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Agribusiness and related  
Cluster Report

TexAmericas Center – Texarkana MSA – Texas

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## 3.2 AGRIBUSINESS, FOOD, BEVERAGE, & OTHER INPUT PROCESSING CLUSTER OF BUSINESSES

The greater Texarkana area is gifted with some of the richest agricultural resources in the world. The fertile soil, favorable climate, availability of excellent transportation via water, highway, rail and air, good marketing opportunities and a productive work force are some of the many resources that allow Texarkana to be recognized as a world supplier of food, feed, and fiber.

TexAmericas Center and the Texarkana area offers several advantages for placing a food and beverage processing plant:

- **Proximity to Agricultural Resources:** Texarkana's location in a region known for agriculture provides access to abundant raw materials such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and livestock. Proximity to these agricultural resources reduces transportation costs and ensures a fresh and consistent supply of ingredients for food and beverage processing.
- **Strategic Location:** Situated near the Texas-Arkansas border, where three interstates converge, Texarkana enjoys a central location within the southern United States. This strategic position provides easy access to 23 major markets within 500-miles and transportation networks, facilitating the distribution of processed food and beverage products.
- **Transportation HUB Infrastructure:** Texarkana benefits from well-developed transportation infrastructure, including interstate highways, railways, airports, and access to waterways, in the central time zone. This infrastructure enables efficient and cost-effective movement of raw materials, finished products, and equipment necessary for food and beverage processing operations.
- **Skilled Workforce:** Texarkana boasts an available, skilled workforce with experience in food processing, quality control, logistics, and related fields in a Right-To-Work state. There is excellent availability of unskilled and semi-skilled workforce at attractive wage rates. Local universities, vocational schools, community colleges, high schools, and training programs offer specialized industry training tailored to the needs of the food and beverage industry, ensuring access to a pipeline of reliable workers.
- **Business-Friendly Environment:** Texarkana provides a supportive business environment with favorable State and Local tax policies, financing programs, incentives, and resources for business development. Local governments often actively support manufacturing initiatives, making it easier for companies to establish and expand food and beverage processing operations.
- **Access to Utilities:** Texarkana offers access to reliable utilities with excess capacities such as water, sewer, electricity, fiber, and natural gas, essential for

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food and beverage processing facilities. Access to these utilities ensures consistent production and reduces operational risks.

- **Quality of Life:** Texarkana provides a high quality of life for residents, with access to amenities such as parks, recreational facilities, cultural attractions, excellent educational resources, and affordable housing options. A favorable living environment can attract and retain skilled workers, contributing to the success of food and beverage processing operations.
- **Supporting Industries:** Texarkana may have supporting industries and suppliers in sectors such as packaging, equipment manufacturing, and distribution, providing additional resources and support for food and beverage processing plants in the area.

Overall, the combination of proximity to agricultural resources, strategic location, transportation infrastructure, skilled workforce, business-friendly environment, access to utilities, quality of life, and supporting industries makes Texarkana an attractive location for placing a food and beverage processing plant.

### **3.2.1 Market Demand And Industry Presence**

Population growth is undeniably crucial to the food and beverage industry. Population growth leads to increase in demand, greater diversity in consumer preferences, the need for innovation and product development, and greater stresses on supply chain management. These factors lead to a need for capacity expansion for some and new market expansion for others.

The population of Texas is growing at twice the national rate, while Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma each are growing at almost 1% per year. Food production in the Texarkana area has expanded in response to this growth. Food and beverage processing contribute significantly to the greater Texarkana economy. Nationally, Texas ranks second, Arkansas is third, Louisiana is sixth, for food and beverage processing companies. Beer, soft drinks, baked goods, preserved fruits and vegetables and meat are important processed products.

### **3.2.2 “Value-Added” Agriculture**

The Texarkana area offers unique advantages to food and beverage processors as the sphere possesses a range of businesses at every level of the value chain, which include farming inputs, specialized farming, food processing, supplement production, drug manufacturing, packaging, trucking operations, beverage manufacturing, wholesale, and more.

### **3.2.3 Growing Conditions For Agriculture Products**

- **Climate:** The Texarkana region typically has a humid subtropical climate, characterized by hot, humid summers and mild winters. This climate is generally favorable for a variety of crops, including those requiring warm temperatures and ample rainfall.

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- **Rainfall:** The area receives a significant amount of rainfall throughout the year, about 51.98 inches, with precipitation relatively evenly distributed across the seasons. This consistent rainfall supports the growth of crops without relying heavily on irrigation.
  - **Temperature:** Summers in the Texarkana region are typically hot and humid, with temperatures frequently exceeding 90°F (32°C) during the peak growing season. Winters are relatively mild, with rare cold spells and potential for frost.
  - **Soil:** The soil composition in the Texarkana area can vary, but it often includes fertile loam and clay soils, which are suitable for a wide range of agricultural crops. These soils typically provide good drainage and nutrient retention, contributing to healthy plant growth.
  - **Growing Season:** The Texarkana region generally has a long growing season, with 213 days of sunshine, allowing for multiple crop rotations each year. Frost-free periods typically extend from March to November fall, providing ample time for warm season crops to mature.
  - **Topography:** The topography of the Texarkana area varies from flat to gently rolling terrain, with some areas featuring river valleys and lowlands. This diverse topography can influence local microclimates and soil conditions, positively affecting agricultural practices and crop selection.
  - **Pest and Disease Pressure:** Like any agricultural region, the Texarkana area may face challenges from pests, diseases, and other environmental factors that can impact crop yields. Integrated pest management practices and disease-resistant crop varieties are often employed to mitigate these risks.

### 3.2.4 Commodity Production

The four state Texarkana Region of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas is part of the Southern United States, where agriculture plays a significant role in the economy.

While the specific agriculture products can vary depending on factors like climate, soil conditions, and local farming practices, the Texarkana area and surrounding regions have excellent access to the following Agriculture inputs: Rye, Cotton and Cottonseed, Cattle, Poultry and Eggs, Hogs, Dairy, Corn, Nursery, Greenhouse, Fruit (Peaches), Vegetables (Tomatoes), Tree Nuts (Pecans), Wheat, Sorghum, Rice, Soybeans, Feed Grains, Aquaculture (Catfish and Crayfish), Sugarcane, Corn, Sweet Potatoes, Hay, Oats, Canola, Hay, Timber, and Peanuts.

Texas ranks first in the number of cattle operations and the value of all cattle and calves. Texas is the top producer of cotton, hay, sheep, goats, mohair, and horses. Some of the state's top crops also include vegetables, citrus, corn, wheat, peanuts, pecans, sorghum, and rice.

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### 3.2.5 Value Addition

Nearly 1,700 businesses in the Texarkana region create some of the highest quality food and beverages in the country. Texarkana is an emerging location for craft beer and wine, with the presence of Redbone Majic Brewing and Pecan Point breweries and O'Farrell Country Vineyards and Wine-A-Rita. Building on the state's diverse range of agricultural products, employment in the industry is growing quickly, increasing 24 percent between 2011 and 2021 (vs. 16th nationally). Currently about 40,000 workers are employed in this industry within the Texarkana region. Food & Beverages is an important growth industry for rural Texarkana and has one of the most diverse workforces of our Target Industry Groups.

### 3.2.6 Food, Beverage, and Other Processing Sectors

The Texarkana region offers easy access to all the ingredients that make this industry work well: low business costs, skilled workforce, access to raw materials, a central location and a transportation network that lets you get your product to market fast.

- Between 2014 and 2019, Food manufacturing has seen some of the strongest growth in the Texarkana region, supported by a strong agricultural sector. In 2019 there were a total of 5,596 people employed in this sector, representing 10% growth in jobs over that period, which created LQ of 5.4 overall (2019). The total number of companies operating in the area was 27, with six new companies entering the market over that time frame. Jobs in the sector Confectionery Manufacturing from Purchased Chocolate grew by 120.3% (2104-2019) and have a LQ of 6.1, while jobs at the three Commercial bakeries employee 130 individuals for a LQ of 4.6.
- A niche market that Texarkana is strong in is Dog and Cat Food Manufacturing. With 3 companies located here employing 124 individuals' employment has grown by 235.1% between 2014 and 2019. This gives the Texarkana an LQ of 6.9 times the US average.
- The Texarkana region food industry specializes in Farm-To-Table chicken and other fowl products, other meat processing as well as Canned Fruit/Vegetables. Other processing focuses include cold chain logistics, frozen and packaged products, Bread, confectionary, dairy products, snack foods, canning, salt, and much more. The region also has core competency in animal food production. There are thousands of quality products being sold throughout the world coming out of the Texarkana region.
- The greater Texarkana region is home to numerous major food processing facilities, including Tyson Foods, Campbell Soup, Ameripack Foods, Pilgrim's Pride (JBS USA), Americold, MidAmerica Pet Food, Saputo Foods, Advanced Foods, IsoNova Technologies, Bob Evans Farms, Southern

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Bakeries, Flowers's Bakery, Advanced Food Technologies. Cargill Inc., Frito-Lay, Inc., John Soules Foods, Newly Weds Foods, Mt Perfect Pet, York Pecan Co., Hostess Brands, Kerry, Keith Smith, Old Hickory, HNO Blending, M&M Milling, Ice House America, Twice The Ice, Fay J's Candy Co., Bolisa Snacks, Red River Beef, Billie Jo's Beef, Lo Ranch, Lagniappe Specialty Meats, Dodd Dear Processing, among others. The region also boasts dozens of boutique operations processing game, organically grown meats, and other niche markets.

#### *3.2.6.1 Meat Processing*

Animal Production and Aquaculture jobs grew by 18% between 2014 – 2019. In 2019 there were 383 employed in this sector for a LQ of 2.2 times the US average. In total there are 70 companies operating in this sector (2109); the number of companies grew by 10 between 2014-2019. Poultry Processing's LQI is 28.0 times the US Average. Rendering and Meat Byproduct Processing is 33.9 times the US Average. Food processing, especially for meat processing, stands out as good fit because it can be linked to the high concentration of animal production in the economic region; dog and cat food manufacturing which has a LQI of 6.9 times the US average has seen tremendous job growth.

#### *3.2.6.2 Beverage Processing*

- Beverages have become a core piece of the greater Texarkana's image and economy. In the greater Texarkana region, there are currently around 15 beverage operations, which include soft-drink manufacturers, breweries, wineries, and distilleries. Texarkana is recognized for having the highest quality water found in the State of Arkansas (2023).
- The greater Texarkana region is home to major beverage production & distribution facilities, including Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Multipack Services, Mountain Valley Spring Water, Native Dog Brewing, Redbone Magic Brewing, Pecan Point Brewing, Origami Sake, Bubba Brews Brewing, Beavers Bend Brewery, Hiland Dairy Foods, Wine-A-Rita, O-Ferrels Winery
- Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau (OK) manages 4,000 acres in eastern Oklahoma and focuses on finding sustainable solutions to the economic, social, and environmental challenges facing agribusiness operations.
- Employment in Beverages increased 25% over the past 10 years.

#### *3.2.6.3 Grain Processing*

Grain growing and production in the Texarkana region contribute to the agricultural sector, although it may not be as dominant as in some other regions known for large-scale grain production. Nonetheless, the region does participate in grain farming,

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primarily focusing on traditional crops; however, the region has recently seen good growth in the organics area.

#### 3.2.6.4 *Overview of Traditional Grain Production*

Here's an overview of grain production in the Texarkana area:

- **Crop Variety:** Farmers in the Texarkana region cultivate a variety of grains, with corn, soybeans, and wheat being among the most common. These crops are typically grown for various purposes, including food production, animal feed, and industrial uses like ethanol production.
- **Agricultural Practices:** Grain production in the Texarkana region involves modern agricultural practices, including the use of advanced machinery, irrigation systems, fertilizers, and crop management techniques. Farmers may also employ sustainable farming methods to conserve soil health and reduce environmental impact.
- **Climate and Soil Conditions:** The Texarkana region's climate and soil conditions are generally conducive to grain production. The area experiences a humid subtropical climate with warm summers and mild winters, which is suitable for growing a variety of crops. The soil composition varies but often includes fertile loam and clay soils.
- **Market Dynamics:** Grain producers in the Texarkana region participate in local, regional, and national grain markets. They may sell their crops to grain elevators, agricultural cooperatives, processors, and other buyers. Market prices, weather conditions, transportation costs, and government policies can influence the profitability of grain farming in the region.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Like any agricultural activity, grain production in the Texarkana region faces challenges such as weather variability, pest and disease pressures, input costs, and market fluctuations. However, there are also opportunities for innovation, diversification, and value-added production to enhance the resilience and profitability of grain farming operations.
- **Support Services:** Agricultural extension services, research institutions, farm equipment dealers, and agribusinesses provide strong support services to grain producers in the Texarkana region. These entities offer technical assistance, agronomic expertise, market information, and access to inputs and resources.

#### 3.2.6.5 *Overview of Organic Grain Production*

Organic production efforts in the Texarkana region reflect a growing trend towards sustainable agriculture and consumer demand for organic products. While the region may not have as extensive organic farming operations as some other areas, there are

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initiatives and efforts to promote organic agriculture. Here are some aspects of organic production efforts in the Texarkana region:

- **Organic Farms:** There are several organic farms in the Texarkana region that produce a variety of crops, including fruits, vegetables, grains, and livestock products. The newest and largest is Bell Farms which operates on 3,700 acres. These farms adhere to organic farming practices, which prohibit the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), while emphasizing soil health, biodiversity, and ecological balance.
- **Certification:** Certain organic farmers in the Texarkana region seek organic certification through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP) or other accredited certifying agencies. Organic certification ensures that farms comply with organic standards and allows farmers to label and market their products as organic, thereby meeting the growing demand for organic foods.
- **Crop Diversity:** Organic farmers in the Texarkana area grow a variety of crops, including fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, and herbs. They may also engage in organic practices for specialty crops such as organic cotton or medicinal herbs, depending on market demand and environmental suitability.
- **Livestock Production:** In addition to crop farming, some producers in the Texarkana region raise organic livestock, including poultry, beef cattle, dairy cows, and small ruminants. Organic livestock farming involves providing animals with access to pasture and forage, avoiding antibiotics and growth hormones, and adhering to other organic standards.
- **Soil Health:** Organic farming practices in the Texarkana region prioritize soil health and fertility through methods such as crop rotation, cover cropping, composting, and reduced tillage. These practices help improve soil structure, enhance nutrient cycling, and promote biodiversity, contributing to sustainable agriculture.
- **Consumer Demand:** Consumer interest in organic food and products has been growing nationwide, including in the Texarkana region. Organic producers may benefit from increased demand for organic produce, meat, dairy, and other organic goods, both locally and regionally.
- **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):** Some organic farms in the Texarkana region operate Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, where consumers can purchase shares or subscriptions to receive a regular supply of fresh, locally grown organic produce. CSA



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programs foster direct relationships between farmers and consumers, support local agriculture, and promote sustainable food systems.

- **Farmers Markets and Local Food Initiatives:** Farmers markets, farm-to-table restaurants, and local food initiatives provide outlets for organic farmers in the Texarkana region to sell their products directly to consumers. These venues not only support local
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Organic farming in the Texarkana region faces challenges such as access to organic inputs, pest and disease management, marketing and distribution, and transitioning from conventional to organic production methods. However, there are also opportunities for organic producers to capitalize on premium prices, environmental stewardship, and community support for sustainable agriculture.

#### 3.2.6.6 *Flavoring, Sauces, Spices*

- A niche market that is growing in the Texarkana area is the growing and production of additives, flavoring, sauces, species and more.
- **Supply Chain Integration:** Companies in the Texarkana area involved in the production of additives, flavorings, sauces, and spices are likely part of broader supply chains that serve the food and beverage industry. They may source raw materials from agricultural suppliers, process and manufacture products locally, and distribute them to regional or national markets.
- **Sauces and Condiments:** Some manufacturers in the Texarkana area specialize in the production of sauces, condiments, and dressings, including items such as barbecue sauce, hot sauce, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, salsa, marinades, and salad dressings. These products are often made from a combination of ingredients such as tomatoes, vinegar, spices, herbs, and sweeteners.
- **Spices and Seasonings:** While the Texarkana region may not be a major center for spice production, there may be companies involved in blending, packaging, or distributing spices and seasonings. This can include a wide range of products such as salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, curry blends, and specialty seasoning mixes for various cuisines. The number of Farms, Ranches, and Local Food Businesses that deliver Spices in Texarkana area are above 100.
- Specialty companies in the market include firms like IsoNova that extract protein from eggs and then sales that item back into the marketplace.

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### 3.2.6.7 *Animal And Pet Food Manufacturing*

The Texarkana region offers several advantages for animal and pet food manufacturing, such as access to multiple input products for all area of the value chain, low logistics costs, access to needed infrastructure, labor availability, manageable regulatory requirements, and good great access to end market.

Companies already operating in the area include: Tyson - Texarkana River Valley Animal Food, Mid America Pet Food, Eagle Mountain Pet Food, IsoNova, and others.

### **3.2.7 Packaging**

Texarkana's strategic location offers proximity to suppliers of packaging materials, reducing transportation costs and lead times. Texarkana area packaging manufacturers are all about creating packaging materials and solutions involving designing, developing, and producing packaging that meets specific needs. You will be able to choose from suitable materials, like cardboard, plastic, steel, wood, and create different types of packaging, such as boxes or containers. The goal is to protect the products and make them easy to handle and transport. Texarkana packaging companies ensure that products are well-packaged and ready to reach customers in the best possible condition. They have experience in all forms including: Paper, Bopp & Woven Poly Bags, Tubes And Cores, Adhesives, Corrugated, And IBC, Recycled Materials, Jerrycans, Pallets, Steel Drums, and more

### **3.2.8 Cold Chain Facilities**

- Given the fact that Cold chain facilities play a critical role in both the food and beverage industry as well as pharmaceutical and supplement production, and the current and growing presence of these industries the Texarkana region is underserved.
- An enhanced presence of these facilities would play a vital role in preserving product quality, ensuring safety and compliance, stabilizing price points, enhancing the ability to bring new industry to the market, and supporting global distribution networks.
- Companies already operating in the area include: Americold and Total Transportation.

### **3.2.9 TexAmericas Center's Food Hub Concept For Startups And Skunk Works Assistance**

TexAmericas Center and our local Council of Governments have authored a Feasibility Study and Business Plan to create a Food Hub at TexAmericas Center. The Food Hub would have integrated into it a Commercial Kitchen, third-party logistics services performed by TAC3PL, market potential, competition, demand and trends, , supply of ingredients, an ecommerce website/platform, a brick & mortar location, incubator/accelerator space, distribution channels, regulatory compliance.

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partnerships with Texarkana College, Texas A&M University – Texarkana, and University of Arkansas – Texarkana and more.

### **3.2.10 Agricultural Equipment Manufacturing & Wholesale**

- While Texarkana is not widely known as a major hub for farm equipment manufacturing, there are smaller-scale manufacturers in the area catering to the agricultural community. Among them are Priefert Manufacturing which has grown into one of the largest farm, ranch and rodeo equipment manufacturers in the world. Also, in the region are 17 specialty trailer manufacturers, many focused on the need of farms and ranches.
- The wholesale industries for Farm Supplies, Farm & Garden Equipment, and Construction & Mining Machinery are strong and growing in the Texarkana region. Jobs in the Farm Supplies Merchant Wholesalers sector have an LQ of 3.3 times higher than the US average. Jobs in the Farm and Garden Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers sector have an LQ of 2.1 time the US average, and Jobs in the Farm and Garden Machinery and Construction and Mining (except Oil Well) Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers sector have an LQI of 2.0 time the US average.

With our rich agricultural heritage, our region can lead in the creation of products, services, and technology that benefit yield, efficiency, and profitability.



Whether you are looking to expand your business, your current lease is expiring, you are planning a move to Texas, or you have considered leaving the mid-south region, talk to us first!

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