Most food consumed by humans does not go directly from harvest in the field or livestock operation to a home dinner table. It is far more common to have many intermediate steps in transporting, processing, packaging and distribution before foods reach retail outlet shelves or restaurant kitchens. Once there, most foods undergo additional preparation before being eaten by consumers.

In the conventional food system, most foods are not sold and consumed in the communities where the products originate. Instead, farm products are produced in larger quantities and sold to processors that may be long distances from the farm. Processors, in turn, sell and ship their finished products to distributors and wholesalers, who then sell products to retail stores or restaurants. By the time the food reaches the consumer’s plate, it may have traveled thousands of miles over days, weeks, or even months and changed hands numerous times.

Food manufacturing business in Shawnee County employ more than 2,300 people and pay wages totaling more than $99 million annually.

For more information visit www.heartlandhealthyneighborhoods.org to access the full report.