

U.S. Horticulture in 2014

ACH12-33/January 2016

Results from the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties

31 percent...

... of horticulture sales are nursery stock crops.

Top States in Sales (\$ millions)

California	2,878.0
Florida	1,796.7
Oregon	932.0
Michigan	645.0
Texas	593.8
North Carolina	570.7
Ohio	392.1
Arizona	388.9
Washington	365.7
New Jersey	355.7

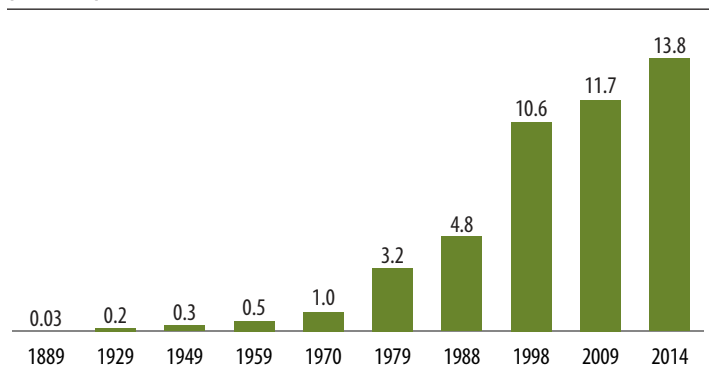
In 2014, U.S. horticulture operations sold \$13.8 billion in floriculture, nursery, and other specialty crops, an 18 percent increase since 2009. During that time industry-wide expenses increased 16 percent. More than half of horticulture farms are family or individually owned but corporations account for three fourths of sales. Ten states account for 65 percent of sales, with California and Florida each having sales well over \$1 billion.

These are among the many findings in the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The first horticulture census was conducted in 1889, and sales have increased steadily, particularly since the late 1980s (Fig. 1). The 2014 study was a detailed census

of all farms with annual horticulture crop sales of \$10,000 or more.

To measure the industry's expansion, NASS added 60 new flowers and plants to the 2014 questionnaire since 2009, the last time the horticulture census was conducted.

Fig. 1
U.S. Horticulture Sales, 1889 - 2014 (\$ billions)



Source: USDA NASS, Census of Horticultural Specialties. The graph shows the years in which the horticulture census was conducted – by the Census Bureau until 1988, and by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service since 1998.

Horticulture Farms

Across the country, the number of horticulture operations increased 8 percent between 2009 and 2014 to 23,221 farms. Most states experienced an increase but in 15 states the number of horticulture farms decreased. (Fig. 2)

Smaller farms (with annual horticulture sales of \$100,000 or less) accounted for 4 percent of sales in 2014. Farms with annual sales greater than \$100,000 accounted for 96 percent of sales. Similarly, smaller farms had higher retail

SNAPSHOT: U.S. Horticulture Production, 2009 and 2014

	2009	2014	% change
Number of operations	21,585	23,221	+ 8
Total sales (\$ billions)	11.7	13.8	+ 18
Avg. sales per operation (\$1,000s)	541	594	+10
Wholesale as % of total sales	84.6	86.0	+2
Corporations as % of total operations	34.9	37.6	+8
Production expenses (\$ billions)	9.5	11.0	+ 16
Number of operations hiring labor	16,639	17,086	+ 3
Number of hired workers	280,201	274,759	-2

Source: USDA NASS, 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties.

Horticulture Crops

Nursery stock items were by far the top-selling crop, valued at \$4.3 billion in 2014. The top ten crops in 2014 were also the top crops in the last horticulture census, although the order shifted slightly. All ten increased in total sales during that time. (Table 1)

Table 1
Top Horticulture Crops in Sales, 2009 and 2014
 (in 2014 rank order)

	2009 (\$ millions)	2014 (\$ millions)
Nursery stock	3,850.3	4,266.6
Annual bedding & garden plants	2,305.9	2,567.5
Sod, sprigs, or plugs	876.8	1,138.5
Potted flowering plants	871.5	1,084.3
Potted herbaceous perennial plants	843.8	944.9
Food crops under protection	553.3	796.7
Foliage plants	509.9	721.9
Propagative materials	601.7	695.1
Cut flowers and cut lei flowers	403.3	462.1
Commercial strawberry & vegetable plants	330.6	371.8

Source: USDA NASS, 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties.

Expenses

Horticulture producers had \$11.0 billion in expenses in 2014, up from \$9.5 billion in 2009. Hired labor was the single largest category, accounting for 37 percent of total costs. (Table 2)

Table 2
Top Horticulture Production Expenses, 2014
 (\$ millions and percent change since 2009)

	\$ billions	% change since 2009
Hired labor	4.1	+ 13
Seeds, plants, vines, trees, etc.	1.8	+ 21
Containers	0.6	+ 17
Gasoline, fuels, and oils	0.6	+ 22
Other	4.0	+ 16
Total	11.0	+ 16

Source: USDA NASS, 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties.

Fig. 2
Number of Horticulture Farms by State, 2014, and Change from 2009

