



Economic Impact of the 2019 Sunbelt Agricultural Expo: Summary Report

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**Center for Agribusiness
and Economic Development**
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Executive Summary

The Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition is a trade show and attraction held annually in Moultrie, Georgia during October. Businesses throughout a 50-mile radius and beyond realize economic activity during the Expo due to the large number of attendees traveling to the event. In addition to the trade show and attraction held over 3 days, the Expo maintains operations as an agribusiness enterprise throughout the year.

- The Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development collected survey data from visitors and vendors during the 3-day event to estimate their spending in the region related to Expo.
- The visitors and vendors participating in the annual event spent over \$12.6 million across many types of businesses – including at the Expo site – in addition to hotels, restaurants, gas stations and other retailers within the region.
- This influx of dollars leads to ripple effects throughout the economy because those businesses then make purchases from other establishments in the region and employ people who spend money for their households. The combination of these effects – direct plus ripple effects – help demonstrate the magnitude of economic impact that the Expo visitor and vendor spending bring to Georgia.
- The total annual economic impact in the 20-county region attributable to the Sunbelt Expo event and business operations is \$16.72 million, with associated income of \$5.10 million generated for employees and proprietors in the region. Together, this accounts for approximately 187 part-time and full-time jobs throughout the region, with estimated state and local tax revenue contribution of nearly \$1.1 million.

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Overview

As part of the strategic planning process of the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition (hereafter, Expo) the University of Georgia's Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED) was commissioned to evaluate the regional economic contribution of the ongoing agribusiness operations and the impact of annual Expo event held in October each year in Moultrie, Georgia. This study is a re-examination of these effects for Expo by CAED, with the last one published in 2006.¹

Methodology and Data Collection

Impact analysis evaluates the economic benefits of an event, business enterprise, or industry for a particular geography (such as county or state) along with corresponding ripple effects resulting from purchasing local inputs, hiring of workers and their affiliated household spending. In this study, we employ the IMPLAN modeling process to examine the effect of the Expo on the regional and State economy. Because no business operates in isolation within the economy, we use this approach to document not only the direct benefit, but also those generated for other businesses within the economy.²

Researchers at CAED gathered visitors and vendor spending information, combined with business operations data to quantify the unique character of the event in bringing in attendees and exhibitors as well as inputs to the economic analysis model. Surveying took place during the event on October 15- 17, 2019 employing both electronic and paper methods in order to garner the largest number of responses. Data for revenues and expenses of the Expo business operations are provided from the relevant accounts for research purposes by the Expo management team.³

Survey Results

The following report contains findings representing a region of 20 counties surrounding Moultrie in light of the fact that the visitors and vendors/exhibitors traveling to the Expo desire to purchase products and services to an extent that may exceed the supply available in Colquitt County during the normal course of activities. Because attendees also purchase accommodations and other goods and services, we explore the spending pattern for an area within approximately a 50-mile radius of Moultrie, which encompasses the 20-county region.⁴

Attendee Origin

The Expo event held in October attracts visitors from many different locations (see Figures 2 and 3), with the largest portion of visitors coming from another state (42.1%), followed by residents of Georgia that live beyond 50 miles from Moultrie as reported in the survey responses. The event is also widely attended by those close by, with 21.8% within the 50-mile radius and another 3.2% from the local Moultrie/Colquitt area. The average number of days for attendance for visitors is 1.64 days.

1 Economic Impact of the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, by Archie Flanders, Kent Wolfe and John McKissick, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, Center Report # 06-01, March 2006. See link [HERE](#) for the entire report. This report forms the precedent for the scope and methodology of the current study and is considered an overall reference for its content.

2 For more information on the IMPLAN modeling process, visit [IMPLAN.com](#).

3 Consult the full CAED technical report for additional detail on the methodology and data collection process.

4 The number of completed surveys total 718 from visitors and 119 from vendors. Accounting for travel party size, the tabulation of these surveys represents 2,004 attendees for the event comprised of 1,603 visitors and 401 vendors.

Figure 1. Location of Residence for 2019 Expo Visitors

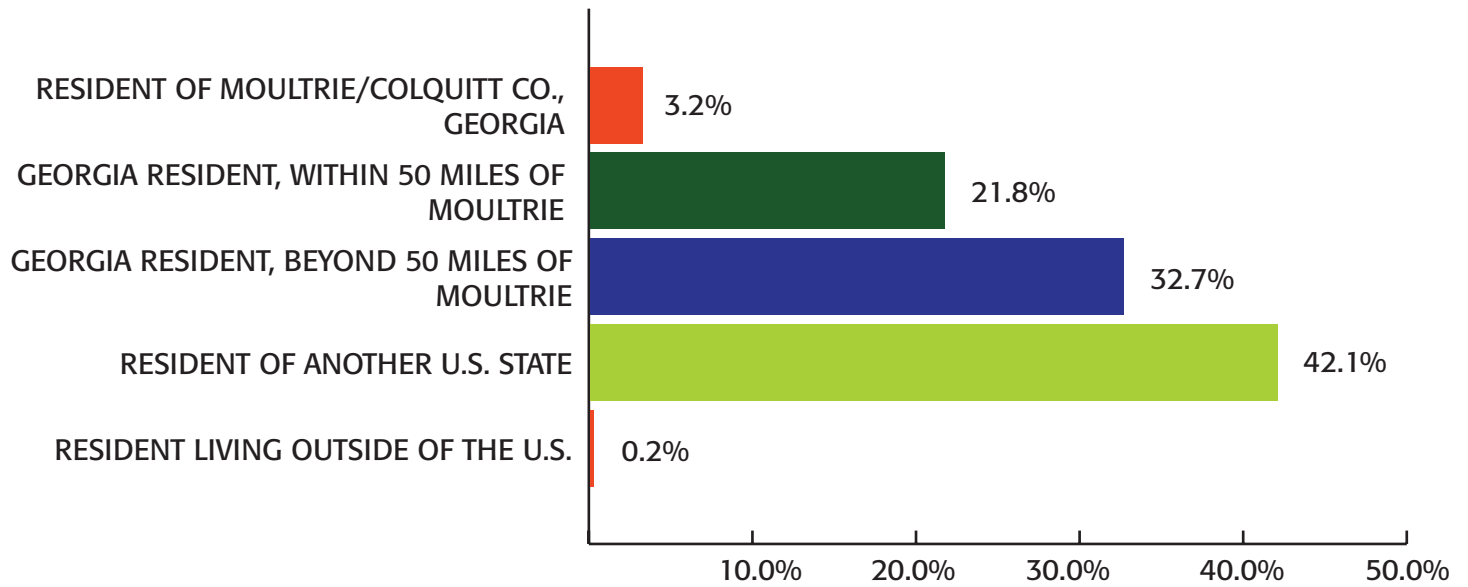
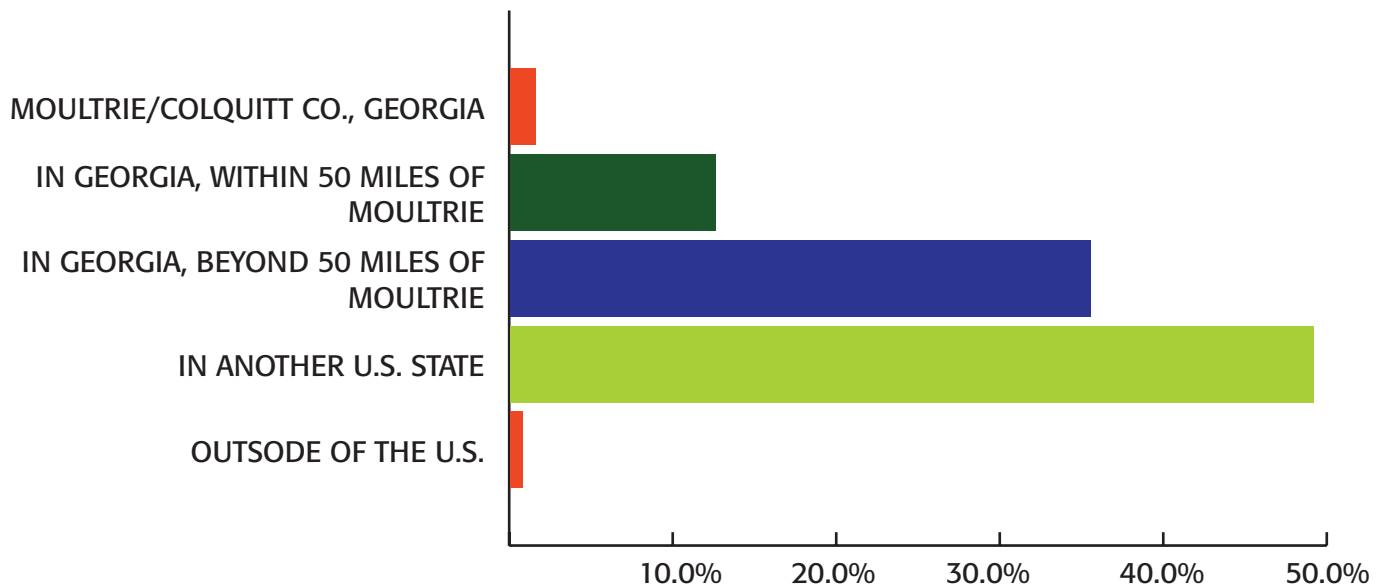


Figure 2. Location Origin for 2019 Expo Vendors



The largest portion of Exhibitors come from another state (49.2%) or beyond 50 miles of Moultrie (35.6%) and average 2.99 days at the Expo. Accommodations and services for these attendees involve business enterprises in Moultrie and the surrounding region of 20 counties. This report includes impacts for all visitors and exhibitors at the Expo regardless of residence. Based on precedent, inclusion of residents from within a 50-mile radius estimates Expo event impacts as a portion of the existing economy and does not attempt to speculate as to output, employment, and income in the absence of the Expo event.

Lodging Expenditures

Tables 1 and 2 present a summary of the survey results for visitors and exhibitors who had lodging expenditures (in Georgia) during the Expo event. For visitors, 25.4% lodged in hotels and motels within 50 miles of Moultrie during the Expo, and these positive responses⁵ averaged 2.4 nights of lodging within the State of Georgia on their trip to Expo. For exhibitors, 55.9% lodged in hotels and motels for an average of 3.9 nights in Georgia. With exhibitors averaging nearly 3 (2.99) days at the Expo, survey results indicate that some exhibitors are in the 20-county area before and/or after the event. The relative nightly expenditures per person suggest that visitors participate in more room sharing than exhibitors, and exhibitors are more likely to lodge with one person in a room.

With the exception of the “other” lodging options for visitors within 50 miles, expenditures per person nearer to the Expo are reported as similar to those further outside the region.⁶ Lodging outside of 50 miles includes respondents who may have lodged in Georgia either coming to, or returning home from the Expo, after lodging within 50 miles during the Expo.

Table 1. Survey Lodging Expenditures: Visitor Lodging Type, No. of Nights, Distance from Expo*

Lodging Type	< 50 Miles from Expo Site			> 50 Miles from Expo Site		
	Responses (%)	Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night	Responses (%)	Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night
Hotel	64.7	2.4	76.36	49.1	2.8	77.51
Friends	13.2	3.4	N/A	13.2	7.6	N/A
RV/Campground	15.8	3.7	40.16	24.5	2.2	31.41
Other	6.3	5.6	82.50	13.2	4.6	36.38

*Proportions and averages based on survey responses.

Table 2. Survey Lodging Expenditures: Vendor Lodging Type, No. of Nights, Distance from Expo*

Lodging Type	< 50 Miles from Expo Site			> 50 Miles from Expo Site		
	Responses (%)	Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night	Responses (%)	Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night
Hotel	60.0	3.9	59.92	40.7	1.8	49.41
Friends	6.4	3.8	N/A	11.1	N/A	N/A
RV/Campground	10.0	4.7	27.27	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	23.6	5.0	39.50	48.2	4.5	35.90

*Proportions and averages based on survey responses.

Other Expenditures

Expenditures in Table 3 are for respondents who had expenses in a specified category within the 50-mile region. Those visiting Expo only for the day (no overnight expenses), but purchased meals at restaurants within 50 miles of Moultrie averaged \$22.10 per person for each day at the Expo. The visitors who did have some lodging expenses (“overnight visitors”) averaged \$35.40 per person for each day, while exhibitors averaged \$22.85 per day. This spending pattern does not include any expenses within the Expo event site.

5 In this case, positive responses indicate an average of only those who had the type of expense indicated.

6 For visitors, the other lodging responses were few and included choices such as a bed and breakfast, winery hotel and hunting lodge. For vendors, other choices included Airbnb, other types of rentals and hunting lodge.

Table 3. Survey Expenditures: Visitor/Vendor Respondent Spending within 50 miles of Moultrie

Spending Category	Day Visitors	Overnight Visitors	Vendors
	\$/Person/Day		
Restaurants	22.10	35.40	22.85
Food & Drinks	12.62	18.02	11.89
Fuel & Related	25.31	41.96	17.76
Retail	28.20	27.41	6.60
Recreation/Entertainment	17.23	25.84	4.57

*Does not include spending at Expo site and is an average of those who reported some level of spending.

Expenditures at the Expo Site

Table 4 reports expenditures for items sold inside of the Expo. Both day visitors and overnight visitors purchased significantly higher priced items on average than exhibitors in each of the categories, while overnight visitors outspent day visitors as well. Broadly speaking, the expenditures for the “other” category represent a combination of farm supply and general merchandise purchases for visitors and general merchandise for vendors.⁷

Table 4. Survey Expenditures: Visitor/Vendor Respondent Spending at Expo site

Spending Category	Day Visitors	Overnight Visitors	Vendors
	\$/Person/Day		
Food & Drink	13.05	18.80	9.89
Souvenirs	21.19	25.37	18.44
Crafts	15.52	20.19	10.62
Other	29.50	45.35	22.65
Average # Days at Expo	1.20	2.08	2.99

*Only includes spending at Expo site and is an average of those who reported some level of spending.

Total Spending

A summary of the average expenditures for survey respondents making purchases in a specified category are reported in Tables 1 through 4, representing only those respondents who indicated a positive value for spending in each. A more general approach for applying average daily per person expenditures among all visitors and vendors are in Tables 5 through 7. Note that there could be differences in some calculated totals due to rounding of reported averages.

⁷ As pointed out in the previous study, this finding does not indicate that there was no spending on high value agricultural equipment or machinery as a result of contacts or negotiations at the Expo. Some of these purchases may be completed following the event.

Lodging

For lodging (Table 5), the total spending is derived by applying average daily lodging expenditures (regardless of level of reported spending) expanded on 33,827 visitors (tickets sold) for the surveyed average number of nights spent in Georgia, apportioned based on type of lodging venue reported both within and beyond 50 miles from Moultrie (7.3% of visitors/13% of vendors report expenditures for lodging outside the 50-mile region during their trip). The vendor average daily spending for lodging is expanded on 2,322 individuals working with exhibitors for the reported number of average nights in Georgia as we did for the visitor figures. Using the average number of nights spent in Georgia captures spending for the entire stay in the state.⁸

Table 5. Expo Visitor & Vendor Lodging Expense, by Lodging Type and Distance from Expo

VISITORS				VENDORS		
< 50 MI.				< 50 MI.		
Lodging Type	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night	Total (\$)	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night	Total (\$)
Hotel	2.4	76.36	1,461,707	3.9	59.92	264,036
RV/Campground	3.7	40.16	289,417	4.7	27.27	24,131
Other	5.6	82.50	356,463	5.0	39.50	87,895
Friends	3.4	N/A	N/A	3.8	N/A	N/A
> 50 MI.				> 50 MI.		
Lodging Type	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night	Total (\$)	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Night	Total (\$)
Hotel	2.8	77.51	262,203	1.8	49.41	10,937
RV/Campground	2.2	31.41	42,312	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	4.6	36.38	54,440	4.5	35.90	23,481
Friends	7.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Spending Outside of the Expo Site

To calculate expenditures that take place in the region, but outside of the Expo site (Tables 6 and 7), we apply average daily expenditures (regardless of level of reported spending) distributed among the day visitors, overnight visitors, and vendors. In Table 6, average daily spending by category is expanded upon the number of day visitors (19,522/57.8%) based on their average days at the Expo (1.20). Similarly, for overnight visitors (Table 7), the same approach is employed, expanding on the number of overnight visitors, apportioned additionally to account for the lesser spending of those who had no lodging expenses outside of the 50-mile region times the average number of nights spent in Georgia (3.3). In the same manner as the overnight visitors, the vendor spending estimate is allotted by distance from Expo, expanded on the average number of nights in Georgia for all vendors/exhibitors.

⁸ The previous study took a slightly different approach, but given the data available this approach is reasonable for the purpose of this estimation.

Table 6. Day Visitor Spending Outside of Expo Site*

< 50 MI.			
Spending Category	Expo Avg. (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)
Restaurants	1.2	15.11	354,517
Food & Drinks (non-restaurant)	1.2	7.52	176,437
Fuel & Related	1.2	17.85	418,804
Retail	1.2	13.37	313,692
Recreation/Entertainment	1.2	5.85	187,582

*There is no spending counted for outside of 50 miles for the estimates of day visitors (no overnight). The per person/per day figure is averaged over all day visitors per category.

Table 7. Overnight Visitor & Vendor Spending Outside of Expo Site

Spending Category	VISITORS			VENDORS		
	< 50 MI			< 50 MI		
	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)
Restaurants	3.3	31.16	1,350,440	3.83	22.85	176,794
Food & Drinks (non-restaurant)	3.3	14.98	649,217	3.83	11.89	91,995
Fuel & Related	3.3	36.34	1,574,936	3.83	17.76	137,412
Retail	3.3	17.74	768,832	3.83	6.60	51,065
Friends	3.3	11.43	495,364	3.83	4.57	35,359
Spending Category	> 50 MI			> 50 MI		
	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)	GA Nights (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)
	Restaurants	3.3	31.16	117,430	3.83	22.85
Food & Drinks (non-restaurant)	3.3	14.98	56,454	3.83	11.89	13,746
Fuel & Related	3.3	36.34	136,951	3.83	17.76	20,533
Recreation/Entertainment	3.3	11.43	43,075	3.83	4.57	5,283

Spending Inside the Expo Site

Table 8 provides the summary of expenditures that take place on the Expo site, where we apply average daily expenditures for visitors and vendors. The daily spending per person is expanded upon the number of total visitors (33,827) and average days at the Expo per visitor via survey data (1.64). The vendor figures are calculated similarly, expanding on the number of vendors (2,322) and their average days spent at the Expo.

Table 8. Visitor and Vendor Spending Inside the Expo Site

Spending Category	Visitors			Vendors		
	Expo Days (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)	Expo Days (Avg.#)	\$/Person /Day	Total (\$)
Food & Drink	1.64	14.07	780,551	2.99	9.08	63,040
Souvenirs	1.64	16.69	925,899	2.99	9.33	64,776
Crafts	1.64	9.23	512,046	2.99	3.92	27,216
Other	1.64	18.32	1,016,325	2.99	8.73	60,610

Economic Impact

Using the IMPLAN modeling system, we apply a factor, known as the regional purchase coefficient (RPC, up to 100%) for each business type, representing the fraction of the local products that are supplied locally.⁹ Table 9 shows the business types experiencing additional economic activity within the 50-mile region as a result of visitors and vendors spending at Expo. Total visitor and exhibitor spending in the region is estimated at \$12.66 million, but 37% is leakage that has no economic impact in the region. Similarly, calculations including spending outside of the 50-mile results in a total of \$13.55 million prior to accounting for leakage.

These direct expenditures by visitors and vendors create millions of dollars of spending activity in the affected sectors (such as hotels, restaurants) plus increased economic activity resulting from the purchases it makes within the region as well as the spending by people who are employed in them. The combination of these effects – direct plus ripple effects – help demonstrate the magnitude of economic activity that the influx of visitor and vendor spending bring to the region and State.

Table 9. Regional Expenditures and Direct Impact of Sunbelt Annual Event, by Industry Sector

Description	Expenditures			Impact		
	Visitors	Vendors	Total	Direct	% Leakage	RPC
Hotels & Motels	1,818,170	351,931	2,170,100	2,170,100	0.00	100%
Other Accommodations	289,417	24,131	313,548	313,548	0.00	100%
Food Services	1,704,957	176,794	1,881,751	1,881,751	0.00	100%
Food & Beverage Stores	1,606,205	155,035	1,761,240	595,551	0.66	Margin
Fuel & Related	1,993,739	137,412	2,131,151	476,590	0.78	Margin
Misc. Store Retailers	2,520,470	143,057	2,663,526	1,464,103	0.45	Margin
Amusement & Recreation	632,619	35,359	667,977	667,977	0.00	100%
Farm Machinery & Equip.	609,795	N/A	609,795	122,758	0.79	50%
General Merchandise Stores	406,530	60,610	467,141	147,333	0.68	Margin
	11,581,902	1,084,328	12,666,230	7,839,711	0.37	

⁹ See <https://implanhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115009674588-Regional-Purchase-Coefficients> for full details on the explanation and limitations of this function of the model. Larger RPC's indicate more production within the area meeting the local demand, while lower RPC's signify more leakage of direct impacts out of the region under study as increased portions of a consumed good are imported from outside the impact area.

Total Economic Impact of the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition¹⁰

Expo Business Operations and Event

Table 10 presents the combined economic contribution of Expo business activities plus the annual Sunbelt event on the region of 20 counties, directly supporting \$10.23 million in output (sales or revenue) within the area. In addition, other businesses experience ripple effects of the spending, leading to total output impact of \$16.72 million. The direct labor income attributable to Expo business operations and those impacted by the Expo event total \$3.39 million, while further effects throughout the economy lead to additional income that totals \$5.10 million for employees and proprietors. The employment involved in all of the economic activities total 186.6 jobs throughout the region.¹¹ State and local tax revenues (combined) collected from activity in the region are \$1.1 million.

Table 10. Business Operations and Event: Annual Economic Benefits to the Region

Impact Type	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Induced Effect	Total Effect
Output	10,233,305	4,079,185	2,410,462	16,722,951
Labor Income	3,392,168	1,054,707	650,713	5,097,587
Employment	140.0	27.2	19.4	186.6
State/Local Taxes				1,080,731

Source: IMPLAN 2018 Data for 20 county model region surrounding the Sunbelt Ag Expo.

Expo Business Operations

The Expo business operations generate over \$2.39 million of annual revenue (2019) which is the direct output, covering expenses for items that they purchase from within the region, the State of Georgia and throughout the U.S. Examples of these expenses include items such as employee salaries, business operations, advertising, agricultural inputs, fuel, and insurance, the purchase of which generate further economic activity in the economy (Table 11). The indirect and induced impacts lead to total regional output of \$4.39 million and more than \$1.11 million in wages and benefits for employees and proprietor income. There are over 25 jobs involved with businesses impacted by Expo operations when considered on an annual basis. The Expo business generates \$139,172 in state and local tax revenue for the 20-county region.

Table 11. Business Operations: Annual Economic Benefits to the Region

Impact Type	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Induced Effect	Total Effect
Output	2,393,594	1,468,445	525,068	4,387,106
Labor Income	629,927	343,549	141,739	1,115,215
Employment	14.3	6.7	4.2	25.2
State/ Local Taxes				139,172

10 Direct effects represent the initial impact on the economy of some feature (i.e. construction or operations) of an enterprise. Indirect effects are changes in other industries caused by direct effects of an enterprise. Induced effects are changes in household spending due to changes in economic activity generated by both direct and indirect effects. Thus, the total economic impact is the sum of direct, indirect, and induced effects. Visit IMPLAN.com for additional detail.

11 This assessment accounts for the fact that the Expo annual business operations employs full-time employees throughout the year as well as a number of temporary/part-time employees that work either 3-5 days or a few weeks. Because this is an annual impact, the part-time/temporary employment is incorporated as fractions of a full-time, year-round employee.

Sunbelt Expo Annual Event

Table 12 presents impacts of the Sunbelt Expo annual event resulting from visitor and vendor spending on the region of 20 counties, where direct output is value of sales for lodging, food, retail purchases, and services (See Table 9 for details). The direct sales of \$7.84 million create additional sales that total \$12.33 million, generate \$3.98 million in income for employees and proprietors, and accounts for 161.4 jobs. State and local tax revenues are \$941,559.

Table 12. Event: Annual Economic Benefits to the Region

Impact Type	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Induced Effect	Total Effect
Output	7,839,711	2,610,74	1,885,394	12,335,845
Labor Income	2,762,241	711,158	508,974	3,982,372
Employment	125.7	20.5	15.2	161.4
State/ Local Taxes				941,559

Source: IMPLAN 2018 Data for 20 county model region surrounding the Sunbelt Ag Expo.

From the standpoint of the event expanded to contribution to the entire State of Georgia (Table 13), the direct output value of sales for lodging, food, retail purchases and services are the direct impacts which also include expenses outside the 20-county region. These direct sales of \$8.53 million account for total output of \$16.93 million, generates \$6.05 million in income, and accounts for 175 jobs. State and local tax revenues are \$1.09 million.

Table 13. Event: Annual Economic Benefits to Georgia

Impact Type	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Induced Effect	Total Effect
Output	8,525,190	4,219,569	4,180,284	16,925,044
Labor Income	3,397,186	1,343,771	1,304,090	6,045,046
Employment	120.6	25.6	28.4	174.6
State/ Local Taxes				1,087,255

Source: IMPLAN 2018 Data for the State of Georgia.

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The Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

The Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development is a unit of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the University of Georgia, combining the missions of research and extension. The Center has among its objectives:

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Sam Pardue, Dean and Director



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