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New Mexico ranks among top states for agriculture production

Latest Census of Agriculture data now available

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LAS CRUCES, N.M. – The latest Census of Agriculture reflects the diversity of New Mexico’s agriculture industry, showing that the Land of Enchantment ranks among the top states in the country for the production of pecans, chile peppers, milk, cheese and onions. Data sets from the 2022 Census of Agriculture were released Feb. 13 by the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

The following highlights from the 2022 census reflect increases in the size and diversity of New Mexico agriculture since 2017:

- In 2022, New Mexico’s total value of agriculture production was \$3.71 billion. This calculated a 17% increase from the previous year;
- Direct-to-consumer or -retailer farm and ranch sales increased by 2.3% from 2017;
- 71% of producers have been on their operations for more than 10 years;
- Family-owned and -operated farms accounted for 95% of all New Mexico farms, with 82% of agricultural operations being less than 1,000 acres in size;
- While the average age of the New Mexico producer increased from 59.8 to 60 years of age, 7.2% of New Mexico producers in 2022 were younger than 35 years of age, which calculates a 1% increase in young producers from the 2017 census.

NASS conducts the survey every five years. This census counts all U.S. farms and ranches and those who operate them. Even small plots of land – whether rural or urban – growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

NASS mailed 2022 Census of Agriculture questionnaires to ag producers in late 2022 to collect data for the 2022 calendar year. Producers could respond online or return completed questionnaires by mail through May 2023.

New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte encourages all New Mexicans to explore the updated ag census that reflects advances in the industry.

“Through the ag census, New Mexico producers help show the nation the value and importance of agriculture and influence decisions that will shape the future of the industry,” said Witte. “For

farmers and ranchers in New Mexico and across the country, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future and their opportunity.”

The census highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, expenditures and other topics. Notable changes for 2022 data include new questions about the use of precision agriculture and updates to internet access questions.

The Census of Agriculture gathers information that can be used by Congress, local agribusinesses, policymakers, researchers, local governments and many others for decision-making related to the creation of funding for agricultural programs and services. The information gathered by the census can directly impact New Mexico producers and the future of the industry.

New Mexico State Statistician Margie Whitcotton said the latest census gives a comprehensive snapshot that helps data users to see trends in the industry and helps producers do business.

“The time that individual producers take to provide responses to USDA NASS surveys is essential in creating this publication. Your data shows how agriculture is changing in the state over time and where resources need to be dedicated,” said Whitcotton.

First conducted in 1840 in conjunction with the decennial Census and conducted since 1997 by USDA NASS – the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture – the Census of Agriculture remains the most comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation.

For more information about the census and its data, please visit [the USDA website](#) and browse NASS’ [Quick Stats online searchable database](#). Census reports can be viewed at [the local NASS field office in your area](#). Be sure to also peruse the [downloadable PDF](#) of the 2022 New Mexico Agricultural Statistics.

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