2022 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE *Highlights*

Dairy Cattle and Milk Production

Milk sales up, number of farms and milk cow inventory down, since 2017

In 2022, U.S. farmers had 9.3 million milk cows and sales of milk from cows totaling $52.8 billion, accounting for 9.7% of total U.S. agriculture sales. California and Wisconsin accounted for about a third of U.S. sales. The top five states accounted for over half of sales. Of 24,470 farms that produced and sold milk from cows, 88% were dairy farms that accounted for 98% of milk sold in 2022. These farms had $43.9 billion in production expenses.

9.3 million milk cows

24,470 farms

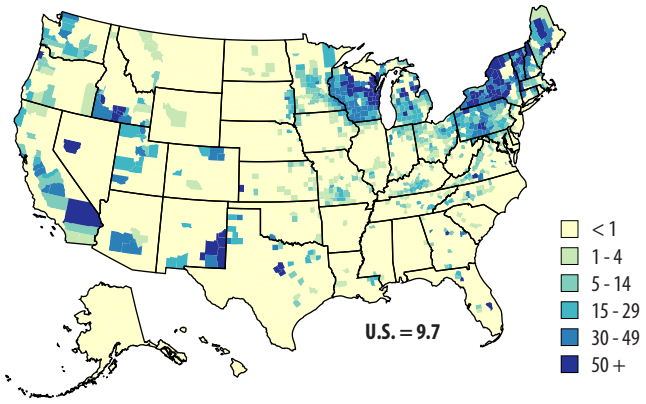
$52.8 billion milk sales

Number and Location

U.S. farmers had 9.3 million milk cows at the end of 2022, down 2.4% from 2017, when the Census of Agriculture was last conducted. During that time, the number of farms with sales of milk from cows declined 39%, from 40,336 farms to 24,470 farms. Sales of milk from cows totaled $52.8 billion in 2022, up 44% from 2017.

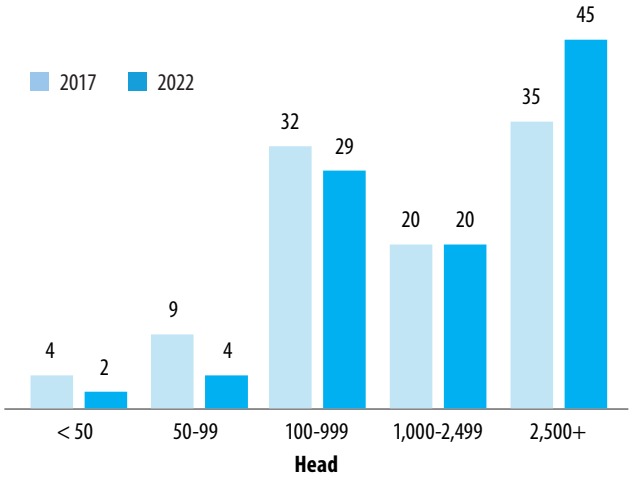
California led the country in both milk cow inventory and sales, with 1.7 million milk cows at the end of 2022 and $9.7 billion in 2022 milk sales. Wisconsin was second in sales, followed by New York, Idaho, and Texas. These five states accounted for 52% of milk cow inventory and 53% of milk sales. The top 10 states accounted for 73% of U.S. milk sales.

Sales of Milk from Cows as Percent of Agriculture Sales, by County, 2022



Top States	($ bil)
California	9.7
Wisconsin	7.4
New York	3.9
Idaho	3.7
Texas	3.5
Michigan	2.7
Minnesota	2.5
Pennsylvania	2.5
Washington	1.6
Iowa	1.3

Percent of Milk Cow Inventory, by Size of Operation (no. of head), 2017 and 2022



Between 2017 and 2022, the proportion of milk cows on smaller operations (with fewer than 1,000 milk cows) declined from 45% to 35%. The proportion on larger operations (2,500 milk cows or more) increased from 35% to 45%. The proportion on mid-sized operations stayed the same at 20%.

$2.8 billion

At $2.8 billion in 2022 milk sales, Tulare County, California, accounted for 5% of all U.S. milk sales. Four of the top five counties in milk sales were in California.

United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

SNAPSHOT

Dairy Producers, 2022

Number = 49,468*

	Dairy	All U.S.
	(percent)	
Sex		
Male	70	64
Female	30	36
Age		
<35	17	9
35 - 64	61	53
65+	22	38
Years farming		
10 or less	20	30
11 or more	80	70
Lived on their farm	82	70
Worked off farm		
No days	69	38
1 to 199 days	14	22
200+ days	17	40
Primary occupation		
Farming	83	42
Other	17	58
With military service	3	9
Race		
American Ind/Alaska Native	0.2	1.7
Asian	0.1	0.7
Black/African American	0.2	1.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Isl	0.1	0.1
White	99.0	95.4
More than one race	0.4	0.9
Hispanic	1.7	3.3
Average age (years)	51.4	58.1

** Producers on 23,153 specialized dairy farms as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). More than half of a farm's sales came from milking dairy cattle. 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 2022 and earlier censuses are available at national, state, and county levels.

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

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Producer Characteristics

The producers on farms that specialized in dairy cattle and milk production were, on average, younger (51.4 years) than U.S. producers overall (58.1 years). Thirty-one percent worked one or more days off the farm, compared to 62% of all U.S. producers. Dairy producers were more likely to consider farming their primary occupation than U.S. producers overall (83% versus 42%) and more likely to live on their farm (82% versus 70%). Almost all dairy producers (99%) were white.

30 **The percent of dairy producers who were women.**

Farm Characteristics

Farms that specialized in dairy and milk production accounted for 98% of U.S. milk sales. Most of these farms (87%) had sales and government payments of $100,000 or more.

Economic Class *(sales and government payments)*	Dairy Farms *(percent of total)*	All Farms *(percent of total)*
< $10,000	7	52
$10,000 - $99,999	6	27
$100,000 - $499,999	34	11
$500,000 - $999,999	17	4
$1,000,000 +	36	6

$1.3 billion

The amount of organic sales by specialized dairy farms, 14% of the total U.S. organic agriculture sales.

Average Farm

On average, dairy farms had higher levels of sales than all U.S. farms, larger land area, greater production expenses, and higher net income.

	Dairy Farms	All Farms
Avg. acres	607	463
Avg. sales	$2,607,198	$285,762
Avg. government payments	$23,052	$21,599
Avg. expenses	$1,895,422	$223,175
Avg. net cash farm income	$745,994	$79,790

Production Expenses

The production costs of farms that specialized in dairy and milk production totaled $43.9 billion, up 32% from 2017. At $20.3 billion, feed was the largest expense item, accounting for 46% of production expenditures.

	($ bil)
Feed	20.3
Hired labor	5.5
Repairs and supplies	2.9
Custom work and hauling	1.8
Vet and medicine	1.6
Fuels	1.5
Interest	1.2
Other expenses	9.1
Total U.S.	43.9

Among Dairy Farms

70% Had internet access

64% Hired farm labor

92% Were family farms

85% Had net positive income

Source: USDA NASS, 2022 Census of Agriculture.