



# American Indian Farmers

ACH12-8/September 2014

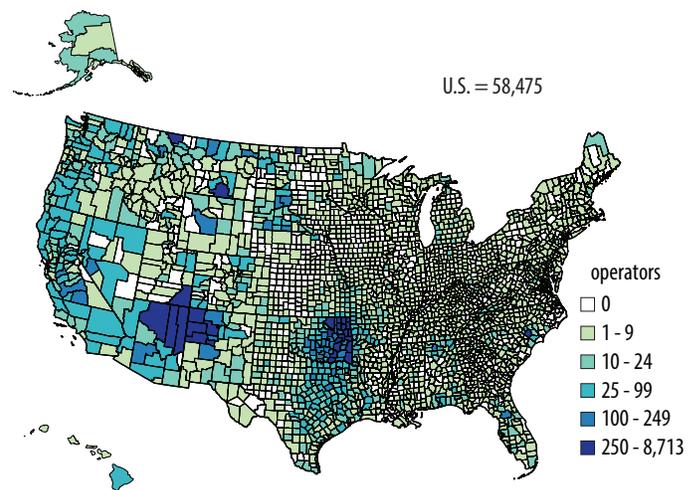
**Two thirds specialized in livestock production.**

## 37,851 farms . . .

. . . sold \$1.8 billion in agricultural products and operated 51 million acres of farmland.

In 2012, the number of American Indian farmers in the United States was 58,475. This was a 5 percent increase since 2007, when the last agriculture census was conducted. Eighty percent lived in seven states in 2012: Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Montana, California, and South Dakota. Apache County, Arizona, had more American Indian farmers than any other county.

**American Indian Farm Operators, by County, 2012**



Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

## About the Numbers

This *Highlights* document includes data for operators reporting their race only as “American Indian or Alaska Native.” An additional 13,472 respondents to the 2012 Census of Agriculture indicated they are “American Indian or Alaska Native” in addition to one or more other races. For more information on American Indian farmers, see <http://bit.ly/REGprofiles>.

\*Statistically significant change. See <http://bit.ly/AgCensusFAQs>.

## Principal Operators

Of total American Indian farmers, 37,851 were principal operators, that is, the person in charge of the farm’s day-to-day operations. Farms with American Indian principal operators increased 9 percent between 2007 and 2012. In contrast, principal operators of all farms declined 4 percent. (Table 1)

Table 1  
**American Indian Farm Operators, 2007 and 2012**

|  | 2007          | 2012          | % change   |
|--|---------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>American Indian farm operators</b>      | <b>55,889</b> | <b>58,475</b> | <b>+5%</b> |
| Total farm operators                       | 3.3 million   | 3.2 million   | -3%        |
| American Indians as % of total             | 1.7%          | 1.8%          |            |
| <b>American Indian principal operators</b> | <b>34,706</b> | <b>37,851</b> | <b>+9%</b> |
| Total principal operators                  | 2.2 million   | 2.1 million   | -4%*       |
| American Indians as % of total             | 1.6%          | 1.8%          |            |

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

The percent of operators who are of American Indian origin is higher than the national average of 2 percent in eight states: Arizona (56%), New Mexico (20%), Oklahoma (10%), Nevada (7%), Alaska (4%), Montana (4%), Utah (3%), and South Dakota (3%).

American Indian principal operators had less Internet access in 2012 than principal operators of all farms (46 percent compared with 70 percent for principal operators overall). They are more likely to be female than operators overall. (Table 2)

Table 2  
American Indian Principal Operators, 2007 and 2012

|                              | American Indian |         | All Principal Operators, 2012 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------------------|
|                              | 2007            | 2012    |                               |
|                              | (percent)       |         |                               |
| <b>Age</b>                   |                 |         |                               |
| < 35 years                   | 6               | 6       | 6                             |
| 35 to 64 years               | 64              | 61      | 61                            |
| 65 years+                    | 30              | 33      | 33                            |
| <b>Gender</b>                |                 |         |                               |
| Male / Female                | 71 / 29         | 70 / 30 | 86 / 14                       |
| <b>Primary occupation</b>    |                 |         |                               |
| Farming / Other              | 51 / 49         | 55 / 45 | 48 / 52                       |
| <b>Worked off farm</b>       |                 |         |                               |
| Yes/No                       | 63 / 37         | 63 / 37 | 61 / 39                       |
| <b>Years on present farm</b> |                 |         |                               |
| 0 - 4                        | 11              | 8       | 8                             |
| 5 - 9                        | 17              | 14      | 14                            |
| 10 +                         | 72              | 78      | 78                            |
| <b>Internet access</b>       |                 |         |                               |
| Yes / No                     | 42 / 58         | 46 / 54 | 70 / 30                       |
| Average age (years)          | 56.6            | 58.1    | 58.3                          |

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

## Farm Size and Sales

American Indian principal operators sold \$1.8 billion of agricultural products in 2012, including \$693 million in crop sales and \$1.1 billion in livestock sales. They operated 50.9 million acres of farmland. American Indian sales represented 0.5 percent of total U.S. agriculture sales, and American Indians operated 5.6 percent of U.S. farmland.

Farms with American Indian operators tend to be smaller farms than farms overall, with fewer acres and lower sales.

Seventy-seven percent of farms with an American Indian principal operator had fewer than 180 acres, and 78 percent had sales of less than \$10,000 in 2012. (Table 3)

Table 3  
Farms with American Indian Principal Operator, by Farm Size and Sales, 2012 (percent)

|                        | Am. Ind. - operated Farms | All Farms |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Farm Size</b>       |                           |           |
| < 50 acres             | 57                        | 39        |
| 50 to 179 acres        | 20                        | 30        |
| 180 to 999 acres       | 15                        | 23        |
| 1,000 acres or more    | 8                         | 8         |
| Total                  | 100                       | 100       |
| <b>Farm Sales</b>      |                           |           |
| < \$10,000             | 78                        | 56        |
| \$10,000 to \$49,999   | 14                        | 19        |
| \$50,000 to \$249,999  | 5                         | 13        |
| \$250,000 to \$999,999 | 2                         | 8         |
| \$1,000,000 or more    | 1                         | 4         |
| Total                  | 100                       | 100       |

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

## Top Commodities

More than two thirds of American Indian-operated farms specialized in livestock production in 2012 (compared with 50 percent of all farms), including beef, sheep and goat, and combination livestock farming. (Table 4)

Table 4  
Top Farms by Commodity Specialization<sup>a</sup>, 2012 (American Indian principal operator)

|                                  | No. of Farms | % of Farms |
|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Beef cattle                      | 13,712       | 36         |
| Combination animals <sup>b</sup> | 6,443        | 17         |
| Sheep and goats                  | 5,926        | 16         |
| Combination crops <sup>b</sup>   | 5,752        | 15         |
| Vegetables                       | 2,087        | 6          |

<sup>a</sup>More than half of a farm's sales come from that commodity.

<sup>b</sup>Farms with no single majority commodity and farms specializing in miscellaneous commodities.

Source: USDA NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

To learn more about American Indian farms and farmers, the 2012 Census of Agriculture, and how to access national, state, and county data, go to:

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