



Black Farmers

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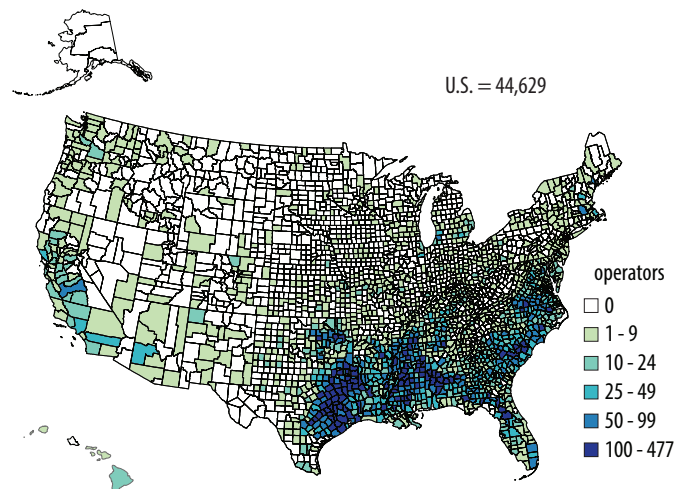
Up 12 percent since 2007; most live in southern states.

33,371 farms . . .

. . . sold \$846 million in agricultural products and operated 3.6 million acres of farmland.

In 2012, the number of black farmers in the United States was 44,629. This was a 12 percent increase since 2007, when the last agriculture census was conducted. Nationally black farmers were 1.4 percent of the country's 3.2 million farmers in 2012. Ninety percent lived in twelve southern states. Freestone County, Texas, had more black farmers than any other county.

Black Farm Operators, by County, 2012



Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

About the Numbers

This *Highlights* document includes data for operators reporting their race only as "Black or African American." An additional 1,953 respondents to the 2012 Census of Agriculture indicated they are "Black or African American" in addition to one or more other races. For more information on black farmers, see <http://bit.ly/REGprofiles>.

*Statistically significant change. See <http://bit.ly/AgCensusFAQs>.

Principal Operators

Of total black farmers, 33,371 were principal operators, that is, the person in charge of the farm's day-to-day operations. Farms with black principal operators increased 9 percent between 2007 and 2012. In contrast, principal operators of all farms declined 4 percent. (Table 1)

Table 1
Black Farm Operators, 2007 and 2012

	2007	2012	% change
Black farm operators	39,697	44,629	+12%
Total farm operators	3.3 million	3.2 million	-3%
Blacks as % of total	1.2%	1.4%	
Black principal operators	30,599	33,371	+9%
Total principal operators	2.2 million	2.1 million	-4%*
Blacks as % of total	1.4%	1.6%	

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Texas has more black farmers than any other state, but they make up only 3 percent of the state's total farmers. Black farmers make up a larger share of total farmers in Mississippi (12%), Louisiana (7%), South Carolina (7%), Alabama (6%), and Georgia (4%).

Black operators tend to be older than operators overall. Their average age in 2012 was 61.9 years compared with 58.3 years for all principal operators. In most other respects – gender, role of farming, length of time on farm, etc. – black farmers resemble farmers generally. (Table 2)

Table 2
Black Principal Operators, 2007 and 2012

	Black Principal Operators		All Principal Operators, 2012
	2007	2012	
	(percent)		
Age			
< 35 years	3	3	6
35 to 64 years	60	55	61
65 years+	37	42	33
Gender			
Male / Female	86 / 14	86 / 14	86 / 14
Primary occupation			
Farming / Other	44 / 56	48 / 52	48 / 52
Worked off farm			
Yes/No	66 / 34	60 / 40	61 / 39
Years on present farm			
0 - 4	11	9	8
5 - 9	17	14	14
10 +	72	77	78
Internet access			
Yes / No	34 / 66	55 / 45	70 / 30
Average age (years)	60.3	61.9	58.3

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Farm Size and Sales

Black principal operators sold \$846 million of agricultural products in 2012, including \$502 million in crop sales and \$344 million in livestock sales. They operated 3.6 million acres of farmland. Black sales represented 0.2 percent of total U.S. agriculture sales, and black-operated farmland accounted for 0.4 percent of U.S. farmland.

Farms with black operators tend to be smaller than farms overall, with fewer acres and lower sales. Eighty-six per-

cent of farms with a black principal operator had fewer than 180 acres in 2012, and 79 percent had sales of less than \$10,000. (Table 3).

Table 3
Farms with Black Principal Operator, by Farm Size and Sales, 2012
(percent)

	Black-operated Farms	All Farms
Farm Size		
< 50 acres	49	39
50 to 179 acres	37	30
180 to 999 acres	13	23
1,000 acres or more	1	8
Total	100	100
Farm Sales		
< \$10,000	79	56
\$10,000 to \$49,999	15	19
\$50,000 to \$249,999	4	13
\$250,000 to \$999,999	1	8
\$1,000,000 or more	1	4
Total	100	100

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Top Commodities

Nearly half of farms with a black principal operator specialized in beef cattle in 2012. The next largest category was mainly farms with no single majority crop. (Table 4)

Table 4
Top Farms by Commodity Specialization^a, 2012
(black principal operator)

	No. of Farms	% of Farms
Beef cattle	16,132	48
Combination crops ^b	7,036	21
Oilseeds and grains	2,588	8
Combination animals ^b	2,590	8
Vegetables and melons	1,819	5

^aMore than half of a farm's sales come from that commodity.

^bFarms with no single majority commodity and farms specializing in miscellaneous commodities.

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

To learn more about black farms and farmers, the 2012 Census of Agriculture, and how to access national, state, and county data, go to:

www.agcensus.usda.gov