



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
NEW ENGLAND FIELD OFFICE
53 PLEASANT ST. RM 2100
CONORD, NH 03301



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2009

Contact: Gary Keough
(800) 642-9571

2007 CENSUS SHOWS GROWING TRENDS IN U.S. AGRICULTURE

[Concord, NH] The number of farms increased in the United States for the first time since World War II according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Results from 2007 Census of Agriculture showed there were 2.205 million farms in the U.S., up four percent from 2002. Increases were seen in the number of farms with sales of less than \$2,500 and in the number of farms with sales of over \$100,000. Land in farms was 922.1 million acres, down 2 percent from 2002. The official definition of a farm or ranch includes all places where \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold, or normally would have been sold.

"The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them," said Gary Keough, director of the NASS New England Field Office. "It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation. The Census helps illustrate growing trends throughout agriculture, both nationally and in the New England States," said Keough. "This is an exciting time for the entire agriculture community because the census is the voice of every farmer and rancher – regardless of size or type of operation."

The 2007 Census of Agriculture provides inventory, production, expenditure and demographic information of U.S. Agriculture by State and county. Complete results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture including first-ever numbers about on-farm energy generation, community-supported agriculture arrangements and historic barns are available at www.agcensus.usda.gov

The 2007 Census of Agriculture also showed the changing demographics of U.S.'s principal farm operators. Fifty five percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 42 percent in 2002. Fourteen percent were women compared to 11 percent in 2002. The average age continues to go up as the average age was 57.1 years compared to 55.3 years in 2002.

Across New England there were 33,112 farms in New England, up from 28,254 farms in 2002. Land in farms increased from 3,996,503 acres in 2002 to 4,044,104 acres in 2007. Although land in farms increased, the average farm size decreased from 142 acres per farm in 2002 to 122 acres in 2007. Maine, at 8,136 farms, had the largest number of farms in New England, followed by Massachusetts at 7,691 farms, Vermont at 6,984 farms, Connecticut at 4,916 farms, New Hampshire at 4,166 farms, and Rhode Island at 1,219 farms.

Connecticut: The number of farms in Connecticut from the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 4,916, up 17 percent from 2002. The largest increases in farm numbers occurred in those with less than \$100,000 of sales. Land in farms totaled 405,616 acres, up 14 percent from 2002. Much of this increase can be attributed to an increase in shellfish production. Market Value of Agricultural Production totaled \$551.6 million, up 17 percent.

Demographics of Connecticut's principal farm operators:

- 54 percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 50 percent in 2002.
- 24 percent are women compared to 21 percent in 2002.
- Average age is 57.6 years, up from 55.4 years in 2002.

Maine: The number of farms in Maine from the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 8,136, up 13 percent from 2002. The largest increases in farm numbers occurred in those with less than \$100,000 of sales. Land in farms totaled 1,347,566 acres, down two percent from 2002. Market Value of Production totaled \$617.2 million, up 33 percent.

Demographics of Maine's principal farm operators:

- 56 percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 53 percent in 2002.
- 25 percent are women compared to 22 percent in 2002.
- Average age is 56.4 years, up from 53.7 years in 2002.

Massachusetts: The number of farms in Massachusetts from the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 7,691, up 27 percent from 2002. The largest increases in farm numbers occurred in those with less than \$100,000 of sales. Land in farms totaled 517,879 acres, virtually unchanged from 2002. Market Value of Production totaled \$489.8 million, up 27 percent.

Demographics of Massachusetts's principal farm operators:

- 52 percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 46 percent in 2002.
- 29 percent are women compared to 21 percent in 2002.
- Average age is 56.3 years, up from 54.9 years in 2002.

New Hampshire: The number of farms in New Hampshire from the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 4,166, up 24 percent from 2002. The largest increases in farm numbers occurred in those with less than

\$100,000 of sales. Land in farms totaled 471,911 acres, up six percent from 2002. Market Value of Production totaled \$199.0 million, up 37 percent.

Demographics of New Hampshire's principal farm operators:

- 54 percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 51 percent in 2002.
- 30 percent are women compared to 25 percent in 2002.
- Average age is 56.2 years, up from 54.1 years in 2002.

Rhode Island: The number of farms in Rhode Island from the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 1,219, up 42 percent from 2002. The largest increases in farm numbers occurred in those with less than \$50,000 of sales. Land in farms totaled 67,819 acres, up 11 percent from 2002. Market Value of Production totaled \$65.9 million, up 19 percent.

Demographics of Rhode Island's principal farm operators:

- 49 percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 48 percent in 2002.
- 24 percent are women compared to 17 percent in 2002.
- Average age is 56.3 years, up from 54.3 years in 2002.

Vermont: The number of farms in Vermont from the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 6,984, up six percent from 2002. The largest increases in farm numbers occurred in those with between \$5,000 and \$50,000 of sales. Land in farms totaled 1,233,313 acres, down one percent from 2002. Market Value of Production totaled \$673.7 million, up 42 percent. Much of this increase can be attributed to high prices received for milk in 2007.

Demographics of Vermont's principal farm operators:

- 50 percent reported a primary occupation other than farming compared to 47 percent in 2002.
- 21 percent are women compared to 15 percent in 2002.
- Average age is 56.5 years, up from 53.9 years in 2002.

###