

Data to Impact:

Testing a Methodology for Measuring Statewide Farmers Market Impact

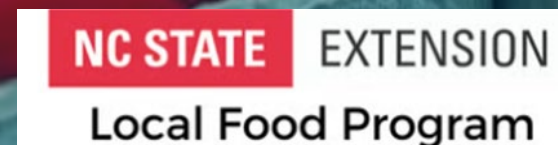
Hannah Dankbar
NC State Extension

Kelly Crane
NCFMN

Tori Davis
NC State Extension

June 10, 2025

NACDEP Annual Conference



All photos from NCFMN

Agenda

1. NCFMN + Extension
2. Project Overview
3. Methods
4. Where We Are
5. Next Steps



NCFMN + NC State Extension

2020

- Extension FM trainings + network building

2022

- NCFMN BOD + USDA-FMPP Award
- Extension support with first market census + programming

2023

- NCFMN 501(c)3 status
- Extension support with resource library and resource development

2024

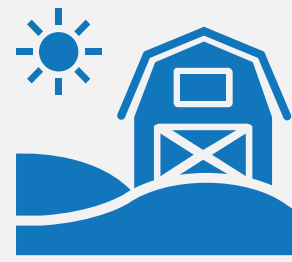
- NCFMN facilitates NC DUNC initiative
- Expand programming + plan for first statewide conference
- Extension supports with programming and updated census protocol

2025

- First statewide farmers market conference (over 100 attendees)
- Coordinated NC DUNC effort
- Initial push to calculate statewide impacts



Project Purpose + Topics

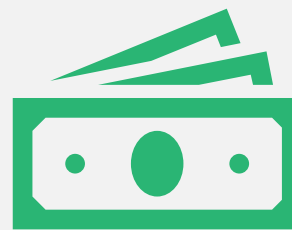


Project Purpose: To calculate social and economic impacts of farmers markets in North Carolina for the purpose of advocating for farmers markets at the state level.



4 metrics were identified for extrapolation

1. # of markets
2. # of businesses supported
3. \$ of sales
4. # of visitors



Other topics of interest

- > market operations
- > infrastructure
- > employment
- > finances
- > marketing
- > governance
- > nutrition assistance



Learning from Others

Other State Associations: Farmers Market Federation of New York, Michigan Farmers Market Association, Ohio Farmers Market Network, West Virginia Farmers Market Network, Virginia Farmers Market Association, Farm2Facts

Connected With: Oregon Farmers Market Association

Process Based On: WV farmers market census survey, 2012-2015, OFMA census survey, 2018-2021 with expertise from Kelly Crane and Dr. Mallory Lynn Rahe (fromally OSU Ag Econ, now at Missouri)

Methods: Step 1- Census

The 2024 Farmers Market Census was an online survey to gather valuable data from farmers markets across North Carolina. The survey was constructed on Qualtrics and an anonymous link was sent out to farmers markets across North Carolina, Extension agents, and community development and agriculture support organizations via email and social media. The survey was conducted November 1, 2024, to February 6, 2025. In adherence to ethical research standards, the study followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol 25574 to ensure participant privacy and informed consent.

Topics Covered:

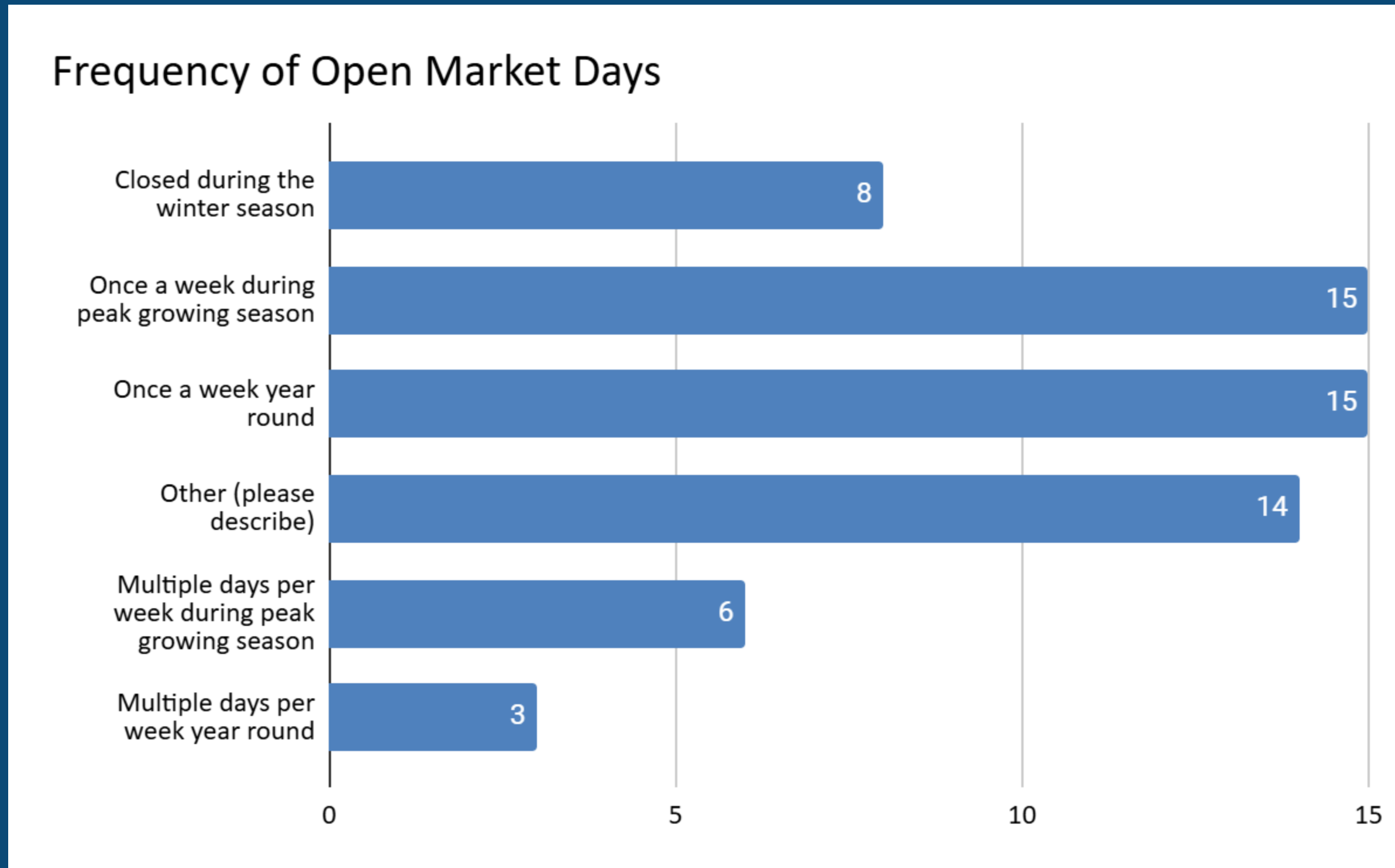
- market operations
- infrastructure
- employment
- finances
- marketing
- governance
- nutrition assistance

Responses

44/100 counties represented
74 out of an estimated 196 markets

NCFMN Region	Single Market	Multiple Market Count	# of markets w/in Multiple Markets	Total Markets	Response Rate
West North Central	19	3	7	26	43%
South Central	17	2	6	23	45%
Northeast	8	3	3	11	32%
Southeast	5	0	0	5	33%
Total	6	1	3	9	26%
	55	9	19	74	38%

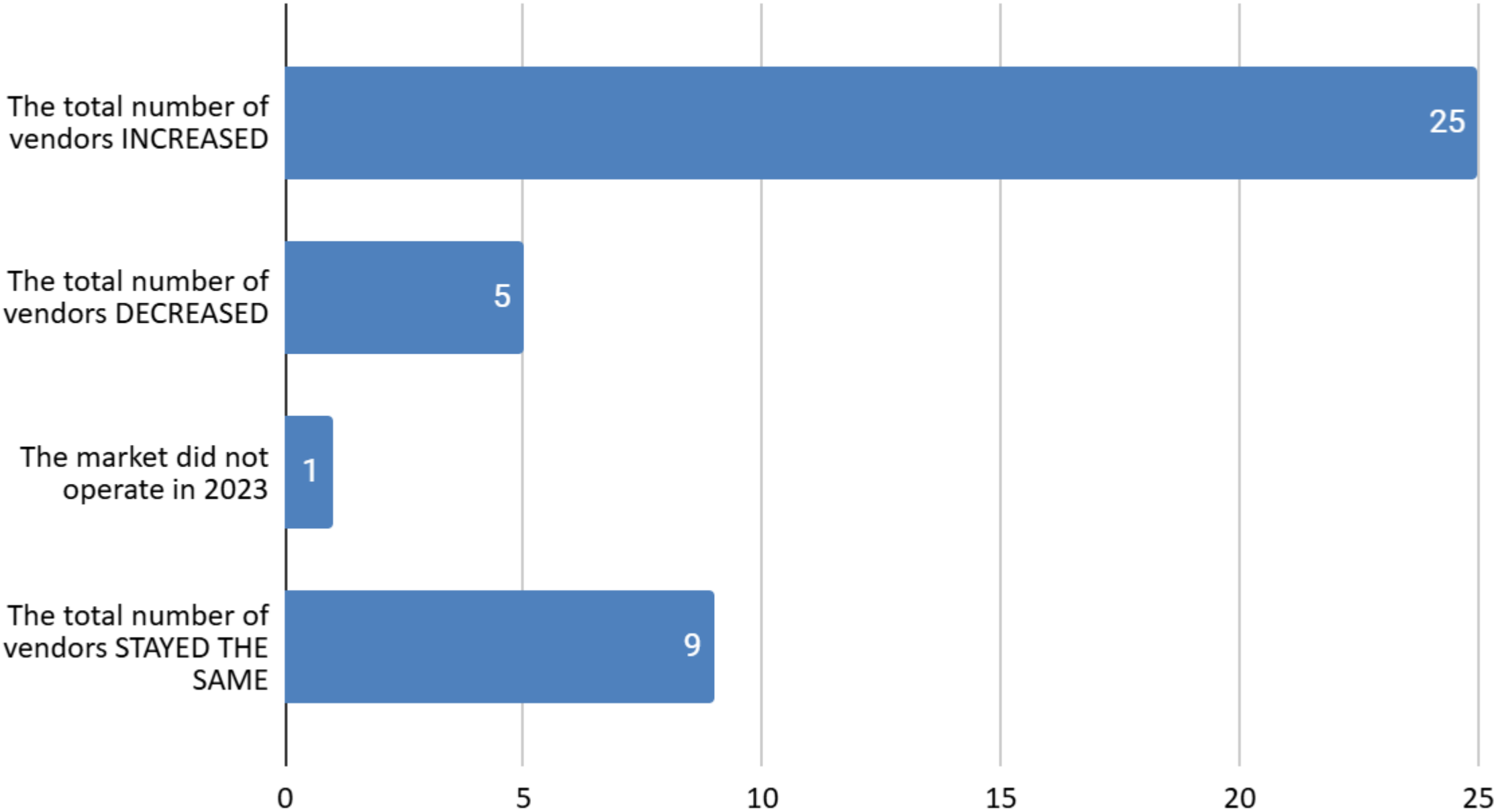
Example Census Results



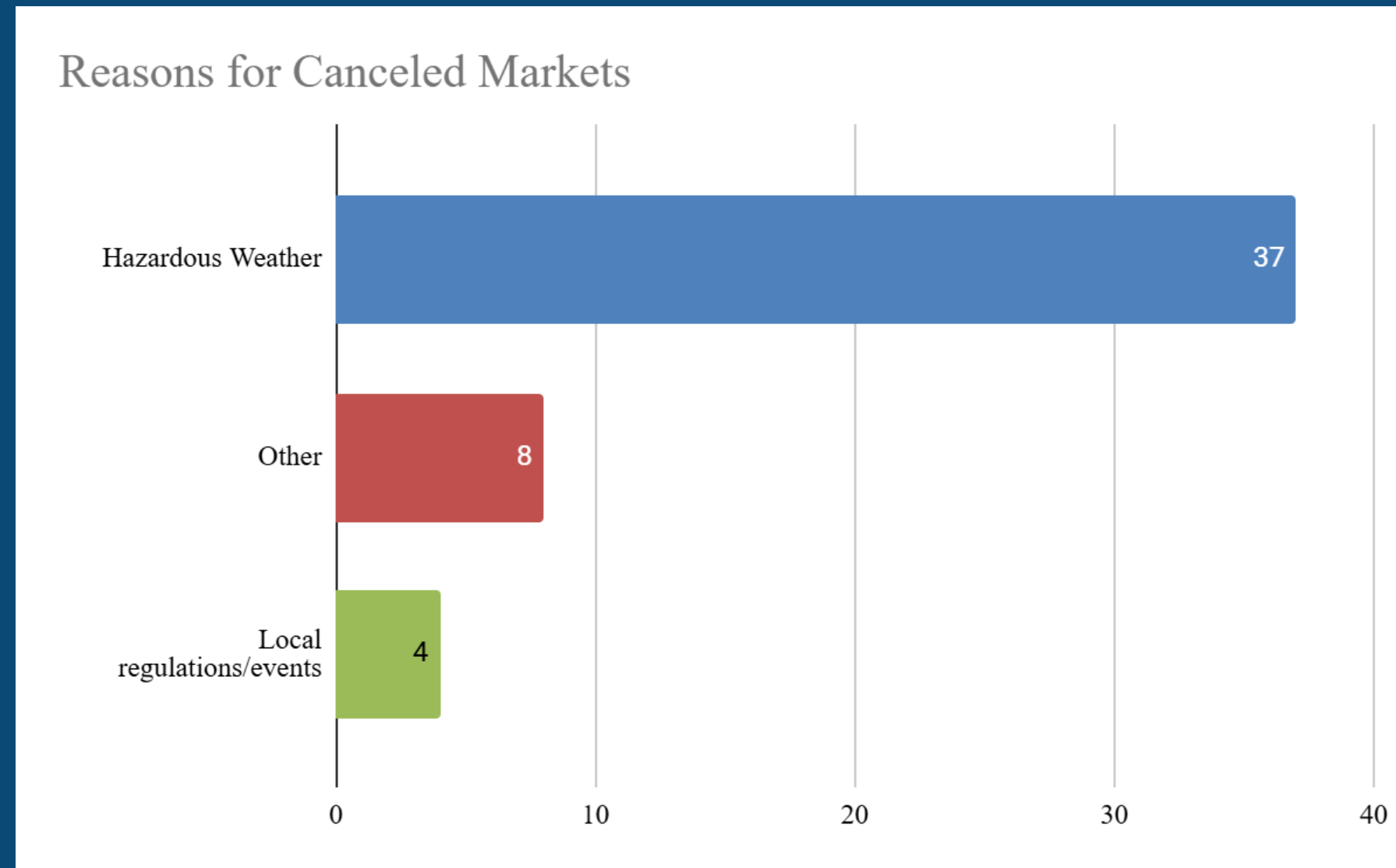
Example Census Results

Does your market have a written policy for the geography from which products are allowed to be sold? If so, what is that geography? (if yes, add number of miles or other geographic description)		
YES	47	50 miles, 100 miles, county
NO	9	

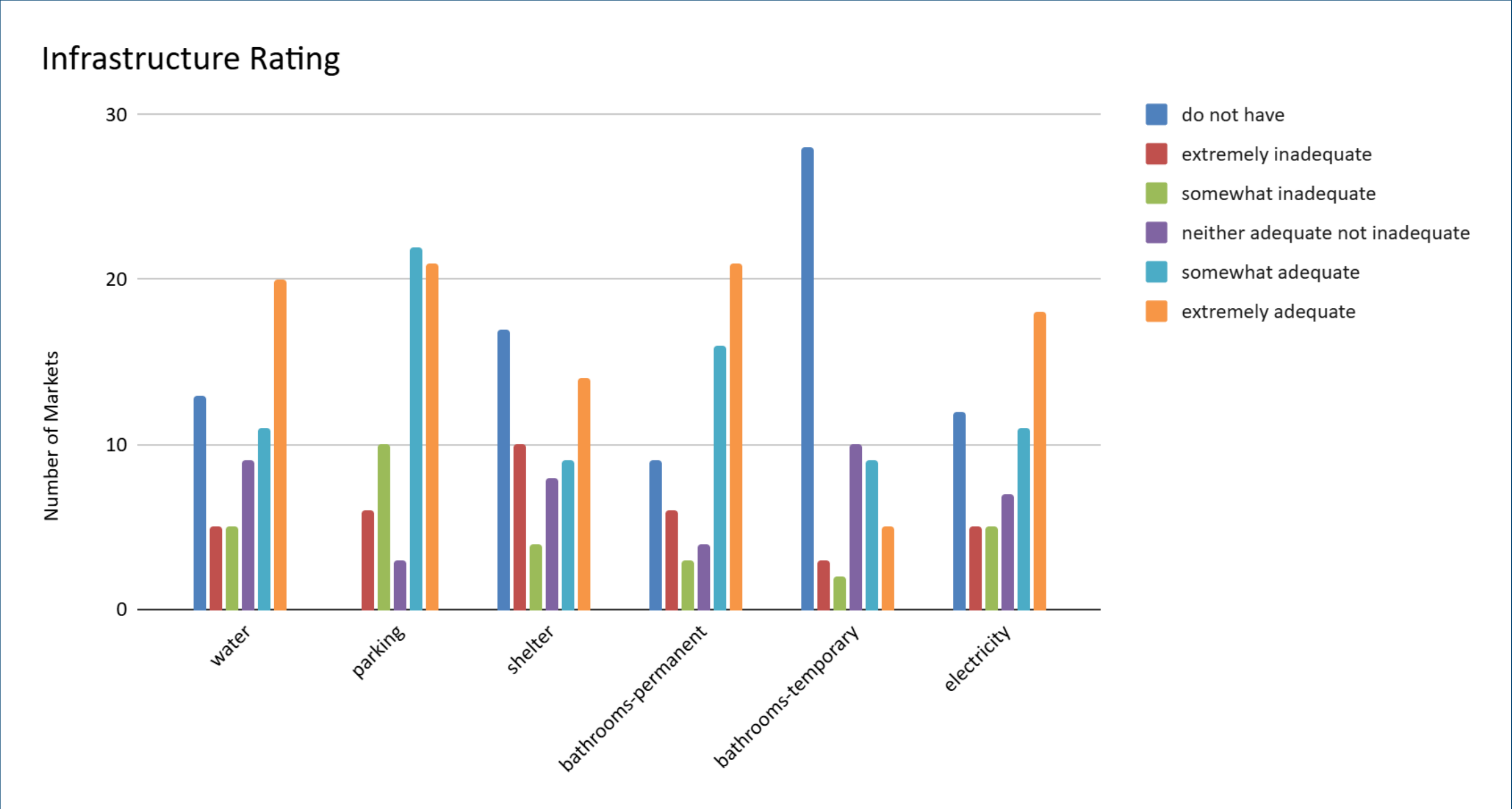
How did the total number of Vendors change from 2023-2024?



Example Census Results



Example Census Results



Methods: Step 2- Market Listing + Sorting

- Have a list of ALL markets in the state that you know of
- Code each market by size, using # of vendors
- Use membership and census data as available
- For non-members, review websites and/or social media and use info ranging from lists of vendors to pictures they've posted to make the best educated designation possible

Market Name	Physical Address (to eventually be mapped)	County	NCFMN Region	Market website	Market Size	Guestimate
Alamance County Farmers Market	817 Sharpe Rd, Burlington, NC 27217	Alamance	North Cen			
Downtown Mebane Farmers Market	102 East Ruffin St., Mebane, NC 27302	Alamance	North Cen	https://cityofmebanenc.gov/farmers-market/	Medium	24 - census
Alleghany Farmers Market	Crouse Park at East Whitehead Street, Sparta, NC 28675	Allegheny	West		Medium	membership data
Anson County Farmers Market	291 Turner Rd., Wadesboro, NC 28170	Anson	South Central		Small	Hannah emailed
Ashe County FM	108 Backstreet, West Jefferson, NC	Ashe	West	www.ashefarmersmarket.com	Medium	45 - census

	largest # of vendors one could find selling at your market during any one day during peak growing season
Small	<20
Medium	21-50
Large	51-60
XL	>60

Statewide Metrics



of markets



of businesses
supported



\$ of sales



of visitors

Methods: Step 3- Data Cleaning



Review census responses asking HOW markets collected data and how confident they are in their responses for key metrics (sales, visitors, & vendors).



Use both responses to rate confidence from 1-4.



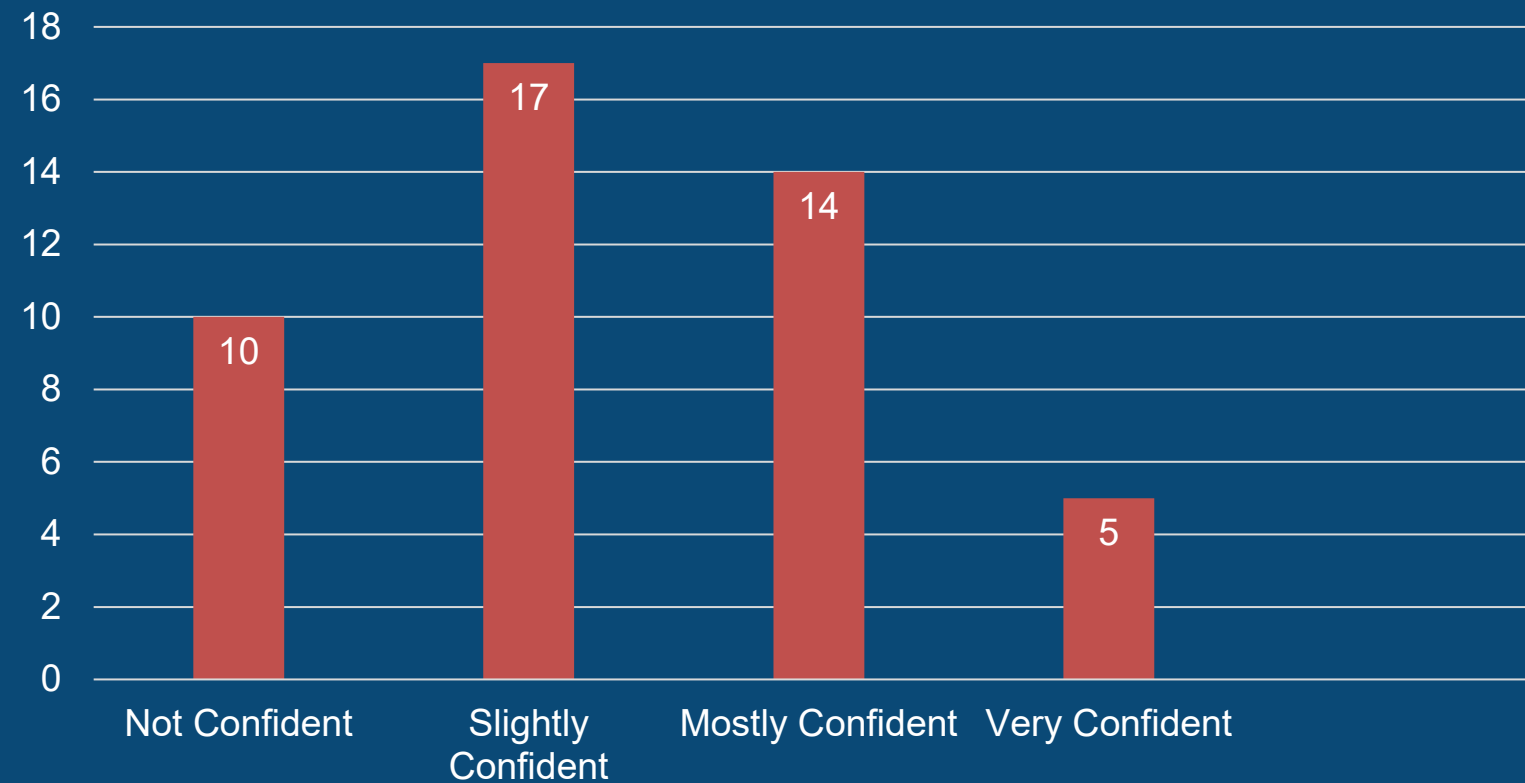
Screen out 1 and 2 scores.



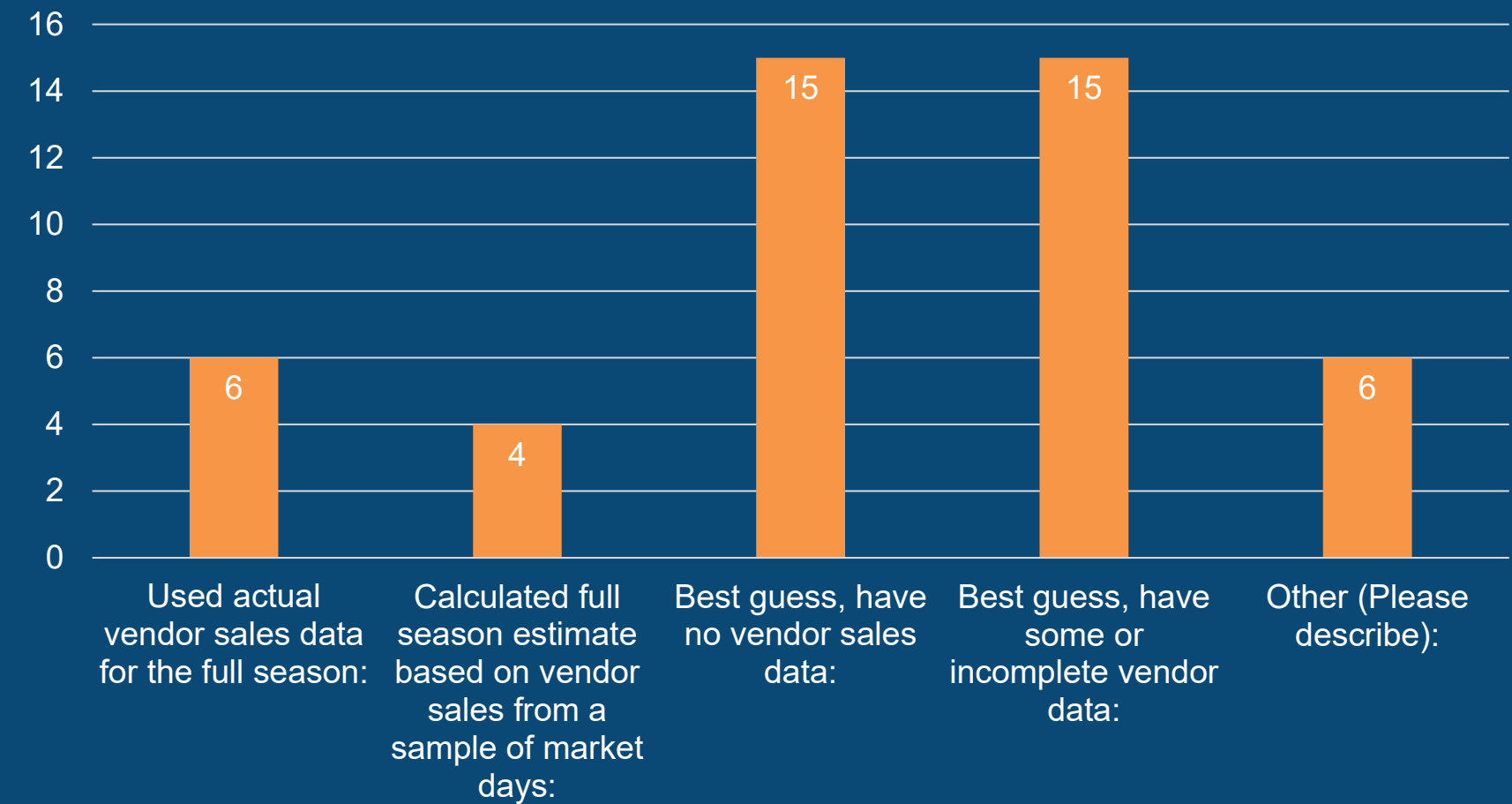
Check that there are at least 3 (preferably more) markets of each size that have usable data. Reach out to other markets in the band if there is insufficient data.

Methods: Step 3- Data Cleaning

How confident are you in your estimate of your market's total gross sales? n=46



Sales Data Methods n=46



Methods: Step 4- Analyzing Data

Gather data for each group of markets (small, medium, etc.). Find the average of each metric for each group (Example: average # of visitors at medium markets)

Multiply the average by the # of markets in the state in each group from master list

Add the data totals for each group of markets together to get statewide estimate for businesses supported, sales, and visitors

Can break out to regional metrics based on interest from NCFMN





Where We Are + Next Steps

Where We Are:

- confirming list of markets and sizes
- finalizing census report

Next Steps:

- Methods Steps 3 + 4
- Create infographics
- Share with markets + market partners for feedback to create targeted resources

Lessons Learned So Far:

- data reliability is a major challenge
- markets frequently change
- having quality place-based local food data is important right now

Using the Results

- statewide advocacy
- build collaborations

Thank you!

Questions?

hcdankba@ncsu.edu