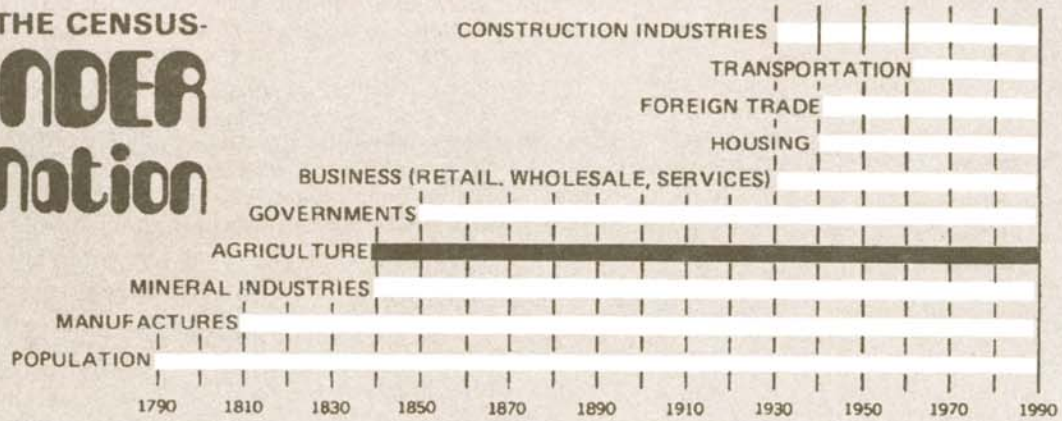
U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS-
FACTFINDER for the Nation



CFF No. 3 (Rev.)

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AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. census of agriculture provides a periodic statistical picture of the Nation's farming, ranching, and related activities. The census was taken every 10 years from 1840 to 1920 and every 5 years from 1925 through 1974. Enumerations for 1978 and 1982 adjusted the data-reference year to coincide with the economic censuses (business, industry, etc.) for 1982. Thereafter the agriculture census reverted to a 5-year cycle. It reports data on agricultural production, resources, and inventories for every county, State, and region of the United States, and a summary for the Nation; it is the only set of uniform agricultural data at the county level. The 1987 census includes farms, ranches, and horticultural operations in the 50 States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

The 1969, 1974, 1982, and 1987 censuses were taken by mail; most prior censuses were conducted by personal interview. (The 1978 census was taken by a combination of both.) The 1982 and 1987 census used regionalized report forms; 13 regions were set up, based on cropping patterns within groups of States.

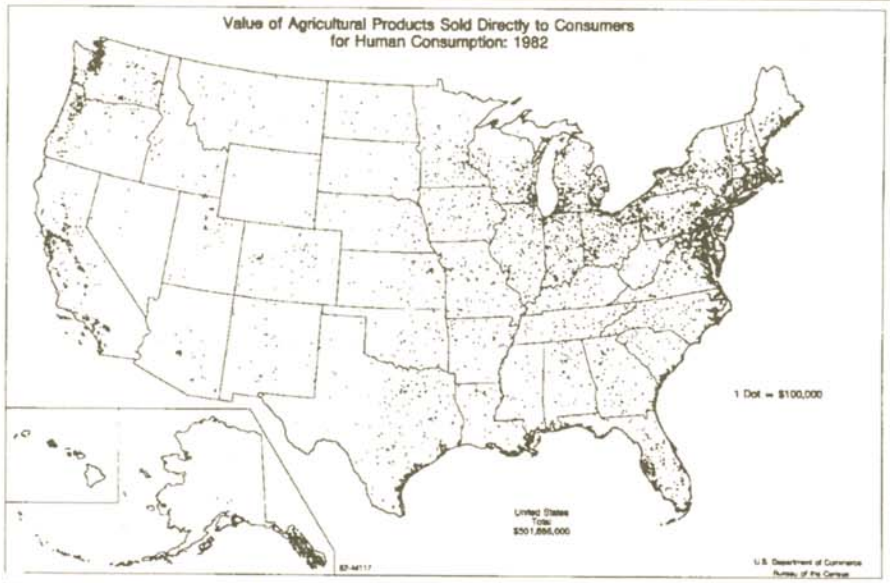
In addition to the periodic census of agriculture, the Census Bureau conducts a variety of related surveys and censuses at various times to provide data on subjects such as agricultural economics and land ownership, horticulture, cotton ginnings, corporations, irrigation organizations and drainage, farm energy use, and other topics; some of these surveys run concurrently or in association with the major census of agriculture.

WHAT DOES THE CENSUS COVER?

In the first censuses of 1840 and 1850, farmers were asked about livestock only in terms of the number of cattle, milk cows, and working oxen. Crop items included production of Indian corn, pounds of cheese made, pounds of silk cocoons, and gallons of wine produced, in addition to other inquiries, many of which are similar to questions asked in more recent times. As the Nation expanded, the number of farms and ranches grew in number and in mechanization, specialization, and complexity. The scope of the agriculture census expanded to meet the needs for data to measure these developments.

The purposes, content, and priority of needs for agriculture census data undergo a thorough review in preparation for each census. This review's objectives are to reduce reporting burden, simplify the report

SAMPLE MAP FROM VOLUME 2, GRAPHIC SUMMARY[1]



[1] For 1987, the *Agricultural Atlas.*

U.S. Department of Commerce
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For sale by Customer Services (DUSD), Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by draft on a U.S. bank. Price, 25 cents per copy. A discount of 25 percent is available on orders of 100 copies or more sent to a single address.

form, improve response, and reduce the time between data collection and publication. Only essential, basic items are asked of all farms; additional items for which county-level data are urgently needed are asked on a sample basis.

For 1987, the principal categories of data collected in the 50 States were

- Acreage
- Crops
- Vegetables
- Nursery and greenhouse products
- Fruit and nut production
- Value of sales
- Land use and participation in acreage reduction programs
- Irrigation
- Livestock and poultry
- Animal specialties
- Type of organization
- Characteristics and occupation of operator
- Production expenses, including energy, labor, repair and maintenance, interest, rent paid, and taxes
- Use of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals
- Machinery and equipment
- Market value of land and buildings

Inventory figures for the 1987 census were obtained as of December 31, 1987, and data on citrus crops from the bloom of 1986. Generally, all other information was for calendar year 1987.

WHO USES THE DATA AND HOW?

Complete and accurate agriculture statistics help ensure a more orderly and efficient marketing and food distribution system, which benefits both the farmer and the consumer.

Census data are used for trend analysis, particularly in forecasting farmer/grower needs. Each census provides uniformly based benchmark data by county and indicates the latest activities in the Nation's agriculture. In addition, the statistics are the basis for many of the year-to-year estimates and projections made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They also provide a base to identify areas or universes suitable for sample surveys by the Department of Agriculture, State governments, universities, and private institutions.

Federal, State, and local agencies use the data for planning rural development, agricultural research, and extension work. These data serve as criteria for determining the agricultural base of a county and for analyzing its economy and resources.

Census statistics on farms, by geographic location and by size and type of operation, provide much of the background information Congress uses in developing and revising farm programs. The data also are used for determining the effects of these programs on various sizes and types of farms.

Farm cooperatives, commodity and trade associations, and agribusinesses use census data to aid in planning, marketing, and advertising; locating new plants and service and distribution centers; allocating research funds; forecasting markets; and other marketing decisions. This improves the farmers' access to markets and suppliers.

Census statistics, along with current estimates, take some of the guesswork out of the production and marketing decisions that confront individual farmers. By comparing their own operations with the census results for their county or State, farmers and agricultural service operators know how to better adjust their own production plans to fit ever-changing market conditions.

Most farmers probably never see a census publication, but they benefit from the available statistics through the actions and reactions of their marketing cooperatives and associations, commodity groups, market forecasters, farm organizations, the farm press, and other data users. Census figures show a geographic picture of American agriculture, the changing crop and livestock patterns in agriculture, farmers' economic conditions and operating costs, and the sources of marketing and income. Knowledge of these factors aids farmers and other decision makers at all levels.

FARM DEFINITION

The definition of a farm for census purposes has been changed at various times over the years. From 1978 to the present, a farm is defined as any place from which the sales of agricultural products amounted, or normally would amount, to $1,000 in the census year.

HOW THE DATA ARE PUBLISHED

The census data are issued in printed reports (paper, and microfiche) computer tapes, diskettes for personal computers, through on-line network systems, and in the compact disk-read only memory (CD-ROM) format. (CD-ROM is an economical solution for serving the needs of microcomputer users. One CD-ROM holds about 600 million characters (megabytes), roughly equivalent to 1,500 flexible diskettes or 4 high density computer tapes. The CD-ROM's will be available in early 1990 after the computer tapes are released.)

Information on the back of this publication tells where publications, tapes, etc., may be obtained. The dates shown in parentheses reflect scheduled release times for the first report in each series.

1987 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Advance Reports

Advance Reports, series AC87-A-01(A) to -51(A) (for States) and AC87-01-001(A) to -51-045(A) (for counties), * + (fall 1988 to spring 1989)

Prior to publication of the final census figures, a separate report for each county in the United States with 10 or more farms is released, giving statistical highlights on basic data items, including the principal crops and livestock for each county, along with comparable data for 1982. At the earliest possible date, this series provides usable information on a limited number of major items, in less

TYPICAL TABLE FROM CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, VOLUME 1, GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERIES, STATE REPORT

Table 42. **Crops Harvested and Value of Production: 1987 and 1982**

[For meaning of abbreviations and symbols, see introductory text]

Crop	1987				1982			
	Farms	Acres	Quantity	Value of production[1] ($1,000)	Farms	Acres	Quantity	Value of production[1] ($1,000)
Harvested cropland	2 172	441 345	(X)	96 953	2 700	499 986	(X)	-
Corn for grain or seed (bushels)	1 076	129 805	9 796 185	19 103	1 363	150 676	14 880 293	-
Corn for silage or green chop or cut for dry fodder, hogged or grazed	155	11 145	(X)	1 789	209	10 034	(X)	-
Sorghum for grain or seed (bushels)	21	864	23 705	39	6	115	4 407	-
Sorghum for silage or green chop, cut for dry forage or hay, or hogged or grazed	13	258	(X)	19	28	283	(X)	-

TYPICAL TABLE FROM CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, VOLUME 1, GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERIES, STATE REPORT

Table 48. **Summary by Tenure of Operator: 1987**

[For meaning of abbreviations and symbols, see introductory text]

Item	All farms				Farms with sales of $10,000 or more			
	Total	Full owners	Part owners	Tenants	Total	Full owners	Part owners	Tenants
FARMS AND LAND IN FARMS								
Farms ..... number..	2 966	1 825	857	284	1 859	1 064	636	159
percent..	100.0	61.5	28.9	9.6	62.7	35.9	21.4	5.4
Land in farms ..... acres..	608 088	142 331	398 881	66 876	540 390	98 735	382 099	59 556
Average size of farm ..... acres..	205	78	465	235	291	93	601	375
MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD								
Total sales (see text) ..... farms..	2 966	1 825	857	284	1 859	1 064	636	159
$1,000..	443 065	231 331	178 174	33 560	439 509	229 138	177 260	33 110
Average per farm ..... dollars..	149 381	126 757	207 904	118 169	236 422	215 356	278 711	208 240
Farms by value of sales:								
Less than $1,000 (see text)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

TYPICAL TABLE FROM COTTON GINNINGS IN THE UNITED STATES, SERIES A30

Table 1. Comparative Summary: Crops of 1978 to 1987

Bales, ginnings, and harvests	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978
Running bales:										
United States, total	14,359,531	9,437,968	12,987,834	12,544,866	7,504,236	11,526,035	15,150,260	10,826,242	14,261,922	10,549,219
Upland	14,083,390	9,236,839	12,837,088	12,418,749	7,413,334	11,429,648	15,072,854	10,724,266	14,165,664	10,459,201
American Pima	275,141	201,129	150,746	126,117	90,902	96,387	77,406	101,976	96,258	90,018
Equivalent 480-pound net weight bales ...	14,741,173	9,703,592	13,417,572	12,962,303	7,760,247	11,940,485	15,627,452	11,117,129	14,620,077	10,850,669
Number of active gins	1,653	1,662	1,774	1,860	1,852	2,000	2,189	2,254	2,336	2,461
Average number of bales per gin	8,686	5,679	7,321	6,745	4,052	5,763	6,921	4,803	6,105	4,287
Cotton ginned prior to—										
August 1	1,178	145,022	69,955	162,769	2,138	39,800	44,387	199,606	72,294	143,791
September 1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

detail than the final reports. In addition, an "advance" report is published for each State and the Nation.

FINAL SUMMARY VOLUMES (late 1988 to fall 1989)

Volume 1, *State and County Data* (late 1988 to fall 1989), series AC87-A-1 to -56, 📖 * ⊙ +. A separate report is published for each of the 50 States and for the United States, by State, which is available in the printed format and also on CD-ROM. Volume 1 reports also are published for Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, Northern Marianas, and American Samoa containing data for each area and its subdivisions. Each of the State reports is divided into two chapters: chapter 1, with 53 tables at the State level; and chapter 2, containing 36 tables of detailed data for each county, and tables with selected summary data for counties and the State, organized by subject.

Volume 2, *Subject Series* (early 1990 to late 1991), series AC87-SS-1 to -6, 📖 * 🌍 ■ +. This series of reports includes the *Agricultural Atlas* (formerly *Graphic Summary*), *Ranking of States and Counties, Coverage Evaluation, History, Government Payments and Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold,* and *ZIP Code Tabulation of Selected Items from the 1987 Census of Agriculture* (⊙ +). The *Atlas* offers a profile of the Nation's agricultural system in a series of dot and multicolor pattern maps for the United States. The *Ranking of States and Counties* ranks the leading States and counties for selected items in the 1987 Census of Agriculture with comparative data from the 1982 Census of Agriculture.

Volume 3, *Related Surveys,* series AC88-RS-1 to -2, 📖 * 🌍 + 💻 (early 1990). This series encompasses the data reports for two surveys: The *1988 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey* provides detailed tabulations about irrigation on the Nation's farms and ranches in 1988. Subjects include estimated quantities of irrigation water used by crops, method of water distribution, and data on wells and pumps used in irrigation. Data will be available for each of the 17 Western States, Arkansas, Florida, and Louisiana. The *1988 Agricultural Economic and Land Ownership Survey* provides national and State-level data on debts, expenditures, income, and assets for both farm operators and landlords.

Volume 4, *The 1988 Census of Horticultural Specialties,* 📖 * 🌍 + 💻 (scheduled for release in late 1990). This report will present data from the 1988 Census of Horticultural Specialties, which is conducted every 10 years, and is the source of comprehensive horticultural data for each county and State within the Nation. A horticultural establishment is defined as an operation growing and selling $2,000 or more of horticultural products (greenhouse, outdoor-grown floricultural products, nursery products, mushrooms, and sod) during the census year.

OTHER REPORTS

Cotton Statistics. These statistics have been collected during each cotton

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ginning season since 1902. The results are issued in a series of three reports:

- A10—Biweekly data on ginnings during the season, by States. (subscription*, single copies+) +
- A20—Monthly data on ginnings during the season, by counties. (subscription*, single copies+) +
- A30—Final figures for cotton ginnings and production for the United States, States, and counties, including the number of active and idle gins; average net weight of bales ginned (U.S. and States); percent of total cotton ginned to specified dates (U.S. and States); amount of American Pima cotton ginned (U.S.); 100 leading counties, ranked by amount of cotton ginned and produced; and cotton gins, by States, by number of bales ginned. * +

All series show comparative data for earlier years.

Other Statistics. Agricultural data also are presented in convenient digest form in several Bureau publications, the annual *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, * +, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970,* available commercially, +, and the periodic *County and City Data Book* (latest, 1988), * +. Certain reports from other Bureau programs contain some statistics related to agriculture, such as the following:

- 1980 Census of Population and Housing—Data down to the county level on farm residence, employment, and other characteristics, * +.
- 1982 and 1987 Economic Censuses—Food processing and transportation of agricultural products, * +.
- Foreign Trade Statistics—Exports and imports, * +.
- *Current Population Reports*—Farm households, income, and poverty status, * +.
- *County Business Patterns*—Annual data series presenting economic data at the State and county levels for agricultural services, forestry, fisheries, and general business data, * +.

Publications of the Department of Agriculture and various States also contain additional information.

WHERE THE DATA CAN BE FOUND

Published reports can be purchased from:

* Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402
202/783-3238

Computer tapes, CD-ROM, microfiche, and so on, are available from:

\+ Data User Services Division (DUSD)
Customer Services
Bureau of the Census
Washington, D.C. 20233
301/763-4100

The county-level advance data and highlights of volumes 3 and 4 will be available on the AGRIDATA network, while advance State data and volume 2 and 3 highlights also will be in the CENDATA package. CENDATA is accessible through DIALOG, telephone 800/334-2564, and CompuServe, telephone 800/848-8199.

Published reports from the agriculture censuses and surveys, as well as the other materials mentioned above, are available in many of the Government and Census depository libraries across the country. These are mainly college, university, and large public libraries. (List on request +.) The publications are available for reference and/or order at Census Bureau regional offices. Special tabulations of census or survey results can be ordered from the Census Bureau's Agriculture Division.

Most States now have data centers that assist users with printed and computerized data. There are also organizations registered with the Bureau's National Clearinghouse for Census Data Services that can provide tape copies and services to their customers. (Lists on request.+)

DATA USERS' SERVICES

The Census Bureau assists its data users in a number of ways. It publishes an annual *Catalog and Guide*, *, the monthly *Census and You* (formerly *Data User News*) (subscription * or single copies +), and a *Monthly Product Announcement* (free +), and issues guides to particular segments of its statistics. Guides to the agriculture census and related statistics were published for the 1982 and 1987 censuses (free +). The Bureau also conducts workshops on the availability and use of statistics. It offers exhibits and resources for the conventions of interested national organizations, and each Bureau regional office has an information services specialist trained to answer inquiries and assist in locating data.

FACTFINDER FOR THE NATION

General information about the Census Bureau's various statistical programs is contained in the publication in this series entitled "Bureau Programs and Products," CFF 18, +.

Inquiries and suggestions about the agriculture statistics program and other Bureau activities are invited. Write or call:

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Washington, D.C. 20233
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