



Metro Omaha Farm & Food Economy

No More Empty Pots (Omaha)

Center for Rural Affairs

Heartland Regional Food Business Center

Rural Prosperity

Comunidad Maya Pixan Ixim

August 18, 2025

Ken Meter Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis)

Paul, Nebraska, 2017

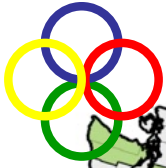


Nebraska Farm Heritage

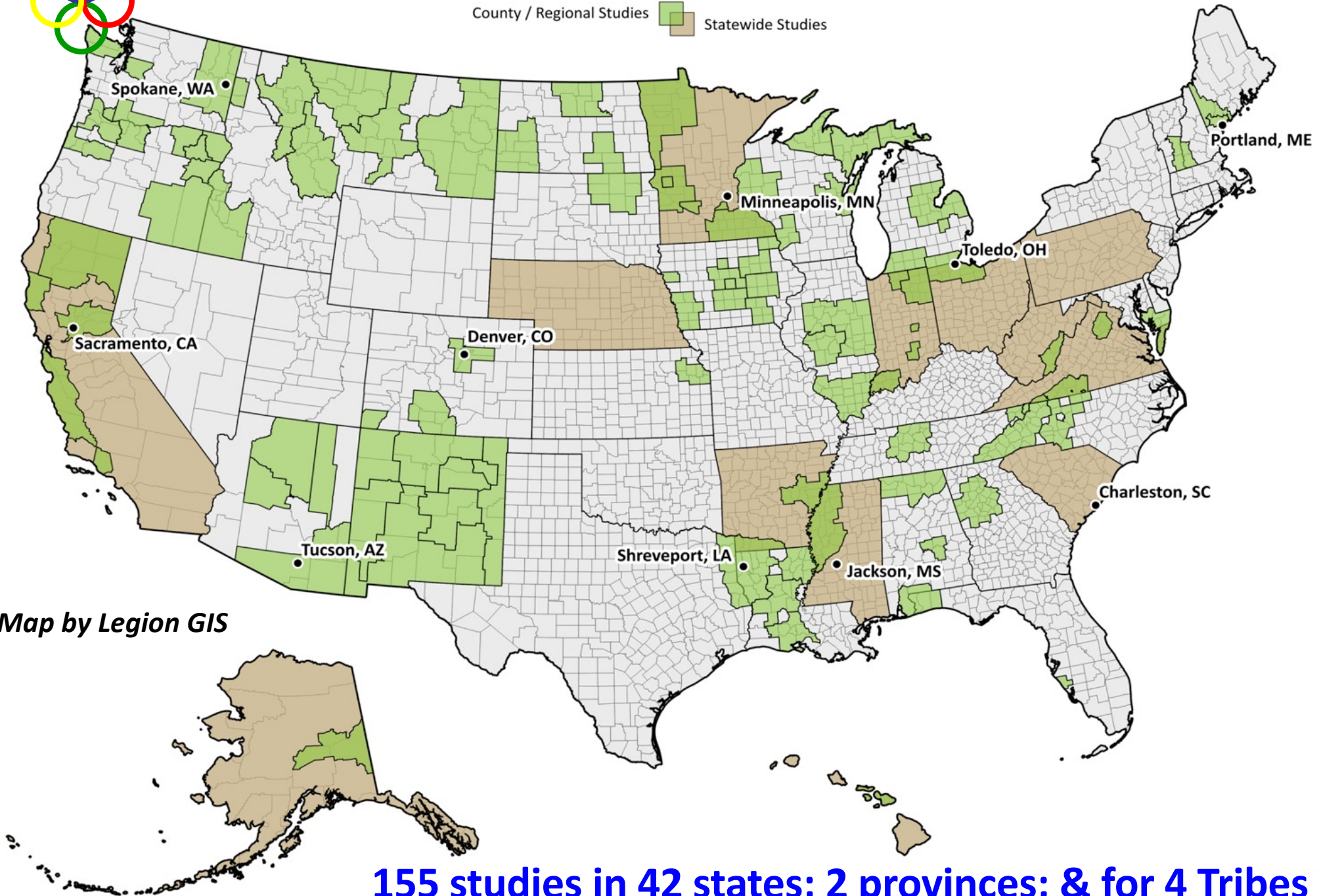
**20 Years Living & Working
in Low-Wealth Neighborhood**

**Extensive Field Experience Partnering
with Food Systems Initiatives**

CRC Farm & Food Economy Studies



County / Regional Studies  Statewide Studies 



155 studies in 42 states; 2 provinces; & for 4 Tribes



A Vision for the US Food System

Build:

Health

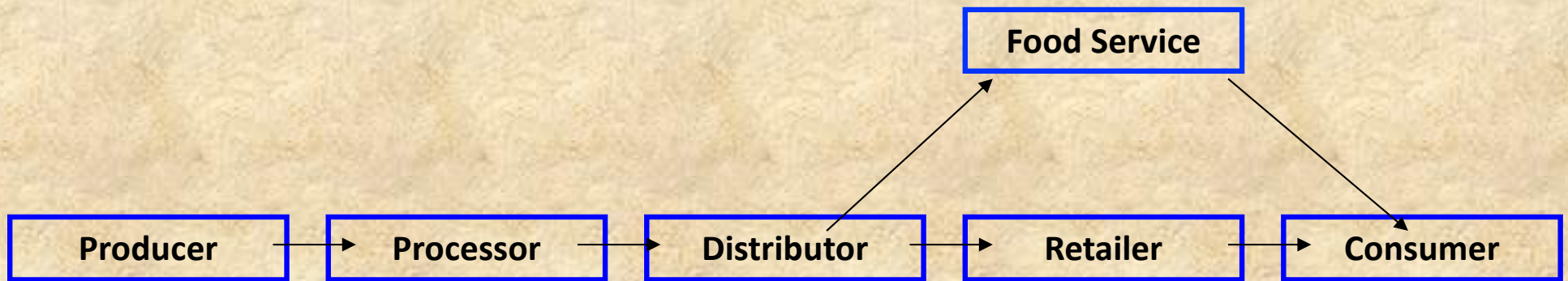
Wealth

Connection

Capacity



“Supply Chain”



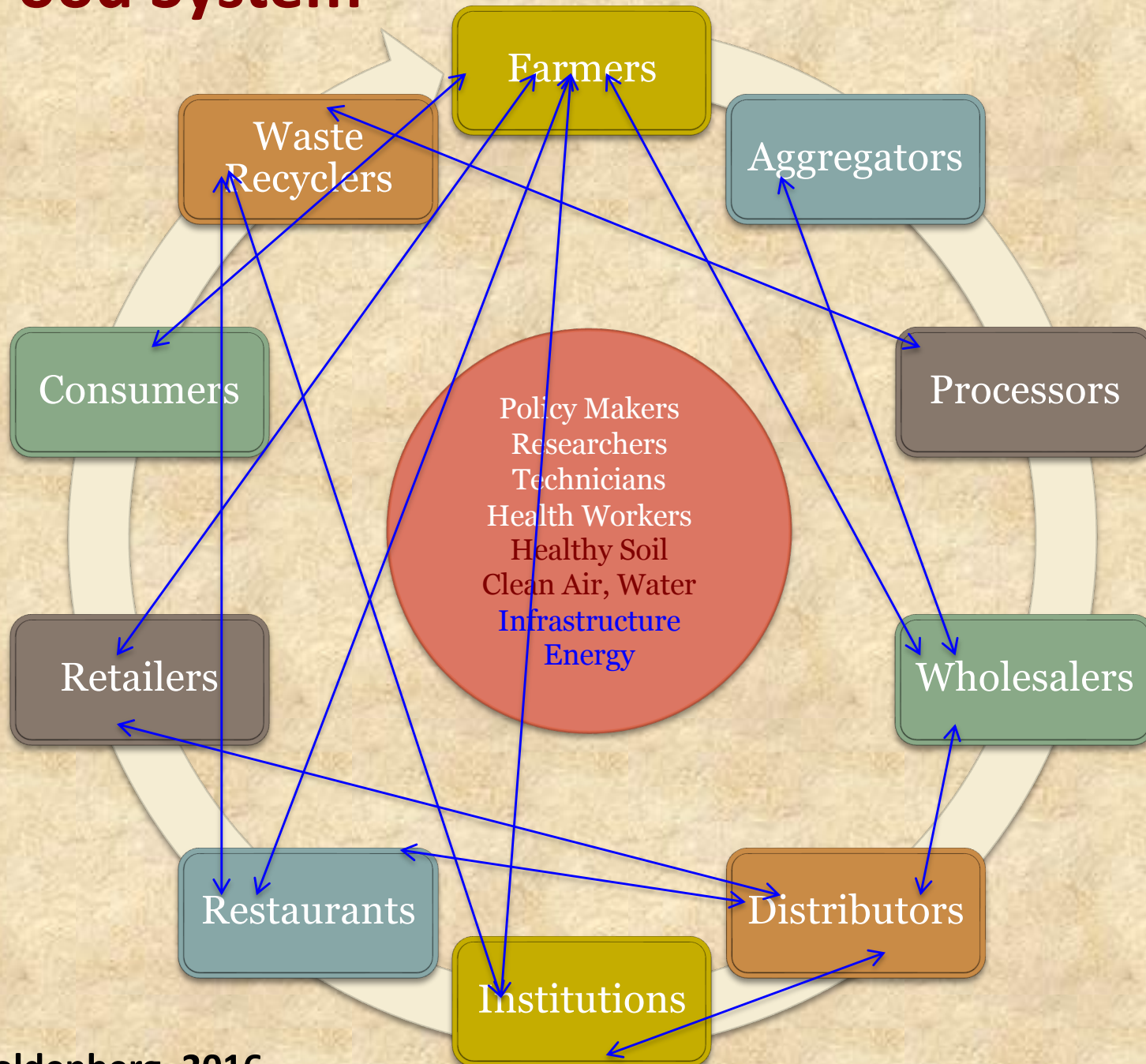


Food System





Food System

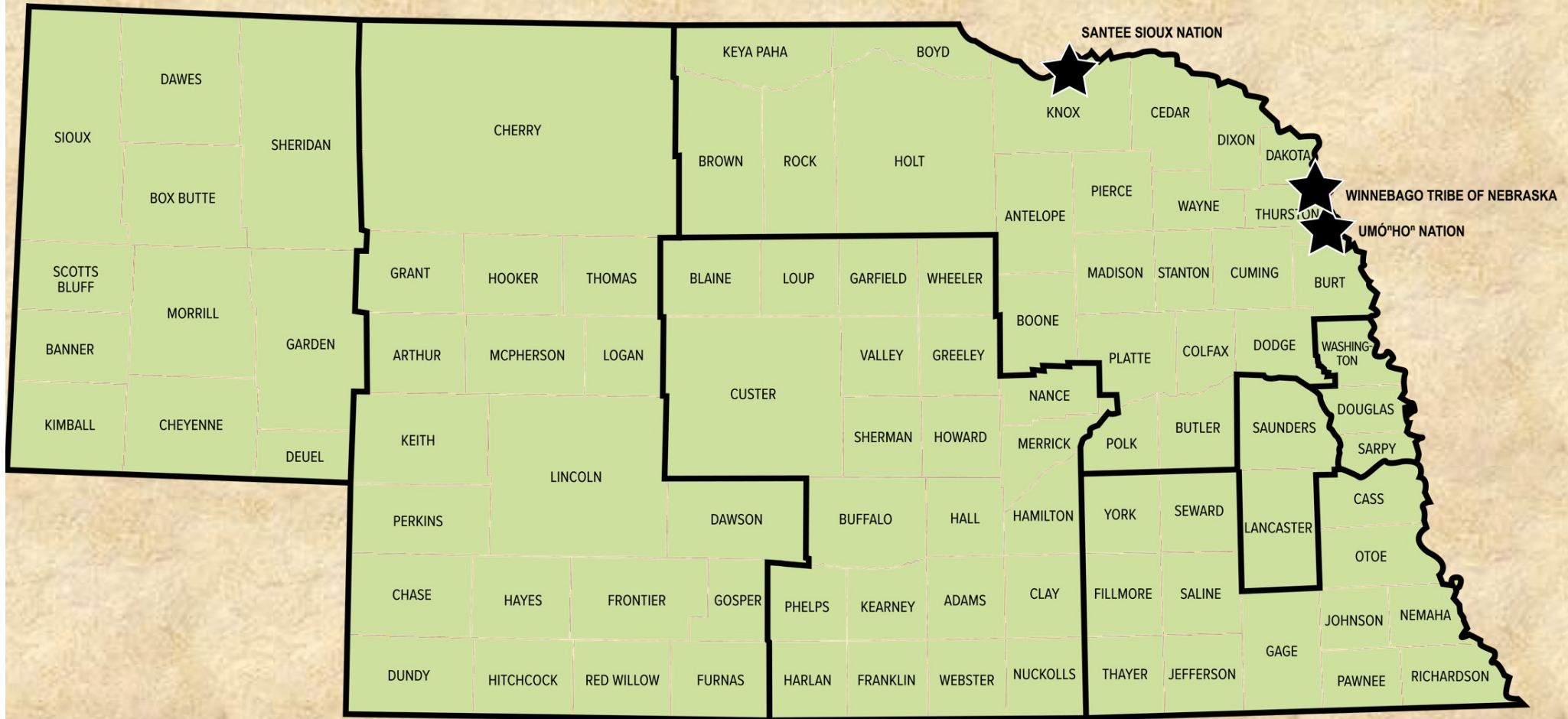




Mural, The Food Project — Boston



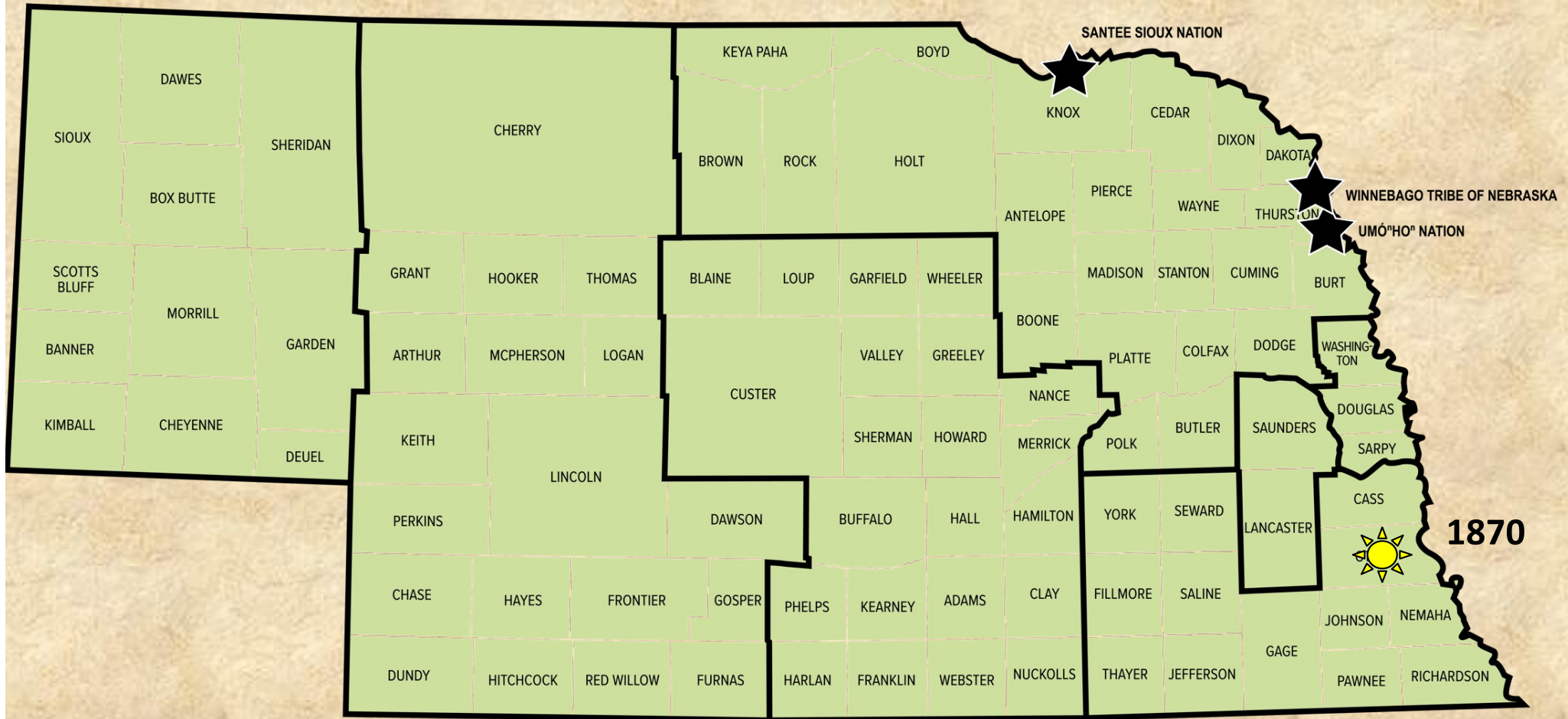
Omaha Metro



Map by Kylie Kai, Center for Rural Affairs



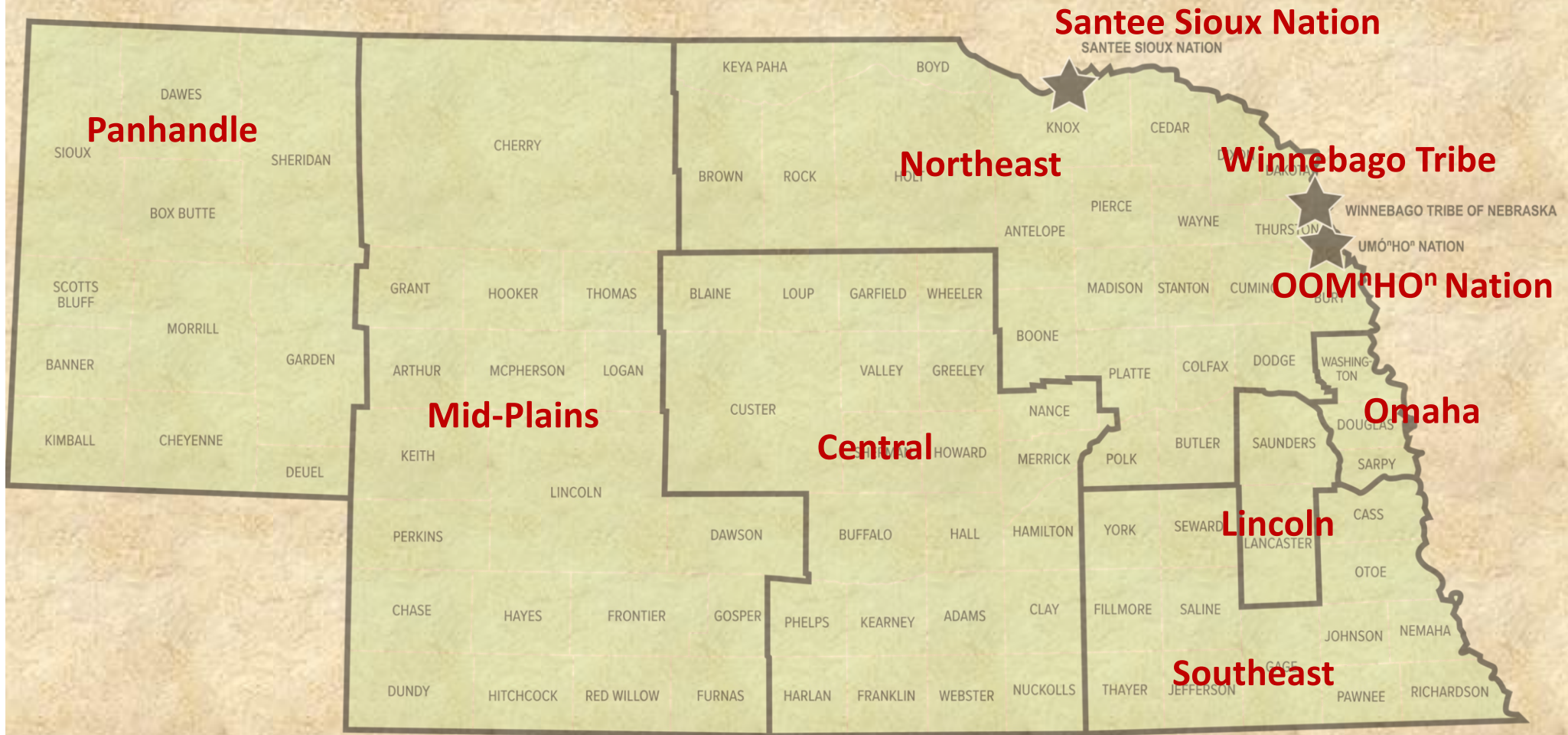
Omaha Metro



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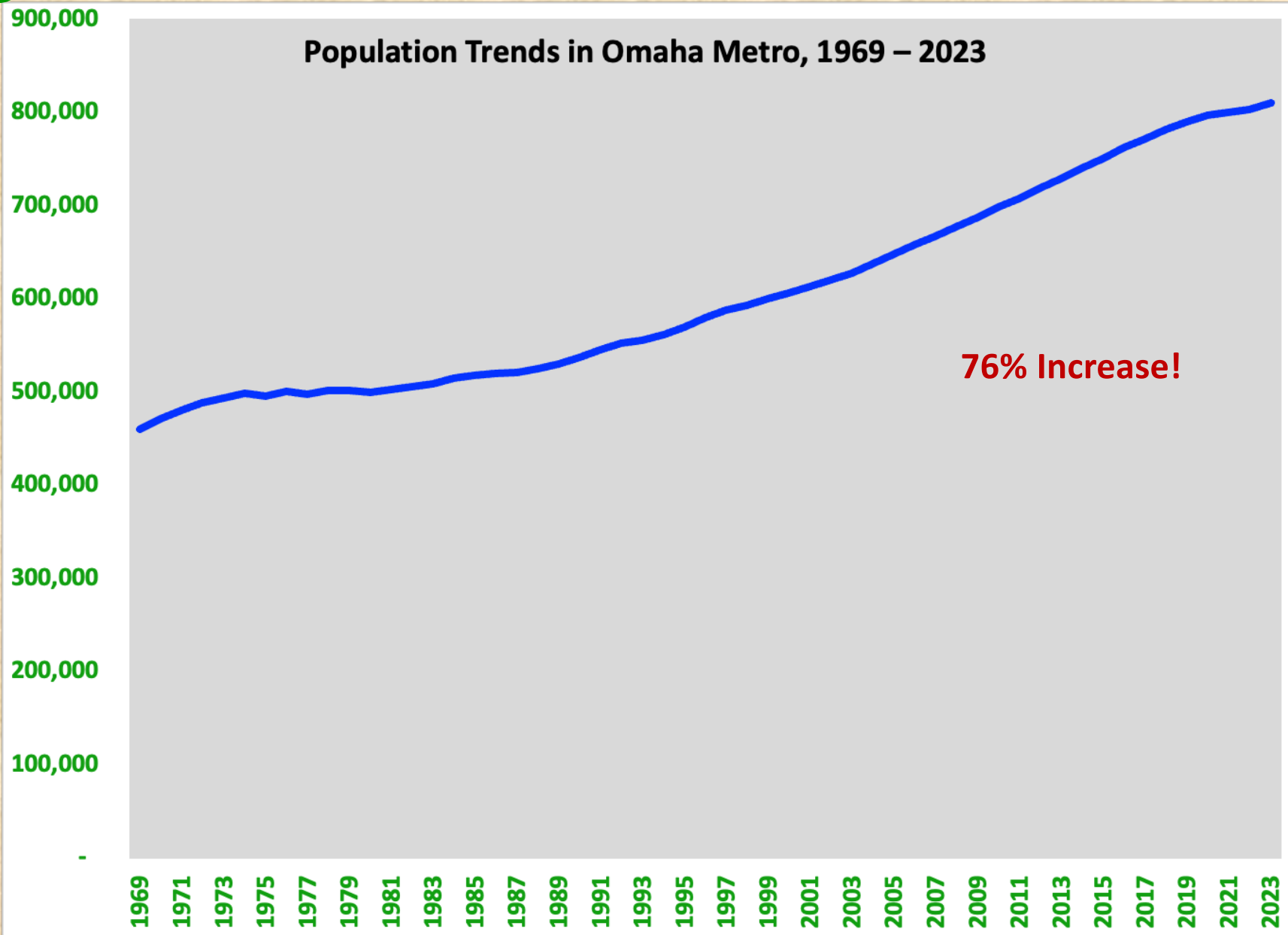


Omaha Metro



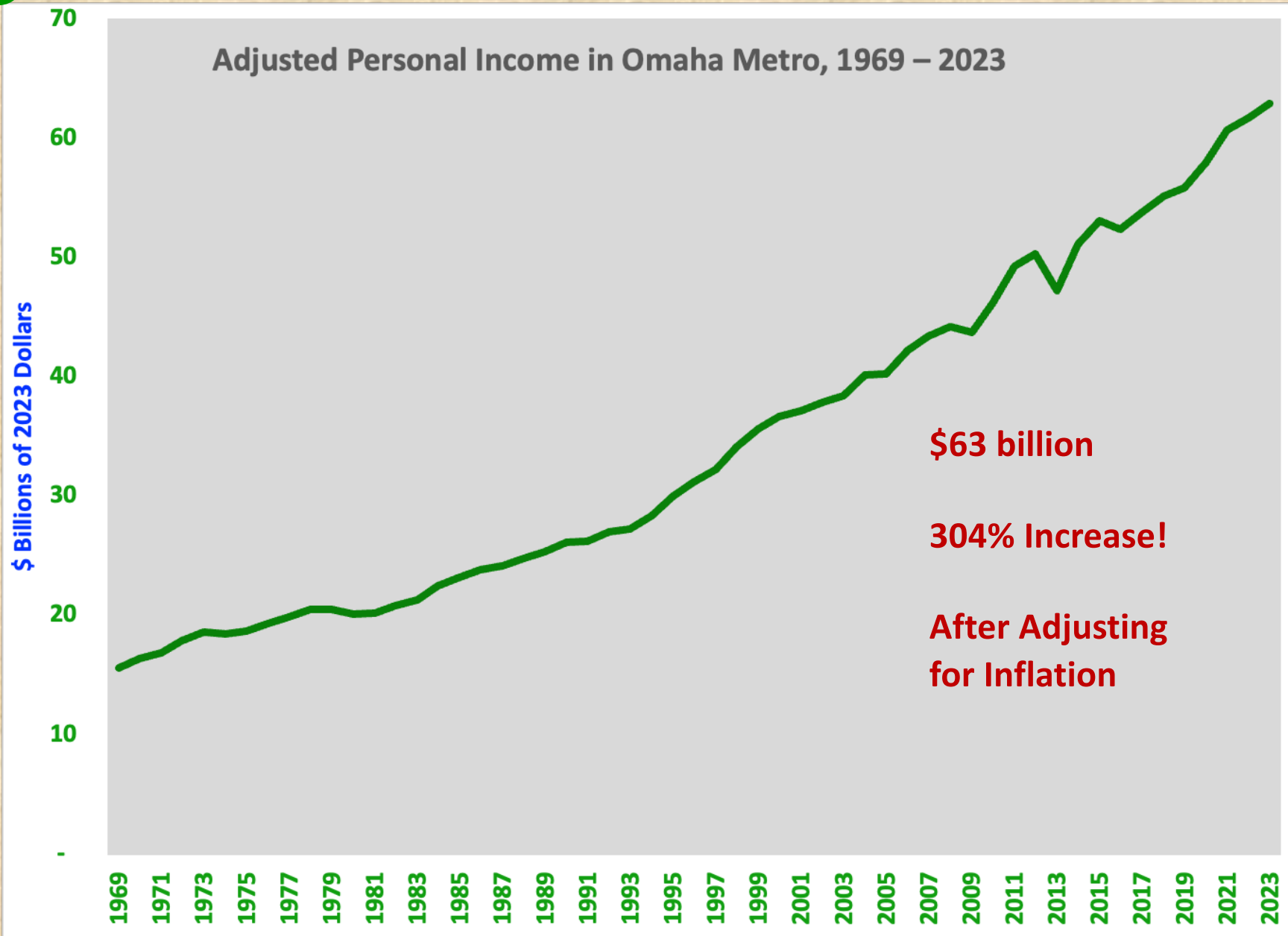


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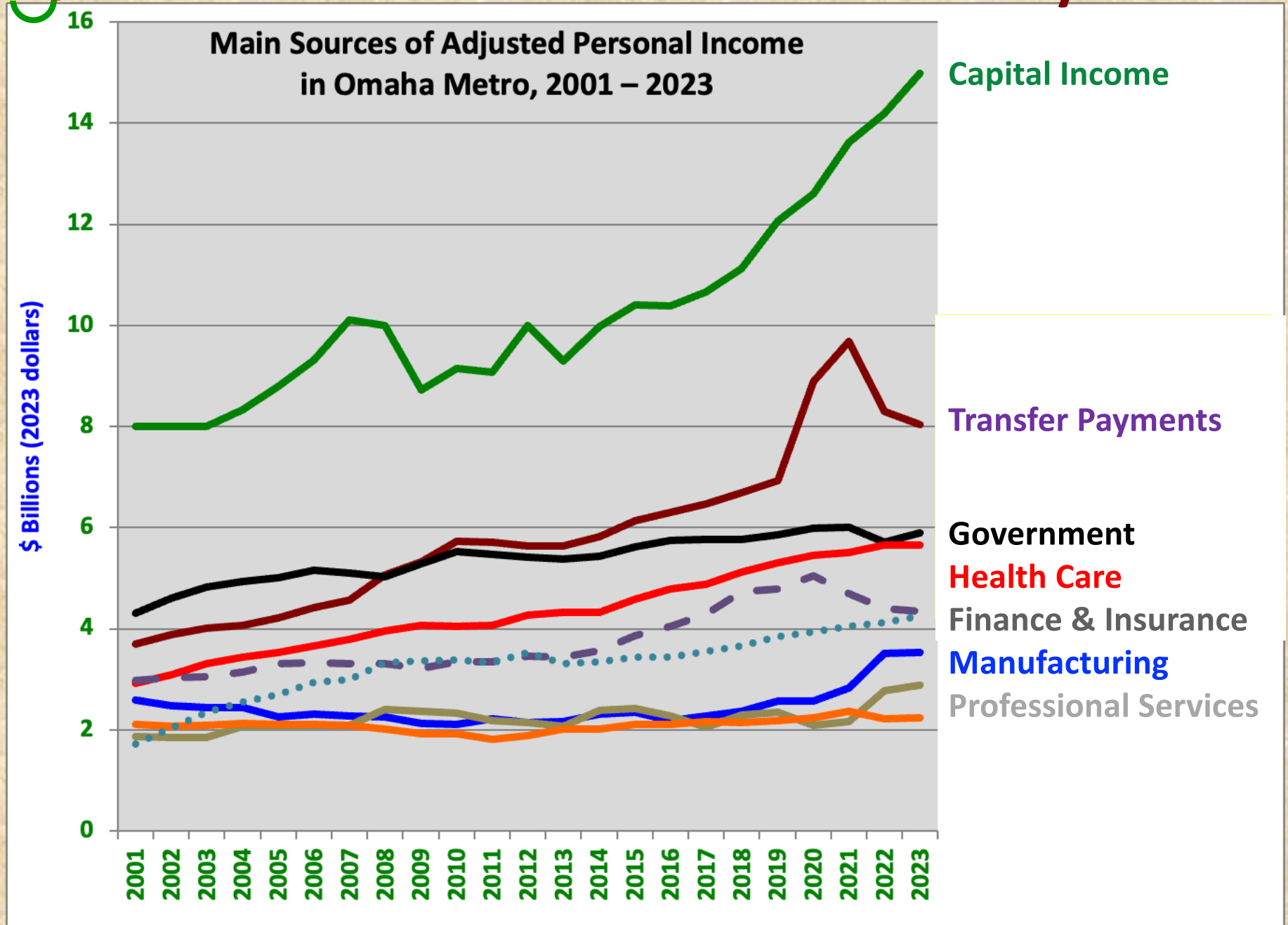


Omaha Metro Farm & Food Economy



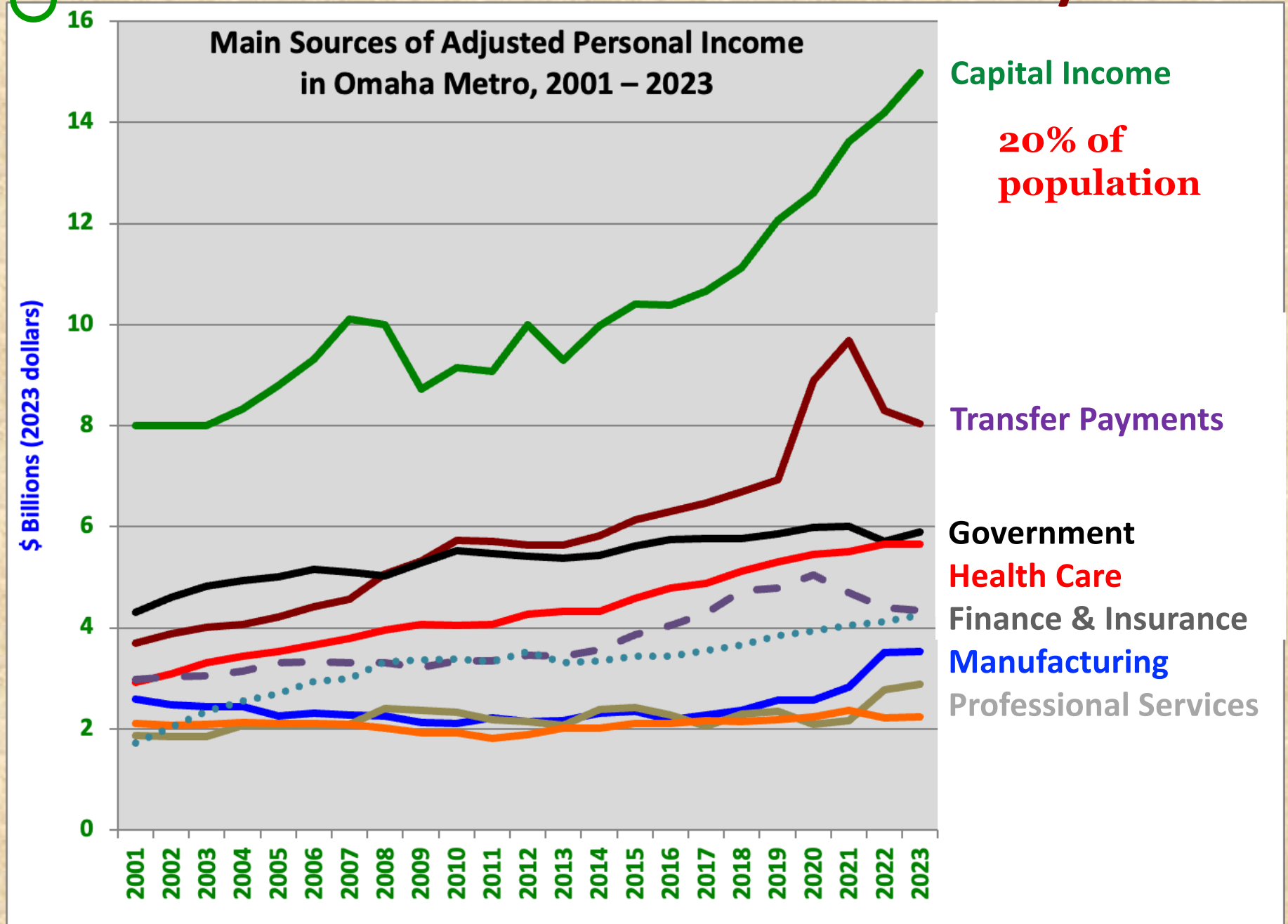


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Bureau of Economic Analysis, Federal Census



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**Government Programs
Account for 22% of Personal Income**



Photo by Kylie Kai, Center for Rural Affairs



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168,000 residents (21%) earn less than 185% of federal poverty guidelines

This is a lower rate than

- **Lincoln Metro (25%)**
- **Mid-Plains (29%)**
- **The Panhandle (30%)**



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Food Insecurity Rates: 110,330 residents

Douglas County 14.5% — 84,990 Residents
(\$61 Million Required)

Sarpy County 11.8% — 22,880 Residents
(\$16 Million Required)

Washington Cty 11.7% — 2,460 Residents
(\$1.6 million required)



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**4% percent of the region's households
(about 31,000 residents)**

Earn less than \$10,000 per year

About 77,000 residents (10%)

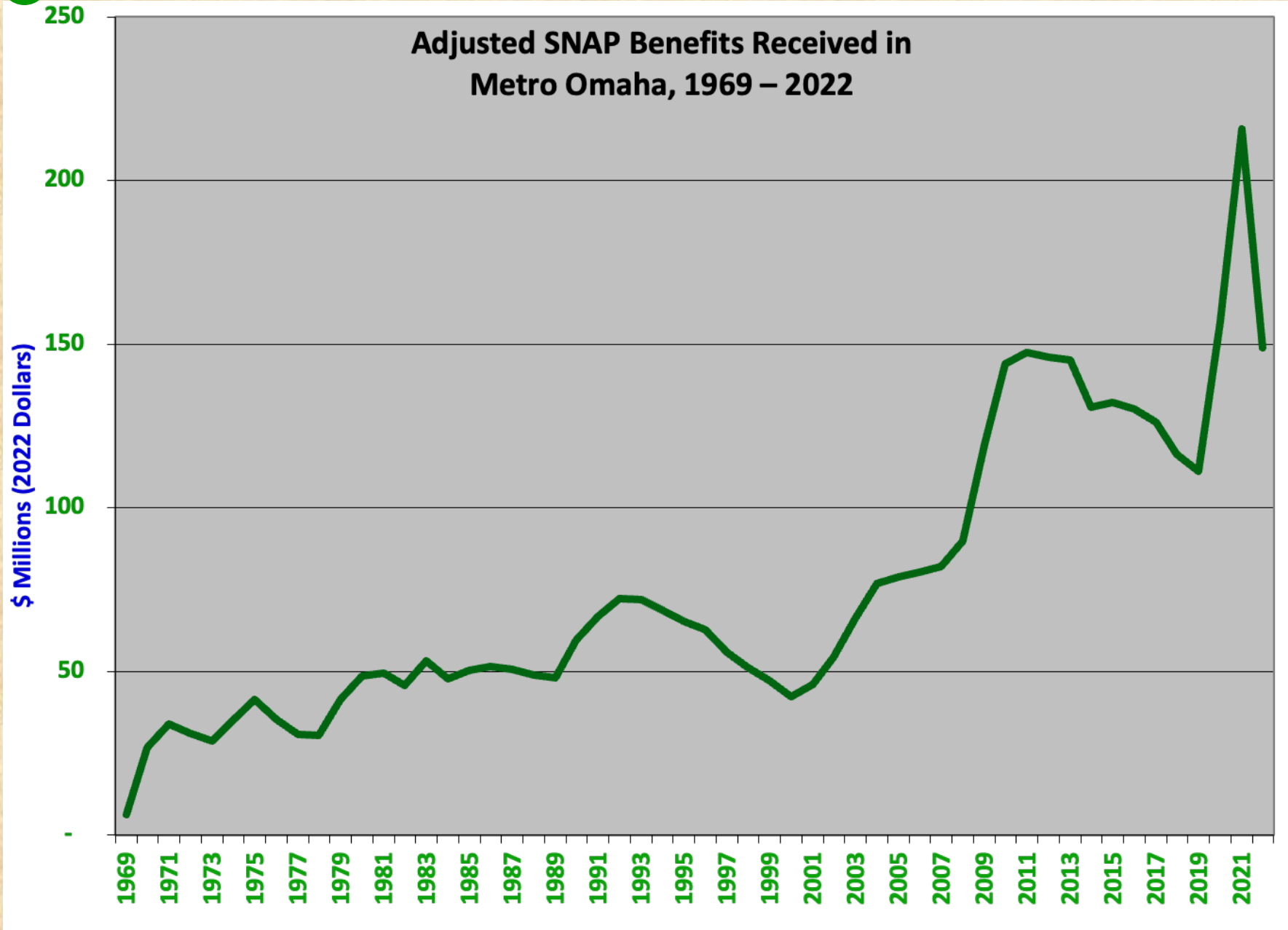
collected \$149 million in SNAP benefits in 2022

This was less than pandemic peak of \$216 million

**SNAP benefits averaged \$88 million per year for
the years 1989–2022**

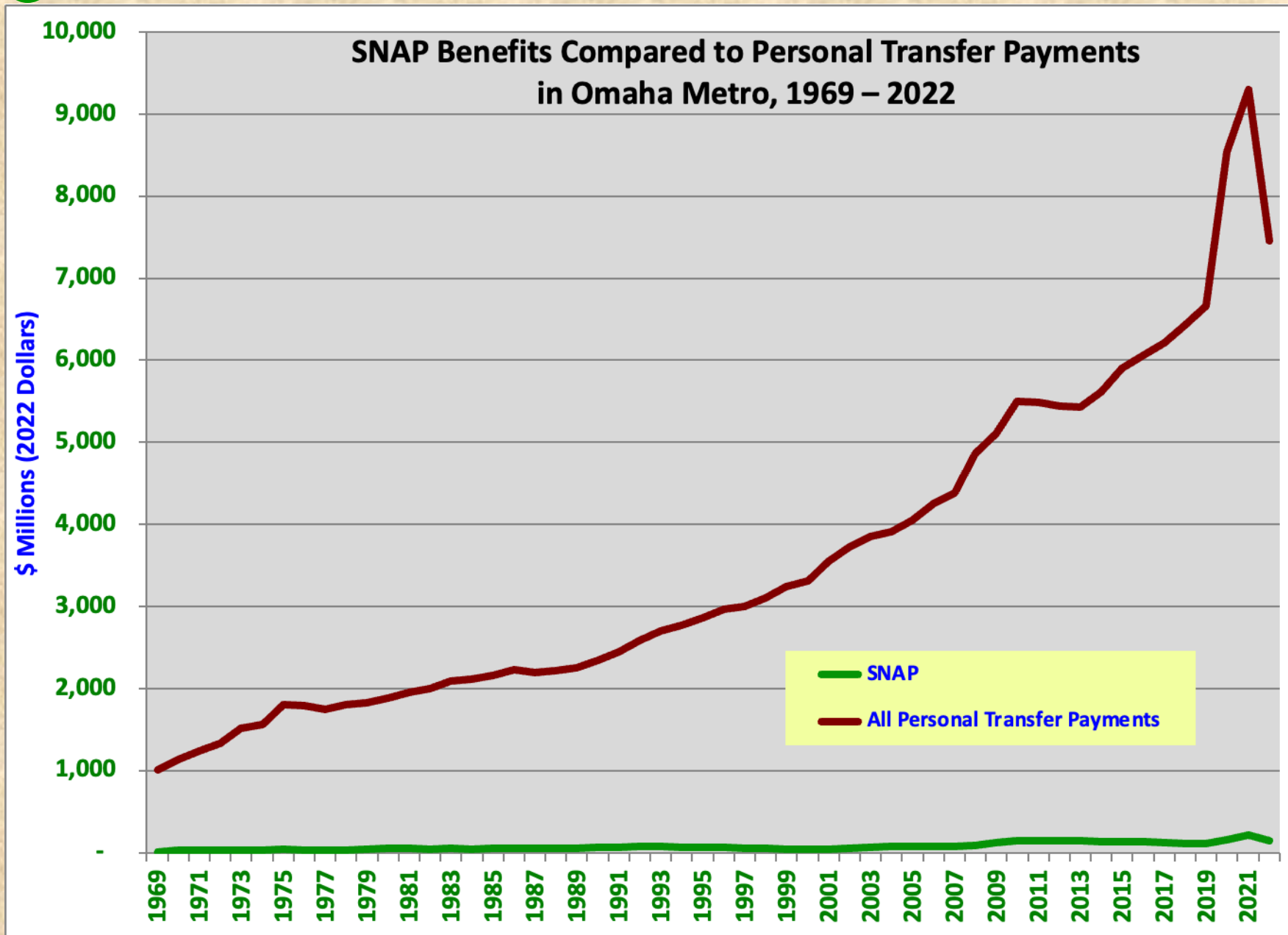


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Could Omaha Metro Feed Itself?



Photo by Kylie Kai, Center for Rural Affairs



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Consumer Markets for Food



Photo Courtesy of City of Lincoln



Omaha Metro Farm & Food Economy

Consumer Markets for Food

Omaha Metro residents purchase \$2.9 billion of food each year, including \$1.9 billion to eat at home.

Home purchases:

| | \$ Millions |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Meats, Poultry, Fish, & Eggs | 386 |
| Fruits & Vegetables | 350 |
| Cereals & Bakery Products | 236 |
| Dairy Products | 176 |
| “Other,” incl. Sweets, Fats, & Oils | 722 |

Photo Courtesy of City of Lincoln



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\$79 million — Needed to feed all residents

\$2.9 billion — Total market for food

That is an increase of 2.7%



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\$79 million — Needed to feed all residents

\$63 billion — Aggregate Personal Income

That is 0.1% of personal income



Consumers matter

If each resident bought \$5 of food directly from some Omaha Metro farm each week...

...Farms would earn **\$211 Million**



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Farmers Produced:

\$358 Million of Commodities

(per year 1989 – 2022)

Spent \$324 Million to Produce Them

(per year 1989 – 2022)



Omaha Metro Farm & Food Economy

\$211 million — Buying \$5 of food per week

\$358 million — Cash Receipts for Farmers

59% of current farm cash receipts



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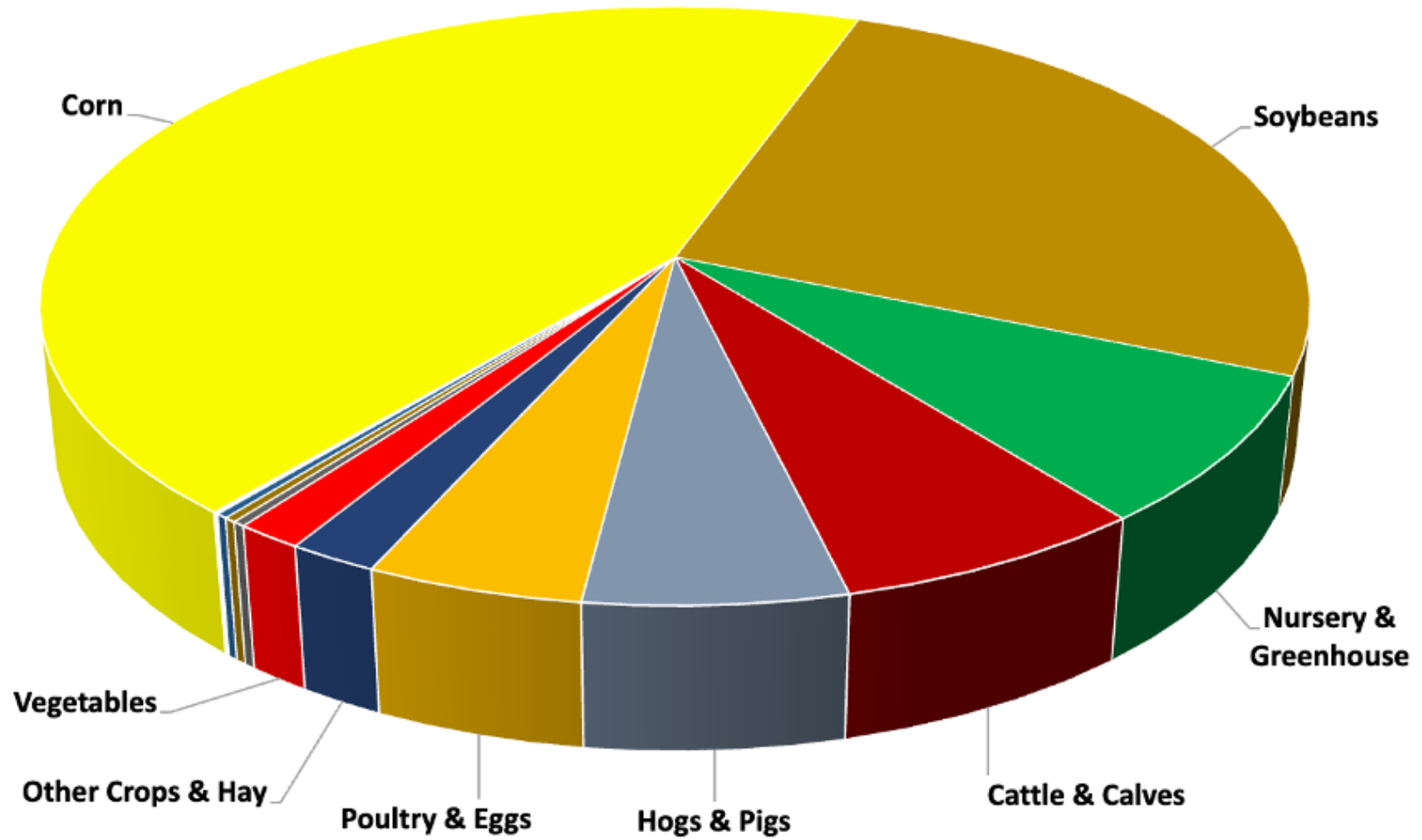
**Omaha Farms are Similar to
Those in the Rest of the State!**

| | \$ Millions |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Corn | 123 |
| Soybeans | 72 |
| Nursery / Greenhouse | 22 |
| Cattle & Calves | 19 |



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Omaha Metro's Top Farm Products in 2022





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73,862 Hogs

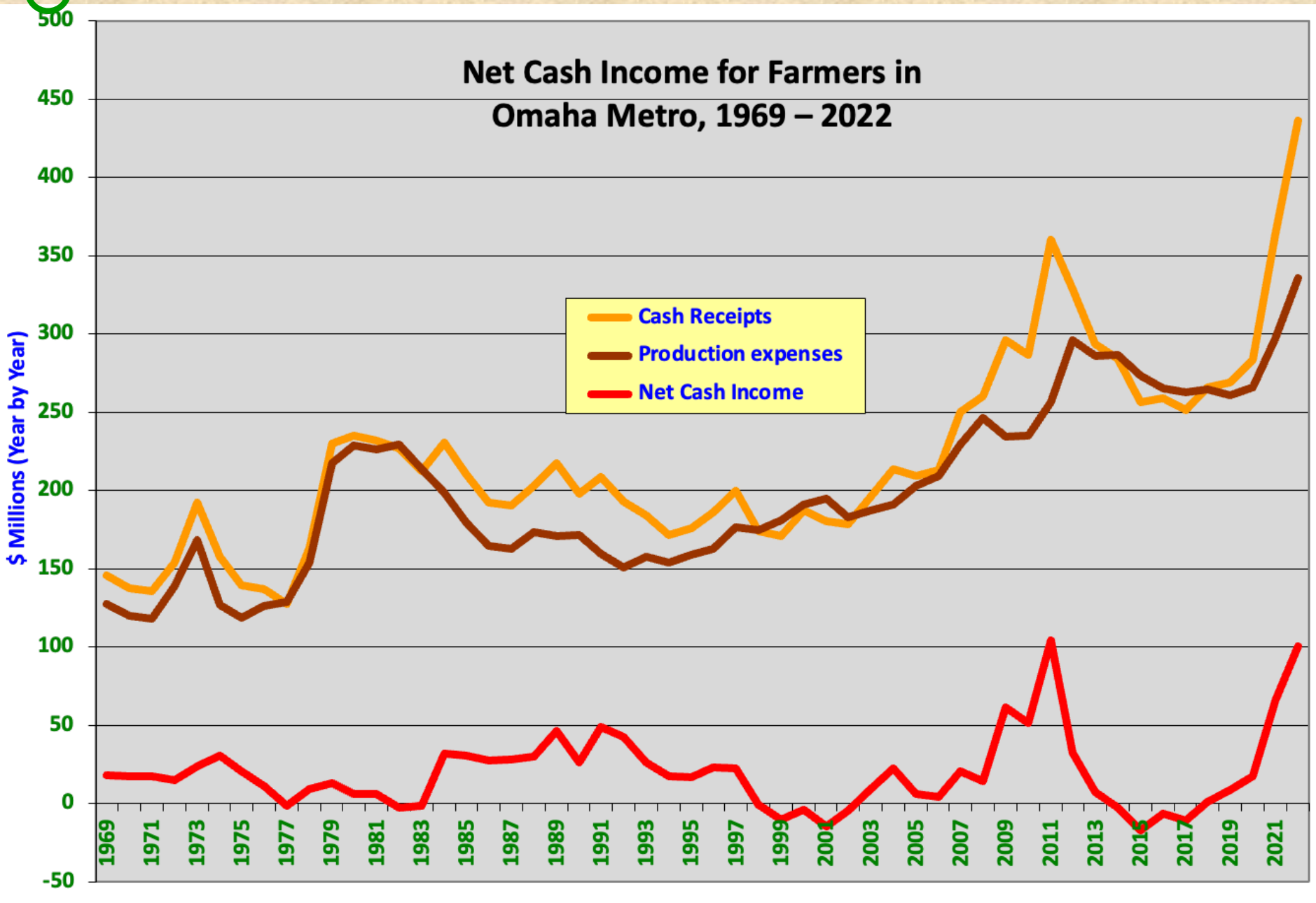
13,110 Cattle & Calves

810,578 People

Photo by Kylie Kai, Center for Rural Affairs

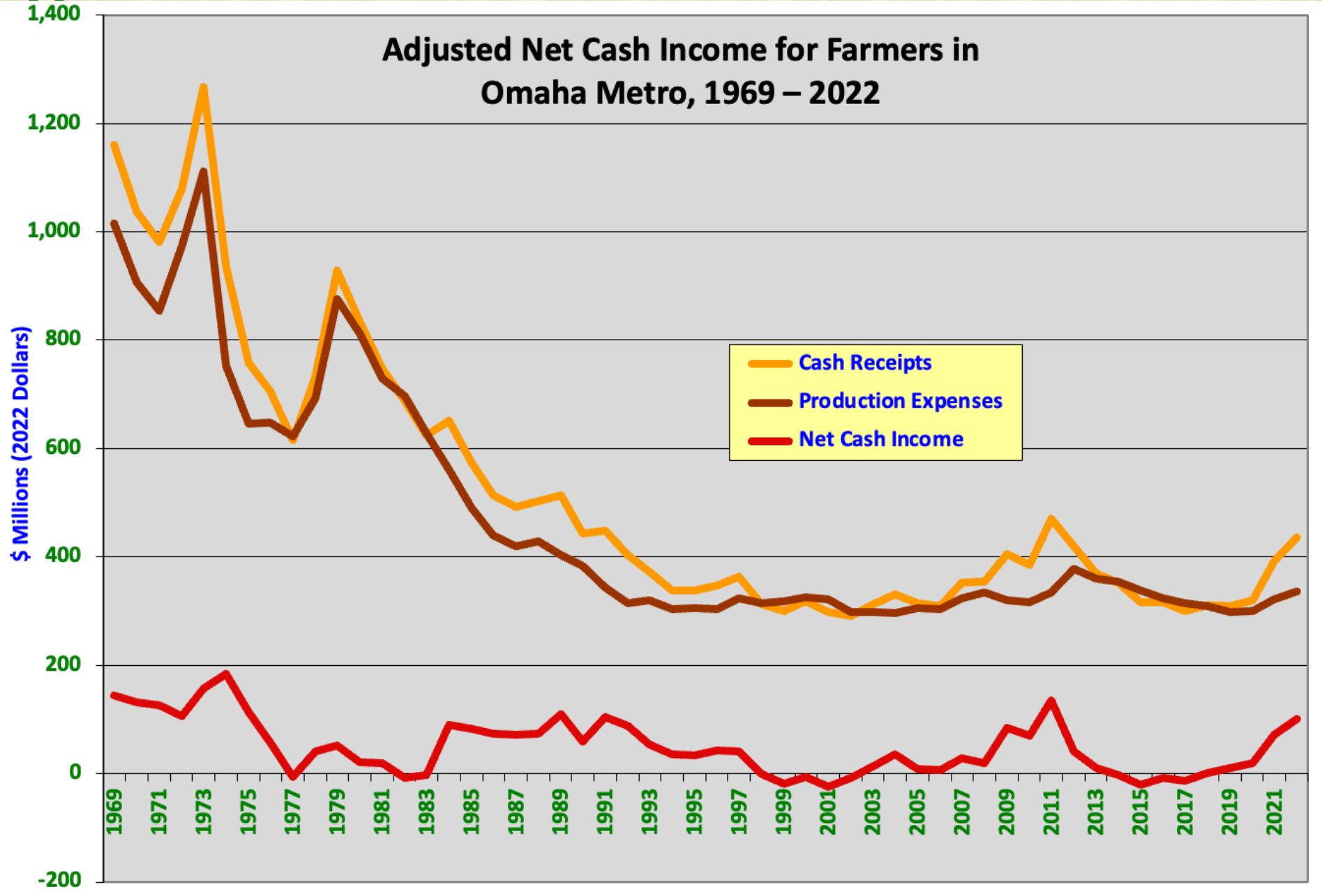


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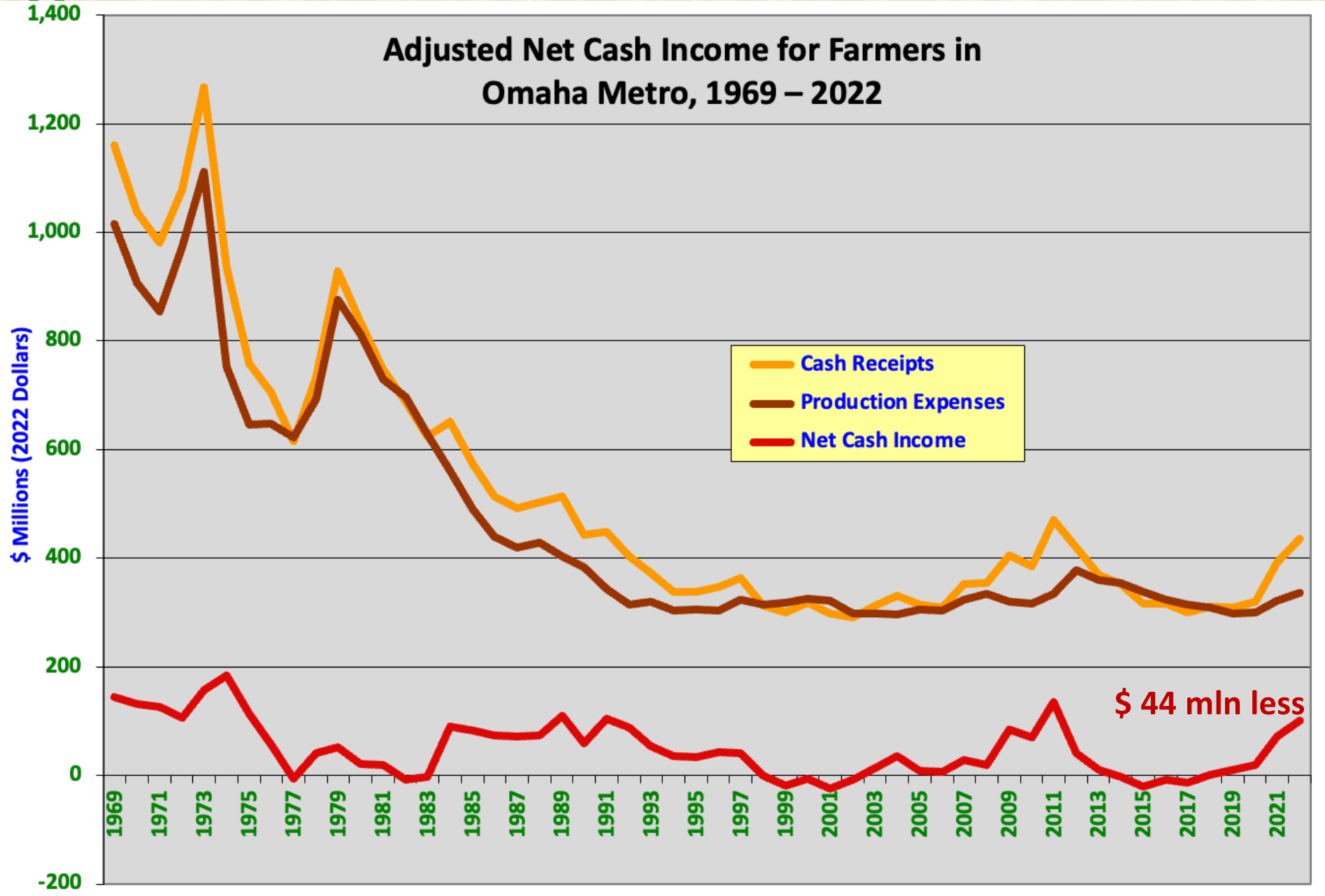


Bureau of Economic Analysis

Losses in 12 of Last 54 Years

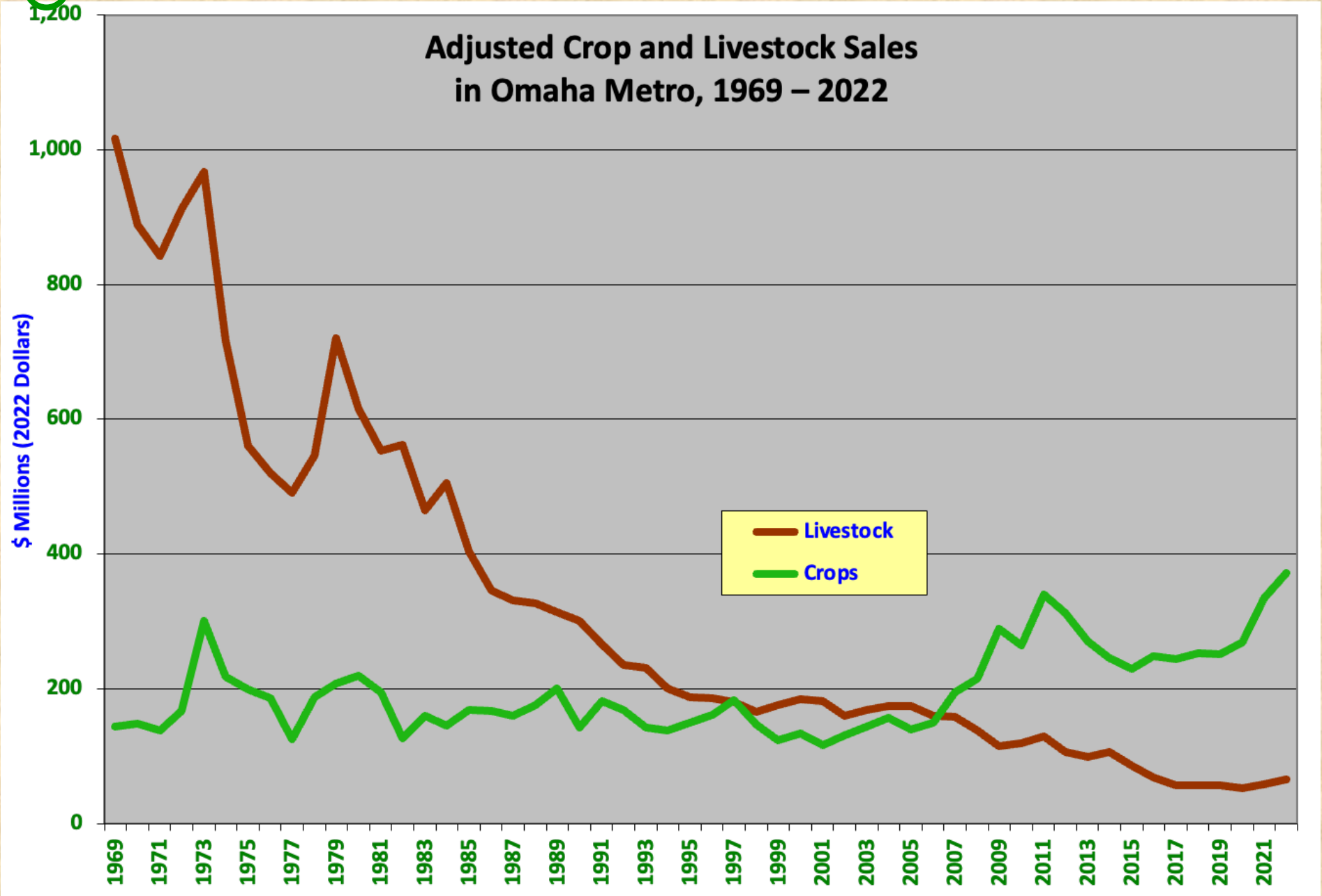


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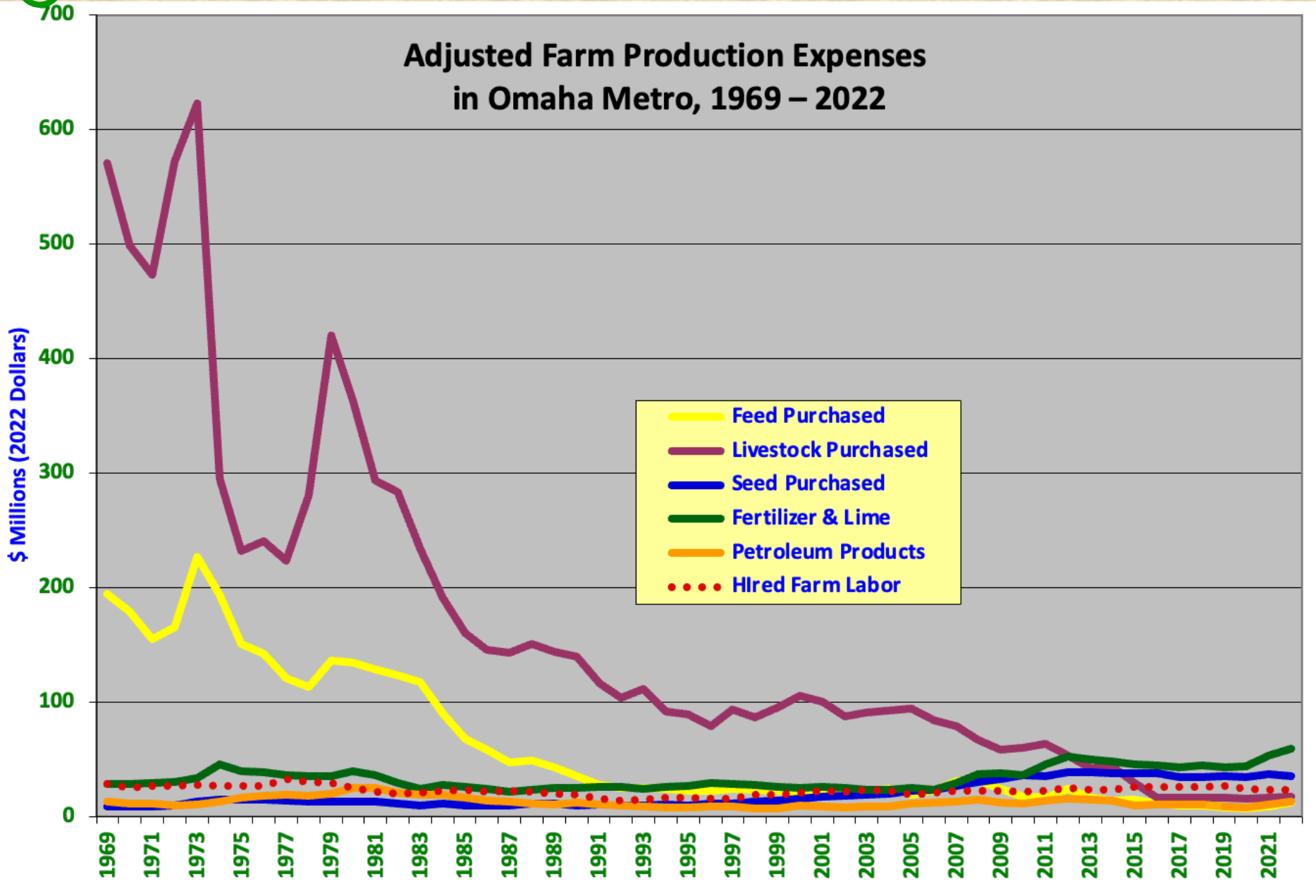


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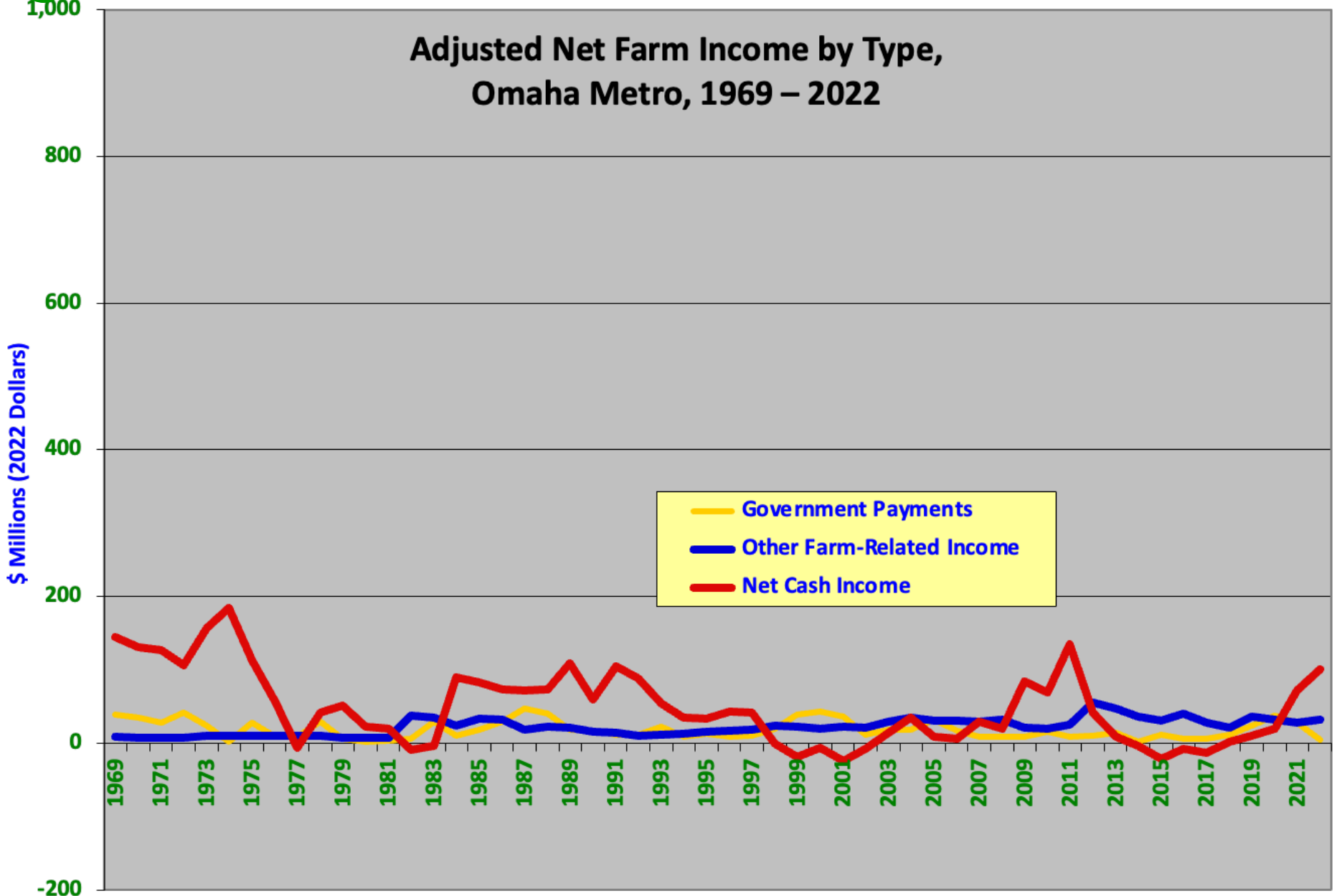


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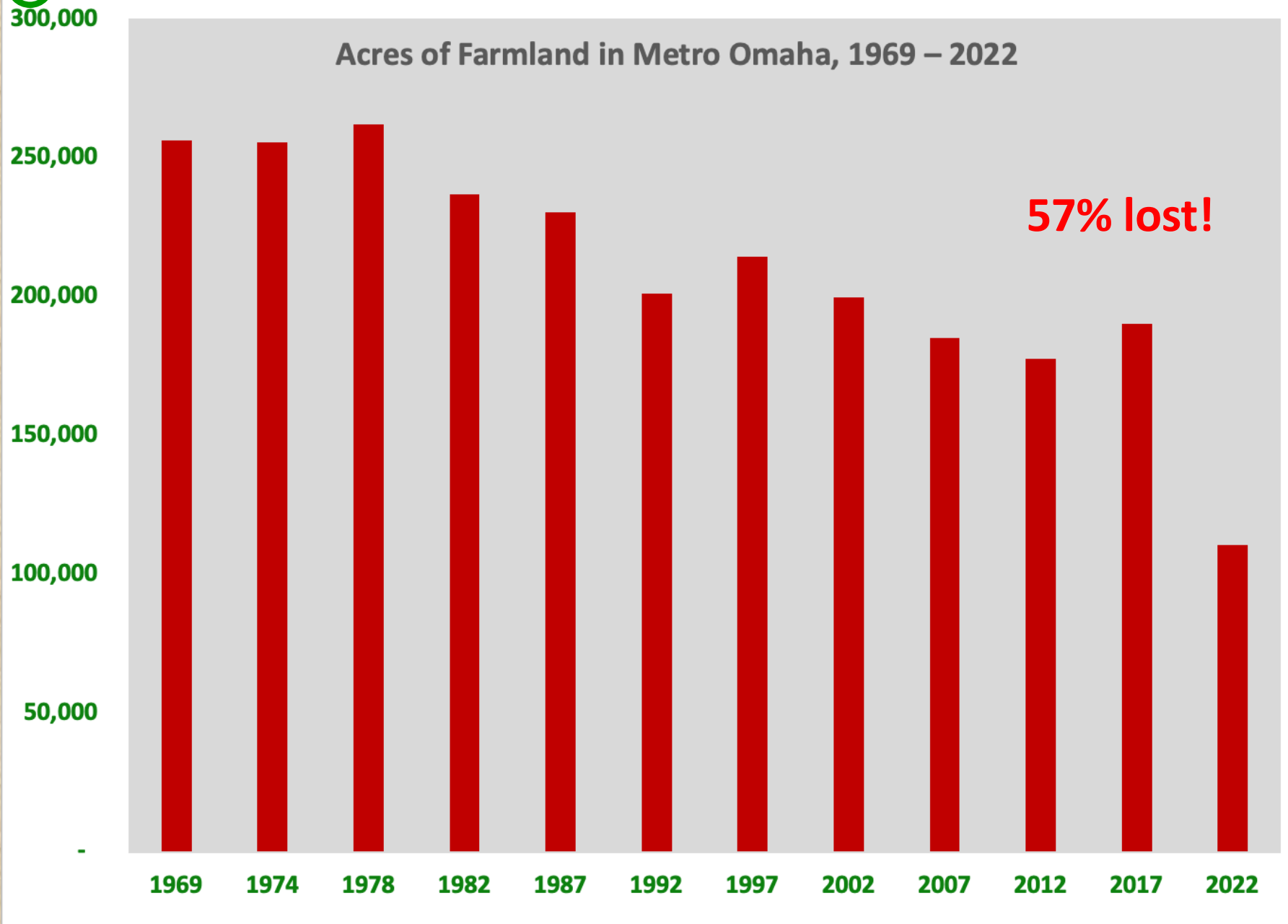


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Douglas and Sarpy Counties — Farmland



USDA NASS Census of Agriculture



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Submitted Questions



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Has Ken worked with Blue Corn? (No)

- Oneida Nation (White Corn)
- Small mills — Masa
- Whole Grain Milling — Welcome, MN

What data does Ken utilize? (Sources listed)

Does Composting play a role in community resilience?

(See circle diagram)



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Scenarios for Food Insecurity in 5 years?

- Competitive Culture
- Medicare / Medicaid cutbacks
- Tax Breaks to Wealthy
- Farm Policy Favors Commodity Lobby

- 1. Homegrown Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program**
- 2. Expand Neighborhood Agriculture & Food Processing**
- 3. Urban–Rural Cooperation**
- 4. Food Fights**



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Which Cities Have Tackled Food Insecurity?

(Limited — Lack of electoral constituency)

- **Belo Horizonte, Brazil** (Cluster of programs)
- **Cleveland** (Public land available for commercial farming)
- **San Diego** (Radical inclusivity)
- **Shreveport** (Networked opportunities)
- **Toronto** (Built constituency)
- **New York City** (Combined food & energy)
- **Bennington, Vermont** (Radical hospitality)
- **Tucson, Arizona** (Food bank animates)



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What Collaborations Have Worked in Omaha to Address Food Insecurity?

(The room knows this better than I do)

How Can We Encourage People to Grow More of their Own Food?

(Build a sense of belonging)

What About Farmland Issues?

(Big topic!)

Omaha Metro Farm & Food Economy

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