

# United States of America - Census of Agriculture 2017

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agriculture Statistics  
Service (NASS)**

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## Identification

### SURVEY ID NUMBER

USA\_2017\_CA\_v01\_M\_v01\_A\_ESS

### TITLE

Census of Agriculture 2017

### ABBREVIATION OR ACRONYM

CA 2017

### COUNTRY

Name	Country code
United States of America	USA

### STUDY TYPE

Agricultural Census [ag/census]

### SERIES INFORMATION

The first Census of Agriculture (CA) in the United States of America was conducted in 1840 as part of the sixth decennial census of population. After the 1920 census, the census interval was changed to every five years until 1945. The CA continued to be implemented as part of the decennial census through 1950. From 1954 to 1974, the census took place in the years ending in 4 and 9. In 1976, the Congress changed the five-year data collection cycle to years ending in 2 and 7, to coincide with other economic censuses, a cycle that continues to this day. The CA 2017 was the twenty-ninth Federal census of agriculture and the fifth to be conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### ABSTRACT

The Census of Agriculture (CA) is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The CA, taken only once every five years, looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures. The Census of Agriculture provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every county in the nation. Through the Census of Agriculture, producers can show the nation the value and importance of agriculture and can influence decisions that will shape the future of U.S. agriculture.

### KIND OF DATA

Census/enumeration data [cen]

### UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Agricultural holdings

## Scope

### NOTES

The census scope covered agricultural activities (crop and livestock production).

The questionnaire collected information on:

1. Acreage
2. Land Use and Practices
3. Land Rented or Leased from Others for Cash
4. Crop Insurance and Government Programs
5. Type of Organization
6. Personal Characteristics
7. Crops: hay and forage crops, field crops, vegetables, potatoes, melons, fruits, nuts, and berries
8. Cultivated Christmas Trees, Short Rotation Woody Crops, and Maple Syrup
9. Nursery, Greenhouse, Floriculture, Sod, Mushrooms, Vegetable Seeds, and Propagative Materials
10. Livestock and Livestock Products: poultry, cattle, calves, hogs, pigs, horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys, sheep, and goats
11. Aquaculture

12. Colonies of Honeybees
13. Production Contracts and Custom Feeding
14. Organic Agriculture
15. Food Marketing Practices
16. Fertilizers, Chemicals, and Soil Conditioners Applied
17. Renewable Energy
18. Machinery and Equipment
19. Farm Labor
20. Production Expenses
21. Market Value of Land, Buildings, Machinery, and Equipment
22. Income from Farm Related Resources
23. Agricultural Activity within the Borders of American Indian Reservations, Pueblos, and Service Areas

## KEYWORDS

Keyword
Structure of Agriculture
Land use
Crops
Livestock and Poultry
Labor in the Agricultural Sector
Aquaculture
Agricultural Equipment and Facilities

## Coverage

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## GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The CA 2017 covered the continental territory of the country.

## UNIVERSE

The statistical unit for the CA 2017 was the farm, an operating unit defined as “any place from which USD 1000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year”. The agricultural operations that did not produce and sell USD 1000 or more of agricultural products during the census year, or did not have the potential, were excluded from the CA.

## Producers and sponsors

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## PRIMARY INVESTIGATORS

Name
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS)

## Sampling

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## SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The CA 2017 was an enumeration of all known agricultural holdings meeting the USDA definition of a farm.

The National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) maintains a list of farmers and ranchers from which the Census Mail List (CML) of agricultural operations that potentially meet the farm definition was compiled. The development of CML 2017 started in 2014 as the update of the list information from respondents to the CA 2012. Between 2015 and 2017, NASS conducted a series of National Agricultural Classification Surveys (NACS) on approximately 1.6 million records, which included non-respondents from the CA 2012 and newly added records from outside list sources.

NASS used its June Area Survey (JAS) to quantify the number and types of farms not on the CML. The records in the JAS that were not on the CML were named the Not-on-the-Mail List (NML) domain. The NML farms were used to measure coverage associated with the census. The JAS was based on an area frame, which covered all land in the U.S. and included all farms.

## Data collection

### DATES OF DATA COLLECTION

Start	End
2017-12	2018-07

### DATA COLLECTION MODE

Mail Questionnaire [mail], Computer Assisted Web Interview [cawi], Computer Assisted Telephone Interview [cati], Computer Assisted Personal Interview [capi]

### DATA COLLECTION NOTES

The National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) employs 230 full-time personnel for the purpose of carrying out the CA program. NASS entered into an agreement with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) to collect data for the CA 2017.

As part of its Census of Agriculture Program, NASS conducted special studies which provided more detailed data on a particular subject area. Following the CA 2017, NASS conducted the 2018 Census of Aquaculture, 2018 Irrigation and Water Management Survey, 2019 Census of Horticultural Specialties, 2019 Organic Survey, and 2020 Local Food Marketing Practice Survey.

Data collection was accomplished primarily through the mail-out/mail-back method. It was supplemented with Computer-assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) on the Internet, Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and Computer-assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI).

Pre-notification of census data collection began on 17 November 2017. The producers with an active e-mail address on the Census Mail List (CML) received a message informing them of the upcoming census data collection period and encouraging them to utilize the census web form. From 27 to 30 November 2017, the respondents received a letter with their access code and instructions for completing their census online. Mail packets were mailed in December 2017 and January 2018. Follow-up mail packets were mailed in mid-February 2018 and in mid-March 2018. Beginning in mid-April 2018 and continuing through July 2018, extensive efforts were made to collect data for the non-respondents (sampled records), including an additional CAWI push, autodial calls, CATI, and CAPI.

### \*\*QUALITY ASSURANCE\*\*

NASS conducted an extensive program to follow up all non-responses. NASS also used capture-recapture methodology to adjust for under-coverage, non-response, and misclassification. To implement capture-recapture methods, two independent operations were required - the CA 2017 (based on the CML) and the June Area Survey (JAS) 2017 (based on the area frame). Records in the JAS 2017 were matched to the CA 2017 using probabilistic record linkage. Historically, NASS has been careful to maintain the independence of these two operations.

## Questionnaires

### QUESTIONNAIRES

The CA 2017 used four versions of the questionnaire:

- General form (17-A100)
- Short form (17-A200)
- Hawaii form (17-A101)
- American Indian form (17-A300)

The general form facilitated reporting crops and livestock most commonly grown and raised in the U.S. The short form expedited reporting specific crops or livestock for pre-identified farms and ranches in the U.S. The latter versions of the report form were designed to facilitate reporting on the crops most commonly grown within specific regions.

The CA 2017 covered 19 out of the 23 essential items recommended in the WCA 2020.

## Data Processing

### DATA EDITING

Captured data were processed through a computer formatting program that verified that records were valid. Rejected records were referred to analysts for correction. Accepted records were sent to a complex computer batch edit process. The computer edit system determined the best value to impute for reported responses that were deemed unreasonable and for required responses that were absent. The complex edit ensured the full internal consistency of the record. After tabulation and review of the aggregates, a comprehensive disclosure review was conducted. Cell suppression was used to protect the cells that were determined to be sensitive to a disclosure of information.

### \*\*DATA PROCESSING NOTES\*\*

The completed printed forms were scanned, and Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) was used to capture categorical responses and to identify the other answer zones in which some type of mark was present.

## Access policy

### CONTACTS

Name	Affiliation	Email	URL
National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS)	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	nass@nass.usda.gov	<a href="#">Link</a>

### ACCESS CONDITIONS

Information on the request procedure to access restricted microdata files:  
[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Data\\_and\\_Statistics/Special\\_Tabulations/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Data_and_Statistics/Special_Tabulations/index.php).

Access and use information are set by National Agricultural Statistics Service, Department of Agriculture:  
<https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/quick-stats-agricultural-database>.

## Metadata production

### DDI DOCUMENT ID

DDI\_USA\_2017\_CA\_v01\_M\_v01\_A\_ESS\_FAO

### PRODUCERS

Name	Abbreviation	Affiliation	Role
National Agriculture Statistics Service	NASS	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Metadata producer
Statistics Division	ESS	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Metadata adapted for FAM

## Data Dictionary

Data file	Cases	Variables
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