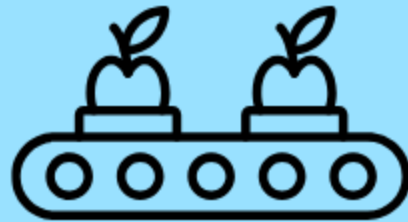


# What Are Food Systems?

Food systems involve a complex web of activities that connect various elements of the food supply chain. Food systems can be different depending on the geographic, demographic, economic, and technological status of a region. Most food systems have four main parts; **production, processing, distribution, and consumption.**



**Production**

**Processing**

**Distribution**

**Consumption**

Production is the creation of food, from growing crops to raising animals. Food production can look diverse, from farming a small half-acre plot to a 50-thousand-acre ranch. Also involved in the production is the industry providing production inputs - the seeds, plants, animal feed, and fertilizer needed to produce food.

Processing begins once the food is ready to be transformed into finished goods. Every food requires a level of processing, storage, preserving, and/or packaging. Multi-step processes like transforming wheat into cereal are also involved in processing.

Distribution involves the transportation of food from producers to various businesses. This could be food sold to the general public in grocery stores, direct-to-consumer sales at farmer's markets, wholesalers selling to restaurants, and food banks providing food to low-income households.

The final stage is consumption, where consumers access a variety of food that has gone through the food system and eat it. Consumers can shop for food products at grocery stores, convenience stores, and vending machines. They can also access food in restaurants, schools, cafeterias, or various other places like food banks.

