



U.S. Hog Breeding Herd Structure

Released September 24, 2004, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For information on *Quarterly Hogs and Pigs* call Dan Lofthus at 202-720-3106, office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

Annual Pigs Per Breeding Animal Continues Steady Increase

The U.S. breeding herd efficiency continues to increase over time. This report continues a periodic review of changes in the make up of the breeding herd and trends in its efficiency. The last review, released in September 2002, reviewed the industry as of the 2001 production year. This report compares the current evaluation to that time period.

The average number of pigs per year per breeding herd animal (includes sows, gilts, and boars) was 16.9 in 2003, up from 16.2 in 2001. The steady increase in average pigs per breeding animal was largely due to the increase in the number of litters per sow per year. This increase in productivity continued to be a factor in the breeding herd decline of 3 percent since 2001. (Chart 1 and 2).

Operations with more than 5,000 head accounted for 79 percent of the pig crop in 2003 compared to 75 percent in 2001. Conversely, operations with less than 5,000 head, accounted for 25 percent of the U.S. pig crop in 2001 but only 21 percent in 2003 (Chart 3). Meanwhile, the number of hog operations with more than 5,000 head has increased from 2,200 in 2001 to 2,270 in 2003 (Chart 4). The number of operations with less than 5,000 head has declined from 79,000 to 71,300 during the same period (Chart 5). The majority of this decline was in operations with less than 500 head.

The litter rate for operations with less than 5,000 head averaged 8.48 pigs per litter in 2003, virtually unchanged from 2001. (Chart 6). The litter rate for operations with more than 5,000 head was 8.99 pigs in 2003 compared with 8.95 in 2001.

The number of pigs per breeding animal per year for operations with less than 5,000 head increased from 15.08 pigs in 2001 to 15.62 in 2003, an increase of 0.54 pigs or 4 percent (Chart 7). Operations with more than 5,000 head increased from 16.62 pigs to 17.24 pigs over the same period, an increase of 0.62 pigs or 4 percent. The increase in pigs per breeding animal for operations with less than 5,000 head is largely attributed to the steady loss of less efficient operations with fewer than 1,000 head and an increase in the proportion of operations with 1,000 to 4,999 head.

Feeder pig imports have become more of a factor in the structure of the U.S. breeding herd. The U.S. imported 4.8 million Canadian feeder pigs between December 2002 - November 2003, up 30 percent from the same period a year earlier and up 57 percent from two years ago. (Source: Foreign Agricultural Service and Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau). These imports account for approximately 14 percent of Canada's annual pig crop. (Source: Statistics Canada, Agricultural Division). These feeders, if domestically produced, would require approximately 5 percent more U.S. breeding inventory annually.

In conclusion, much of the increase in the efficiency of the U.S. hog breeding herd over the last 5 to 10 years can be attributed to the shift in size of operations from smaller, less efficient to larger, more efficient operations. As a larger proportion of pig crop production is accounted for by operations with 5,000 or more head, the average pigs per breeding animal will likely continue to rise. However, at a point in the future where consolidation of inventory may slow, advancements in technology and herd health will contribute more to the measurement of efficiency than the shift of production to larger operations.

Chart 1

U.S. Hogs and Pigs

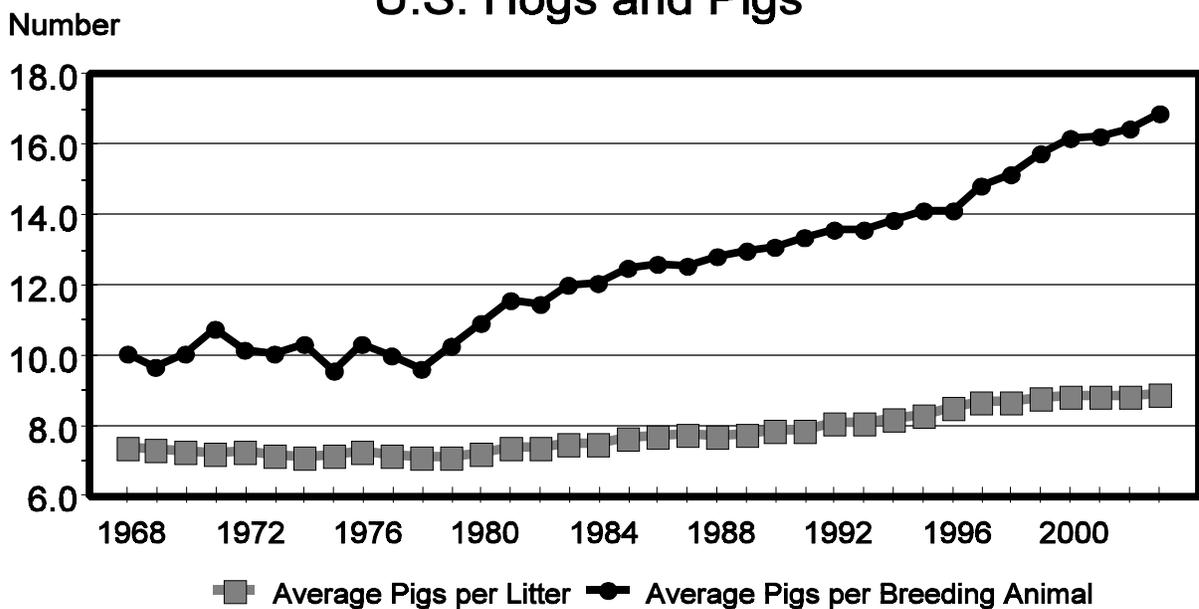


Chart 2

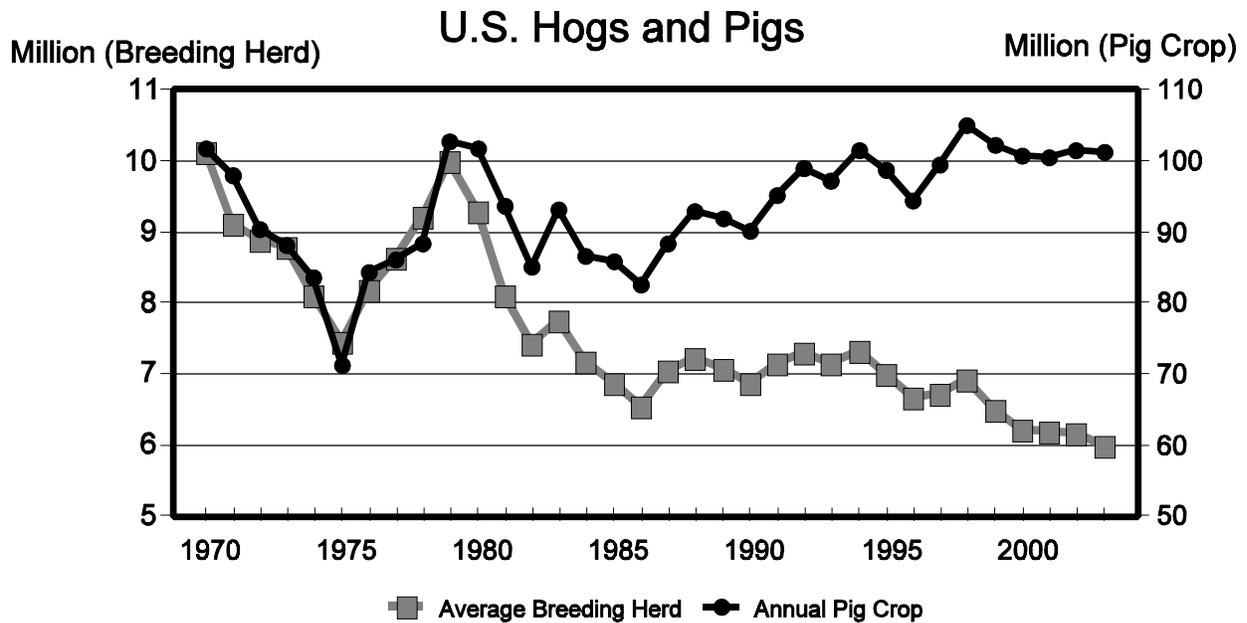


Chart 3

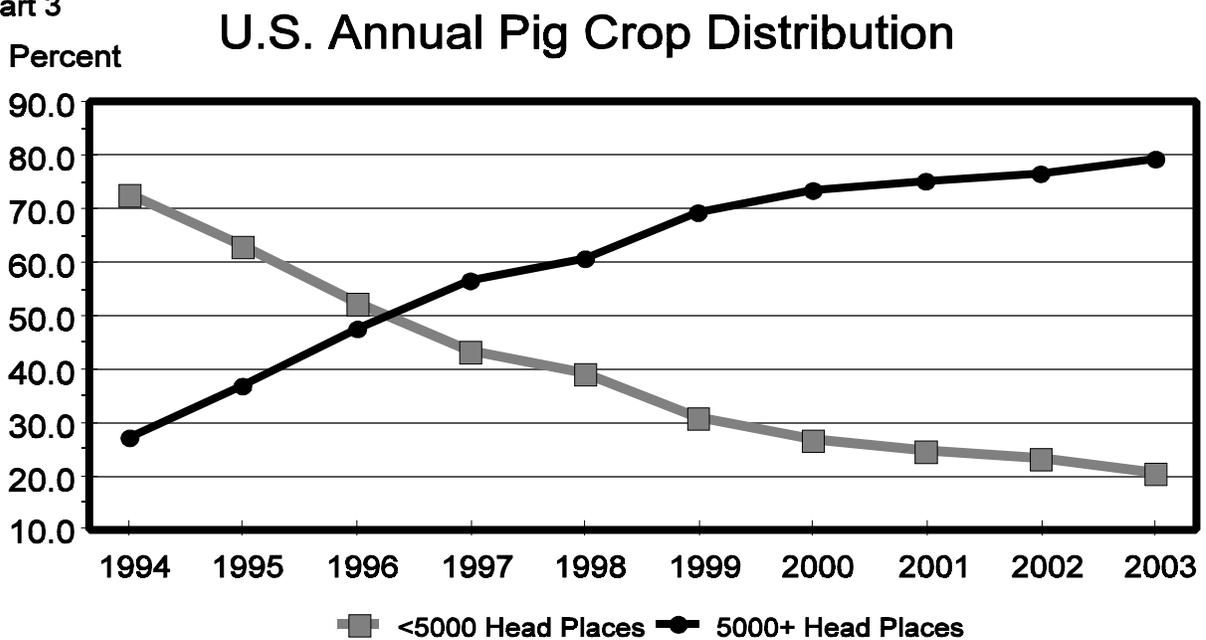


Chart 4

U.S. Hogs Operations 5000+ Head

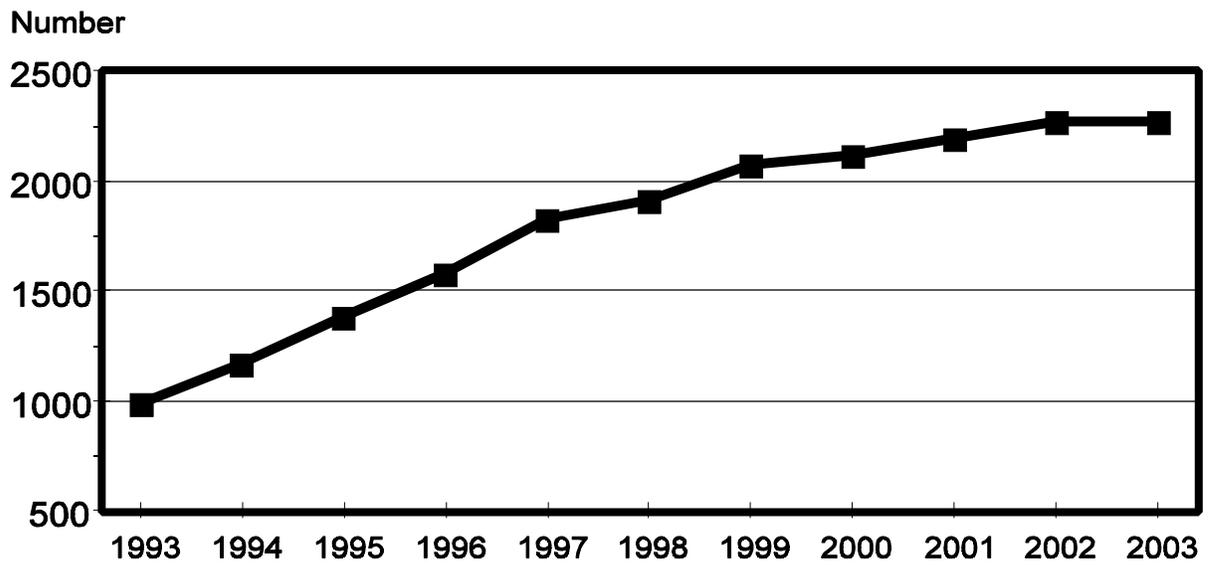


Chart 5

U.S. Hogs Operations <5000 Head

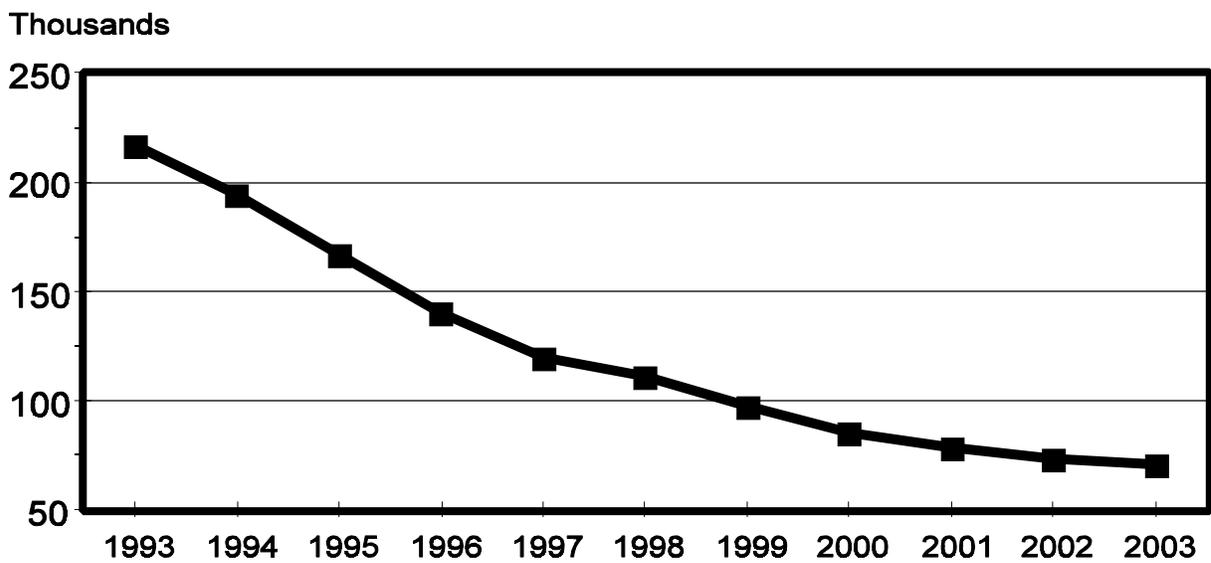


Chart 6

U.S. Annual Litter Rate

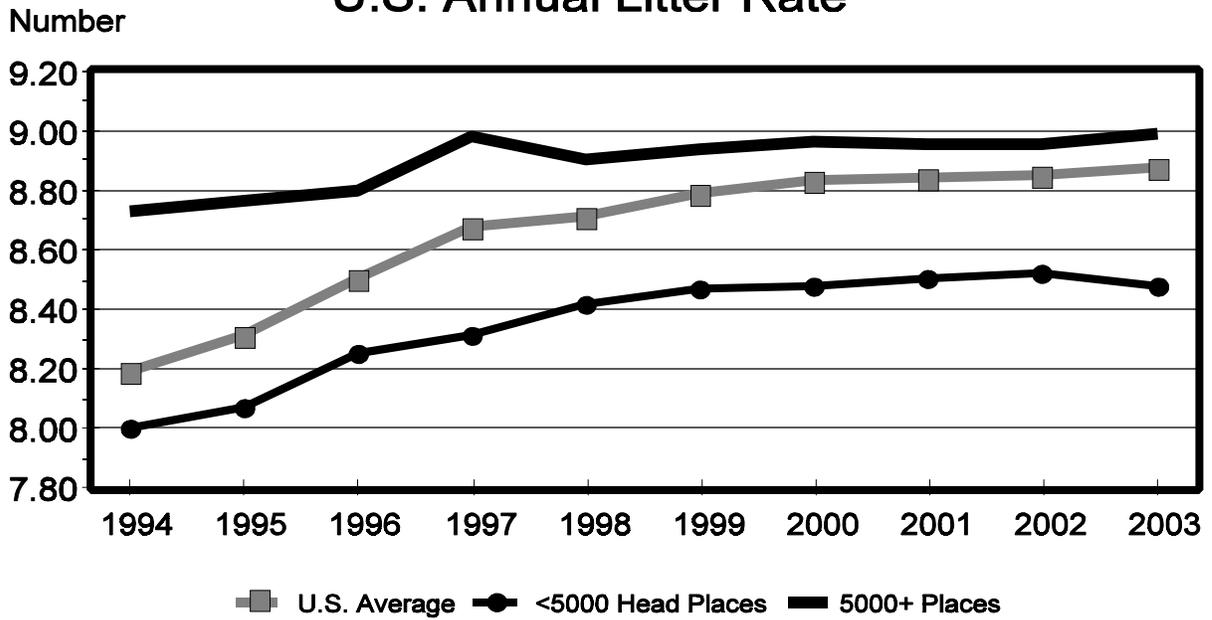
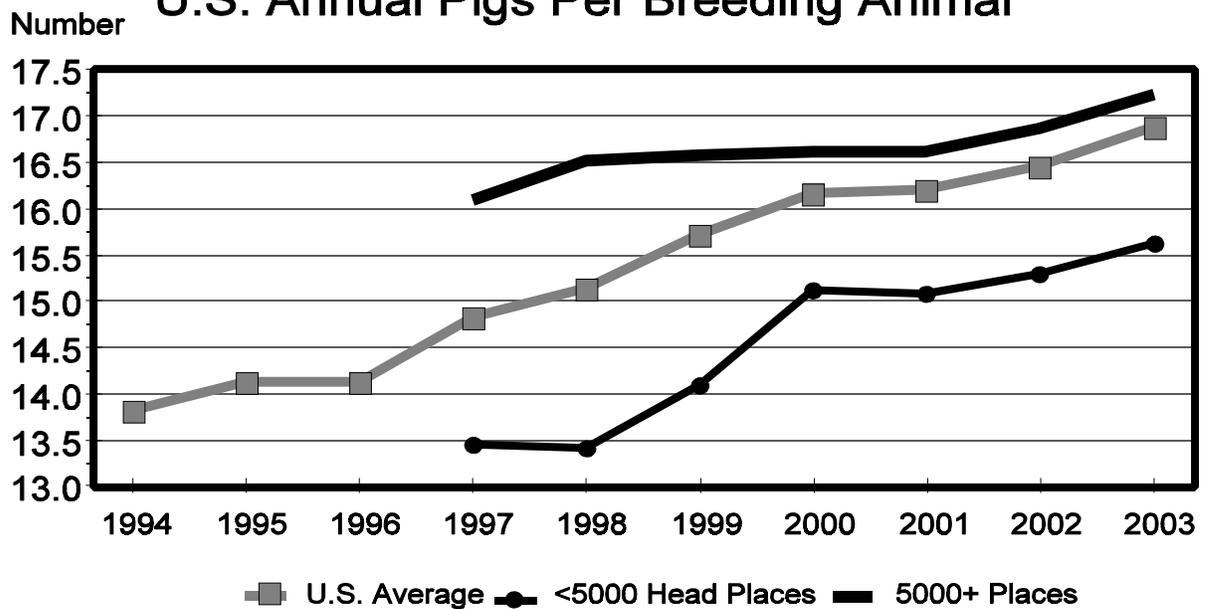


Chart 7

U.S. Annual Pigs Per Breeding Animal



ACCESS TO REPORTS!!

For your convenience, there are several ways to obtain NASS reports, data products, and services:

INTERNET ACCESS

All NASS reports are available free of charge on the worldwide Internet. For access, connect to the Internet and go to the NASS Home Page at: www.usda.gov/nass/. Select "Today's Reports" or Publications and then Reports Calendar or Publications and then Search, by Title or Subject.

E-MAIL SUBSCRIPTION

All NASS reports are available by subscription free of charge direct to your e-mail address. Starting with the NASS Home Page at www.usda.gov/nass/, click on **Publications**, then click on the **Subscribe by E-mail** button which takes you to the page describing e-mail delivery of reports. Finally, click on **Go to the Subscription Page** and follow the instructions.

PRINTED REPORTS OR DATA PRODUCTS

CALL OUR TOLL-FREE ORDER DESK: 800-999-6779 (U.S. and Canada)
Other areas, please call 703-605-6220 FAX: 703-605-6900
(Visa, MasterCard, check, or money order acceptable for payment.)

ASSISTANCE

For **assistance** with general agricultural statistics or further information about NASS or its products or services, contact the **Agricultural Statistics Hotline** at **800-727-9540**, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, or e-mail: nass@nass.usda.gov.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.