In 2022, the United States had 296,480 young producers (those under the age of 35), accounting for 9% of the country’s 3.37 million producers. Eighty-one percent of young producers started farming in the last 10 years, and 64% reported having a primary occupation other than farming. Young producer-operated farms accounted for 15% of U.S. agriculture sales and 12% of U.S. farmland.

Number and Location

In 2022, the ag census counted 3.4 million producers involved in decision making on the 1.9 million farms and ranches across the United States. Overall, the number of producers decreased 0.8% from the previous census. The number of producers under the age of 35 increased 3.9% from the previous census, compared to a 12% increase in producers 65 years of age or older, and a 9% decrease in producers 35-64 years of age.

The share of young producers was higher in the Northern states. States with the highest percentage of young producers as a share of total producers included Pennsylvania, Indiana, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, New York, and South Dakota.

Counties with the highest proportion of young producer-operated farms were largely in the Great Lakes, Northern Great Plains, and Northeast regions; counties with the lowest proportion were in the Mississippi Delta and Southeast regions.

The percent of Texas producers under the age of 35, representing 24,900 producers – the highest number of young producers in any state.
Producer Characteristics

Young producers were much more likely to be a beginning farmer (81% of young producers had farmed 10 years or fewer, compared with 30% of all producers). Young producers were also more likely to work off the farm. Half of young farmers reported working off the farm 200 days or more per year and were less likely to report farming as their primary occupation (36% compared to 42% of all U.S. producers). In terms of gender, ethnicity, and race, young farmer demographics were similar to those of all U.S. producers.

Farm Characteristics

Young producer-operated farms sold $80 billion in agricultural products in 2022, with 49% ($39 billion) in crop sales and 51% ($41 billion) in the sales of livestock, poultry, and livestock and poultry products. These farms accounted for 15% of total U.S. agriculture sales. They received $1.3 billion in government payments in 2022.

Farm Decision Making

The 2022 Census of Agriculture collected data on producer decision making. Young producers were most involved in day-to-day decisions and land use/crop decisions. Young producers were also more likely to make decisions regarding livestock and marketing compared to all U.S. producers.

About the Census

The Census of Agriculture, conducted once every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Results from the 2022 ag Census, as well as previous censuses, are available online at national, state, and county levels. See the searchable database Quick Stats, downloadable PDF reports, maps, and a variety of topic-specific products.

Source: USDA NASS, 2022 Census of Agriculture.