



# Oregon State University Extension Service

## 2017 Census of Agriculture Highlights: Oregon's Farm Producers

This article presents Oregon Census of Agriculture data to complement national data compiled by the USDA in their [Farm Producers Highlights](#). New census questions shed new light on how multiple producers on one farm contribute to that farm's operations. The 2017 Census also collected data on young producers, new and beginning producers, and (for the first time) those with military service.

### Total Oregon Producers

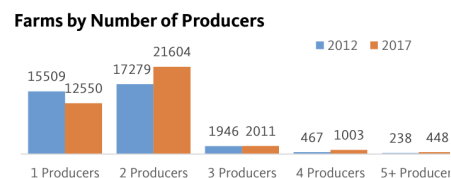
- 67,595 producers
- 37,616 farms

In 2017, the total number of Oregon producers was 67,595, a 16.5 percent increase over 2012.

### Farms by Number of Producers (Figure 1)

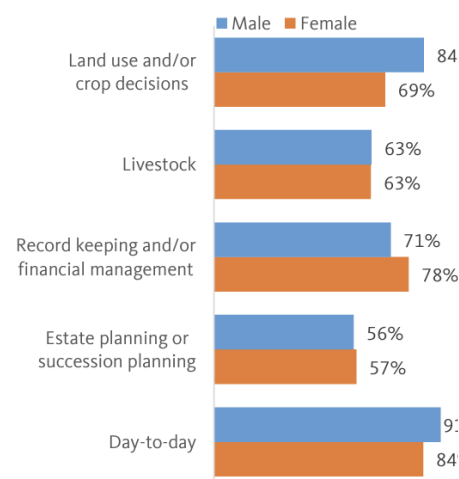
The number of farms with only one producer declined; all categories of farms with two or more producers increased. In 2017, 66.6 percent of farms reported more than one person as producer. In 2012, 56.2 percent of farms reported more than one person as producer.

### About Oregon Producers



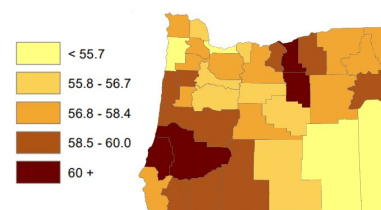
**Figure 1.** Farms by Number of Producers.

Credit: Shannon Caplan



**Figure 2.** Farm Decision Making by Type of Decision and Sex of Producer (percent of category)

Credit: Shannon Caplan



**Figure 3.** Average Age Continues to Rise

Credit: Shannon Caplan

## Sex

- **Male:** 56%
- **Female:** 44%

Male producers increased 7.0 percent between 2012 and 2017, while female producers increased 31.2 percent, underscoring the effectiveness of the attempt to better represent all people involved in farm decision making.

Table 1. Total producer increase from 2012 to 2017

	2012	2017	% Change
<b>All</b>	58,000	67,600	+16.5%
<b>Male</b>	35,200	37,700	+7.0%
<b>Female</b>	22,800	29,900	+31.2%

## Farm Decision Making by Type of Decision and Sex of Producer (Figure 2)

Male producers had higher rates of involvement in land use and/or crop decisions than female producers. While Female producers were most involved in day-to-day decisions and record keeping and/or financial management.

## Age

- **Age < 35:** 7
- **Age 35-64:** 57
- **Age 65+:** 36

## Average Age Continues to Rise (Figure 3)

The average age of Oregon farm producers in 2017 was **57.9 years**, up 0.5 from 2012.

## Farming Experience

- **10 years or less farming:** 28
- **11 years or more farming:** 72

Producers tend to be experienced; they had been on their

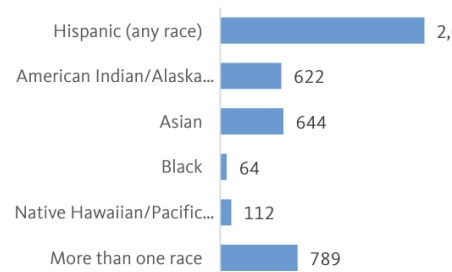


Figure 4. Producers by Ethnicity and Race

Credit: Shannon Caplan

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current farm an average of **19.5 years**.

## Beginning Producers

Beginning farmers have ten or fewer years of farming experience. They were 28 percent of Oregon producers in 2017. Their average age was 46.6, and their farms were smaller than average in both acres and sales.

Counties by percent of producers with ten or fewer years of experience

- **Multnomah:** 40%
- **Deschutes:** 37%
- **Josephine:** 36%
- **Hood River:** 34%
- **Columbia:** 32%
- **Jackson:** 32%
- **Grant:** 31%
- **Wasco:** 31%
- **Clatsop:** 31%
- **Washington:** 31%

## Working and Living Location

- **Lived on their farm:** 86%
- **Did not work off farm:** 38%
- **Worked off farm 1 to 199 days:** 24%
- **Worked off farm 200+ days:** 38%

## Primary Occupation

- **Primary occupation farming:** 41
- **Primary occupation other than farming:** 59

## Military Service

- **With military service:** 12%

In Oregon, 8,227 (12 percent) of producers had served or were serving in the U.S. military in 2017. They are largely male (93 percent) and almost a decade older than producers as a

whole.

Eighty percent have farmed eleven years or more, and farming is the primary occupation for 51 percent of them.

Average age of producers with military service: 67.3 years

## Ethnicity and Race (Figure 4)

- **Hispanic (any race):** 3
- **American Indian/Alaska Native:** 0.9
- **Asian:** 1.0
- **Black:** 0.1
- **Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander:** 0.2
- **White:** 96.7
- **More than one race:** 1.2

The Census of Agriculture asked separate questions for ethnicity and race. In Oregon, 65,364 producers (96.7%) are white.

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*OSU Extension's [Small Farms Program](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms) (<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms>), [Department of Applied Economics](https://appliedecon.oregonstate.edu/) (<https://appliedecon.oregonstate.edu/>), and the [Rural Communities Explorer](https://oregonexplorer.info/topics/rural-communities?ptopic=140) (<https://oregonexplorer.info/topics/rural-communities?ptopic=140>) are collaborating with the [Oregon Community Food System Network](http://ocfsn.net/) (<http://ocfsn.net/>) to analyze food systems data, including the 2017 Census of Agriculture.*

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