

ALASKA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

2003

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United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service

The Alaska Agricultural Statistics Service is pleased to publish the 43rd annual "Alaska Agricultural Statistics 2003". Collection and publication of data has been made possible through cooperative funding from the State of Alaska Division of Agriculture, the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Alaska, and the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

This 2003 publication includes information on agriculture in Alaska's geographic areas as well as the diverse commodities produced in our great state. State level statistics on crops, livestock, cash receipts, numbers of farms and value of production are all included, as are breakdowns by geographic regions.

The data for this publication comes from surveys conducted throughout the year. This would not be possible without the active cooperation of the Alaskan producers, agri-businesses, county extension agents, university staff, weather reporters and other government agencies. A special thank you goes to the farmers and ranchers who took time from their busy schedules to respond to our surveys.

A special thank you to those farmers and ranchers who filled out a **2002 Census of Agriculture**. Data from this Census is the most comprehensive look at Alaskan agriculture and will become available to the public in the spring of 2004.

Individual survey results obtained by the National Agricultural Statistics Service are kept strictly confidential. The data collected, as well as names and addresses, are not released to anyone outside this agency, including other USDA and government

entities. Information is summarized and published such that no individual operation can be identified. Summarized results are released to everyone free of charge.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Ray Garibay, as the new Washington and Alaska State Director. Ray has served NASS since 1983. He has worked in Kansas, Tennessee, and Washington D.C. in varying capacities, with his previous assignment being that of the State Statistician in the Maryland office. Ray grew up on a 1,200 acre family farm where they raised corn, cotton, sorghum and soybeans. He graduated from Texas A&M College, and while in graduate school met his wife Robin. While Ray works in Olympia, Washington he is looking forward to learning more about Alaska's diverse and unique agriculture, as well as participating in the Alaska outdoor experience as much as possible on visits to the state.

I'd also like to bid a fond farewell to Melody Roos who, after only two and a half years in our office, has moved on to better things. Her dedication, knowledge of the state, willingness to take on any task (including sifting through what remained of our burnt out office) and her sense of humor will be missed. She is replaced by Gilbert Lucero, who comes to our office from the Department of the Army.

We appreciate your interest in Alaskan agriculture and enjoy presenting to you how "**Agriculture Counts**" in the Last Frontier!

SUZAN BENZ
Agricultural Statistician