



Pandemic Impacts on Agriculture and Food Services

Recent survey results shed light on the employment and revenue impacts from COVID-19.

National supply chain disruptions and changes in food spending made headlines at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, meat processing plants closed as workers tested positive for the virus (Corkery & Yaffe-Bellany, 2020) and consumers are spending more on food at home (ERS, 2020).

The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i (UHERO) conducted a survey with other community partners to quantify the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic across sectors in Hawai'i.

This fact sheet focuses on the results for two food-related sectors in Hawai'i: *agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector, or agriculture for short, and the food services sector, representing businesses that provide food away from home. The figure compares these sectors in the State of Hawai'i and Hawai'i County (HI County) based on available data.*

Changes in employment

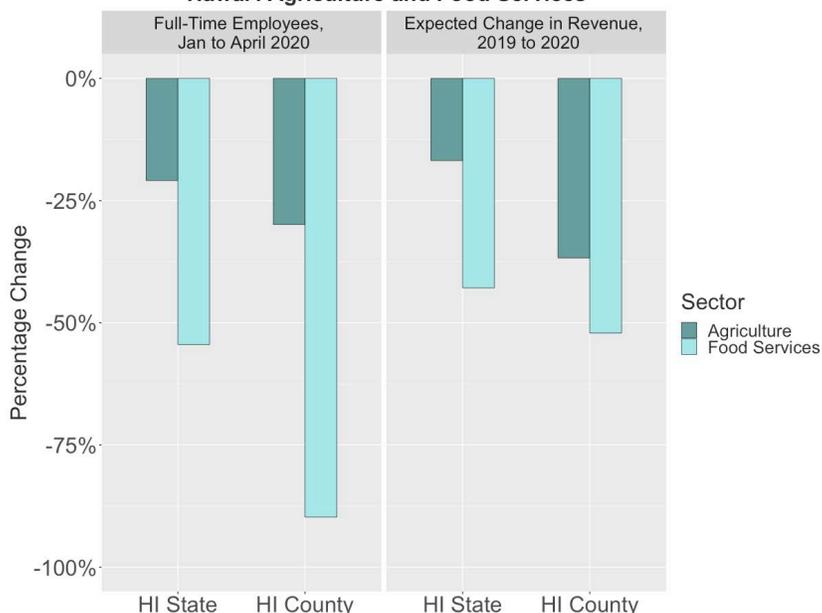
The survey results show that full-time employment decreased in the first four months of 2020. From January to April, the number of full-time employees in agriculture fell by 21% statewide and by 30% in HI County. In the food services sector, full-time employment fell by 55% statewide and 90% in HI county. Thus, the decline in the food services' labor force was more than twice that of agriculture.

Anticipated change in revenue

Survey respondents anticipated decreases in revenue in both the agriculture and food services sectors. Compared to average revenue in 2019, agriculture's revenue in 2020 was expected to decrease by 17% in the state and 37% in HI County. Revenue in the food services sector was anticipated to decrease by 43% statewide and 52% in HI County.

For more information contact: Sarah Rehkamp (srehkamp@hawaii.edu) or Samantha Cohen at (scohen@hawaii.edu)

Change in Employment and Expected Change in Revenue: Hawai'i Agriculture and Food Services



Source: Data from Garboden (2020).

The tourism factor

With the sharp drop in tourism, many industries in Hawai'i have faced decreased demand for their products or services. However, agriculture has been a sector with one of the lowest percentages of revenue coming from tourism at about 5%. The food services sector, on the other hand, has been more dependent on tourism with 39% of revenue coming from visitors.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and evolving. These results put numbers behind the stories of COVID-related impacts on two food-related sectors in Hawaii. The data show that the early impacts from the pandemic have not been uniform; the food services sector has been affected more than agriculture and the impacts have been more pronounced in HI County for these sectors.

References

Corkery, M. and Yaffe-Bellany, D. (2020, April 13). *U.S. Food Supply Chain is Strained as Virus Spreads*. The New York Times. <http://go.hawaii.edu/35V>.

Economic Research Service (ERS). (2020, October 28). *Food at home's share of total food spending hit a high of 66 percent in April 2020* [Fact Sheet]. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <http://go.hawaii.edu/GZ3>.

Garboden, P. (2020, April 27). COVID-19's uneven impact on businesses and workers: Results from a UHERO-Chamber of Commerce Hawaii survey [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://go.hawaii.edu/35A>.

