

Agricultural Processing in Wisconsin

Agricultural Processing: Occupational Profiles

When thinking about the promotion of food processing as an economic cluster for Wisconsin one of the elements that must be considered is the occupational structure of the industry. In other words, what types of jobs are associated with the industry? For the Wisconsin food processing industry of the top 45 occupations, which range from general office and shipping and receiving clerks to bakers and butchers and accounts for 87.4% of all jobs within the industry, 82.2% have annual wages/salaries of less than \$50,000 and 46.7% have annual wages/salaries of less than \$30,000.

When thinking about training requirements, of the top 45 occupations 44.4% require less than a high school education and no prior work experience within the industry and 46.7% require a high school diploma or equivalent. Only two of the 45 top occupations required some postsecondary training (non-degree) and only one requires a bachelor's degree. The low level of expected formal education and prior work experience corresponds with the modest wages and salaries associated with the industry.

Any strategy to promote economic growth and development must provide a balanced view of employment opportunities. Not all workers have the skills or desire to work in advanced technology based industries. There should be employment opportunities across a range of skill sets. The promotion of food processing as an economic cluster can help balance the creation a range of employment opportunities.

In a 2009 study of the Wisconsin agricultural economy Deller and Williams documented that the food processing industry generates about 252,000 jobs and \$15.5 billion in income. This represents just over seven percent of all employment and just less than seven percent of all income in Wisconsin. In addition, the economic activity associated with food processing generated just over \$1 billion in state and local government revenues. This series of factsheets is aimed at helping better understand the food processing industry in Wisconsin and identify policies that may enhance the competitiveness of the industry.

Agricultural process manufacturing, such as cheese making, vegetable canning and freezing and breweries as well as wineries, remains an important part of the Wisconsin economy. Equally important, the products that are associated with food processing, in particular cheese and beer, are an integral part of the Wisconsinites self-identity. Curly Lambeau, one of the founders of the Green Bay Packers, used funding from his employer, the Indian Packing Company, a meat canning processor, to fund the early operations of the team. The Milwaukee Brewers are named in recognition of the city and state's long tradition in making beer.

Occupations in Wisconsin Food Processing Sector

	Share of Employment	Avg Annual Wage or Salary	Education	Work Experience
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	8.6%	\$26,850.0	Less than high school	None
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	8.1%	\$28,890.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Food Batchmakers	5.8%	\$30,520.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Slaughtering and Meat Packers	5.2%	\$25,840.0	Less than high school	None
Packers and Packers, Hand	4.8%	\$25,290.0	Less than high school	None
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4.1%	\$27,150.0	Less than high school	None
Helpers--Production Workers	3.6%	\$26,700.0	Less than high school	None
Bakers	3.5%	\$23,470.0	Less than high school	None
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	3.2%	\$55,780.0	Postsecondary non-degree award	Less than 5 years
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2.5%	\$32,690.0	Less than high school	None
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	2.3%	\$38,380.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2.0%	\$50,970.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	2.0%	\$35,200.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Team Assemblers	1.9%	\$29,810.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Production Workers, All Other	1.9%	n.a.	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders	1.7%	\$25,720.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1.6%	\$41,030.0	Postsecondary non-degree award	None
Food Processing Workers, All Other	1.5%	n.a.	Less than high school	None
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1.5%	\$25,070.0	Less than high school	None
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	1.3%	\$24,110.0	Less than high school	None
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	1.3%	\$30,890.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	1.2%	\$37,100.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Cashiers	1.2%	\$19,340.0	Less than high school	None
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1.1%	\$65,960.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Food and Tobacco Roasting, Baking, and Drying Machine Operators and Tenders	1.1%	\$30,970.0	Less than high school	None
General and Operations Managers	1.1%	\$103,600.0	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years
Retail Salespersons	1.1%	\$24,660.0	Less than high school	None
Driver/Sales Workers	1.0%	\$27,410.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Machine Feeders and Offbearers	0.9%	\$27,460.0	Less than high school	None
Office Clerks, General	0.8%	\$29,900.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	0.8%	\$35,180.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Industrial Production Managers	0.8%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	0.7%	\$30,570.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	0.7%	\$34,570.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	0.7%	\$23,920.0	Less than high school	None
Maintenance Workers, Machinery	0.7%	\$43,450.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	0.7%	\$33,710.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products	0.6%	\$24,720.0	Less than high school	None
Food Preparation Workers	0.6%	\$20,070.0	Less than high school	None
Butchers and Meat Cutters	0.6%	\$34,440.0	Less than high school	None
Cleaning, Washing, and Metal Pickling Equipment Operators and Tenders	0.6%	\$28,680.0	Less than high school	None
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	0.6%	\$18,770.0	Less than high school	None
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	0.5%	\$61,600.0	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years
Customer Service Representatives	0.5%	\$33,590.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Crushing, Grinding, and Polishing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	0.5%	\$33,130.0	High school diploma or equivalent	None

References: Deller, Steven C. and Williams, David. 2009. "The Contribution of Agriculture to the Wisconsin Economy." Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics Staff Paper No. 541. University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension. (August). www.aae.wisc.edu/pubs/sps/pdf/