

Family Farms

Ninety-six percent of U.S. farms are family-owned



ACH17-26/January 2021

In 2017, 96% of U.S. farms were family-owned. Small family farms account for 88% of all U.S. farms, 46% of land in farms, and 19% of the value of all agricultural products sold. Large-scale family farms made up less than 3% of all U.S. farms, but produced 43% of the value of all agricultural products. Mid-size family farms accounted for 5% of U.S. farms, and produced 20% of the value of all agricultural products.

1,798,439
small family farms

108,304
mid-size family farms

52,592
large and very large family farms



Number and Location

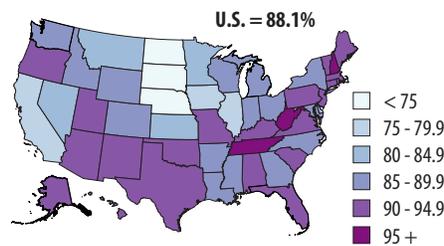
The 2017 Census of Agriculture questions for demographic data were revised to better capture the contributions of all persons involved in agricultural production. In response to detailed questions about farm decision making, more farms reported multiple individuals involved in farm operations. Because of the changes, the small farm typology categories were changed to eliminate classification based on occupation. Data is comparable for the combined all small farms category between census cycles as well as the other typology groups.

Family Farm Counts by Size

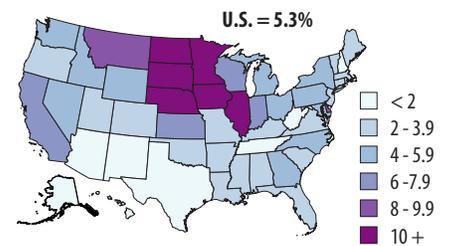
	2017	Percent Change Since 2012
Small	1,798,439	-3%
Mid-Size	108,304	-8%
Large	47,056	-13%
Very Large	5,536	-3%
All Family Farms	1,959,335	-4%

The number of family farms decreased from 2012 to 2017, down almost 80,000 farms or 4%. Larger decreases occurred for mid-size and large family farms, down 8% and 13%, respectively. There were 82,885 non-family farms in the U.S. in 2017, up 18% from 2012.

Small Family Farms as Percent of Total Farms, 2017



Mid-Size Family Farms as Percent of Total Farms, 2017



The share of small family farms, particularly those with low sales, is lowest in the Midwest and Northern Plains states, and highest in the South and New England states. The share of mid-size and large-scale farms is highest in the Midwest and Northern Plains states.

Farm Types

The 2017 Census of Agriculture farm typology report classifies all farms into unique categories based on two criteria – who owns the operation and gross cash farm income (GCFI). GCFI includes the producer's sales of crops and livestock, fees for delivering commodities under production contracts, government payments, and farm-related income.

Small family farms – GCFI less than \$350,000

Low-sales farms – GCFI less than \$150,000.

Moderate-sales farms – GCFI between \$150,000 and \$349,999.

Mid-size family farms – GCFI between \$350,000 and \$999,999.

Large-scale family farms – GCFI of \$1,000,000 or more.

Large family farms – Farms with GCFI between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999.

Very large family farms – Farms with GCFI of \$5,000,000 or more.

Non-family farms – Any farm where the producer and persons related to the producer do not own a majority of the business.

SNAPSHOT

Family Farm Producers, 2017

Number=3,235,214*

	Small Farm Producers	Mid-Size Farm Producers	Large- Scale Farm Producers
	(percent)		
Sex			
Male	62	74	78
Female	38	26	22
Age			
<35	8	11	10
35 - 64	57	65	68
65+	35	24	22
Years farming			
10 or less	28	15	13
11 or more	72	85	87
Lived on their farm	76	77	68
Worked off farm			
No days	36	62	70
1 to 199 days	22	18	13
200+ days	42	20	17
Primary occupation			
Farming	37	79	85
Other	63	21	15
Race			
American Ind/Alaska Native	1.9	0.4	0.2
Asian	0.6	0.9	1.0
Black/African American	1.5	0.2	0.1
Nat Hawaiian/Pacific Isl	0.1	0.0	0.0
White	95.1	98.2	98.3
More than one race	0.8	0.3	0.3
Hispanic	3	2	2
With military service	12	5	5

*Total number of all family farm producers. Data collected for up to four producers per farm.

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.

The searchable database Quick Stats, the new Census Data Query Tool, downloadable PDF reports, maps, and a variety of topic-specific products, including profiles by race, ethnicity, and sex are available online.

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Producer Characteristics

Small family farm producers are more likely than mid-size or large-scale producers to be female, age 65 or older, and report being of Hispanic origin or a race other than white or Asian. They are also more likely to report having served in the military, working off the farm, and to be a new/beginning farmer (farmed 10 years or less). Across many demographic categories, mid-size and large-scale family farm producers look similar. The majority of these producers report farming as their primary occupation, and no work off the farm. Fewer report having served in the military, and a low share are beginning farmers.

While 92% of small family farms have two or fewer producers, mid-size and large-scale family farms are more likely to report multiple persons involved in the farming operation. Eleven percent of mid-size farms report three or more producers; and 26% of large and very large farms report three or more producers.

Farm Specialization

	Small Family Farms (lower sales)	Small Family Farms (moderate sales)	Mid-Size Family Farms	Large Family Farms	Very Large Family Farms
	(percent)				
Grains and oilseeds	10	43	53	47	8
Specialty crops	9	8	8	14	29
Other crops	24	9	8	9	5
Cattle	35	19	14	12	14
Dairy	1	9	9	10	28
Hogs and pigs	1	2	2	4	8
Poultry and eggs	2	7	4	2	6
Other animals	18	3	2	2	2

Farm specialization varies between the farm size groups. The majority of lower sales small family farms specialize in cattle (35%) or other crops (24%); the largest share (43%) of moderate sales small family farms specialize in grains and oilseeds. Over half (53%) of mid-size farms specialize in grains and oilseeds, while large-scale farms are more varied in production specialization. Almost half (47%) of large family farms specialize in grains and oilseeds. Very large farms are more likely to specialize in dairy production or specialty crops (vegetables, fruits and horticulture); 29% of very large farms specialize in specialty crops and 28% specialize in dairy production.

Profile of U.S. Farms

Profile of U.S. Farms, by Type, 2017

	U.S. Total	Family Farms			Non-Family
		Small	Mid-Size	Large*	
		(percent of U.S. total)			
Number of farms	2.0 million	88	5	3	4
Land in farms	900 mil. acres	46	21	20	13
Value of land and buildings	\$2.7 trillion	46	20	24	10
Agricultural sales	\$389 billion	19	20	43	18
Direct sales to consumers	\$2.8 billion	45	17	23	15
Government payments	\$8.9 billion	40	25	25	10
Production expenses	\$326 billion	23	18	41	18
Net cash farm income of producers	\$66 billion	4	24	54	18

* Includes very large