



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Tennessee Field Office  
Cooperating with Tennessee Department of Agriculture



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## **2017 Census of Agriculture Data Series Additions Measure the Changing Face of Agriculture**

**NASHVILLE**– April 11, 2019 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Tennessee Field Office today announced the results of the 2017 Census of Agriculture with both traditional and new information about States nearly 70,000 farms and their 114,000 caretakers over 10.9 million acres in farms. The average farm size was 155 acres, down 5 acres from 2012, primarily due to the increase in the State’s smaller farms (1-49 acres). The average age of the State’s producers increased one year from the last census to 58 years of age.

Comprehensive data, by every crop and species reported, is available at both the State and county levels. Later releases will include individual county data which will include, among many other facts, the number of farms, land in farms, income from agricultural sales, demographic data, whether most of their income came from crops or livestock, and a comparison, by item, to the previous Census of Agriculture (2012).

Debra Kenerson, Tennessee State Statistician noted, “NASS added new data series based on requests for the data and to also offer objective data.” One of the new data series captures information about young farmers (ages 35 and under). According to this recently released data, Tennessee has 9,344 producers who are involved in the care of 7,101 farms. Age averaged 29.2 years and acres per farm averaged 167.

Another new series measures the number of new and beginning farms (10 years or less on any farm) in the State. Our first measure of these data indicate 30,953 new and beginning farmers involved in 20,266 farms. The average farm size is 113 acres with an average age of 47.4 years.

The number of producers who reported having previous or active military service totaled 14,463. These producers were involved in 13,869 farms with an average acreage of 125. The reported average age was 67.4.

Additionally, NASS allowed for the reporting of 4 farm producers per operation as compared to the more traditional, ‘one operator equal one operation,’ which is more reflective of the number of producers involved in the operation.

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The farm structure showed changes, with an increase of nearly 40 percent in the number of female producers to 40,097, compared to an increase of 2.3 percent of male producers to 73,502 from the previous census. The average acreage of farms operated by women was 116 acres compared to an average of 161 acres operated by males. The average age of women producers was 57.3 years as compared to 58.4 for male producers.

Agriculture Commissioner Charles Hatcher noted, “The Census of Agriculture measures the State’s agricultural viability while showcasing its importance to the State’s Number 1 industry, agriculture.”

Kenerson added her sincere thanks to producers who participated in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, ensuring an accurate measure of our State’s position in the country’s agricultural industry,

Results are available in many online formats including [video presentations](#), a [new data query interface](#), maps, and traditional data tables. To address questions about the 2017 Census of Agriculture data, @USDA\_NASS will host a live Twitter “Ask the Census Experts” #StatChat on Friday, April 12 at 1 p.m. ET. All Census of Agriculture information is available at [www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus).

The Census tells the story of American agriculture and is an important part of our history. First conducted in 1840 in conjunction with the decennial Census, the Census of Agriculture accounts for all U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. After 1920, the Census happened every four to five years. By 1982, it was regularly conducted once every five years. Approximately 100,000 Census of Agriculture questionnaires were sent out in Tennessee, and most responses were received by mail or Internet. Conducted since 1997 by USDA NASS – the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture – it remains the only source of comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation and is invaluable for planning the future.

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