In 2017, the United States had 1.2 million female producers, accounting for 36 percent of the country’s 3.4 million producers. Female producers are slightly younger, more likely to be a beginning farmer, and more likely to live on the farm they operate than male producers. More than half of all farms (56 percent) had a female producer. These female-operated farms accounted for 38 percent of U.S. agriculture sales and 43 percent of U.S. farmland.

Number and Location

The 2017 Census of Agriculture revised the demographic data collected to better capture the contributions of all persons involved in agricultural production. In response to detailed questions about farm decision making, more farms reported multiple individuals involved in farm operations.

As a result of the new approach to counting producers, the total number of U.S. producers increased 7 percent between 2012 and 2017. The number of female producers increased 27 percent. The number of farms with female producers increased 23 percent.

In 2017, female-operated farms – the 1.1 million farms with one or more female producers responsible for making decisions about the farm’s operation – were 56 percent of total farms. In comparison, 91 percent of farms had one or more male producers.

The percent of farms run entirely by women.

The percent of female producers in Texas, which has 156,233 female producers, more than any other state.

Counties with the highest proportion of female-operated farms were largely in the West and Northeast.

Counties with the lowest proportion were in the Midwest, the northern Plains, and the Mississippi Delta.
Producer Characteristics

Female producers are slightly younger on average than male producers (57.1 years versus 57.7 in 2017) and more likely to be a beginning farmer (30 percent of female and 25 percent of male producers had farmed 10 years or fewer). They were more likely to live on the farm they operated and less likely to report farming as their primary occupation.

Farm Characteristics

Female-operated farms sold $148 billion in agricultural products in 2017, with 49 percent ($73 billion) in crop sales and 51 percent ($75 billion) in sales of livestock and livestock products. These farms accounted for 38 percent of total U.S. agriculture sales. They received $4 billion in government payments.

Female-operated and Male-operated Farms by Economic Class, 2017 (percent)

(sales and government payments combined)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Class</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $1,000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000 to $4,999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 to $9,999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 +</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nineteen percent of female-operated farms had sales and government payments of more than $50,000, compared with 26 percent of male-operated farms. Sixty-two percent of female-operated farms had sales and payments of less than $10,000.

Most female producers operate farms that have more than one producer. Of 1.2 million female producers, 13 percent operated farms in 2017 on which they were the only producer.

Farm Decision Making

The 2017 Census collected first-ever data on the decisions producers make. The graph shows for each type of decision, the percent of female producers and percent of male producers who make those decisions.

- Female producers were most involved in day-to-day decisions and record keeping/financial management.
- Male producers had higher rates of involvement than female producers in land use/crop decisions and in livestock decisions.