



TASMANIAN

# SMALL SCALE PRODUCER SURVEY

This document provides an overview and highlights of the small-scale producer survey conducted by Sprout Tasmania in 2021.

Sprout would like to gratefully acknowledge the survey funder, the Department of Primary Industry.



## WHAT DID WE DO?



Identified and adapted an existing tested producer survey.



Tested the survey with a sample of Tasmanian producers (n=9)



Refined the survey based on their feedback.



Launched the survey using the Survey monkey platform on the 9 March 2021.



Promoted the survey via networks, using champions, email, social and traditional media. Survey ran until 23 March.



Produced a data dashboard and analysed the results.



## WHAT DID WE FIND?



**138 small scale producers** completed the survey.

We had survey participants from 25 of 29 Tasmanian local government areas. We had the **highest number of participants from the Huon Valley**, followed by the West Tamar and Launceston local government areas.



Most producers have a turnover of **\$5,000-\$350,000**

They use a variety of **PRODUCTION PHILOSOPHIES** which broadly describes them as **sustainable farmers**.



## WHO ARE THE TASMANIAN SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS?

Most producers are **45 years of age or plus**

**35% = 45-54**  
**23% = 55-64**  
**10% = UNDER 35**



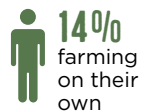
have dependent children



**60%** farming with their partner



**20%** farming with family members



**14%** farming on their own



**1/3** are deriving a large part of the household income **off-farm**.

For meat producers the off-farm income is higher when compared with market gardeners.



**70%** are looking to grow their business, whether they are new or established producers. Of the participants in the survey only 11% describe themselves as new entrants.

As a group Tasmanian small-scale producers are forward thinking with **over half looking to invest up to \$100,000 in their businesses** in the next 5 years.



While the face of our small-scale producers is mostly 45 plus, they are also **highly educated** with 60% or more of them holding a bachelor's degree or higher in a wide variety of fields. They are **predominantly not born in Tasmania**, with 70% from either Victoria or NSW originally. On average they have **lived in Tasmania for 14 years**.

# WHO ARE THEIR CUSTOMERS?

Small scale producers in Tasmania have diversified income streams.



**60%**  
Direct to customers



**34%**  
Farmers markets



**38%**  
Via online platforms



**20%**  
Producer cooperatives



**60%**  
Hospitality sector - cafes and restaurants



**35%**  
Farmgate



**36%**  
Retailers



**35%**  
Wholesalers



**Market gardeners** are more likely to sell to **everyday Tasmanians**, although their second ranked customers are wholesalers.



**Meat producers** are twice as likely to engage with the commodity market, sell to the **hospitality sector**, and more likely to **value-add**.

Of these producers, **one in three engage in agritourism** with 17% providing accommodation or on farm experiences. This is more likely if they are meat producers.

9% provide training and education services.



**1 IN 4 PRODUCERS ARE VALUE-ADDING THEIR PRODUCTS.**

**TOP 5**

## CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR TASMANIAN SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS



**Cost of business inputs** such as plant, equipment and insurance



**Employing staff** - the cost and regulation



Cost of and access to **land**



**Freight and logistics** for outputs



**Red tape, licences, and permits.**

For market gardeners, licences, fees and red tape are the greatest cost to business, whereas for meat producers it is the interest and mortgage on their land.

**TOP 5**

## CONSTRAINTS TO EXPANDING

The top 5 constraints are the same for market gardeners and meat producers.

**1**

Limited access to finance

**2**

Limited access to processing and value-adding equipment and services

**3**

Difficulty improving productivity and efficiencies.

**4**

Cost effective transport and logistics.

**5**

Cost and planning restriction on land.



**OVER 80%**

**OF SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS FEEL THEY WOULD BENEFIT DIRECTLY FROM HAVING THEIR COLLECTIVE VOICES REPRESENTED.**



If you would like more information about the survey, please contact Jennifer Robinson, CEO Sprout Tasmania [info@sprout.org.au](mailto:info@sprout.org.au), we welcome your inquiry.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

In the short to medium term, Sprout Tasmania, through partnerships with organisations and government will prioritise the following actions:

## SPROUT TASMANIA

- Research and raise awareness of existing finance/grants programs for the small-scale producer cohort.
- Work with partner organisations to develop an employment resources kit.
- Continue to advocate to Government on the issues identified in this survey.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Work with partner organisations to advocate to local government about consistent interpretation of food safety regulations and land use planning.
- Partner with TasTAFE, National Association of Sustainable Agriculture and Registered Training Organisations to explore bespoke pre-employment training for working on small scale farms that adopt an organic in principle approach.

## WITH GOVERNMENT

- Explore with government and/or philanthropic organisations seed funding grants such as those run-in other states for small scale producers to improve efficiencies and productivity.
- Conduct more detailed research into the barriers and enablers to improving productivity and efficiency on farm.
- Work with local and state governments to conduct research and map food processing assets that can be utilised by small scale producers for value-adding.
- Gain funding to repeat this survey annually.

