



Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture
10 W 15th Street, Suite 3100 · Helena, MT 59626

Farm Computer Use and Ownership

Released: August 10, 2007

For more information contact: John Hilton or Peggy Stringer at 1-800-835-2612

Montana farms and ranches that have Internet access remained at 70 percent in 2007, the third highest percentage in the Nation. The 70 percent with Internet access in 2007 compares with 70 percent in 2005, and 63 percent in 2003. Seventy-five percent of farms and ranches had access to a computer in 2007, fifth highest nationally, compared with 75 percent two years ago and 72 percent in 2003. Seventy-five percent of all Montana farms and ranches own or lease a computer, up from 73 percent in 2005 and 70 percent in 2003. Farms and ranches using computers for their agricultural business in 2007 was unchanged from 2005, at 45 percent, but up from 44 percent in 2003.

Thirteen percent of farms use the Internet to purchase agricultural inputs, up from 10 percent in 2005 and 11 percent in 2003. Sixteen percent of farms with Internet access conduct agricultural marketing activities over the Internet, up from 12 percent in 2005 and 12 percent in 2003. Of the farms with Internet access, 3 percent conduct business with any USDA website, down from 4 percent in 2006 and 6 percent in 2003. Three percent of farms with Internet access conduct business with any other government website, up from 2 percent in 2005, but down from 10 percent in 2003. Seven percent of farms with Internet access use any USDA toll-free customer service number, compared with 5 percent in 2005 and 11 percent in 2003. In 2007, 38 percent conduct business with any non-agricultural website, compared with 43 percent in 2005.

The primary method of accessing the Internet in Montana for 2007 was dial-up service, at 43 percent, compared with 70 percent in 2005. DSL service came in second with 34 percent in 2007, compared with 17 percent in 2005. Satellite service was third with 12 percent in 2007, compared with 9 percent in 2005. Wireless Internet access was fourth with 8 percent in 2007, compared with 1 percent in 2005. Cable Internet access was fifth with 2 percent in 2007, compared with 1 percent in 2005, and other/unknown Internet access was 1 percent in 2007, compared with 2 percent in 2005.

A total of 55 percent of **U.S.** farms now have Internet access, compared with 51 percent in 2005. Sixty-three percent of farms have access to a computer in 2007, compared with the 2005 level of 59 percent. The proportion of U.S. farms owning or leasing a computer in 2007, at 59 percent, is up slightly from 55 percent in 2005. Farms using computers for their farm business increased 3 percentage points from 2005 to 35 percent in 2007.

High-speed Internet access methods, such as DSL, cable, satellite, and wireless, have become much more available to Internet users in the farm sector since 2005. The proportion of operators using DSL doubled in 2007, at 27 percent, compared with the 2005 level of 13 percent. Cable, satellite, and wireless were each reported as the primary access methods on 7 percent of those U.S. farms with Internet access; with satellite and wireless methods both at virtually double their 2005 levels. Dialup was again the most common method of accessing the Internet, with nearly half (47 percent) of U.S. farms still using it, down from 69 percent in 2005.

In 2007, 80 percent of U.S. farms with sales and government payments of \$250,000 or more have access to a computer, 78 percent own or lease a computer, 66 percent are using a computer for their farm business, and 75 percent have Internet access. For farms with sales and government payments between \$100,000 and \$249,999, the figures are: 70 percent have access to a computer, 66 percent own or lease a computer, 51 percent are using a computer for their farm business, and 61 percent have Internet access. For farms with sales and government payments between \$10,000 and \$99,999, 62 percent reported having computer access, 57 percent own or lease a computer, 36 percent use a computer for their farm business, and 53 percent have Internet access.

For crop farms, 64 percent have computer access and 37 percent use a computer for their farm business in 2007, up 4 and 3 percentage points from 2005, respectively. Internet access for crop farms has increased to 56 percent in 2007, compared to 52 percent in 2005. For livestock farms, 62 percent have computer access and 55 percent have Internet access. The use of a computer for farm business has increased to 33 percent for livestock farms, up 3 points from 2005.

#end#