

# 2025 MICHIGAN APPLES INDUSTRY FACTS



# 2<sup>ND</sup>

**LARGEST APPLE  
PRODUCER IN  
THE USA**

Michigan is the second largest  
producer of apples in the United States.



# 17.6

**MILLION  
APPLE TREES**

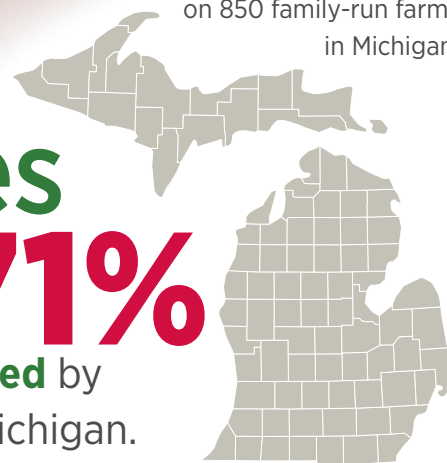
There are 17.6 million apple  
trees, covering 38,000 acres  
on 850 family-run farms  
in Michigan.

# 30.5

**MILLION BUSHELS OF APPLES**

In 2024, Michigan growers harvested an estimated  
30.5 million bushels (1.28 billion lbs.) of apples.

**Apples**  
account for **71%**  
of the **cash**  
**income generated** by  
fruit grown in Michigan.



## BIG BUSINESS

Fresh apple production, processed apple products,  
agri-tourism, and agriculture support services.

An industry cluster, or allied industries, is a dense grouping  
of related businesses, suppliers, and support organizations  
within a specific product or service  
sector. These clusters play a significant  
role in driving the economy of the region  
where they are prevalent. The Michigan  
Apple industry is pivotal to the agricultural  
industry cluster that accounts for over 805k jobs.

**805K**  
**JOBS**

**A Big Deal** Apples are the largest and most  
valuable fruit crop in Michigan.

**#2 LARGEST  
INDUSTRY IN  
THE STATE**  
**Michigan's food &  
agribusiness industry**

Michigan's food & agribusiness industry employs  
17% of the state's total manufacturing employment,  
making it the 2nd-largest industry in the state.

## AG LABOR

The harvest, packing and processing of Michigan Apples requires farm worker hand labor.

**7<sup>TH</sup>**

Michigan has the 7th highest agriculture worker population in the U.S.

**NEARLY  
60%**

of the total cost of Michigan Apple production can be attributed to labor.

The oppressive AEWR (Adverse Effect Wage Rate) is an immediate threat to the Michigan Apple industry.

In the last decade, the AEWR has increased by 57%, and is 37% higher than Michigan's minimum wage.

**57%** Increase in AEWR over the last 10 years



## MICHIGAN APPLE GROWERS: COSTS VS. RETURN

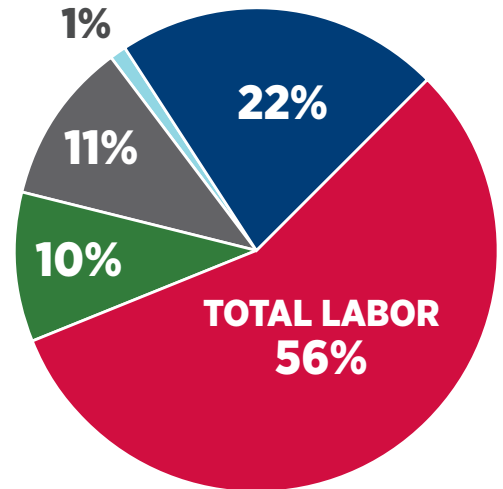
Labor Costs are Forcing Out Domestic Growers: A Real-Life Example from a Michigan Apple Grower

### 2025: Crop Expenses

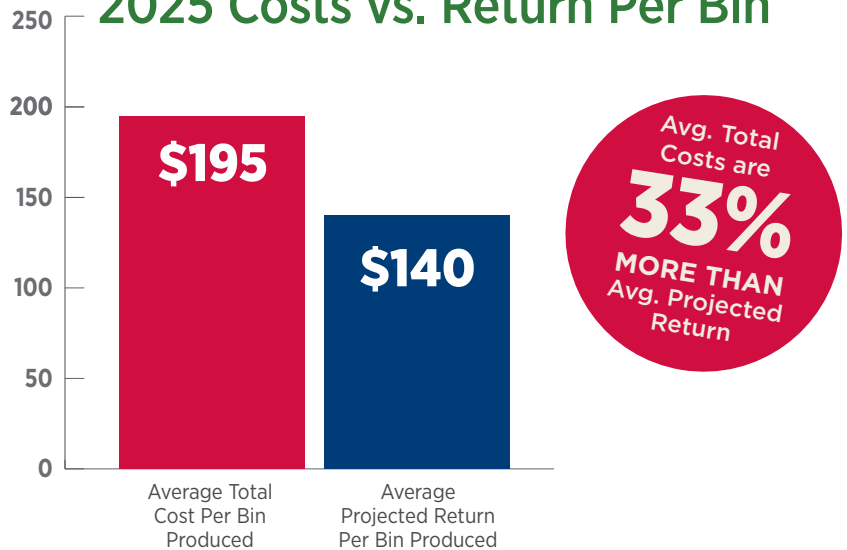
#### COST-PER-ACRE

A breakdown of average cost-per-acre, including labor, for our farmer.

- Total Labor
- Crop Protection
- Bin Storage
- Irrigation
- Overhead & Taxes



### 2025 Costs vs. Return Per Bin



Estimated Total  
Projected Loss When  
Applied to 45 Acre Farm

**-\$135,495**

## TRADE

### More than \$1 billion in exports to the world

U.S. Apples export to all corners of the world — Mexico, India, Canada, Asia, Europe and others. It has recorded steady post-COVID growth in exports to a value of \$1.08 billion in 2024.

**Canada and Mexico are the United States' largest trading partners.** With Washington producing an average of nearly 5 billion pounds of apples each year, exports to these trade partners and others are critical. **Washington needs to export approximately 30% of their crop annually to keep domestic opportunities open for other states and maintain a healthy domestic market.**

**Farm Bill** programs help the apple industry address the challenges and find opportunities for export.

Through the **Market Access Program (MAP)**, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service partners with groups to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities.

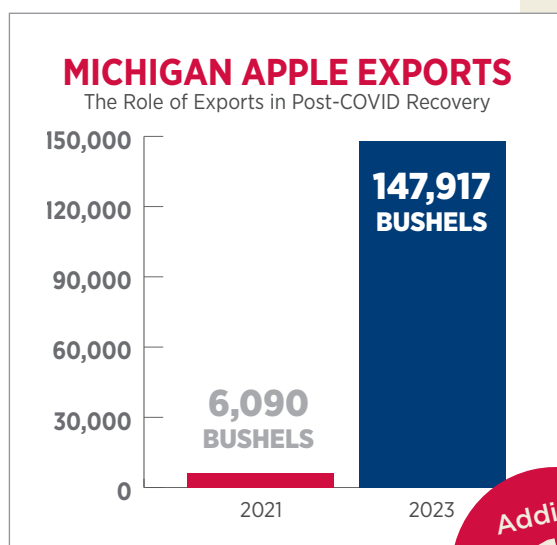
The **Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC)** program funds projects that address sanitary, phytosanitary, and technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops.

TASC has helped Michigan with trade barriers in Mexico, Israel, and most recently, Thailand.

### In 2023, Michigan Apple exports brought a value of \$3,137,000 to the industry.

Post-pandemic, the Michigan Apple industry recorded a steep increase in apple exports with the 2023-24 crop with bushels shipped increasing by 40 percent.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan Apple exports reduced to only 6,090 bushels in 2021. In 2023, Michigan exported 147,917 bushels to Canada, Central America, Colombia, Mexico, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.



Sources: USDA FAS-Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS) & US Apple Export Council

## FARM BILL

Export programs, along with research, marketing and risk management are just some of the areas in which the Farm Bill has positively supported successes in our industry.

Globally, Farm Bill programs allow the Michigan Apple industry access to new and existing export markets while addressing phytosanitary and trade-related challenges.

Domestically, Specialty Crop Block Grant funding has made it possible for Michigan Apple Committee to see progress in increasing consumption of Michigan Apples through targeted programs. In addition, crop insurance and research programs within the Farm Bill also support the sustainability of the Michigan Apple industry.

### Specialty Crop Block Grant

Since 2013, Michigan Apple Committee has leveraged

**\$1,462,213**

in Specialty Crop Block funding to implement **18 consumer education campaigns** aimed at increasing consumption of Michigan Apples.

### Crop Insurance

The Farm Bill also protects growers from the unexpected through crop insurance. According to the USDA, approximately

**66%** of the U.S. apple crop is insured

allowing growers who have invested in their industry to have the stability and security to produce apples for consumers into the future.

Adding  
**\$3.14M**  
to the  
Industry



# RESEARCH

Recent cuts to federal funding through USDA have eliminated or seriously impeded research programs that have immediate impacts as well as long-term effects to the sustainability of the Michigan Apple Industry.

Recent cuts to **USDA-SCRI** (Specialty Crop Research Initiative) have direct and potentially devastating impacts on the apple industry, while indirectly, cuts to USAID, National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation affect researchers and the Universities where they work.

Research funding often requires long-term investments – experimental orchards take approximately three years to bear fruit; graduate and undergraduate assistant researchers are hired to help with day-to-day work; many projects build on prior work year-over-year.

**These investments will all be lost with funding cuts.**



## National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Specialty Crop Research Funding for Michigan Apple Research

*“All research is momentum, one thing stops and so does everything else, so research needs to keep on going.”*

Since 2008, **Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)** funds allocated by the Farm Bill have granted more than **\$31.2 million for projects benefiting the Michigan Apple industry**. Michigan Apple growers benefit from other research done at land grant universities.

- Limiting bird damage to fruit crops: A planning program to identify research directions for the future
- RosBREED – Enabling marker-assisted breeding in Rosaceae
- Conserving Native Bees and Valuing their Services for Sustainable Specialty Crop Pollination
- Development and Delivery of Resource-Efficient, Ecologically Sustainable Fruit Production Systems for Apple and Cherry Producers

- Limiting bird damage to fruit crops: integrating economic, biological, and consumer information to develop sustainable, long-term solutions
- Developing sustainable pollination strategies for U.S. specialty crops
- RosBREED: Combining disease resistance with horticultural quality in new rosaceous cultivars
- Solid Set Canopy Delivery Systems: an efficient, sustainable and safer spray technology for tree fruit
- Integrated Crop Pollination Project

Source: NIFA, USDA

**Learn more about Michigan Apple Industry issues:**



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