



Press Release

Texas Agricultural Statistics Service

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On: 2002 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

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Austin . . . The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) announced today that preliminary demographic data from the 2002 Census of Agriculture - the Nation's largest agricultural information-gathering project - are now available at the state and national level.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture counted 228,827 farms and ranches in Texas, up slightly from 1997. Land in farms and ranches decreased 3 percent and the average size of farm was 569 acres, down from 587 acres in 1997. The official definition of a farm or ranch includes all places where \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year.

Demographic data contained in the report include sex of operator, residence on or off the farm, days worked off farm, years present on farm, age group categories, race, and number of persons living in each household. For example, preliminary results show:

- ◆ Seventy-one percent of all Texas farms and ranches sold less than \$10,000 worth of agricultural products, compared to 70 percent in 1997 and 61 percent in 1992.
- ◆ Fifty-four percent of Texas operators considered farming their primary occupation, up from 40 percent in 1997.
- ◆ The average operator age was 57 years old, up 1 year from 56 years old in 1997.
- ◆ Twenty-nine percent of agricultural producers were women in 2002; the number of women who were principal operators increased 7 percent from 1997.
- ◆ The number of black principal operators increased by 7 percent and American-Indian principal operators increased by 40 percent from 1997 to 2002.
- ◆ Ninety-two percent of Texas' agricultural operations are still run by individuals or families.

Final 2002 Census of Agriculture data at the national, state and county levels will be released on June 3, 2004. That report will, for the first time, provide facts about organic crop acreage and sales, production contracts, farm computer and Internet use, in addition to the full range of traditional Census data such as land use and ownership; acres irrigated; crop acreage and production; livestock and poultry inventories; value of products sold; participation in Federal farm programs; and market value of land and buildings. The Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years; the first was in conjunction with the 1840 population census.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture introduced new methodology to account for all farms and ranches in the United States. Incompleteness in the Census mail list has been measured by matching list names against all qualifying operations found by canvassing sample land areas throughout the nation. All results published for the 2002 Census of Agriculture have been adjusted for farms missing from the Census mail list. To assist data users in the transition to the new, more complete Census basis, 1997 Census of Agriculture results are provided two ways, as originally published and then adjusted for under coverage to be comparable to the 2002 Census of Agriculture results.

All reports from the 2002 Census of Agriculture will be available free through the NASS web site at www.usda.gov/nass/. For additional information regarding the Census, call the Texas Agricultural Statistics Service at 800-626-3142.