



TENNESSEE  
AGRICULTURAL  
STATISTICS  
SERVICE

P.O. Box 41505  
Nashville, TN 37204-1505  
1-800-626-0987

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/tn>

cooperating with  
Tennessee Department  
of Agriculture



# Agri-News

**Debra K. Kenerson**  
**State Director**

[nass-tn@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-tn@nass.usda.gov)

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## ELEVEN PERCENT OF TENNESSEE FARMS PRODUCED 86 PERCENT OF STATE'S AGRICULTURE IN 2002

Results of the latest census of agriculture, conducted by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, show that a relatively small percentage of Tennessee farms continue to account for a significant portion of the state's agricultural production. Eleven percent of Tennessee's farms had 86 percent of the market value of agricultural products sold during 2002, compared with 83 percent in 1997. The results also show that the value of farm land and buildings increased by 27 percent from 1997 to 2002.

"I'm pleased to see this notable increase in value of farm land and buildings," said Tennessee's State Director, Debra Kenerson. "It's certainly a positive step forward for our farmers and ranchers economic health." The average value of land and buildings per farm rose by over \$80,000 during the 5-year period, reaching an average of \$325,783 in 2002. The average value of land and buildings per acre is up more than \$500 during that same time period to \$2,405 per acre in 2002.

Overall, the state's 87,595 farms generated \$2.20 billion in sales during 2002 on 11.7 million acres of land. Although the total number of farms fell 4 percent from 1997, the average farm size and average value of products sold per farm both increased 2 percent during 2002 to 133 acres and \$25,113, respectively. The number of farms with sales of \$1 million or more increased 14 percent from 1997 to 253. **Greene** county ranked first in the number of farms with 3,367, while **Warren** county was number one in the market value of agricultural products sold in Tennessee at \$93.9 million.

Livestock and poultry farms accounted for over half of the state's total sales of agricultural products in 2002, replacing crops, including nursery and greenhouse, as the leading commodity group. Sales of poultry and eggs and cattle and calves both increased 12 percent from 1997, while sales of tobacco and cotton fell 26 and 18 percent, respectively. The number of broiler farms in 2002 increased 22 percent from 1997, while the number of farms producing tobacco dropped by nearly half since 1997. Tennessee ranked second in the U.S. in the number of equine and goats on farms and third in rabbit inventory at the end of 2002.

Ninety-five percent of Tennessee farms are still run by individuals or families and most are still small farms. Seventy-eight percent of operations had less than \$10,000 in sales of agricultural products in 2002. The average age of a Tennessee farmer in 2002 was 56.0 years old, up from 54.8 in 1997. Twenty-six percent, or nearly 32,000, of the state's 123,277 agricultural producers were women in 2002 and the number of women who were principal operators increased 10 percent from 1997 to 9,413. Part-time farming continues to be a major part of Tennessee agriculture, as 44 percent of the principal farm operators worked 200 days or more off the farm, a 13 percent decline from 1997.

2002 Census of Agriculture final data provide consistent and detailed production, economic, demographic and environmental data including facts on number and type of farms, land use, value of sales and government payments, production expenses, hired labor, computer and Internet use, livestock and poultry inventory and sales, aquaculture, irrigation, crop acreage and production, gender and race of operator, production contracts, number of people in farm households, tenure of operator, chemical use, value of land and buildings, production contracts, organic acreage, and a myriad of other topics.

Volume 1 tables are currently available online at [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/) by clicking on "Census of Agriculture." The website provides the county, state, and national data through the online database, "QuickStats", that can be queried into .CSV files. Published tables will be available as .PDF, .CSV, and .TXT files. For general information about the census or other NASS surveys, visit [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/) or contact the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service toll free at 800-626-0987.