



2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Small Farms

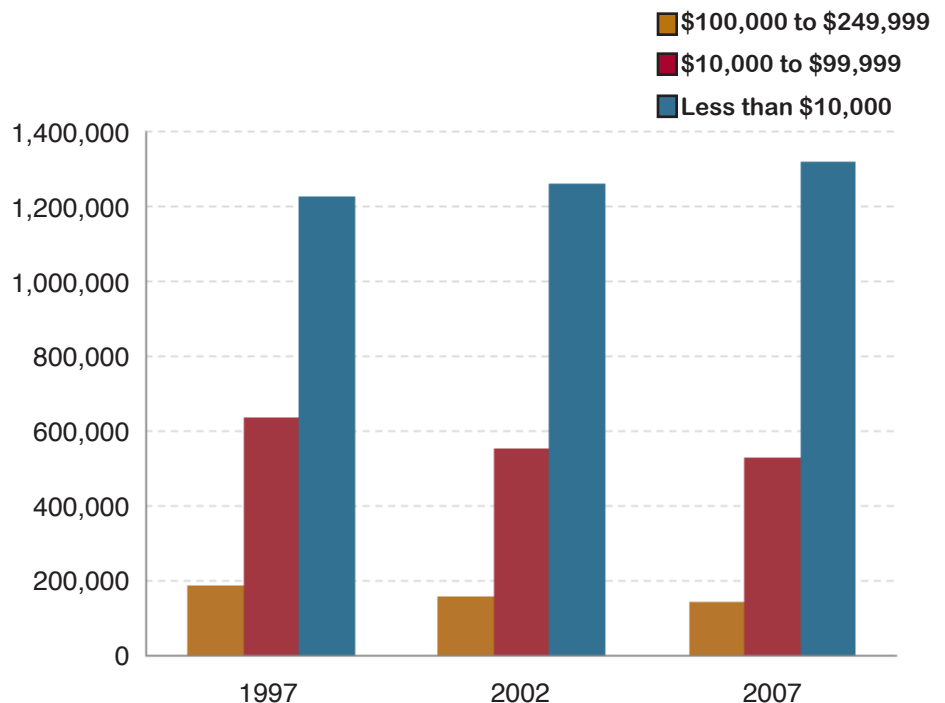
Small farms account for 91 percent of all farms in the United States.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows an increase in the number of small farms in the United States. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines small farms as farms with \$250,000 or less in sales of agricultural commodities. In 2007, there were 18,467 more small farms counted than in 2002. It is important to understand the attributes and characteristics of these farms and the role they play in the changing structure of U.S. agriculture.

Growth Trends

The number of small farms counted in the 2007 Census of Agriculture was 1,995,133, or 91 percent of all farms. Overall small farms increased 1 percent from 2002 to 2007, but the increase was not seen in all sales classes. Farms with sales less than \$10,000 increased while farms with sales of more than \$10,000 decreased. U.S. farms with sales between \$100,000 and \$249,999 decreased by 7 percent.

Number of Small Farms, 1997 to 2007



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service



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The majority, 57 percent, of direct to consumer sales is from small farms.

How Do They Compare?

Small farms account for 91 percent of all U.S. farms and more than half of the land in farms. Operators of farms with value of sales between \$100,000 and \$249,999 are younger than average and are more likely to be full time farmers. Operators of farms with sales of less than \$10,000 typically work off farm.

| OPERATIONS (Percent of Total U.S.) | Sales \$100,000 - \$249,999 | Sales \$10,000 - \$99,999 | Sales < \$10,000 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| All Farms | 7% | 24% | 60% |
| Land in Farms | 16% | 22% | 18% |
| Sales | 8% | 6% | 1% |
| Government Payments | 15% | 13% | 18% |
| Value of Land and Buildings | 12% | 20% | 24% |
| Cropland Harvested | 16% | 14% | 4% |
| Cattle Inventory | 13% | 22% | 9% |
| Horse Inventory | 6% | 22% | 65% |
| Hay | 17% | 33% | 18% |
| Organic Sales | 12% | 9% | 1% |
| Direct to Consumer Sales | 15% | 31% | 11% |

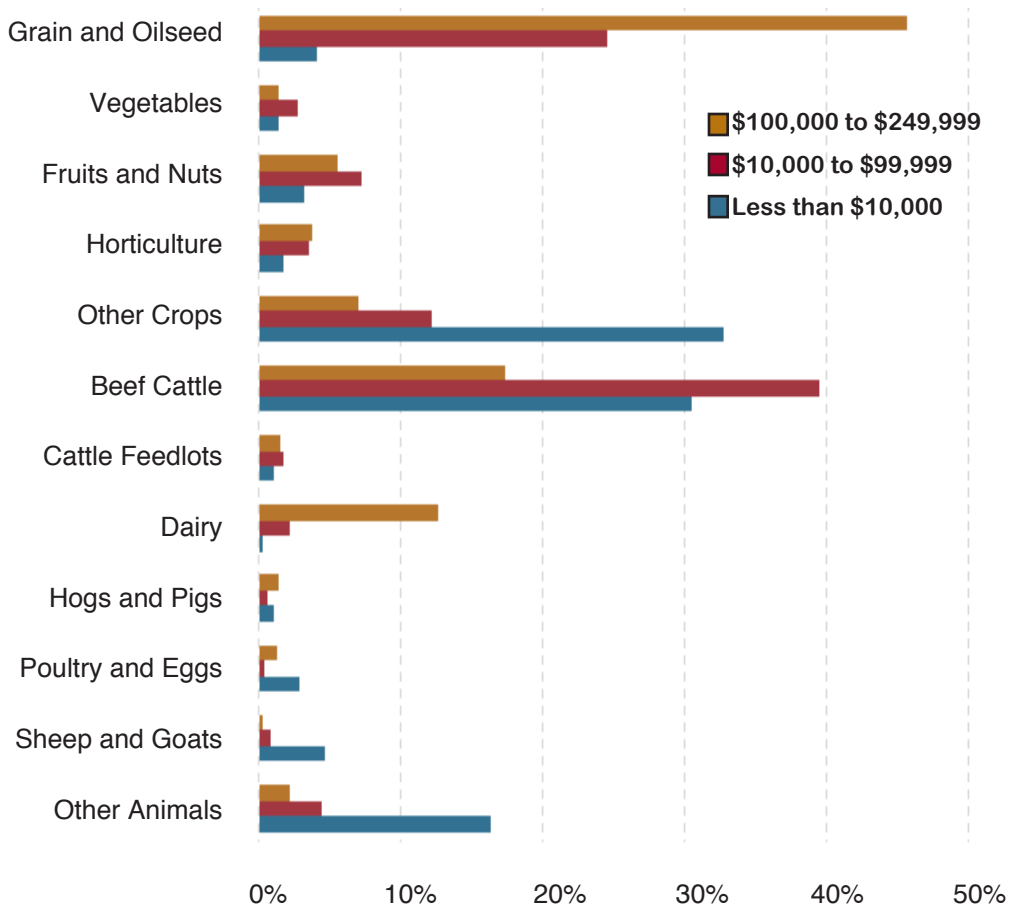
| OPERATORS | All Farms | Sales \$100,000 - \$249,999 | Sales \$10,000 - \$99,999 | Sales < \$10,000 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Average Age | 57.1 | 55.1 | 57.9 | 57.6 |
| 65 Years or Older | 30% | 25% | 33% | 31% |
| Not White or Hispanic | 7% | 3% | 6% | 8% |
| Female | 14% | 5% | 10% | 18% |
| Worked Off Farm | 65% | 49% | 65% | 71% |
| 4 Years or Less on Present Farm | 10% | 5% | 8% | 13% |

Small Farms

What Is Produced?

Almost 50 percent of the farms that sold between \$100,000 and \$249,999 of agricultural products in 2007 specialized in grain and oilseed production followed by cattle and milk production. The largest category of production for farms with sales between \$10,000 and \$99,999 was beef cattle and calves followed by grains and oilseeds. More than half of farms that produced less than \$10,000 were beef cattle or “other crop” farms. This category includes hay farms and farms where no single crop comprised more than 50 percent of sales.

Percent of Farms by North American Industry Classification System



Small farms account for 56 percent of the total U.S. value of agricultural land and buildings.

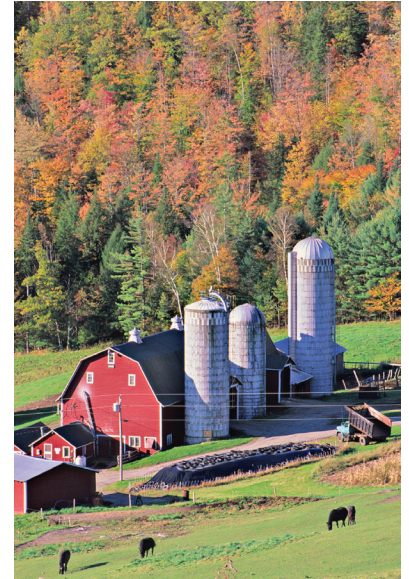
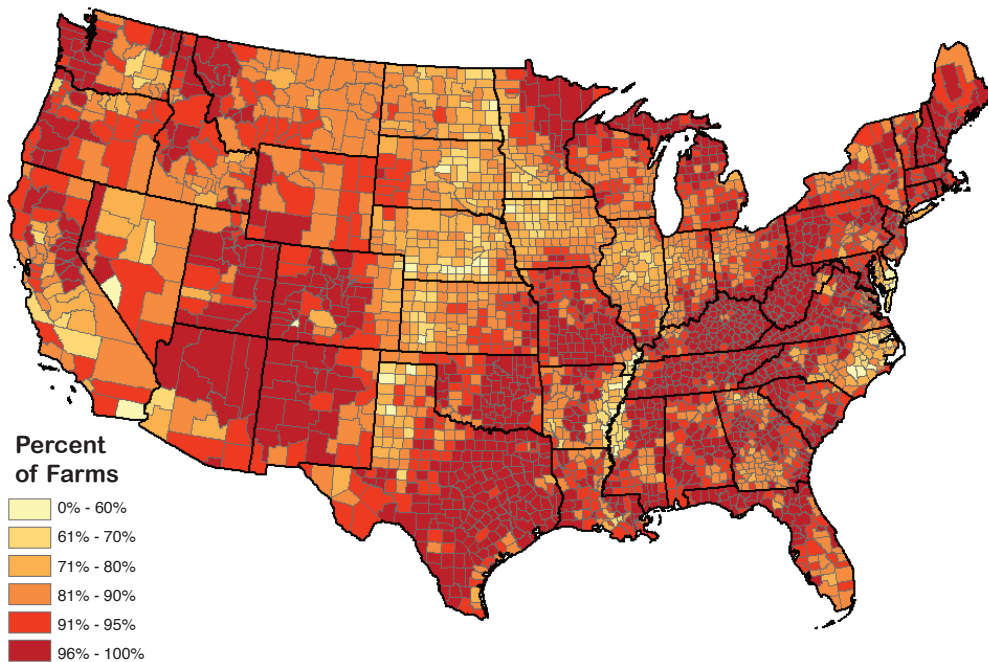
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Where Are Small Farms Located?

Nationally, 91 percent of all farms fall under the USDA small farm definition, which are places that sell less than \$250,000 in agricultural products annually. The percentage of small farms is highest in the South and New England.

There are 14 states where 95 percent or more of all farms are small. West Virginia has the highest percentage of small farms. There are only five states where less than 80 percent of all farms are small – Delaware, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa.

Percent of Farms with Sales Less than \$250,000



For more information:

www.nass.usda.gov

www.agcensus.usda.gov

Agricultural Statistics Hotline
(800) 727-9540

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www.agcensus.usda.gov