

Production Data

Dataset Source	Description	Characteristics	Limitations
<p>U.S Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture Web address: <a href="http://www.agcensus.usda.gov">http://www.agcensus.usda.gov</a></p>	<p>The primary source for data covering farm production, land, and farm demographics. It also includes information on farm characteristics by size of farm and sales levels. The Census is compiled every five years by U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).</p>	<p><b><u>Unique Feature:</u></b> The most thorough survey of farms and farm production nationally. <b><u>Comprehensiveness:</u></b> Very comprehensive. <b><u>Levels:</u></b> Counties, congressional districts, states, nation. <b><u>Accuracy:</u></b> Quite high for major commodities and less comprehensive for minor products. <b><u>Ease of use:</u></b> Relatively easy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five-year increments of time between censuses may make it difficult to keep current with emerging developments.</li> <li>• Considerable data at the local level are suppressed for confidentiality reasons, which may produce gaps in your ability to understand local conditions.</li> <li>• Reported data only reflects conditions of that one year, thus potentially capturing anomalies in the year of study.</li> </ul>
<p>U.S Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service Web address: <a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov">http://www.ers.usda.gov</a>  ***note that there are a wide variety of datasets collected and maintained by ERS.</p>	<p>USDA-ERS provides many data sets covering farm production (including cash receipts and production expenses), the farm economy, farm practices, food and nutrition, food choices and health, markets, food safety, international markets, natural resources, and the rural economy. At the state and national levels, ERS reports extensive historical data as well.</p>	<p><b><u>Unique Feature:</u></b> Excellent data for researchers to draw upon. <b><u>Comprehensiveness:</u></b> Very comprehensive. <b><u>Levels:</u></b> States, nation. <b><u>Accuracy:</u></b> Quite high for major commodities and less comprehensive for minor products. <b><u>Ease of use:</u></b> Relatively straightforward data sets with exceptional detail, but can be difficult to locate on the ERS site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not provide local-level detail</li> </ul>

<p>U.S. Department of Commerce</p> <p>Bureau of Economic Analysis</p> <p>Web address:  <a href="http://www.bea.gov/">http://www.bea.gov/</a></p>	<p>An essential tool for understanding personal income in local regions, including detailed breakdowns of farm income and expenditures. BEA data allow one to financially profile all farms in a given geography. BEA also publishes user-friendly data showing population trends, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) receipts, and sources of transfer payments.</p>	<p><b><u>Unique Feature:</u></b> Time-series data covering farm income and personal income for each county in U.S. from 1969 to the present.</p> <p><b><u>Comprehensiveness:</u></b> Comprehensive compilation of personal income by source, though only by broad categories, such as “manufacturing.”</p> <p><b><u>Levels:</u></b> Counties, metro regions, economic regions, metro/non-metro areas, states, nation.</p> <p><b><u>Accuracy:</u></b> Farmers report that the trends shown in BEA data accurately reflect their experiences in the economy.</p> <p><b><u>Ease of use:</u></b> One of the most user-friendly data sites available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeled data from Census of Agriculture and other sources; may differ from USDA-NASS or USDA-ERS data, though personnel from each agency attempt to coordinate data protocols.</li> <li>• Farm income data largely reflect production of major commodities rather than smaller specialty crop farms; and do not cover off-farm income.</li> <li>• No information is provided covering specific marketing channels farmers may use.</li> </ul>
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