



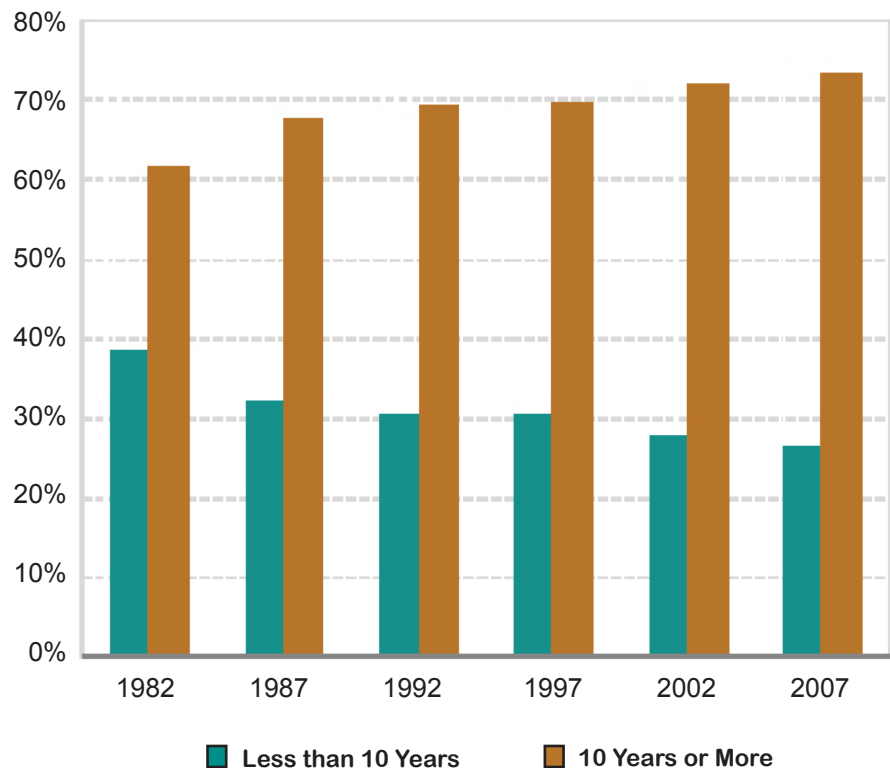
# 2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## New Farms, New Farm Operators

The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows 291,329 farms and ranches with a principal operator who began working on the operation since 2002. An additional 361,491 principal operators started operating their present farm within the last 10 years.

Since 1982, the Census of Agriculture has collected information on the number of years principal operators have been on their current farm or ranch. During this time, the percentage of beginning farmers – those who have been on one operation for less than 10 years – has steadily declined. The 2007 Census shows only 26.5 percent of all principal operators have been farming for less than 10 years, a decline of more than 10 percent since 1982.

Percentage of Principal Operators by Years on Farm, 1982 to 2007



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service



# 2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE



## Beginning Farmers and Their Operations

Beginning farm operators are younger on average than farm operators overall, and they are less likely to farm full time. Almost 80 percent of them work off the farm as well. The Census of Agriculture does not collect information on the reason for off-farm work, so it is impossible to determine whether beginning farmers are temporarily working off the farm while they establish their farm business or if they intend to engage in farming only as a part-time activity.

Operators	Operation Started			
	All Farms	2003-2007	1998-2002	Prior to 1998
Average Age	57.1	47.6	50.4	60.4
65 and older	30%	10%	14%	37%
Not White, not Hispanic	7%	9%	8%	6%
Female	14%	19%	17%	12%
Work Off the Farm	65%	79%	77%	59%
Farming is Primary Occupation	45%	33%	34%	50%

The U.S. agriculture industry is dominated by farm establishments that have had the same principal operator for 10 or more years. Farms with principal operators who started within the past 5 years only account for 13 percent of all U.S. farms and 7 percent of all sales.

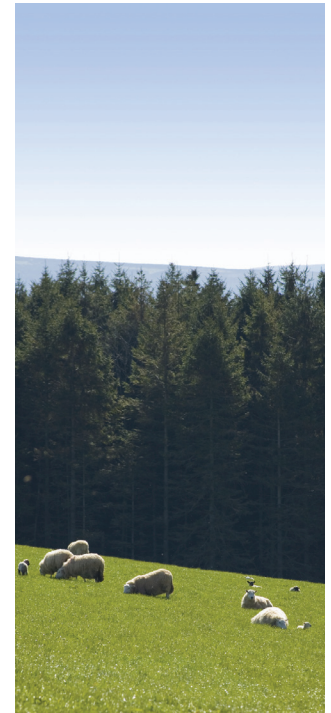
Operations (Percent of Total U.S.)	Operation Started		
	2003-2007	1998-2002	Prior to 1998
All Farms	13%	16%	70%
Land in Farms	6%	11%	83%
Sales	7%	11%	82%
Government Payments	6%	8%	86%
Value of Land & Buildings	8%	11%	81%
Cropland Harvested	4%	7%	88%
Organic Sales	12%	15%	73%
Direct to Consumer Sales	10%	14%	76%

# New Farms, New Farm Operators

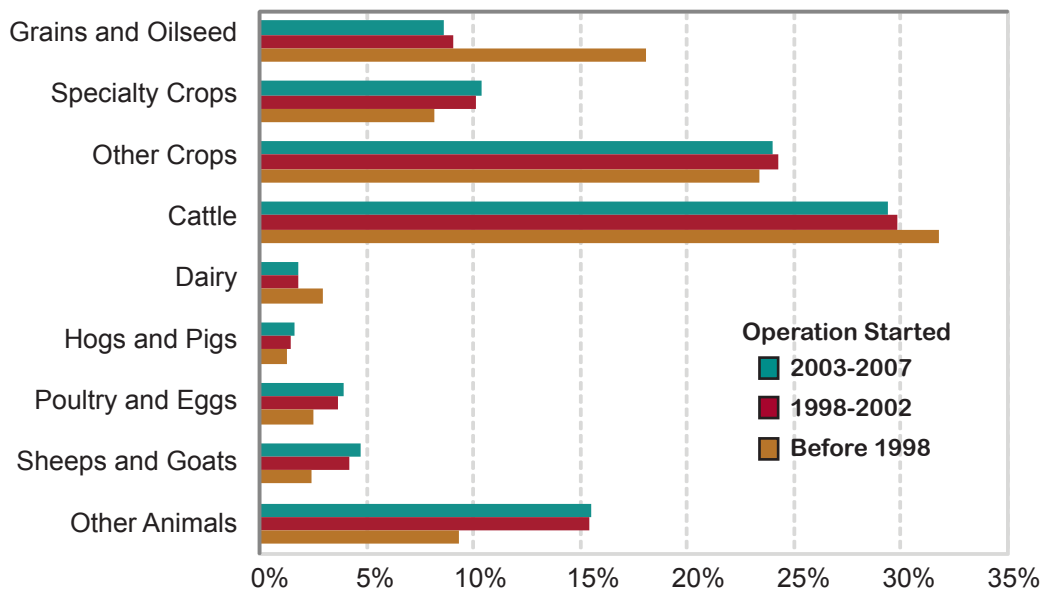
## Economics and Production

Farms with new principal operators are significantly different in size and economics than the average U.S. farm. However, the overall pattern of production on these farms is similar to all U.S. farms. The primary differences are that these farms are less likely to specialize in grain and oilseed production and are more likely to engage in specialized animal production.

Average	Operation Started			
	All Farms	2003-2007	1998-2002	Prior to 1998
<b>Size</b>	418 acres	201 acres	285 acres	490 acres
<b>Value of Agricultural Products Sold</b>	\$134,807	\$70,816	\$94,487	\$156,210
<b>Government Payments Received</b>	\$9,523	\$5,989	\$6,498	\$10,385
<b>Production Expenses</b>	\$109,359	\$65,656	\$81,365	\$124,083
<b>Net Income</b>	\$29,117	\$6,864	\$15,077	\$36,565
<b>Operators Reporting Positive Net Income</b>	47%	33%	37%	52%



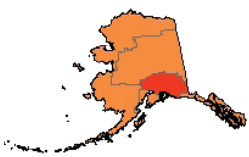
Percentage of Farms by North American Industry Classification System



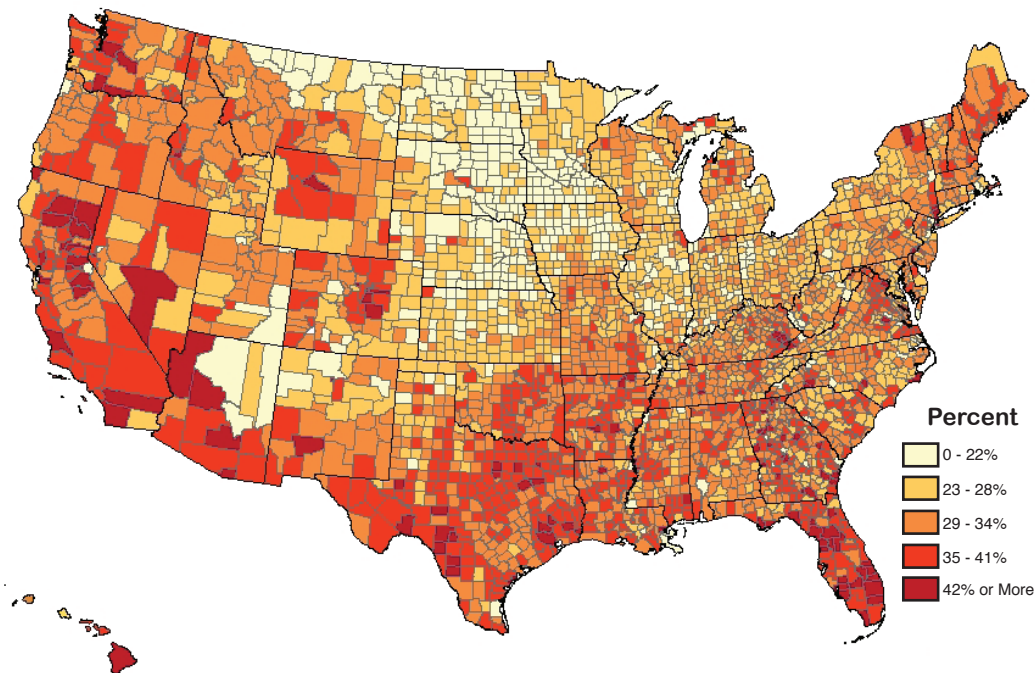
# 2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## Geographic Concentration

The percent of beginning farm operators is highest in the South and West, and lowest in the Midwest. Hawaii has the highest percentage of beginning farm operators, with almost 40 percent having started to work on their present operation within the last 10 years. Other states with a significant percentage of new operators since 1997 are Florida (38 percent), California (37 percent) and Texas (35 percent). There are 6 states where less than 25 percent of operators have started in the last 10 years: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota.



Percent of Beginning Farmers by County, 2007



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

## New Farms, New Farm Operators

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