



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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On **June 3**, final National and State statistics from the 2002 Census of Agriculture were released on the Internet at www.usda.gov/nass/. These same statistics will be available in hard copy and CD-ROM format later on this summer or fall. The 2002 Census of Agriculture introduced new methodology to account for all farms in the United States. Incompleteness in the census mail list has been measured by matching list names against all qualifying operations found through canvassing sample land areas in the region. It was primarily new and small operations, and often women and minority operators, who were under represented on the mail list. For more information on the change in methodology, see "Frequently Asked Questions" at www.nass.usda.gov/census/. For more information on New England agriculture, see www.nass.usda.gov/nh/.

The following information offers some brief highlights for the New England region and each State in the region. The official definition of a farm includes all places where \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture showed there were 28,254 farms in New England, down from 31,601 farms in 1997. Land in farms decreased slightly from 4.1 million acres in 1997 to 4.0 million acres in 2002. Although land in farms decreased, the average farm size increased from 131 acres per farm in 1997 to 141 acres in 2002. Maine, at 7,196 farms, had the largest number of farms in New England, followed by Vermont at 6,571 farms, Massachusetts at 6,075 farms, Connecticut at 4,191 farms, New Hampshire at 3,363 farms, and Rhode Island at 858 farms.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture revealed that Milk and other Dairy Products remained the top commodity group in New England with over \$582 million in sales; nearly 60 percent of the Milk and other Dairy Product sales were from the state of Vermont. Horticulture ranked a close second with \$551 million in sales. Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes (combined) were followed by Poultry and Poultry Products, ranking third and fourth respectively. Direct sales of food from New England farms totaled \$83 million in 2002. Massachusetts remained the direct marketing leader in the region, with 38 percent of the region's total direct sales for human consumption. Across the region, the value of certified organically produced commodities was \$24 million.

In 2002, 45,360 farm operators were on 28,254 farms throughout New England, with 36 percent of total farm operators being women. The 2002 Census of Agriculture also showed that 94 percent of New England's farm sold less than \$250,000 worth of agricultural products, identifying them as "small farms" by USDA definition. Eighty-six percent were family or individually owned. There were 5,679 women operators in 2002 who were the principal operator, up 321 women operators from 1997. For New England, there were 16,116 total women operators.

Highlights From Each of the New England States

Connecticut's Nursery and Greenhouse industry topped \$246 million in 2002 to remain the dominant industry in the state. Poultry and Poultry Products remained in second place with \$62 million in sales. Milk and other Dairy Products were close behind with \$57 million in sales, down 16 percent from 1997. Total sales of all commodities in Connecticut increased to \$471 million, up from \$435 million in the 1997 agricultural census. Connecticut recorded the highest sales per farm in the region at an average of \$113,175 per farm. Land in Farms decreased 12 percent to 357,154 acres. Connecticut's women farm operators accounted for 34 percent of all farm operators in the state. Ninety-four percent of the farms in Connecticut recorded sales under the \$250,000 level, identifying them as "small farms" by USDA definition. The average age of the principal operator on Connecticut farms was 55.4 years in 2002.

Maine's highest sales category was Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes with a combined \$126 million in sales. Milk and other Dairy Products were second with \$88 million in sales. Poultry and Poultry products were a close third at \$79 million. Total sales of all commodities in Maine increased to \$464 million, up from \$450 million in the 1997 agricultural census. Land in Farms increased slightly to 1.4 million acres. Maine and Vermont had the largest farm size at an average of 190 and 189 acres respectively. Maine's women farm operators accounted for 37 percent of all farm operators in the state. Ninety-five percent of the farms in Maine recorded sales under the \$250,000 level, identifying them as "small farms" by USDA definition. The average age of the principal operator on Maine farms was 53.7 years in 2002.

Massachusetts's Nursery and Greenhouse industry sold \$154 million in 2002 and replaced Fruits, Nuts, and Berries as the dominant industry in the state. Fruits, Nuts, and Berries dropped to second place with \$56 million in sales. Milk and other Dairy Products were close behind with \$49 million in sales on farms with sales of \$50,000 or more. Total sales of all commodities in Massachusetts were \$384 million, down from \$484 million in the 1997 agricultural census. Land in Farms decreased slightly to 518,570 acres. Massachusetts was second only to Connecticut in average value of land and buildings in New England at \$9,234 per acre. Massachusetts's women farm operators accounted for 36 percent of all farm operators in the state. Ninety-five percent of the farms in Massachusetts recorded sales under the \$250,000 level, identifying them as "small farms" by USDA definition. The average age of the principal operator on Massachusetts farms was 54.9 years in 2002.

New Hampshire's Nursery and Greenhouse industry topped \$54 million in 2002 to replace Milk and other Dairy Products as the dominant industry in the state. Milk and other Dairy Products were bumped to second place with \$43 million in sales from operations with sales of \$50,000 or more. Fruits, Nuts, and Berries were a distant third at \$9 million. Total sales of all commodities in New Hampshire were \$145 million, down from \$156 million in the 1997 agricultural census. Land in Farms increased slightly to 444,879 acres. New Hampshire's women farm operators accounted for 39 percent of all farm operators in the state. According to the Census of Agriculture, 50 percent of all farms in New Hampshire used computers for their farm business. Ninety-six percent of the farms in New Hampshire

recorded sales under the \$250,000 level, identifying them as “small farms” by USDA definition. The average age of the principal operator on New Hampshire farms was 54.1 years in 2002.

Rhode Island’s Nursery and Greenhouse industry remained strong in 2002; at \$38 million in sales, nursery and greenhouse products accounted for 68 percent of all of the agricultural sales within the state. Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes were in second place with \$6 million in sales. Total sales of all commodities in Rhode Island increased to \$56 million, up from \$51 million in the 1997 agricultural census. Land in Farms decreased six percent to 61,223 acres. Twenty-four percent of all farms in Rhode Island had less than 10 acres of land. Sixty percent of all farms in Rhode Island were smaller than 50 acres in size. Rhode Island’s women farm operators accounted for 31 percent of all farm operators in the state. Ninety-four percent of the farms in Rhode Island recorded sales under the \$250,000 level, identifying them as “small farms” by USDA definition. The average age of the principal operator on Rhode Island farms was 54.3 years in 2002.

Vermont’s Dairy industry topped all the New England States with \$342 million in 2002, a decrease of two percent from 1997. Sales of cattle and calves was the second highest source of cash receipts in Vermont at \$45 million in sales. Total sales of all commodities in Vermont were \$473 million, down from \$479 million in the 1997 agricultural census. Land in Farms decreased slightly to 1,244,909 acres. Vermont’s women farm operators accounted for 33 percent of all farm operators in the state. Ninety-two percent of the farms in Vermont recorded sales under the \$250,000 level, identifying them as “small farms” by USDA definition. Only one percent of the farms in Vermont had more than a million dollars in agricultural products sold. In 2002, nearly 30 percent of Vermont farms had hired farm labor; 7,631 workers were employed on those farms. The average age of the principal operator on Vermont farms was 53.9 years in 2002.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. Located in Concord, New Hampshire, it is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six states in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at nass-nh@nass.usda.gov. All national statistics and state level newsletters are available free from E-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.]

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