Priority **2: DOCUMENT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SMALL FARMS on their communities to increase investment in and support of small farms**

**283 out of 584 respondents (49%) ranked this topic as highest priority. Of those, 182 provided justification as follows:**

* 73 respondents (or 40%) commented on the need to have current and relevant data of what benefits small farms have on communities and counties.

*“The state and US government put little value on small farms, or see them as “boutique.” It would be interesting to know what the cumulative impact would be on the social, economic, and quality of life benefits of more small farms.”*

* 41 respondents (or 23 %) commented that there is a general lack of understanding about small farm economic impact and this would help address that gap.

*“There are so many people across the state that have such a skewed vision on what impact agriculture has. As a producer and a consumer, this should be a top priority.”*

* 32 respondents (or 18 %) commented that there is a need for this information to educate the local community who do not think small farms contribute to the economic health of a region.

“*In my view, this also relates to tax policies and whether a community values its open space. Having an economically successful and sustainable farm business includes developing and maintaining awareness and support for the communities we draw resources and labor from.”*

* 23 respondents (or 13 %) commented that this information could be used to educate county officials, policy makers, and funders for investments in small farms.

*“The long term future belongs to small farms. But the long term benefits and goals are not mapped by our short term fixated society. The economic impact of small farms must be measured in decades to support investment strategies geared to long term returns.”*