banana Festival continued nearly 30 years, and during that time refrigerated railcars began to bypass Fulton. In the end, the Fulton Chamber of Commerce decided to drop the Banana Festival in 1993, in part because “the workload that the Banana Festival placed on...” them was too much to handle, and the festival vanished from Fulton’s tradition (Lexington Herald-Leader 1993).

Metcalfe County. The second category is a festival that celebrates processed food products that are also (likely to be) produced in that county. This includes the International Bar-B-Q Festival in Owensboro (Daviess County), the Ham Festival in Trigg County, and the Burgoo Festival in Anderson County. In general, people assume that these products are specifically (and sometimes specially) produced in that county, and therefore the food is identified as a signature of the place. These two festival types are held throughout the growing season, with the first type of festival held more toward autumn to align with the traditional harvest period (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 List of Food-themed County Festivals in Kentucky and their schedule, 2006.

Name / Weeks	April	May	June	July	Sept.	Oct.
Benton Tater Day	X					
Chocolate Festival		X				
Mountain Mushroom Festival		X				
International Barbeque Festival		X				
May's Lick Asparagus Festival		X				
Beaver Dam Strawberry Festival		X				
Kentucky Dairy Festival			X			
Green River Catfish Festival				X		
Icecream Festival				X		
Breathitt Co. Honey Festival					X	
Monroe Co. Watermelon Festival					X	
Trimble Co. Apple Festival					X	
Casey Co. Apple Festival					X	
Kentucky Bourbon Festival					X	
Spoonbread Festival					X	
Sweet Owen Days					X	
Anderson Co. Burgoo Festival						X
Barbeque on the River						X
Hancock Co. Sorghum Festival						X
Marion Co. Country Ham Days						X
Morgan Co. Sorghum Festival						X
Pumpkin Festival						X
World Chicken Festival						X
Carroll Co. Tobacco Festival						X
Edmonton Co. Pumpkin Festival						X
Kentucky Apple Festival						X
Washington Co. Sorghum Festival						X
Trigg Co. Ham Festival						X
Bloomfield Tobacco Festival						X

Source: kyfestivals.com; *The Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Kentucky Living*,
The Louisville Courier-Journal, *The Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*

I

ronically, when product origins are carefully examined, in many cases the food represented as a theme, and as a symbolic ‘local’ product, tends to originate from somewhere outside the county boundary, or even outside of Kentucky. This is especially true of processed food. For example, apples provided to Casey County for their Apple Festival in 2005 came from Linden, California, packed by the Prima Frutta Packing

Company (Figure 6.4). While London’s World Chicken Festival prided itself on cooking “with the world’s largest stainless frying pan,” the origins of the chicken so prepared is not explained to participants (Figure 6.5). One can likely predict that the chickens consumed at the World Chicken Festival are most likely not provided from within Laurel County (Figure 6.6). On-site interviews also revealed that Owensboro’s meat prepared for the International Bar-B-Q Festival does not necessarily come from its county’s meat animal producers, but is purchased elsewhere (Figure 6.7). Ironically, Owensboro’s Bar-B-Q Festival originates in competitions among the local Catholic churches whose parishioners cooked their own barbecue for church picnics. For team members who cook barbecue at the festival today, the origin of the food is not the most important thing considered unless it critically changes the total sales.



Figure 6.4 Box of apples delivered from California at Casey County Apple Festival. They were shipped in to be used for making the largest apple pie in the world.

Source: Author’s photo archive (September, 2005)

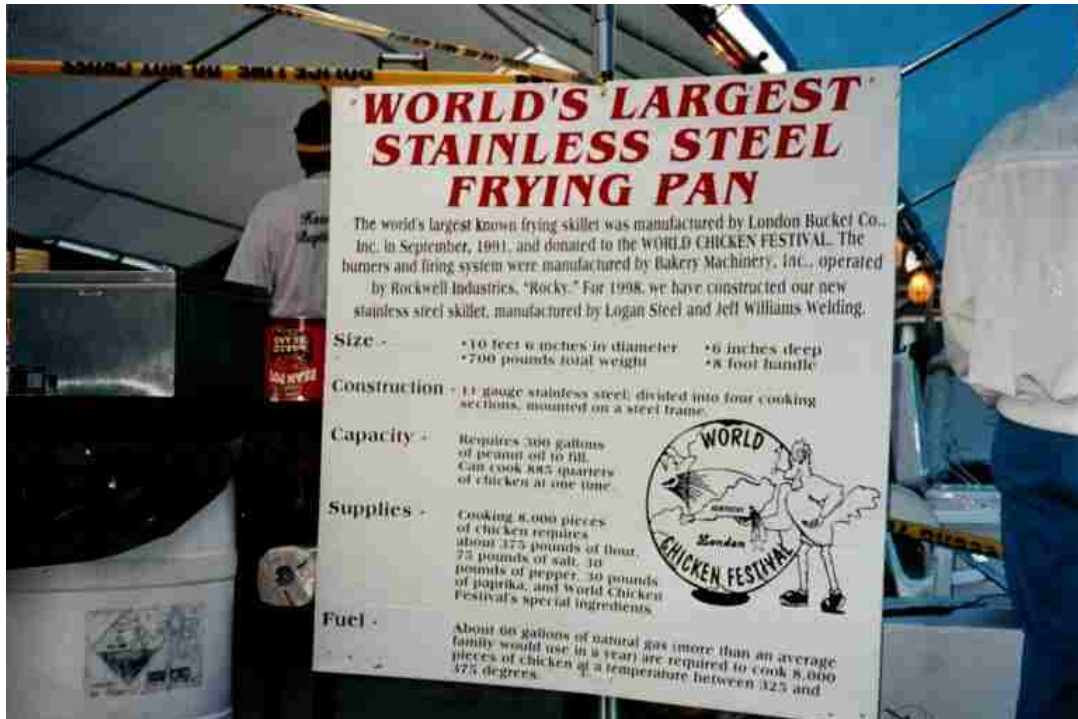


Figure 6.5 Sign of pan used at World Chicken Festival.
Source: Author's photo archive (September, 2003)



Figure 6.6 The largest stainless steel frying pan used at the World Chicken Festival.
Source: Author's photo archive (September, 2003)



Figure 6.7 “Blessed Mother” Cooking team at the International Bar-B-Q Festival (Owensboro, KY). They were cutting chicken and placing them on burner to be grilled at adjacent pit. Source: Author’s photo archive (May, 2005)

4) Kentucky Food and Tourism

Whether it is the World Chicken Festival or the International Bar-B-Q Festival, festival participants and organizers who facilitate events tend to take pride in the tradition that their festivals have established over the years. The term “tradition,” however, becomes critical when it equates to long-term continuity, and the manner in which the meaning of “local food” is mobilized to influence the construction of “tradition” cannot be ignored. Bendix (1989) argues that traditions are always defined in the context of what is seen in the present. What we see as “tradition” in Kentucky’s food-related festivals is likely to find context in our current understanding of what “has been.” Drawing from a case study of the Asparagus Festival held at Stockton, California, Lewis (1997) refers to the emerging food festivals across America—which celebrate a particular foodstuff and

link it to a particular community or region—as “rationally constructed food festival[s].” He points out that it was only after 1986 (long after the region started producing the crop) that asparagus was chosen as a theme for a festival in Stockton, cultivating an image of exclusive products and gender neutrality. The festival’s success eventually and unconsciously led the community to refer to itself as the “Asparagus Capital of the World.” Considering that there are many food-related festivals that emerged in Kentucky, many of them during the period of the 1970s to the early 1990s, I contend that many of these festivals fit Lewis’s idea of “rationally constructed food festivals.” Here I will examine Owensboro’s Bar-B-Q Festival as a case study that will illustrate the misconceptions associated with the pride of “tradition” as manifest in festivals and the imaginary of Kentucky’s “local food.”

Owensboro has hosted the International Bar-B-Q Festival since 1979, and the city, Kentucky’s third largest, identifies itself as the “Barbecue Capital of the World,” in part because Owensboro residents enjoy consuming barbeque, but also because of the long history of local Catholic churches hosting barbecue picnics for fundraisers since the nineteenth century (Lawrence 2000). Historically, Welsh migrants settled in Daviess County and the surrounding area, and they were accustomed to eating mutton (Bosley 2006). Given the traditional consumption of mutton, Owensboro’s barbecue was always characterized nationally as being made with mutton, as compared with the prevalence of pork in North Carolina and beef in Kansas City. After the Bosley family purchased a local restaurant, located in Owensboro’s west end, in 1963 and named it the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn, their success influenced the city’s reputation as a center of a distinctive regional cuisine. The Bosley’s built a permanent barbecue pit in 1975 (Figure 6.8) and

have served this specialized food ever since (Bosley 2006).

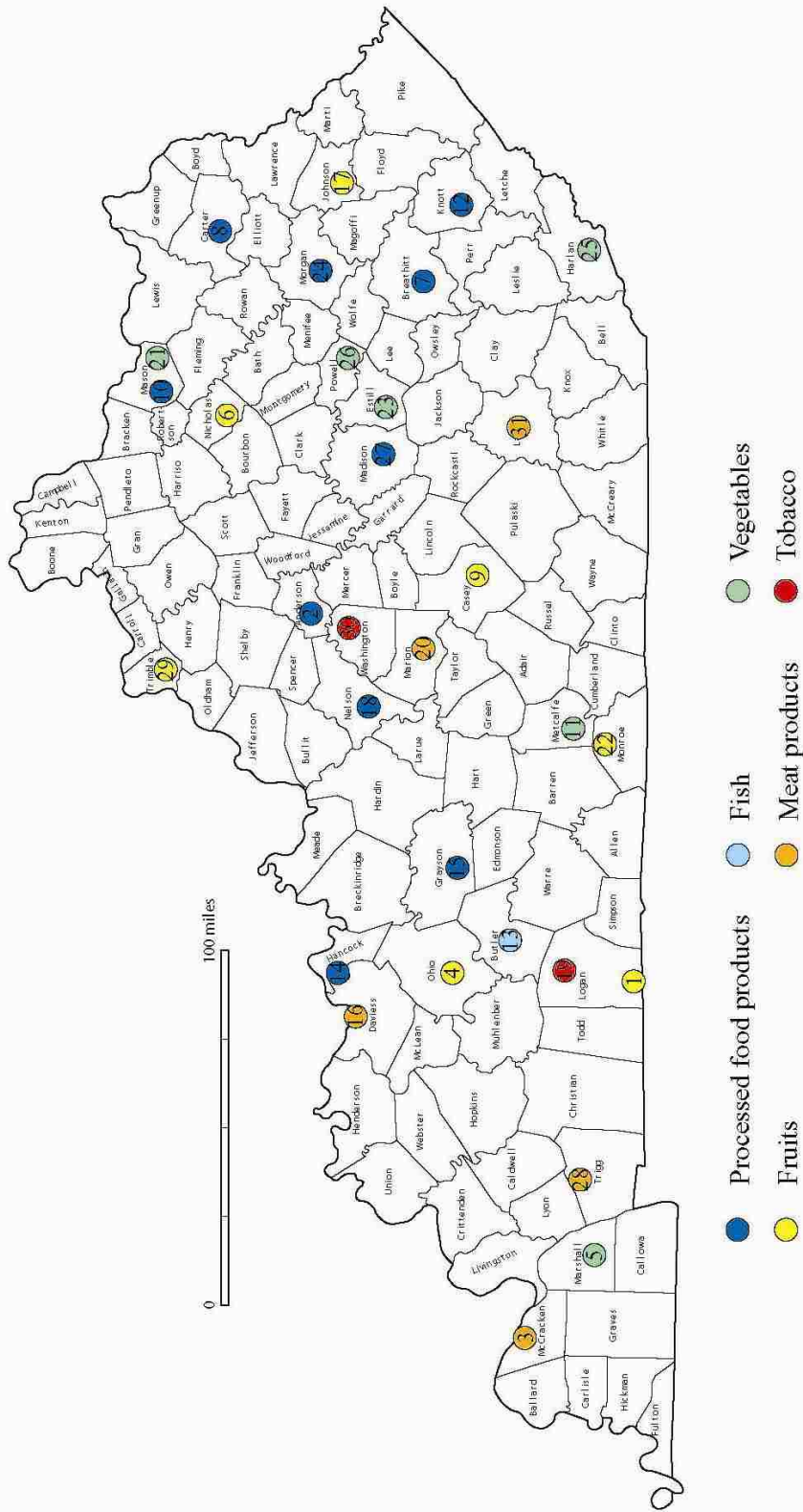


Figure 6.8 The barbecue pit used to cook meats in the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn. This pit was built in 1975 and has been maintained since.
Source: Author's photo archive (November, 2006)

Consumption of Owensboro's barbecue, however, has changed through the years. More and more consumers prefer pork barbecue instead of mutton. The reason is attributed to calorie balance and familiarity of the taste (Lawrence 1997). Because mutton cannot be supplied locally, like many vendors at the Owensboro International Bar-B-Q Festival, the Moonlite Inn purchases mutton from ranches in South Dakota and Iowa (Bosley 2006). The restaurants' perception of "local food," however, does not translate in the same way that consumers at a farmers' market would expect: for the restaurant owners, it is not the food itself or the site of production that needs to be "local", rather, it

is the place of consumption and the supply of food products in quality which are the most important factors in defining “local food.” If restaurants demand a meat supply that meets their quality and quantity standards greater than the local farmers can supply, the Moonlite Inn and other barbecue restaurants in Owensboro cannot prepare “local food” in the manner that both restaurants and consumers expect. Therefore, the idea of using a territorial boundary to define “local food” based upon product origin becomes mute.

This example shows how the meaning of constructed place identity through county food-related festivals becomes complex and contradictory when the definitions of “local food” as well as the connections between food and place identity are interpreted on the basis of the site of consumption. A review of the distribution of county food festivals (Figure 6.9) reveals that there are hardly any matches between the events and the location of state’s agricultural production.



Numbers (1-31) of each festival correspond to Table 6.1.

Figure 6.9. Distribution and Types of Food-Related County Festivals in Kentucky, 2006.

Source: Ulack et al. 1998, www.kyfestivals.com

Traditionally, in addition to growing burley tobacco and breeding, raising, and training racehorses, Kentucky's agriculture was known for raising and breeding beef cattle. Kentucky prides itself on producing the largest number of beef cattle east of Mississippi River (Ulack et al. 1998), but its total beef production is less than a quarter of what Texas produces and, excepting the Kentucky State Fair, Kentucky did not have any festival to celebrate beef production until very recently.³³ Within the last decade large corporate poultry farms have moved into western Kentucky, as the concentration of poultry and hog farms has shifted from other areas where production costs were higher and environmental regulations were more restrictive (Stull 2000, Burmeister 2002). The distribution of poultry plants, however, bears on relationship to the location of the World Chicken Festival. For fruits and vegetables, there are no Kentucky-grown products that are recognized as being in the top 10 in the nationwide marketplace. Kentucky's "green" vegetable production, for example, is totally eclipsed by many other states. Other than these major agricultural products, it is true that farmers in Logan County still grow tobacco, but the existence of a Logan County Tobacco and Heritage Festival does not mean Logan County is the only county growing tobacco after the buyout or the county with the largest production. Johnson County and Casey County are both said to have one of the largest apple-growing areas in Kentucky (Thompson 1985), but this is not reflected in the most recent Agriculture Census. The same thing can be said for sorghum, strawberries, and watermelons, all of which have been chosen as a theme products at various county festivals (See Table 6.1, Figure 6.1, 6.9). In reality, therefore, Kentucky's

³³ Fort Harrods' Beef Festival began in 2006. The festival event includes various cook-off competitions, though it is not clear what portion of meat consumed at the festival is based upon beef raised in Mercer County.

county food festivals do not strictly reflect a dominant type of agricultural production in these counties.

Why are county festivals not themed for the food products actually produced? Or, why did counties theme their festivals based on selected food products in the first place? There are some explanations. First, the production situation may have changed from the time when the festivals originated. Historically, places have produced enough chicken et al. to accommodate participants, but as festivals became larger, the quantity of products supplied locally became insufficient to meet the festivals' needs. Over the years with increased festival popularity and participation, the supply-demand balance has changed to create demand in excess of local supply at least during the time of the event. The result has been that festival organizers have prioritized participants' interests, instead of limiting their supply to "locally grown" products. Indeed, apples peeled at the Casey County Apple Festival were shipped from California to meet a significant requirement of the standardized size and quality needed (see Figure 6.4) to run the electronic peeler efficiently thereby allowing the hosts to make the "world's largest apple pie." On the other hand, only one local apple vendor sold fresh apples at the festival (Figure 6.10).



Figure 6.10 Only one vendor sold apples at Casey County Apple Festival.
Source: Author's photo archive (September, 2005)

Second, not all participants come to festivals expecting to consume themed food: for some participating in a social gathering is perhaps more important than the consumption of local food. If so, it would partially corroborate Kniffen's (1951) argument that American agricultural fairs constantly struggled to maintain a balance between education and entertainment. Farmers and festival organizers may seek to promote their themed "local food," in a kind of friendly competition (Figure 6.11). Because there are a limited number of festivals, and participants look for entertainment beyond themed food products, securing farm income through sales at festivals has become more important than publicizing the importance of a localized supply. Third, festivals may have originated with famous local corporations or businesses, and citizens may not have been involved in the original establishment of food-related festival themes historically. After all, for the

World Chicken Festival organizers, frying chickens with “the largest stainless steel frying pan” (see Figure 6.5) is more important than whether the chickens are brought in from free range pastures in Laurel County, Kentucky, or factory farms in Thailand.



Figure 6.11 Country hams that won the competition at the Trigg County Ham Festival.
Source: Author’s photo archive (October, 2005)

Finally, because of a decreasing farm population, fewer people in a given area are familiar with the processes of where and how farm products are produced and handled. This production process opacity reduces attention to the traditional meanings ascribed to food products: where they are from, who produced them, their qualities, and how they end up at the festival. Therefore, themed-foods sold in county festivals may not have as strong an association with places for all participants as it formerly had.

As a result of changing agricultural economies in recent years, many

tobacco-producing communities in Kentucky ended their festivals or changed their themes to eliminate the negative image that was being ascribed to tobacco. After more than 20 years, the Garrard County Tobacco Festival changed its name to Rural Heritage Festival in 2005, effectively abandoning the “tobacco” tradition (Kocher 2005). Similarly, after more than 15 years, Washington County changed its festival from the Tobacco and Sorghum Festival to the Sorghum Festival in 2005, and to the Lincoln Festival in 2006, in honor of Abraham Lincoln’s mother who once lived in this county. Currently only Logan County retains the word “tobacco” in its festival’s name, the Logan County Tobacco and Heritage Festival. The festival began in 1957, but the community could end 50 years of tradition if it decides to delete “tobacco” from the festival’s name.

All of these conditions, from the county food festivals that do not use domestic food products to a restaurants’ difficulty in maintaining a “local food” supply and tradition provide an example of the pragmatic limits of food localism in Kentucky and even suggesting that food localism is a myth. Because the Agricultural Development Board has been investing tobacco settlement funds in the marketing segment of Kentucky’s agriculture, there is potential to develop “local food” within many rural service communities, and to combine this effect with tourism development. As we have observed in farmers’ markets, however, the current trend is that commodity supply will not meet consumers’ demands consistently. To succeed in Kentucky’s post-tobacco agricultural restructuring, more collective investments must be made to connect place, food, and consumption with community identity. If more incentives were created to develop “locally grown” agricultural products as the theme of county food festivals, Kentucky could assist in the development or redevelopment of small farms, restaurants, and entire

communities. Indeed, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) created a Restaurant Reward Program, part of Kentucky Proud Program, to financially support restaurants and caterers that purchase food products directly from Kentucky growers and food producers. By submitting copies of receipts for specific products that were purchased from Kentucky producers, those participating restaurants receive up to \$1,000 in reimbursements per month.³⁴ If such investments are also applied to Kentucky's food-related festivals, perhaps direct incentives can potentially create a Kentucky version of gastronomy tourism. Without the establishment of place-based food identity that meets supply, however, the road to success may be long and filled with uncertainty.

If resources and interests exist, how can Kentucky create its own gastronomic tourism by utilizing its "local food"? Hjalager's (2002) economic analysis of gastronomy tourism provides insights into this question. She points out that there are four steps in a general typology for developing gastronomic tourism (see Table 6.3):

³⁴ For this information, I thank Les Miller, former colleague in UK Geography Department and the current co-owner of Stella's Deli in Lexington, for kindly sharing his experience and information on this issue. Needless to say, the KDA's Restaurant Reward Program is an innovative program to support small businesses. It must be understood, however, that those who commit to this program also undertake a greater burden than large chain restaurants, because by participating in this program and purchasing from Kentucky producers, their stock management will likely spend more money than dealing with food service companies.

Table 6.3 Typology of Value-Added in Gastronomy Tourism, with Implications for Kentucky's Agriculture and Food

	Indigenous Development	Horizontal Development	Vertical Development	Diagonal Development
Main input resource	Food production resources	Resources in the service sector	Entrepreneurial resources	Knowledge
Expected tourist behaviour	Enjoy the food	Understand the food	Experience the food	Exchange knowledge about the food
Principal strategies	Higher revenues through boosted production and marketing	Maintaining revenues through quality and reinvention of traditions	Offering new products and services to tourists	Selling know-how to professionals
Collaborative Structures	Unchanged	Enforced co-operation between existing organizations	Creating new structures and service organizations, still localized	Creating new structures in a global context
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional food trademarks ▪ Regional culinary ▪ Marketing food fairs and food events ▪ Campaigns for particular products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality standards ▪ Certification and branding ▪ Reinvent and commodify historical food traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Routes and trails ▪ Cooking classes and holidays ▪ Visitor centers, museums, and events based on tourism ▪ Open production plants and sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and development ▪ Media centers ▪ Demonstration projects
Implications for Kentucky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase constructed food-related festivals ▪ Promote regional culinary sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish "Kentucky Proud" logo and qualification ▪ Expand farmers' markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate "Kentucky Proud" products in tourism venues, including festivals ▪ Establish Agriculture and Food Museum (e.g. Bourbon Museum in Bardstown) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Has yet to reach this process)

Source: adapted from Hjalager (2002) with modification

1. Indigenous Development: gastronomy tourism is built up within existing economic structures and knowledge base.
2. Horizontal Development: Within the material part of the production chain, the production process and integrating suppliers are reorganized to improve product quality.
3. Vertical Development: New types of linkages and collaborations are created to develop the material provision of food, and foods are integrated in other economic activities.
4. Diagonal Development: The knowledge base of the gastronomy experience is enhanced and intelligence becomes a cluster in the economy.

When applying Kentucky's county food-related festivals and localized food production to her typology, most of them reside in the first (indigenous) and second (horizontal) orders. For example, Owensboro's reputation for barbecue came within two venues, the Moonlite Inn and the International Bar-B-Q Festival. Visitors come to consume and enjoy the food, but they do not find any standardized brands fixed within an Owensboro barbecue rubric. Similarly, other than annual festivals and diligent work by restaurant employees, very few collaborative promotion and certification efforts are being made to incorporate dimensions of gastronomic tourism in the larger scheme of developing "local food."

Likewise, Kentucky's development of food festivals and agricultural production that directly relates to promoting "local food" seems to reside somewhere between the second and third orders of gastronomic tourism (Table 6.3). In terms of a fresh food produce

supply, increasingly farmers' markets have extended beyond the philosophy of 'enjoy the food,' and the KDA's creation of the "Kentucky Proud" logo has expanded further standardization and branding certification. But these processes have been undertaken independently from attracting consumers (or tourists) to access Kentucky's "local food," in part because different institutions promote Kentucky's food products and the state tourism; the former by the KDA and the latter by the Kentucky Department of Tourism. For the state to succeed in fostering agricultural specialty products and emphasizing the "local" at community-based festivals, without the larger integrated overviews of understanding the commodity value of food products and the potential for gastronomic experiences in tourism, there will remain future challenges for developing Kentucky's own "local food" systems and traditions.

5) Summary

This chapter examined the connections between places, identity, and food through case studies of Kentucky's county food festivals. I discussed how the concepts and commodities of "local food" that are themed at Kentucky's county food-related festivals are being produced, consumed, and reproduced spatially and socially. Historically, Kentucky's most popular agricultural festivals were the Kentucky State Fair and various tobacco festivals, while small community festivals have also existed for many decades. The early to mid 1970s and early 1990s saw an increase in county food festivals. While festivals that began in the 1970s were using their traditional food products for festival themes, those that began in the 1990s often chose unique products to symbolize their place and food products. These latter events were based upon the efforts of each

community as well as on the involvement of corporate sponsorship. Many communities saw success in attracting tourists, even from overseas, and with attendance passing 50,000 in some cases. Thus there are no immediate signs that food festivals will disappear from Kentucky's festival landscape.

Considering the state's ongoing agricultural restructuring and rural development under a post-tobacco agricultural economy, there is no doubt that festivals play an important role in boosting communities' economic status. Equally "local food" is a critical commodity for promoting agricultural production as well as the unique identities that become embedded in places. Yet considerable effort is required to critically interpret meanings associated with the "local." Actual places may be one of the key components in emphasizing food identity, and in order to emphasize "local" food, connections between food, identity, and places cannot be neglected.

Whether marketing commodities for profit or appreciating local traditions, *where* a festival is held is undoubtedly the critical issue. The connections between food (or agricultural products), place, and identity cannot be completely separated. As is illustrated by the cases of the Apple Festival in Casey County and the International Bar-B-Q Festival in Daviess County, connections between real food producers and consumers are almost completely lacking. When a food product produced in these counties and is also the key theme at the festival, linking place names to products or products to places can become a key practice in normalizing localism. Considering the struggles and efforts farmers made to expand marketing opportunities for locally produced food in Kentucky, place branding and associating places with constructed identities at county festivals seems an important future direction in establishing what the

Community Farm Alliance call “Locally Independent Food Economies” (Community Farm Alliance 2003). While the “Kentucky Proud” program has begun to demonstrate success, more micro-scale places should realize that they too have the potential to develop place-based branded agricultural and food products. Such place-product linkage may eventually lead to new opportunities for Kentucky to develop gastronomic tourism. The food-related festivals case study demonstrates that potential exists, but more effort is required to connect place, agriculture, food, and identity to overcome supply-demand imbalances.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

“... What also becomes clear is that our food system is the product of a social struggle over the definition of good food in the minds of consumers. ” E. Melanie DuPuis (2002)

“It’s all about having options....” Janet Eaton (2007)

1) Introduction

This chapter briefly summarizes the findings derived from this research project. I readdress this dissertation’s primary research question, “How has the concept of ‘local food’ impacted post-tobacco agriculture in Kentucky?” This follows a reflexive examination of Kentucky’s localization of agricultural markets and food supply, beyond the influence and acceptance of practicing food localism. From these two sections, I derived general applications as well as shortcomings that are either successfully or insufficiently addressed in this study. My personal thoughts on this study and the future of Kentucky’s “local food” movement conclude this chapter.

2) How Has “Local Food” Impacted Post-Tobacco Agriculture in Kentucky?

Throughout the dissertation I discussed how the concept of “local” was attached to Kentucky’s food and agricultural production, how this concept carried a special meaning, and how it influenced the transformation of agriculture formerly dominated by tobacco. Because of several dynamic events that have taken place within a relatively short period of time since the mid 1990s—most notably the national anti-tobacco movement and the local food movement (see Table 3.1 and Table 4.1)—a common assumption formed around Kentucky’s agricultural restructuring: those who lost farm income from raising burley tobacco converted their agricultural production by focusing on selling food products through direct-sales. I have argued, however, that the decline of tobacco farming

in Kentucky was not the result of a simple change that led to a substantial shift in the agricultural production system within the state. Instead, the transition was the result of complex processes of external multi-scalar influences, combined with Kentucky's own internal physiographic and political-economic limitations (Figure 7.1).

Period	Commodity produced in Kentucky	Major buyers and endusers	Location of Destination	Role of spatial scale to the value chain
1933 — 1990s	Tobacco	Warehouses	The US and overseas	Spatial scale did not contribute to add value to Kentucky products
	Grains	Livestock feeders, processing plants, manufacturers.	Within the US	
	Beef	Stockyard, feedlot, butcher shops, retail.	Within the US	
Mid 90s	Poultry	processing plant	The US and overseas	
Post tobacco period after the late 1990s	Fruits and vegetables	corporate wholesale produce auction farmers' markets, CSA, retailers, restaurants	The US and oversea Kentucky and s surrounding states Households and institutions in Kentucky	Most products stay within the state, thereby the direct-sales in local context distinguish from retailers' shipped products



Figure 7.1 Spatio-Temporal Changes of Agricultural Production and Meaning of "Local" Discourse in Kentucky's Post-Tobacco Agriculture.

The decline of tobacco production in Kentucky occurred not only because of the nationwide anti-tobacco movement and decreased domestic cigarette consumption, but also because American tobacco manufacturing companies' gradually increasing access to a global market supply, which was priced much cheaper than American burley tobacco. Under the free-trade ideology that became common in the U.S. economic policy under the Reagan Administration in the mid 1980s (Harvey 2005), American tobacco companies sought to increase the importation of foreign burley tobacco and thereby expand their profit margins. This purchasing strategy endangered the status of Kentucky's tobacco production, which was also vexed by labor supply shortages that were becoming critical in selected locales. Given their labor shortages and ongoing struggles with the weather, Kentucky tobacco producers rarely realized yields greater than the production quotas that the federal government set and that tobacco companies relied upon. Such local struggles, in addition to emerging overseas supply opportunities, gave the transnational tobacco companies a rationale to proceed to expand tobacco imports. At the same time, despite annual adjustments in the tobacco quota allotments, exceptional profits made growers who relied upon tobacco for their primary farm income more and more vulnerable to economic dependency on tobacco. Consequently, the struggles at both the local and global levels of the American tobacco market have led to a decrease in Kentucky's tobacco production. The crop, therefore, has faded as the region's material and symbolic product.

Many Kentucky farmers, especially those in central and eastern Kentucky, found it difficult to expand the scale of their farm operations because of physiographic limitations: many farms were located on hilly slopes and farm owners worked much

smaller acreages than the national average. They had few options in transforming their production. Since many farms lacked sufficient high quality land, their agricultural production options were limited to growing a few acres of tobacco or other crops and raising livestock. Unlike corn or soybeans, which require large planting acreage to generate sufficient profits, tobacco was one of very few products that could meet significant net return on a small acreage. There was a strong need to identify and grow high value-added crops, but the high net income per acre that tobacco brought prevented producers from seriously committing to transforming their production regimes (Swanson 2001). Kentucky's agricultural production, therefore, did not carry any immediate impact on agriculture elsewhere in the United States, the only exception being those areas where tobacco was produced and garnered significant sales.

Because of political-economic limitations, the declining supply of farm labor in Kentucky made tobacco one of the few remaining high profit crop choices that would help maintain farms. Unlike perishable products such as vegetables, with the exception of the planting and harvesting period, tobacco is a manageable commodity crop that requires lower time commitments throughout the growing season. This enabled Kentucky's tobacco farmers to conduct their farm work on a part-time basis if needed, thus keeping their non-farm jobs as a main source of income, while they earned extra cash by raising tobacco. The obverse side of this situation was that opportunities to expand agricultural production to meet manufacturers' demands were limited by tobacco's economies of scale. Federal tobacco quota allotments restricted farmers' ability to expand production, and alternatives such as growing commodity grain crops was not as beneficial on small farms compared with much larger farms in the Midwest or the Great Plains.

Despite the limitations that assailed Kentucky's agriculture within a national context, agriculture remained an important part of Kentucky's economic and socio-cultural character. That Kentucky had the fifth largest number of farms in the United States (only Texas, Missouri, Iowa, and Tennessee had more farms) partially signifies that farms and farming have been intimately connected to the lives of many Kentuckians. When comparing data from the 2000 US Population Census and 2002 Census of Agriculture, one finds that Kentucky has 1 farm for every 18 households, or 1 farm per 46.7 people. This is worth noting, considering that the national average is almost three times higher, as the United States has 1 farm for every 49.5 households, or 1 farm per 132.2 people (US Census Bureau (2000), USDA (2002)). Unlike states such as California where agricultural production is hugely dependent upon wage labor, Kentucky maintained its own agrarian traditions with small farm size and a reliance upon family labor. Agrarian tradition in Kentucky, I contend, is not the same kind of agrarianism found in the Midwest where agriculture is primarily based on mixed farming of commodity grains and livestock, where the ratio of farms to households is much higher than Kentucky, yet the proportion of landownership per farm is also much larger. That is why, in my view, "supporting small farms"—instead of simply buying out tobacco quotas—was the most crucial topic of discussion for agricultural reform during the national anti-tobacco movement in the late 1990s (National Commission on Small Farms 1998).

Considering the differences between Kentucky agriculture and farming traditions in other areas of the United States, it appears that what Kentucky's agricultural society has experienced from the late 1990s to today was a challenge to defend its own unique agrarianism that has been fostered—consciously or unconsciously—by

tobacco-dependent small-scale agriculture that has been set against a globalized neoliberal economy. Despite regulations imposed by the federal quota system and the lack of direct financial support for tobacco farmers which had been in place since the New Deal, Kentucky maintained that farm communities were vital to the state and emphasized traditional agrarian values for decades (Berry and Berry 1998). Maintaining traditional forms of agriculture in Kentucky, however, has not been without its difficulties. Increasingly, farmers chose to operate on a part-time basis, thereby allowing outside and dual-incomes to supplement farm income. Additionally, despite opposition by environmental and farm advocates such as the Sierra Club and the Community Farm Alliance, industrial agriculture was allowed to move into the state. As a result of accepting Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), poultry production became one of the leading sectors in Kentucky agriculture (Burmeister 2004 Curran 2002, Stull 2000). Although Kentucky agriculture maintained its own unique agrarian heritage, it became involved with and participated in the global agricultural market, which resulted in both successes and failures. As Kentucky experienced a gradual decline in tobacco-based agriculture, which resulted in compensation from the Master Settlement Agreement, and the federal tobacco buyout and abolition of price supports and quota allotment requirements, the best option for many farmers was to expand, transform production while maintaining current income levels, or quit farming (Figure 7.2).

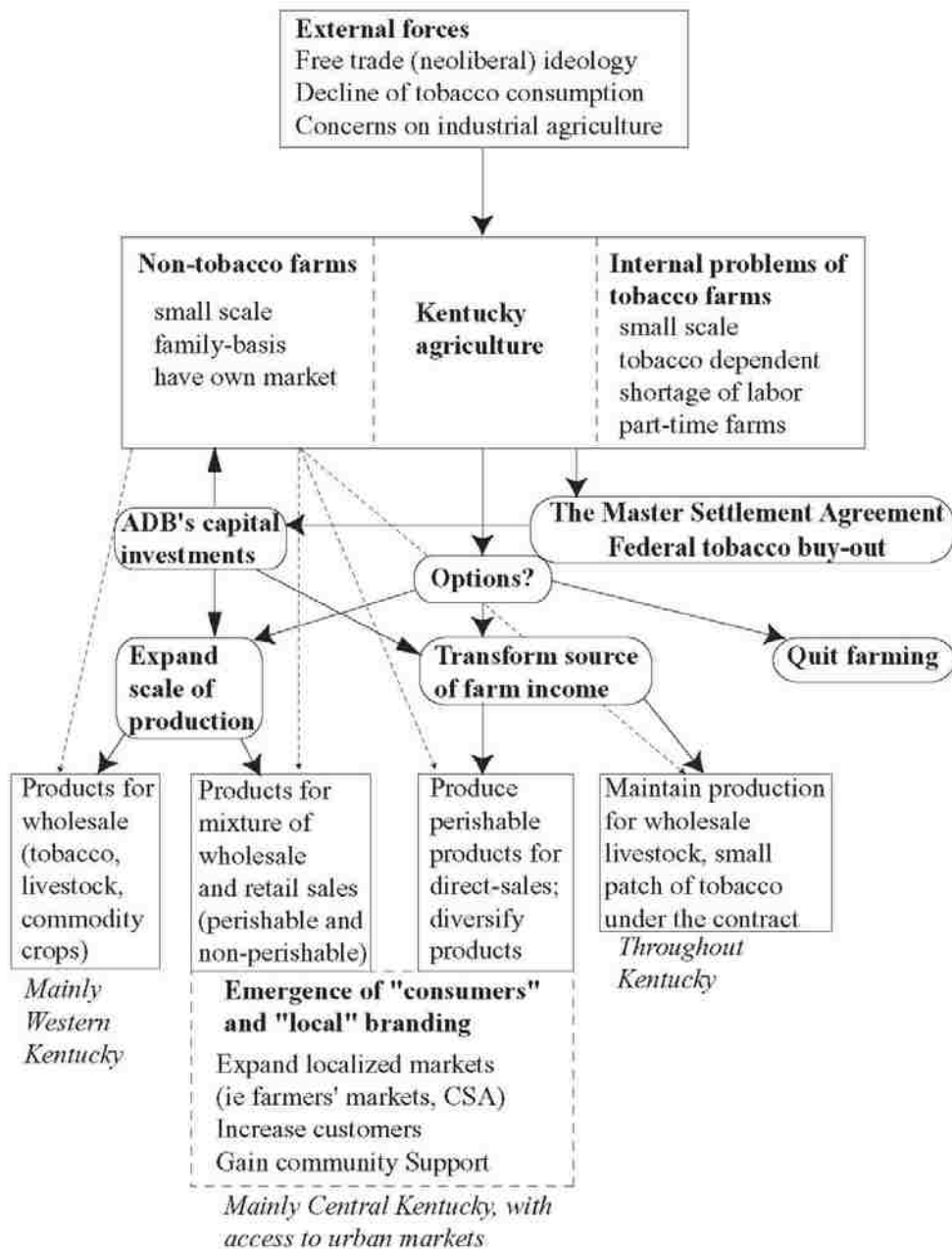


Figure 7.2 Transformation of Agricultural Production and Emergence of Spatially-Divided Agricultural Market Localization in Kentucky.

To maintain the agricultural community which would save the farm-based economy, resist corporate farms, and combat the negative connection between tobacco farming and smoking, the idea of emphasizing the “local” became a discourse in support of

Kentucky's small farms and traditional agricultural production. This became most evident and most successful in producing and selling food products, as opposed to feed products (hay, oats, and others), or tobacco.

When materializing "local" food products within Kentucky's agricultural commodity chains, the discourse of "local food," both the scale of "local" and materialized "food" from agricultural production, was conceptualized in multiple ways. Unlike past decades when tobacco, grain crops, and livestock held the major share of agricultural sales, the idea of the "local" became a key factor in increasing the demand for and value of products that immediately gained consumers' attention. Places such as farmers' markets, roadside farm stores, and restaurants that used "local" food products became sites where newly branded "local" food products became valued and sought after commodities. Retail outlets drew clear distinctions between local and mainstream corporate retailers who had established their own global supply chains. Although in a slightly different context, many counties and communities in Kentucky also began to utilize food products to symbolize their identities. Symbolized food products ranged from raw products such as apples and watermelons to processed products such as barbecue and bourbon whiskey, but all of them had some contextual connection to agricultural production or food processing and their sites. Thus consumers and residents began to recognize such food products as part of their "local food."

John Berry, Jr., former president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) from 1980 to 1994, sought to lead Kentucky's tobacco-dependent agricultural economy in the early 1990s and was very instrumental articulating a future for Kentucky's agriculture. Not only did he influence future leaders to establish

agricultural economies without reliance upon tobacco, but he also initiated the discourse that allowed farmers to maintain their property and businesses. Subsequent leaders of the BTGCA, the Commodity Growers Cooperative (CGC), the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), the Community Farm Alliance (CFA), and Partners for Family Farms (PFF) took practical initiatives, and Berry's philosophy continued through their efforts.³⁵ Producing and marketing food products locally was not a mere localization of farmers' agricultural markets, but also a successful way to keep an agricultural community intact without negative social images and economic consequences by encouraging producers and consumers to consider each other's interests and needs in order to meet their own goals.

Based on this analysis, I conclude that the concept of "local food" and the movement to encourage the production and consumption of "local food" in Kentucky was expansively practiced as a part of multiple agricultural diversification strategies. In Kentucky's context, therefore, what is commonly known as a "local food movement" should not be romanticized as the realization of a "local" ideal, or the love of places (Tuan 1974). On the other hand, unlike the expansion of the cattle industry or grain production, "local" was significant in maintaining a consumer-driven agricultural production, including food and horticultural products such as vegetables, fruits, flowers, and other products that people consumed everyday. The demand for such agricultural products was seized upon by producers who needed markets in the midst of a declining tobacco demand. A gap appeared between former tobacco producers who took different

³⁵ It must be mentioned that the influence of Wendell Berry's agrarian philosophy was equally important to leaders of these organizations. Several former leaders whom I interviewed frequently cited Wendell Berry's works.

directions in the diversification process, namely those who continued in a “productionist” mode, and those who insisted on managing small-scale farms and products with care and concern (Figure 7.2). Ultimately, this split or separation in perspectives diminished tobacco as an icon of Kentucky’s agriculture.

3) Looking Toward the Future of Kentucky’s Agricultural Development

Despite the struggle associated with the loss of their profitable tobacco crops, many Kentucky farmers transformed their farm production through diversifying the products that they raise by increasing their access to direct-sale venues. As the increase in the number of farmers’ markets and food-related festivals suggests, it is evident that more Kentucky residents are interested in purchasing food in a “local” context than before. Does that mean, however, that “local” food production will play an increasingly important role in Kentucky’s agriculture in the future? Will the “local” scale continue to matter and in what form?

Considering how the number of Kentucky’s farmers’ markets increased to almost equal the number of counties, within the last five years, it is safe to assume that there is wide popularity and acceptance of civic agriculture in Kentucky (Lyson and Guptill 2004). Civic agriculture is smaller in scale of production and is sensitive to the needs of local communities (DeLind 2002). The financial investments being made by the Agricultural Development Board (ADB) enabled many direct markets—most notably county farmers’ markets—to spend money on advertising and innovation. The current trends in searching out and consuming healthy, quality food as advocated by popular writers (Kingsolver 2006, Pollan 2006) has also helped make access to locally grown

food more important.

The difficult problem for Kentucky's agriculture, however, is that the separation between commodity agriculture and civic agriculture continues to grow. Even though tobacco farming began to decline as a share of Kentucky's agricultural cash receipts, it was not the food products associated with direct sales that replaced them. According to the most recent issue of *Kentucky Agricultural Statistics*, in 2005, a year after the federal tobacco buyout was enacted, nearly 68 percent of Kentucky's farm cash receipts came from livestock products, including horses and stud fees, poultry (broilers, eggs, etc.), cattle and calves, sheep and lambs, and hogs. Of the 32 percent of total cash receipts that came from crops, tobacco, corn, and soybeans accounted for 78 percent (Kentucky Department of Agriculture 2006). In sum, the segment of horticulture sales that relate to direct food sales represent only a small percentage of the overall agricultural sales in Kentucky. As explained in Chapter 4, the largest investment being made by the ADB is in the livestock industry. While the separation between commodity agriculture and civic agriculture is nothing new in the United States in general (Lyson and Guptill 2004), continuous support must be given to a variety of farm types that may have different needs.

At the same time, as this study has also shown, connecting farm production to the supply of "local" food is not always associated with socioeconomic equality. Because "locally grown" food products bring premiums in direct sale circumstances, many producers try to promote the "local" nature of their products as closely circumscribed and thereby exclude others who do not meet such standards. Thus, the more localism is strictly practiced, the more it is employed to construct normative tensions.

Such practice may be viewed as legitimate among ethically concerned producers or markets that share the same philosophy, but all consumers may not share the same normative standards. What adds to the difficulties associated with food localism is that, unlike a manufacturing plant, supply may not always be available “just in time” because of bad weather, crop diseases, labor shortages, and other circumstances. Hence many direct-sale market participants struggle to come to a consensus on prioritizing between a consistent food supply and being “local.” The blame, risk, and responsibility associated with such a struggle does not rest only with the producers. Instead, to continue supporting the production and marketing of “local” food products, more effort must be made by consumers to understand the practical difficulty of sustaining such a system (Futamura 2007).

How should binaries—commodity / civic agriculture, productionist / sustainable, local / non-local, and many more—and the state’s own political economic limitations be eased and addressed in the long-term development of Kentucky’s post-tobacco agriculture? In my view, three approaches are important: building ‘credibility’ or “traceability” (Lapping 2004), farm labor and entrepreneur training, and “community food security (CFS)” (Allen 2004).

The increasing popularity of “Kentucky Proud” branding shows an interest in purchasing “locally” grown or produced food products. As discussed in Chapter 4, however, the emphasis on “Kentucky Proud” obscures the actual producers and the site of production within Kentucky, situating placelessness into place-branded products. At the same time, those who advocate rigid enforcement of localized markets do so by ensuring that their food products are “local” according to their own standards. This seems an

unfortunate gap: what makes Lincoln County-grown apples that were acquired at a produce auction for selling at farmers' markets less valuable than Casey County-grown apples sold by a grower at the same farmers' market? They both meet the requirement of "Kentucky Proud," but the slight difference in the distribution channels that people use results in one being more credible than the other which, in turn, translates into setting differential or premium values on one product relative to another. To overcome these issues, the concept of traceability—being able to identify the origins and routes of products—should be incorporated into "local food" marketing. The food industries' supply chains are already practicing traceability as part of what they regard as corporate social responsibility (Maloni and Brown 2006). In the case of marketing food products in Kentucky, by linking the wholesale sector (such as produce auctions) and retail sector (such as farmers' markets, roadside farm stores, and many others) to ensure the spatial credibility of supply, the friction of binaries between producers will be reduced and Kentucky's various localized agricultural markets can adopt less-normative practices.

An important reason why Kentucky farmers struggled to meet the demand for burley tobacco was the lack of reliable labor. In recent years after the tobacco buyout, the Commodity Growers Cooperative Inc. began to offer contracted farmers' assistance—all of which is immigrant labor—to supply labor needs. Because of the elimination of quota allotments, those who can afford began to grow more tobacco than they used to do so by expanding planting acreage and hiring labor, solving the problem of capital investment. Similarly, many Kentucky farmers are also market vendors who struggle because of a lack of labor within their current scale of production. Unlike tobacco farmers who expanded their production, however, farmers' market vendors are situated in a difficult

position because their operation is primarily run by vendors such as him/herself and, if any, family laborers. They are not likely to have space and capital that they can allocate toward increasing production. Thus, producers find themselves in a difficult situation where the more they seek to expand farm production for direct-sales venues, the more they will require additional labor to maintain that production. There is not a simple solution to this issue, but one tactic would be to direct the ADB to invest in assisting new participants who are potentially interested in agriculture. Additionally, refocusing the current Kentucky Future Farmers of America (FFA) educational programs in producing and marketing horticultural crops may prove useful. By including farm internships or offering multiple-crop training or experience (instead of focusing on cattle or grain production) may broaden the perspective of FFA students. In this regard, the development of a Sustainable Agriculture Major at the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture may provide impetus for future Kentucky farmers to consider horticultural crop production.

If the credibility of the food product supply and ample labor can be met to sustain localized agricultural marketing, Kentucky will likely succeed in empowering a community-based food security system (CFS). Bellows and Hamm (2003) pointed out that CFS "... provides a context to address food security at a local scale where groups organize to effect social change and operate as conduits of knowledge and experience between more local and more global food security actors." The form of agricultural production that enhances CFS would provide an opportunity for Kentucky farmers not only in supplying quality food products, but also in providing communities with available food resources that would help maintain local infrastructural functions. The Community

Food Security Coalition (CFSC), the American non-profit organization based at Venice, California, presents six principles for CFS. These are 1) low income food needs, 2) broad goals, 3) community focus, 4) self-reliance/empowerment, 5) local agriculture, and 6) systems-oriented (CFSC n.d.). One of the practical dimensions of these principles is institutional purchasing (Allen 2004), which requires that institutions (schools, hospitals, government agencies, and many others) purchase food products from certain defined sources during the growing season. The sellers are Kentucky's small farms who seek to expand their markets. Mandating that institutions purchase from them would ensure that producers would have a market. The Kentucky legislature has already passed House Bill 669, which requires state parks and government offices to require purchasing Kentucky-grown food products whenever available during the growing season.³⁶

The three factors discussed here—ensuring credibility of product origins, labor supply, and community food security—will have a potential synergistic effect on future agricultural production and development. Products must be credible and high quality to convince consumers/buyers to purchase “local” food products. By broadening and

³⁶ Ernst and Brady (2005) pointed out that California Governor Grey Davis vetoed the bill which mandated that public institutions purchase locally grown food, saying that the bill would impose “significant costs to state and local governments” and possible “retaliatory actions by our domestic trading partners” (quoted in Ernst and Brady (2005)). Strictly speaking, this may bring challenges against federal and the state antitrust laws. In my view, what makes bills legitimate yet do not violate antitrust laws is the proximity of sellers to the buyers' location. One of the first places that began practicing House Bill 669 in Kentucky was the state parks. For each state park, it seems that buying food products from nearby local growers is more legitimate than ordering products from food service companies and shipping them from Louisville or Lexington. It may also be true that food products that food service companies provide may be cheaper than what local growers offer for sale. Since the fund is spent by the state budget—derived from state taxpayers—which is paid to support state farmers' business, Kentucky's House Bill 669 is deliberately positioning local farmers against other corporate suppliers. As of this writing, I have not heard of any companies in Kentucky that have voiced concerns on House Bill 669 and mandated institutional purchases.

enforcing local food purchases, Kentucky producers will have more venues to supply their “local” food products. In order to have an ample and credible product supply, farmers labor needs must be assured. By strengthening all of these dimensions, I believe the concerns about binaries—commodity/civic agriculture and local/non-local—would be addressed to sustain a post-tobacco agricultural society, perhaps related to what Gibson-Graham (2006) term “alternative community economies.”

4) General Implications, Contributions, and Limitations

This study examined agricultural restructuring in Kentucky, and did not provide a national comparative view. While restructuring created unique conditions in adopting localized markets partly because of the reconfiguration of tobacco production, this dissertation offers several new perspectives on the transition process. Thus, the study makes several contributions.

First, the study demonstrates that contemporary agricultural restructuring in Kentucky occurs not as a result of one-dimensional scalar problems, but instead as a result of multiple scalar factors. Global market change, national movements, or local struggles were not singular factors in Kentucky’s agricultural restructuring, and scales were not in binary settings either. The case study brought new theoretical insights to complex processes of scalar debate, which often falls into a global/local dichotomy when focused on agricultural restructuring.

Second, this study also pointed out the practical limits of localized food economies. As DuPuis and Goodman (2005) rightly note, “local” scale does not always permit equity; what is worse, it may hide social inequality. The case studies of farmers’ markets

revealed that multiple normative conditions must be met to practice food localism. Surprisingly, however, there are not many studies that directly discuss this issue. Most studies on farmers' markets tend to focus on relationships between vendors and buyers (consumers) and the products that they deal with, but there are few studies that have considered long-term market continuity. The case showed that localization is not purely the product of ideals, but also must deal with often difficult realities.

Third, the study illustrated that a discussion of agrarian philosophy could not be operationalized without considering the role of "food." While industrial agriculture continues to dominate agricultural economies in many parts of the United States, one reason that Kentucky's post-tobacco transition succeeded was because farmers produced and mobilized "food" as a key component in moving former tobacco producers' agricultural production toward the community scale. The sense of community is a powerful discourse that can be deployed to maintain traditions, and in this case Kentucky's farm community was maintained partly because of the state's long agrarian traditions.

At the same time this study has several limitations. First, a comprehensive understanding of how Kentucky farmers changed their production patterns (more full-time farms, the changing dynamics of planted tobacco acreage after the buyout, an increase in the variety of products, etc.) was not fully articulated. The trend has been toward an increase in cattle production, but the connection between cattle and former tobacco producers is not well understood, and will require further quantitative and qualitative analysis of former tobacco producers' decision making processes.

Second, the case was limited to an analysis of Kentucky, and more comparative

analysis of the restructuring processes—both between counties and states—is needed. At the county-level, further research should examine the role of tobacco settlement funds that were distributed to dedicated county projects. Did these funding distributions contribute to county-level agricultural development? Were they distributed fairly, or did they create uneven development by specific commodity groups? What created these differences? What kind of “local” discourses emerged in and between counties? At the state-level, few studies have examined the influence of tobacco settlement funds and post-tobacco agricultural development in tobacco-growing states. How have former tobacco producers transformed their farm operations after the federal buyout? Did a “local” discourse materialize and have an impact on the process of post-tobacco restructuring? If so, how did they differ or share similarities by state? These questions are the basis for my future research agenda.

5) Concluding Remarks

When I first started to work on this dissertation topic in 2003-04, I was a hardcore and innocent “localist.” I wanted to advocate for as much diffusion of the “local food” supply as possible in every Kentucky county. Furthermore, I wanted to see Kentucky adopt policies similar to the “One Village One Product” movement, which started in Japan in the late 1970s and had notable success in Southeast Asian countries (Fujita 2006, Zerrillo and Thomas 2007). I was fascinated to read Glasscock (2003)’s findings that Kentucky would have a valid means to strengthen regional food security to feed all Kentuckians with Kentucky-grown vegetables, thereby, with adequate policymaking, it would be possible to reduce problems of food access and availability for citizens

statewide.

As the research developed, however, and after reading various literatures and witnessing how farmers' market vendors struggled with crop loss and other problems, I became more critical of the romanticized notion that "local" products will "save" communities and their food systems. In reality, those who choose to sell his/her food products, must make an assessment of the potential market, as well as product quantity and quality. As I uncovered more detail about places and food in Kentucky, the idea of a strictly localized food economy made less sense to me. For example, some farmers embrace the food sales process, while others prefer to work on their farm without interacting with anyone.

With the enormous financial resources the state received from the Master Settlement Agreement, Kentucky (and the federal government, more broadly) chose to withdraw support for tobacco production, and invest instead in various other agricultural activities. From ethanol plant construction to agritourism promotion to "Kentucky Proud" branding to cattle fencing, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board made various financial investments, which would have been impossible fifteen years ago, in order to redevelop the agricultural economy into a new mode that no longer depended upon tobacco. Just so, the Kentucky legislature passed several crucial bills to assist access to Kentucky's "local" food. These include House Bill 669, which mandates that state agencies (such as state parks and government offices) purchase products produced in KY; House Bill 391, which allowed approved bakers and micro food processors to sell food products such as jams and salsas at farmers' markets; and House Bill 120, which allowed sampling of food at farmers' markets (see Appendix 1).

These policies enabled Kentuckians to access many different kinds of “local food.” But, the legislation and related programs did not anticipate and address all potential problems, including the concerns of Lexington Farmers’ Market vendors who wanted a clear specification of place of origin—an enforceable definition of “local” and “non-local” food sold at the farmers’ market. Some vendors eventually established a new Bluegrass Farmers’ Market, resulting in two farmers’ market organizations locating in the same city (Futamura 2007a). While many are critical of expanding commodity agriculture, equally many are lacking a critical understanding of “local food” in Kentucky.

In her study of the social history of milk in the United States, Melanie DuPuis (2002) wrote, “... our food system is the product of a social struggle over the definition of good food in the minds of consumers.” I contend that this view can be rephrased to explain the transition of Kentucky’s agriculture. That is, Kentucky’s post-tobacco agricultural and food marketing system was the product of a social struggle over the definition of “local food” in the minds of many Kentuckians. I have argued that “local food” was used as a strategic icon to educate consumers as to the value of Kentucky’s agrarian traditions, yet this tradition has not compelled the concept of “local food” to be deployed in each county or region to reestablish or reinforce an agrarian identity. The question then becomes, what does “local” mean to those who went through the struggles associated with the tobacco collapse, and how will it be defined? Will Kentuckians become keen consumers who try to find out everything about the place of origin of their food? I will briefly address these questions and conclude by reviewing my recent experiences and self-reflexive moments.

In July 2007, I attended a field trip organized by the Kentucky Department of

Agriculture (KDA) to visit the Lincoln County Produce Auction (see KDA's Kentucky Agricultural News: <http://www.kyagr.com/pr/kan/July2007/produceauctiontour.htm>). Other than two UK-affiliated people (including myself) and three staff organizers of the KDA, participants were a man from the KDA and another man from a corporation, both of whom were involved in expanding the market of "Kentucky Proud" products. Primarily Amish and Mennonites who live near the area operated the auction, and buyers—from retailers to farmers' market vendors within driving distance—came to bid on the products (Figure 7.3). What was interesting about the operation of the auction was that auction managers try to prioritize sales of Kentucky-grown products, but they were reluctant to brand them as "Kentucky Proud" products because they were concerned that potential larger sellers from Tennessee and even farther source areas would bring their products and insist that their products were "Kentucky Proud." This situation presented two problems. First, without face-to-face relationships, branding could easily become meaningless (or falsified). And second, by going through the bidding process at an auction, products—whether grown in Casey County, Lincoln County, or elsewhere—became placeless and therefore devalued. Thus, in order to add value to farm products "Kentucky Proud" became the only reliable brand.



Figure 7.3 Sellers and Buyers Waiting for the Auction to Start at the Lincoln County Produce Auction. (Photography taken in July 2007 by author)

In contrast to my concerns, the two professional men who came on the field trip together were excited about the abundance of products and future opportunities they were seeing. A marketing executive enthusiastically talked about the possibility of purchasing large quantities of produce at the afternoon auction, immediately shipping them to Louisville or Lexington’s retail supermarkets, and selling them as “fresh Kentucky Proud” produce (at a higher price, not surprisingly) in the late afternoon of the same day. Certainly that business plan made sense to me. If that technique becomes a routine type of sale in the future, it would probably result in substantial profits for the “middleman.”

But what will result is a loss of product-place identity: where were the products grown, and by whom? In the end, will consumers be satisfied with such products simply because they are (mislabeled) “Kentucky Proud” products? Retail supermarkets may expand the sales of “Kentucky Proud” products that are purchased at produce auctions without addressing any of these questions, but the basic concerns that I raise here all go back to the normative settings in which many farmers’ markets in Kentucky try to operate. The more “Kentucky Proud” products succeed in a variety of retail settings in the future, the more the original purpose of how farm organizations and government agencies try to localize marketing of their agricultural products loses its meaning. Therefore, the constructed sites and values generated by producers would lose their identities. I was at a loss to suggest a viable solution to this conundrum.

On the drive back from Lincoln County to Frankfort, as conversation on various topics of agriculture continued among those who sat in the front rows of the van, I brought up my thoughts on the future of Kentucky’s agriculture and food marketing. I raised concerns that, what seems to be working well now may not work well in the future. While driving the van, Janet Eaton, the farmers’ market specialist of the KDA who led that fieldtrip, listened to my words and simply said, “Well, it’s all about having an option.”

Considering how Kentucky’s agriculture was dominated by tobacco production just 15 years ago, the places and opportunities to market farm products—farmers’ markets, produce auctions, roadside farm stores, restaurants, Community Supported Agriculture, and recently state government offices and state parks—have expanded enormously. What Kentucky’s agricultural leaders, activists, extension agents, and various

organizations—the KDA, the CGC, BTGCA, the CFA, Partners for Family Farms, and more—have done over the years was painstaking work to provide options that enable former tobacco growers could choose from in deciding upon their next direction. Some have chosen to expand their scale—whether in tobacco, grains, or beef cattle, thereby establishing “productionist” farms. Some have decided to quit farm operations after receiving substantial financial compensation from tobacco settlement funds and the tobacco buyout program (Craig 2005). Those who fit in neither the productionist nor retired categories were the ones who used the discourse of “local” most frequently. In some cases, “local” translated to an area within the state boundary, while others defined “local” based on distance from the market location or surrounding counties, all the while rejecting those who did not fit within their understanding of the “local.”

After months of debate on the relocation of the Blue Grass Stockyards from Fayette County, Sharon Burton, publisher of *Farmer's Pride*, brought up the current struggle to find agricultural markets and the changing ways both producers and consumers see agriculture in her column. She pointed out that it was producers (or the ag community, in her words) who detached themselves from consumers by choosing to compete in neoliberal global agricultural markets. Simultaneously, increasing numbers of consumers chose a city life with cars and big box stores, blindly influenced by negative discourses about today's American farms (industrialized, animal cruelty, environmental pollution, and more). She wrote,

“... We've come a long way in recognizing the need to educate consumers about how agriculture affects them. The Kentucky Proud program, agritourism projects, direct marketing programs—all of these ventures bring producers and consumers back into a relationship, and that's a good thing. But somehow, we have got to find a way to make agriculture marketing okay, too. No, we've got to find a way to make it not okay to lose market options. ... We country folks are forever entwined with our city neighbors. We

need to be good neighbors and we need to make sure our neighbors understand the benefits of having us around.” (Burton 2007 (May 16))

In my view, this quote best characterizes the past fifteen years of struggle and the future of Kentucky’s agriculture and “local food.” In the bigger picture, the process of Kentucky’s agricultural restructuring that led to the post-tobacco era pushed both producers and consumers to review their situations. After all, “local food”—however the meanings were varied spatially and culturally—was one of the few ways that led both groups to maintain market options and tied them into a social and economic relationship. Such considerations were non-existent during the period of tobacco-based agriculture in Kentucky. Everyone eats. As long as options for markets and producer-consumer relations around “local food” remain or expand, I believe the process of Kentucky’s post-tobacco agricultural restructuring will continue, and even grow—however agrarian, sustainable, productionist, or short-lived it may turn out to be—and the programs that they have put in place will not be viewed as a failure.

Appendix. 1

Key Legislative Bills Passed by the Kentucky General Assembly

House Bill 611 (2000): Allocated funds gained from Master Settlement Agreement to agricultural and rural development programs. Agricultural Development Board was established under the control of governor, and each county was ordered to form a Agricultural Development Council.

House Bill 391 (2003): Farmers' Market Legislation, Food Safety and Sanitation, Home Canning, allowing microprocessor to sell their products (such as jams, salsa, baked goods, and many more) at farmers' markets.

House Bill 669 (2005): Institutional purchase requirement: state agencies will be required to purchase Kentucky-grown food products in State Parks and government offices.

House Bill 120 (2007): Food Sampling at the Farmers' Market: Allowing farmers' market vendors to introduce sample of their processed food at the market.

Appendix 2

Glossary

ADB:	Agricultural Development Board (organized within the state)
ADC:	Agricultural Development Council (organized within county)
BTGCA:	Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association
CFA:	Community Farm Alliance
CFSC:	Community Food Security Coalition
CGC:	Commodity Growers Cooperative Inc.
CSA:	Community-Supported Agriculture
FDA:	Food and Drug Administration
GCFF:	Governor's Commission of Family Farm
GOAP:	Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy
KDA:	Kentucky Department of Agriculture
KFB:	Kentucky Farm Bureau
MSA:	Master Settlement Agreement
NCCF:	National Coalition of Family Farms
NCSA:	National for Sustainable Agriculture
NCOC:	New Crops Opportunity Center
PFF:	Partners for Family Farms
UK:	University of Kentucky

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Vita

Taro Futamura

Date of birth: August 7, 1975

Place of birth: Chiba City, Japan

Educational institutions attended and degrees already awarded

2000 M.S. (Geography) Graduate School of Geoscience, University of Tsukuba, Japan.

Thesis Title: “Ethnic Segregation and Settlement in Southwest San Francisco Bay Area: A Case Study on Language Acquisition by Minority Students” (Written in Japanese with English abstract)

1998 B. Ed. (Geography) Yokohama National University, Japan.

Thesis Title: “Establishment of Los Angeles Aqueduct and Change of Its Water Resource Region” (Written in Japanese)

Received Teaching Certificate for Elementary Education and Secondary Education (Social Studies (Middle School), Geography and History (High School))

Professional Positions Held

2003-07

TA Instructor, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky.

Course taught (full responsibility)

- GEO 152 “Regional Geography of the World”
 - Summer 2003, Fall 2003, 2004, Spring 2005, and Spring 2006
- GEO 160 “Lands and People in the Non-Western World”
 - Spring 2004
- GEO 334 / JPN 334 “Environment, Society, and Economy of Japan”
 - Summer 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007

2005, 2007

TA Helper, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky, Fall 2005.

Course assisted (grading, advising, lab management, exam proctoring, substitute lectures)

- GEO 310 “Quantitative Techniques in Geography” Fall 2005
- GEO 305 “Elements of Cartography” Fall 2007

1999-2001

Part-time lecturer: Private education program, *Shigakusha* Tsukuba City, Japan.

Teaching social studies (history, geography, and civil studies) for middle school students.

1998-99 Research Assistant: “Sustainable Environmental Use and Development of Irrigation in Ogallala Aquifer Region, American Great Plains” (Head: Noritaka Yagasaki), research supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, July-August 1998, July 1999.

Scholastic and Professional Honors

- 2007 Honorable Kentucky Colonel Award
(Nominated by Richard H. Schein and Karl B. Raitz, signed by Governor Ernie Fletcher)
- 2006 Dissertation Year Fellowship, Graduate School, University of Kentucky.
- 2005 Dissertation Enhancement Award, Graduate School, University of Kentucky.
- 2004-07
Best Graduate Instructor Award, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 (voted by undergraduate Geography Major students).
- 2002 Fulbright Graduate Academic Travel Support, Institute of Int’l Education, USA.
- 2001-03
Fulbright Graduate Fellowship, Institute of International Education, USA.
Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarship, Rotary International Foundation.

Professional Publication (refereed journals only)

- 2007 Futamura, T. Made in Kentucky: The Meanings of “Local” Food Products in Kentucky’s Farmers Markets. *Japanese Journal of American Studies* 18: 209-227. (Written in English)
- 2005 Yagasaki, N., and T. Futamura. Southeast Asian Refugees and the Local Host Society of Garden City in the American High Plains. *The New Geography (Shin Chiri)*, 53(2): 33-50. (Written in Japanese with English abstract)
- 2001 Saito, I., T. Nihei, and T. Futamura. Development of Grain Elevators and Their Vertical Integration in Kansas. *Geographical Review of Japan (Chirigaku Hyoron)*, 74: 661-684. (Written in Japanese with English abstract)
- 2000 Nihei, T., T. Futamura, and I. Saito. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for Agro-Environmental Development in the Kansas High Plains: A Case Study of

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Taro Futamura

December 14, 2007