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# Introduction

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## HISTORY

For more than 156 years, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, conducted the Census of Agriculture and related censuses and surveys. The 1997 Appropriations Act contained a provision that transferred the responsibility from the Bureau of the Census to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The census of horticultural specialties is a part of the agriculture census program.

The 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties is the tenth census of horticultural specialties. Previous horticultural specialties censuses were conducted in conjunction with the census of agriculture and were taken in 1889, 1929, 1949, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1988, 1998, and 2009. The 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties includes producers of floriculture, nursery, and other specialty crops, such as sod, food crops produced under glass or other protection, transplants for commercial production, and propagative materials.

## USES OF CENSUS DATA

The census of horticultural specialties is the leading source of detailed production and sales data at the U.S. and state levels. The census of horticultural specialties is routinely used by government agencies, academia, nursery and floriculture industries, and the general public. Census data are used to:

- Evaluate, change, promote, and formulate policies and programs that help horticultural specialty producers.
- Study historic trends, assess current conditions, and plan for the future.

- Design new and improved methods to increase horticultural specialty production and profitability.
- Analyze and report on the current state of horticultural specialty production in the U.S.

News media and agricultural associations also use census data as background material for stories and articles on U.S. horticultural specialty production.

## AUTHORITY

The census of agriculture is required by law under the "Census of Agriculture Act of 1997," Public Law 105-113 (Title 7, United States Code, Section 2204g). The law authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct surveys deemed necessary to furnish annual or other data on the subjects covered by the census. The 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties was conducted under the provisions of this section.

## HORTICULTURAL SPECIALTIES OPERATION DEFINITION

The definition of a horticultural specialty operation is any place that produced and sold \$10,000 or more of horticultural specialty products during 2014. This same definition was used in the 2009 and 1998 Censuses of Horticultural Specialties. The definition used for the censuses in 1988, 1979, 1970, and 1959 included operations growing and selling \$2,000 or more of horticultural products during the census year. The definition used prior to 1959 used a \$1,000 minimum sales limit.

The definition of a farm in the census of agriculture, which is the basis for identifying horticultural specialty operations, has also varied. Since 1974, the census of agriculture has included all farms from

which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. Prior to 1974, the farm definition was based on a lower value of products sold and included a relationship to acres on the operation.

## DATA COMPARABILITY

Most data are comparable between the 2014 and 2009 censuses of horticultural specialties. A few changes were made to the 2014 census that affect comparability for some data items. See Appendix B, General Explanation and Report Form for a detailed discussion of these changes. Dollar figures are expressed in current dollars and have not been adjusted for inflation or deflation. The data published in this publication are not directly comparable to 2012 Census of Agriculture data or 2015 Commercial Floriculture Survey data. Although data were collected for the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties and the 2015 Commercial Floriculture Survey with the same report form, differences in the kinds of statistics collected and in collection methodology do not allow for direct comparability.

## REFERENCE PERIOD

The 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties covers operations for the 2014 calendar year, except for a small number of operations that maintained their records on a fiscal year basis. These operations were permitted to report their fiscal year that included at least half of the 2014 calendar year. Data for trees on operation were collected for January 1, 2015. Data on estimated value of land, buildings, machinery and equipment were reported for December 31, 2014.

## TABLES AND APPENDICES

**Chapter 1.** Table 1 shows U.S.-level historical data through the 1889 census. Tables 2 through 34 show detailed U.S.- level data for 2014.

**Chapter 2.** Tables 1 through 42 present selected data for all states reporting a data item.

**Appendix A.** Provides information about data collection and data processing activities and discusses the statistical methodology used in

conducting and evaluating the census. Table A provides reliability estimates of U.S. and state totals for operations, total value of sales, total wholesale value of sales, and total retail value of sales. Table B provides reliability estimates of U.S. totals for selected items.

**Appendix B.** Includes definitions of specific terms and phrases used in this publication, including items in the publication tables that carry the note “see text.” The report form and instruction sheet used to collect data are also included.

## RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

In keeping with the provisions of Title 7 of the United States Code, no data are published that would disclose information about the operations of an individual farm or ranch. All tabulated data are subjected to an extensive disclosure review prior to publication. Any tabulated item that identifies data reported by a respondent, or allows a respondent’s data to be accurately estimated or derived, was suppressed and coded with a ‘D’. The number of operations reporting an item is not considered confidential information and is provided even though other information may be withheld.

## SPECIAL STUDIES AND CUSTOM TABULATIONS

Special studies such as the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties, 2013 Census of Aquaculture, and 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey are part of the census program and provide supplemental information to the 2012 Census of Agriculture in the respective subject area. Results are published on the NASS website at [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov). If you would like to learn more about the statistics available from NASS or have questions concerning this report, send an email to [nass@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass@nass.usda.gov) or call the Agricultural Statistics Hotline at 1-800-727-9540.

Custom-designed tabulations may be developed when data are not published elsewhere. These tabulations are developed to individual user specifications on a cost-reimbursable basis and shared with the public. Quick Stats, NASS’s online database, that allows data users to build customized queries, should be investigated before requesting a

custom tabulation.

All NASS special studies, special reports, and custom tabulations are subject to a thorough review prior to release to prevent the disclosure of any individual respondent data. Requests for custom tabulations can be submitted online from the NASS home page ([www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)) or to the NASS DataLab by mail or e-mail at:

USDA  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Room 6061 – Mail Stop 2017  
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250-2054  
or  
[Datalab@nass.usda.gov](mailto:Datalab@nass.usda.gov)

## ROUNDING

For data reported to the nearest 1,000 units, the sum of the data may not equal the reported total due to rounding.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The following abbreviations and symbols are used

throughout the tables:

- Represents zero.
- (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.
- (H) Coefficient of variation is greater than or equal to 99.95 percent or the standard error is greater than or equal to 99.95 percent of mean.
- (L) Coefficient of variation is less than 0.05 percent or the standard error is less than 0.05 percent of the mean.
- (NA) Not available.
- (X) Not applicable.
- (Z) Less than half of the unit shown.
- cwt Hundredweight.
- sq ft Square feet.