



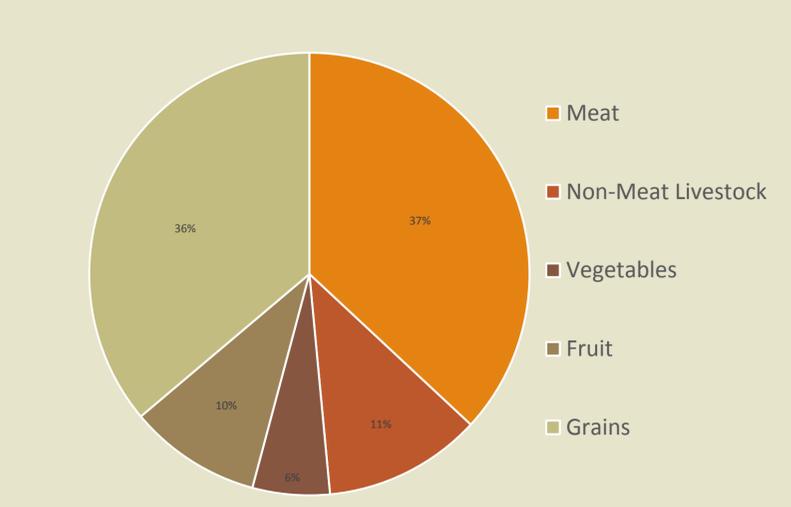
# ORGANIC FARMS AND FARMER'S MARKETS IN MICHIGAN

LILY WARD  
AQUINAS COLLEGE  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

## INTRODUCTION

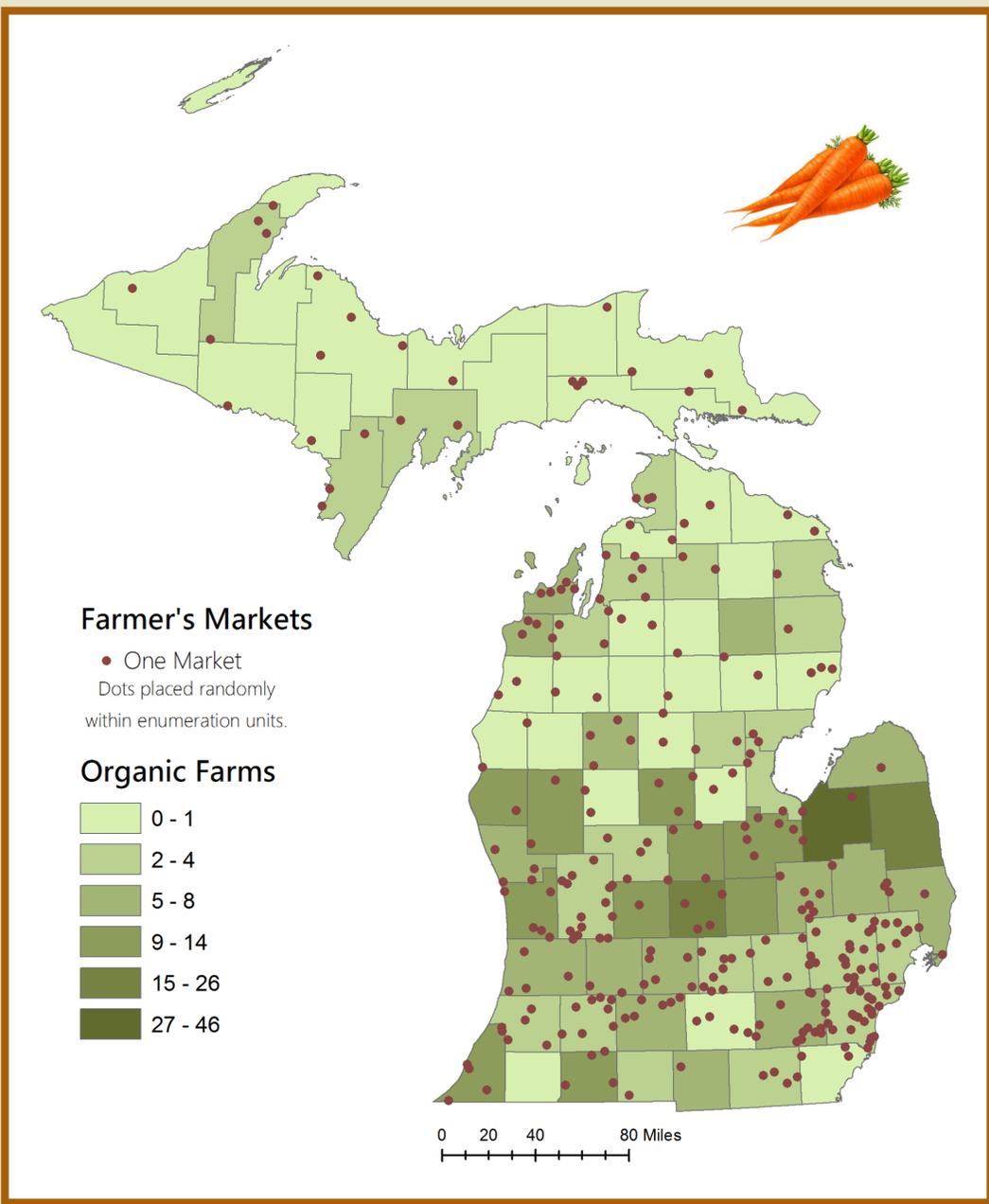
As a society, we are slowly transitioning away from the supermarket-megastore mentality of our parents' generation and moving back to an appreciation for small business and farm-to-table crops. There is value in going to the market and actually talking to the person who harvested the carrots or baked the bread we are buying. This awareness is healthy for society, as it creates more opportunities for small farmers while strengthening the bond between human and earth.

## FARM TYPES



Count of farms used for each type of agriculture, using 2012 data.

- o Meat includes beef cows, swine, goats, and poultry.
- o Non-meat livestock includes milk cows, angora goats, milk goats, and sheep.
- o Fruit also includes orchards, nuts, and berries.
- o Grains includes barley, corn, and oats.



There is somewhat even distribution of dots in the Lower Peninsula, with some coagulation in the Southeastern portion of the state. This seems fitting, as the demand for organic, sustainable produce is greater around large cities, such as Detroit.



This bar graph compares the number of organic farms to the number of non-organic farms in Michigan. It is clear that the number of non-organic farms towers over that of organic farms. This could be in part because organic can be a relative term, and as a society we are in the process of defining exactly what it means. It can also be more expensive and difficult to run an organic farm, especially on a large scale.

## WHAT IS ORGANIC?

The term "organic" can be relative, but the USDA has set standards that have to be met for a product to be marketed as such. To meet USDA organic certification standards, an organization must prove that they are "protecting natural resources, conserving biodiversity, and using only approved substances."

## SOURCES

Michigan Counties Shapefile, Michigan GIS Open Data Portal  
 USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012 Census Volume 1, Chapter 2  
 USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Organic Standards