

# Understanding the Current and Potential Economic Impacts of RI Grown and RI Seafood

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ISLAND**  
COMMERCE





# Understanding the Current and Potential Economic Impacts of RI Grown and RI Seafood

We are pleased to introduce “Understanding the Current and Potential Economic Impacts of RI Grown and RI Seafood.” This report, funded through the United States Department of Agriculture Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program grant, represents a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to strengthen our local food systems and support our state’s producers.

Rhode Island’s fishers and farmers are the backbone of our local food economy. Their dedication, resilience, and commitment to sustainability provide the fresh, high-quality food that nourishes our communities and bolsters our local economy. This report captures the critical role they play, highlighting the economic contributions of our local food brands and identifying opportunities to enhance business activity and encourage engagement.

The findings in this study offer valuable insights that will guide us in making data-driven decisions to promote RI Grown and RI Seafood. This research indicates that those who live in Rhode Island care about local food. In fact, 80% of respondents affirmed that it is important to purchase food that is grown, caught, or made locally.

By fostering stronger connections between producers and consumers, we aim to ensure a more economically vibrant and resilient food system that benefits Rhode Island. This endeavor is not just about food; it is about supporting local livelihoods, preserving our natural resources, and celebrating the unique flavors and traditions that make Rhode Island special.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Rhode Island’s fishers and farmers. Together, we can build a food system that boosts our local economy and enriches our communities.

Thank you for your continued support of RI Grown and RI Seafood. We invite you to explore the findings of this report and join us in championing a thriving local food system for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Tanner, Esq.  
*Secretary of Commerce*



Terrence Gray, P.E.  
*Director, Department of  
Environmental Management*





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RI Seafood is a Rhode Island local food brand that works to increase the consumption and sales of RI local food products through marketing. The brand launched in 2011 and consists of businesses that sell locally harvested seafood products and use the trademarked RI Seafood logos, point of sale information, branded swag, and marketing toolkits. Members also receive features on RI Seafood’s social media channels and announcements through the RI Seafood newsletter.



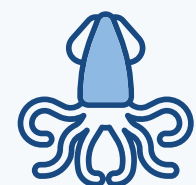
**128**

RI Seafood member businesses  
as of November, 2024



**2,477**

jobs created annually  
by RI Seafood



**\$315.6M**

**Annual sales** attributed  
to direct, indirect, and  
induced impact of  
RI Seafood



**\$1.5M**

is the average annual  
sales each RI Seafood  
member attributes to  
**RI Seafood marketing**

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT OF RI SEAFOOD

For every dollar that the state invests in RI Seafood, the brand generates:



**\$991**  
of **earnings**



**\$2,630**  
of **sales**



**\$27.26**  
of **income tax revenue**

*Learn more about current and potential economic impacts of RI Seafood in the following pages.*





RI Grown, established in 2024, is a Rhode Island local food brand that works to increase the consumption and sales of RI local food products through marketing. The brand consists of businesses that sell locally grown agricultural products and use the trademarked RI Grown logos, point of sale information, branded swag, and marketing toolkits. Members also receive features on RI Grown’s social media channels and announcements through the RI Grown newsletter.



**29**  
RI Grown member businesses  
as of November, 2024



**6**  
jobs created annually  
by RI Grown



**\$981,450**  
**Annual sales** attributed  
to direct, indirect, and  
induced impact  
of RI Grown



**\$23,500**  
is the average annual  
sales each RI Grown  
member attributes to **RI  
Grown marketing**

**EARLY RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT OF RI GROWN**

Launched in 2024, RI Grown was in its first few months when this data was collected. At this early stage, for every dollar that the state invested in RI Grown during its first few months in 2024, the brand generated:



**\$13**  
of **earnings**



**\$49**  
of **sales**



**\$0.36**  
of **income tax revenue**

*Learn more about current and potential economic impacts of RI Seafood in the following pages.*



POTENTIAL FOR GROWING CONSUMER AWARENESS

A Fall 2024 consumer study of Rhode Island residents was conducted to assess consumer awareness of Rhode Island local food brands, interest in purchasing local products, and the barriers or motivations influencing their buying decisions. The study was proportionately distributed across gender, age, race/ethnicity, and geography within the state.

80%

Percentage of respondents who believe it is important to purchase food that is grown, caught, or made locally

57%

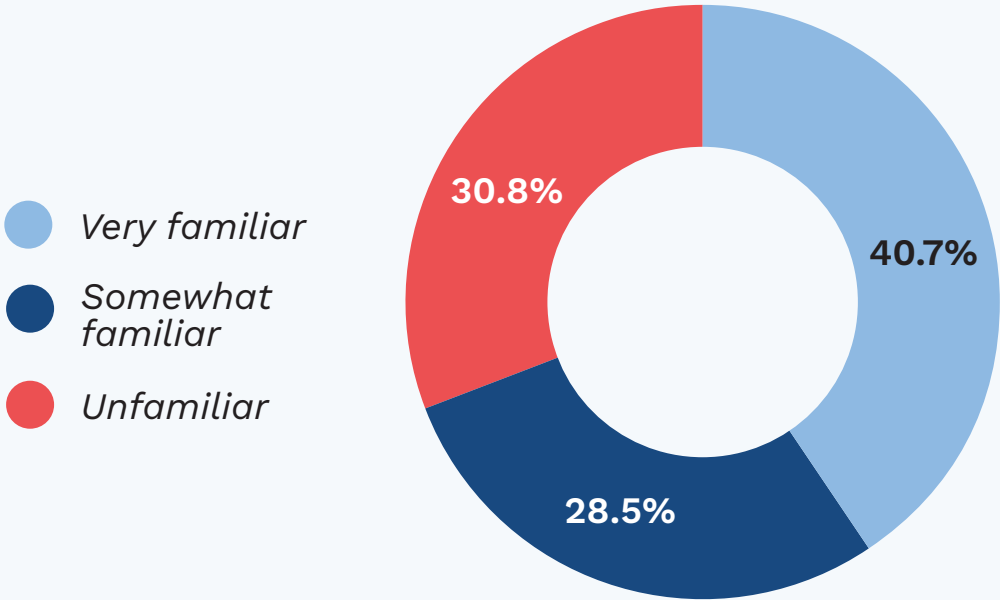
Percentage of respondents who learn about local food in grocery stores

44%

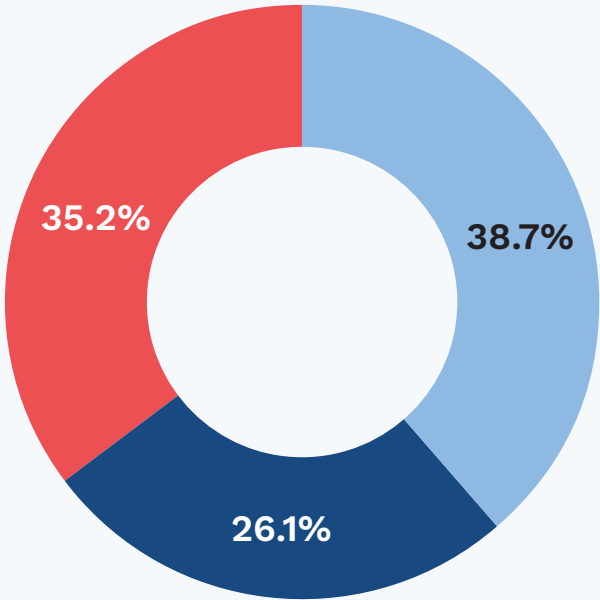
Percentage of respondents who learn about local food online (not including on specific social media channels)



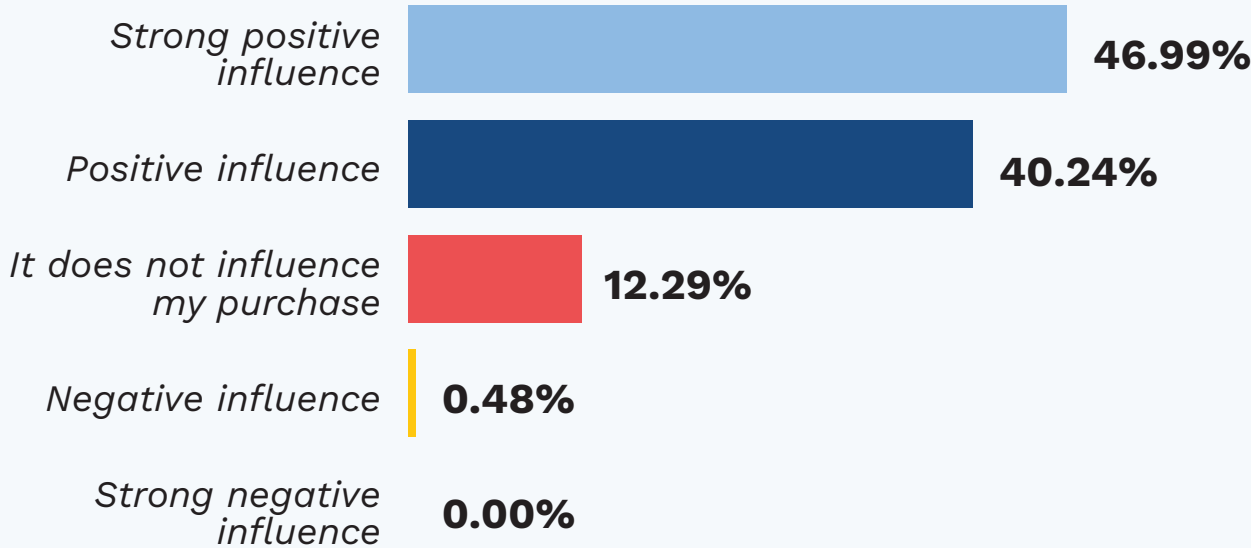
Awareness of RI Grown



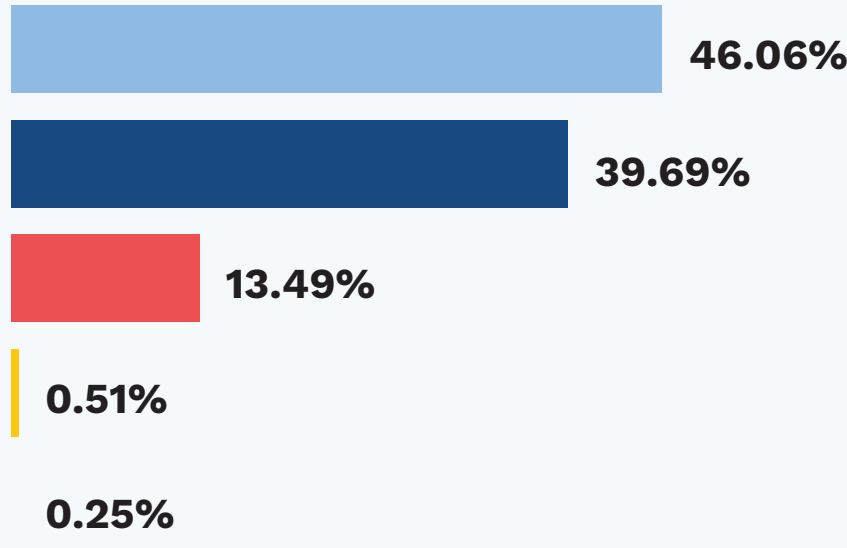
Awareness of RI Seafood



To what extent does seeing a RI Grown logo on a product influence your decision to make a purchase?



To what extent does seeing a RI Seafood logo on a product influence your decision to make a purchase?





# Current Economic Impacts of RI Grown & RI Seafood

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The marketing efforts of RI Grown and RI Seafood generate jobs, earnings, and sales throughout Rhode Island’s economy. There are 29 businesses utilizing RI Grown and 128 businesses utilizing RI Seafood. At present, RI Grown businesses each attribute an average of \$23,500 of their sales annually to RI Grown branded products. RI Seafood businesses each attribute an average of \$1.5 million of their sales to branded products. Based on current utilization and operations, the total statewide economic impacts of the brands are to the right.

In total, each dollar of state investment in RI Grown generates \$13 of earnings and \$49 in sales throughout the state. Each dollar of state investment in RI Seafood generates \$991 of earnings and \$2,630 in sales throughout the state.

RI Grown and RI Seafood both generate tax revenues for Rhode Island. Current economic activity is estimated to generate over \$7,100 of income tax revenue from RI Grown and nearly \$3.3 million of income tax revenue from RI Seafood. For every dollar of state investment, Rhode Island gets back \$0.36 in income taxes from RI Grown and \$27.26 from RI Seafood. Other revenues, such as sales taxes, are not quantified in this analysis.



All numbers represent annual economic impact of RI Grown and RI Seafood



# Potential Economic Impacts of RI Grown & RI Seafood

With additional state investment, RI Grown and RI Seafood could improve utilization among businesses and expand marketing efforts to generate a greater economic impact. Under an ideal, high-growth scenario, state investment in RI Grown would total \$200,000 annually, while annual RI Seafood investment would total \$500,000 annually. This high-growth scenario could result in:



**55 jobs**

**\$2.6M** in earnings

**\$9.8M** in sales

**\$6.8M** in sales directly at RI Grown businesses



**10,000+ jobs**

**\$495M** in earnings

**\$1.3B** in sales

**\$789.1M** in sales directly at RI Seafood businesses

This highlights the transformative potential of strategic investments in these branding programs.

## ADDITIONAL IMPACTS & SURVEY TAKEAWAYS

Survey responses from businesses highlight broader benefits of business use of RI Grown and RI Seafood. Key findings include:

- Improved consumer awareness was cited as the most significant benefit.
- Over half of businesses reported that the brands’ marketing efforts boost their sales, and smaller businesses tend to see larger increases in sales as a result of RI Grown and RI Seafood.
- Social media and online presence were identified as a specific feature that has benefited users of the local food brands.
- Strong consensus — among both businesses that utilize the brands and those that don’t — recognizing the value of marketing, underscoring the importance of ongoing promotional efforts.





# Study Context

In 2017, the State of Rhode Island introduced its first comprehensive food strategy, Relish Rhody, which outlined ambitious goals to strengthen the local food economy. These included growing the state's local food economy by preserving and growing agriculture and seafood industries, enhancing the climate for food businesses, minimizing and diverting wasted food, and ensuring access to healthy and culturally relevant foods for all people in Rhode Island. Launched in 2011, the RI Seafood Marketing Collaborative aligned its mission with these statewide goals and has been advancing them for nearly a decade through the RI Seafood brand. More recently, to further address these local food goals and specifically bolster agriculture-based enterprises, the RI Grown initiative was launched. Unlike the well-established RI Seafood brand, RI Grown is still in its early stages, which is reflected in its modest economic impact to date.

These two 'buy local' food brands aim to boost the consumption and sales of locally produced food through statewide brand marketing. To support the continued growth of these efforts, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation has retained Blaze Partners and Camoin Associates, through a competitive bid process, to conduct a comprehensive economic impact assessment and marketing research study. This report contains an economic impact assessment of the two brands, which will provide context for a forthcoming marketing research study.

The upcoming RI Food Strategy 2030, the state's update to the original food system plan, will include collective priorities and strategies to increase the production, sales, and consumption of Rhode Island grown, harvested, and caught foods. The findings of this report and the forthcoming marketing research study will continue to promote the work of the state's strategic initiatives.



## BRAND MEMBERSHIPS

Throughout this report, data and findings refer to members of RI Grown and RI Seafood. For the purposes of this report, members can be defined as businesses that sell local seafood and agricultural products, and also use the trademarked RI Grown and RI Seafood logos, their point of sale information, branded swag, and online marketing toolkits. Members receive features on each brand's social media channels and announcements through their respective newsletters. RI Seafood members also participate in the Seafood Marketing Collaborative.

## METHODOLOGY

The economic impacts of the proposed projects are analyzed for the State of Rhode Island.

## MODELING PROCESS

An economic impact analysis of the buy local brands was conducted to quantify the potential impacts on the statewide economy. The economic impact includes the “direct” economic impacts, such as sales of RI Grown and RI Seafood products, and the secondary economic impacts generated throughout the economy through the economic “multiplier” effect. The three specific types of impacts considered in the analysis include:

- **Direct:** The most immediate impacts include sales of products specifically marketed as RI Grown or RI Seafood.

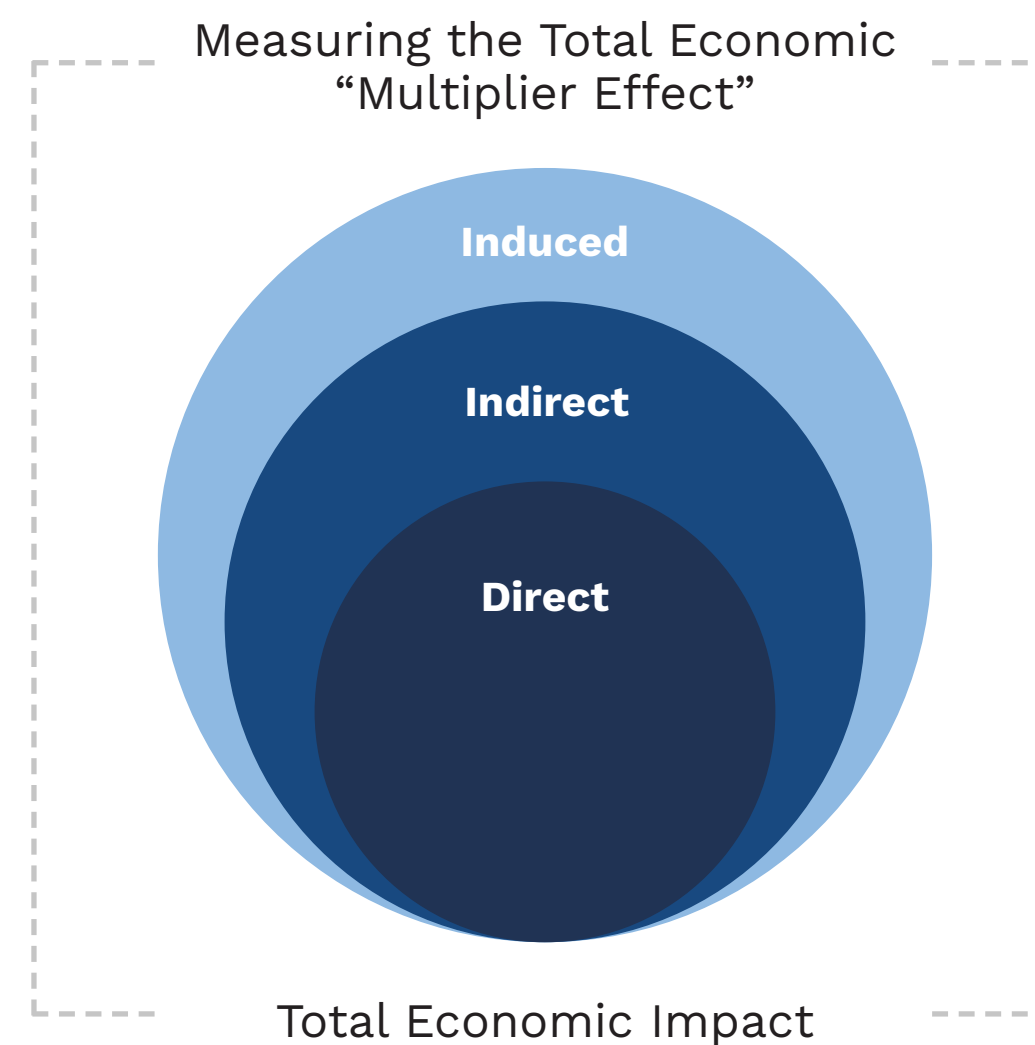
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- **Indirect:** Indirect effects occur at businesses within the state that supply goods and services to businesses that use the brands and re-spend a portion of that revenue within the state. In other words, for every dollar spent at a Rhode Island supplier, a portion will again be spent on goods and services at other Rhode Island businesses. This is considered the indirect impact.
- **Induced:** Another “multiplier” effect occurs when workers at both RI Grown and RI Seafood businesses and indirectly-impacted businesses spend a portion of their wages at firms within the state on goods and services. The portion of the spending by new businesses that are paid to workers and re-spent in the Rhode Island economy is considered the induced impact.

The sum of the direct, indirect, and induced impacts equals the total economic impact. The Lightcast input-output model calculates the total economic impact, including the three different types of impacts.



### Modeling Software

Lightcast designed the input-output model used in this analysis. The Lightcast model allows the analyst to input the amount of new direct economic activity (spending, earnings, or jobs) occurring within the region and uses the direct inputs to estimate the spillover effects that the net new spending, earnings, or jobs have as these new dollars circulate throughout the economy. This is captured in the indirect and induced impacts and is commonly referred to as the “multiplier effect.” See Appendix A for more information on economic impact analysis.

### What Does “Net New” Mean?

When looking at the economic impacts of new development or a facility’s operation, it’s important to look only at the economic changes that would not happen in the absence of the facilities. These effects are the “net new” effect: purchases made only due to the facility or project in question.

### Definition of a “Job”

A “job” is equal to one person employed for some amount of time (part-time, full-time, or temporary) during the study period.



# Rhode Island Agriculture & Seafood Production

Seafood and agriculture play a critical role in Rhode Island's economy. Every year, a vast and diverse array of agricultural and seafood products are harvested from the land and sea throughout the state. This section provides a brief overview of the market value and top products that RI producers harvest.



SEAFOOD PRODUCTION<sup>1 2</sup>

Between wild harvest and aquaculture seafood, the value of seafood grown and harvested in Rhode Island at the point that it enters the supply chain was nearly \$90 million in 2023.<sup>3</sup> While Rhode Island is notorious for its squid harvests, the state harvested and landed over 100 different species from its waters in 2023. Longfin Squid alone accounted for almost \$26 million in 2023, almost one-third of the total value of wild-caught seafood in Rhode Island that year.


Meanwhile, oysters are one of the most valuable aquaculture products sold in Rhode Island. In 2023, aquaculture farms sold over 10.6 million oysters for consumption. That said, RI aquaculturists continue to diversify and cultivated other species such as sugar kelp, soft shell clams, surf clams, and bay scallops.



<sup>1</sup> Source for data on seafood production: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Division of Marine Fisheries (RIDEM DMF). 2024. Rhode Island Annual Fisheries Report: 2023. Jamestown, RI. 46pp.


<sup>2</sup> Source for data on aquaculture production: Rhode Island Coastal Management Council. 2024. Aquaculture in Rhode Island 2023. Wakefield, RI.

<sup>3</sup> \$90 million does not represent the total market value of seafood in Rhode Island. Seafood gains additional value as it moves through the supply chain and is processed and sold to consumers.

 **103 Species**  
Harvested & landed in 2023

 **\$81.7 Million**  
Ex-vessel value of landings in 2023

 **\$8 Million**  
Farm gate value of RI aquaculture in 2023

 **10.6 Million**  
Oysters raised by RI aquaculture farmers and sold for consumption

Top 10 Wild Harvest Species Landed (by Value) in Rhode Island, 2023

Species	2023 Dollars	Pounds
Longfin Squid	\$25,683,891	26,258,837
Sea Scallop	\$12,659,558	1,015,260
American Lobster	\$7,672,900	1,093,229
Summer Flounder	\$5,849,809	2,249,978
Quahog	\$4,033,089	358,852
Jonah Crab	\$3,581,693	2,480,386
Shortfin Squid (Illex)	\$3,160,086	4,433,220
Scup	\$2,336,430	4,001,686
Butterfish	\$2,018,315	3,308,216
Black Sea Bass	\$1,844,052	634,238

Source: RIDEM DMF 2023 Annual Fisheries Report  
Note: All species volumes are provided in pounds landed, except for quahogs, which are recorded as meat pounds



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION<sup>4</sup>

In 2022, the total value of agricultural products in Rhode Island was nearly \$93 million, a 60% increase compared to 2017. Rhode Island’s top agricultural product by value was nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod, with over \$51 million in sales in 2022.

Over 1,000 farms operate throughout Rhode Island. Notably, there were more farms in 2022 in Rhode Island than there were both 5 years ago in 2017 and 20 years ago in 2002, a trend that deviates from regional and national dynamics. Both nationally and in neighboring New England states, the number of farms has been on the decline over the last two decades.



<sup>4</sup> Source for data on agricultural production: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2022 Census of Agriculture.

<sup>5</sup> Aquaculture is included as both part of agriculture and seafood in Rhode Island. The figure here varies slightly from the figure provided on page 13, as the data in the two tables are derived from two different years.



**\$92.8 Million**  
Market value of agricultural products sold in 2022



**59,076**  
Acres of farmland in 2022



**1,054**  
Farms throughout Rhode Island in 2022

Ranking of Market Value of Ag Products Sold, 2022

Products	Farms	Sales (\$1,000)	% of Total Sales	Top County
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, & sod	231	\$51,317	55.3	Washington
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, & sweet potatoes	302	\$14,516	15.6	Newport
Aquaculture <sup>5</sup>	48	\$7,299	7.8	Washington
Milk from cows	10	*	*	Newport
Fruits, tree nuts, & berries	154	\$4,281	4.6	Providence
Poultry & eggs	210	*	*	Providence
Cattle & calves	110	\$1,725	1.9	Washington
Other crops & hay	162	\$1,164	1.3	Washington
Other animals & other animal products	102	\$717	0.8	Newport
Cultivated Christmas trees & short rotation woody crops	45	\$493	0.5	Providence
Horses, ponies, mules, burros & donkey	27	\$475	0.5	Newport
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, & dry peas	37	\$442	0.5	Washington
Hogs & pigs	46	\$344	0.4	Providence
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, & milk	85	\$292	0.3	Washington
<b>Total sales</b>	<b>1,054</b>	<b>\$92,830</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Washington</b>

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service 2022 Census of Agriculture  
\* Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms



# Current Economic Impacts of RI Seafood and RI Grown

RI Grown and RI Seafood are two local branding initiatives that aim to increase sales and consumption of food produced within Rhode Island. RI Grown supports the producers and sellers of agricultural products, while RI Seafood supports producers and sellers of seafood products. This includes farmers, fishermen, distributors, retailers, restaurants, and any other businesses that offer local RI food products to their customers.

Direct economic activity is generated by RI Grown and RI Seafood through brand-specific sales at participating businesses. In other words, when businesses make sales specifically as a result of RI Grown and RI Seafood marketing, that can be considered as a direct economic impact generated by the brands. Camoin Associates uses the input-output model designed by Lightcast to calculate the total economic impacts. This model allows the analyst to input the amount of new direct economic activity occurring in Rhode Island and uses the direct inputs to estimate the spillover effects that the net new spending or jobs have as these dollars circulate throughout the state's economy. This is captured in the indirect and induced impacts and is commonly called the "multiplier effect." See Attachment A for more information on economic impact analysis.





DIRECT SALES ACTIVITY

Businesses that utilize RI Grown and RI Seafood can benefit from various marketing resources that help increase sales. In October and November 2024, a survey was distributed to RI businesses to collect information about how the two brands help increase sales. This survey asked members how much of their annual sales they directly attributed to the buy local marketing initiatives, along with other questions (detailed later in this report).

The average annual sales that each brand-using business makes as a direct result of these marketing initiatives varies significantly by the overall size of the business and by brand. Overall, the average annual increase in sales due to RI Grown marketing is just under \$23,500. Meanwhile, the average annual increase in sales due to RI Seafood is just under \$1.5 million.

The difference in the average sales increase is primarily due to a difference in the mix of businesses that use each brand. RI Grown primarily consists of farms and agricultural producers. Meanwhile, RI Seafood includes restaurants, seafood markets and grocers, direct harvesters/sellers, and wholesalers. In fact, nearly half of RI Seafood members are seafood restaurants. Overall, businesses that utilize RI Seafood branding are more likely to be larger in terms of annual sales.

Currently, there are 29 RI Grown businesses and 128 RI Seafood businesses. Using the average brand-specific sales per business detailed above, the estimated direct sales generated by RI Grown is \$681,130, while the estimated direct sales generated by RI Seafood is \$189.4 million. These are used as the direct inputs to the economic impact model.

Average Annual Sales Per Member on RI Seafood and RI Grown Branded Products

Total Size of Business (Sales)	RI Grown	RI Seafood
Less than \$50,000	\$944	\$4,683
\$50,000 - \$500,000	\$29,002	\$39,500
\$500,000+	\$212,016	\$2,453,667
Weighted Average	\$23,487	\$1,479,644

Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey  
Note: Average Sales per Business for RI Grown has been weighted to better reflect the distribution of farms by size of sales in Rhode Island based on 2022 Census of Agriculture data.



Current Direct Sales of RI Grown and RI Seafood

	RI Grown	RI Seafood
Number of current users	29	128
Average \$ sales per business on branded products	\$23,487	\$1,479,644
Est. total sales on branded products	\$681,130	\$189,394,458

Source: Survey of RI Grown and RI Seafood members; Camoin Associates  
Note: Average Sales per Business for RI Grown has been weighted to better reflect the distribution of farms by size of sales in Rhode Island based on 2022 Census of Agriculture data.



# ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Based on the direct sales activity detailed on the previous page, the economic impacts of the RI Grown and RI Seafood brands are detailed in the tables below.

Indirect impacts are generated when RI Grown and RI Seafood members make purchases from other Rhode Island businesses. For example, when farmers purchase equipment and supplies from other Rhode Island businesses, further economic impact is generated. Meanwhile, induced impacts are generated when workers for RI Grown and RI Seafood members as well as workers at indirectly impacted businesses spend their new earnings within Rhode Island. Together, the indirect and induced impacts form the “multiplier effect”: for every dollar directly generated because of RI Grown and RI Seafood branding and marketing, additional ripple effects are generated elsewhere in Rhode Island’s economy.

## Annual Economic Impact of RI Grown

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	4	\$145,691	\$681,130
Indirect	1	\$37,845	\$118,580
Induced	1	\$75,009	\$181,740
Total	6	\$258,544	\$981,450

Source: Lightcast

## Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	1,643	\$68,033,460	\$189,394,457
Indirect	297	\$20,073,523	\$51,560,217
Induced	482	\$30,767,106	\$74,650,117
Total	2,422	\$118,874,089	\$315,604,791

Source: Lightcast





# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

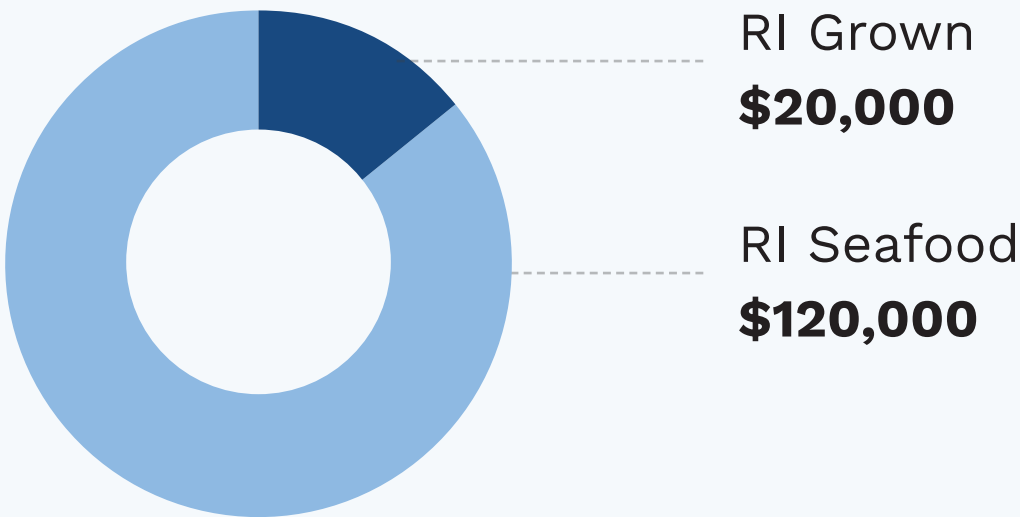
Currently, RI Grown and RI Seafood receive investment from the State of Rhode Island’s general revenue. RI Grown is a relatively new initiative and was allocated funding for the first time in FY2024 from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. RI Grown’s total state investment is currently \$20,000. RI Seafood’s current state investment is \$120,000 annually.

Based on \$20,000 of state investment, details about the return on investment (ROI) for RI Grown are detailed in the table to the right. Overall, the investment per job generated by the brand is \$3,624. Meanwhile, for every \$1 invested in RI Grown by the state, \$13 in earnings and \$49 in sales are generated throughout the state’s economy. Looking at only direct economic impacts, each \$1 of investment generates \$7 of earnings and \$34 of sales.

RI Seafood’s total funding is currently \$120,000. RI Seafood receives around \$20,000 annually from the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) Grants Program and was allocated \$100,000 of funding from the State of Rhode Island’s general revenue for the first time in FY2025. RI Seafood also generates a strong ROI for the state’s investment in the program. Currently, every \$50 of investment in RI Seafood generates a job in Rhode Island. Meanwhile, every \$1 invested in RI Seafood generates \$991 in earnings and \$2,630 in sales throughout the state’s economy. Looking at only direct economic impacts, each \$1 of investment generates \$567 of earnings and \$1,578 of sales in Rhode Island.

Total State Investment in RI Grown and RI Seafood Programs (2024)

Source: RI Grown, RI Seafood



Annual Economic Impact of RI Grown per \$1 of State Investment

	Investment per Job	Earnings ROI	Sales ROI
Direct Only	\$5,438	\$7	\$34
Total	\$3,624	\$13	\$49

Source: Lightcast

Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood per \$1 of State Investment

	Investment per Job	Earnings ROI	Sales ROI
Direct Only	\$73	\$567	\$1,578
Total	\$50	\$991	\$2,630

Source: Lightcast





## TAX REVENUE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In addition to jobs, earnings, and sales, the economic activity generated by RI Grown and RI Seafood also generates tax revenue in the form of personal income taxes. Based on data from 2022 (the most recent data for total individual income taxes available), the average effective income tax rate in Rhode Island is 2.752%.

This average effective income tax rate is applied to the total new earnings generated by current economic activity to estimate the total personal income tax generated by RI Grown and RI Seafood. The table to the right details the annual income tax revenue impact of the two brands.

For every dollar that the state currently invests in RI Grown, it receives an estimated \$0.36 back in income taxes. For RI Seafood, every state dollar invested generates an estimated \$27.26 in income taxes. Overall, the *combined* annual income tax revenue return on investment from RI Grown and RI Seafood is \$23.42.

*It is important to note that additional tax revenue is generated by the marketing activity. This includes sales tax revenue, as the local brands' marketing contributes to higher sales. The current economic impact of the brands is over \$981,000 of sales for RI Grown and over \$315.6 million of sales for RI Seafood. These new sales generate additional sales tax revenue for the State of Rhode Island that is not quantified in this analysis.*

### Estimated Average Effective Income Tax Rate in Rhode Island, 2022

Total Individual Income Taxes (millions of dollars)	\$1,939
Total Personal Income (millions of dollars)	\$70,450
<b>Average Effective Income Tax Rate</b>	<b>2.752%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 Annual Survey of State Government Finances; Bureau of Economic Analysis State Annual Personal Income

### Annual Income Tax Revenue of RI Grown and RI Seafood

	RI Grown	RI Seafood	Total
Total New Earnings (Direct, Indirect and Induced)	\$248,544	\$118,874,089	\$119,132,634
Average Income Tax Rate in Rhode Island	2.752%	2.752%	2.752%
Total Annual Income Tax Revenue	\$7,116	\$3,271,766	\$3,278,882
State Investment in Program	\$20,000	\$120,000	\$140,000
Income Tax Return on Investment	\$0.36	\$27.26	\$23.42

Source: Lightcast, Camoin Associates, RI Grown, RI Seafood



# Potential Economic Impacts of RI Grown and RI Seafood

The following section explores the potential economic impacts of increased investment in the RI Grown and RI Seafood programs. By modeling the effects of enhanced funding and programmatic support, this analysis demonstrates how strategic investments could drive greater economic activity, including job creation, increased income, and expanded market opportunities for local producers.

With more resources, RI Grown and RI Seafood could enhance marketing, offer more resources to businesses, and generate higher impact. The key assumption for the potential economic impact analysis is that greater investment into each brand will generate proportionally higher impacts in terms of jobs, earnings, and sales. This is modeled based on the ROI estimated in the previous section, combined with three potential investment scenarios. The three scenarios can be described as the following:

- High Growth Scenario – RI Grown and RI Seafood receive the ideal, “dream scenario” amount of funding to the programs.
- Moderate Growth Scenario – Funding to each brand increases to half of the “dream scenario” amount.

- Status Quo Scenario – Under the Status Quo, RI Grown and RI Seafood’s state funding grows in parallel to the overall state budget’s growth.

The Status Quo Scenario is based on average growth in Rhode Island’s overall state expenditures. Based on the state’s budget proposals for FY2021 through FY2025, Rhode Island’s expenditures across all funds have grown at a compound annual growth rate of 6% over the last five fiscal years. Therefore, under the Status Quo Scenario, investment in each brand is assumed to grow by 6%.

Under the High Growth Scenario, RI Grown receives \$200,000 of annual state funding, while RI Seafood receives \$1 million bi-annually, or \$500,000 annually. Therefore, the Moderate Growth Scenario assumes \$100,000 of investment in RI Grown and \$250,000 in RI Seafood.



POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RI GROWN

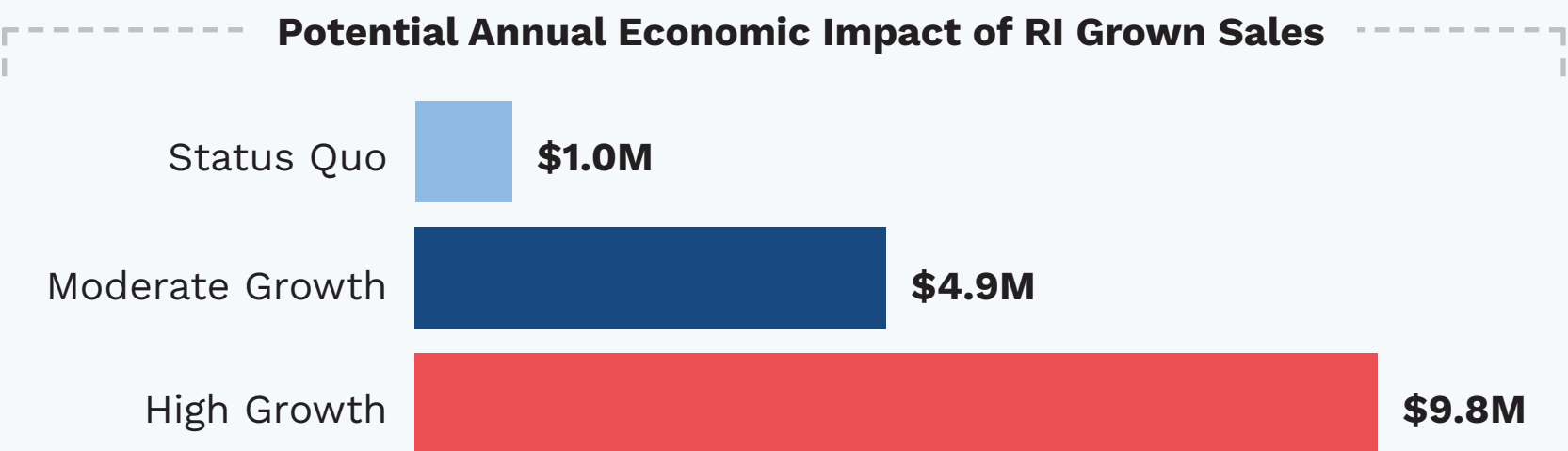
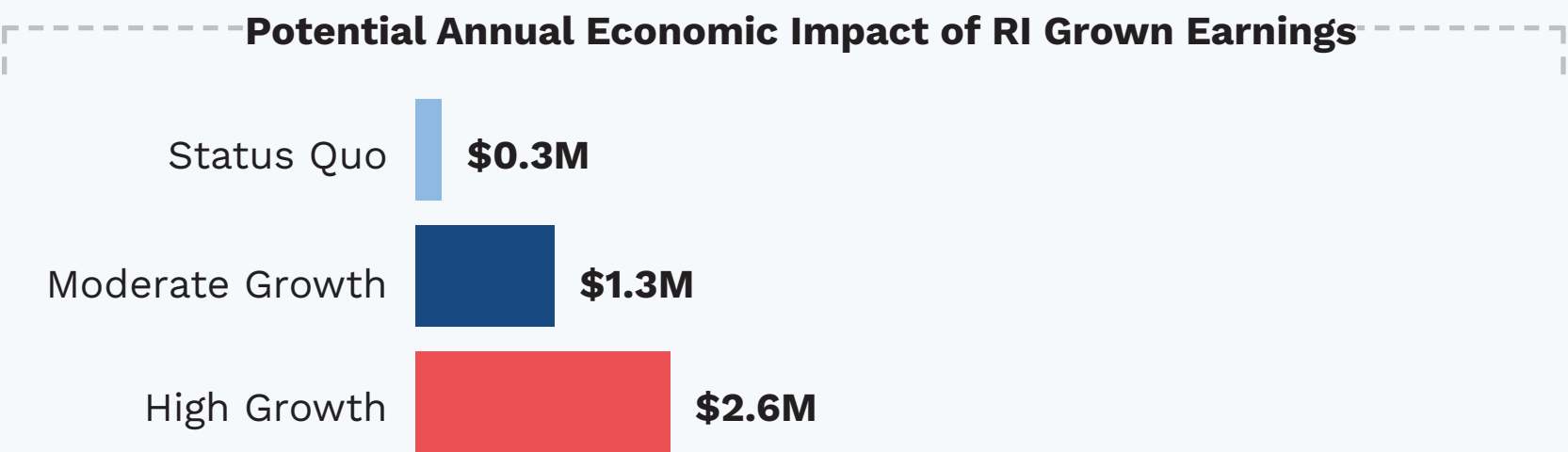
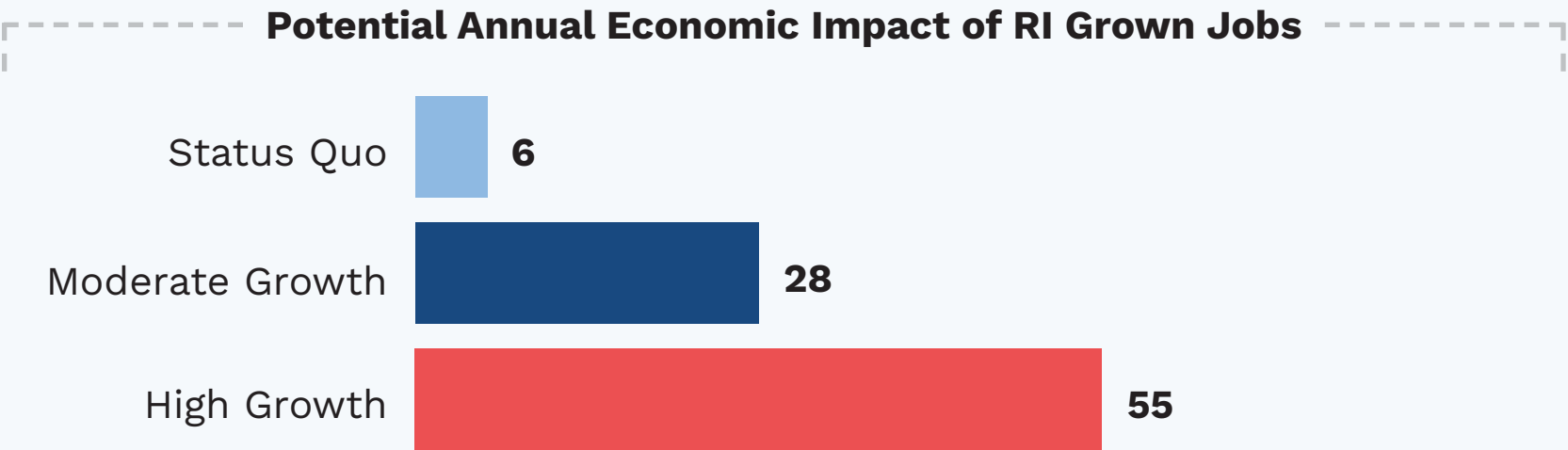
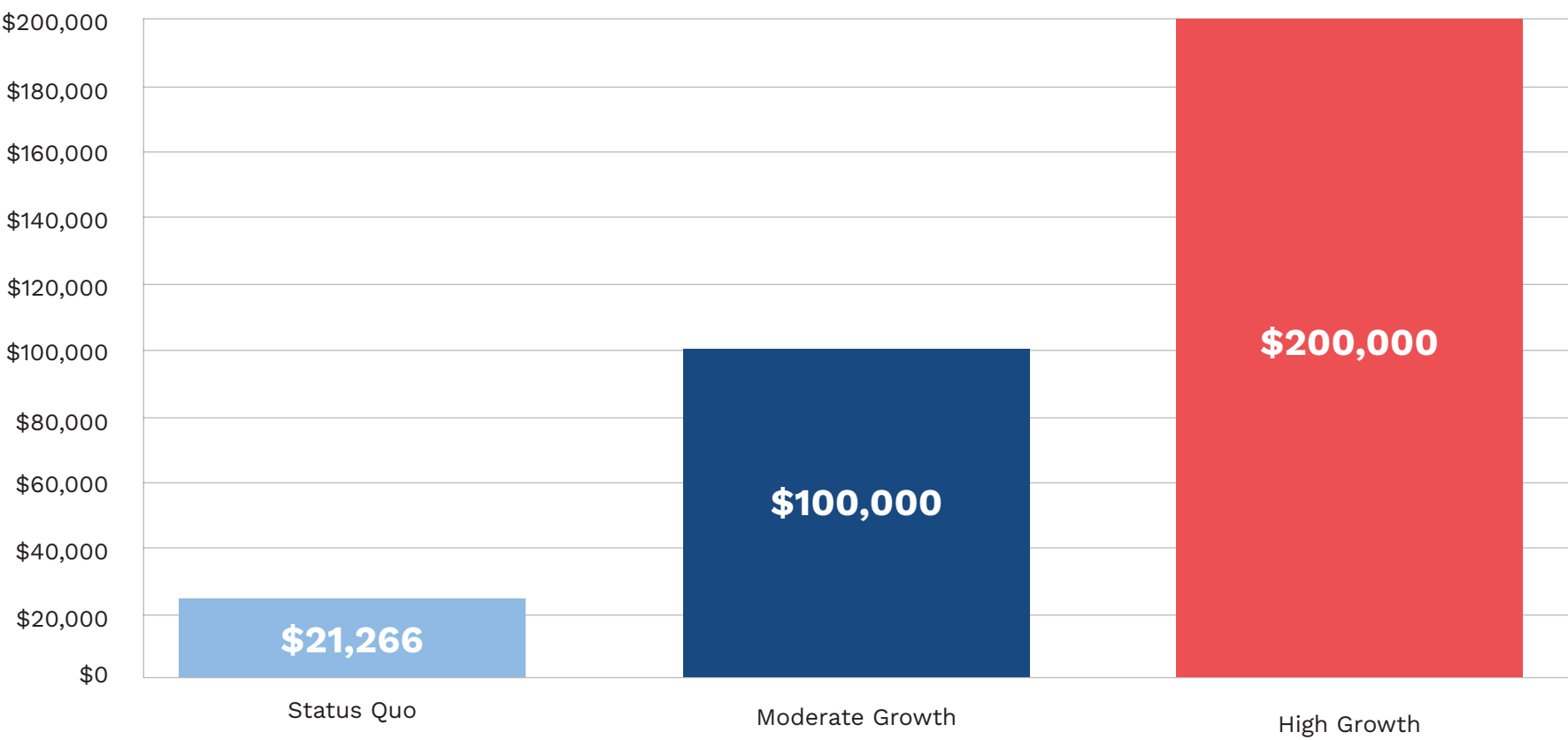
The date on this page and the following page references total direct, indirect, and induced jobs, earnings, and sales. For more detailed breakdowns of the economic impact of each scenario, see Attachment B.

The Status Quo scenario is not significantly higher than the current economic impacts. However, the Moderate Growth Scenario has approximately a 5x impact, while the High Growth Scenario would lead to an approximate 10x impact. Under the Moderate Growth Scenario, RI Grown would generate a total economic impact of 28 jobs, \$1.3 million in earnings, and \$4.9 million in sales. Under the High Growth Scenario, the program’s impact would be 55 jobs, \$2.6 million in earnings, and \$9.8 million in sales statewide.

These impacts do not consider the additional funding that can be leveraged by increased state investment into the brand. With additional resources and staff capacity, RI Grown could leverage additional public or private funding.

*The impact on sales directly occurring at RI Grown businesses would be \$3.4 million under the Moderate Growth Scenario or \$6.8 million under the High Growth Scenario.*

Annual State Investment Scenarios



Source: Lightcast, Camoin Associates



POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RI SEAFOOD

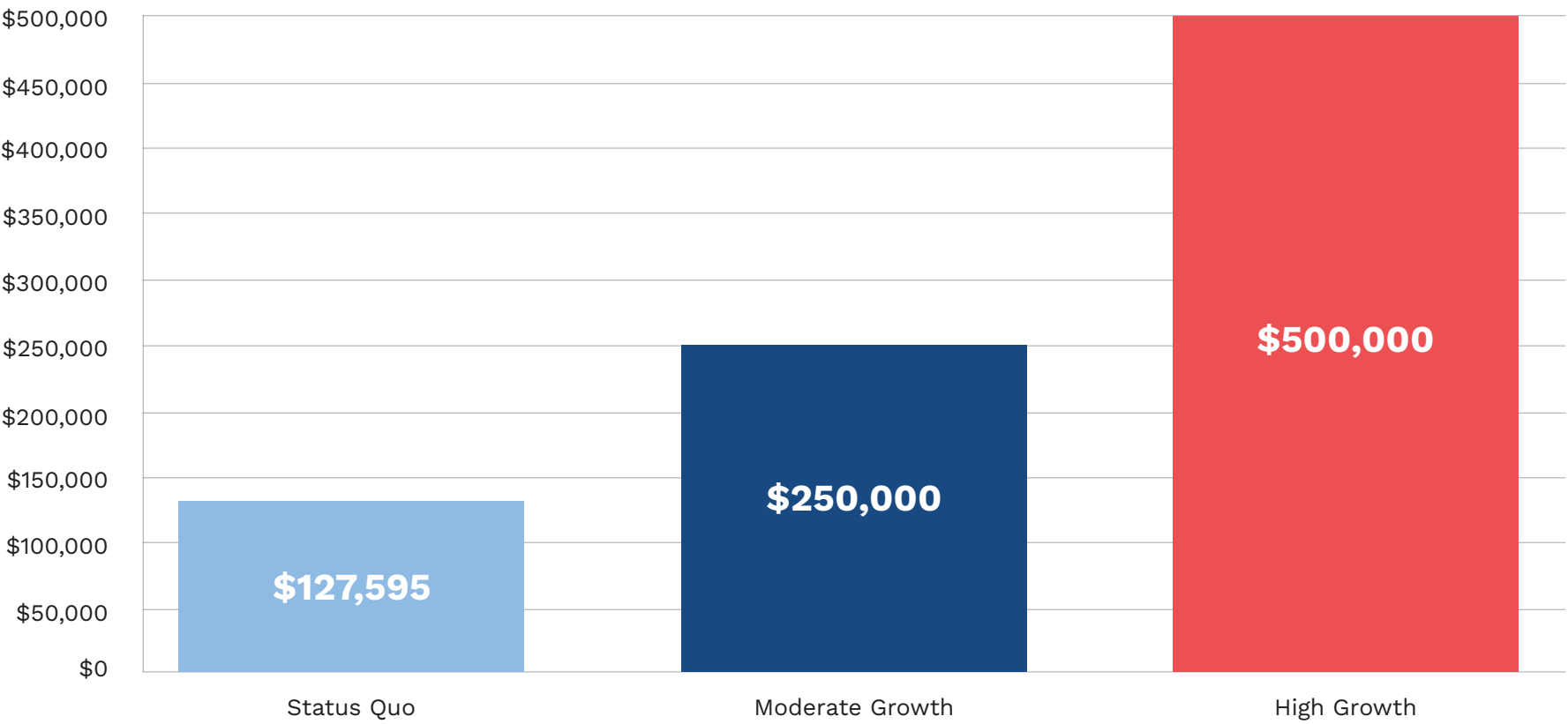
Similar to RI Grown, the Status Quo Scenario does not generate significantly greater impacts compared to the current economic impact of RI Seafood. However, the Moderate Growth Scenario would generate double the impact, and the High Growth Scenario would generate four times the impact compared to the Status Quo Scenario.

Under the Moderate Growth Scenario, RI Seafood would have a total economic impact of over 5,000 jobs, nearly \$250 million in earnings, and over \$657 million in sales. Under the High Growth Scenario, RI Seafood would generate over 10,000 jobs, \$495 million in earnings, and over \$1.3 billion in total sales throughout Rhode Island.

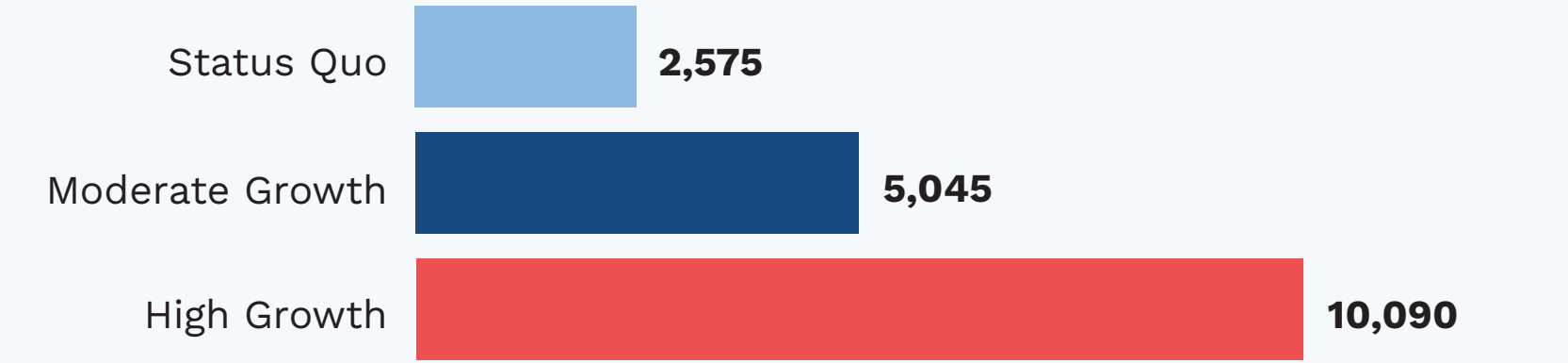
These impacts do not consider the additional funding that can be leveraged by increased state investment into the brand. With additional resources and staff capacity, RI Seafood could leverage additional public or private funding.

*The impact on sales directly occurring at RI Seafood businesses would be nearly \$400 million under the Moderate Growth Scenario or nearly \$790 million under the High Growth Scenario.*

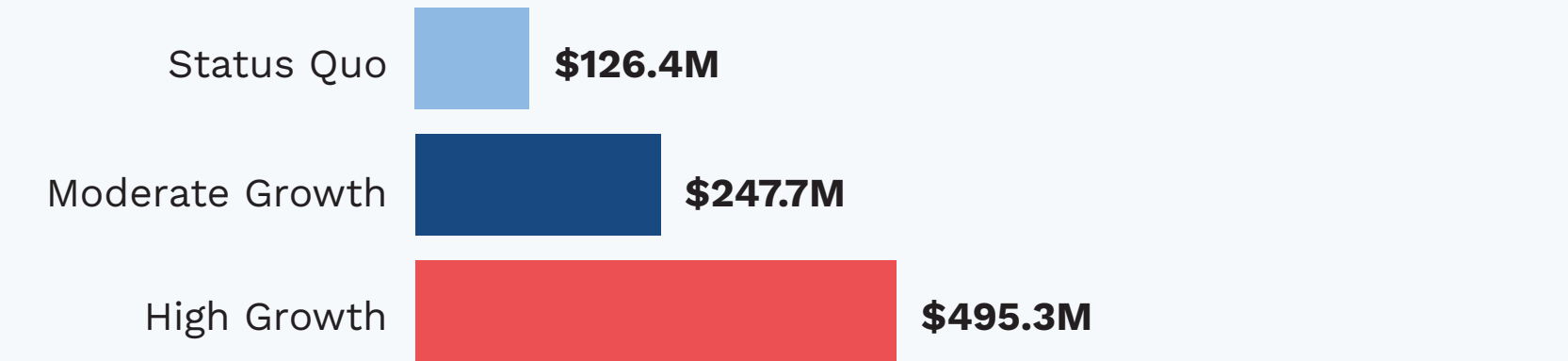
Annual State Investment Scenarios



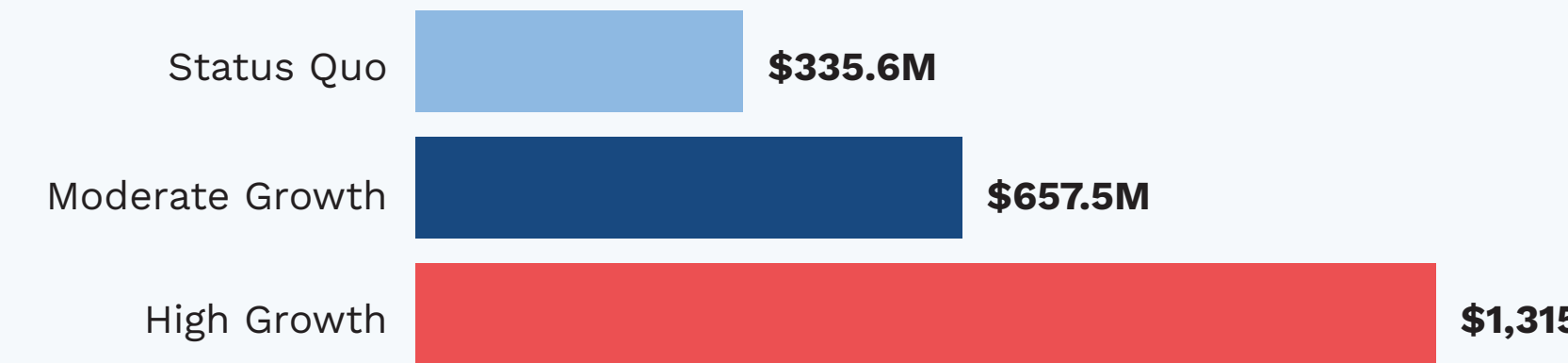
Potential Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood Jobs



Potential Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood Earnings



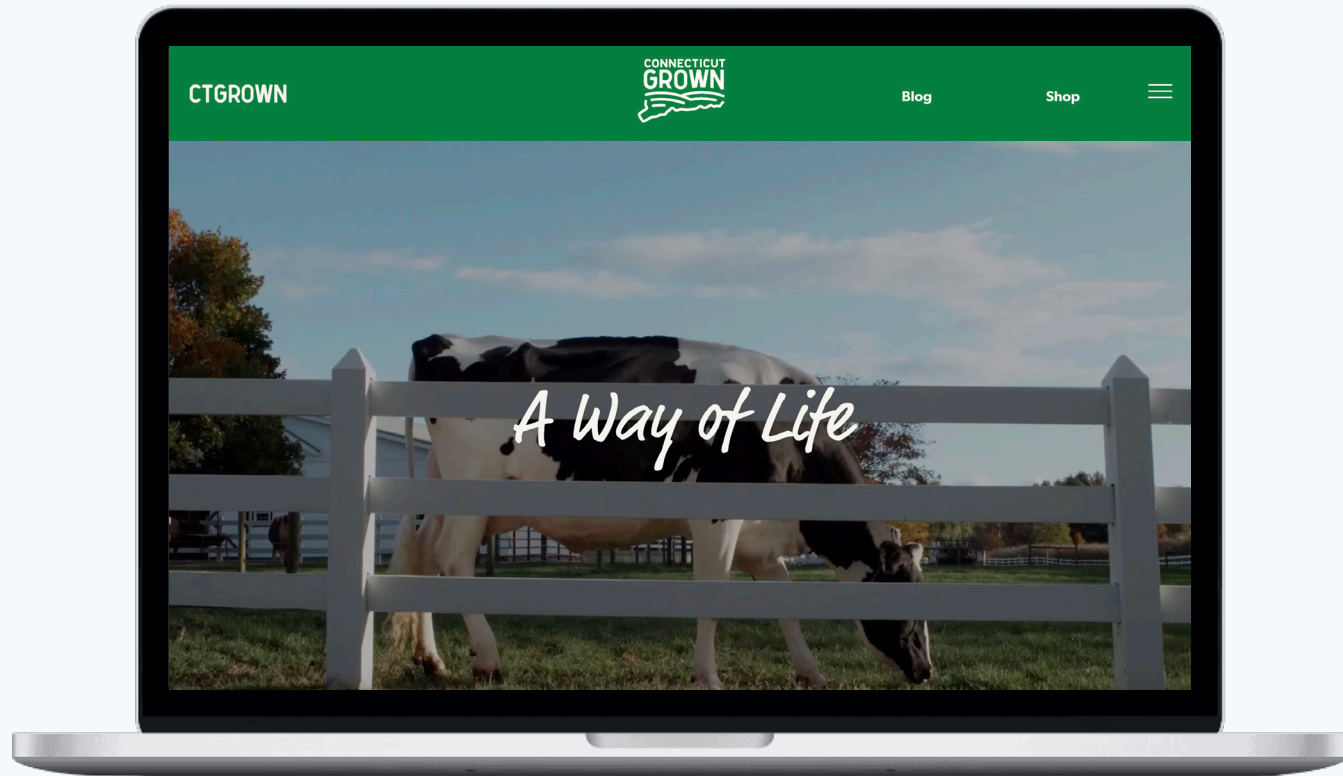
Potential Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood Sales



Source: Lightcast, Camoin Associates



FUNDING FOR COMPARABLE STATE-LED LOCAL FOOD BRAND INITIATIVES



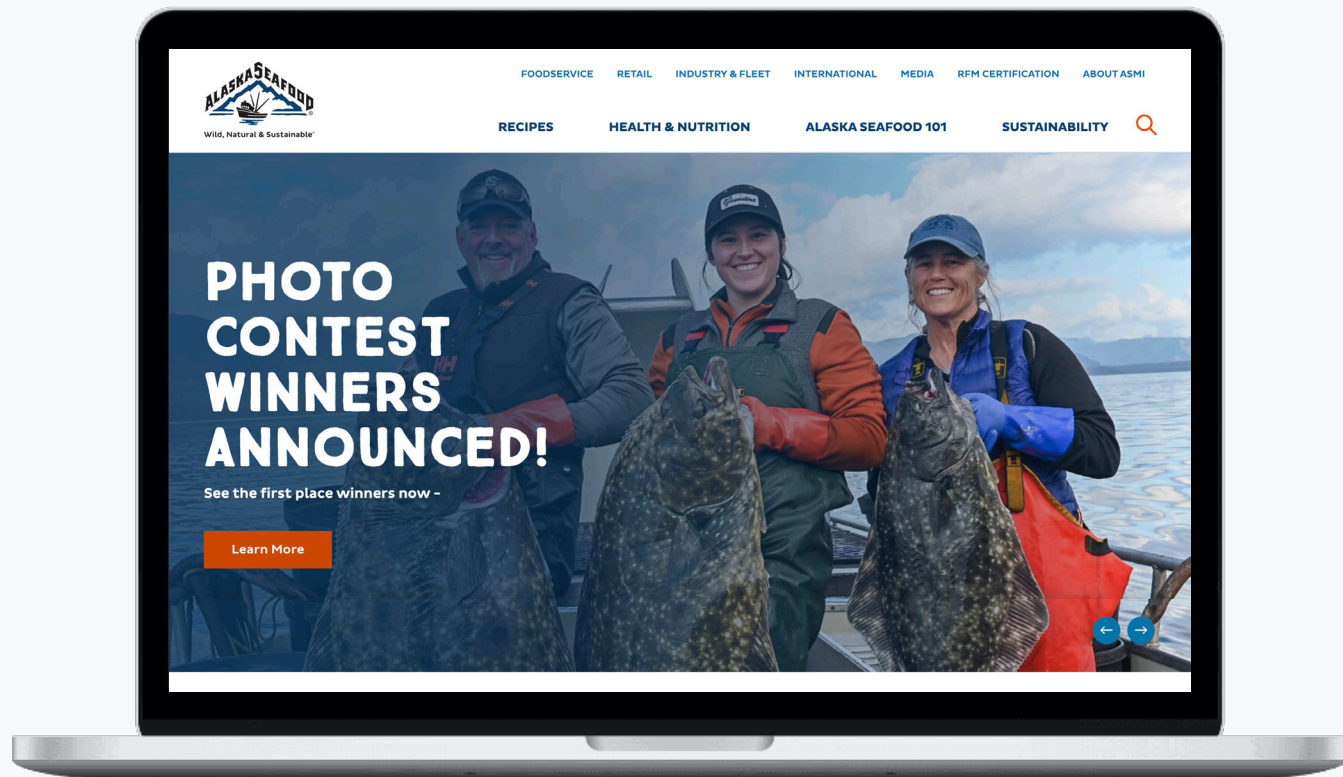
\$100,000

The allocation amount the Connecticut Grown Initiative receives annually through the state’s Community Investment Act.



\$20,000

RI Grown’s total funding is currently \$20,000, which was received for the first time in FY2024 from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.



\$14.2M

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute’s total funding from a state tax (5% assessment based on the value of catches) in FY2023.



\$120,000

RI Seafood receives \$20,000 annually from the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) Grants Program and was allocated \$100,000 from the state’s general revenue for the first time in FY2025.



# Additional Impacts & Survey Takeaways

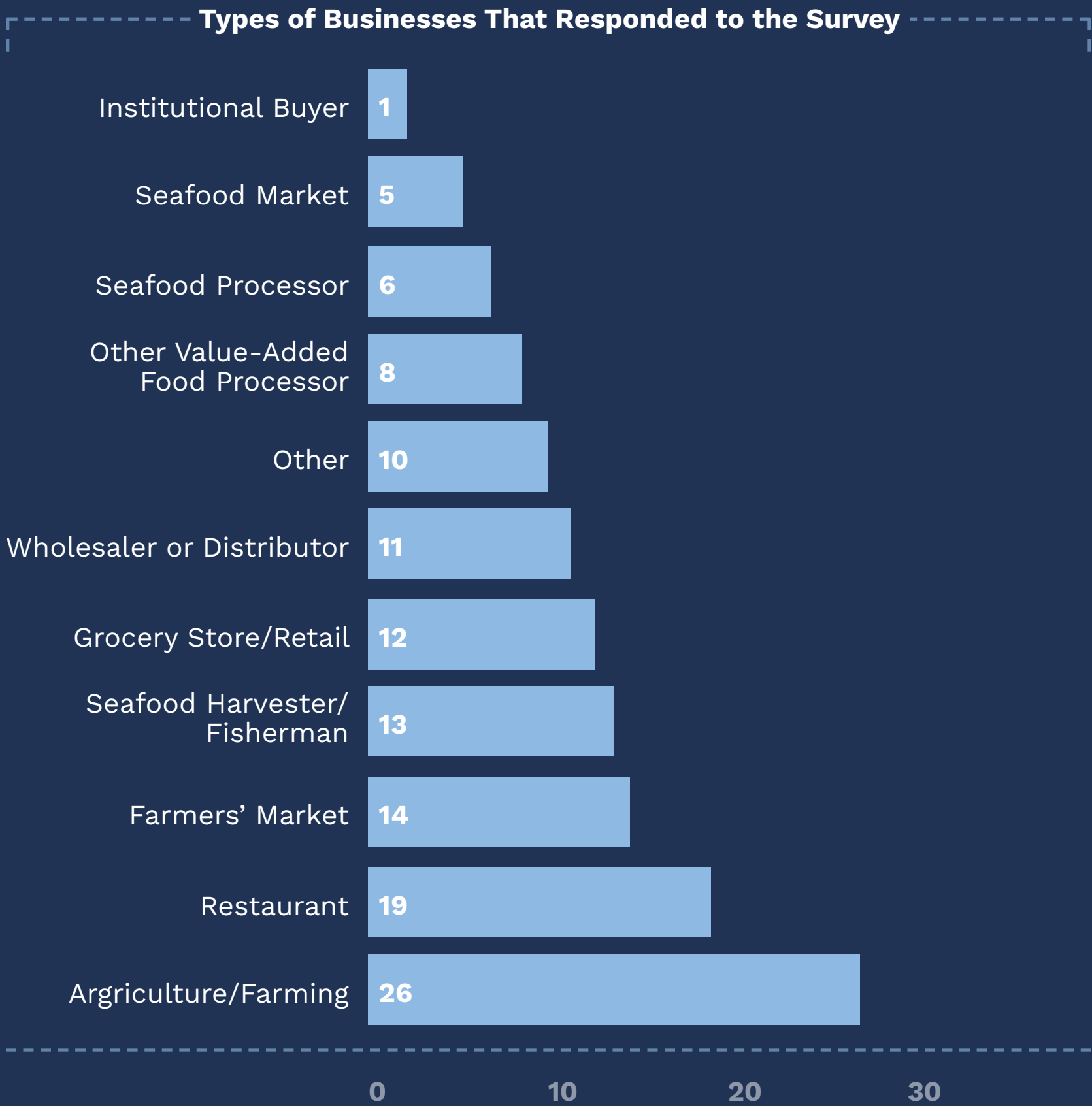
In addition to questions about direct sales activity used in the economic impact model, the economic impact survey provides additional context surrounding the brands’ benefit to businesses and perceptions of marketing. These results are detailed below.

In total, there were 91 total responses to the survey:

- 17 responses from businesses utilizing RI Grown
- 21 responses from businesses utilizing RI Seafood
- 22 responses from businesses utilizing both brands\*
- 28 responses from business that do not utilize the brands
- 3 responses from people who did not know whether they were utilized either brand

The survey was administered online and was available in October and November 2024.

For all RI Grown sales data, the average sales per member were weighted using data from the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Responses were adjusted to reflect the distribution of sales across different farm sizes. The group of respondents involved in both seafood and agriculture likely had minimal impact on the final direct sales figures, as the results were weighted according to overall farm size distribution.



*\* Of these respondents, only 10 provided information about the sales of RI Seafood and RI Grown branded products, 4 selected seafood market, grocery/retail, 4 selected restaurant, and 2 selected either seafood harvester/fishermen and/or agriculture/farming as their business type.*





### RI GROWN AND RI SEAFOOD BENEFITS TO MEMBER BUSINESSES

Better consumer awareness is by far the greatest perceived benefit of being a member of either brand. In total, around two-thirds of respondents that utilize the branding agreed that better consumer awareness is one of the greatest benefits. Other key perceived benefits are new collaborations, general benefits from marketing, and access to marketing toolkits, each of which were selected by more than one-third of respondents.

Notably, social media and online presence was recognized as a specific way that the brands have influenced sales growth by many respondents.

47% of respondents who provided specific examples of benefits mentioned social media and the online presence of the brands. Other specific benefits were point of sale (POS) materials, promotion of consumer awareness, improving consumer sentiment about the fishery, and that the brands imply state support of locally produced food.

Greatest Benefit of Being an RI Grown or RI Seafood Member

	% of Responses
Better consumer awareness	69%
New collaborations/professional relationships	48%
Benefits from general marketing efforts for agriculture or seafood	48%
Access to marketing toolkits	34%
Access to wholesalers and/or distributors	17%
Access to buyers	17%
Increased value of products	17%
Access to producers	10%
Access to processors	7%
Cost savings	7%
Other	7%

Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey





**“The appearance and endorsement on Facebook gave confidence and impetus to my efforts.”**

—Survey Respondent

**“Promoting RI Seafood online raises awareness and drives customers to our website”**

—Survey Respondent



Approximately 44% of brand users believe RI Grown and RI Seafood have positively impacted their business, while just under half feel neutral about the brands’ impacts.

The perceived benefits of using the brands are strongest for businesses who utilize the RI Seafood brand, where 53% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I believe that being a member of RI Seafood has positively impacted my business.”

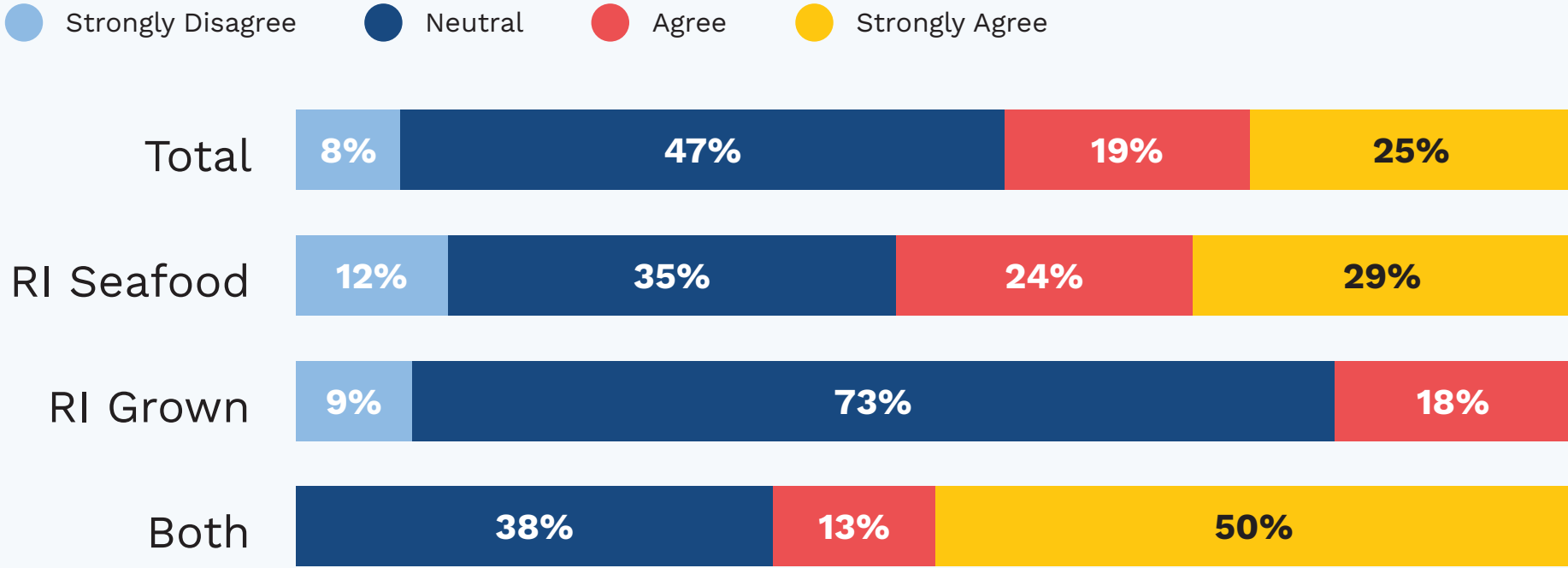
Users of the RI Grown brand were less likely to agree with this statement (18%). Given the novelty of the RI Grown brand, many of these businesses responded that they were neutral to this statement (73%). The perceived benefits will likely become more pronounced as the brand grows and establishes itself.

Meanwhile, 53% of brand-utilizing businesses said that RI Grown and/or RI Seafood drive sales, with 28% reporting that more than 10% of their sales came as a result of the buy local promotion.

Among smaller businesses, or those with annual sales less than \$50,000, more than one-third reported that more than 10% of sales came from marketing efforts, the largest share. This indicates the strong benefits that the brands provide to small producers and sellers.

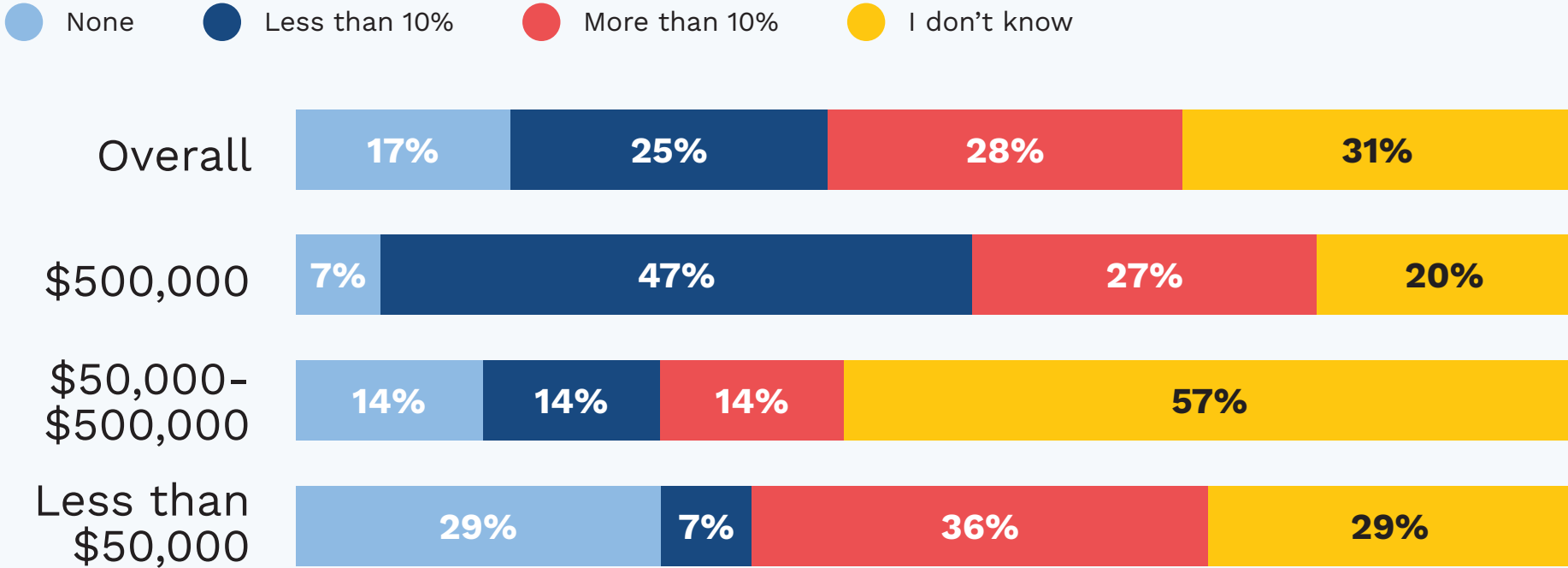
Large businesses, or those with annual sales greater than \$500,000, had the largest share reporting a sales boost from RI Grown/RI Seafood buy local promotion. Among these large businesses, nearly three-quarters reported a sales boost, with over a quarter reporting that more than 10% of sales came as a result of the marketing.

“I believe that being a member has positively impacted my business.”



Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey

What percentage of your sales do you feel came as a result of RI Grown/RI Seafood buy local promotion? By total size of business



Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey



Social media is the top response that businesses gave regarding how they interact with the RI Grown and RI Seafood brand. Overall, 38% of respondents said that they use RI Grown or RI Seafood on social media. Also among the top responses are menus/store signage, collateral material, and on market promotion items.

“Please indicate which of the following ways you have utilized the RI Grown or RI Seafood Brands”

	RI Grown	RI Seafood	Both Brands	Total
On my social media	9%	56%	43%	38%
On menus or store signage	18%	38%	29%	29%
I don't utilize the brand	36%	19%	29%	29%
On collateral material	9%	19%	29%	18%
On my market promotion items such as flags, branded market signs and tags, or large-format logo stickers	18%	13%	29%	18%
On my product labeling	0%	25%	14%	15%
On distribution materials	0%	25%	0%	12%
Other	9%	19%	0%	12%
On my website	0%	13%	14%	9%
On trucks or equipment	0%	13%	0%	6%

Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey





PERCEPTIONS OF MARKETING

There is strong recognition that marketing is valuable to businesses, regardless of brand utilization. Approximately 90% of both RI Grown and RI Seafood brand users that responded to the survey either agree or strongly agree with the statement, “I see the value in Marketing.” Meanwhile, 95% of the businesses that don’t use the brands that responded either agreed or strongly agreed.

Across all brand affiliation statuses, spending on marketing is relatively consistent. Around half of responding businesses in each user category said that they spend between 1-5% of their revenue on marketing, with the exception of RI Seafood (63%). Very few businesses reported that they spend 0% on marketing, and similarly very few report spending more than 25% on marketing.

**Consumers Tend to Learn About Local Food Brands and Products in Stores and Online**

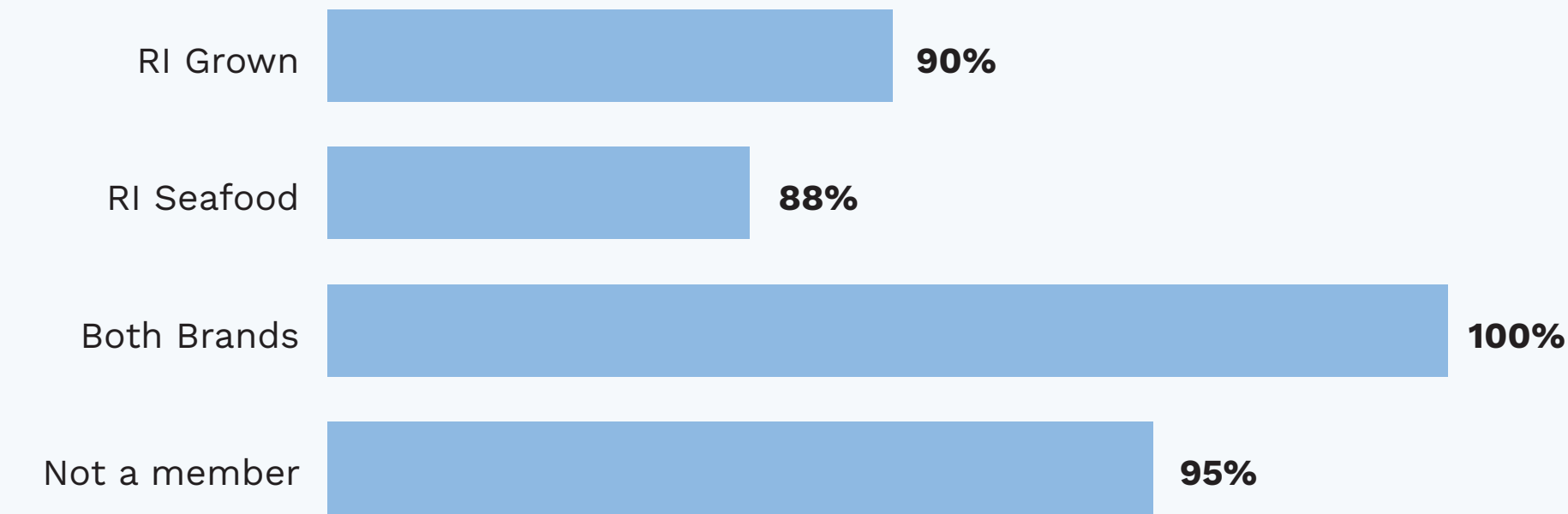
Marketing plays a vital role in increasing consumer awareness of locally grown products. The promotion of the RI Grown and RI Seafood brands has proven effective in boosting brand recognition.

According to a 2024 survey of Rhode Island consumers, the three most prominent locations where consumers learn about local food brands are:

- In grocery stores
- In smaller or specialty markets
- Online

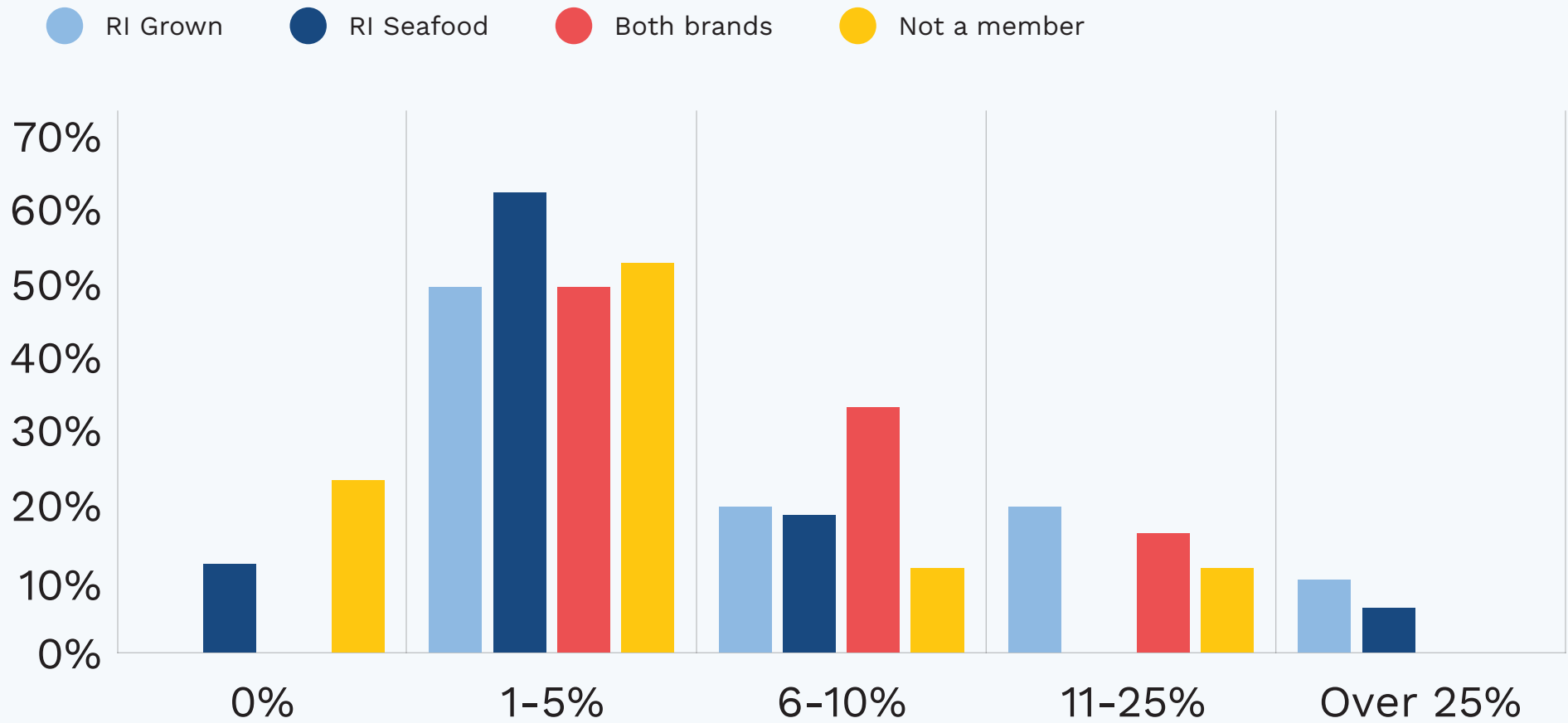
Source: Blaze Partners - 2024 Consumer Awareness Survey

Agree/Strongly Agree: I see the Value in Marketing



Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey

About how much of the money you make each year goes towards marketing?



Source: 2024 Economic Impact Survey



# Appendix



## ATTACHMENT A: WHAT IS AN ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS?

The purpose of conducting an economic impact study is to ascertain the total cumulative changes in employment, earnings, and output in a given economy due to some initial “change in final demand”. To understand the meaning of “change in final demand”, consider the installation of a new widget manufacturer in Anytown, USA. The widget manufacturer sells \$1 million worth of its widgets per year exclusively to consumers in Canada. Therefore, the annual change in final demand in the United States is \$1 million because dollars are flowing in from outside the United States and are therefore “new” dollars in the economy.

This change in final demand translates into the first round of buying and selling that occurs in an economy. For example, the widget manufacturer must buy its inputs of production (electricity, steel, etc.), must lease or purchase property and pay its workers. This first round is commonly referred to as the “Direct Effects” of the change in final demand and is the basis of additional rounds of buying and selling described below.

To continue this example, the widget manufacturer’s vendors (the supplier of electricity and the supplier of steel) will enjoy additional output (i.e., sales) that will sustain their businesses and cause them to make additional purchases in the economy. The steel producer will need more pig iron, and the electric company will purchase additional power from generation entities. In this second round, some of those additional purchases will be made in the US economy and some will “leak out”. What remains will cause a third round (with leakage) and a fourth (and so on) in ever-diminishing rounds of industry-to-industry purchases. Finally, the widget manufacturer has employees who will naturally spend their wages. Again, those wages spent will either be for local goods and services or will “leak” out of the economy. The purchases of local goods and services will then stimulate other local economic activity. Together, these effects are referred to as the “Indirect Effects” of the change in final demand.

Therefore, the total economic impact resulting from the new widget manufacturer is the initial \$1 million of new money (i.e., Direct Effects) flowing in the US economy, plus the Indirect Effects. The ratio of Total Effects to Direct Effects is called the “multiplier effect” and is often reported as a dollar-of-impact per dollar-of-change. Therefore, a multiplier of 2.4 means that for every dollar (\$1) of change in final demand, an additional \$1.40 of indirect economic activity occurs for a total of \$2.40.

Key information for the reader to retain is that this type of analysis requires rigorous and careful consideration of the geography selected (i.e., how the “local economy” is defined) and the implications of the geography on the computation of the change in final demand. If this analysis wanted to consider the impact of the widget manufacturer on the entire North American continent, it would have to conclude that the change in final demand is zero and therefore the economic impact is zero. This is because the \$1 million of widgets being purchased by Canadians is not causing total North American demand to increase by \$1 million. Presumably, those Canadian purchasers will have \$1 million less to spend on other items and the effects of additional widget production will be canceled out by a commensurate reduction in the purchases of other goods and services.

Changes in final demand, and therefore Direct Effects, can occur in a number of circumstances. The above example is easiest to understand: the effect of a manufacturer producing locally but selling globally. If, however, 100% of domestic demand for a good is being met by foreign suppliers (say, DVD players being imported into the US from Korea and Japan), locating a manufacturer of DVD players in the US will cause a change in final demand because all of those dollars currently leaving the US economy will instead remain. A situation can be envisioned whereby a producer is serving both local and foreign demand, and an impact analysis would have to be careful in calculating how many “new” dollars the producer would be causing to occur domestically.



ATTACHMENT B: DATA TABLES - DETAILED POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RI GROWN AND RI SEAFOOD

STATUS QUO SCENARIO

Annual Economic Impact of RI Grown

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	4	\$154,912	\$724,241
Indirect	1	\$40,240	\$126,085
Induced	1	\$79,757	\$193,243
Total	6	\$274,908	\$1,043,569

Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	1,747	\$72,339,488	\$201,381,762
Indirect	316	\$21,344,033	\$54,823,607
Induced	512	\$32,714,443	\$79,374,931
Total	2,575	\$126,397,963	\$335,580,300

MODERATE GROWTH SCENARIO

Annual Economic Impact of RI Grown

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	18	\$728,453	\$3,405,650
Indirect	3	\$189,224	\$592,901
Induced	6	\$375,045	\$908,701
Total	28	\$1,292,722	\$4,907,252

Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	3,423	\$141,736,374	\$394,571,785
Indirect	618	\$41,819,840	\$107,417,119
Induced	1,003	\$64,098,138	\$155,521,076
Total	5,045	\$247,654,352	\$657,509,981

HIGH GROWTH SCENARIO

Annual Economic Impact of RI Grown

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	37	\$1,456,907	\$6,811,300
Indirect	7	\$378,447	\$1,185,802
Induced	12	\$750,091	\$1,817,403
Total	55	\$2,585,444	\$9,814,505

Annual Economic Impact of RI Seafood

	Jobs	Earnings	Sales
Direct	6,847	\$283,472,748	\$789,143,571
Indirect	1,237	\$83,639,680	\$214,834,238
Induced	2,007	\$128,196,277	\$311,042,153
Total	10,090	\$495,308,705	\$1,315,019,961

Source: Lightcast, Camoin Associates



## ATTACHMENT C: DATA SOURCES ABOUT LIGHTCAST

Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass) is a global leader in labor market analytics, offering a data platform that gives a comprehensive, nuanced, and up-to-date picture of labor markets at all scales from national to local. Key components of the platform include traditional labor market information, job postings analytics, talent profile data, compensation data, and skills analytics. Lightcast integrates government data with information from online job postings, talent profiles, and resumes to produce timely intelligence on the state of the labor market. Job and compensation data is available by industry, occupation, educational program, and skill type. Learn more at [lightcast.io](https://lightcast.io).

A survey was distributed to both members and non-members of RI Grown and RI Seafood to collect information about the brands, how businesses use the brands, and the total sales generated by RI Grown and RI Seafood marketing. The survey was available online during October and November 2024 and was distributed with the assistance of partners.





## ABOUT CAMOIN ASSOCIATES

As the nation's only full-service economic development and lead generation consulting firm, Camoin Associates empowers communities through human connection backed by robust analytics.

Since 1999, Camoin Associates has helped local and state governments, economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses across the country generate economic results marked by resiliency and prosperity.

To learn more about our experience and projects in all of our service lines, please visit our website at [camoinassociates.com](https://camoinassociates.com). You can also find us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

### The Project Team

Rachel Selsky, CEO  
*Project Principal*

Angela Hallowell  
*Analyst and Project Manager*



## ABOUT BLAZE PARTNERS

Blaze Partners is a full-service advertising and digital marketing agency based in Falmouth, Maine, and proudly certified as a B Corp.

Blaze brings valuable experience in state-sponsored local food branding, having worked on similar projects with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). We have extensive knowledge of the impact that state organizations like Real Maine (and RI Grown/RI Seafood) can have on the state economy. Building a passion for local foods and beverages is something we've done not only for state organizations, but also for New England-based food brands like Grandy Oats and Pineland Natural Meats.

We're proud to be partnering with RI Commerce, as well as the RI Grown and RI Seafood teams, on this exciting project to build the case for investment in Rhode Island's local food brands, and test marketing strategies to grow awareness of, and participation in the brands.

To learn more about our experience and projects in all of our service lines, please visit our website at [blaze-partners.com](https://blaze-partners.com). You can also find us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).



### The Project Team

Jenna Klein Jonsson, Managing Partner  
*Project Principal*

Stevie Carey  
*Project Lead*