

A recent article released by the Texas Farm Bureau discussed the 2022 Ag Census available at this link:

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

The following is taken from that 2/21/24 article:

<https://texasfarmbureau.org/ag-census-shows-texas-lost-over-17700-farms/>

Texas farmland declined by more than 1.6 million acres with a loss of over 17,700 farms, according to the latest Census of Agriculture.

As of 2022, there were 125,417,325 acres of Texas land dedicated to farming and ranching compared to 127,036,184 five years ago.

Texas lost about 887 acres per day, according to ag census data.

And the number of farms decreased from 248,416 to 230,662.

It's a trend that U.S. agriculture follows.

There are slightly more than 1.9 million farms in the U.S., down 142,000 or 7% from the previous survey.

"The downward trend of the number of farms in Texas and the U.S. has been taking place for decades," said Brant Wilbourn, Texas Farm Bureau associate director of Commodity and Regulatory Activities.

"Rising costs, weather disasters, increased regulations and lack of available labor have made agricultural production difficult to remain economically sustainable."

It's a concern U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack noted in his speech at the American Farm Bureau Federation last month.

"This survey is essentially telling us, asking us the critical question of whether as a country are we okay with losing that many farms," Vilsack said. "Are we okay with losing that much farmland, or is there a better way?"

In his speech, he encouraged farmers to consider generating additional revenue through climate-smart initiatives and bioproduct production, especially as the ag census notes many farmers rely on second incomes outside of the farm.

The average farm size, however, increased in both Texas and the U.S.

In Texas, the average farm size is 544 acres, up from 511 in 2017. In the U.S., the average farm size is 463 acres, an increase of about 23 acres.

"The increased farm size could be attributed to some consolidation within agriculture as some farmers left the industry over the last five years," Wilbourn said.

The number of new and beginning farmers has increased, which is encouraging news, Wilbourn noted. But the latest census results show the number of farmers over the age of 65 is outpacing younger farmers.

“Agriculture has endured this trend for many decades, but this data shows there’s still interest in younger generations, and we’re excited about the impact they’ll make,” Wilbourn said.

According to the ag census, the average U.S. farmer is 58.1 years old. In Texas, the average age is 59.9 years old.

There are 481,821 new and beginning farmers with five years of experience or less in the U.S. In Texas, that number is 59,856.