



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture  
**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **USDA releases 2022 Census of Agriculture data down to the county level**

**Helena, MT – February 13, 2024** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) today announced the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, spanning more than 6 million data points about America’s farms and ranches and the people who operate them down to the county level. The information collected directly from producers shows a decrease in the total number of Montana farms. The data shows an increase in the number of new and beginning (operating 10 or fewer years on any farm) as well as young (under the age of 35) producers in Montana. The full Census of Agriculture report as well as publication dates for additional ag census data products can be found at [nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](https://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus). Ag census data can also be found in NASS’s searchable online database, Quick Stats.

“We are pleased to provide updated Census of Agriculture data to all those who serve U.S. agriculture, especially the producers who gave their time to complete the questionnaire. Census of Agriculture data tell a story. This comprehensive snapshot every five years helps data users to see trends and shifts in the industry over time and helps producers do business,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “Overall, though there are always changes across U.S. agriculture, the data remain largely consistent with the previous ag census. Data users will also notice some new data on the topics of hemp, precision agriculture, and internet access.”

Ag census data provides a valuable insight into demographics, economics, land use and activities on Montana farms and ranches such as:

- There were 24,266 farms and ranches in Montana, down 10.3 % from 2017 on 57.6 million acres a decrease of 1 %.
- Family-owned and operated farms accounted for 92.8 % of all Montana farms and operated 80 % of land in farms.
- Montana farms and ranches produced \$4.54 billion in agricultural products, up from \$3.52 billion in 2017. The majority (55 %) of the sales were from crop sales. The Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas category led with 43.0 % of all sales, followed by Cattle (38.6 %). With farm production expenses of \$4.36 billion, Montana farms had net cash income of \$1.14 billion. Average farm income rose to \$46,889.
- 83.6 % of Montana farms had internet access in 2022, a slight increase from 81.4 % in 2017. However, 78.7 % of farms and ranches across the United States had internet access.
- A total of 2,544 Montana farms and ranches used renewable energy producing systems compared to 2,555 farms in 2017. Nearly all the Montana farms (85 %) with renewable energy systems reported using solar panels.
- In 2022, 931 Montana farms sold directly to consumers, with sales of \$15.7 million. Value of sales increased .3 % from 2017.

- The 1,080 farms with sales of \$1 million or more were 4.5 % of Montana farms and represented 98.7 % of sales and government payments. The 13,723 Montana farms (57 %) with sales of \$50,000 or less accounted for 2.6 % of sales and government payments in Montana.
- The average age of all Montana producers was 59.3. The average age in 2017 was 58.2 years.
- There were 11,724 Montana farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 7 %. Beginning farmers in Montana are younger than all farmers, with an average age of 46.9.
- The number of Montana producers under age 35 was 3,689, comprising 8 % of all Montana producers.
- In 2022, 17,830 female producers accounted for 40 % of all Montana producers, compared to 36 % of all U.S. producers. Sixty-seven percent of all Montana farms had at least one female decision maker.

The national response rate for the 2022 Census of Agriculture was 61%; more than 40% of responses were submitted online. Montana's response rate for the 2022 Census of Agriculture was 59.3%; more than 40% of responses were submitted online. To address questions about the 2022 Census of Agriculture data, NASS will host a live X Stat Chat ([@usda\\_nass](#)) for the public on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 1 p.m. EST. Ag census data highlight publications are available at [nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights](https://nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights).

First conducted in 1840 in conjunction with the decennial Census and conducted since 1997 by USDA NASS – the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture – the Census of Agriculture remains the most comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation.

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*NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.*

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