



UTAH
AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS
SERVICE

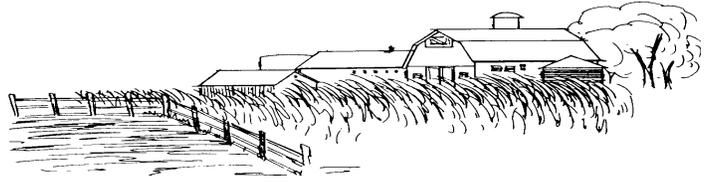
News Release

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2002 CENSUS TAKES A SNAPSHOT OF UTAH'S AGRICULTURE

The 2002 Census of Agriculture counted 15,282 farms in Utah in 2002. These farms averaged 768 acres in size and sold \$1.1 billion worth of agricultural products - an average of \$73.0 thousand in sales per farm. The Census was conducted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. According to USDA definition, a farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year.

Every five years the Census of Agriculture takes a snapshot of America's agriculture. This picture is an invaluable tool for assessing trends and determining current needs of farmers and ranchers at the local level. The census provides comprehensive, comparable statistics for every county in the Nation. For example, according to the 2002 Census, Utah county ranked first in the state in number of farms with 2,046 while Box Elder county was number one in the state in total cropland at 335,315 acres.

The 2002 Census results show changes in Utah agriculture over time since they can be directly compared to past Census results. For instance, the total number of farms in Utah counted in the Census decreased 3.3% from 1997, and land in farms acreage dropped 2.3%. However, the average value of sales per farm increased 30.0% from 1997.

The 2002 Census revealed other interesting facts about Utah's agriculture, such as:

- ! Only 2.5% of the farms in Utah had more than \$500,000 in sales, yet they accounted for 63.0% of the value of all sales.
- ! 48% of all farms had sales of less than \$2,500.
- ! The average age of the principal operator was 55.2 years old and he or she has spent an average of 19.9 years on the present farm.
- ! 24.7% of all farm operators in Utah are women.

These facts and more for every county and state are now available for the 2002 Census of Agriculture on the NASS website at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>. For general information about the Census or other NASS surveys visit the above website or call the Ag Statistics Hotline at 1-800-727-9540. The Utah Agricultural Statistics Office and it's Director, Rick Kestle, can be reached at 1-800-747-8522.