

Volume 1

**State and County Data**

Part 21

**Massachusetts**

AC78-A-21

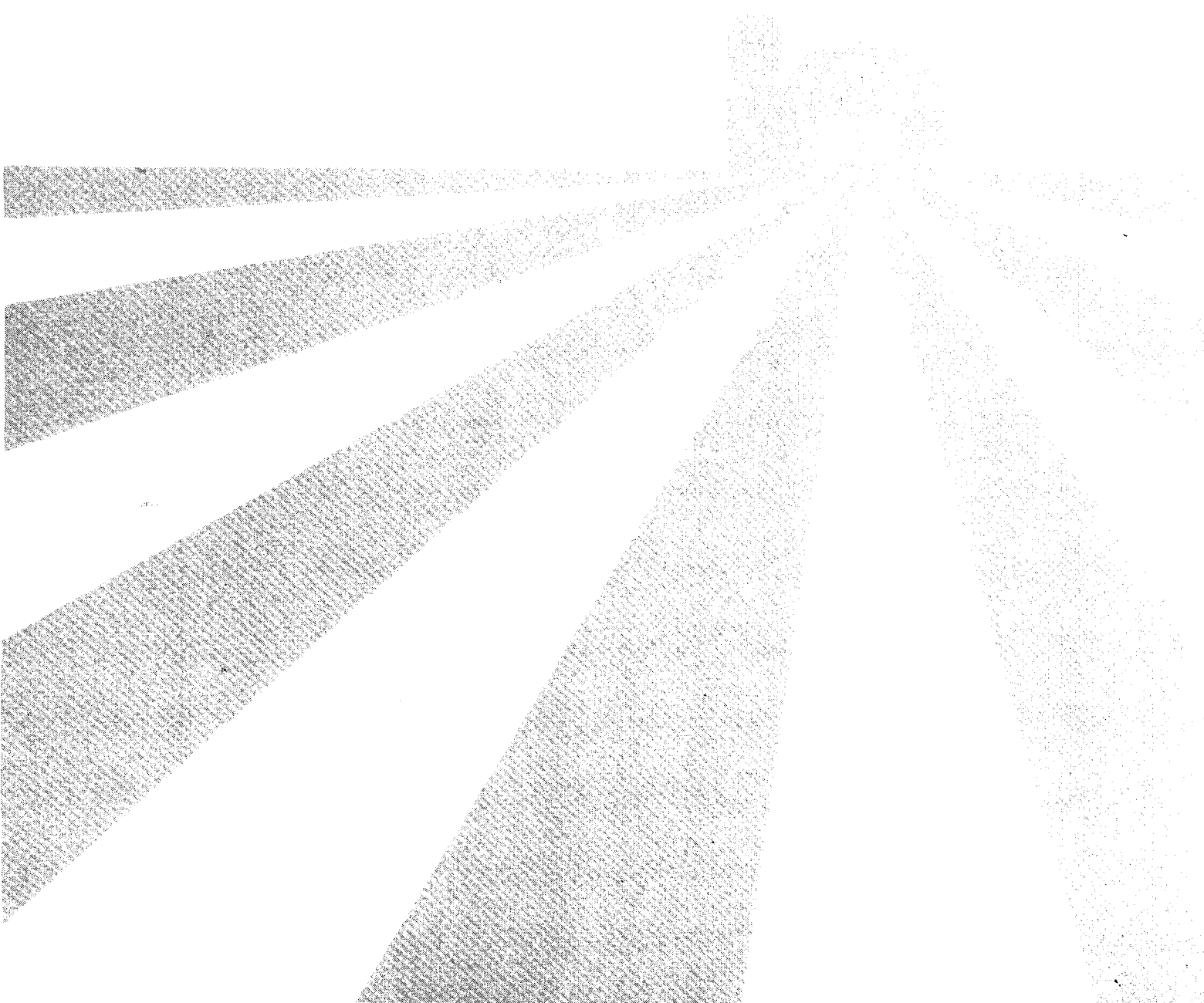
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1978

CENSUS OF  
AGRICULTURE

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U.S. Department of Commerce  
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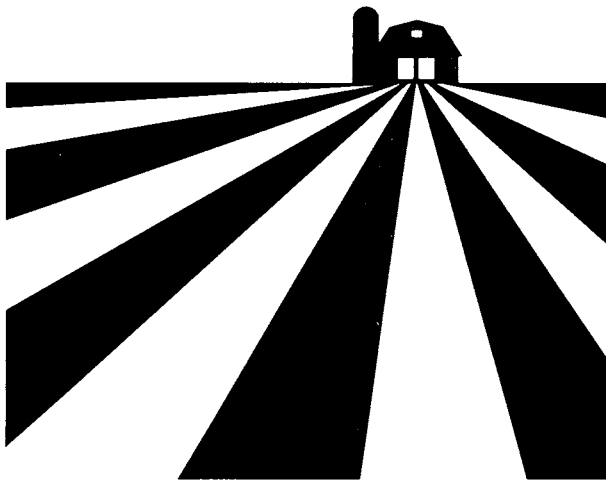


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Part 21  
**Massachusetts**

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Issued March 1981



**U.S. Department of Commerce**

Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary

William A. Cox,  
Acting Chief Economist

**BUREAU OF THE CENSUS**

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<sup>1</sup> Not shown separately to avoid disclosing data for individual farms. However, the data for the county are included in the State totals.

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### HISTORY

The census of agriculture provides a periodic statistical picture of the Nation's farming, ranching, and related activities. The 1978 Census of Agriculture is the 21st 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. From 1840 to 1950, an agriculture census was taken as part of the decennial census of population. A 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. Thereafter, the agriculture census will revert to a 5-year cycle.

### AUTHORITY AND AREA COVERED

The census of agriculture is authorized under the provisions of title 13, United States Code. Section 142(a) provides for the census to be taken in 1979, in 1983, and in every fifth year after 1983. Section 191 provides that the census shall include each State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. A census of agriculture will be conducted in American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands in conjunction with the 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

### FARM DEFINITION

Since 1850, when minimum criteria defining a farm for census purposes were first established, the farm definition has been changed nine times, as the Nation has grown and changed. The current definition was announced on August 12, 1975, in accordance with a joint agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Bureau of the Census. It defines a farm, for statistical purposes, as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agri-

cultural 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 county reports) counted as a farm 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.

### METHOD OF ENUMERATION

Evaluation studies of the 1969 and 1974 censuses, which were conducted primarily by mail, indicated that the administrative lists used to create the census mailing list were not adequate to assure complete coverage in the census. Also, censuses prior to 1969, conducted by direct enumeration, had been found by evaluation studies (conducted since 1950) to be progressively less and less complete, as increased mobility of farm operators led to increases in the numbers of nonresident operators, operators farming on a part-time basis, and operators farming two or more separate tracts.

The 1978 Census of Agriculture was conducted primarily by mail for maximum economy, supplemented by a personal canvass of a statistical area segment sample for maximum completeness of coverage. The area segment sample, which consists of selected geographic areas completely canvassed by direct enumeration, provides reliable estimates for States of the number and characteristics of any farms not represented in the mail portion of the census. Estimates for such farms are an integral part of the State totals published for the 1978 census. The direct enumeration sample estimates are statistically reliable only for State totals and have not been allocated to counties. Appendix A provides a more detailed description of how the 1978 census was taken and includes a discussion of census coverage.

### COMPARABILITY OF DATA

State totals for 1978 are not directly comparable with totals for 1974 or earlier censuses as they include data for farm operations represented on the mail list plus estimates from the direct enumeration sample for farms not represented on the mail list. The 1974 State level data include only operations represented on the mail list.

Coverage evaluation studies for the 1974 census indicated that 10.7 percent of all farms were not included in the census. Farms missed in the census were usually small and accounted for less than 3 percent of the total value of agricultural products sold and less than 6 percent of the land in farms. The proportion of farms missed in the 1974 census was generally higher in

States having a large proportion of small farms and urbanized areas having a sizable number of part-time farms. Farm counts for 1974, adjusted for the net undercount, are shown in appendix C.

County level data on acreages and inventories for 1978 and 1974 are generally comparable; however, improvements in the coverage of the 1978 census, especially of smaller farms, should be taken into consideration when comparing farm counts.

## USE OF SAMPLING

Two types of sampling were used for data collection for the 1978 census. In addition to the State estimates from the direct enumeration sample discussed previously, data for items in sections 22 through 27 of the census report form were collected from only a sample of farms. Data based on a sample are subject to sampling error. Detailed discussions of the census report forms, the use of sampling, and estimates of sampling error are included in appendix A.

## GRAPHICS

Several charts and maps presented on the following pages show selected agricultural statistics for this State. The items in the charts and the first four maps are presented for all States. The last four maps present data of particular importance to this State.

## TABULAR PRESENTATION

**State data**—In chapter 1, State tables 1 through 28 show detailed State level data usually accompanied by historical data for one or more censuses. Tables 29 through 35 provide 1978 State data cross-tabulated by various farm classifications.

**County summary data**—Selected data items are presented by county in chapter 2. Tables 1 through 15 include general data such as land in farms, size of farms, land use, operator characteristics, expenses, and machinery and equipment. Inventory and sales data for livestock, poultry, and animal specialties are contained in tables 16 through 27 and detailed crop data in tables 28 through 35. Tables 36 through 43 present data on foreign ownership, income from customwork, direct sales to consumers, operators by racial group, and female operators.

**Individual county data**—Five pages of tables are presented in chapter 3 for each county with 10 farms or more in 1978. The tables include final data for each county and are more comprehensive than those in the preliminary reports. Data are provided for all farms and for farms with sales of \$2,500 or more for both 1978 and 1974.

This chapter also includes a set of similar tables for the State as a whole and for those farms in the State not on the mailing list and not included in county tables.

## PRELIMINARY REPORTS

Preliminary reports have been published separately for all counties in the United States with 10 farms or more in 1978, each State, the four geographic regions, and the United States. This series provided, at the earliest possible date, information on major data items, with comparable final data from the 1974 census. The data items were standard for each State and county except in table 3 where the selected crops varied by State according to their relative importance in the State. The State preliminary report also included a full set of tables providing data derived from the direct enumeration sample on the estimated number and characteristics of farms not included in county totals because they were not represented on the mailing list.

For major data items at the county level differences between the preliminary and final figures are in general less than 5 percent. At the State level, differences are significantly less.

## CENSUS DISCLOSURE RULES

In keeping with the provisions of title 13, United States Code, data that would disclose the operations of an individual farm are not published. However, the number of farms in a given size category or other classification is not considered a disclosure. Appendix A presents additional information on disclosure rules.

## 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.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The following abbreviations and symbols are used throughout the tables:

- Zero.
- (D) Data withheld to avoid disclosing information for individual farms.
- (X) Not applicable.
- (Z) Less than half of the unit reported.
- (NA) Not available.
- \* Independent city.



# Highlights of the State's Agriculture: 1978 and 1974

	All farms				Farms with sales of \$2,500 or more			
	1978		1974 <sup>1</sup>		1978		1974 <sup>1</sup>	
	Total	Not on mail list	Total		Total	Not on mail list	Total	
Farms..... number.....	5 891	945	4 497		3 859	271	3 185	
Land in farms..... acres.....	678 714	61 355	601 734		535 675	27 603	496 050	
Average size of farm..... acres.....	115	65	134		139	102	156	
Harvested cropland..... acres.....	213 669	16 264	188 015		184 241	6 597	168 942	
Average per farm..... acres.....	36	17	42		48	24	53	
Farms by size:								
1 to 49 acres..... number.....	2 785	588	1 812		1 613	155	1 142	
50 to 499 acres..... number.....	2 938	357	2 513		2 093	116	1 885	
500 to 999 acres..... number.....	137	-	142		127	-	131	
1,000 acres or more..... number.....	31	-	30		26	-	27	
Value of land and buildings: <sup>2</sup>								
Average per farm..... dollars.....	168 952	93 650	128 535		195 905	93 988	150 448	
Average per acre..... dollars.....	1 443	1 442	961		1 399	923	966	
Value of machinery and equipment on farms: <sup>2</sup>								
Average per farm..... \$1,000.....	127 697	6 560	84 637		111 514	3 255	72 708	
Average per farm..... dollars.....	21 677	6 942	18 821		28 897	12 010	22 828	
Value of agricultural products sold..... \$1,000.....	214 675	2 681	179 653		211 420	2 192	177 112	
Average per farm..... dollars.....	36 441	2 838	39 950		54 786	8 087	55 608	
Crops sold..... \$1,000.....	100 829	750	86 453		99 469	547	85 347	
Average per farm..... dollars.....	17 116	794	19 225		25 776	2 019	26 797	
Livestock and livestock products sold..... \$1,000.....	95 164	1 753	68 330		93 443	1 492	67 109	
Average per farm..... dollars.....	16 154	1 855	15 195		24 214	5 507	21 070	
Poultry and poultry products sold..... \$1,000.....	18 682	178	24 134		18 508	152	23 977	
Average per farm..... dollars.....	3 171	189	5 367		4 796	561	7 528	
Farms by value of agricultural products sold:								
Less than \$2,500..... number.....	2 012	674	1 354		-	-	59	
\$2,500 to \$9,999..... number.....	1 563	197	942		1 563	197	942	
\$10,000 to \$39,999..... number.....	1 121	74	1 162		1 121	74	1 162	
\$40,000 to \$99,999..... number.....	688	-	678		688	-	678	
\$100,000 to \$199,999..... number.....	293	-	211		293	-	211	
\$200,000 or more..... number.....	194	-	133		194	-	133	
Abnormal farms..... number.....	20	(X)	17		(X)	(X)	(X)	
Value of agricultural products sold by farms having sales of:-								
Less than \$2,500..... \$1,000.....	2 052	490	1 528		-	-	77	
\$2,500 to \$9,999..... \$1,000.....	8 021	926	5 236		8 021	926	5 236	
\$10,000 to \$39,999..... \$1,000.....	23 900	1 266	25 284		23 900	1 266	25 284	
\$40,000 to \$99,999..... \$1,000.....	43 555	-	41 870		43 555	-	41 870	
\$100,000 to \$199,999..... \$1,000.....	40 091	-	28 553		40 091	-	28 553	
\$200,000 or more..... \$1,000.....	95 854	-	76 094		95 854	-	76 094	
Abnormal farms..... \$1,000.....	1 203	(X)	1 089		(X)	(X)	(X)	
Farm production expenses for selected items: <sup>2</sup>								
Feed for livestock and poultry..... \$1,000.....	40 503	1 012	40 395		39 163	595	39 636	
Seeds, bulbs, plants, and trees..... \$1,000.....	7 838	100	6 645		7 674	32	6 569	
Commercial fertilizer..... \$1,000.....	7 360	212	5 808		6 920	111	5 587	
Other agricultural chemicals..... \$1,000.....	4 035	153	2 768		3 833	113	2 701	
Petroleum products—gasoline, diesel, etc..... \$1,000.....	12 019	287	8 766		11 520	158	8 502	
Hired farm labor..... \$1,000.....	40 716	335	31 981		39 625	103	31 561	
Livestock and poultry inventory:								
Cattle and calves..... number.....	102 226	5 275	103 938		93 290	3 000	96 204	
Hogs and pigs..... number.....	59 626	5 040	43 229		55 488	2 899	41 968	
Sheep and lambs..... number.....	7 153	638	5 896		3 585	72	2 696	
Chickens 3 months old or older..... number.....	1 512 683	46 830	1 956 434		1 479 514	36 411	1 936 943	
Crops harvested:								
Corn for all purposes..... acres.....	44 269	1 151	37 409		42 624	862	36 344	
Hay crops..... acres.....	133 117	14 188	110 327		106 965	5 148	94 114	
All vegetables harvested for sale..... tons, dry.....	262 706	18 249	225 714		229 204	9 806	201 372	
Land in orchards..... acres.....	15 214	403	(NA)		14 699	357	14 954	
Land in orchards..... acres.....	8 556	445	9 366		7 572	203	8 913	

<sup>1</sup>Not fully comparable because of direct enumeration sample in 1978 totals; see text.  
<sup>2</sup>1978 data are based on a sample of farms; see text.

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