



Missouri Economy Indicators

Missouri Food & Beverage Manufacturing

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Food and beverage manufacturing accounted for 18% of Missouri manufacturing jobs in 2020. Nearly 47,500 people worked in these industries, followed closely by the second largest manufacturing employer, transportation equipment producers with 44,000 jobs. Missouri is particularly specialized in *Animal Food Manufacturing*; it has more than four times the employment concentration in this industry compared with the national average. Because many food and beverage manufacturing jobs require extensive on-the-job training, employers can face challenges related to maintaining a skilled workforce.

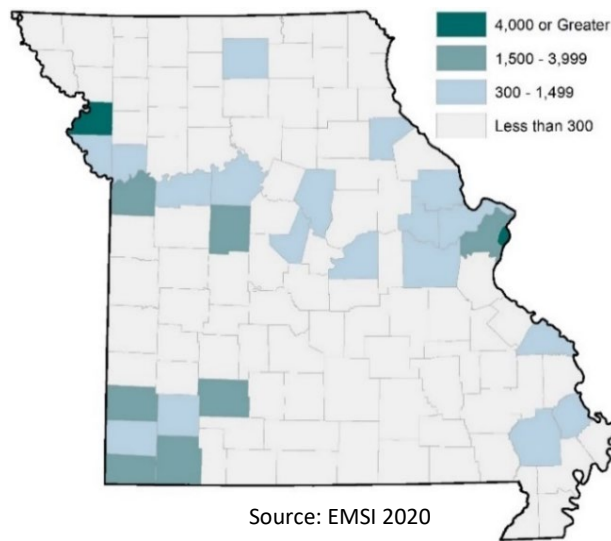
Missouri Food & Beverage Manufacturing Employment

In 2020, Missouri had 841 food and beverage manufacturers that employed nearly 47,500 workers. It ranked 13th among all states for employment in these businesses.

Food and beverage manufacturing jobs have tended to concentrate in Missouri's major cities, along the I-70 corridor and in the southwest corner of the state.

In Missouri, top employers in food and beverage manufacturing include Anheuser-Busch, Conagra, General Mills, Gilster-Mary Lee, Kraft Heinz, Nestle Purina, Schreiber, Smithfield, Tyson and Triumph Foods.

Food & Beverage Manufacturing Employment, 2020



Food & Beverage Employment Trends

Since 2001, Missouri food and beverage manufacturing employment has had a 0.4% gain compared with a 25% decline in total employment for all other Missouri manufacturing industries. Food and beverage manufacturing employment grew by 4,222 jobs from 2010 to 2020 — a 10% increase.

From 2010 to 2020, all but one subindustry — bakeries — added jobs. The bakery industry endured large employment declines in the early part of the decade. When Hostess Brands declared bankruptcy, many bakery employees lost jobs in Missouri and other Midwest states.

Missouri Food & Beverage Mfg. Employment Trends, 2010-2020

Description	2010 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2010 - 2020 Change	2010 - 2020 % Change
Animal Processing	17,780	18,637	857	5%
Beverage Manufacturing	4,479	5,698	1,219	27%
Dairy Product Manufacturing	5,377	5,539	163	3%
Animal Food Manufacturing	3,544	5,058	1,514	43%
All Other Food & Beverage Mfg.	3,496	3,911	415	12%
Bakeries & Tortilla Manufacturing	4,703	3,523	(1,180)	(25%)
Fruit, Veg. & Specialty Food Mfg.	1,730	2,692	962	56%
Grain and Oilseed Milling	2,160	2,433	273	13%
TOTAL	43,270	47,492	4,222	10%

Source: EMSI data based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics payroll employment figures

Food and Beverage Workforce Challenges

Finding enough skilled workers may affect future growth of Missouri's food and beverage manufacturing industries. In early 2020, 92 Missouri food and beverage manufacturing employers indicated in a survey that they primarily rely on employee networks and social media to recruit new workers. Employers struggle to hire workers with the necessary skills and experience, and a majority of respondents said they often hire less experienced workers and then train them.

This can be a significant challenge in industries such as meat processing. A new meat processing employee may need six months to a year to learn food safety, animal handling and animal slaughter skills. Employers participating in the survey also noted they often require employees to work nights and weekends while processing food items, and some employees seek more flexible work schedules.

Missouri's population has grown slowly for many years, which creates further challenges for employers seeking workers. Food and beverage manufacturers may turn to automation to offset labor needs. Only 26% of responding food and beverage employers said they had no intention to automate compared with 43% of all other responding agricultural, food and forestry employers. Aside from automation, the industry will need to create interest in food batchmaker and meat processor jobs and be able to compete for freight movers, packagers, first-line supervisors and other occupations by offering competitive pay or other incentives.

Additional Resources

- Show-Me-State Food, Beverage & Forest Products Mfg. Initiative: agriculture.mo.gov/food-beverage-forestproducts
- Missouri Food, Agriculture and Forestry Workforce Needs Assessment: tinyurl.com/MUAgWorkforce
- Ag and Entrepreneurial Factors Driving U.S. Food Manufacturing Startup Locations: extension.missouri.edu/dm103
- Missouri distilling industry economic contribution and value chain analysis: tinyurl.com/MUExceedAnalysis
- Missouri Small Business Development Centers provide confidential business assistance at sbdc.missouri.edu.

All Missouri Economy Indicators briefs in this series are available at tinyurl.com/ExceedEconomyIndicators

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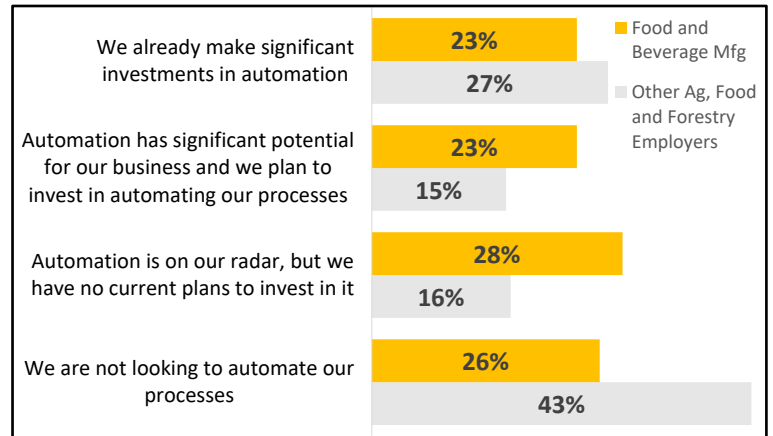
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Missouri Survey Respondent Sentiments about Internal Process Automation



Source: MU Extension Food, Agriculture and Forestry Employer Survey, Jan.-March 2020