

# Localization of the agri-food industry a solution?

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Centralized agriculture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is now confronted with the growing demand to be more sustainable. Localization is a solution that moves away from the centralized farming practices that the U.S. currently relies upon.

# Basic Terms

- The **agri-food industry** is the production of food through agriculture.
- **Localization** is a term used to express the movement away from centralized farming to regional or local farming systems.
- **Regional** (see map) and **local** is within state boundaries or in close proximity.



## Research Question

Sustainability has become a growing bi-partisan problem, but controversy is rooted in the answers to the solution. This study asks to what extent can localizing agriculture in the United States increase sustainability in the agri-food industry?



# Methodology

To analyze whether or not localization is a more sustainable option this study compares two dependent variables and how they interact with independent variables that represent sustainability

## Dependant Variables

- Centralized farming systems: majority of food originates from the same place (i.e. midwest)
  - Local/regional farming systems (previously defined)
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# The Independent Variables

Show the most significant differentiations between the dependant variables.

## Food Miles

- Is how far a food item travels until it reaches a consumer
- It is measured by CO2 emissions

## Packaging

- Packaging makes up 1/3 of the waste in the U.S. and up to 15% of the energy use in food products

## Farming Practices

- One of the most influential variables determining sustainability

# Results

## Food Miles

Local/regional farming systems tend to have significantly less of an impact on the environment based off of their CO2 emissions.

## Packaging

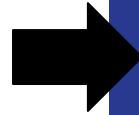
centralized farming systems tend to have more packaging compared to local/regional farming systems because of the longer travel distances.

## Farming Practices

Local/regional farming systems have more sustainable farming practices on average and tend to adopt more sustainable practices compared to centralized farming systems.

# Discussion

Local/regional farming systems have potential to make the current agri-food industry more sustainable but the infrastructure currently in place does not support localization.



## Proposed Supporting Infrastructure

- Food hubs are a mediary between local/regional farming systems and grocers, creating a streamlined system.
- Product certification for local/regional.
- Educating consumers and farmers.

# Conclusion

Therefore, because local/regional food production is more sustainable, more research is needed on how to create an agri-food infrastructure that supports and incentivises locally produced food