



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Family-owned farms account for 93% of California farms, according to the Census of Agriculture Typology Report**

*Small family farms make up 79% of all California farms*

**SACRAMENTO, CA, Jan. 29, 2021** – Family farms comprise 93% of all California farms, account for 81% of land in farms, and 71% of the value of all agricultural products sold. This compare to 96% of all U.S. farms, account for 87% of land in farms, and 82% of the value of all agricultural products sold, according to the [2017 Census of Agriculture Farm Typology report](#) released on January 22, 2021 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

The farm typology report primarily focuses on the “family farm,” defined as any farm where the majority of the business is owned by the producer and individuals related to the producer. The report classifies all farms into unique categories based on two criteria: who owns the operation and gross cash farm income (GCFI). GCFI includes the producer’s sales of crops and livestock, fees for delivering commodities under production contracts, government payments, and farm-related income.

“Classifying California’s 70,500 farms to better reflect their diversity is critical to evaluating and reporting on state’s agriculture,” said NASS Pacific Regional Director Gary Keough. “Typology allows us to more meaningfully explore the demographics of who is farming and ranching today as well as their impact on the economy and communities around the country.”

The data show that small family farms, those farms with a GCFI of less than \$350,000 per year, account for 79% of all California farms, 36% of total land in farms, and 5% of the value of all agricultural products sold. Large-scale family farms (GCFI of \$1 million or more) make up 7% of all California farms but produce 60% of the value of all agricultural products. Mid-size farms (GCFI between \$350,000 and \$999,999) are 7% of California farms and produce 6% of the value of all agricultural products.

The data also show that the number of family farms decreased by 10% (7,400 farms) since 2012. The number of large-scale family farms decreased by only 1% while mid-size family farms experienced a slight increase. Small family farms experienced a decline of 12%.

Other key findings from the 2017 Census of Agriculture Farm Typology report include:

- Dairy operations are more likely to be large-scale family farms. Beef and sheep farms tent to be small family farms. Most (65%) of mid-size farms specialize in fruit and tree nut crops.
- Small family farms account for 89% of all direct sales to consumers, compared to 4% for mid-size family farms and 3% for large-scale family farms.

- Compared to producers on mid-size and large-scale family farms, small family farm producers are more likely to be women, age 65 or older, and report being of Hispanic origin or a race other than white. They are also more likely to be new and beginning farmers (farmed 10 years or less) and to report having military service.

Access the full farm typology report and additional information such as maps and data *Highlights* on the [NASS website](#). Typology data are also available in the NASS [Quick Stats database](#).

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