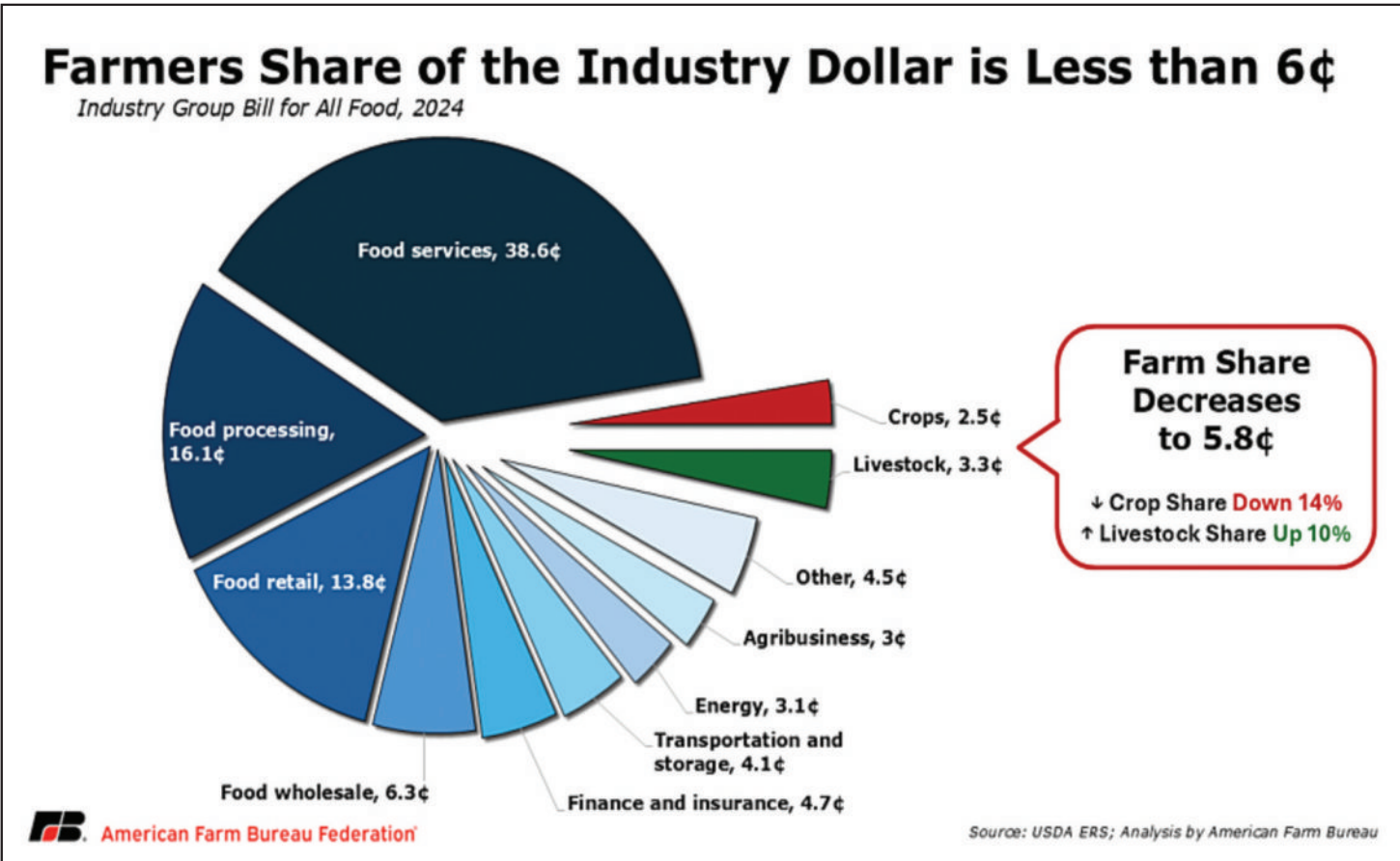


Farmers' share of consumer food spending dollar shrinks to 5.8 cents



Despite planting, growing and harvesting most foundational food in the United States, American farmers only glean a tiny amount of consumer food spending, reports Faith Parum of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Department of Agriculture data from 2024 estimates show that “farmers and ranchers received a combined 5.8 cents of every food dollar, down slightly from 5.9 cents in 2023.”

The 5.8 cents in profits are divided by sectors. Parum explains, “Crop producers saw their share decline from 2.9 to

2.5 cents, while livestock producers experienced a modest increase from 3 to 3.3 cents.” But overall, the trends show that farmers’ share of consumer food dollars has decreased over time. In contrast, the largest share of each consumer dollar is spent on food processing and food service.

The shrinking income underscores why increases in agricultural input costs, such as higher fuel or fertilizer prices, can quickly erode farm income and strain farmers already burdened by low commodity prices.

When it comes to food-at-home purchases, farmer and rancher profits gained a “0.5% increase year over year,” Parum explains. “In 2024, the farm share of the food-at-home dollar was 18.5 cents, up slightly from 18.4 cents in 2023.”

Products that require little processing produce bigger profit margins. Parum reports, “Fresh eggs returned 69.1 cents per dollar to farmers in 2024, up from 65.2 cents in 2023. Beef rose from 49.8 cents to 52.2 cents, and fresh milk increased from 48.1 cents to 50.8 cents.”

The overall picture of farming income spotlights the realities of modern food production and distribution, where “most of the economic value is created after products leave the farm,” Parum writes.

Written by Heather Close --The Rural Blog



POTENTIAL MATERIAL FOR THE MASTERS? Shown here are the members of Kershaw’s crackerjack new Junior Golf Team who will meet the Lancaster Junior Golfers in a second match on the Kershaw Country Club course this afternoon. From left to right kneeling are Bunny Croxton, Hubert Brown and Douglas Davidson. Standing, left to right, William Hayes Jr., Maxie Clyburn and Eric Hilliard.

Junior Golf Team Off To Good Start

Kershaw’s newly organized Junior Golf Team got off to an auspicious start by defeating the Lancaster Junior 19 and a half to one half in a match played over the Lancaster County club course, last Thursday.

Playing for Kersaw, in order of their ratings, were William Hayes, Jr., Max Clyburn, Hubert Brown, Eric Hilliard, Doug Davidson. Hayes defeated Walton 3-0. Clyburn defeated Walton and Hyatt 3-0.

Brown defeated Hawfield 3-0. Hilliard defeated Carruthers 3-0. Brown and Hilliard defeated Hawfield and Carruthers 3-0.

Davidson defeated his opponent one and a half to one half.

Clyburn was medalist with an 83.

A good sized gallery is expected to be on hand this afternoon when

the two teams meet in a second match at the Kershaw Country Club course. Play begins at 2:00 p. m.

Henry Lewis Clyburn, one of the Kershaw Golf Club’s best golfers, is official coach of the youngsters.

Insurance Agency Opens Up At Mill

Cox and Stover, Kershaw’s newest insurance agency, is opening today at its location in the building located between Crenshaw’s Drug Sundries and Second Baptist church in the Springs Mill Village.

The new agency will be owned and operated by Isaac Cox, George E. Stover Jr. and Ralph Stover, and will specialize in all forms of

SC schools, government agencies must buy US-made flags under new state law

By: Jessica Holdman -

COLUMBIA — David McGehee was attending an event at the South Carolina Governor’s Mansion when he looked up at the flag flying over the entrance. He immediately knew it was made in China, he said.



Flags provide a backdrop news conference held on the first floor of the Statehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, on Monday, Jan. 13, 2025. (File photo by Travis Bell/STATEHOUSE CAROLINA/Special to the SC Daily Gazette)

“I can tell by looking at it because I’ve been doing it for 26 years,” said the head of Columbia Flag & Sign Co., a family-owned flag retail company in West Columbia. “They rectified it really quick.”

U.S. and state flags fly at the entrance of the Governor’s Mansion in Columbia, S.C. (File photo by Mary Ann Chastain/Special to the SC Daily Gazette) But the realization during the 2024 visit prompted McGehee to call his legislator, Rep. Chris Wooten.

“To me, being an old Marine, I think it’s a bit of a spit in the face to see a U.S. flag made in China, so I took it personal,” said Wooten, R-Lexington, who spent four years in the Marine Corps and seven years as a South Carolina state trooper.

So he filed a bill ahead of the 2025 legislative session requiring all United States and South Carolina flags bought by cities, counties, public schools and state agencies going forward to be 100% made in the United States. They must be completely manufactured in the U.S. with materials and supplies produced in the U.S.

After both chambers passed the bill unanimously, Gov. Henry McMaster signed it into law this week.

Now it’s up to state purchasing

officials to redraft contracts to include the new manufacturing requirements.

Columbia Flag & Sign Co. has supplied flags to the state for more than two decades, McGehee said. He’s one of three vendors approved by the state as a flag supplier for state agencies.

He said he didn’t know where the flag flying at the Governor’s Mansion came from, but it wasn’t from his company.

And while having to reapply two years into his five-year state contract is a nuisance, McGehee said, it’s worth it.

“Honestly, it’s un-American to sell an American flag that’s not made by Americans,” said McGehee, a member of the South Carolina Army National Guard and a law enforcement veteran. “It just goes against my principles.”

It’s a long-standing problem for flag-makers and retailers, which industry groups have sought to combat.

The Flag Manufacturers Association of America, of

which McGehee is a member, wrote an open letter to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos stating that more than 100,000 U.S. flags sold on the online platform each month are imported and falsely marketed as American-made, a violation of federal textile law.

“This is over \$1.5 million of monthly sales of U.S. flags being sold that are not labeled with country of origin per the Textile Act,” the letter continues.

“Not only is it an ethical problem,” McGehee told the SC Daily Gazette. “It’s also a problem of quality.”

“You pull them out of the package from Amazon, they look great,” he added. “When they pay somebody in China 10 cents an hour to sew, the sewing quality is not there. So, they’re not going to last as long.”

Plus, it has an impact on U.S. and South Carolina workers, McGehee said.

Valley Forge Flag Co., which has five manufacturing plants in South Carolina — in Smoaks, Kingstree, Lane, Moncks Corner and Olanta — makes a large portion of the flags sold by Columbia Flag & Sign Co.

“This is a small niche industry,” McGehee said. “I know who the manufacturers are. I’ve been to their plants.”

Under the contract Columbia Flag & Sign Co. holds with the state, it sells flags to schools and agencies at prices that range from \$6.25 for a 12-by-18-inch classroom flag to \$190 for a 3-by-5-foot ceremonial indoor flag mounted on an eagle-topped pole.

Public Service Commission Schedules Hearing Involving a Request for Approval of a Water Utility Merger on April 29th, 2026

Columbia, South Carolina—The Public Service Commission has scheduled a merits hearing in Docket No. 2025-283-WS, which involves a joint application of South Carolina Water Utilities, Inc., South Carolina Water Utilities-PUI, Inc., South Carolina Water Utilities-PWR, Inc., and Blue Granite Water Company (collectively, “the Joint Applicants”) for approval of a merger, for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29th, 2026.

Per their application, the Joint Applicants request the Commission issue an Order:

- Approving the Merger Agreement between SCWU, SCWU-PUI, SCWU-PWR, and BGWC and the resulting expansion of SCWU’s service territory.
- Allowing SCWU to assume the rights and responsibilities to serve

SCWU-PUI, SCWU-PWR and BGWC’s customers and allowing SCWU to assume all related permits and other permits and certain other property necessary for the operation of the systems of the Joint Applicants.

- Allowing SCWU to operate the merged systems under the name “South Carolina Water Utilities.”
- Allowing SCWU to operate the consolidated water and sewer systems under the schedules of rates and charges currently approved by the Commission.

If the proposed merger is approved, it will not affect the rates customers pay for services provided by the Joint Applicants nor will it affect their service.

This hearing will be livestreamed to the public at 10:00 a.m. on April 29th at this link.

For more information, please reach out to the Public Service Commission at 803.896.5100 or at contact@psc.sc.gov

It’s not the largest contract the company holds.

“But it still is important to us,” McGehee said. “Not only is somebody buying a handful of flags on that contract, but they need their flagpoles repaired. They need new flag poles. They need other products that we sell.”



HAPPY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS WEEK

Another U.S.-made flag company, Allegiance Flag Supply in North Charleston, doesn’t have a state contract but has offered 10,000 free U.S. flags to teachers across the country to hang in their classrooms in honor of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

Thank you, Mr. Phillips and Mrs. Cooper, for your countless hours of dedication and commitment to the students of Andrew Jackson High School. Your unwavering support and hard work make a lasting impact on our school community. You are truly our rock, and we are deeply grateful for all that you do. Go Vols!