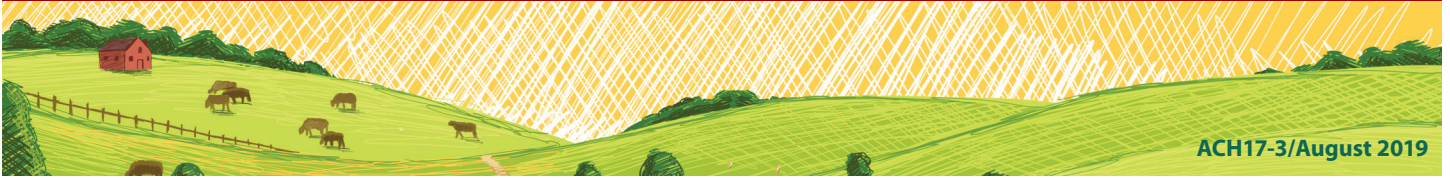


Farms and Farmland

Farms and farmland continue to decline as average farm size increases



ACH17-3/August 2019

In the five years between 2012, when the last Census of Agriculture was conducted, and 2017, the number of farms in the United States and the amount of land in farms continued their gradual decline and average farm size continued to increase. The amount and direction of change varied by state and by county but farmland continued to be most heavily concentrated in the center of the country.

2,042,220 farms



900.2 million acres



441 acres average farm size



Farms and Land

In 2017, the United States had just over 2 million farms, down 3.2 percent from 2012. These farms accounted for 900.2 million acres of land in farms, or 40 percent of all U.S. land. This was a decline of 14.3 million acres (1.6 percent) from the 2012 level.

During the same time, the average farm size increased 1.6 percent, from 434 acres in 2012 to 441 acres in 2017.

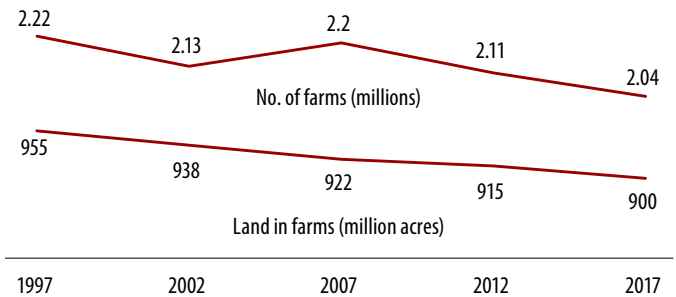
Between 2012 and 2017, only the smallest farms (less than 10 acres in size) and the largest farms (2,000 acres or larger) increased in number. All categories of farms between the smallest and largest decreased in number.

Farms and Farmland, 2012 and 2017

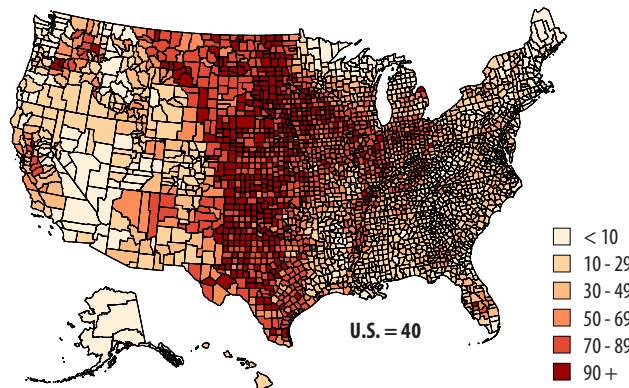
	2012	2017	% change
Number of farms	2,109,303	2,042,220	-3.2
Land in farms (acres)	914,527,657	900,217,576	-1.6
Average farm size (acres)	434	441	+1.6

Twenty-year Trends, 1997–2017

Between 1997 and 2017, the number of U.S. farms declined 8 percent and the amount of farmland declined 6 percent.



Farmland as Percent of Land Area by County, 2017



Two out of five acres of land in the United States are farmland. But the distribution of that land varies. In many counties from North Dakota down through Texas, more than 70 percent of land is used for agriculture.

What is a "Farm"?

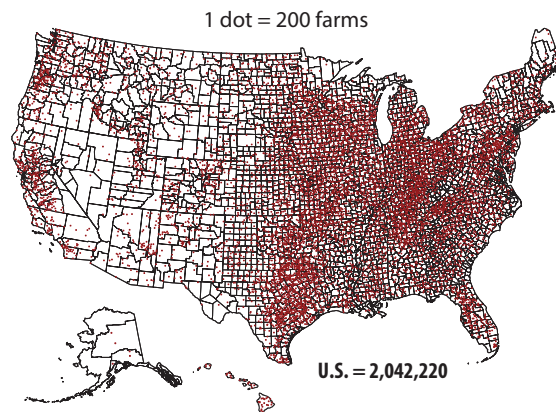
Since 1974, the Census of Agriculture has defined a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

U.S. Farms by Location

Counties in Kentucky, Tennessee, and eastern Texas have high farm densities. With nearly a quarter million farms, Texas has more than twice as many farms as the next state.

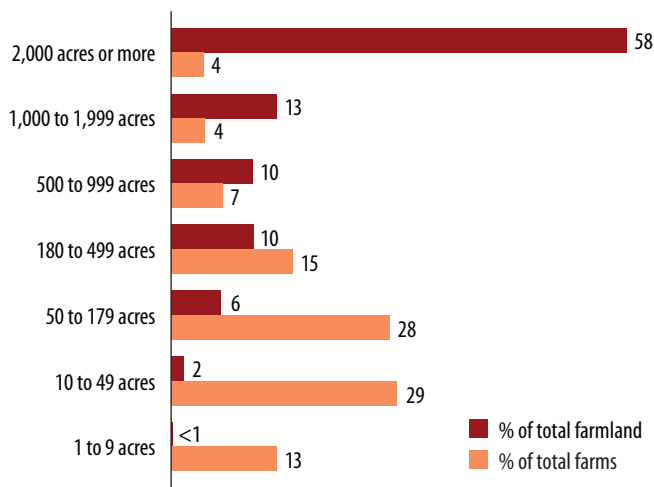
California, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota had the largest declines in farm numbers. Nevada, Rhode Island, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania had the largest percentage declines.

Number of Farms, 2017



Top States	no. of farms
Texas	248,416
Missouri	95,320
Iowa	86,104
Oklahoma	78,531
Ohio	77,805
Kentucky	75,966
Illinois	72,651
California	70,521
Tennessee	69,983
Minnesota	68,822

Farms and Land by Size of Farm



In 2017, the largest 4 percent of U.S. farms (2,000 or more acres) controlled 58 percent of all farmland, while 13 percent of farms (1 to 9 acres in size) controlled 0.14 percent of farmland.

In 1997, the largest farms controlled 50 percent of all farmland.

Farm Specialization^a

Three fourths of farmland is used by farms specializing in two commodity categories: oilseed and grain production (30 percent) and cattle and dairy production (44 percent).

	% of farmland	% of farms
Oilseeds and grains	30	16
Specialty crops (fruits, vegetables, nursery)	3	9
Other crops	13	22
Cattle and dairy	44	34
Hogs and pigs	1	1
Poultry and eggs	1	2
Sheep and goats	2	5
Other animals	6	11

Land Use

Nine out ten acres of agricultural land in 2017 were either permanent pasture or cropland. Woodland accounted for 8 percent of farmland, and the remaining 3 percent includes land in farmsteads, buildings, livestock facilities, etc. Midwestern states have large amounts of cropland; most permanent pasture is in the western states.

	acres (mil)	% of total
Permanent pasture	401	45
Cropland	396	44
Harvested	320	36
Woodland	73	8
Other	30	3
Total	900	100

692,625

The number of farms specializing in cattle and dairy production in 2017.

^a Refers to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). More than half of a farm's sales come from the commodity.

Land Ownership

A farm may be operated by *full owners* (own all the land they farm), *part owners* (rent some farmland but own some as well), or *tenants* (rent all the land they farm). In 2017, farms operated by part owners accounted for just under one fourth of all farms but 56 percent of all farmland. These farms were larger than others in both acres operated and agriculture sales.

	% of farms	% of farmland	Average size	
			acres	dollars
Full owners	69	34	220	100,738
Part owners	24	56	1,020	418,884
Tenants	7	10	620	285,606

40

The percent of U.S. farmland rented from others.

About the Census

The Census of Agriculture, conducted once every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Results from the 2017 and earlier censuses are available at national, state, and county levels.

See the searchable database Quick Stats, the new Census Data Query Tool, downloadable PDF reports, maps, and a variety of topic-specific products.

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus