



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service
Southern Region News Release



Cooperating with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Georgia Department of Agriculture, and South Carolina Department of Agriculture
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2024

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USDA releases 2022 Census of Agriculture data down to the county level

[Athens, GA] The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) last week announced the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, spanning more than 6 million data points about America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them down to the county level. The information collected directly from producers shows a continued decline in the total number of South Carolina farms. However, the data also show a rise in the number of new and beginning (operating 10 or fewer years on any farm) producers in South Carolina. The full Census of Agriculture report as well as publication dates for additional ag census data products can be found at nass.usda.gov/AgCensus. Ag census data can also be found in NASS's searchable online database, Quick Stats.

"We are pleased to provide updated Census of Agriculture data to all those who serve U.S. agriculture, especially the producers who gave their time to complete the questionnaire. Census of Agriculture data tell a story. This comprehensive snapshot every five years helps data users to see trends and shifts in the industry over time and helps producers do business," said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. "Overall, though there are always changes across U.S. agriculture, the data remain largely consistent with the previous ag census. Data users will also notice some new data on the topics of hemp, precision agriculture, and internet access."

Ag census data provide valuable insights into demographics, economics, land use and activities on South Carolina farms and ranches such as:

- There were 22,633 farms in South Carolina (down 8.7% from 2017) with an average size of 201 acres on 4.55 million acres of farmland (down 4.0%).
- Family-owned and operated farms accounted for 87.6% of all South Carolina farms and operated 67.0% of land in farms.
- South Carolina farms produced \$4.4 billion in agricultural products, up from \$3.0 billion in 2017. With farm production expenses of \$3.2 billion, South Carolina farms had net cash income of \$1.5 billion. Average net farm income rose to \$64,908. A total of 31.8% of South Carolina farms had positive net cash farm income in 2022.
- South Carolina farms with internet access continued to rise from 72.6% in 2017 to 77.3% in 2022.
- A total of 1,084 South Carolina farms used renewable energy producing systems compared to 831 farms in 2017, a 30.4% increase. The majority of South Carolina farms (88.5%) with renewable energy systems reported using solar panels.
- In 2022, there were 1,708 South Carolina farms that sold directly to consumers, with sales of \$29.3 million. Value of sales decreased 2.4% from 2017.

- The 991 farms with sales of \$1 million or more represented 4.4% of South Carolina farms and 24.5% of farmland; they sold 86.2% of all agricultural products in South Carolina. The 19,594 South Carolina farms with sales of less than \$50,000 accounted for 86.6% of farms, 52.4% of farmland, and 2.7% of sales in South Carolina.
- The average age of all South Carolina producers was 58.9, up 0.7 years from 2017.
- There were 12,679 South Carolina farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 12.0%. Beginning farmers in South Carolina are on average 10 years younger than all farmers, with an average age of 48.9.
- The number of South Carolina producers under age 35 was 2,977, comprising 7.8% of all South Carolina producers. The 2,280 South Carolina farms with young producers tend to be slightly smaller than average in acres, but higher in average sales.
- The 13,491 female producers accounted for 35.4% of all South Carolina producers. Over 54.6% of all South Carolina farms had at least one female decision maker.

The national response rate for the 2022 Census of Agriculture was 61%; more than 40% of responses were submitted online. Ag census data highlight publications are available at nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights.

First conducted in 1840 in conjunction with the decennial Census and conducted since 1997 by USDA NASS – the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture – the Census of Agriculture remains the most comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation.

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NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

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