

Geographic Method of Tabulation

Data are provided by the mailed ZIP Code that was included in the address label of each census report form, but were tabulated within the State where the agricultural production was located or reported as indicated by the census respondent. See Limitations of ZIP Code Data for a detailed explanation.

ZIP Code Definition

ZIP Codes primarily identify areas within the United States to simplify and speed the distribution of mail. Although data based on ZIP Codes may be used for geographic and demographic purposes, the data should be used with caution, since ZIP Code alignments do not necessarily conform to boundaries of cities, counties, States, or other jurisdictions.

The first digit of a five-digit ZIP Code divides the country into 10 large groups of States numbered from 0 in the Northeast to 9 in the far West. Each State is divided into geographic areas identified by the second and third digits of the ZIP Code. Three-digit ZIP Codes for each region and State are shown below:

Three-Digit ZIP Code Reference List

3-Digit States

Included*****

10-089 Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont

004 and Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania
090-199

201 and Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina,
206-297 Virginia, and West Virginia

298-399 Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi,
and 723 Tennessee

400-499 Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio
500-514 Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin
520-526
530-599
and 821

600-693 Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska
515-516
527-528
and 739

700-722 Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas
724-738
740-799
and 885

800-820 Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico
822-837 Utah, and Wyoming
840-884

889-898
961-979
and 994

838 and Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and
900-960 Washington
962-968
970-978
980-993
995-999

The fourth and fifth digits of a ZIP Code identify a local delivery area. Nine digit ZIP Codes are not available in this tabulation.

A ZIP Code's name represents the main post office, branch, or community post office. During census mail list development, the census mail list records went through a series of computer operations that 1) checked the validity of the ZIP Code/post office name match, 2) inserted ZIP Codes or post office names into records missing one of these two items, and 3) standardized spelling of post office names. This activity occurred during late 1996 and 1997.

After all data collection and census processing were completed, the ZIP Codes with five or more farms were identified along with the appropriate data. They were then matched to the United States Postal Service - City State File. The ZIP Code post office names were used to the fullest extent possible, not the locality names.

It is important to note that the data presented here are based only on the ZIP Codes boundaries in the census year. ZIP Code directories are revised annually to reflect both the expansions and contractions within existing ZIP Codes.

Limitations of ZIP Code Data

Data are limited to farm counts for selected items, because of the large number of ZIP Codes involved. Reporting only farm counts eliminated the need for disclosure analysis. This analysis involves reviewing all data tables before publication to identify and suppress data that would disclose information concerning an individual operation. Publishing farm counts in a given size category or other classification is not considered a release of confidential information.

Farm location vs. mailed ZIP Code. The 1997 Census of Agriculture, like all agricultural censuses since 1969, employed the mail out/mail back method of enumeration. In most cases, the operator's mailing address and mailed ZIP Code (ZIP Code in the address label of the census report) were the same as the location of the farm operated. Therefore, the vast majority of farms were tabulated in the ZIP Codes where they were located. However, in some instances, the operator's farm was located outside the mailed ZIP Code. Consequently, these farms are not counted in the ZIP Codes of their physical location.

Reported State vs. mailed State. The farm counts were tabulated by mailed ZIP Code within reported State, i.e., the State in which the farm was physically located. In a case where the operator's mailing address was in a State different than the State in which the farm was located, the ZIP Code in the address would not belong to the set of ZIP Codes for the reported State.

In this situation, the data are published as follows. If fewer than five farms reported the out-of-State ZIP Code, the farms were tabulated and published in the "All other ZIP Codes" category for the reported State. If five or more farms reported the out-of-state ZIP Code, the farms were tabulated and published as an additional, distinct ZIP Code in the stub and appears before or after the ZIP Codes for the reported State depending on its rank relative to ZIP Codes in the State. ZIP Codes for each State are displayed in ascending order.

For the first time, the mailed city and mailed ZIP Code include the mailed State even when

published in another State.

Geographic differences within State. More commonly, the reported State and the mailed State were the same, but the ZIP Code where the farm was physically located may have been different than the mailed ZIP Code. Since the census did not request that operators report the ZIP Code in which the farm was located, these cases cannot be identified in the tables. The mailed ZIP Code is the best available approximation of the physical location for farms published at the ZIP Code level.

Reasons for farm location outside mailed ZIP Code. Listed below are a few of the reasons mailed ZIP Codes may not correspond to the farm location.

- The farm operator did not have a residence at the farm or considers his/her primary residence to be elsewhere and received his/her Census report at his/her non-farm address.
- The operator picked up mail at a post office box number located in a post office which had a ZIP Code different than that of the farm.