

ACH17-2/April 2019

The 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire substantially revised the demographic data collected in order to better capture the contributions of all persons involved in farm operations and agricultural production. The revised questions, which identified a producer as someone involved in making decisions for the farm, led to more people identifying as producers. The 2017 Census also collected data on young producers, new and beginning producers, and (for the first time) those with military service.

**3.4 million**  
producers



**57.5 years**  
average age



**2 million**  
farms



## Total Producers

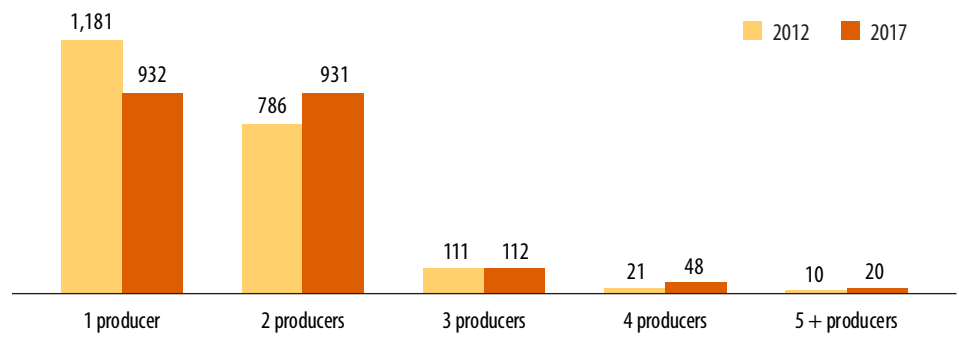
In 2017, the total number of U.S. producers was 3.4 million, a 6.9 percent increase over 2012, as more farms reported multiple individuals involved in farm decision making. In 2017, the majority of farms (54 percent) reported more than one person as producer. In 2012, the majority (56 percent of farms) identified only one producer.

While the number of male producers declined 1.7 percent, the number of female producers increased nearly 27 percent, underscoring the effectiveness of the attempt to better represent all people involved in farm decision making.

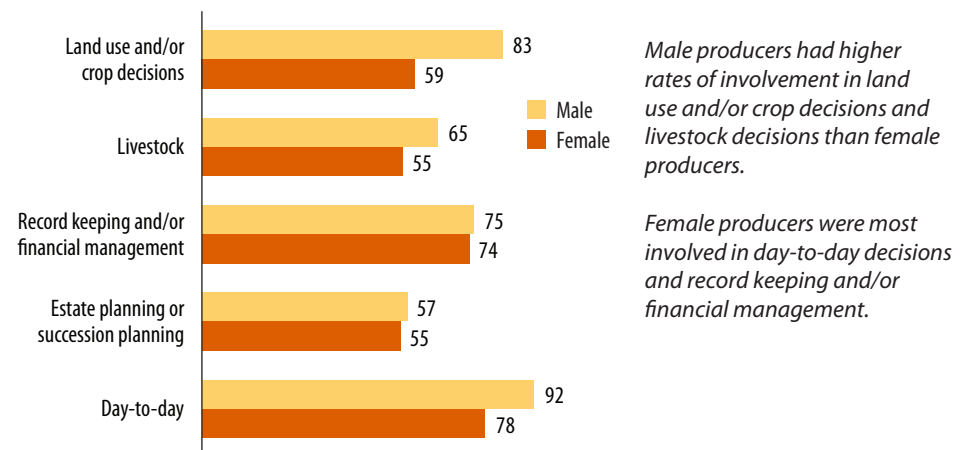
	2012	2017	% change
	(millions)		
All	3.18	3.40	+6.9
Male	2.21	2.17	-1.7
Female	0.97	1.23	+26.6

The total number of producers increased nearly 7 percent between 2012 and 2017. The number of farms with only one producer declined; all categories of farms with two or more producers increased.

Farms by Number of Producers, 2012 and 2017 (thousands)



Farm Decision Making by Type of Decision and Sex of Producer, 2017 (percent of category)



Male producers had higher rates of involvement in land use and/or crop decisions and livestock decisions than female producers.

Female producers were most involved in day-to-day decisions and record keeping and/or financial management.

For a video on *What's New in the 2017 Census?*, see [www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/Video\\_Features/index.php](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/Video_Features/index.php).

## Snapshot of U.S. Producers, 2017

U.S. total = 3,399,834

	% of total
Male	64
Female	36
Age <35	8
Age 35-64	58
Age 65+	34
10 years or less farming	27
11 years or more farming	73
Lived on their farm	74
Did not work off farm	39
Worked off farm 1 to 199 days	21
Worked off farm 200+ days	40
Primary occupation farming	42
Primary occupation other than farming	58
With military service	11
Hispanic	3
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.7
Asian	0.6
Black	1.3
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1
White	95.4
More than one race	0.8

## Demographics in the Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture, conducted once every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Demographic information is available at national, state, and county levels, as well as for classes of farm and congressional districts.

Results from the 2017 Census, as well as previous censuses, are available online. See the searchable database Quick Stats, the new and easy-to-use Census Data Query Tool, downloadable PDF reports, maps, and a variety of topic-specific products.

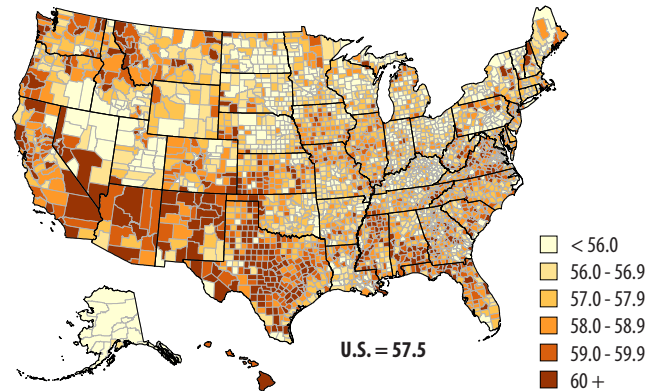
Highlights featuring demographic groups and profiles by race, ethnicity, and sex will become available throughout 2019.

[www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus)

## Average Age Continues to Rise

The average age of all U.S. farm producers in 2017 was 57.5 years, up 1.2 years from 2012, continuing a long-term trend of aging in the U.S. producer population. Producers also tend to be experienced; they had been on their current farm an average of 21.3 years.

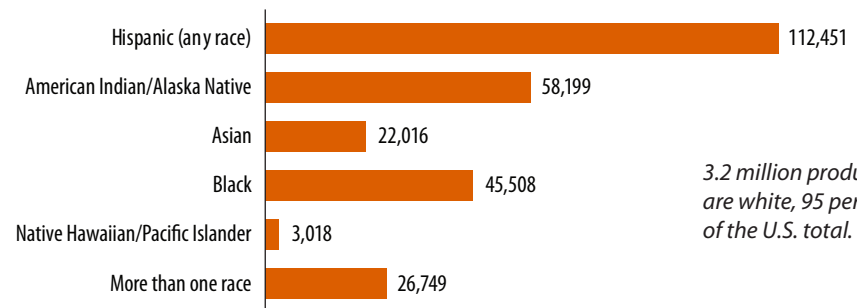
### Average Age of Producers by County, 2017



On average, producers are older in southern states and younger in Midwestern states.

## Producers by Ethnicity and Race

Consistent with Office of Management and Budget specifications for federal statistical agencies, the Census of Agriculture asked separate questions for ethnicity and race.



3.2 million producers are white, 95 percent of the U.S. total.

## Military Service

Accounting for 11 percent of the U.S. total, 370,619 producers had served or were serving in the U.S. military in 2017. They are largely male (95 percent) and a full decade older than producers as a whole.

They are experienced farmers, with 81 percent having farmed eleven years or more. For more than half of them (52 percent), farming is their primary occupation.

At the county level, the share of producers with military service is highest in the southeastern United States.

**67.9** Average age of producers with military service.

## Beginning Producers

Beginning farmers have ten or fewer years of farming experience. They were 27 percent of U.S. producers in 2017. Their average age was 46.3, and their farms were smaller than average in both acres and sales.

Top States	%
Alaska	46
Georgia	33
Maine	33
Hawaii	32
Florida	31
Rhode Island	31
West Virginia	31
New Hampshire	31
Colorado	31

*As a percent of producers in the state, Alaska ranks first in beginning farmers.*