



## South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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### **Certified South Carolina Is Good for Farmers, Good for Business**

COLUMBIA – South Carolinians are eating more local food thanks to the continued success of the Certified South Carolina program.

According to a new [study](#) by Joseph C. Von Nessen, Ph.D., a research economist at the University of South Carolina’s Darla Moore School of Business, South Carolinians purchased \$176.3 million more from South Carolina farmers in 2018 than they did in 2010 across all Certified South Carolina food categories. That accounts for an additional \$273.5 million in economic activity, 1,615 jobs and \$51.2 million in labor income for South Carolinians each year. These results show Certified South Carolina delivers a strong return on investment for South Carolina taxpayers.

Launched in 2007, Certified South Carolina is a cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) to promote South Carolina food products. Previous research has found a 78 percent recognition rate for the Certified South Carolina brand among in-state consumers.

“Dr. Von Nessen’s findings tell us why Certified South Carolina is so important: Consumers want local food, and this program is helping them find it,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “I’m thrilled that South Carolinians continue to support our state’s 24,000-plus farmers.”

Von Nessen’s study also shows South Carolina making steady progress toward “50 By 20,” SCDA’s goal of growing the agribusiness sector to a \$50 billion-a-year industry by 2020. According to data from 2018 – the most recent available – agribusiness had a \$46.2 billion annual impact on South Carolina’s economy. That’s up from \$34 billion in 2006 and \$41.7 billion in 2015. South Carolina agribusiness accounted for 246,957 jobs and more than \$9.6 billion in labor income in 2018. Agribusiness also shows strong growth, having grown 25 percent between 2010 and 2018.

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