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# Introduction

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The Ranking of Congressional Districts Report presents selected 2002 Census of Agriculture statistics ranked by congressional districts. Rankings are based on congressional districts of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. The census of agriculture, conducted every five years, is the leading source of facts and statistics about the Nation's farms and ranches, and the only source of uniform, comprehensive agriculture data for every state and county, or county equivalent, in the U. S.

## Purpose and Tabular Presentation

Data are presented by congressional district for all states, except Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming which are "at large" states. The state total is presented for these seven states. The statistics presented in this report include:

- Operator characteristics
- Farm characteristics
- Selected value of agricultural products sold
- Selected livestock and poultry inventories
- Selected crops harvested

## How Farms were Assigned to Congressional Districts

The census of agriculture asked farm operators to report the principal state and county of agricultural activity for the farm operation, but not the congressional district. However, about 98-percent of farm operations (2,094,470 farms) were assigned to a congressional district based on the reported principal county of operation, or by the zip code on their report form mail label if principal county was not reported. The land in these operations was located entirely within one congressional

district. About 15-percent of the operations (328,877 farms) were assigned to a congressional district based on zip code.

For the cases where operations could not be assigned with certainty, mainly those whose principal county of operation or zip code area fell within multiple congressional districts, the assignment was based on the relative amount of agricultural land within each congressional district present in the county. For example, a congressional district with 40-percent of the agricultural land within the county of operation had a 40-percent probability of getting an operation assigned to it. Less than 2-percent of operations (34,512 farms) were assigned by this probabilistic method.

## Comparability

The 2002 Census of Agriculture introduced new methodology to account for all farms in the U.S. Incompleteness in the census mail list was measured by matching list names against all qualifying operations found through canvassing sample land areas throughout the Nation. All published census items were reweighted for undercoverage.

## History

For more than 150 years, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, conducted the census of agriculture. The 1997 Appropriations Act contained a provision that transferred the responsibility from the Bureau of the Census to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The 2002 Census of Agriculture is the 26th Federal census of

agriculture and the second conducted by NASS.

The first agriculture census was taken in 1840 as part of the sixth decennial census of population. From 1840 to 1950, the agriculture census was taken as part of the decennial census. A separate mid-decade census of agriculture was conducted in 1925, 1935, and 1945. From 1954 to 1974, a census of agriculture was taken for the years ending in 4 and 9. In 1976, Congress authorized the census of agriculture to be taken for 1978 and 1982 to adjust the data reference year so that it coincided with other economic censuses. This adjustment in timing established the agriculture census on a 5-year cycle collecting data for years ending in 2 and 7.

### **Uses of Census Data**

Agriculture census data are routinely used by farm organizations, businesses, State departments of agriculture, elected representatives and legislative bodies at all levels of government, public and private sector analysts, and colleges and universities. Agriculture census data are used to:

- Evaluate, change, promote, and formulate farm and rural policies and programs that help agricultural producers;
- Study historical trends, assess current conditions, and plan for the future;
- Formulate market strategies, provide more efficient production and distribution systems, and locate facilities for agricultural communities;
- Make energy projections and forecast needs for agricultural producers and their communities;
- Develop new and improved methods to increase agricultural production and profitability;

- Allocate local and national funds for farm programs, e.g. extension service projects, agricultural research, soil conservation programs, and land-grant colleges and universities;
- Plan for operations during drought and emergency outbreaks of diseases or infestations of pests.

In addition agricultural news media and agricultural associations use census data as background material for stories and articles on U.S. agriculture and the foods we produce.

### **Authority**

The 2002 Census of Agriculture is required by law under the “Census of Agriculture Act of 1997,” Public Law 105-113 (Title 7, United States Code, Section 2204g). The law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a census of agriculture in 1998 and in every fifth year after, covering the prior year. The census of agriculture includes each state, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

### **Related Information**

National, state, and county-level data are available on number and size of farms; crop production; livestock, poultry, and their products; tenure, age, and primary occupation of operator and up to three operators; type of organization; value of products sold; government payments plus market value of agricultural products sold; production expenses; direct marketing; landlord expenses; computer use; production contracts; fertilizers and chemicals; machinery and equipment; farm labor and migrant workers; value of land and buildings; agricultural activity on American Indian reservations; grain storage capacity; land use; irrigation; and the North American Industry Classification System. The information is in printed and electronic formats (CD-ROM). For more information, call 1-800-727-9540.

A more comprehensive listing of Congressional District rankings is available on the Internet at the NASS website [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/).

### **Symbols**

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.