

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The 1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS) is an integrated survey of farm finance and land ownership. Publication of data on land ownership characteristics began in 1880, with the classification of farm tenure. Varying elements of farm financial data have been collected since the first agriculture census was taken in the United States in 1840. The principal financial characteristics in earlier data collections were value of farm land and sales of agricultural products, but in 1890 census data were also requested on farm mortgage debt. In later censuses, farm taxes were also included.

Beginning in 1960, special surveys were conducted in connection with the 1959 and 1964 Censuses of Agriculture on selected aspects of farm finance. In 1971, the 1970 Survey of Agricultural Finance was conducted as part of the 1969 Census of Agriculture. The survey collected data on land in farms, value of land and buildings, rents, capital and operating expenditures, credit used for purchasing specified items for farm use, outstanding debt by kind and source, value of agricultural products sold, construction of farm buildings and structures, and off-farm income.

The 1979 Farm Finance Survey was comparable to the 1970 Survey of Agricultural Finance. The 1979 survey included new sections on production contracts, income and expenses from farm-related sources, assets, the date and acres of land acquired and disposed of, off-farm work, education, and household characteristics, and repeated questions from the 1970 survey on debts, expenditures, income, and taxes. Data for all these items were collected from the operator, and most of the same items from the landlords. The landlord report form also included new sections on land ownership, sales of agricultural land, participation in management decisions, and type of ownership.

The 1988 AELOS included the majority of the financial measures collected in the 1979 and earlier Farm Finance Surveys and greatly expanded the data on land ownership. AELOS included estimates for every State and U.S. totals for acres of agricultural land owned, how it was purchased, type of ownership, and a measure of the number of acres acquired and sold for specified years. Land ownership data were included for landholders who operated farms as well as for landholders who were not farm operators. The 1999 AELOS includes the items that were on the 1988 AELOS with one exception: the type of lease arrangements for land owned was not asked of the operators, only of the landlords. Depreciation was added to the expense section and value of assets January 1 was added to the asset section.

SOURCE OF DATA

All data shown in this report, with a few exceptions that are explained in the Classifications section in Appendix A, were from the 1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey, which was taken in 2000 for the 1999 calendar year. Some of the operator data was collected, via enumerators, through the 1999 Agricultural Resource Management Study (Phase III) questionnaire, and converted into AELOS data.

To determine the content of the AELOS report forms, NASS consulted with the Census Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics. Suggestions also were received from other agencies such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of the Census. Correspondence was sent to State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and State Departments of Agriculture to inquire of their data needs.

The AELOS operator questionnaire was tested in the Summer of 1999. The pretest was accomplished by meeting with farmers and ranchers in selected States. They were asked to complete the operator questionnaire as it related to their operation. They made comments with respect to the questionnaire and gave suggestions about the layout and clarity of questions asked.

Based on evaluation of the test and additional research, a final questionnaire for data collection was developed for operators. Copies of the operator and landlord questionnaires are in Appendix B.

The sample size for AELOS totaled 42,328. The AELOS total sample included 17,245 samples from the Agricultural Resource Management Study (ARMS) sample. Of these, 11,376 were personally enumerated via typical ARMS data collection. The remaining ARMS sample of 5,869 plus the supplementary AELOS sample of 25,083 were mailed the operator report for completion of applicable items for the land which they operated. The landlord form was sent to landlords listed on the completed operator reports. Landlord were asked to complete items relating to the land (target acres) rented to the specified operators. The landlord sample size amounted to 68,313. There was a potential response for 67,196 names of which 34,158 good reports were received. A combination of essential items from the operator and landlord reports made possible the determination of data for items applicable to all land in farms.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data are published for the United States, 4 regions, 10 sub regions and each of the 50 States. Data are published in greater detail at the US level than for smaller geographic areas. Tables 1 through 67 are primarily devoted to land in farms and the financial characteristics of farms including expenses, assets, and debt for the farm operator and for the associated landlords. Tables 68 through 103 describe land ownership and related characteristics for both landholders who operate farms as well as landholders who are not farm operators.

SPECIAL TABULATIONS

Custom designed tabulations can be developed to individual user's specifications on a programming cost reimbursement basis. Inquiries about special tabulations should be directed to the NASS Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO), 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20250.

HISTORICAL DATA

No comparable historical data are shown in this publication. For earlier surveys or censuses see:

1997 Census of Agriculture - Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Part 51, **Summary and State Data**

1987 Census of Agriculture - Volume 3, **Related Surveys** Part 2 **Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey**

1987 Census of Agriculture - Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Part 51, **Summary and State Data**

1982 Census of Agriculture - Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Part 51, **Summary and State Data**

1978 Census of Agriculture - Volume 1, **Summary and State Data**, Part 51, **United States**

1978 Census of Agriculture - Volume 5, Part 6, **Farm Finance Survey**

1974 Census of Agriculture - Volume II, Part 2, Chapter III, **Farm Debt**

1969 Census of Agriculture - Volume V, Part 11, **Farm Finance Survey**

1965 Survey - 1964 Census of Agriculture, Volume III, Part 3, **Sample Survey of Agriculture**, and Part 4, **Farm Debt**

1960 Survey - 1959 Census of Agriculture, Volume V, Part 5, **1960 Sample Survey of Agriculture**, and Part 4, **Farm Mortgage Debt and Farm Taxes**; Board of Governors, Federal

Reserve System (Washington, 1964) Farm Debt**DATA DISSEMINATION**

The 1999 AELOS data are available on the Internet, get direction from the NASS Home Page at www.nass.usda.gov. Other data request will be serviced by the Market and Information Services Office (MISO) located at USDA, NASS, 1400 Independence Ave., SW Washington, DC 20250 (Telephone - 202-690-8122)

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Symbol Information

(-) Represents zero.

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

(NA) Data not available.

(X) Data not applicable.

(Z) Less than half a unit of measure.

DATA IN TABLES MAY NOT ADD DUE TO ROUNDING.

FOR EXPLANATION OF TERMS IN TABLES, SEE APPENDIX A.