

USES OF AGRICULTURE CENSUS DATA

http://agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/usintro.pdf

The census of agriculture provides a detailed picture of U.S. farms and ranches every five years. It is the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every State and county or county equivalent. Census of agriculture data are routinely used by farm organizations, businesses, State departments of agriculture, elected representatives and legislative bodies at all levels of government, public and private sector analysts, the news media, and colleges and universities. The data are frequently used to:

- Show the importance and value of agriculture at the county, state, and national levels;
- Provide agricultural news media and agricultural associations' benchmark statistics for stories and articles on U.S. agriculture and the foods we produce;
- Compare the income and costs of production;
- Provide important data about the demographics and financial well being of producers;
- Evaluate historical agricultural trends to formulate farm and rural policies and develop programs that help agricultural producers;
- Allocate local and national funds for farm programs, e.g. extension service projects, agricultural research, soil conservation programs, and land-grant colleges and universities;
- Identify the assets needed to support agricultural production such as land, buildings, machinery, and other equipment;
- Create an extensive database of information on uncommon crops and livestock and the value of those commodities for assessing the need to develop policies and programs to support those commodities;
- Provide geographic data on production so agribusinesses will locate near major production areas for efficiencies for both producers and agribusinesses;
- Measure the usage of modern technologies such as conservation practices, organic production, renewable energy systems, internet access, and specialized marketing strategies;
- Develop new and improved methods to increase agricultural production and profitability;
- Plan for operations during drought and emergency outbreaks of diseases or infestations of pests.