

November 2025

# Food Processing

Georgia's Top Manufacturing Sector

**Georgia Power Economic Development**

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[selectgeorgia.com](http://selectgeorgia.com)

# Why Georgia for Food Processing?

Georgia is an ideal home for food processing – it's the state's leading manufacturing sector in terms of employment and gross regional product (GRP). With 39,000 farms producing a variety of food commodities, Georgia's processors capitalize on an abundance of raw materials. Georgia is home to a highly-skilled, affordable workforce, exceptional transportation infrastructure, and world-class technological resources geared toward promoting the success of the food processing industry.

## Georgia's strengths:

- Abundant agricultural assets
- Skilled, affordable workers
- Excellent accessibility to market
- Business-friendly environment



**252**

Food & beverage  
processing &  
distribution  
locations



**89K**

Food & beverage  
processing jobs



**\$13.2B**

Food & beverage  
processing GRP  
contribution



**39K**

Farms in Georgia

Sources: Locations with 50+ Employees, Georgia Powe Economic Development 2025; Lightcast 2025.Q4; USDA 2024

# New and existing companies find Georgia a great place to do business.

One of the best measures of an industry's success in a region is that region's ability to attract and retain businesses belonging to that industry. Between 2020 and 2025, **36** food processing businesses either expanded or moved new operations to Georgia, creating **9,440** new jobs.

## **J.M. Smucker-Hostess Brands Expand Columbus Production Operations**

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to expand production at our Columbus, Georgia manufacturing facility to continue to meet the needs of our consumers. Throughout this process, we have appreciated the partnership and collaboration of local officials and are excited to maintain our commitment to invest in our operations and employees here in Columbus." Beaux Williamson, Facility Manager, The J.M. Smucker Company

Source: "J.M. Smucker-Hostess Brands Expand Columbus, Georgia, Production Operations," Area Development News Desk, 10.14.2025

## **King's Hawaiian to Invest \$54 Million in Hall County Expansion**

"For 15 years, Georgia has been an essential part of our success. The support from Lanier Technical College, Georgia Quick Start, and the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in helping us train and develop talent to grow our business." Mark Taira, CEO, King's Hawaiian

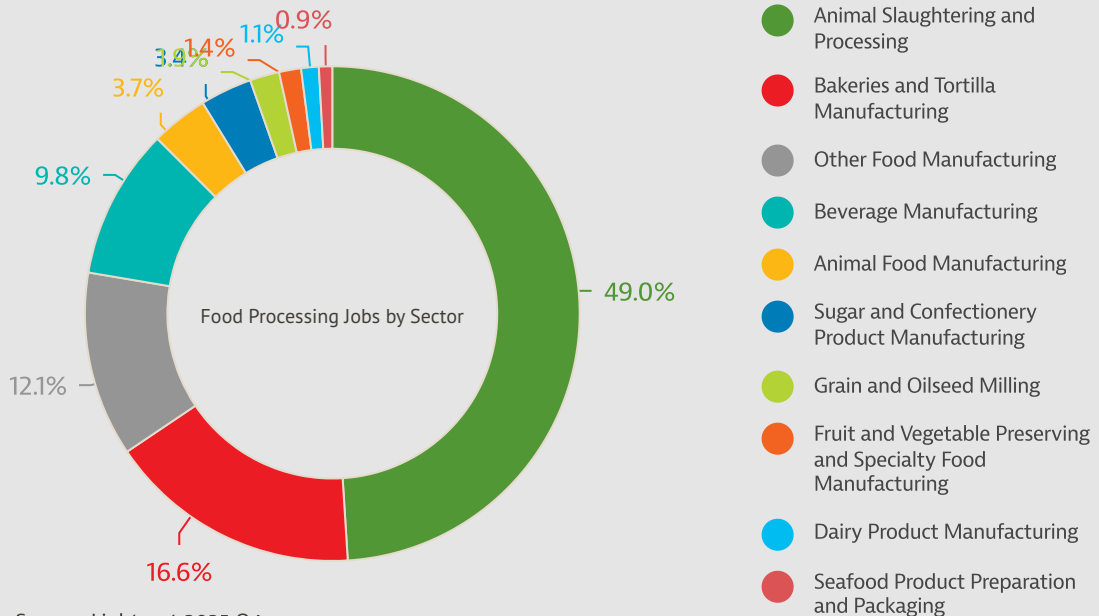
Source: "King's Hawaiian to Invest \$54 Million in Hall County Expansion," Office of the Governor Press Release, 7.17.2025

# Industry Segments

Animal Processing is the dominant segment within Georgia's food processing industry. Georgia is the poultry capital of the world with more than \$1.8 billion in annual exports to markets around the U.S. and world.

- Animal Food Manufacturing
- Grain and Oilseed Milling
- Sugar and Confectionery Product Manufacturing
- Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing
- Dairy Product Manufacturing
- Animal Slaughtering and Processing
- Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging
- Bakeries and Tortilla Manufacturing
- Other Food Manufacturing
- Beverage Manufacturing

## Top Industry Sectors in Georgia



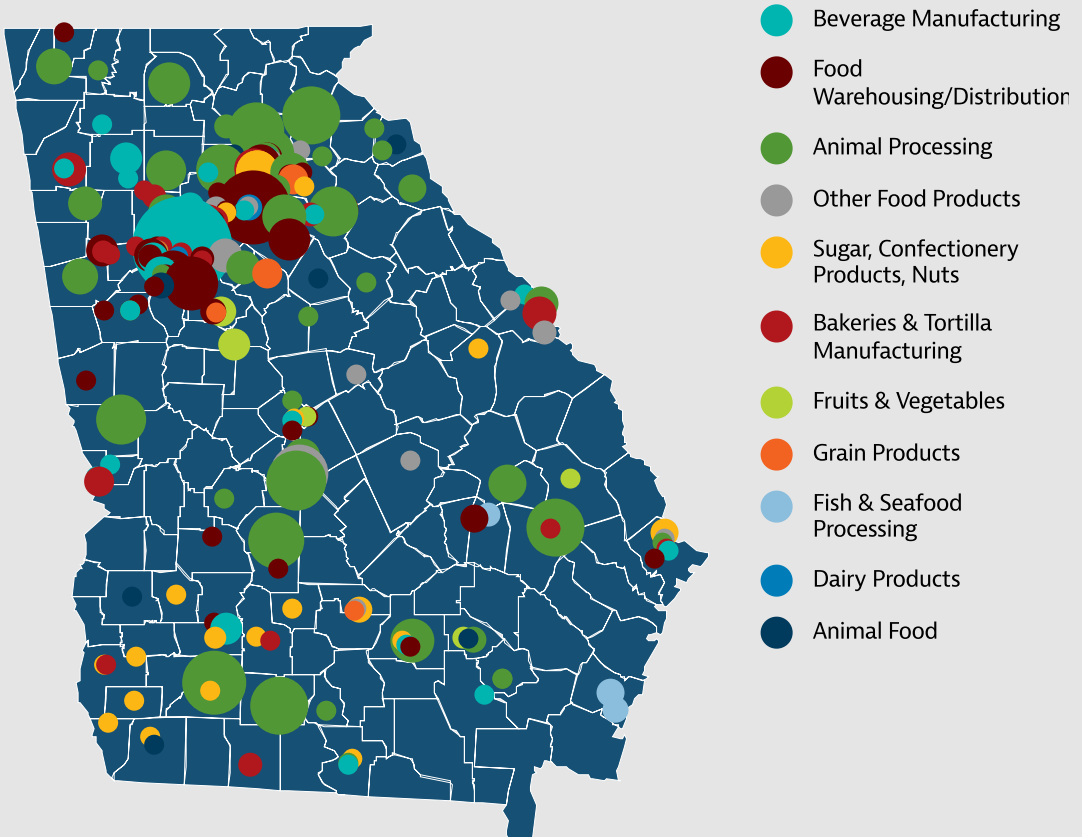
Source: Lightcast 2025.Q4

# Georgia's Food Processors and Distributors

The map below includes food processing operations and food warehousing and distribution locations with 50 or more employees.

Georgia's food processing ecosystem is well established, with a thriving agricultural industry, diverse blend of manufacturers who take advantage of abundant, local raw materials, a strong system of distributors, and a transportation infrastructure second to none.

## Georgia's Food Processors and Distributors



Source: BusinessWise 2025, Georgia Power Economic Development Industry Database 2025

# Top Employers in Food Processing

With superior highway access, a thriving agricultural industry, and an abundance of workers at low relative wages, Georgia is the ideal location for food processing operations. Georgia is home to more than 250 food and beverage processing and distribution facilities with at least 50 employees.

## Georgia's Top Employers in Food Processing & Distribution

Company	Employees	Industry Sector
Pilgrim's	6,810	Animal Processing
Coca-Cola Co.	5,250	Beverage Manufacturing
Fieldale Farms Corp.	4,240	Animal Processing
Tyson Foods Inc.	3,687	Animal Processing
Koch Foods Inc.	3,066	Animal Processing
Publix/Distribution & Manufacturing	2,800	Food Warehousing/Distribution
Wayne-Sanderson Farms LLC	2,783	Animal Processing
Perdue Farms Inc.	2,595	Animal Processing
Gold Creek Foods LLC	2,581	Animal Processing
Coca-Cola Bottling Co. United Inc.	2,377	Beverage Manufacturing
Frito-Lay Inc.	1,700	Other Food Products
Claxton Poultry Farms Inc.	1,650	Animal Processing
McLane Food Service Inc.	1,635	Food Warehousing/Distribution
Fresh Express	1,500	Food Warehousing/Distribution
Mar-Jac Poultry Inc.	1,377	Animal Processing
Pepsi Beverages Co.	1,301	Beverage Manufacturing
Tip Top Poultry Inc.	1,280	Animal Processing

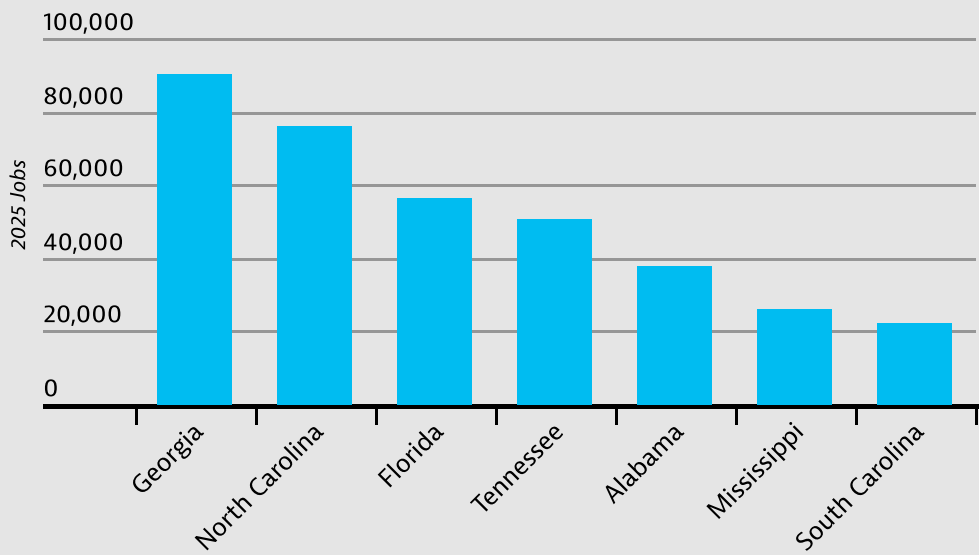
Source: BusinessWise 2025, Georgia Power Economic Development Industry Database 2025

# Georgia's competitive business climate is ideal for manufacturers.

Competitive wage rates, an abundance of skilled workers and a business-friendly environment make Georgia an ideal place for manufacturing. Georgia's wages for manufacturing occupations related to food processing are typically lower than those of the U.S. overall. Georgia is highly competitive within the Southeast as well, with an advantage over surrounding states based on the concentration of food processing workers and low wages. Additionally, Georgia's employment-at-will, right-to-work status, and low unionization rates help the state's food processing operations remain at the forefront of increasingly global markets.

- A unionization rate of **3.8%** compared to **9.9%** nationally (% members)
- The largest number of food and beverage processing jobs in the Southeast (29% of industry workers)
- A low state corporate tax rate of 5.19%

## Georgia Leads the Southeast in Number of Food Processing Workers



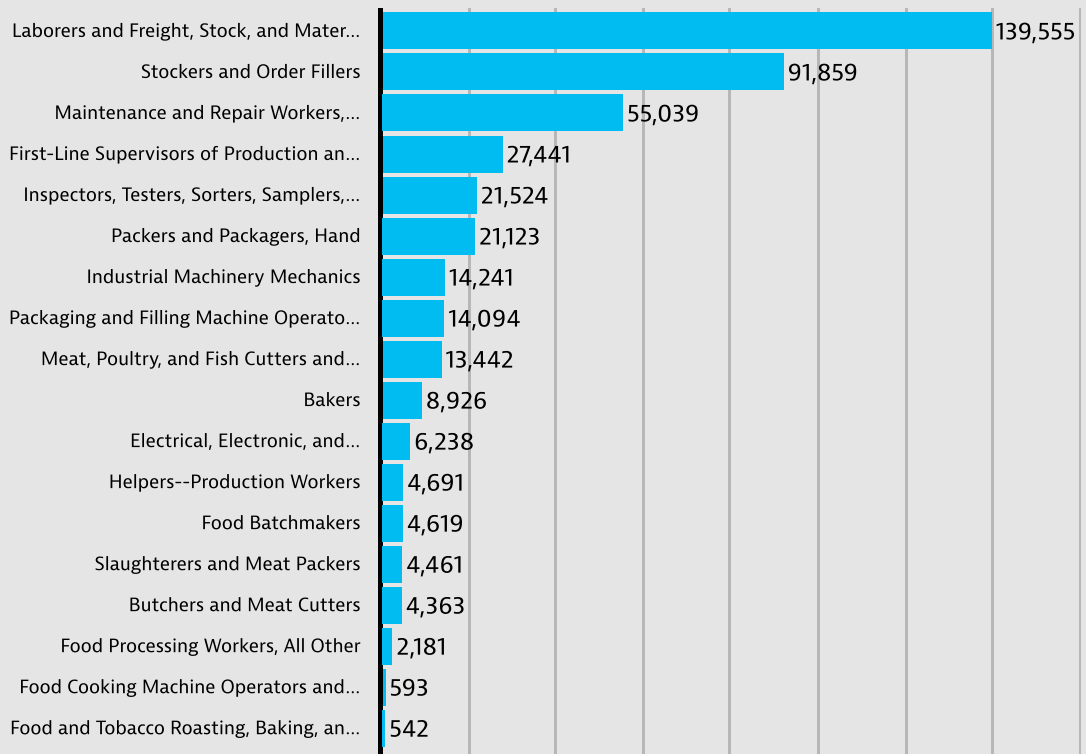
Source: Lightcast 2025.4Q

# Talent critical for food processing success

Based on staffing patterns for food and beverage processing industries, Georgia has an abundance of workers employed in critical occupations. Major occupations include:

- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers
- Slaughterers and Meat Packers
- Bakers
- Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders

## Georgia is Home to 435K Workers in Occupations Critical for the Industry



Source: Lightcast 2025.4Q



## About Georgia Power Economic Development

Georgia Power has been helping companies locate in our state for nearly 100 years. We offer a full array of products and services available at no cost. To receive confidential and proven assistance, please contact one of our experienced professionals:

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