

# Navigating Challenges for Locally Produced Food



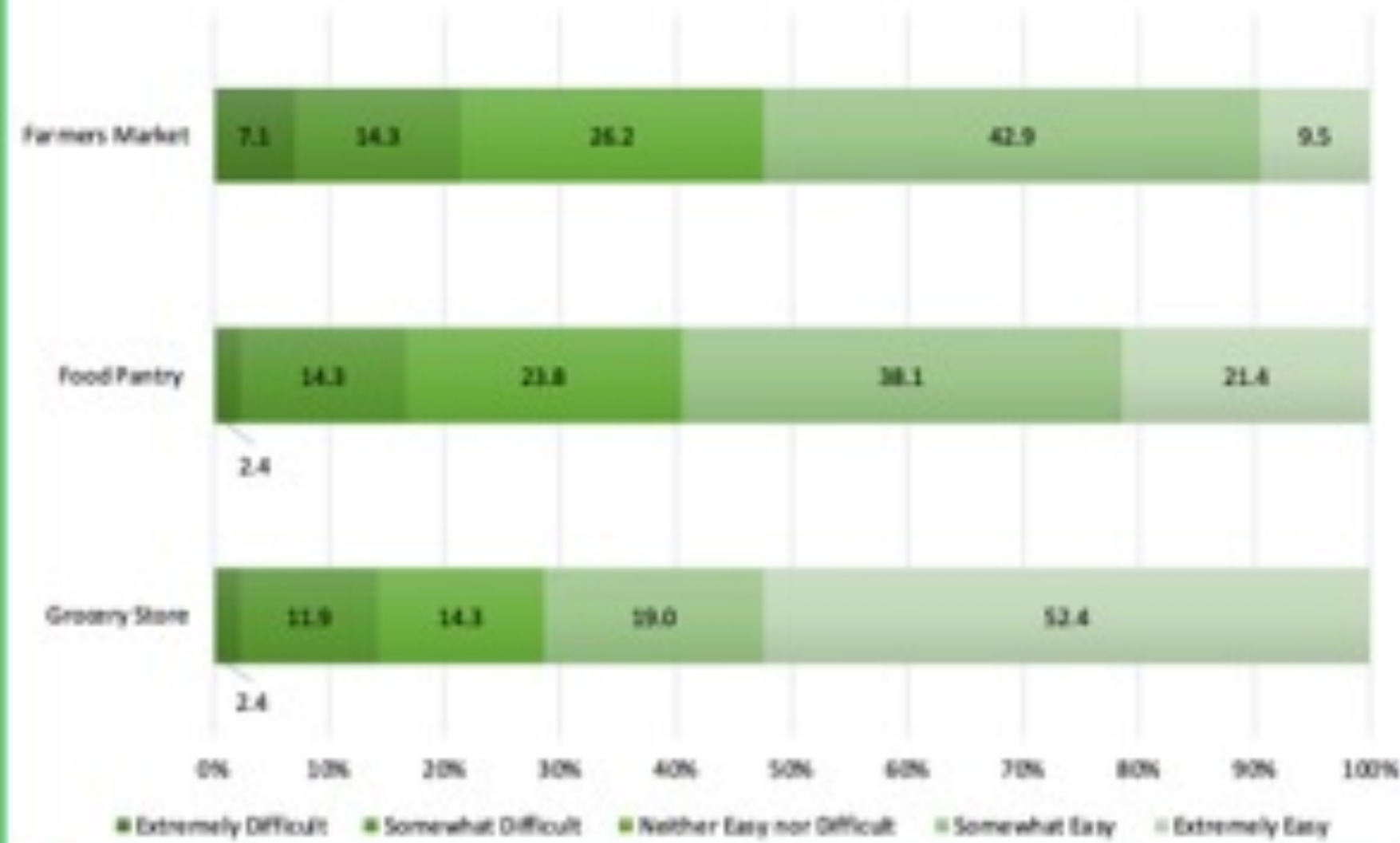
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## Abstract

There is much interest in locally produced food and the benefits it can have on communities across the state of Kansas. By interviewing city managers, we have identified some of the unique factors and challenges that city officials face when considering their community's local food systems. Through interview and survey data, we sensed that there is a desire for more local food in communities but lack of resources, lack of policies and the nature of large commodity agriculture in Kansas appear as challenges. Ad-hoc groups coming from schools, churches, and committees at the county level make up the majority of the efforts today in our communities.

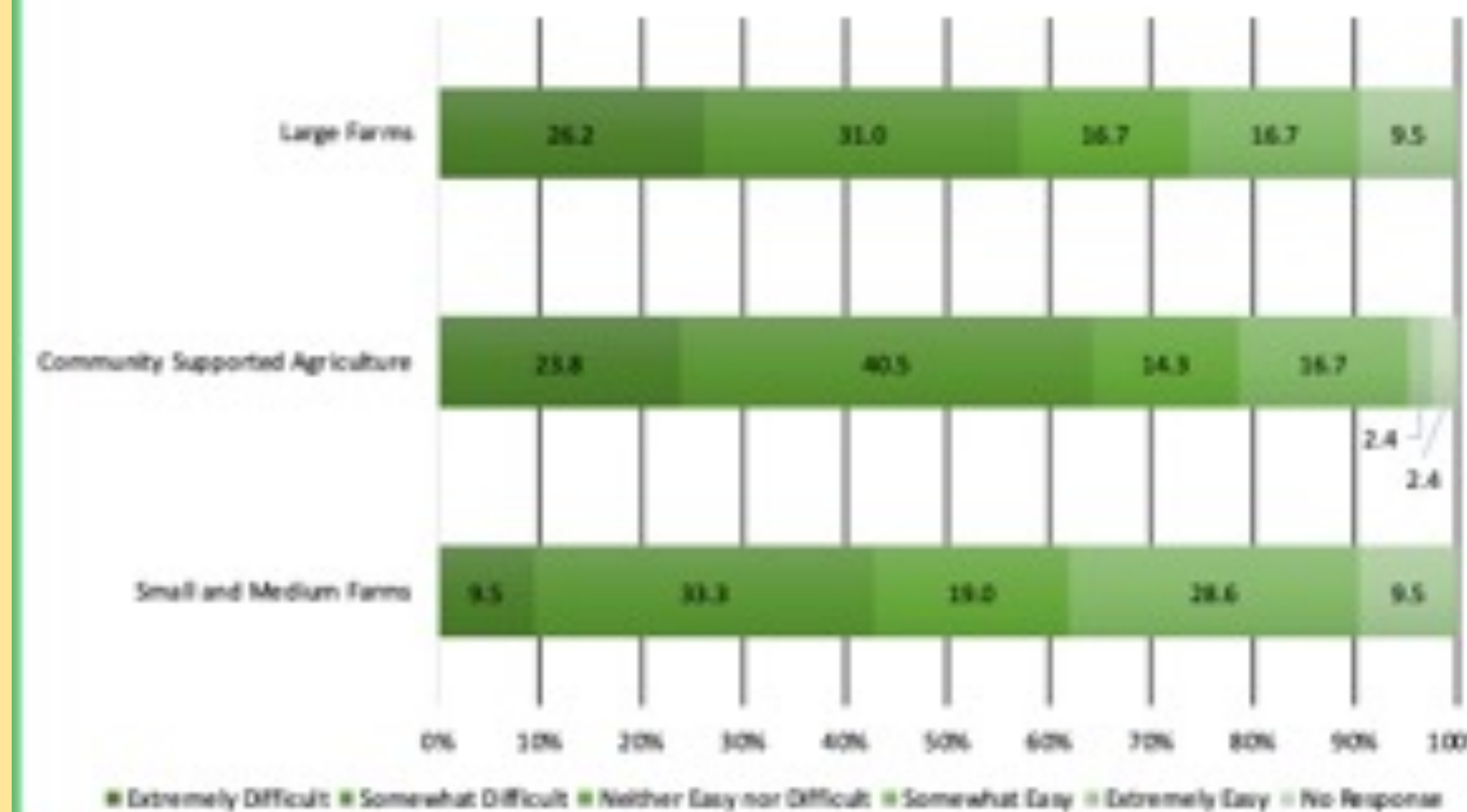
Please assess how easy it is for your community to access all of these types of food retailers. (n=42)



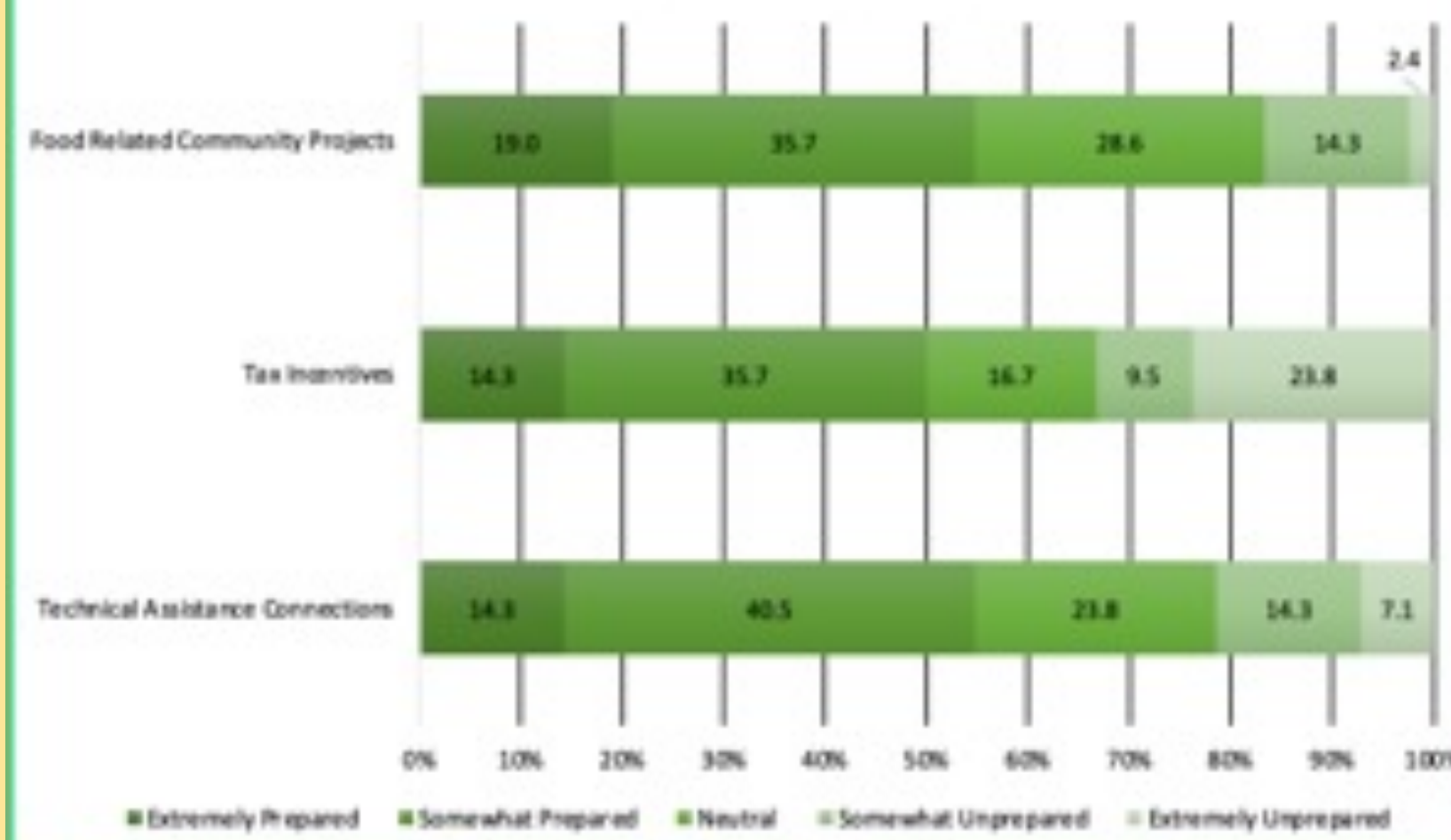
## Literature Review

Existing research regarding local food systems highlights the economic implications and environmental benefits associated with localized food production. Environmental benefits linked to localized food production and distribution include reduced carbon footprint and enhanced biodiversity. Studies also describe some of the influences that local food systems have on community health, emphasizing nutritional advantages and social unity. Existing literature also identifies challenges such as distribution issues, or supply chain issues and policy constraints especially related to land, zoning and taxes.

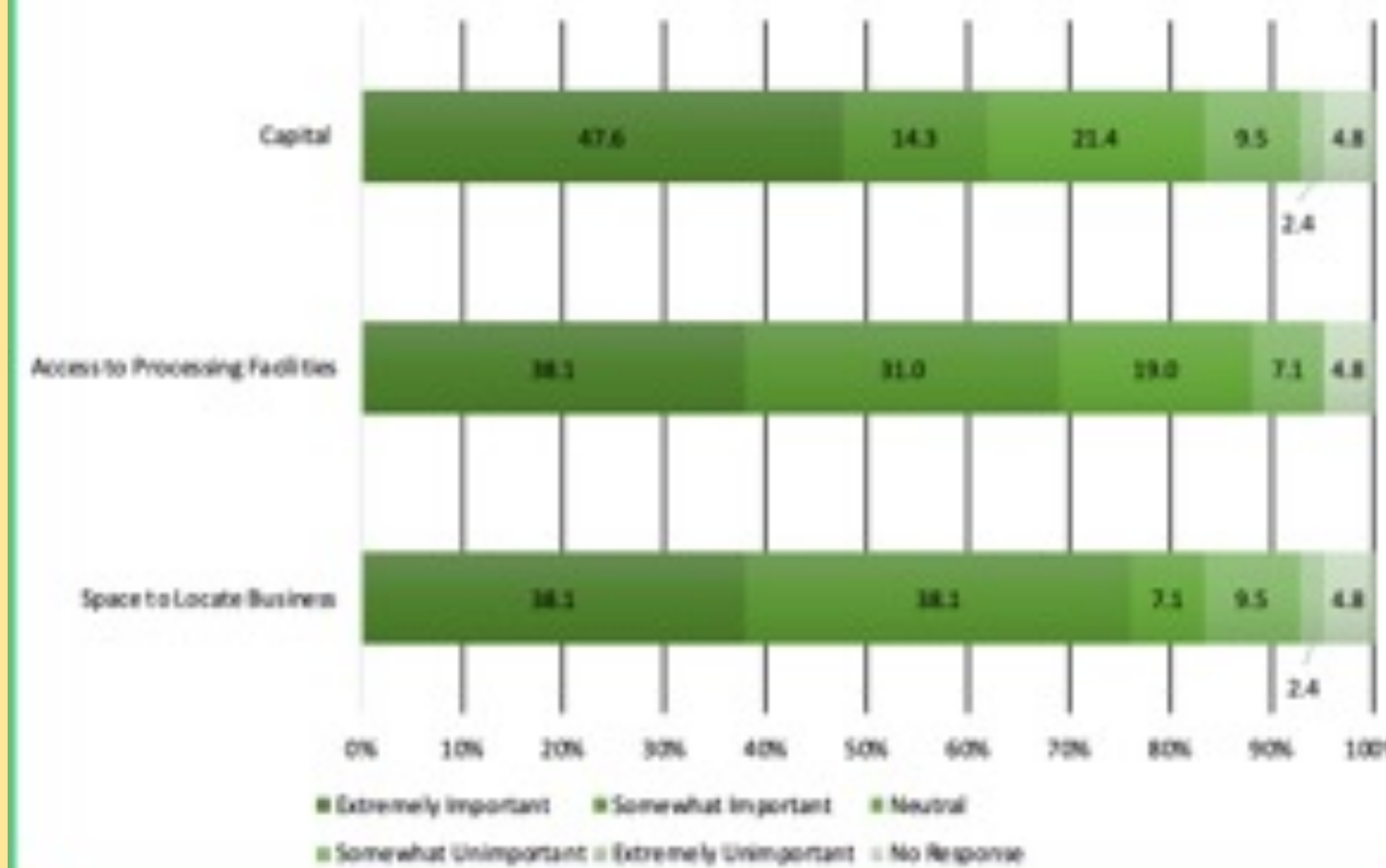
How hard is it to access the following food production or food related businesses in your community (or within a 15 minute drive from your community)? (n=42)



How prepared are you/your community to offer the following potential solutions to local farm and food entrepreneurs? (n=42)



How important are the following barriers for food-related entrepreneurs/businesses in your community? (n=42)



## Methods

During 2023, we contacted several city administrators across the state of Kansas to better understand their local food systems. Thirty municipalities with a population between 10,000 and 50,000 were the target for an interview. We received a total of 9 responses from city managers from across the state. The interview responses were recorded both through Zoom interviews and through email. We then followed up by contacting over 170 city managers for a quantitative survey and received 42 responses. One of the primary areas of interest was in regard to some of the challenges that communities face with producing and distributing locally grown food. The data collection took several weeks and gave insight into the challenges that communities face when considering locally produced food.

## Findings

There are several interesting takeaways from this data. First, the desire for an increase in locally produced food does exist among communities across the state of Kansas. However, there are some challenges those communities will face for that to happen. Many of those in city administration, do work with other groups for the collective good of the community. Those collaborations with other groups can be crucial to creating and sustaining local food systems in Kansas communities. While the responses we received indicate that policies related to local food systems are not currently a top priority for legislators, many communities across Kansas are ready for that to change. Second, many logistical and environmental factors specific to the state of Kansas are among the main contributors to the limited amount of produce that is grown in the state. Commodities, (such as grain and livestock) being produced on a large scale, is the most common form of agriculture in Kansas. Some of the responses mentioned, that getting producers to use land and resources for vegetables or produce might be a different task. In conclusion, a more concerted effort, or policy could have a large impact in increasing the production of local foods in Kansas.



## References

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