

# SAN LUIS VALLEY COMMUNITY FOOD & AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

---

## Community Survey Report

---

Surveys were made available between October 2022 and March 2023 online via the SLVLFC website, multiple listservs related to food system efforts in the region, distribution by project stewards, promotion on social media, and outreach at food system events. To encourage participation, survey respondents were offered the chance to win a \$100 gift card.

In addition to online surveys, paper surveys were made available to residents without access to smart phones or computers. Also, the Promotores del Valle de San Luis provided survey support and interpretation services to reach out to Spanish and Q'anjob'al (a Mayan language)-speaking community members.

**The community survey was widely marketed to be taken by anyone that “eats or buys food in the San Luis Valley.”** It included questions about community members' ability to access healthy food, their values when it comes to the food they want to eat, perceptions of the healthfulness of their food options, interest in learning more about gardening or cooking, their food waste practices, and their trusted sources of information when it comes to food.

**[SLVLOCALFOODS.ORG/CFAA](https://slvlocalfoods.org/cfaa)**

Q1

| Q1. Please select the top three places you get food.   | Count       | %   |
|--|-------------|-----|
| Grocery store (City Market, Safeway, etc.)   | 921         | 91% |
| Walmart  | 601         | 59% |
| Farmers' market, farm stand, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program   | 274         | 27% |
| Restaurant or diner (sit down, carry out or delivery)  | 254         | 25% |
| Dollar store (Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, Dollar General)  | 228         | 23% |
| Specialty food stores (natural, ethnic markets, bakeries, etc.)  | 192         | 19% |
| Grow your own, hunt, fish, etc.  | 162         | 16% |
| Fast food restaurants  | 138         | 14% |
| Food pantry or food bank   | 114         | 11% |
| Food Hub   | 52          | 5%  |
| Other (please specify)   | 26          | 3%  |
| Cafeteria or dining service (school, workplace, hospital cafeterias, senior center, health care center, residential care facility) | 48          | 5%  |
| Online (Amazon, etc)   | 46          | 5%  |
| Gas station or convenience store   | 32          | 3%  |
| Meal or grocery home delivery  | 31          | 3%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>1011</b> |     |
| Other:   |             |     |
| Amish run stores (damaged goods and bakery)  |             |     |
| Bountiful Meats  |             |     |
| Cactus Hill  |             |     |
| Commodities  |             |     |
| Community garden   |             |     |
| Costco   |             |     |
| Crestone Mercantile  |             |     |
| Elephant Cloud   |             |     |
| Food stores with organic options outside of the Valley because there aren't options  |             |     |
| Food that my neighbors give me.  |             |     |
| Food trucks  |             |     |
| Local farmers  |             |     |
| Locally owned grocery (not corp chain)   |             |     |
| Misfits Market, it rescues food that would get thrown away and sells for discount.   |             |     |
| Salazar's  |             |     |
| SLV foods coalition  |             |     |
| Thrive   |             |     |
| Top Value  |             |     |



Q3

| Q3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements by checking the box: Note: Healthy foods generally include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meat, legumes, dairy and water. | Strongly agree | %   | Agree | %   | Neutral | %   | Disagree | %   | Strongly disagree | %  |
|--|----------------|-----|-------|-----|---------|-----|----------|-----|-------------------|----|
| Overall, I eat healthy foods.  | 345            | 34% | 494   | 49% | 129     | 13% | 25       | 2%  | 17                | 2% |
| In general, my community has sufficient options for healthy eating.  | 168            | 17% | 396   | 39% | 210     | 21% | 187      | 18% | 47                | 5% |
| I have access to fresh fruits and vegetables in my community.  | 147            | 15% | 569   | 56% | 167     | 17% | 95       | 9%  | 29                | 3% |
| I know where to access locally-grown foods in my community.  | 146            | 14% | 450   | 45% | 198     | 20% | 172      | 17% | 42                | 4% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>1011</b>    |     |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |

Q4

| Q4. Do you agree with the following statements?                       | Yes         | %   | Somewhat | %   | No | %  |
|---|-------------|-----|----------|-----|----|----|
| I know how to cook.   | 871         | 86% | 130      | 13% | 7  | 1% |
| I have enough space to cook.  | 847         | 84% | 128      | 13% | 32 | 3% |
| I have enough propane/natural gas/wood/electricity to cook.           | 913         | 90% | 74       | 7%  | 19 | 2% |
| I have the tools I need to cook (ie. knives, pots, pans, stove, etc.) | 900         | 89% | 93       | 9%  | 16 | 2% |
| I have enough time to cook.   | 605         | 60% | 329      | 33% | 74 | 7% |
| I have a safe place to cook.  | 944         | 93% | 51       | 5%  | 8  | 1% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>1011</b> |     |          |     |    |    |

Q5

| Q5. I would like to learn more about how to cook. Check all that apply. | Count       | %   |
|---|-------------|-----|
| Healthy foods   | 563         | 56% |
| Low-cost meals  | 526         | 52% |
| Simply, easy meals  | 497         | 49% |
| Locally-grown foods   | 432         | 43% |
| Culturally appropriate/ heirloom/ traditional foods                     | 346         | 34% |
| None of the above   | 176         | 17% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>1011</b> |     |

Q6

| Q6. Do you agree with the following statements?  | Yes         | %   | Somewhat | %   | No  | %   |
|--|-------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| I currently garden and know how to grow food   | 362         | 36% | 339      | 34% | 307 | 30% |
| I participate in a community garden  | 82          | 8%  | 94       | 9%  | 827 | 82% |
| I raise animals in my yard/on my land (e.g., chickens)   | 161         | 16% | 59       | 6%  | 784 | 78% |
| I know where the community gardens are in my community   | 417         | 41% | 300      | 30% | 292 | 29% |
| I know where other points of sale are for local food in my community ie. farmers' markets, CSAs, farms, farm stands, food hub etc. | 476         | 47% | 340      | 34% | 190 | 19% |
| I currently forage, hunt or fish for food  | 188         | 19% | 197      | 19% | 618 | 61% |
| I would like to learn more about how to forage/grow/hunt/fish for my own food and regulations about these activities.              | 413         | 41% | 268      | 27% | 326 | 32% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>1011</b> |     |          |     |     |     |

Q7

| Q7. "The food that we purchased didn't last, and we just didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or Never True for your household in the last 12 months? | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Often True  | 101        | 10% |
| Sometimes True  | 363        | 37% |
| Never True  | 527        | 53% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>991</b> |     |

Q8

| Q8. "We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or Never True for your household in the last 12 months? | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Often True   | 106        | 11% |
| Sometimes True   | 431        | 43% |
| Never True   | 454        | 46% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>991</b> |     |

Q9

| Q9. In the last 12 months, since last October, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food? | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| No   | 727        | 73% |
| Yes  | 264        | 27% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>991</b> |     |

Q10

| Q10. In the last 12 months, since last October, did you or other adults in your household ever provide groceries to others? | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Yes   | 618        | 62% |
| No  | 373        | 38% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>991</b> |     |

Q11

| Q11. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to buy food? | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| The pandemic made it more difficult for me to buy food.             | 503        | 51% |
| No Change.  | 384        | 39% |
| Not Applicable  | 56         | 6%  |
| The pandemic made it easier for me to buy food.                     | 48         | 5%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>991</b> |     |

Q12

| Q12. Please select the reason(s) that best describe why you or your household doesn't always have the kinds of food you want to eat. Check all that apply.          | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Kinds of food we want not available in stores or pantries   | 376        | 38% |
| Not enough money for food   | 331        | 33% |
| Not enough time for shopping or cooking   | 236        | 24% |
| Not applicable  | 232        | 23% |
| On a special diet   | 175        | 18% |
| Too difficult to get to the store   | 166        | 17% |
| Not able to cook or eat because of health problems  | 39         | 4%  |
| No kitchen equipment available to cook (stove, pots, knives)  | 25         | 3%  |
| Other (please specify)  | 19         | 2%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>989</b> |     |
| Other:  |            |     |
| Age or illness  |            |     |
| Don't know how to cook the food   |            |     |
| Food allergies  |            |     |
| Food bank shut down where I live past month   |            |     |
| Food from the Dollar Store  |            |     |
| Foods with lower glycemic impact for Diabetics  |            |     |
| Food goes bad too fast  |            |     |
| It would be good to have a comprehensive source list of local producers who sell to the public, eggs, meat, milk, produce, even ethnic prepared foods like tamales. |            |     |
| Lack of knowledge or motivation   |            |     |
| More job opportunities  |            |     |
| My appliances are lost in the supply chain  |            |     |

|   |
|---|
| Need more gluten free egg free options  |
| No collaboration with others for deciding on, buying, cooking, and enjoying foods |
| Struggle with the cleanup after meal prep in a small kitchen space                |

Q13

| Q13. In the past 12 months what resources have you accessed to get free or reduced cost foods? Check all that apply. | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Food pantries or food banks  | 297        | 30% |
| Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)   | 239        | 24% |
| I do not have a need for these resources   | 227        | 23% |
| Not applicable   | 218        | 22% |
| Free communal meals  | 202        | 20% |
| School lunch/breakfast or summer feeding programs  | 135        | 14% |
| Churches/spiritual centers   | 110        | 11% |
| Women, Infant, Children Program (WIC)  | 97         | 10% |
| Neighbors  | 88         | 9%  |
| Double Up Food Bucks at the farmers' market  | 81         | 8%  |
| Senior meal sites  | 48         | 5%  |
| Other (please specify)   | 38         | 4%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>989</b> |     |
| Other:   |            |     |
| Friends and Family   |            | 11  |
| I would use, but don't qualify for any.  |            | 10  |
| Community garden   |            | 3   |
| Discounts at stores  |            | 3   |
| Food box through AHEC  |            | 2   |
| P-EBT card   |            | 2   |
| Commodities  |            |     |
| More Jobs  |            |     |
| Online meal kit deals this summer were cheaper than shopping locally   |            |     |
| Started growing my own food  |            |     |
| TEFAP  |            |     |
| Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley  |            |     |

Q14

| Q14. What community services would help you access food more easily? Select your top 3.   | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Knowledge about how to grow, prepare, and/or preserve your own food   | 439        | 44% |
| Additional farmers market locations or CSA programs near me   | 436        | 44% |
| Community gardens to grow your own food   | 258        | 26% |
| Mobile pantries or markets  | 192        | 19% |
| Larger SNAP or WIC benefit allocations  | 187        | 19% |
| Not applicable  | 173        | 17% |
| Additional food pantries  | 164        | 17% |
| Additional communal meals programs  | 140        | 14% |
| Home grocery or meal delivery   | 130        | 13% |
| Universal free school meals   | 120        | 12% |
| Communal commercial kitchen   | 91         | 9%  |
| Other (please specify)  | 26         | 3%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>991</b> |     |
| Other:  |            |     |
| A cheap grocery store with healthier local food (and gluten or sugar free options)  |            | 15  |
| Better wholesale distribution to local retailers.   |            |     |
| Food co-op  |            |     |
| Help cooking meals  |            |     |
| Later hours or weekday hours for farmers markets  |            |     |
| Make qualifying better for all. We have had huge medical bills that took money from my food budget.                                       |            |     |
| Someone to help me cook and clean   |            |     |
| Transportation  |            |     |
| Would like to know if there is a way to get info out on gleaning farmers fields after harvest on things like potatoes if we sign a waiver |            |     |

Q15

| Q15. How far do you travel to get food/groceries? | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Less than 1 mile                                  | 186        | 20% |
| 1-5 miles   | 274        | 29% |
| 5-10 miles  | 107        | 11% |
| More than 10 miles                                | 376        | 40% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>                          | <b>943</b> |     |



Q16

| Q16. What are some challenges you experience when traveling to get food/groceries? Check all that apply.                          | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Not applicable  | 397        | 42% |
| The store is far from my home.  | 323        | 34% |
| The stores near my home do not offer fresh, healthy food options.   | 217        | 23% |
| Traveling to get food takes me away from job/ I don't have time   | 137        | 15% |
| There isn't an easy walking route to the grocery store.   | 103        | 11% |
| It's hard to keep my car fixed up or to pay for needed repairs.   | 99         | 11% |
| I can't pay for gas or ride fare.   | 82         | 9%  |
| If I walk or bike, I can only carry a limited amount of food at one time.   | 82         | 9%  |
| There isn't a clearly designated bike route from my home to the grocery store.  | 57         | 6%  |
| I share rides with others, which limits when I can go.  | 43         | 5%  |
| Other (please specify)  | 17         | 2%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>941</b> |     |
| Other:  |            |     |
| Groceries/grocery bags are too expensive  |            | 5   |
| Low temperatures/weather makes walking, biking, and roads dangerous   |            | 2   |
| Hard to travel with children  |            | 2   |
| Not fit to go to grocery store/health problems  |            | 2   |
| My food bank closed down (crestone)   |            |     |
| No transportation   |            |     |
| Our Manassa grocery store has closed permanently.   |            |     |
| The only reason that I don't shop at lowe's in Del Norte is due to the crappy manager! So I shop for groceries in other SLV towns |            |     |
| Too many druggies infrastructure of the store begging for money.  |            |     |
| We need a seafood resource in the valley! Clean seafood, gulf shrimp.   |            |     |

Q17

| Q17. Within the past month, I threw food away, composted it, or fed it to animals when our household didn't/couldn't eat it. | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Never  | 328        | 35% |
| Once per week  | 414        | 44% |
| Twice per week   | 120        | 13% |
| More than three times per week   | 81         | 9%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>943</b> |     |

Q18

| Q18. Select the reasons you threw food away. Check all that apply.                | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| It was past the “best if used by” date and I threw it away.                       | 353        | 38% |
| I bought too much food and couldn’t eat it before it spoiled.                     | 269        | 29% |
| The food quality was questionable (i.e. the fruit was bruised).                   | 244        | 26% |
| Our schedule changed or we were too busy and we didn’t get meals made as planned. | 242        | 26% |
| Not applicable  | 209        | 22% |
| Restaurant portions were too big and I couldn’t eat it all.                       | 139        | 15% |
| I didn’t know how to prepare some of the food I purchased.                        | 68         | 7%  |
| Other (please specify)  | 8          | 1%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>936</b> |     |
| Other:  |            |     |
| Children don't finish their food  |            |     |
| I eat out rather than cook the food I have at home                                |            |     |
| I like buying up a lot of food so others can't have it.                           |            |     |
| Not enough storage space in fridge/freezer  |            |     |
| We compost or give extra scraps to animals  |            |     |

Q19

| Q19. I currently compost at home. Compost is defined as recycling food scraps. | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| No   | 583        | 62% |
| Yes  | 360        | 38% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>943</b> |     |

Q20

| Q20. If my city or county were to offer a food waste composting program in our community, I would participate: | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Yes  | 538        | 57% |
| Not sure   | 277        | 29% |
| No   | 128        | 14% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>943</b> |     |

Q21

| Q21. How concerned are you, if at all, that global climate change will harm your community’s food system at some point in your lifetime? | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Very concerned   | 494        | 52% |
| Somewhat concerned   | 299        | 32% |
| Not very concerned   | 96         | 10% |
| Not at all concerned   | 54         | 6%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | <b>943</b> |     |

Q22

| Q22. What sources do you use to learn about food (i.e nutrition classes, diet info, cooking skills, gardening) in the San Luis Valley? Select your top 3. | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Social media  | 483        | 52% |
| From friends and family   | 434        | 46% |
| Local events  | 271        | 29% |
| TV  | 240        | 26% |
| Online news   | 220        | 24% |
| Newspapers  | 150        | 16% |
| Local classes hosted by organizations   | 132        | 14% |
| Podcasts  | 117        | 13% |
| Radio   | 103        | 11% |
| School/extension groups   | 100        | 11% |
| My doctor or health clinic  | 93         | 10% |
| Food assistance programs (SNAP, WIC, etc.)  | 92         | 10% |
| Webinars  | 75         | 8%  |
| Other (please specify)  | 65         | 7%  |
| The library   | 62         | 7%  |
| County Public Health Department   | 56         | 6%  |
| My religious/faith community  | 40         | 4%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>935</b> |     |
| Other:  |            |     |
| Online recipes/Internet   | 18         |     |
| Personal research/health/experimenting  | 11         |     |
| Youtube   | 10         |     |
| Cookbooks/Books   | 9          |     |
| None of the above   | 7          |     |
| I don't know where to get this information  | 3          |     |
| Email lists   | 2          |     |
| Magazines   | 2          |     |
| 4-h   |            |     |
| Apothecary and Farm Park  |            |     |
| Healthcare nutritionists/local healers  |            |     |
| My work   |            |     |
| Workout programs  |            |     |

Q24

| Q24. Which food and agriculture system goals are most important to the San Luis Valley community? Please select your TOP 3.   | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Increase the production, sales, and consumption of locally-grown foods.   | 450        | 48% |
| Invest in a thriving local food and farm economy.   | 442        | 47% |
| Encourage and support youth farming and ranching programs.  | 338        | 36% |
| Promote & build upon programs to conserve water.  | 284        | 30% |
| Ensure access to healthier food for all and reduce food insecurity in our community.  | 279        | 30% |
| Find ways to add value to our agricultural products through farm, ranch and food entrepreneurs.                               | 248        | 26% |
| Promote conservation practices to improve soil health.  | 245        | 26% |
| Build a resilient emergency food system that can respond to challenges (i.e. pandemics, fires, floods).                       | 231        | 24% |
| Increase opportunities for food and agricultural education (soil health, cooking, gardening, food safety, food preservation). | 230        | 24% |
| Support community health and wellness.  | 218        | 23% |
| Prepare our food and agriculture systems for the impacts of climate change.   | 199        | 21% |
| Increase local food outlets and commercial kitchens for food entrepreneurs.   | 196        | 21% |
| Reduce food waste and related solid wastes.   | 154        | 16% |
| Recognize and celebrate our community's diverse food cultures.  | 117        | 12% |
| Address the lack of racial equity in our current food system.   | 92         | 10% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>943</b> |     |

## Demographics

| Which San Luis Valley county do you live in? | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Alamosa                                      | 344        | 37% |
| Saguache                                     | 269        | 29% |
| Rio Grande                                   | 152        | 16% |
| Conejos                                      | 76         | 8%  |
| Costilla                                     | 63         | 7%  |
| Mineral                                      | 31         | 3%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>                     | <b>935</b> |     |

| What is your age?        | Count      | %   |
|--------------------------|------------|-----|
| Less than 5 years        | 1          | 0%  |
| 5-9 years                | 1          | 0%  |
| 10-14 years              | 1          | 0%  |
| 15-19 years              | 24         | 3%  |
| 20-24 years              | 51         | 5%  |
| 25-29 years              | 84         | 9%  |
| 30-34 years              | 106        | 11% |
| 35-39 years              | 97         | 10% |
| 40-44 years              | 124        | 13% |
| 45-49 years              | 87         | 9%  |
| 50-54 years              | 74         | 8%  |
| 55-59 years              | 80         | 9%  |
| 60-64 years              | 68         | 7%  |
| 65-69 years              | 71         | 8%  |
| 70-74 years              | 47         | 5%  |
| 74-79 years              | 13         | 1%  |
| 80-84 years              | 7          | 1%  |
| 85 years or over         | 1          | 0%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b> | <b>937</b> |     |

| What gender category do you identify with? | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Female                                     | 684        | 73% |
| Male                                       | 227        | 24% |
| Prefer not to answer                       | 15         | 2%  |
| Other/ Self-Identified                     | 12         | 1%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>                   | <b>938</b> |     |

| What is the highest level of education you have completed?   | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| None   | 9          | 1%  |
| 1st - 4th grade  | 7          | 1%  |
| 5th - 6th grade  | 25         | 3%  |
| 7th - 8th grade  | 21         | 2%  |
| 9th grade  | 25         | 3%  |
| 10th grade   | 15         | 2%  |
| 11th grade   | 23         | 2%  |
| High school graduate (or degree equivalent)                  | 162        | 17% |
| Some college (1-4 years, no degree)                          | 159        | 17% |
| Associate's Degree (include occupational or academic degree) | 90         | 10% |
| Bachelor's Degree (BA, BS, AB, etc.)                         | 228        | 24% |
| Master's Degree  | 122        | 13% |
| Professional Degree  | 19         | 2%  |
| Doctorate Degree   | 16         | 2%  |
| Prefer not to answer   | 16         | 2%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>                                     | <b>937</b> |     |

| What is your total household income in the last 12 months? | Count      | %   |
|--|------------|-----|
| Under \$15,000   | 136        | 15% |
| \$15,000 to \$24,999                                       | 166        | 18% |
| \$25,000 to \$34,999                                       | 136        | 15% |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999                                       | 136        | 15% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999                                       | 124        | 13% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999                                       | 71         | 8%  |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999                                     | 51         | 5%  |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999                                      | 15         | 2%  |
| Over \$200,000   | 17         | 2%  |
| Prefer not to answer                                       | 83         | 9%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>                                   | <b>935</b> |     |

| What race(s) do you identify with?        | Count      | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| White                                     | 747        | 83% |
| Two or more races                         | 80         | 9%  |
| American Indian or Alaska Native          | 40         | 4%  |
| Black or African American                 | 15         | 2%  |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 7          | 1%  |
| Asian                                     | 6          | 1%  |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>                  | <b>895</b> |     |

| What is your ethnicity?  | Count      | %   |
|--------------------------|------------|-----|
| Not Hispanic or Latino   | 462        | 52% |
| Hispanic or Latino       | 426        | 48% |
| <b>Total Respondents</b> | <b>888</b> |     |