

# LOUISIANA FARM LABOR



## New and Beginning Producers: 2022 Census of Agriculture Highlights

PUB.#47

### Report in a Snapshot

New and Beginning (N&B) producers have received particular attention in the last years with the ageing of the US farmer. N&B producers are defined as “producers operating on any operation for 10 years or less.” In this report, we present information for this group and discuss changes between the 2017 and the 2022 data. Below are some highlights:

- 1) **Farm Size:** Highest concentration of N&B producers in farms between 10-49 acres.
- 2) **Tenure:** Operations with N&B producers have a high percentage (74%) of **tenure**, yet a significant portion of the land (54%) is leased or rented, emphasizing challenges in **land access**.
- 3) **Off-farm Employment:** High percentage (63%) claiming **off-farm employment** more than 200 days a year.
- 4) **Economic Class:** There's a **shift towards a higher concentration of N&B producers** in farms making \$50,000 or more.

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

### Producer Characteristics

The 2022 AgCensus reported 13,778 N&B producers, a 5.20% increase from 2017 AgCensus (13,097 N&B producers). Most of the N&B producers are male (59%) and white (92%).

#### Age

An analysis of the age distribution of N&B producers is shown in Figure 1. Notably, 5% of these producers are under 25 years old, indicating a **gradual increase** in young entrants to agriculture—a positive trend given historical declines in this demographic. Additionally, there's a rise in individuals over 65 years old taking up farming, often returning after retirement or joining family operations. Both age groups face unique challenges: **younger farmers struggle with access to credit**

and land, while older farmers may encounter issues with succession planning.

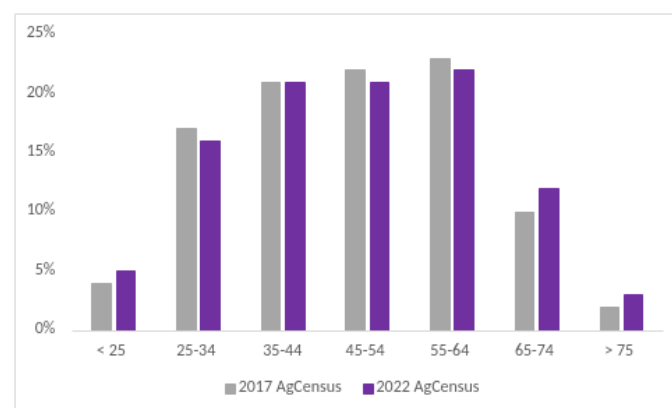


Figure 1: New and Beginning Farmer Age Classification

#### Occupation & Experience

As with many N&B producers we observe a higher percentage reporting farming **not to be their primary occupation (72%)**. A total of 10,578 N&B producers report working off-farm with (63%) for more than 200 days (about 6 and a half months) a year.

According to data collected from the 2022 AgCensus, there's a nearly even distribution among N&B producers in terms of their farming experience. Specifically, 49% of these producers have been operating a farm for less than 5 years, while 51% have been involved in farming for a period of 6 to 10 years. This information highlights the diversity of experience levels within the N&B producer category.

#### 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 producers focus on day-to-day decisions (84%), followed by record keeping and financial management (66%). For the first time the Census collected information on **marketing, with (50%) of producers reporting involvement**. Last is the estate and succession planning where we observe an even lower percentage (38% vs 42%) from the 2017 AgCensus.

Table 1. Involvement in Decision Making

Decision Making	2022	2017
Day-to-day decisions	84%	84%
Land use and/or crop decisions	66%	68%
Livestock decisions	61%	65%
Marketing decisions	50%	NA
Record Keeping/ Financial Management	66%	69%
Estate planning	38%	42%

Facts for Operations

The 2022 AgCensus reported 8,874 farms with N&B producers, accounting for 1,768,347 acres of land. These numbers are high by 1.79% and 18.84%, respectively, from 2017.

Farm Composition

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

- 1. The number of farms reporting one producer, hence **farms with N&B primary operators** decreased from 3,213 to 2,975 (7% decrease).
- 2. **Most of the operations with N&B producers report two producers.**
- 3. The number of farms reporting more than 3 N&B producers increased since 2017, and these producers are more likely to be male.

The fact that we see a higher number of N&B producers being documented in operations with more than 2 producers is promising as it can be associated with 1) an interest in farming, 2) inclusion of younger members in ag operations, 3) mentorship and higher involvement in decision-making. However, this population is more likely to need additional support to ensure its success.

Farm Size

We observe the **highest concentration of N&B producers in farms sized between 10-49 acres (37%) and 50-179 acres (25%)**. Slight decrease in the numbers of N&B producers in smaller sized farms and slight increase in larger farms (180 acres+). With such information we cannot tell if these producers are operating their own farms or suggest an involvement of a younger cohort in family operations.

Table 2. Classification of Operations based on Acreage

Farm Size	2022	2017
1-9 acres	19%	20%
10-49 acres	37%	38%
50-179 acres	25%	25%
180- 499 acres	10%	9%
500 or more acres	9%	8%
Total acres	1,768,347	1,488,019

Production

**Key production specializations** where we see a higher concentration of N&B producers include livestock, aquaculture, and sugarcane (Table 3). Some other noticeable changes include poultry and egg production operations which reported more than double involvement of N&B producers within five years, and a reported 44% decrease in N&B producers that work in hog and pig operations.

Table 3. Top 5 Production Specialties by NAICS Classification

Production Specialty	2022	2017
Beef cattle ranching	3,061 (34%)	3,612 (41%)
Sugarcane farming	1,586 (18%)	1,651 (19%)
Aquaculture	1,430 (16%)	1,364 (16%)
Oilseed and grain farming	639 (7%)	477 (5%)
Poultry and egg production	634 (7%)	253 (3%)

Ownership and Tenure

**A total of 7,844 (74% of) farms with N&B producers own land in farms.** Figure 2 presents respective information on farms with N&B producers.

The slight difference in acreage between full ownership and part ownership suggests a potential challenge in landholding.

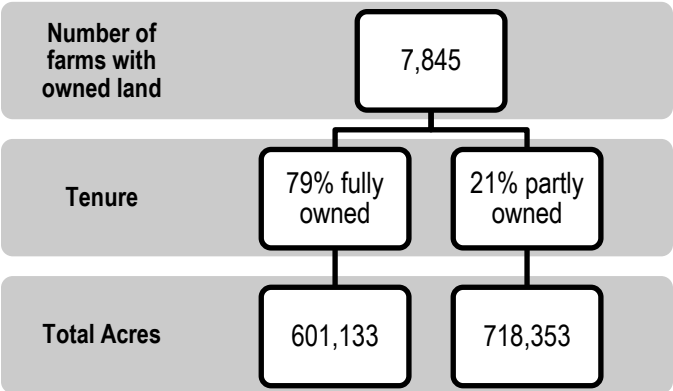


Figure 2: Ownership and Tenure Information

A significant portion, however, relies on renting or leasing. A total of 2,691 farms with N&B producers rented or leased land,

amounting to 959,701 acres. The total leased or rented land exceeds the fully owned or the partly owned land. This underscores land access as a persistent challenge for this group which may rely on renting or leasing to continue their farming and ranching activities.

#### *Market Value & Economic Class*

USDA reports on economic activities and operations reporting that operations with N&B producers made 1,050,658 (in \$1,000) in market value of products sold and received 30,342 (in \$1,000) in government payments.

Turning our attention to economic activities (Table 4), we see a higher concentration of N&B producers in farms with less than \$1,000. Also, N&B producer numbers have increased in farms reporting \$50,000 or more.

**Table 4. Economic Class for Agricultural Operations**

Economic Class	2022	2017
Less than \$1,000	26%	35%
\$1,000- \$2,499	16%	14%
\$2,500 -\$4,999	12%	13%
\$5,000 -\$9,999	14%	12%
\$10,000- \$24,999	11%	11%
\$25,000- \$49,000	6%	5%
\$50,000 or more	15%	10%

The AgCensus collected information on Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans and federal farm program payments. In 2022 the amount of **CCC loans doubled** (6,029 vs 2,805 in \$1,000), an amount owned by 19 in 2022 vs 29 operations in 2017. Fewer farms in 2022 report conservation reserve payments and other federal farm program payments.

## Glossary:

**Commodity Credit Corporation loans.** This category includes nonrecourse marketing loans for wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, oats, cotton, rice, soybeans, Austrian winter peas, honey, dry edible peas, lentils, chickpeas, peanuts, sunflower seed, flaxseed, canola and other rapeseed, safflower, mustard seed, crambe, sesame seed, wool and mohair. (Appendix B, Ag Census 2022).

**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)

Authors:

Maria Bampasidou, Associate Professor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, [mbampasidou@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto: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](https://LSUAgCenter.com)**

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