

# LOUISIANA FARM LABOR



## Female Producers: 2022 Census of Agriculture Highlights

PUB.#46

### Report in a Snapshot

Women involvement in agricultural operations has been more accurately documented in the latest two Census of Agriculture (AgCensus) as they collected information for up to four producers. Based on 2022 data, in the US, there exist **1,224,726 female producers accounting for one third (36%) of total farmers**. In Louisiana we observe a similar pattern. Female producers total 15,160 accounting for 35% of producers. This report provides highlights of the 2022 AgCensus and key indicators documenting changes since 2017. Below are some highlights.

- 1) **Occupation & Experience:** Farming as primary occupation is reported by 33% of female producers. New and beginning farmers account for 37% of female producers in Louisiana.
- 2) **Production Emphasis:** Highest concentration of female producers in farms between 10 and 49 acres. Beef ranching, sugarcane farming and aquaculture operations among the top 5 with highest concentration of female producers.
- 3) **Primary Operators:** The number of farms reporting one producer, hence farms with female primary operators decreased from 2,180 to 1,611 (a 26% decrease). Most of the operations with female producers report two producers, one male and one female.
- 4) **Decision Making:** Most of the female producers focus on day-to-day decisions (22%), followed by record keeping and financial management (20%).
- 5) **Market Value & Economic Class:** The less than \$1,000 economic class reports the highest number of female producers. But female producer numbers have increased in farms reporting \$50,000 or more.

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

### Producer Characteristics

The 2022 AgCensus reported 15,160 female producers, a **1.21% decrease from 2017** AgCensus (15,345 producers). Here it is important to note that the level of response in Louisiana was 41% so this decrease should be treated with caution as some of the involvement of women in agriculture may be underrepresented.

#### Age

An analysis of the age distribution (Figure 1) reveals a **small proportion of female producers under 25 years old (2%)**, which indicates a relatively small influx of young female producers to agriculture the last ten years. Younger farmers often struggle with access to credit and land and perhaps this is one of the challenges for young female producers. The 2022 AgCensus reported **increased numbers in the 45-54 & 55-64** age groups but **fewer female producers over 65**. A reversed pattern when we account for all Louisiana producers (please refer to Louisiana: Highlights from the 2022 Census of Agriculture publication).

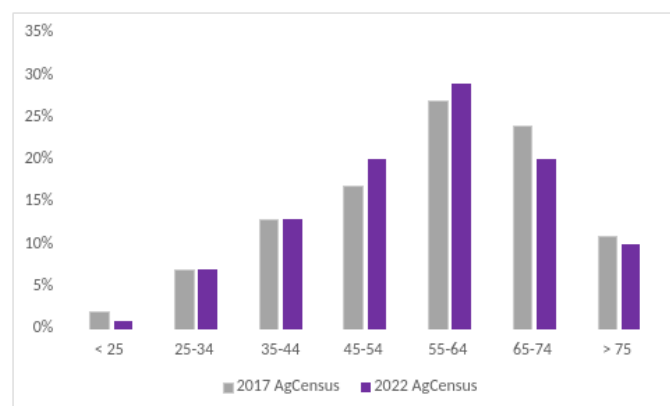


Figure 1: Female Producers Age Classification

Also, female producers are younger on average than male producers; 57.1 vs 58.6 years of age for male producers.

Experience

Regarding farming experience, **37% of female producers are characterized as new and beginning farmers** with less than 10 years of farming experience. The high percentage (63%) of female producers with 11 years or more of experience signifies a high involvement in farm operations.

Occupation & Place of residence

Out of 15,160 female producers, about **67% report farming not to be their primary occupation**. A total of 9,375 producers report working off-farm with 62% of them working off-farm for more than 200 days (about 6 and a half months) a year.

More than two thirds of female producers (70%) vs 63% of male producers reside on farm.

Decision Making

The 2022 AgCensus continued the collection of data on producer's involvement in decision making for six categories (Table 1). **Most of the female producers focus on day-to-day decisions (77%), followed by record keeping and financial management (71%)**. For the first time the Census collected information on marketing, with 47% of female producers reporting involvement. This group has the least involvement in marketing from other populations (please see young and N&B producer respective publications).

Table 1. Involvement in Decision Making

Decision Making	2022	2017
Day-to-day decisions	77%	77%
Land use and/or crop decisions	56%	57%
Livestock decisions	53%	57%
Marketing decisions	47%	NA
Record Keeping/ Financial Management	71%	73%
Estate planning	44%	46%

Last is estate and succession planning, where we observe a decrease from 46% to 44% in female producer involvement. **Stressing the fact that succession planning is considered a long-term and multigenerational decision the inclusion of female producers can have beneficial impacts**, particularly in situations where the farm is fully or partially owned.

Facts for Operations

The 2022 AgCensus reported 13,717 farms with female producers, accounting for 3,558,715 acres of land. Though the number of farms with female producers decreased by 3.64%, land in farms reported increased by 19.92%, respectively, from 2017, showcasing a degree of consolidation in the ag sector.

Farm Composition

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

- 1. The number of farms reporting one producer, hence **farms with female primary operators** decreased from 2,180 to 1,611 **(26% decrease)**.
- 2. **Most of the operations with female producers report two producers**, one male and one female.
- 3. Farms reporting more than five female producers increased significantly but **one female producer is the most frequent case (90%)**.

Farm Size

The highest concentration of female producers (36% in both 2022 and 2017) is reported in farms ranging between 10 to 49 acres. We observe fewer female producers in small farm operations (1-9 acres) a drop from 17% to 15%; a slight increase from 11% to 12% in farms sized 50-179 acres; a slight decrease in the category of farms sized 180-499 acres, from 28% to 27%. However, the largest increase in female producer numbers is seen in farms of 500 acres or more, which rose from 8% to 10%.

Production

**Key production specializations** with female producers in Louisiana include beef cattle ranching, sugarcane, aquaculture, poultry and egg production (Table 2).

Table 2. Top 5 Production Specialties by NAICS Classification

Production Specialty	2022	2017
All farms	13,717	14,235
Beef ranching	4,837 (35%)	5,532 (39%)
Sugarcane farming	2,644 (19%)	2,968 (21%)
Aquaculture	2,434 (18%)	2,503 (18%)
Oilseed and grain farming	900 (7%)	764 (5%)
Poultry and egg production	778 (6%)	454 (3%)

Ownership and Tenure

Ownership and tenure offer important insights into the financial health of the ag sector. Figure 2 presents respective information on farms with female producers.

The notable difference in acreage between full ownership and part ownership suggests a potential disparity in landholding. Another option is renting or leasing farmland. A total of 3,635 **farms are rented or leased, accounting for 22%** of total

acreage, adding to the documentation that access to land continues to be one of the main problems producers face.

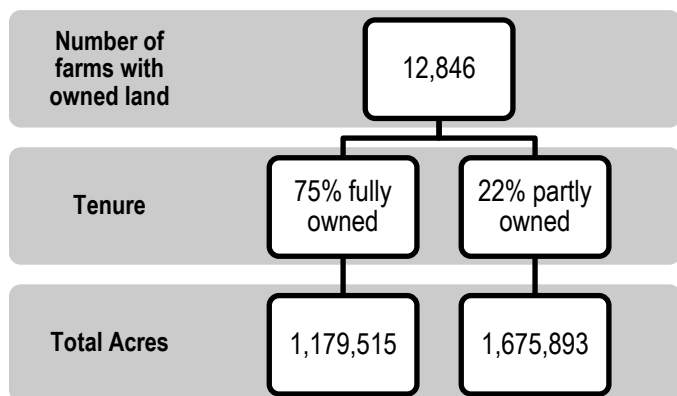


Figure 2: Ownership and Tenure Information

### Economic Class & Market Value

Turning our attention to economic activities (Table 3), we see a higher concentration of female producers in farms with less than \$1,000. But female producer numbers have increased in farms reporting \$50,000 or more.

Table 3. Economic Class for Agricultural Operations

Economic Class	2022	2017
Less than \$1,000	27%	31%
\$1,000- \$2,499	13%	13%
\$2,500 -\$4,999	12%	13%
\$5,000 -\$9,999	14%	13%
\$10,000- \$24,999	12%	12%
\$25,000- \$49,000	7%	6%
\$50,000 or more	16%	12%

The 13,717 farms reporting female producers made 1,963,162 (in \$1,000) in market value of products sold; a 52% increase since 2017.

Moreover, the dependence on government payments has decreased from 70,861 (in \$1,000) in 2017 to 57,232 (in \$1,000) in 2022.

## 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](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](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/index.php#full_report)

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