



# Small and Artisan Grains Market in Minnesota



## Market Spotlight

This report highlights the market for small and artisan grains in Minnesota. AURI used publicly available information to analyze production trends, buyers, and existing opportunities. This document is part of a series of market spotlights from AURI on Minnesota's different agricultural and food industries.

## Industry Outlook

Small and artisan grains comprise less than 10% of the total field crops grown in Minnesota. Corn and soybeans dominate field crop production in the state, and farmers are wary of diversifying their cash crop grain options (Asprooth et al., 2023).

This report delves into the production trends and market dynamics for small and artisan grains in Minnesota, including barley, rye, buckwheat, emmer, and spelt. AURI selected these grains from the Artisan Grain Collaborative (AGC) website, which works to create a strong and diverse regional grain shed. Currently, markets for most crops are not fully developed, and data is scarce.



## Market Supply

Figures 1 and 2 show Minnesota's production and harvested acres of select small and artisan grains.

- Data from the USDA-NASS shows that Minnesota produces less barley than in years past. Barley production decreased by 30% from 6.1 million bushels in 2012 to 4 million bushels in 2022.

The production of other small grains increased during the 2012–2022 period.

- In 2012, Minnesota only produced 285,000 bushels of rye for grains. Production reached more than 2 million bushels in 2022.

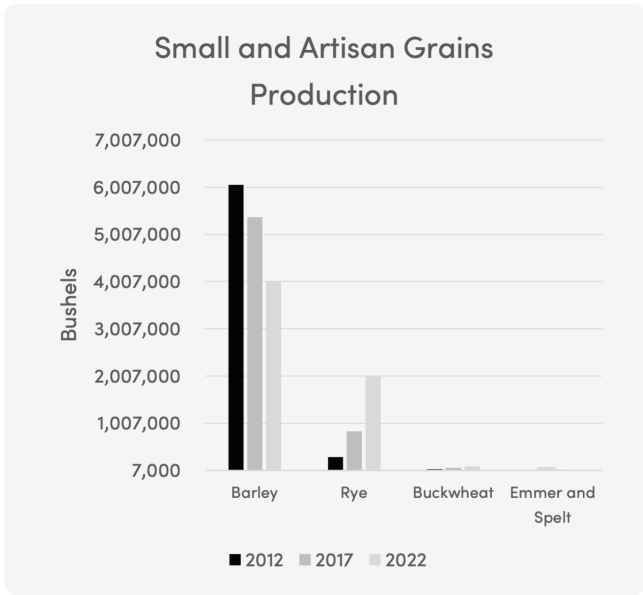


Figure 1. Production of small and artisan grains in Minnesota (USDA-NASS, 2024).

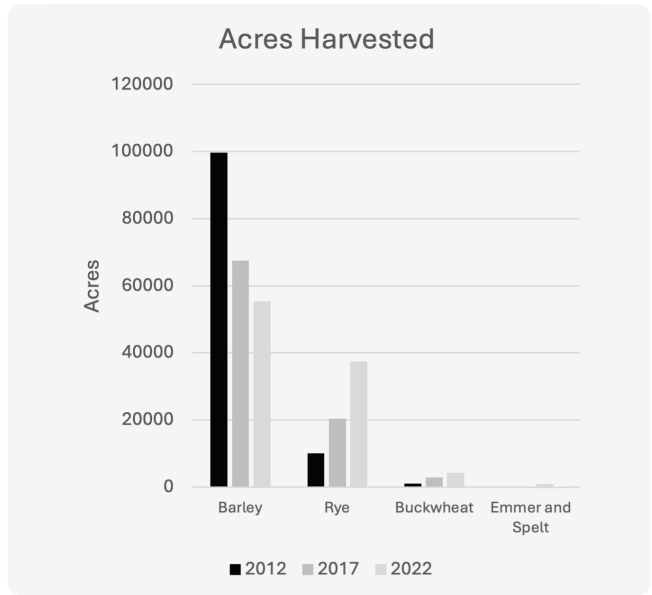


Figure 2. Acres harvested of small and artisan grains in Minnesota (USDA-NASS, 2024).

- Buckwheat output more than tripled in Minnesota between 2012 to 2022. Production increased from 27,000 bushels (1,038 acres harvested) in 2012 to 93,000 (4,328 acres harvested) in 2022.
- In 2022, 7,200 bushels of emmer and spelt were produced from only three farms. Emmer and spelt production are nascent in Minnesota, and neither were reported in 2017.
- There is no reported data on the production of einkorn in Minnesota.

## Market Demand

Data scarcity prevents the assessment of Minnesota’s market demand for small and artisan grains. More market research is needed to understand the demand for small and artisan grains from Minnesota grain buyers. However, research shows that consumer tastes are changing, and they are interested in local, flavorful, and healthy grains, which may increase demand for small and artisan grains.

### Market considerations:

- The lack of grain elevators, co-ops, and millers working with small and artisan grains drives many farmers to work independently. This can be challenging as they lack access to cleaning facilities, sufficient storage space, or equipment to transport the grain they produce.
- Artisan grains are typically used for food, while many small grains are used for animal feed. The American Feed Association shows that Minnesota used 300,000 tons of small grains (barley, wheat, oats, and millet) for feed in 2020.
- In 2021, the U.S. produced 9.8 million bushels of rye and imported 10.3 million (USDA-ERS, 2024). For the same year, 120 million bushels of barley were produced in the U.S., and 14.7 million were imported.

# Who are the buyers of artisan grains in Minnesota?

This section presents some of the state's small and artisan grain buyers. AURI collected the list from conversations with experts and from the Artisan Grain Collaborative website. Table 1 presents the active participants in the state's small and artisan grain supply chain.

- Post-harvesters include local elevators, co-ops, and cleaning facilities. Processors are millers, maltsters, and food and feed processors.

	Post-Harvest Handlers	Processors
<b>Barley</b>	Malteurop Malting Co New Vision Co-op ADM F.W. Cobs Company Friederichs Seed Inc. Busch Agricultural Resources	Bay State Milling Star of the North Bean Yelloh Homestead Mills Rich Products Corporation Vertical Malt Gregory's Food Deerwood Rice & Grain Processing Maltwerks
<b>Rye</b>	Cargill New Vision Co-op Swany White Flour Mill Friederichs Seed Inc. Healthy Food Ingredients	Whole Grain Milling Bay State Milling Yelloh At Last Gourmet Food Ardent Mills Kadelbach Organic Farms Gregory's Food Homestead Mills
<b>Buckwheat</b>	New Vision Co-op ADM F.W. Cobs Company Swany White Flour Mill Buckwheat Growers Association of Minnesota Busch Agricultural Resources Healthy Food Ingredients	Bay State Milling Sandhill Mill Yelloh Gregory's Food Homestead Mills
<b>Emmer and Spelt</b>		Sandhill Mill Baker's Field Flour & Bread

Table 1. Supply chain participants for the Minnesota small and artisan grain market.



## Takeaways

- 1 Despite a lack of small and mid-scale processors, production of rye, buckwheat, and emmer and spelt in Minnesota is increasing, with more acres harvested and bushels produced. Investments are needed in the state's small and mid-scale grain post-harvest processing (cleaning and storage, toll processing, milling, and malting).
- 2 More market research is needed to adequately demonstrate Minnesota's small grain buyer processing capacity.
- 3 Data shows that barley is one of Minnesota's few small grains with decreasing production trends. Buckwheat and rye have increasing production trends, and Emmer and spelt are nascent.



This document is part of the Agricultural Innovation Center at the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) to provide market business development services to agricultural producers in Minnesota. The center assists farmers with market research, marketing plans, customer identification, and market intelligence issues. The center provides direct business, products, processes, and development services.

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### Questions or comments?

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