
Introduction

The 2017 Census of Agriculture Farm Typology report provides data that supplement the 2017 census. It primarily focuses on the “family farm,” or any farm where the majority of the business is owned by the producer and individuals related to the producer, including relatives who do not live in the producer’s household. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during a given year.

The typology classifies all farms into unique groups. Family farms are classified based on gross cash farm income (GCFI). GCFI includes the farm producer’s sales of crops and livestock, fees for delivering commodities under production contracts, government payments, and farm-related income. Small farms have gross cash farm income (GCFI) of less than \$350,000. The census of agriculture typology is based on USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) typology that was last updated in 2013 and uses information about the producer’s main occupation to separate small farms into groups. Because of changes in the way demographic data were collected on the census of agriculture, the sub-categories for small farms were revised for this publication; small farms classification is based only on gross cash farm income (GCFI) and does not incorporate an occupation component. Data are comparable to previous typology reports for midsize and large-scale family farms as well as nonfamily farms.

REVISED DEFINITIONS

Small family farms – GCFI less than \$350,000

Low-sales farms – GCFI less than \$150,000.

Moderate-sales farms – GCFI between \$150,000 and \$349,999.

Midsize family farms – GCFI between \$350,000 and \$999,999.

Large-scale family farms – GCFI of \$1,000,000 or more.

Large family farms – Farms with GCFI between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999.

Very large family farms – Farms with GCFI of \$5,000,000 or more.

Non-family farms – Any farm where the producer and persons related to the producer do not own a majority of the business.

USES OF CENSUS DATA

The census of agriculture provides a detailed picture of U.S. farms and ranches every five years. It is the leading source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every State and county or county equivalent. Census of agriculture data are routinely used by agriculture organizations, businesses, State departments of agriculture, elected representatives and legislative bodies at all levels of government, public and private sector analysts, the news media, and colleges and universities. Census of agriculture data are frequently used to:

- Show the importance and value of agriculture at the county, State, and national levels;
- Provide agricultural news media and agricultural associations benchmark statistics for stories and articles on U.S. agriculture and the foods we produce;
- Compare the income and costs of production;
- Provide important data about the demographics and financial well-being of producers;
- Evaluate historical agricultural trends to formulate farm and rural policies and develop programs that help agricultural producers;

- Allocate local and national funds for farm programs, e.g. extension service projects, agricultural research, soil conservation programs, and land-grant colleges and universities;
- Identify the assets needed to support agricultural production such as land, buildings, machinery, and other equipment;
- Create an extensive database of information on uncommon crops and livestock and the value of those commodities for assessing the need to develop policies and programs to support those commodities;
- Provide geographic data on production so agribusinesses will locate near major production areas for efficiencies for both producers and agribusinesses;
- Measure the usage of modern technologies such as conservation practices, organic production, renewable energy systems, internet access, and specialized marketing strategies;
- Develop new and improved methods to increase agricultural production and profitability;
- Plan for operations during drought and emergency outbreaks of diseases or infestations of pests;
- Analyze and report the current state of food, fuel, and fiber production in the United States;
- Make energy projections and forecast needs for agricultural producers and their communities.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The 2017 Census of Agriculture was required by law under the “Census of Agriculture Act of 1997,” Public Law 105-113 (Title 7, United States Code, Section 2204g). The law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a census of agriculture every fifth year.

DATA COMPARABILITY

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Part 51, Appendix B (https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/usappxb.pdf) for a detailed discussion of these changes. Dollar figures are expressed in current dollars and have not been adjusted for inflation or deflation. In general, data for censuses since 1974 are not fully comparable with data for 1969 and earlier censuses due to changes in the farm definition.

REFERENCE PERIOD

Reference periods for the 2017 Census of Agriculture were similar to those used in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. Reference periods used were:

- Crop production is measured for the calendar year, except for a few crops such as avocados, citrus, and olives for which the production year overlaps the calendar year. See 2017 Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Appendix B (https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/usappxb.pdf) for details.
- Livestock, poultry, and machinery and equipment inventories, and market value of land and buildings are measured as of December 31 of the census year.
- Crop and livestock sales, other farm-related income, direct sales income, income from federal farm programs, Commodity Credit Corporation loans, Conservation Reserve, Farmable Wetlands, Conservation Reserve Enhancement, and Wetlands Reserve Program participation, farm expenses, chemical and fertilizer use, irrigated acreage, and hired farm labor data are measured for the calendar year.

“SEE TEXT” ITEMS

Several items in the tables include the note “(see text).” For descriptions, see the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Appendix B (https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/usappxb.pdf).

RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

In keeping with the provisions of Title 7 of the United States Code, no data are published that would disclose information about the operations of an individual farm or ranch. All tabulated data are subjected to an extensive disclosure review prior to publication. Any tabulated item that identifies data reported by a respondent or allows a respondent’s data to be accurately estimated or derived, was suppressed and coded with a ‘D’. However, the number of farms reporting an item is not considered confidential

information and is provided even though other information is withheld.

DATA PRODUCTS

The 2017 Census of Agriculture Farm Typology report and other census products are available on the NASS website at <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/index.php>.

SUBJECT SERIES REPORTS AND CUSTOM TABULATIONS

Subject series reports such as the 2017 Census of Agriculture Farm Typology report provide supplemental information to the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Results are published on the internet.

Custom-designed tabulations may be developed when data are not published elsewhere. These tabulations are developed to individual user specifications on a cost-reimbursable basis and shared with the public. Quick Stats, NASS's online database that allows data users to build customized queries, should be investigated before requesting a custom tabulation.

All special studies and custom tabulations are subject to a thorough disclosure review prior to release to prevent the disclosure of any individual respondent data. Requests for custom tabulations can be submitted via the internet at: [www.nass.usda.gov/Data_and_Statistics/Special Tabulations/index.php](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Data_and_Statistics/Special_Tabulations/index.php)

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The following abbreviations and symbols are used throughout the tables:

- Represents zero.
- (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.
- (H) Coefficient of variation is greater than or equal to 99.95 percent or the standard error is greater than or equal to 99.95 percent of mean.
- (IC) Independent city.
- (L) Coefficient of variation is less than 0.05 percent or the standard error is less than 0.05 percent of the mean.
- (NA) Not available.
- (X) Not applicable.
- (Z) Less than half the unit shown.
- cwt Hundredweight.
- sq ft Square feet.