



# Sorghum Farming

ACH12-23/March 2015

*Sales up 7 percent since 2007; production for grain and silage both down.*

## Two states...

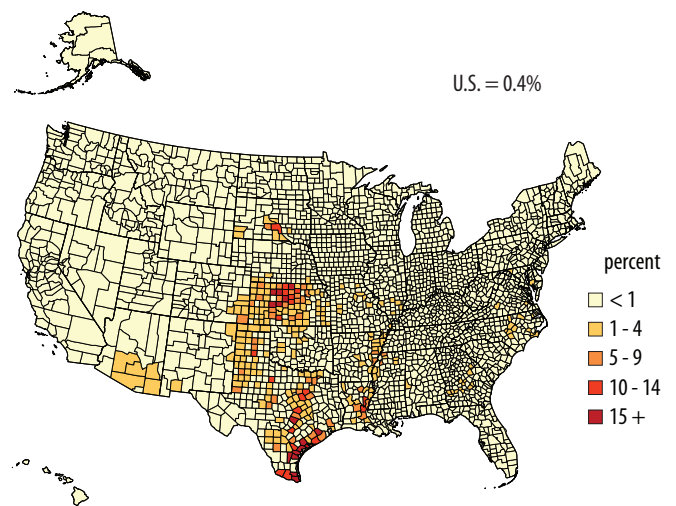
... accounted for three fourths of sorghum sales in 2012.

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

Texas	743.3
Kansas	579.4
Louisiana	75.4
Arkansas	70.9
South Dakota	39.7
Oklahoma	34.4
Nebraska	26.2
Mississippi	25.1
Missouri	21.4
North Carolina	20.9

In 2012, the U.S. sorghum industry had sales of \$1.8 billion, accounting for 0.4 percent of total U.S. agriculture sales. Although many states produce and sell sorghum, Texas and Kansas together accounted for 75 percent of U.S. sorghum sales. The 2012 Census of Agriculture provides a comprehensive picture of the sorghum industry, as well as the oilseed and grain sector overall.

Sorghum Sales as Percent of Agriculture Sales, by County, 2012



Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

## Industry Size, Value, and Location

Sorghum sales were 7 percent higher in 2012 than in 2007, when the last agriculture census was conducted. During the same period, sorghum production for grain and for silage both declined. U.S. farmers produced 264.3 million bushels of grain sorghum in 2012, down 45 percent from 2007. They produced 5.6 million tons of silage, down 2 percent from 2007. The number of farms with sorghum sales declined 16 percent. (Table 1)

Table 1  
U.S. Sorghum Farming, 2007 and 2012

	2007	2012	% Change
Sales (\$ billions)	1.7	1.8	+ 7
Farms with sales	27,142	22,908	- 16
Production			
For grain (million bushels)	482.5	264.3	- 45
For silage (million tons)	5.8	5.6	- 2

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Texas led the country in sorghum for grain production, producing 114.9 million bushels in 2012. Kansas was second, with 87.0 million bushels, and Louisiana third (12.5 million bushels). Texas and Kansas together accounted for 76 percent of grain production and 75 percent of grain and silage sales. The top seven counties in sales were in Texas.

Top Counties in Sorghum Sales (\$ millions)	
Hidalgo, TX	63.6
Willacy, TX	50.4
Nueces, TX	41.7
Cameron, TX	37.5
San Patricio, TX	32.7
Moore, TX	24.0
Wharton, TX	23.0
Ford, KS	22.3
Gray, KS	21.9
Jewell, KS	21.8

*Does not include counties withheld to avoid disclosing individual data.*  
*Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.*

## Farm Characteristics

Seventy-five percent of farms with sorghum sales were family or individually operated, accounting for 57 percent of sales. Partnerships (including family partnerships) were 14 percent of operations and 31 percent of sales. (Table 2)

Table 2  
**Sorghum Farms by Type of Operation, 2012**

	% of Operations	% of Sales
Family/Individual	75	57
Partnership	14	31
Corporation	9	11
Other	2	1
All	100	100

*Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.*

## Oilseed and Grain Farming (including sorghum)

In 2012, there were 369,332 U.S. farms with more than half of their income coming from sales of oilseed and grain crops, including sorghum. Of these specialized farms, 16,549 had combined sorghum sales of \$1.4 billion, which accounted for 82 percent of the \$1.8 billion in total U.S. sorghum sales.

**Production Costs.** Total production costs on specialized oilseed and grain farms were \$93.1 billion in 2012, a 75 percent increase over 2007, when production expenses were \$53.1 billion. The largest expenses were fertilizer, at \$18.8 billion, and cash rent for land and buildings, at \$13.4 billion. Per farm average costs were \$251,982, a 60 percent increase from 2007.

**Producer Characteristics.** The 2012 Census of Agriculture identified characteristics of those responsible for the day-to-day operation of oilseed and grain farms. These farmers were slightly younger than principal operators of all farms. Four percent were women, a smaller share than the 14 percent for all farms. Sixty-six percent reported farming as their primary occupation. Thirty-seven percent earned less than a quarter of their income from farming in 2012, while 13 percent earned their entire income from farming. (Table 3)

Table 3  
**Oilseed and Grain Producers: Key Characteristics, 2007 and 2012**  
 (principal operators of farms specializing in oilseed and grain farming)

	2007	2012	All Farms 2012
	percent		
<b>Gender</b>			
Male / Female	95 / 5	96 / 4	86 / 14
<b>Age</b>			
Under 45 years	19	19	16
45 to 64 years	53	52	51
65 years and older	28	29	33
<b>Primary Occupation</b>			
Farming / Other	66 / 34	66 / 34	48 / 52
<b>Percent of Income from Farming</b>			
< 25%	40	37	70
25% to 49%	14	13	8
50% to 74%	18	19	9
75% to 99%	17	18	7
100%	11	13	6
<b>Average Age (years)</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>58.3</b>

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

*Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.*

To learn more about sorghum farming, the oilseeds and grain sector, 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)**