



# 2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## Black Farmers

**The number of black or African-American farm operators grew 9 percent from 2002.**

### Black or African-American Farm Operators

The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows that U.S. farmers and ranchers are becoming more diverse and that the number of black or African American farm operators continues to rise.

The 2007 Census counted a total of 41,024 black operators on 32,938 farms and ranches across the United States. The number of black operators grew 9 percent from 2002, outpacing the 7 percent increase in U.S. farm operators overall.

There were a total of 39,697 black operators who reported black or African-American as their only race in 2007. Of these, 30,599 were principal operators, up 5 percent from 2002.\*

	2007	2002	% Change
<b>All Farm Operators</b>	3,281,534	3,053,801	+7
Black Farm Operators	41,024	37,791	+9
Blacks as % of Total	1.3%	1.2%	+1
<b>All Principal Farm Operators</b>	2,204,792	2,128,982	+4
Black Principal Operators	30,599	29,090	+5
Blacks as % of Total	1.4%	1.4%	+2

\* Before 2002, the Census of Agriculture collected detailed demographic data on only one operator per farm. Since 2002, the census has taken a more comprehensive approach, counting all operators and collecting detailed demographic information on up to three operators per farm. The principal operator is the person in charge of day-to-day decisions for the farm or ranch.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service



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*The states with the highest percentage of black principal farm operators are:*

1. Mississippi
2. South Carolina
3. Louisiana
4. Alabama
5. Georgia

## How Do They Compare?

When compared to all farms nationwide, those with black principal operators tend to be smaller both in terms of size and sales. These operations are also less likely to have Internet access.

FARM/RANCH OPERATIONS	All Farms	Black-Operated Farms
Average Size of Farm	418 acres	104 acres
Average Value of Sales	\$134,807	\$21,340
Sales & Government Payments <\$10,000	58%	79%
Farms with Internet Access	57%	34%

The number of black farm operators who are women grew 53 percent from 2002, outpacing the 29 percent increase in the number of female farm operators overall. Women now comprise 14 percent of all black or African-American principal farm operators.

Black farm operators tend to be older than their counterparts nationwide, with an average of 60.3 years, as compared to 57.1 years for U.S. farmers overall. A total of 37 percent of all black farmers are 65 or older, compared to 30 percent of all farmers nationwide.

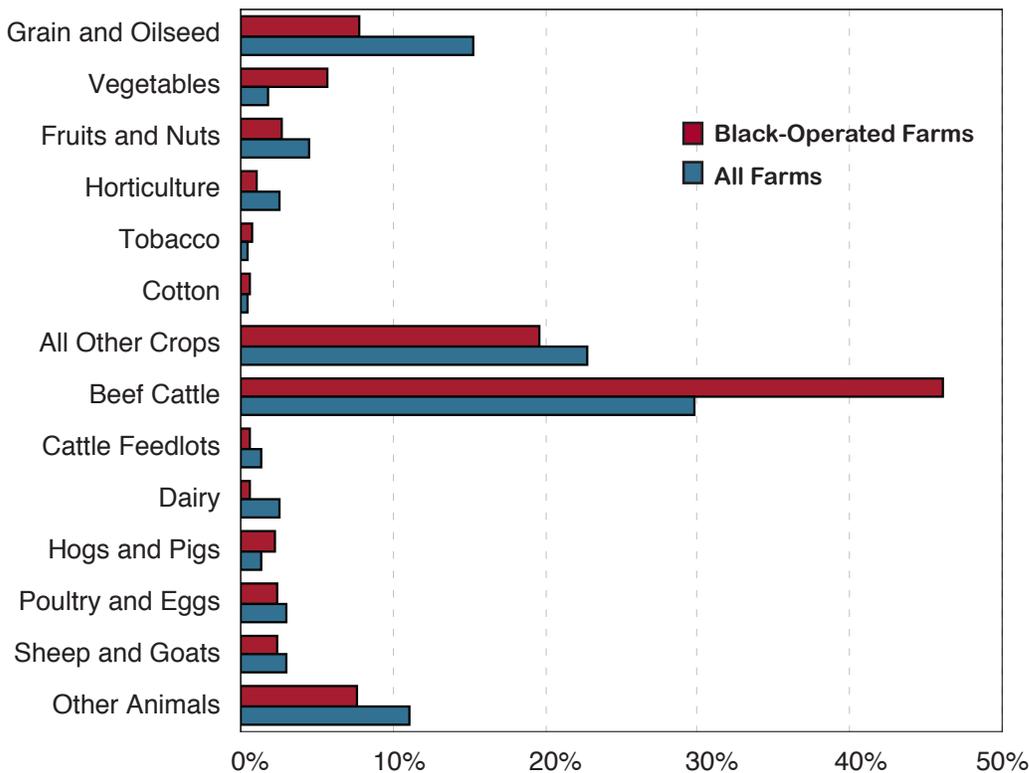
FARM/RANCH OPERATORS	All Operators	Black Operators
Male	86%	86%
Derive <50% of Income from Farming	80%	93%
Farming as Primary Occupation	45%	44%
Operator Owns All Farm Acres	69%	69%
Worked Off Farm	65%	66%
4 Years or Less on Present Farm	10%	11%
65 Years or Older	30%	37%
Average Age of Operator	57.1	60.3

# Black Farmers

## What Do They Produce?

Almost half (46 percent) of all black-operated farms are classified as beef cattle farms and ranches, compared to 30 percent of all farms nationwide. Another 20 percent are classified as “all other crop farms,” compared to 23 percent of farms overall. This category includes hay farms and farms where no single crop comprised more than 50 percent of sales. And, while 15 percent of farms overall are classified as grain and oilseed farms, only 8 percent of black-operated farms fall into this category.

Percent of Farms by  
North American Industry Classification System



## Every Voice Counts

In conducting the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) placed a special emphasis on outreach to traditionally under-represented populations, including small, minority, female and limited-resource farm operators.

Working in partnership with community-based organizations nationwide, NASS engaged in an extensive effort to make sure the 2007 Census mailing list included all farms and ranches, regardless of size, location or type of operation. NASS also partnered with these groups to provide hands-on assistance and support to local producers — including non-English speakers — in filling out their Census forms. In addition, NASS targeted its media outreach efforts towards publications and broadcast outlets that reach small, minority and non-English-speaking producers.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture marked the first time NASS attempted to collect a Census report from individual farm operators on American Indian reservations in all states. In 2002, reservations were counted as a single farm and reservation officials supplied counts of individual operators. NASS will issue a follow-up report about agricultural activity on American Indian reservations in the spring of 2009.

NASS is committed to continuing its outreach to all underserved populations.

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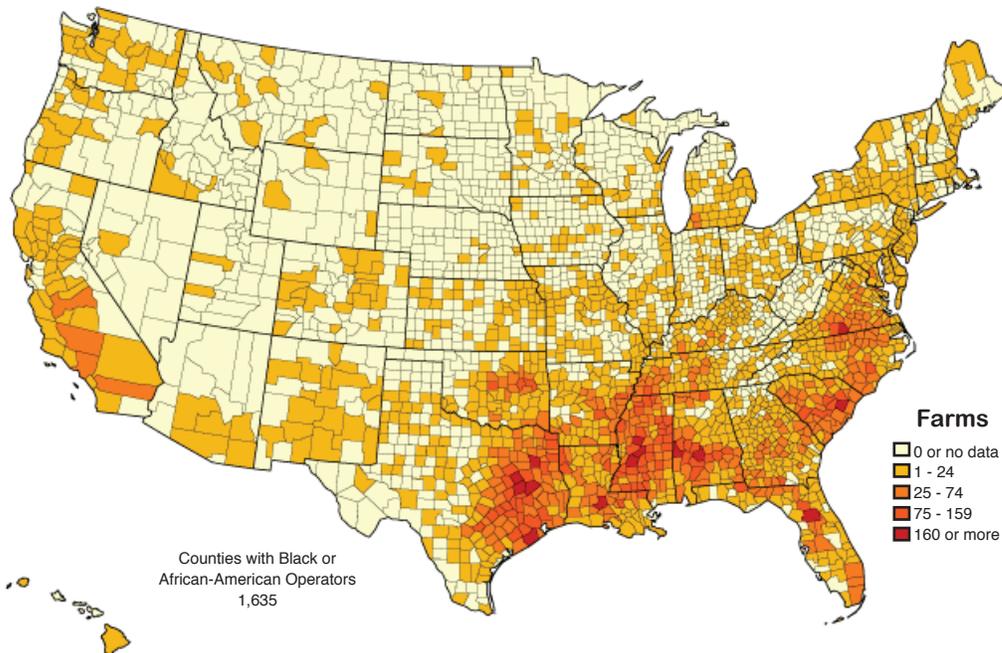
## Where Do They Farm?

The percentage of black principal operators is highest in the Southern United States. The states with the highest percentage of black principal operators are Mississippi (12.6 percent), South Carolina (8.1 percent), Louisiana (6.4 percent), Alabama (5.6 percent) and Georgia (4.3 percent).

Texas has 6,124 Black principal farm operators, the largest number in any state. Blacks make up 2.5 percent of the total farm operators in Texas. In 35 states, blacks or African Americans comprise less than 1 percent of all principal farm operators.



Number of Farms with Black or African-American Operators: 2007



## For more information:

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

[www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)

Agricultural Statistics Hotline  
(800) 727-9540

## To be counted in 2012:

Sign-up at

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

or call

(800) 892-1660

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