The publications from the 1982 Economic and Agriculture Censuses are dedicated to the memory of Shirley Kallek, Associate Director for Economic Fields. During her career at the Bureau of the Census (1955 to 1983), she continually directed efforts to improve the timeliness and accuracy of economic statistics.
1982 Census of Agriculture

AC82-SS-3

Volume 2
SUBJECT SERIES

Part 3

Ranking of States and Counties

Issued February 1985

U.S. Department of Commerce
Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary
Clarence J. Brown, Deputy Secretary
Sidney Jones, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
John G. Keane, Director
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This report was prepared in the Agriculture Division under the general supervision of Orvin L. Wilhite, Chief (to January 1980); Arnold L. Bollenbacher, Chief (to June 1982); and John H. Berry, Chief (to August 1984), and Charles P. Pautler, Jr., his successor.

Many divisions contributed to this report. Publications Services contributed in publication planning and design, editorial review, composition, and printing procurement; Computer Services provided the computer processing facilities.

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The press, farm magazines, radio and television stations, and farm organizations were most helpful in publicizing the census and encouraging cooperation of farm and ranch operators.

Special tribute is paid to the millions of farm and ranch operators who furnished the information requested. Only through their cooperation was it possible to collect and publish the data in this report.

If you have any questions concerning the statistics in this report, call (301) 763-5230.
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The census of agriculture provides a periodic statistical picture of the Nation’s farming, ranching, and related activities. The 1982 Census of Agriculture is the 22d taken by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

The first agriculture census was taken in 1840 as part of the sixth decennial census of population. From 1840 to 1950, an agriculture census was taken as part of the decennial census. A separate mid-decade census of agriculture was conducted in 1925, 1935, and 1945. From 1954 to 1974, a census of agriculture was taken for the years ending in 4 and 9. In 1976, Congress authorized the census of agriculture to be taken for 1978 and 1982 to adjust the data reference year to coincide with the 1982 Economic Censuses covering manufacturing, mining, construction, retail trade, wholesale trade, service industries, and selected transportation activities. After 1982, the agriculture census will revert to a 5-year cycle and be taken covering years ending in 2 and 7.

This report presents statistics for the leading States and counties in the United States for selected items based on data from the 1982 census.

The census of agriculture is the leading source of statistics about the Nation’s agriculture and the only source of consistent, comparable data about agriculture at the county, State, and national levels. Census statistics are used by Congress in developing and changing farm programs and for determining the effects of these programs. Many national and State programs affecting agriculture are designed or allocated on the basis of census data, such as funds for extension services, research, and soil conservation projects. Private industry uses census statistics to provide a more effective production and distribution system for the farm community.

The census of agriculture is required by law under title 13, United States Code, sections 142(a) and 191, which directs that the census be taken in 1979, in 1983, and in every fifth year after 1983 covering the prior year. The 1982 census includes each State, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Since 1850, when minimum criteria defining a farm for census purposes were first established, the farm definition has been changed nine times. The current definition, first used for the 1974 final reports, is any place from which $250 or more of agricultural products were sold or normally would have been sold during the census year. The previous definition (used for the 1959, 1964, and 1969 censuses, and for the 1974 preliminary reports) was any place with less than 10 acres from which $250 or more of agricultural products were sold or normally would have been sold during the census year, or any place of 10 acres or more from which $50 or more of agricultural products were sold or normally would have been sold during the census year.

All censuses since 1969 were conducted primarily by mail. To improve the coverage of the 1978 census, especially in counting the number of small farms, the mailout/mailback enumeration was supplemented by the direct enumeration of all households in approximately 6,400 sample segments in rural areas in all States, except Alaska and Hawaii. Due to budget reductions, the direct enumeration area sample was eliminated for 1982.

The U.S., region, and State data for 1978 shown in the 1978 Census of Agriculture publications included data for farms represented on the mail list plus estimates from the area sample for farms not on the mail list. The 1978 county data included only farms represented on the mail list as the sample was not large enough to provide reliable estimates for each county.

To provide comparable data for 1982 and 1978, estimates from the 1978 area sample have been subtracted from the 1978 data. Thus, the 1978 data in this report include only farms represented on the mail list.

Data on acreages and inventories for 1982 and 1978 are generally comparable. Dollar figures shown for expenses and agricultural product sales have not been adjusted for changes in price levels between census years.

All of the tables, except table 12, in this report show data and rank for the leading agricultural States and counties for selected items from the 1982 and 1978 censuses. Statistics from all places qualifying as farms in the 1982 census are included. Statistics from the 1978 census also represent data from all places qualifying as farms but, as mentioned before, exclude those estimates from the area sample for farms not on the
1978 mail list. Also, shown in most tables is the cumulative percent of the U.S. total as each leading State or county is ranked.

For all but one table, the leading States or counties were determined by the size of the item of agricultural resource, inventory, or production. The State or county with the largest total for the selected item was ranked first, the State or county with the next largest total, second, and so forth. However, Table 22, Value of Crops Sold Per Acre of Harvested Cropland, is the only table ranked on a ratio of agricultural measures. This table shows States and counties ranked by the proportion of the gross value of crops sold to the total acres of harvested cropland in the area.

Tables on fruits and field crops harvested present the number of acres harvested along with the primary quantity of the harvested item, which determines the rank of State or county. The leading counties for the primary item are often not the same for the acres harvested.

Comparative data and rank for the 1978 census are shown for the leading 1982 States and counties in most of the tables presented. Depending on the specified item ranked, the 1978 data and rank may be very similar to 1982.

Total lines for the leading States and counties show the sums of the data items for the States and counties listed. The crop tables show rank for both quantity harvested and acres harvested. In these tables the primary ranking of States and counties is by quantity harvested; also, the related ranking of the acres harvested is shown.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DATA AND RANKINGS

Data for the leading agricultural States and counties usually indicate agricultural areas of commercial importance. The leading counties usually account for a significant part of the U.S. total as shown by the cumulative statistics in each table. For certain specialty crops and fruits grown in a few areas, the leading counties account for nearly all the production. For other more widespread items such as alfalfa hay and cattle and calves on farms, the leading counties account for a lesser proportion of the U.S. totals.

It is important to note that the rank of counties is based only on data for the census year. Unusual weather or economic conditions during 1982 may have had a significant effect on the ranking of counties for certain items in certain areas. A ranking of counties based on the average of data for several years would undoubtedly show a number of differences in the rankings.

Occasionally the ranking of a county may be influenced by the assignment of all land, agricultural operations, and sales of farms with land in two or more counties to the county with the largest value of agricultural products raised or produced.

CENSUS DISCLOSURE RULES

In keeping with the provisions of title 13, United States Code, no data are published that would disclose the operations of an individual farm. However, the number of farms in a given size category or other classification is not considered a disclosure, so this information may be given even though other information is withheld.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Appendix A includes definitions and explanations of selected terms used in the tables.

"SEE TEXT" REFERENCE

Items in the tables which are followed by the reference "see text" are explained or defined in appendix A.

INVENTORIES, PRODUCTION, AND SALES DATA

Inventories of livestock, poultry, and machinery and equipment are as of December 31 of the census year. Crop and livestock production, sales, and expense data are for the calendar year, except for a few crops (such as citrus) for which the production year overlaps the calendar year.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The following abbreviations and symbols are used throughout the tables:

- Represents zero.
- (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.
- (X) Not applicable.
- (NA) Not available.