



# Louisiana Commodities and Conservation Newsletter

## May 2019; Issue-1

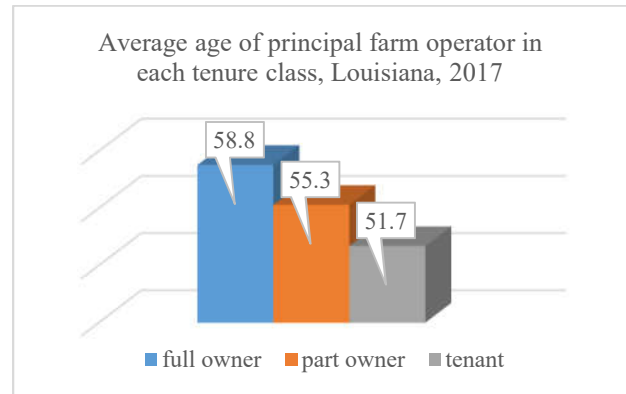
### Conservation payment rates see slight changes

Popular soil health practices, namely cover crops and conservation tillage, NRCS-EQIP cost-share payment rates show a small change in the 2018 Farm Bill. The payment amounts (unit costs) have been slightly lower for cover crops and slightly higher for conservation tillage practices. The 2019 payment rates for the practices are shown in the table.

Practice	NRCS practice code	Payment FY2018-19
Cover crops, single species	340	\$48.60/ac
Cover crops, multiple species	340	\$54.60/ac
Reduced tillage	345	\$17.45/ac
Tillage > 20in	324	\$15.29/ac
No-Till/Strip-Till	329	\$14.78/ac

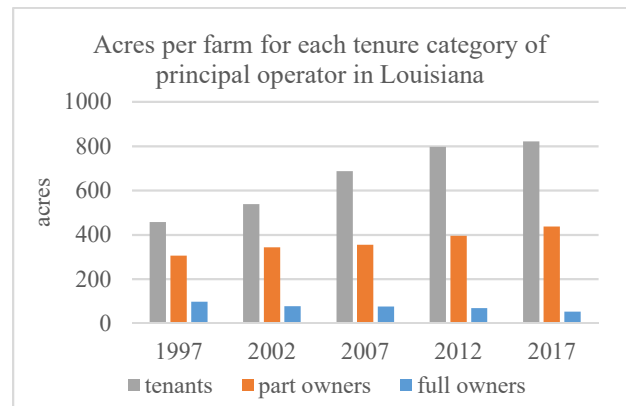
### Louisiana’s aging farmer population

In the 2017 census, the average age of Louisiana principal farm operators is 58.4 years, slightly lower than the average age in 2002 at 58.6 years. This slight decrease can be a result of older individuals leaving agriculture. Moreover, under each tenure category, not surprisingly, the full-owners represent the oldest group at 58.8 years, followed by part-owners at 55.3 years, and tenant farmers at 51.7 years. The national average age of principal farm operators is 58.6 years in 2017.



### Tenant farm Size continues to grow

The number of acres per farm under each tenure category shows that tenant farmers have more acres per farm and the size of the farms are on an upward trend. Their farm size increased from 450 acres in 1997 to 820 acres in 2017, almost doubling in twenty years.

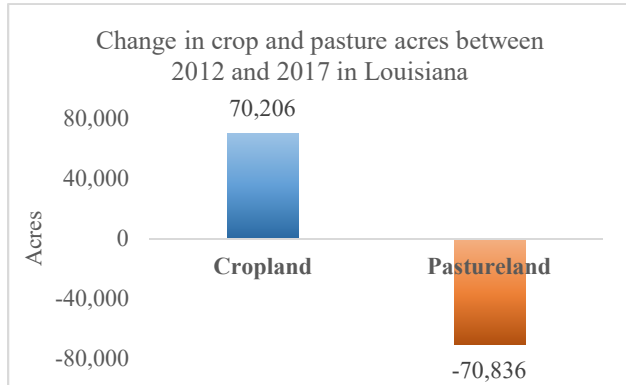


### WOTUS

EPA published a new definition on Feb 14, 2019. Comment period ended April 15, 2019. Updates can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule>

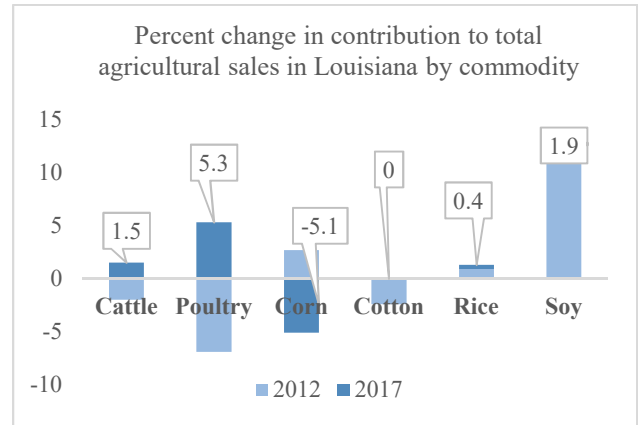
## Louisiana’s changing agricultural landscape

High crop prices that existed in the early part of the decade has played a role in changing the landscape of Louisiana agriculture. Crop commodities have gained 70,206 acres and production share while pasture operations lost about 70,836 of acres in the same period.



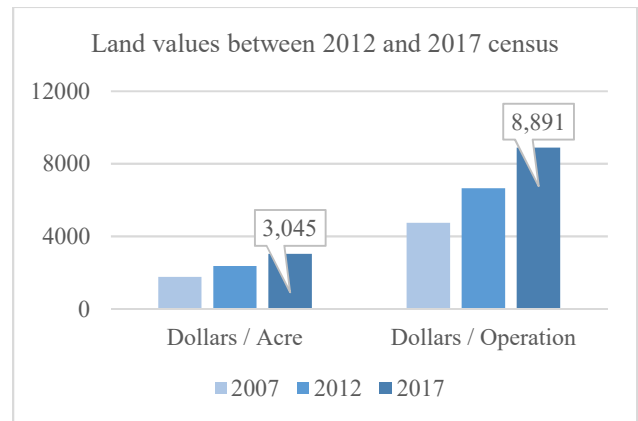
## Shifting composition of agricultural commodities in Louisiana

The contribution of commodities to total agricultural sales has changed in the state since the previous census. Poultry remains one of the leading commodities in the state in terms of total sales. Its share increased by 5.3% from 2012. Rice and corn have been outpaced by soybeans which, along with poultry, is tied for the most valuable agricultural commodity produced in Louisiana according to 2017 agricultural census. Although increased by only 1.9% in total sales from 2012, its share has grown to 20.4% of total sales since 2007. Cotton and corn shares declined slightly in the same period. Rice increased by a mere 0.4% from 2012, whereas corn share in total sales decreased by 5.1% compared to 2012.



## Land values of agricultural operations

Land values have followed the increasing trend in cropland acres observed in Louisiana. Farmland values increased to \$3,045/acre in Louisiana in 2017. The value per operation has increased at a much quicker pace than the dollar per acre indicating a decrease in the number of farm operations that has accompanied the increase in crop acres, similar to the national trend. Farm operations are valued at approx. \$890,000/farm operation.



Note: The \$/operation values should be multiplied by 100 for actual values.



Questions and comments:

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