

LOUISIANA FARM LABOR



Producers with Military Service: 2022 Census of Agriculture Highlights

PUB.#49

Report in a Snapshot

The 2022 Census of Agriculture (AgCensus) is out, and it has shed some light on the changing profile of agricultural operators. In this report, we present information for producers with military service and discuss changes between the 2017 and 2022 data.

- 1) **Primary Occupation:** While 46% of producers consider farming their main job, a significant 54% are involved in other professions, balancing farming with additional responsibilities.
- 2) **Off-farm Occupation:** Approximately one-third of these producers spend over 200 days a year in off-farm employment, emphasizing the dual roles many balance alongside their agricultural endeavors.
- 3) **Experience:** The range of experience is broad among producers: 10% have been farming for 5 years or less, 16% for 6 to 10 years, and a substantial 74% boast over a decade of involvement in farming. This diversity suggests a blend of fresh perspectives and deep-rooted expertise within the community.
- 4) **Decision Making:** Day-to-day decisions are the most common, engaging 23% of producers, while strategic areas such as marketing, which now includes 14% of producers, and estate planning, at 12%, highlight shifting priorities and the evolving nature of farm management.

Visit the Farm Labor website to find publications in the series for selected subgroups including young producers, female producers and new and beginning producers.

Producer Characteristics

The 2022 AgCensus reported 3,791 producers with military service, **20.21% lower than the 2017** AgCensus reporting 4,751 producers with military service. Most of these producers are male (95%) and white (88%).

Age

For this group we expect to see a concentration in older cohorts considering their past profession, particularly producers older than 65 years of age. The strong presence of these senior producers underscores their dedication and ongoing commitment to the agricultural sector. However, we cannot say if this is a trend that is triggered only by passion towards agriculture and to what extent USDA programming has assisted in addressing concerns and challenges for the specific population of producers.

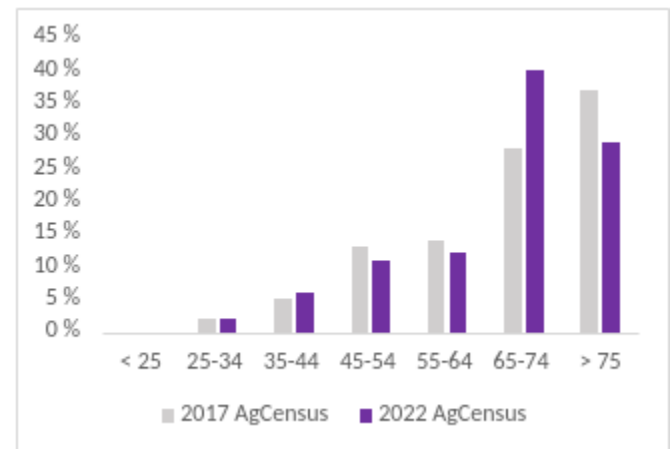


Figure 1: Military Producers Age Classification

Occupation & Experience

As with other groups, producers with military service do not report farming as their primary occupation; only 46% count farming as their primary occupation, while 54% are employed in other fields. Notably, one-third of these producers work off-farm for more than 200 days a year, indicating significant dual commitments.

In terms of farming experience, 10% have been in the field for 5 years or less, 16% for 6 to 10 years, and most 74% have over a decade of experience. This paints a picture of a community where seasoned producers and newcomers alike contribute to farming.

Decision Making

The 2022 AgCensus reveals that **most producers prioritize day-to-day operations, with 91% engagement, a total of 5 percentage points higher than the state average.** Notably, this year marks the first time the AgCensus has captured data on marketing decisions, in which 55% of producers with military service are involved. Meanwhile, we see a drop in involvement in all other categories.

These statistics reflect the changing dynamics and varied priorities on how producers with military service manage their operations. However, we need to note here that Louisiana had a very low response rate, close to 41%, which leaves room for well-undocumented patterns in decision making.

Table 1. Involvement in Decision Making

Decision Making	2022	2017
Day-to-day decisions	91%	91%
Land use and/or crop decisions	73%	78%
Livestock decisions	65%	70%
Marketing decisions	55%	NA
Record Keeping/ Financial Management	70%	74%
Estate planning	50%	55%

Facts for Operations

The 2022 AgCensus reported 3,619 farms with producers with military service with 626,784 acres of land. These numbers are low by 20.25% and 34.70%, respectively, from 2017.

Farm Composition

The 2022 AgCensus did not clarify the role of the producers with military service, for example if they were the primary operators (decision-maker). Looking closely to the composition of farm operators we notice the following:

- 1. The number of farms reporting one producer, hence **farms managed by a producer with military service equal 1,453 down from 1,954 in 2017.**
- 2. **If they are not working alone, producers with military service tend to work with another producer.**

Farm Size

Table 2 presents information on the concentration of producers with military service based on farm size.

Table 2. Classification of Operations based on Acreage

Farm Size		
1-9 acres	14%	13%
10-49 acres	39%	35%
50-179 acres	29%	31%
180- 499 acres	12%	12%
500 or more acres	6%	8%

We observe the highest concentration of producers with military service in farms between 10-49 acres, 35% in 2017 to 39% in 2022. In the second place we have farms sized between 50-179 acres.

Production

Key production specializations for producers with military service in Louisiana include beef cattle ranching, sugarcane, aquaculture, poultry and egg production.

Table 3. Top 5 Production Operations

Production Specialty	2022	2017
Total	3,619	4,538
Beef ranching	1,321 (36%)	1,923 (42%)
Other crop farming	877 (23%)	1,091 (22%)
Sugarcane farming	862 (22%)	1,080 (22%)
Aquaculture	645 (17%)	675 (14%)
Poultry and egg production	165 (4%)	113 (2%)

Ownership and Tenure

Land in farms with producers with military service is predominately owned. A total of 94% of the farms (3,388), own land which amounts to 402,010 acres. Data on tenure indicates that 85% of these farms are fully owned and the land owned amounts to 309,046 acres. A significant portion of producers with military service relies on renting or leasing; about 21% of the farms reported are rented or leased.

Market Value & Economic Class

The recent USDA report revealed no significant shifts in the economic classes of producers with military service from 2017 to 2022. Producers with military service are concentrated in the less than \$1,000 economic class (about 31%).

A decrease in farm operations in each economic class is observed but we also have a decrease reported in the total number of farms with producers with military service. Again, we note here the low response rate the 2022 AgCensus received.

Table 4. Economic Class for Agricultural Operations

Economic Class	2022	
Less than \$1,000	31%	30%
\$1,000- \$2,499	14%	14%
\$2,500 -\$4,999	11%	13%
\$5,000 -\$9,999	13%	14%
\$10,000- \$24,999	13%	12%
\$25,000- \$49,000	6%	6%
\$50,000 or more	12%	11%

Glossary:

Farm with sales of less than \$1,000. This category includes farms with sales of less than \$1,000 but having the potential for sales of \$1,000 or more. Some of these farms had no sales in the census year. It provides information on all report form items for farms that normally would be expected to sell agricultural products of \$1,000 or more. (Appendix B, Ag Census 2022).

Farms by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The NAICS classifies economic activities. For the 2022 census, all agricultural production establishments (farms, ranches, nurseries, greenhouses, etc.) were classified by type of activity or activities using the NAICS code. The 2022 census is the sixth census to use NAICS. Censuses prior to the 1997 census used the old Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system to classify farms.

For more information:

Ag Census (2017). Census of Agriculture. "Full Report"
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/#full_report

Ag Census (2022). Census of Agriculture. "Full Report"
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/index.php#full_report

Authors:

Maria Bampasidou, Associate Professor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, mbampasidou@agcenter.lsu.edu
Juna Dylce, Research Associate, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness

This work was partially supported from the Louisiana Board of Regents #LEQSF(2023-26)-RD-A-01



For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our website:

LSUAgCenter.com

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.