



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 Alabama 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 Alabama. 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 Alabama farms and ranches such as:

- There were 37,362 farms in Alabama (down 8.0% from 2017) with an average size of 231 acres (up 9.5%) on 8.6 million acres of farmland (up 0.6%).
- Family-owned and operated farms accounted for 90.5% of all Alabama farms and operated 72.8% of land in farms.
- Alabama farms produced \$9.0 billion in agricultural products, up from \$6.0 billion in 2017. With farm production expenses of \$6.4 billion, Alabama farms had net cash income of \$2.8 billion. Average net farm income rose to \$76,012. A total of 36.6% of Alabama farms had positive net cash farm income in 2022.
- Alabama farms with internet access continued to rise from 72.6% in 2017 to 75.2% in 2022.
- A total of 835 Alabama farms used renewable energy producing systems compared to 772 farms in 2017, an 8.2% increase. The majority of Alabama farms (83.7%) with renewable energy systems reported using solar panels.
- In 2022, there were 1,753 Alabama farms that sold directly to consumers, with sales of \$14.1 million. Value of sales increased 50.1% from 2017.

- The 2,250 farms with sales of \$1 million or more represented 6.0% of Alabama farms and 17.2% of farmland; they sold 84.1% of all agricultural products in Alabama. The 30,891 Alabama farms with sales of less than \$50,000 accounted for 82.7% of farms, 53.2% of farmland, and 2.6% of sales in Alabama.
- The average age of all Alabama producers was 58.7, up 0.7 years from 2017.
- There were 20,588 Alabama farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 5.1%. Beginning farmers in Alabama are on average 10 years younger than all farmers, with an average age of 48.4.
- The number of Alabama producers under age 35 was 4,996, comprising 8.0% of all Alabama producers. The 3,756 Alabama farms with young producers tend to be smaller than average in acres, but higher in sales.
- The 21,778 female producers accounted for 34.7% of all Alabama producers. Over 53.7% of all Alabama 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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