

New England Region and State Data

Connecticut

New Hampshire

Maine

Rhode Island

Massachusetts

Vermont

Preliminary Report

2002 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

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Introduction

Preliminary 2002 Census of Agriculture statistics presented in this report describe the number of farms and ranches by size and type for each State and the Nation. Selected demographic items portray the American farmers and ranchers who are the source of U. S. agricultural production. Demographic data include gender of operator, age group categories, race, years on present farm, days worked off farm, number of persons living in farm households, and number of households deriving income from this farm or ranch. Data are presented as preliminary because the comprehensive census review of all items to the county level is continuing. These data are therefore subject to some limited change when final census results are released. The expected date for the release of the complete report is June 3, 2004.

The Abbreviated Historical Highlights table provides selected data items for each census from 1974. Since 1969, the Census of Agriculture has been conducted principally via mail returns using a list of known and potential operators. Although comprehensive in measuring the vast majority of U.S. economic activity in agriculture, the mail list provides an incomplete measure of all operations that qualify as farms or ranches. 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, during the census year. Many small operations meeting the farm definition do not appear on any list of agricultural producers or farm program recipients and therefore have not been represented by the census mail enumeration.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture introduced new methodology to account for all farms in the United States. Incompleteness in the census mail list has been measured by matching list names against all qualifying operations found by canvassing sample land areas throughout the nation. Information from an area based sample has historically been used to evaluate the coverage achieved in agricultural censuses. It is primarily new and small operations, and often women

and minority operators, who are underrepresented on the mail list.

To assist data users to transition to the new, more complete census basis, the 1997 Census of Agriculture results are provided two ways. Data for 1997 are shown as published earlier with comparisons to previous censuses and then reweighted for undercoverage to be more comparable to the 2002 Census of Agriculture results. The 1997 Census thereby provides a “bridge” from the data that were based solely on the mail list to the current 2002 representation of all U.S. farms and ranches. Only one set of 1997 data is presented for Alaska and Hawaii as no coverage adjustment occurred for these two states.

The total number of farms in the United States serves as an example of the impact of the change. In the 1997 Census of Agriculture, the mail list accounted for 1,911,859 farms and ranches. Adding in the measured undercoverage resulted in a 1997 total of 2,215,876 farms and ranches as shown in the Historical Highlights table.

The comparable total for all U.S. farms and ranches in 2002 is 2,129,226 representing a decline of approximately 4 percent since 1997. Most of the farm land has historically been included in the mail census totals since the larger operations are on the mail list. Therefore, there are proportionally larger changes to number of farms as a result of coverage adjustment than to land in farms. This lowers the average farm size on the new basis.

General Terms

The following definitions and explanations apply to the terms and phrases used in this publication. Definitions are essentially the same as those used in earlier censuses, but new items have been added and are explained below.

Farm. In 2002, a farm is defined as any place where \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold. The \$1,000 threshold can be met by any combination of sales and government payments. Abnormal farms are institutional, experimental and research farms.

Land in farms. The acreage designated as “land in farms” consists primarily of agricultural land used for crops, pasture, or grazing. It also includes woodland and wasteland, provided it was part of the farm operator’s total operation. Land in farms includes acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetlands Reserve Programs (WRP).

Land in farms is an operating unit concept and includes land operated by owners, by those renting from others, and operated by hired managers. Land used rent free was to be reported as land rented from others. All grazing land, except land used under government permits on a per-head basis, was included as “land in farms” provided it was part of a farm or ranch. Land under the exclusive use of a grazing association was to be reported by the grazing association and included as land in farms. All land in American Indian reservations used for growing crops or grazing livestock was to be included as land in farms. Land in reservations not reported by individual American Indians or Alaska Natives or others was to be reported in the name of the tribal group that used the land. In many instances, an entire American Indian reservation was reported as one farm.

Value of sales. This category represents the gross market value of agricultural products, before taxes and production expenses, for all agricultural products sold or removed from the place in the census year, regardless of who received the payment. It includes sales by the operator(s) as well as the value of any shares received by partners, landlords, contractors, or others associated with the operation. The value of commodities placed in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans is included in this figure. It does not include payments received for participation in other federal farm programs. Also, it does not include income from farm-related sources such as custom work and other agricultural services, or income from non-farm sources. Sales are expressed in current dollars for each census of agriculture with no adjustment for inflation.

Demographic Terms

The term operator designates a person who operates a farm or ranch, either doing the work or making day-to-day decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, feeding, and marketing. An operator may be the owner, a member of the owner’s household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper. A person renting land to others or having land worked on shares by others is considered the operator only of the land retained for his/her own operation. A farm may have more than one operator. However, each operation was asked to designate one principal operator, defined below.

Total Operators. This category represents the total reported number of operators on farms and ranches. The 2002 census is the first census to ask for the total number of operators associated with the operation. It is also the first time the total number of women operators has been determined.

All (Multiple) Operators. The 2002 Census of Agriculture is the first census to collect data for more than one operator per farm. Demographic and other information was collected for up to three operators per farm, the principal operator plus one or two additional operators. This may be fewer than the total number of operators on some farms. Table columns designated as “all operators” refer to these multiple operators. Demographic data on up to the 3 operators reported are presented separately for women, by race categories, and for Hispanic origin.

Demographic information for multiple operators was collected for place of residence; days worked off farm; year began operating farm; age; sex; primary occupation; Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin; race; residence on an American Indian reservation; and number of persons living in household. If data were not reported for any of the items, they were imputed based on information reported by nearby farms with similar acreage, tenure, and value of sales.

Principal operator. The person responsible for the on-site, day-to-day operation of the farm or ranch business. This person may be an owner, renter, a hired manager, or business manager.

Primary occupation. Primary occupation classifications were “Farming” and “Other”. Operators selected the category associated with where they spend more than 50 percent of his/her work time.

Race. Data are provided for six race categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, and for operators reporting more than one race. The 2002 census is the first to provide respondents the opportunity to choose more than one race category; operators classified as “more than one race” are not included in any of the single race categories. Operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin are found in all of the racial groups listed in the census and were tabulated according to reported race.

American Indian and Alaska Native farm operators. This category was previously labeled American Indian operators; and included Alaska Native operators. To

ensure complete coverage of this category the term Alaska Native was added in 2002 census.

Number of households sharing in net income of farm. These data are new in the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The principal operator reported the number of households sharing net income. Hired managers were excluded from reporting this item.

Symbols and abbreviations. The following symbols and abbreviations are used throughout the tables:

- Zero
- (X) Not Applicable
- (NA) Not Available or Not Published

If you have any questions about the census of agriculture, please call the National Agricultural Statistics Service at 800-727-9540.

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