



# 2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## Demographics

The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows a continuation in several trends regarding the characteristics of U.S. farm operators. There is growing ethnic and racial diversity among farm operators nationwide, and the percentage of women operators is up. The average age of farmers continues to rise, and they increasingly rely on off-farm employment as a source of income.

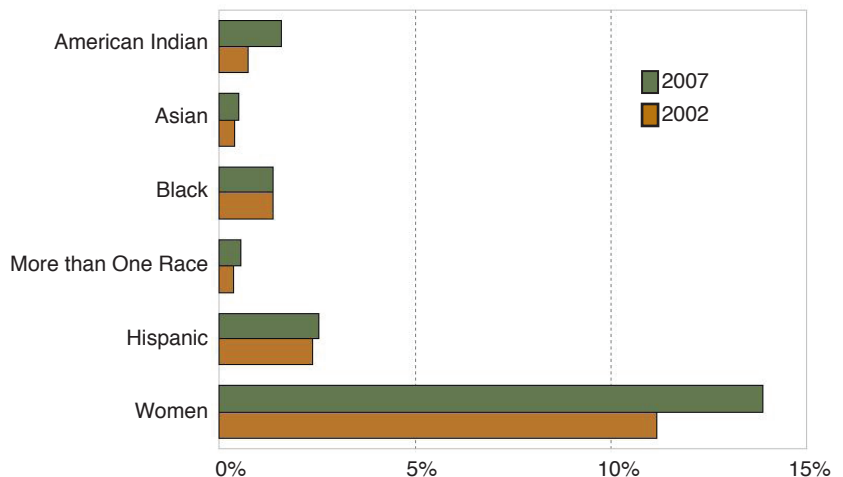
### Increasing Diversity

The Census of Agriculture collects data on both the race and ethnic background of farm operators. The 2007 Census shows that U.S. farm operators are becoming more diverse.

Of the 2.2 million farms in the United States, 1.83 million have a white male principal operator. The number of principal operators of all races and ethnic backgrounds has increased 4 percent since 2002, but the growth in the number of non-white operators has outpaced this overall growth. The number of operators of Hispanic origin has also increased 10 percent since 2002. Hispanic origin operators can be of any race.

One of the most significant changes in the 2007 Census of Agriculture is the increase in female farm operators, both in terms of the absolute number and the percentage of all principal operators. There were 306,209 female principal operators counted in 2007, up from 237,819 in 2002 – an increase of almost 30 percent.

Percent of Farm Operators by Race, Ethnicity and Gender



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service



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## Every Voice Counts

In conducting the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) placed a special emphasis on outreach to traditionally under-represented populations, including small, minority, female and limited-resource farm operators.

Working in partnership with community-based organizations nationwide, NASS engaged in an extensive effort to make sure the 2007 Census mailing list included all farms and ranches, regardless of size, location or type of operation. NASS also partnered with these groups to provide hands-on assistance and support to local producers – including non-English speakers – in filling out their Census forms. In addition, NASS targeted its media outreach efforts towards publications and broadcast outlets that reach small, minority and non-English-speaking producers.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture marked the first time NASS attempted to collect a census report from individual farm operators on American Indian reservations in all states. In 2002, reservations were counted as a single farm and reservation officials supplied counts of individual operators. NASS will issue a follow-up report about agricultural activity on American Indian reservations in the spring of 2009.

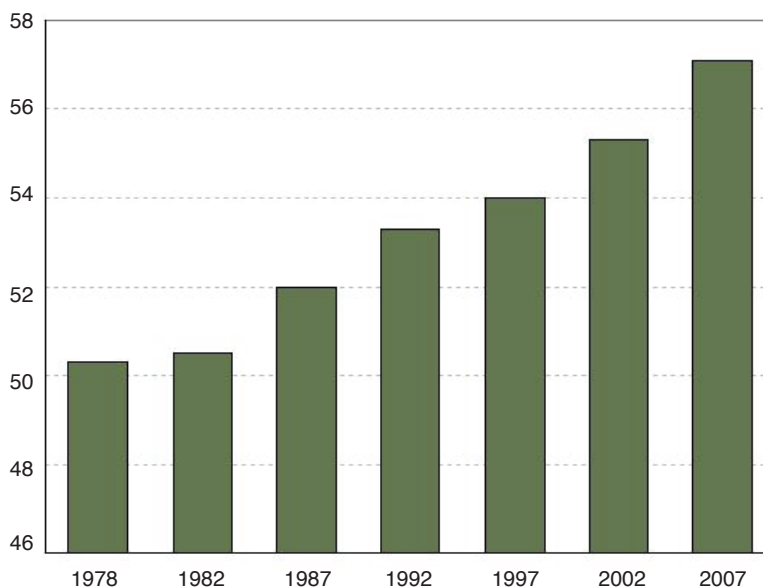
NASS is committed to continue its outreach to all underserved populations.

There is a relationship between the type of farm operated and the demographics of the farm operator. For example, white farmers are more likely than non-white farmers to produce grains and oilseeds. Asians and Native Hawaiians have a higher percentage of fruit and tree nut farms than other races. Women operators are fairly equally split among three industries: cattle, calves, and feedlots; aquaculture and other livestock operations; and other crops. Cattle and calves was the most common farm type for American Indian, Black and Hispanic farmers.

## Age

The average age of U.S. farm operators increased from 55.3 in 2002 to 57.1 in 2007. The number of operators 75 years and older grew by 20 percent from 2002, while the number of operators under 25 years of age decreased 30 percent.

Average Age of Principal Operator



# Demographics

## Farming as Lifestyle

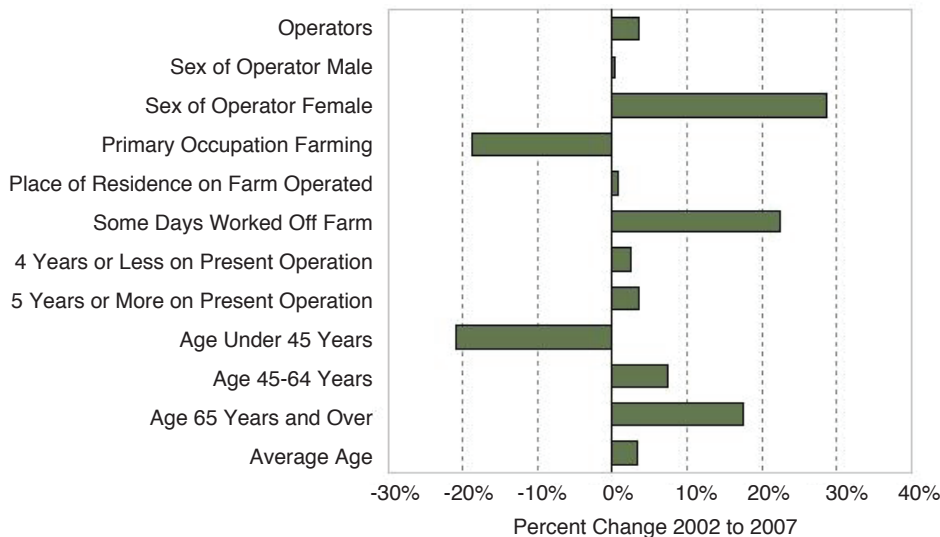
Most farms in the United States are small, with 60 percent of all farms reporting less than \$10,000 in sales of agricultural products. Of the 2.2 million farms nationwide, only 1 million show positive net cash income from the farm operation. The remaining 1.2 million farms depend on non-farm income to cover farm expenses.

Of the 2.2 million principal farm operators in the nation, 1.2 million report something other than farming as their primary occupation. Almost 900,000 principal operators report working off the farm more than 200 days a year. The share of farmers working off-farm grew from 55 percent in 2002 to 65 percent in 2007.

The demographic characteristics of operators on larger farms, with sales over \$250,000, differ from those of small farms. Operators of larger farms tend to be younger, are more likely to report farming as their primary occupation, and are less likely to work off the farm.



**Principal Operator Characteristics**



**For more information:**

[www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)

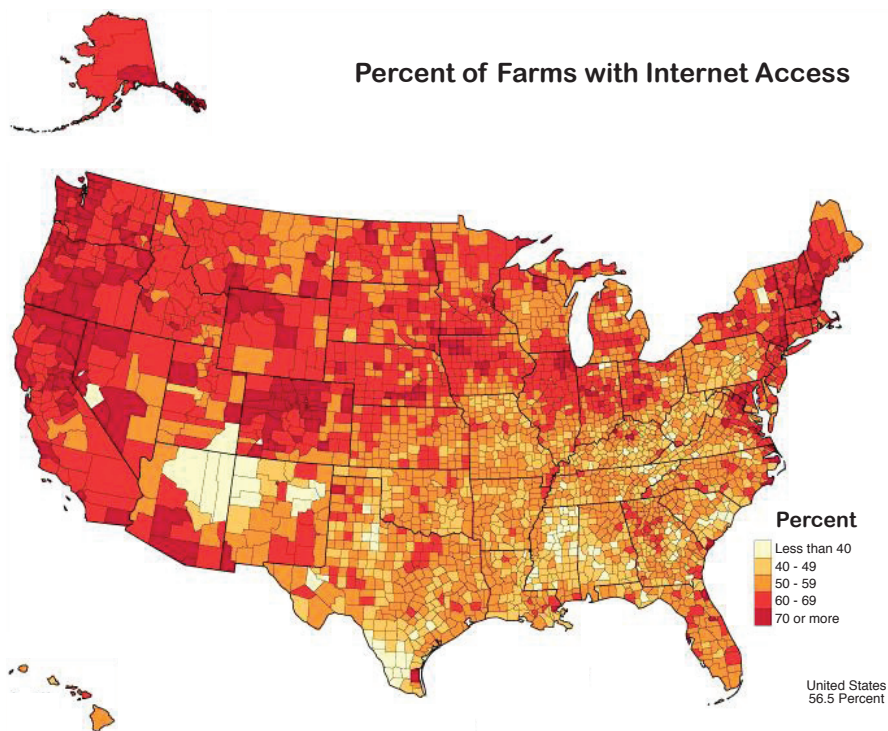
[www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)

**Agricultural Statistics Hotline  
(800) 727-9540**

# 2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## Internet Access

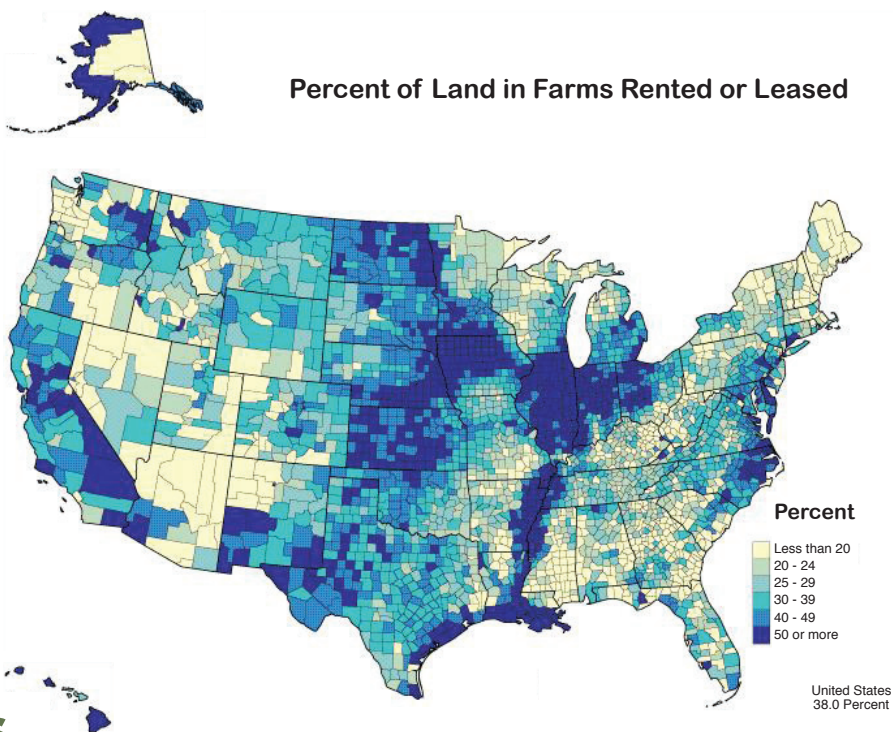
The percentage of farm operations with Internet access has increased over the past five years, from 50 percent in 2002 to 57 percent in 2007. For the first time in 2007, the Census looked at high-speed Internet access, an important measure of farmers' ability to use the Internet effectively. Of the U.S. farms with Internet access, 58 percent reported having a high-speed connection. The 2007 Census shows both Internet access and high-speed Internet access at the county level for the first time.



## Percent of Land in Farms Rented or Leased

## Land Ownership

Agricultural land ownership has remained stable over the past five years. The 2007 Census shows that 62 percent of farmland in the U.S. is owned by the operator. Areas with more cropland, such as the Midwest, tend to have a greater percentage of rented land.



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