



# NEWS RELEASE

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

[Charleston, West Virginia] – February 14, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 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 fall in the total number of West Virginia farms. However, the data also show a rise 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 West Virginia. 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 provide valuable insights into demographics, economics, land use and activities on West Virginia farms and ranches such as:

- There were 22,787 farms and ranches in West Virginia down 3.5% from 2017 with an average size of 156 acres on 3.5 million acres of farmland down 3.1%.
- Family-owned and operated farms accounted for 93% of all West Virginia farms and operated 87% of land in farms.
- West Virginia farms and ranches produced \$948 million in agricultural products, up from \$754 million in 2017. With farm production expenses of \$808 million, West Virginia farms had net cash income of \$201 million. Average farm income rose to \$11,268. A total of 35% of West Virginia farms had positive net cash farm income in 2022.
- West Virginia farms with internet access continued to increase from 70% in 2017 to 72% in 2022.
- A total of 987 West Virginia farms and ranches used renewable energy producing systems compared to 925 farms in 2017, a 7% increase. The majority of West Virginia farms (82%) with renewable energy systems reported using Solar Panels.
- In 2022, 1,502 West Virginia farms sold directly to consumers, with sales of \$6.772 million. Value of sales decreased 40% from 2017.

- The 206 farms with sales of \$1 million or more were less than one percent of West Virginia farms and 4% of farmland; they sold more than 59% of all agricultural products in West Virginia. The 21,347 West Virginia farms with sales of \$50,000 or less accounted for 94% of farms, 76% of farmland, and 16% of sales in West Virginia.
- Over eighty percent of farmland in West Virginia was used by farms specializing in two commodity categories: beef cattle production (50%) and Hay and Forage (32%).
- The average age of all West Virginia producers was 58.7 up 1.2 years from 2017. This is a larger increase than average age increases between prior censuses.
- There were 12,487 West Virginia farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 6%. Beginning farmers in West Virginia are younger than all farmers, with an average age of 48.3.
- The number of West Virginia producers under age 35 was 3,159, comprising 8% of all West Virginia producers.
- In 2022, 13,851 female producers accounted for 35% of all West Virginia producers. Fifty-four percent of all West Virginia 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. 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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