

# Poultry and Egg Production

ACH12-18/January 2015

A \$42.8 billion industry, 11 percent of total agriculture sales.

## Six states...

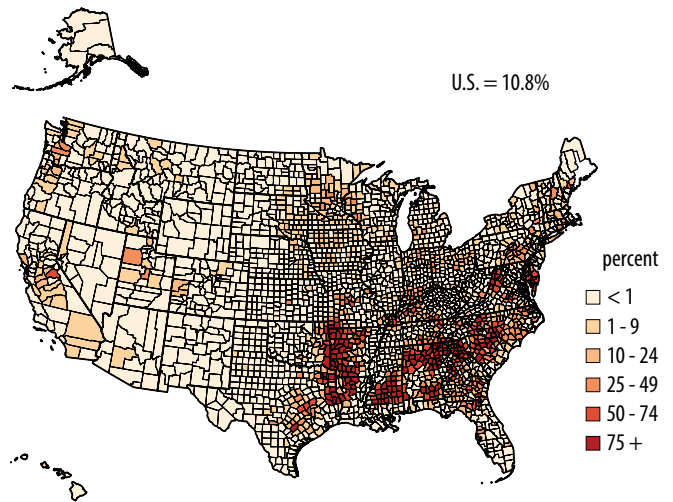
... accounted for more than half of poultry and egg sales in 2012.

### Top States in Sales (\$ billions)

North Carolina	4.8
Georgia	4.8
Arkansas	4.0
Alabama	3.6
Mississippi	2.7
Texas	2.6
California	1.7
South Carolina	1.5
Missouri	1.4
Pennsylvania	1.4
Iowa	1.3
Minnesota	1.2
Indiana	1.2
Virginia	1.2
Kentucky	1.1

In 2012, U.S. sales of poultry and eggs totaled \$42.8 billion; this was a \$5.7 billion, or 15 percent, increase over 2007. In the country as a whole, poultry and egg sales accounted for 11 percent of total U.S. agriculture sales in 2012. The 2012 Census of Agriculture provides a comprehensive picture of the poultry and egg industry.

Poultry and Egg Sales as Percent of Agriculture Sales, by County, 2012



Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

## Industry Size, Value, and Location

Much of the industry is concentrated in the southeastern part of the country. The top six states (each with sales well over \$2 billion in 2012) accounted for 53 percent of sales. The fifteen states with sales of more than \$1 billion were spread across the country; they accounted for 81 percent of sales.

The top ten counties in 2012 poultry and egg sales were scattered across eight states, with Sussex County, Delaware, having the highest sales.

### Top Counties: Poultry and Egg Sales (\$ millions)

Sussex, DE	657.5
Duplin, NC	522.7
Sampson, NC	499.8
Lancaster, PA	469.0
Rockingham, VA	460.6
Benton, AR	457.5
Shelby, TX	448.6
De Kalb, AL	411.1
Gonzales, TX	402.3
Merced, CA	400.5

Does not include counties withheld to avoid disclosing individual data.

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

## Poultry Inventory

Poultry inventory consists of the following categories: broilers, fryers, and other chickens raised for meat; layer chickens (includes both those that lay table eggs and those raised for hatching other chickens); pullets (young chickens to replace the laying flock); turkeys; and assorted other poultry (ducks, geese, quail, roosters, etc.). Between 2007, when the last agriculture census was conducted, and 2012, inventory declined 6 percent for turkeys and for broilers and other meat-type chickens. Inventory increased 4 percent for pullets and remained nearly unchanged for layers.

	2007	2012	%
	millions		change
Broilers and other meat chickens	1,602.6	1,506.3	- 6
Layer chickens	349.8	350.7	0
Pullets to replace laying flock	105.9	110.3	+ 4
Turkeys	107.2	100.8	- 6

## Farm Characteristics

The number of farms with poultry and egg sales decreased 8 percent from 148,911 farms in 2007 to 137,541 farms in 2012. Of these farms, 89 percent were family or individually operated and 5 percent were operated by a partnership. Corporations accounted for 5 percent of farms and 27 percent of sales. (Table 1)

Table 1  
Poultry and Egg Farms by Type of Operation, 2012

	% of Operations	% of Sales
Family / Individual	89	60
Partnerships	5	12
Corporations	5	27
Other	1	1
All	100	100

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Three types of producers operate poultry farms: independent growers raising poultry for themselves, contract growers raising poultry for someone else under a production contract (contractees), and contractors using contractees to raise some poultry in addition to their own production.

Contractees account for higher shares of production than number of farms. In 2012, in the case of broilers, contractees accounted for 48 percent of broiler farms but 96 percent of production. For pullets, it was 30 percent of farms but 63 percent of production, and for turkeys, 20 percent of farms but 69 percent of production.

Of the 137,541 farms with 2012 poultry and eggs sales, 51,755 were primarily poultry and egg operations (that is, more than half of the farm's sales came from poultry and eggs). These specialized farms were 38 percent of farms with poultry and eggs sales, but accounted for 98 percent (\$42.0 billion) of sales in 2012. They had production costs of \$35.3 billion (20 percent higher than in 2007).

## Producer Characteristics

The 2012 Census of Agriculture identified characteristics of those responsible for the day-to-day operation of farms specializing in poultry and egg production. Poultry farmers on average were younger at 55 years old than principal operators overall at 58 years old. As in the 2007 census, 19 percent were women – a higher proportion than for farms overall in 2012. (Table 2)

Table 2  
Poultry and Egg Producers: Key Characteristics, 2007 and 2012  
(principal operators of farms specializing in poultry and egg production)

	2007	2012	All Farms 2012
	percent		
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	81	81	86
Female	19	19	14
<b>Age</b>			
Under 45 years	25	20	16
45 to 64 years	57	58	51
65 years and older	18	22	33
<b>Primary Occupation</b>			
Farming	52	58	48
Other	48	42	52
<b>Percent of Income from Farming</b>			
< 25%	63	59	70
25% to 49%	6	6	8
50% to 74%	10	11	9
75% to 99%	11	12	7
100%	10	12	6
<b>Average Age (years)</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>58.3</b>

Principal operator is the person responsible for day-to-day operation of the farm. A farm "specializing in poultry and egg production" has more than half of its sales come from that commodity.

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

To learn more about poultry and egg production, the 2012 Census of Agriculture, and how to access national, state, and county data, go to:

**[www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)**