



2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Women Farmers

More than 30 percent of U.S. farm operators are women.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows that women have a growing presence in U.S. agriculture. Women are running more farms and ranches, operating more land, and producing a greater value of agricultural products than they were five years ago.

Of the 3.3 million U.S. farm operators counted in 2007 Census, 30.2 percent — or more than 1 million — were women. The total number of women operators increased 19 percent from 2002, significantly outpacing the 7 percent increase in the number of farmers overall. The number of women who were the principal operators of a farm or ranch increased by almost 30 percent, to 306,209. Women are now the principal operators of 14 percent of the nation's 2.2 million farms.*

| | 2007 | 2002 | % Change |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| All Farm Operators | 3,337,450 | 3,115,172 | +7 |
| Women Farm Operators | 1,008,943 | 847,832 | +19 |
| Women as % of Total | 30% | 27% | +11 |
| All Principal Farm Operators | 2,204,792 | 2,128,982 | +4 |
| Women Principal Operators | 306,209 | 237,819 | +29 |
| Women as % of Total | 14% | 11% | +24 |

U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service



** Before 2002, the Census of Agriculture collected detailed demographic data on only one operator per farm. Since 2002, the census has taken a more comprehensive approach, counting all operators and collecting detailed demographic information on up to three operators per farm. The principal operator is the person in charge of day-to-day decisions for the farm or ranch.*

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The states with the highest percentage of female principal farm operators are:

1. Arizona
2. New Hampshire
3. Massachusetts
4. Maine
5. Alaska

How Do They Compare?

When compared to all farms nationwide, those with female principal operators tend to be smaller both in terms of size and sales. However, women are more likely to own all of the farmland that they operate.

| | All Farms | Male-Operated Farms | Female-Operated Farms |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Average Size of Farm | 418 acres | 452 acres | 210 acres |
| Average Value of Sales | \$134,807 | \$150,671 | \$36,440 |
| Sales & Government Payments <\$10,000 | 58% | 55% | 75% |
| Average Age of Principal Operator | 57.1 | 56.8 | 58.8 |
| Farming as Primary Occupation | 45% | 46% | 40% |
| Operator Owns All Farm Acres | 69% | 66% | 85% |

What Do They Look Like?

Like farm operators overall, the majority of women farm operators are white. However, a growing percentage of female farmers are of other races or ethnicity. The largest number of women minority operators is American Indian, followed by operators of Hispanic origin.

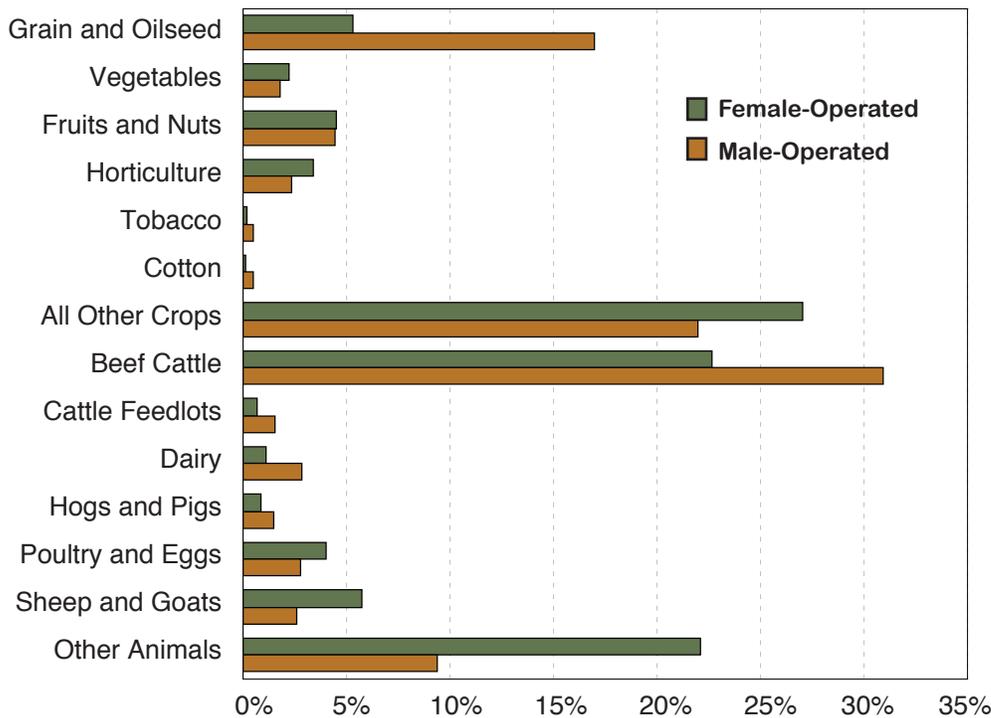
| | All Women Operators | Women Principal Operators |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|
| White | 935,256 | 287,092 |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 22,845 | 10,103 |
| Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin | 21,670 | 6,777 |
| More than One Race Reported | 10,359 | 2,285 |
| Black or African American | 9,148 | 4,429 |
| Asian | 6,690 | 2,033 |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 894 | 267 |

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What Do They Produce?

Women-operated farms tend to be diverse. Women are much more likely than their male counterparts to operate farms classified as “other livestock farms,” a category that includes horse farms, or “all other crops,” which includes hay farms. Men, meanwhile, are much more likely to run grain and oilseed farms and beef cattle operations.

Percent of Farms by
North American Industry Classification System



Every Voice Counts

In conducting the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) placed a special emphasis on outreach to traditionally under-represented populations, including small, minority, female and limited-resource farm operators.

Working in partnership with community-based organizations nationwide, NASS engaged in an extensive effort to make sure the 2007 Census mailing list included all farms and ranches, regardless of size, location or type of operation. NASS also partnered with these groups to provide hands-on assistance and support to local producers — including non-English speakers — in filling out their Census forms. In addition, NASS targeted its media outreach efforts towards publications and broadcast outlets that reach small, minority and non-English-speaking producers.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture marked the first time NASS attempted to collect a Census report from individual farm operators on American Indian reservations in all states. In 2002, reservations were counted as a single farm and reservation officials supplied counts of individual operators. NASS will issue a follow-up report about agricultural activity on American Indian reservations in the spring of 2009.

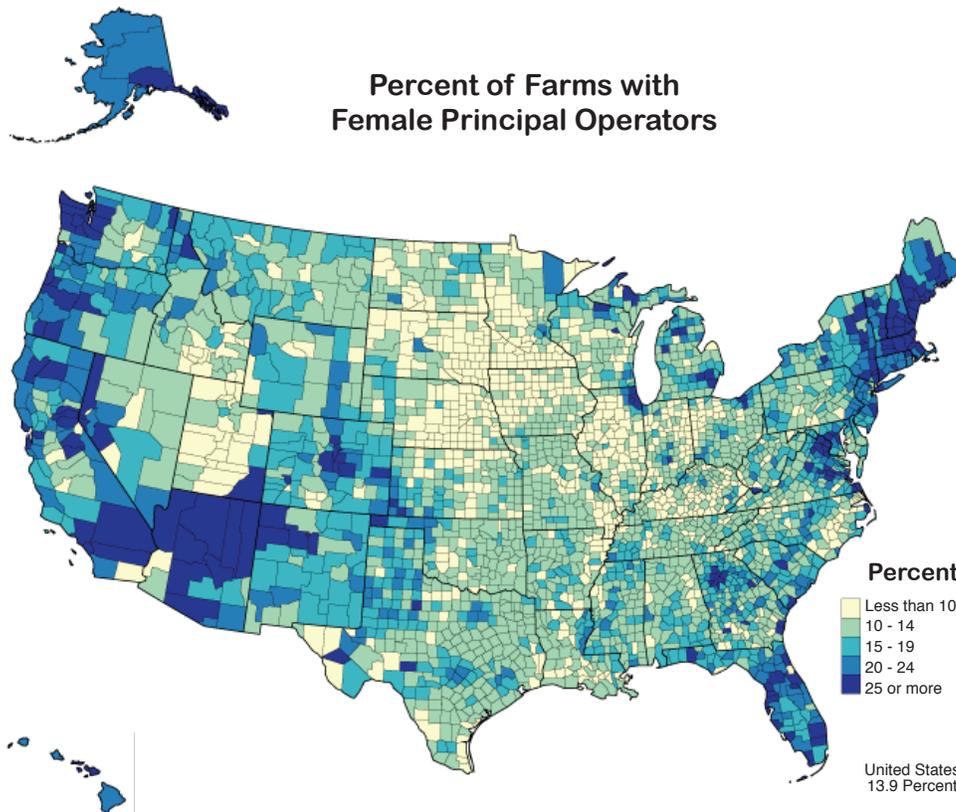
NASS is committed to continuing its outreach to all underserved populations.

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Where Do They Farm?

The percentage of women principal operators is highest in the West and in New England. The states with the highest percentage of women principal operators are Arizona (38.5 percent), New Hampshire (29.7 percent), Massachusetts (28.9 percent), Maine (25.1 percent) and Alaska (24.5 percent).

The states with the lowest percentages of women principal operators are in the Midwest. Women make up less than 10 percent of all farm operators in four Midwestern states: South Dakota (7.7 percent), Nebraska (8.4 percent), Minnesota (9.1 percent) and Iowa (9.1 percent).



For more information:

www.nass.usda.gov

www.agcensus.usda.gov

Agricultural Statistics Hotline
(800) 727-9540

To be counted in 2012:

Sign-up at

www.nass.usda.gov/counts

or call

(800) 892-1660

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