



# ARIZONA NEWS RELEASE

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## **PRELIMINARY CENSUS RESULTS GIVE FIRST LOOK AT CHANGING FACE OF AGRICULTURE**

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 levels.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture serves as the most comprehensive source of data describing U.S. agriculture. "This census incorporates collection of new data and improved methodologies to enable us to present the most complete and accurate picture of U.S. agriculture available," said NASS Administrator Ron Bosecker.

Several new measures were included in the 2002 Census of Agriculture, including information about more than one operator per farm. 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:

- The average age of American agricultural producers in 2002 was 55.3 years-old. In Arizona, the average age was 54.9 years-old.
- 27.2 percent of all agricultural producers were women in 2002; the number of women who were principal operators increased 12.6 percent from 1997. In Arizona, the number of women agricultural producers totaled 35.2 percent.
- Principal operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin increased by 50.8 percent from 1997 to 2002. In Arizona, there were 764 principal operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin, 10.5 percent of all principal operators.
- Black principal operators in the U.S. increased by 8.8 percent and American Indian principal operators increased by 19.4 percent from 1997 to 2002.
- Ninety percent of America's agricultural operations are still run by individuals or families

and most are still small farms. In Arizona, 77.9 percent of farm operations were run by individuals or families. Nearly 80 percent of all Arizona farms had agricultural product sales less than \$50,000, which is similar to what occurred in the 1997 Census.

Final 2002 Census of Agriculture data at the national, state and county levels will be released on June 3, 2004. That report will provide first time facts about organic crop acreage and sales, production contracts, farm computer and Internet use, plus the broader, full range of traditional census data including land use and ownership; acres irrigated; crop acreage and quantities harvested; livestock and poultry inventories; value of products sold; value of production contracts; participation in Federal farm programs; and, market value of land and buildings.

The census of agriculture is currently conducted every 5 years; the first was conducted in conjunction with the 1840 population census. All reports from the 2002 Census of Agriculture will be available free through the NASS web site at [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/). For additional information regarding the Census, contact Steven Manheimer,

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*FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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