

Farms Producing Crop and Livestock Products

Farms producing crops declined by 11 percent between 1992-97 to 18,245 farms, while livestock farms declined by 3 percent to 29,136 farms (Table 5)¹. There were 1,332 fewer farms (-20 percent) producing any type of grains in 1997 compared to 1992. In 1997, there were 18 percent fewer farms that produced corn, 18 percent fewer farms that produced wheat, and 15 percent fewer farms that produced soybeans than in 1992. Tobacco farms suffered a very large decline from 1992-97, falling 2,558 farms (-30 percent). Farms producing vegetables, melons, and sweet corn declined by 206 farms (-17 percent). Farms producing fruits, nuts, or berries declined by 224 farms (-23 percent). Nursery/greenhouse farms increased by 652 farms (64 percent) from 1992-97. Among major commodity groups, only the number of farms in the latter commodity group and farms producing cotton increased from 1992-97. There were 298 additional farms that produced cotton in 1997, an increase of 211 percent.

As noted, the number of livestock farms decreased proportionately less than the number of crop farms, falling by 862 farms from 1992-97. The number of farms producing cattle and calves fell by 567 farms (-2 percent). The number of farms producing dairy products fell by 24 percent from 1992-97. A total of 1,296 farms produced dairy products in 1997, compared to 1,706 farms in 1992. There were 1,775 farms producing poultry in Virginia in 1997, an increase of only four farms since 1992. Farms producing hogs and pigs decreased dramatically from 1992-97. From 1,596 farms in 1992, only 823 farms remained in 1997, representing a decline of 48 percent.

Central Extension District has nearly 1/4 of Virginia grain farms, 1/3 of tobacco farms, and nearly 1/4 of all cattle farms. Grain and cattle production are spread throughout the extension district. Most farms producing tobacco are in the West Piedmont and Southside Planning Districts. The latter district alone had 44 percent of tobacco farms in the extension district and 15 percent of all Virginia tobacco farms.

Northeast Extension District is very specialized in grain production. The district has 18 percent of the state's grain farms (the only commodity group of which it has a sizable state percentage). Grain production is spread throughout the district except for the urban counties of James City and York. The district has 13 percent of the state's nursery and greenhouse farms, particularly concentrated in the counties surrounding the city of Richmond.

¹Many farms produce both crops and livestock, so crop plus livestock farms will exceed the total number of farms in Virginia. For example, the number of farms in the tobacco column indicates all farms that produced any amount of tobacco during 1997.

Northern District has 13 percent of Virginia grain farms, 28 percent of fruit farms, 12 percent of vegetable farms, 23 percent of nursery/greenhouse farms, 16 percent of cattle farms, and 16 percent of hog farms. The Rappahanock-Rapidan Planning District has 7 percent and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District has 5 percent of all Virginia cattle farms. Together, these two planning districts also have 20 percent of all Virginia fruit farms and 12 percent of all Virginia nursery/greenhouse farms.

Northwest District has 23 percent of Virginia fruit farms, 18 percent of nursery/greenhouse farms, 22 percent of cattle farms, 36 percent of dairy farms, 57 percent of poultry farms, and 25 percent of hog farms. Rockingham and Augusta counties together have over 9 percent of state beef cattle farms, 28 percent of dairy farms, and 39 percent of poultry farms. Although Virginia dairy farms declined by 24 percent between 1992-97, Rockingham County lost only 15 dairy farms and has even gained a few poultry farms. The Fifth Planning District has primarily cattle farms. Approximately 73 percent of all farms in Northwest District raise cattle.

The Southeast District has 24 percent of grain farms, 20 percent of hog farms, 22 percent of vegetable farms, and all the peanut farms. The number of farms raising peanuts fell by 25 percent from 1992-97. The number of farms producing grains decreased by 19 percent in Southeast District, about the same percentage as in the rest of the state.

The Southwest District is particularly prominent in cattle production, having one-third of all such Virginia farms. The district also has significant proportions of Virginia farms producing tobacco (65 percent), fruits (19 percent), greenhouse/nursery (22 percent), and dairy (22 percent). Counties with large losses in the number of tobacco farms were Lee (-34 percent), Scott (-30 percent), Russell (-21 percent), and Washington (-33 percent). The district has two prominent dairy counties, Washington and Wythe, which lost 23 percent and 31 percent of dairy farms, respectively. The district has a rapidly growing number of nursery/greenhouse farms, reflecting Christmas tree production as part of this commodity group. Nursery/greenhouse farm numbers increased most substantially in Grayson (+463 percent) and Floyd (+74 percent).

Extension District	Grains	Tobacco	Veg. & Melons	Fruits, Nuts & Berries	Nursery/ Greenhouse	Beef Cattle	Dairy	Poultry & Eggs	Hogs
Central	1,244	1,924	144	97	257	6,071	272	255	159
Northeast	960	11	188	76	215	904	35	74	68
Northern	657	15	168	210	386	4,156	140	198	133
Northwest	862	1	122	173	306	5,844	462	1,018	203
Southeast	1,269	122	223	55	138	570	13	135	165
Southwest	210	3,793	163	140	369	8,805	374	95	95
Virginia	5,202	5,866	1,008	751	1,671	26,350	1,296	1,775	823