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USDA releases 2022 Census of Agriculture data

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 announced the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture. The information collected directly from producers shows a continued decline in the total number of Virginia farms. However, the data also show an increase in the number of new and beginning (operating 10 or fewer years on any farm) producers.

“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 Virginia farms such as:

- There were 38,995 farms in Virginia down 10% from 2017 with an average size of 187 acres up 4% on 7.3 million acres of farmland down 6%. That is 29% of all Virginia land.
- Family-owned and operated farms accounted for 95% of all Virginia farms and operated 89% of land in farms.
- Virginia farms produced \$5.49 billion in agricultural products, up from \$3.96 billion in 2017. With farm production expenses of \$4.35 billion, Virginia farms had net cash income of \$1.48 billion. Average farm income increased to \$38,058. A total of 37% of farms had positive net cash farm income in 2022.
- Farms with internet access continued to increase from 74% in 2017 to 78% in 2022.
- A total of 2,559 farms used renewable energy producing systems compared to 2,318 farms in 2017, a 10% increase. Solar panels account for 85% of the renewable energy producing systems in Virginia.
- The 1,273 farms with sales of \$1 million or more were 3% of Virginia farms. They sold almost three-fourths of all agricultural products in Virginia. The 32,456 Virginia farms with sales of \$50,000 or less accounted for 83% of farms.
- The average age of all producers was 59.2, up 0.7 years from 2017. This is a smaller increase than average age increases between prior censuses.
- There were 20,378 farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of almost 8%. Beginning farmers in Virginia are younger than all farmers, with an average age of 48.6.
- The number of producers under age 35 was 5,139, comprising 8% of all Virginia producers. The 4,008 farms with young producers making decisions tend to be larger than the overall average in both acres and sales.
- In 2022, 25,237 female producers accounted for 37% of all producers. Fifty-nine percent of all farms had at least one female decision maker.

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.

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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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