

NEWS RELEASE



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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FARM NUMBERS CONTINUE DECLINE

Lincoln, Neb., January 31, 2005 -- Nebraska's number of farms and ranches declined during 2004 continuing the downward trend, according to the USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service. The number of farms and ranches in the State is 48,300, down 200 or less than 1 percent from 2003. Numbers of farms and ranches in Nebraska with less than \$100,000 in agricultural sales declined 1,300, while operations with more than \$100,000 saw a 1,100 farm increase. "Strong farm income during 2004 pushed Nebraska farms into higher sales categories, but overall farm size showed the smallest increase since 1998," said Mark Harris, director, Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service.

Land in farms and ranches in Nebraska remained unchanged at 45.9 million acres. The average size of operation increased to 950 acres, up 4 acres from a year earlier.

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