

Kansas State University's

R G I

Rural Grocery Initiative

Strengthening our stores
Strengthening our communities

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Kansas State University's Center for Engagement and Community Development

Mission:

To connect the resources and expertise of Kansas State University to the significant issues of public need facing Kansans and communities worldwide.

Why Focus on Rural Food Retail?

**Because,
Rural Grocery Stores Provide:**

- **Economic Development**
 - Rural grocery stores are an important rural economic driver
- **Food Access**
 - Rural grocery stores provide a primary source of nutritious and competitively priced foods
- **Important Community Hubs**
 - Rural grocery stores provide important local, civic and social meeting spaces



Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores?

Economic Development

- Because,

Rural grocery stores are a critical small business

1. Rural grocery stores in KS, on average, contribute \$644,000 to the local economy.
2. Grocery stores are resilient businesses in economic downturn times
3. Kansas rural grocery stores provide, on average, 17 local jobs
 - 6 full time; 11 part time
4. Rural grocery stores in Kansas generate 1 out of every 5 tax dollars for local community
5. Locally-owned, small business have a larger economic multiplier
6. SNAP and WIC benefits provide economic stimulus
 - SNAP puts food dollars directly and indirectly into local economies.
 - Food Dollar Leakage: Local grocery stores are critical to capture SNAP dollars



Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores?

Healthy Food Access

Because,

8% of rural population (Approx. 4.75 million people) in the U.S. are living in communities lacking access to healthy foods. (Policy Link; Food Trust, 2013)

- **Poverty:** 20% of census tract is below poverty level.
- **Lack of Access:** 33% of the census tract's population resides more than 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store.



Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores?

Healthy Food Access

Because,

1. Rural areas suffer the highest obesity rates in the nation.
2. Rural grocery stores offer more healthy foods, at lower cost, than rural convenience stores.
3. Prevalence of grocery stores in non-metro counties is inversely associated with incidence of obesity.
4. Rural grocery stores are often a distribution point for locally-sourced foods.
 1. Provides support for local producers
 2. Provides site for fresh produce sales



Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores?

Community Hubs

- Functions as anchor of community life
 - Helps form community identity
 - Sites where community bonds are created and sustained
 - Social capital built
- Provides a place for talking with one another
 - Diverse talk takes place
 - small talk
 - Local, state, national politics
 - A community gathering space
 - Clubs, libraries, art galleries
- Creates habits of public association



Kansas State University's Rural Grocery Initiative

Goals:

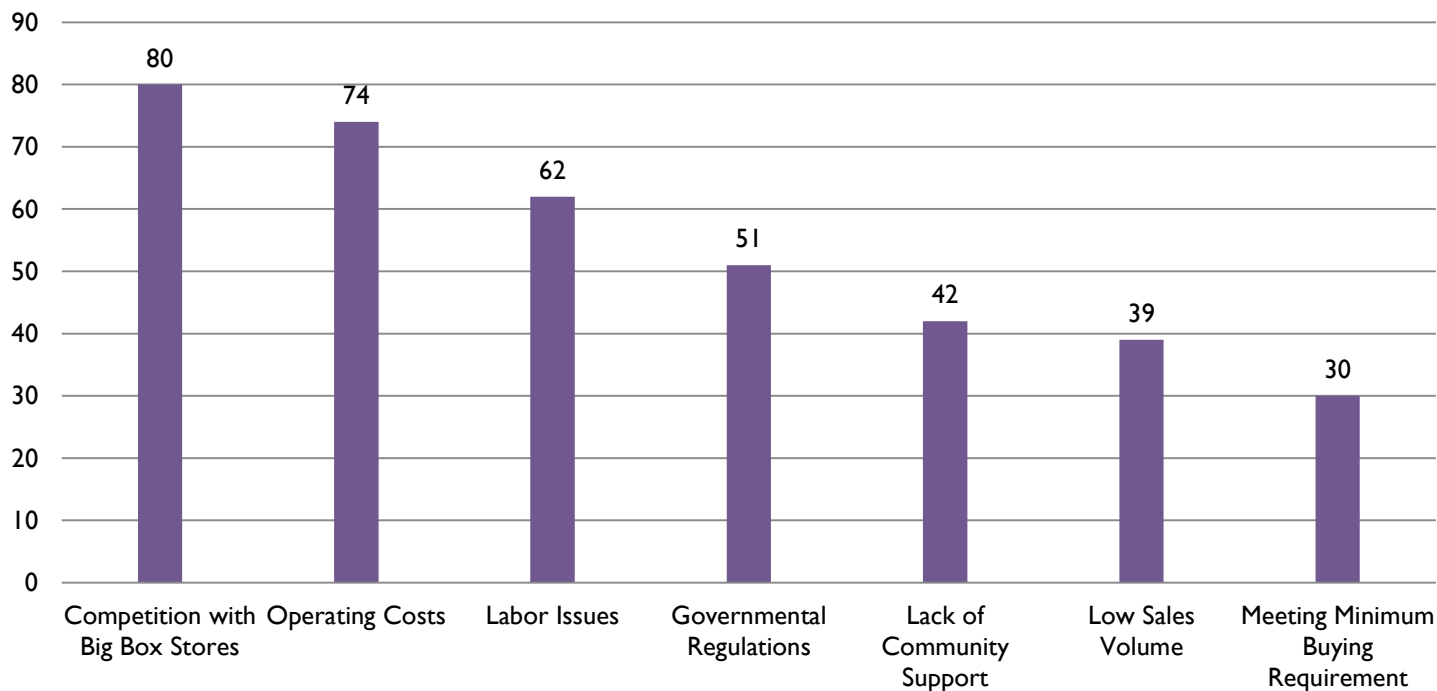
1. Identify challenges facing rural grocery stores (2,500 or less)
2. Develop responses to those challenges
3. Identify and detail sustainable business models of grocer operation
4. Build virtual and face-to-face information networks for rural grocers

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Rural Grocer Survey: Top Seven Challenges

**Rural Grocer Challenges:
Percent of Owners Identifying Each Challenge**



RGI Research: Generating Community Support

- Highlight the power of community support
 - Walsh, CO
 - Cuba, KS
- Build community investment
 - FEAST Community Conversations



Building Community Investment:

A **FEAST** event:

- Brings together diverse community food stakeholders
- Is a facilitated deliberation about community food system based on community assets
- Builds community investment and develops change actions to make community more food secure.



Food * Education *
Agriculture * Solutions * Together

RGI Research: Addressing the Supply Chain Challenge

1. Identifying rural grocery distribution challenges
2. Facilitating grocery collaborations
3. Facilitating / energizing regional distribution centers
4. Convening food distribution national conversations
5. Exploring ways to increase rural grocery food sales



RGI Research: Facilitating Sustainable Grocery Operations

- *Developed Case Studies for Rural Grocery Ownership Models*
 - *School-based enterprise – Leeton, MO*
 - *Community owned – Protection, KS*
 - *Public / private partnerships – Onaga, KS*
 - *Cooperatives – Kiowa, KS*
 - *Sole proprietorships, Jetmore, KS*
 - *501(c)3 – Morland, KS*
- *Created Rural Grocery Toolkit*
 - *Tools for establishing rural grocery stores*
 - *Tools for existing rural grocery stores*



Rural Grocery Toolkit

<http://www.ruralgrocery.org/resources/>

- **For those considering establishing a rural grocery store:**
 - Below are five “steps” for planning and establishing a new store in a community. Each step contains information and resources for elements important to establishing a rural grocery.

Step 1
Assessing
the Market

Step 2
Getting Started

Step 3
Legal Requirements
and Licensing

Step 4
Financing

Step 5
Marketing
Your Business



RGI Research: Influencing Healthy Food Purchasing in Rural Grocery Stores

- Funded by USDA
- K-State researchers, industry partners, and three rural grocery case study stores are:
 - Introducing a nutritional quality index system – NuVal – into case study stores.
 - Introducing Extension nutrition education program to citizens in those case study stores. Extension component will design and deliver education modules specifically identifying healthy food choices in small food retail outlets.
 - Examining the impacts these interventions have on healthful food purchases and grocery food sales of rural residents. Results will inform both grocery store business strategies and consumers as they consider making healthful food choices.



RGI Research: Increasing Healthy Food Access in Rural Grocery Stores

- Funded by the Kansas Health Foundation
- K-State researchers are:
 - building an infrastructure for a statewide technical assistance collaborative and learning laboratory to conduct research and provide technical assistance around three interrelated healthy food access challenges:
 - 1 the challenge of strengthening retail food outlet business practices while expanding healthy food options within grocery stores, especially in rural parts of Kansas;
 - 2 the challenge of increasing the reach of SNAP Incentive programs into rural Kansas' markets; and
 - 3 the challenge to expanding the number of WIC-authorized retailers in rural and frontier towns and counties.

Add Your Voice and Work to the Rural Grocery Initiative

- Join the conversation -
 - www.ruralgrocery.org
 - Rural Grocery Facebook / Twitter
- Present your research -
 - 5th Rural Grocery Summit, June 6-7, 2016, Wichita, Kansas
 - Summit website: <http://conferences.k-state.edu/ruralgrocery/>





Thank You

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