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# Introduction

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The success of the census of agriculture is directly dependent upon the participation of America's farmers and ranchers, and we are grateful for every agricultural operator who furnished the information requested. Completing the census report form was a way for producers to have their voices heard and to impact the future of America's agriculture. The data reported in the 2012 Census of Agriculture provide the agricultural community, government representatives, public and private sector analysts, educators, and others access to high-quality statistics.

This preliminary 2012 Census of Agriculture report includes selected data for farmers, ranchers, and their operations for each State and the Nation. Responses were summarized at the state, and national level and no individual farm data are revealed. A comprehensive census review of all items to the county level is continuing, therefore the data in this preliminary report are subject to change when final census results are released. Finalized data are scheduled for release in May 2014. An announcement will be made on USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service's website [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov) and the census website [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

The six tables in this report provide preliminary 2012 and comparable 2007 data, including coefficients of variation or CVs for 2012. Selected data include number of farms, land in farms, market value of agricultural products sold, and government payments for all farms by the following principal operator categories: women; Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; and Black or African American. The tables also include demographic data about the principal operators by gender, primary occupation, number of years on the present farm, average age and number of operators by age group, Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino ethnicity, and race.

The appendix provides information about the data collection and data processing activities and discusses the statistical methodology used in conducting and evaluating the census.

## General Terms

The following definitions and explanations apply to the terms and phrases used in this publication.

**American Indian and Alaska Native farm operators.** Operators of American Indian and Alaska Native race operating on or off of an Indian reservation. For most reservations, the individual operators were added to the census mail list. Those reservations that did not include all the individual operators on the census mail list were identified and the data for the entire reservation, including the data for the operators that would have met the definition of a farm, were collected on one report form.

**Economic class of farms.** Economic class data are the classification of farms by the sum of market value of agricultural products sold and federal farm program payments.

**Farm.** The census definition of a farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

**Government payments.** This category consists of direct payments as defined by the 2008 Farm Bill; payments from Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); loan deficiency payments; disaster payments; other conservation programs; and all other federal farm programs under which payments were made directly to farm operators. Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) proceeds, amount from State and local government agricultural program payments, and federal crop insurance payments were not tabulated in this category.

**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 not actually under cultivation or used for pasture or grazing, provided it was part of the farm operator's total operation. Land in farms includes land in conservation programs, including the Conservation

Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Farmable Wetlands Program, and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Land in farms is an operating unit concept and includes land owned and operated as well as land rented from others. Land used rent free was 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 reported by the grazing association and included as land in farms. All land in American Indian reservations used for growing crops, grazing livestock, or the potential of grazing livestock was included as land in farms. Land in reservations not reported by reservation, individual American Indians or non-Native Americans was reported in the name of the cooperative group that used the land. In many instances, an entire American Indian reservation was reported as one farm.

**Market value of agricultural products sold.** This category represents the gross market value before taxes and production expenses of all agricultural products sold or removed from the place in 2012 regardless of who received the payment. It is equivalent to total sales and it includes sales by the operators as well as the value of any shares received by partners, landlords, contractors, or others associated with the operation. It includes value of direct sales and the value of commodities placed in the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan program. Market value of agricultural products sold 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 nonfarm sources. The value of crops sold in 2012 does not necessarily represent the sales from crops harvested in 2012. Data may include sales from crops produced in earlier years and may exclude some crops produced in 2012 but held in storage and not sold. For commodities such as sugarbeets and wool sold through a co-op that made payments in several installments, respondents were requested to report the total value received in 2012. The value of agricultural products sold was requested of all operators. If the operators failed to report this information, estimates were made based on the amount of crops harvested, livestock or poultry inventory, or number sold. Caution should be used when comparing sales in the 2012 census with sales reported in earlier censuses. Sales figures are expressed in current dollars and have not been adjusted for inflation or deflation.

**Operator.** The term operator designates a person who operates a farm, either doing the work or making day-to-day decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, feeding, and marketing. The operator may be the owner, a member of the owner's household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper. If a person rents land to others or has land worked on shares by others, he/she is considered the operator only of the land which is retained for his/her own operation. The census collected information on the total number of operators, the total number of women operators, and demographic information for up to three operators per farm.

**Primary occupation of operator.** Data on primary occupation were obtained from operators. The primary occupation classifications used were:

*Farming or ranch work.* The operator spent 50-percent or more of his/her work time during 2012 at farming or ranching.

*Other.* The operator spent less than 50-percent of his/her work time during 2012 in farming or ranching operations.

**Principal operator.** The person primarily responsible for the on-site, day-to-day operations of the farm or ranch business. This person may be a hired manager or business manager.

**Race of operator.** Data, except for Hawaii, were collected for American Indian (included Alaska Native), Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and White. Respondents were asked to mark one or more of the race categories. In Hawaii operator race data were collected for American Indian (included Alaska Native), Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Other Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and White. The combination of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander is equivalent to the Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander category on the other forms. The combination of the Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Other Asian categories is equivalent to the Asian category on the other forms.

**Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin.** Operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin are found in all of the racial groups listed in the census and were tabulated according to the race reported, as well as in the table pertaining only to this group.

## Abbreviations and Symbols

The following abbreviations and symbols are used throughout the tables:

- Represents zero.
- (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.
- (H) Coefficient of variation of estimate is greater than 99.9 percent.
- (L) Coefficient of variation of estimate is less than 0.05 percent.
- (NA) Not available.
- (X) Not applicable.
- (Z) Less than half of the unit shown.