

Census of Agriculture

Statistics Canada conducts the Census of Agriculture and the Census of Population for Canada every five years. The Alberta statistics presented here are highlights from the latest Census of Agriculture, conducted on May 10, 2016, with comparable statistics from the 2011 Census of Agriculture.

Included is information on primary production, farm numbers, land use, operating arrangements, capital, operating expenses, and farm operators.

Since 1996, a **consensus farm** has been defined as an agricultural operation that produces at least one of the following products intended for sale: crops (hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock); poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry); animal products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or other agricultural products (Christmas trees, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products).

Farm operators are those persons responsible for the day-to-day management and/or financial decisions made in the operation of a farm or an agricultural operation. Up to three farm operators could be reported per farm, including owners, tenants or hired managers, if they are responsible for management decisions for particular aspects of the farm, such as planting and harvesting, capital purchases, and marketing.

Census Farms and Land

	2011	2016
Total Number of Farms	43,234	40,638
Number of Farms by Size		
Under 130 Acres.....	7,547	7,544
130 - 239 Acres.....	7,917	7,334
240 - 399 Acres.....	5,395	4,918
400 - 559 Acres.....	3,653	3,257
560 - 759 Acres.....	3,258	2,947
760 - 1,119 Acres.....	3,997	3,565
1,120 - 1,599 Acres.....	3,335	3,012
1,600 - 2,239 Acres.....	2,694	2,529
2,240 - 2,879 Acres.....	1,575	1,497
2,880 Acres and Over	3,863	4,035

	Acres	
Tenure of Farmland		
Owned	30,233,516	29,291,562
Total Rented, Leased, Crop Shared, or Used ⁽¹⁾	22,690,880	23,417,222
Less Total Area Used by Others	2,425,562	2,458,601
Total Area of Farms ⁽²⁾	50,498,834	50,250,183
Total Area in Crops.....	24,102,289	25,261,781
Total Area in Summerfallow.....	1,263,051	644,021
Total Area in Tame or Seeded Pasture	5,920,507	5,421,962
Total Natural Area for Pasture	15,903,273	15,861,059
All Other Land (incl. Christmas trees)	3,309,714	3,061,360
Average Farm Size	1,168	1,237

(1) Includes land used through other arrangements, such as land trading or rent free.

(2) The sum of all land tenures minus "Total Area Used by Others."

Crops

	2011	2016
	Acres	
Selected Field Crops Grown		
Grains	11,483,988	11,594,888
Total Wheat	6,703,703	7,008,542
Spring Wheat (excl. Durum)	5,971,359	5,728,527
Durum Wheat	536,018	1,101,498
Winter Wheat	196,326	178,517
Oats for Grain.....	891,580	822,185
Barley	3,610,111	3,413,856
Mixed Grains.....	201,511	242,206
Corn for Grain	17,148	40,884
Total Rye.....	59,935	67,215
Fall Rye.....	50,616	62,089
Spring Rye.....	9,319	5,126
Oilseeds	6,151,215	6,258,309
Canola	6,071,744	6,165,746
Flaxseed	69,743	78,619
Soybeans.....	3,693	6,865
Sunflowers.....	6,035	7,079
Hay and Fodder Crops	5,219,532	4,418,489
Corn for Silage.....	95,861	200,267
Alfalfa and Alfalfa Mixtures	3,657,114	3,056,701
All Other Tame Hay.....	1,466,557	1,161,521
Other Field Crops	1,184,719	2,927,527
Forage Seed	131,933	164,070
Potatoes	53,440	53,912
Mustard Seed.....	62,958	134,262
Sugar Beets	33,314	28,259
Triticale.....	40,762	50,440
Dry Field Peas.....	706,726	1,909,491
Total Dry Field Beans (incl. chickpeas).....	57,811	123,593
Lentils.....	97,775	463,500
Total Vegetable Crops (excl. greenhouse)	10,716	10,108
Total Fruit, Nut and Berry (incl. non-producing)	2,610	2,164
Total Nursery Products	9,755	7,420
Total Sod Under Cultivation	10,063	10,116
Total Irrigated Crops	1,241,411	1,517,089

	Square Feet	
Total Greenhouse Area	12,986,416	12,676,835
Total Greenhouse Area In Use	12,861,869	12,647,517
Flowers (cut, bedding plants, etc.).....	4,785,343	5,203,806
Vegetables	6,281,029	6,816,967
Other Greenhouse Products.....	1,795,497	626,744

Livestock on Farms

	2011	2016
	Number	
Total Cattle and Calves	5,104,605	5,206,999
Total Cows	1,611,085	1,656,368
Dairy Cows	80,694	80,014
Beef Cows	1,530,391	1,576,354
Bulls - One Year and Over.....	90,813	94,913
Heifers for Dairy or Beef Herd Replacement	304,760	329,339
Heifers for Slaughter or Feeding.....	684,470	573,834
Steers - One Year and Over.....	819,409	902,839
Calves - Under One Year.....	1,594,068	1,649,706
Total Pigs	1,397,534	1,462,247
Boars.....	4,543	4,941
Sows and Gilts for Breeding	108,322	121,562
All Other Pigs	1,284,669	1,335,744
Total Sheep and Lambs	202,903	195,511
Ewes	92,427	90,281
Rams.....	4,995	4,772
Lambs	105,481	100,458
Selected Livestock		
Horses and Ponies	139,410	108,702
Bison (Buffalo).....	57,483	54,907
Goats.....	28,920	27,955
Deer and Elk.....	18,630	13,065
Llamas and Alpacas.....	11,740	5,807
Colonies of Honey Bees	235,951	304,846
Gallons of Other Pollinating Bees	189,510	199,848
Total Hens and Chickens	11,956,949	14,125,401
Broilers, Roasters and Cornish	8,717,694	10,168,167
Pullets, Under 19 Weeks, for Laying	823,934	1,095,046
Laying Hens, 19 Weeks and Over	1,896,008	2,211,606
Layer and Broiler Breeders	519,313	650,582
Total Turkeys	706,902	768,529
Other Poultry ⁽³⁾	204,148	170,757
Chicks and Poultry Hatched ⁽⁴⁾	68,224,440	79,530,375

	Kilograms	
Poultry Production ⁽⁵⁾		
Broilers, Roasters and Cornish	124,468,680	136,914,883
Turkey.....	16,958,259	18,544,695

Organic Production

	Number of Farms	
Organic Products for Sale	326	424
Certified Organic Products for Sale	290	354
Transitional Organic Products for Sale.....	42	97

(3) Includes geese, ducks, roosters, ostriches, emus, pheasants, quail, wild turkeys, etc.

(4) Hatched in commercial poultry hatcheries in calendar year prior to the Census.

(5) For calendar year prior to the Census.

Land Practices and Features

	2011	2016
	% of Total Farms	
Winter Cover Crops	2.7	3.4
Windbreaks or Shelterbelts	39.3	50.7
Plowing Down Green Crops.....	5.4	3.3
Rotational Grazing	35.1	33.3
In-field Winter Grazing or Feeding	25.7	27.5
Farms Producing or Using Manure ⁽⁵⁾	56.6	25.0

	Acres	
Land Management Practices		
Commercial Fertilizer ⁽⁵⁾	17,571,243	19,389,984
Lime ⁽⁵⁾	25,757	54,217
Herbicides ⁽⁵⁾	17,658,829	19,666,602
Insecticides and Fungicides ⁽⁵⁾	4,480,268	7,041,170
Trace Minerals and Nutrients ⁽⁵⁾	–	1,962,676
Tillage Incorporating Crop Residue Into Soil	2,543,229	2,539,408
Tillage Retaining Crop Residue on Surface.....	4,477,959	4,193,223
No-till or Zero-till Seeding	12,924,625	15,176,949
Crop Residue Baled ⁽⁵⁾	2,236,814	2,761,430

Farm Operating Arrangements

	Number of Farms	
Sole Proprietorship.....	24,459	21,328
Partnership With Written Agreement	1,239	1,177
Partnership Without Written Agreement	9,708	7,838
Corporation - Family	6,821	9,287
Corporation - Non-Family	771	803
Other (institution, community pasture, etc.)	236	205

Farm Capital

	Millions of Dollars	
Total Farm Capital (market value)	95,571.9	143,927.5
Farm Machinery and Equipment	10,933.2	14,604.7
Livestock and Poultry	4,267.6	11,036.5
Land and Buildings.....	80,371.1	118,286.3
Owned.....	57,050.5	81,864.1
Rented or Leased.....	23,320.6	36,422.2

Number of Farms

	Number of Farms	
Farms Classified by Total Farm Capital		
Under \$100,000.....	361	417
\$100,000 - \$199,999	1,032	718
\$200,000 - \$349,999	3,101	1,780
\$350,000 - \$499,999	4,203	2,605
\$500,000 - \$999,999	11,966	9,461
\$1,000,000- \$1,499,999	6,459	5,567
\$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999	3,762	3,720
\$2,000,000 - \$3,499,999	5,894	5,981
\$3,500,000 and Over	6,456	10,389

(5) For calendar year prior to the Census.

2016 Census of Agriculture for Alberta

Provincial Highlights



Gross Farm Receipts ⁽⁵⁾

	2011	2016
Total Gross Farm Receipts ⁽⁶⁾	11,436.2	17,730.0

Millions of Dollars

Number of Farms

Farms Classified by Gross Farm Receipts

	2011	2016
Under \$50,000	21,620	16,953
\$50,000 - \$99,999	5,934	5,516
\$100,000 - \$249,999	7,015	7,065
\$250,000 - \$499,999	4,211	4,503
\$500,000 - \$999,999	2,494	3,356
\$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	1,175	1,909
\$2,000,000 and Over	785	1,336

Farm Business Operating Expenses ⁽⁵⁾

	2011	2016
Total Farm Operating Expenses	9,710.7	14,969.0

Millions of Dollars

Paid Agricultural Labour

	2011	2016
Total Farms Reporting Paid Labour	12,798	9,565
Year Round Paid Labour (full or part-time)	6,467	6,728
Seasonal or Temporary Paid Labour	8,687	6,093

Number of Farms

Succession Planning

	2011	2016
Total Farms Reporting a Succession Plan	—	3,440
Successor(s) - Family Member(s)	—	3,335
Successor(s) - Non-Family Member(s)	—	112

Number of Farms

Farm Direct Marketing ⁽⁵⁾

	2011	2016
Total Farms Reporting Direct Sales	—	2,062
Unprocessed Agricultural Products Sold	—	1,986
Using Farm Gate Sales, Stands, Kiosks, U-pick	—	1,761
Using Farmers' Markets	—	425
Value-added Products Sold	—	197
Using Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	—	119
Using Other Methods	—	94

Number of Farms

Use of Technology ⁽⁵⁾

	2011	2016
Use of Technologies for Farm Management	—	—
Computers/laptops for Farm Management	—	23,725
Smartphones/tablets for Farm Management	—	19,093
GPS Technology	—	13,684
Automated Steering (auto-steer)	—	10,462
GIS Mapping (e.g., soil mapping)	—	2,589

Number of Farms

(5) For calendar year prior to the Census.

(6) Excluding sales of forest products.

Types of Farms ⁽⁷⁾

	2011	2016
Classified by Gross Farm Receipts		
Dairy	485	411
Cattle (beef, incl. feedlots)	12,022	12,282
Hog	193	166
Poultry and Egg	339	373
Sheep and Goat	490	399
Other Animals	6,374	5,101
Grain and Oilseed	12,692	13,451
Soybean	4	4
Oilseed (except soybean)	5,243	3,735
Dry Pea and Bean	162	582
Wheat	2,083	2,894
Corn	9	25
Other Grain Farming	5,191	6,211
Fruit and Tree Nut	151	137
Vegetable and Melon	277	299
Greenhouse, Nursery and Floriculture	826	605
Other Crop Farming	9,385	7,414

Number of Farms

Paid Agricultural Employees

	2011	2016
Total Number of Agricultural Employees	37,852	33,498
Year Round Employees (full or part-time)	15,598	16,661
Seasonal or Temporary Employees	22,254	16,837

Number of Employees

Farm Operators ⁽⁸⁾

	2011	2016
Total Farm Operators	62,050	57,605
Per cent of Canada	21.1%	21.2%
Total Farms Reporting	43,234	40,638
Per cent of Canada	21.0%	21.0%

Number of Operators

Farm Operators by Sex

	2011	2016
On Farms With One Operator	25,155	23,225
Male	23,010	20,410
Female	2,145	2,805
On Farms With Two or More Operators	36,890	34,380
Male	21,065	19,435
Female	15,830	14,955

Number of Operators

(7) Farms classified by the commodity or group of commodities that make up the majority of total receipts; based on the North American Industry Classification System.

(8) Up to three operators can be reported per farm. As this is a count of distinct operators, operators of two or more separate farms are included only once.

Average Age of Farm Operators

	2011	2016
All Farm Operators	54.5	55.7
On Farms With One Operator	56.2	56.6
On Farms With Two or More Operators	53.3	55.0

Years

Farm Operators by Age Group

	2011	2016
All Farm Operators		
Under 35 Years	4,550	4,910
35 - 54 Years	26,720	20,155
55 Years and Over	30,785	32,535
Farms With One Operator		
Under 35 Years	1,370	1,890
35 - 54 Years	10,125	7,630
55 Years and Over	13,665	13,700
Farms With Two or More Operators		
Under 35 Years	3,180	3,020
35 - 54 Years	16,595	12,525
55 Years and Over	17,120	18,835

Number of Operators

Farm Operator Labour

	2011	2016
Farm Operators by Hours of Farm Work ⁽⁹⁾		
Less Than 20 Hours per Week	19,660	18,905
20 - 40 Hours per Week	18,905	18,370
More Than 40 Hours per Week	23,480	20,325
Farm Operators Reporting Paid Non-Farm Work	32,245	27,245
Less Than 20 Hours per Week	5,860	5,360
20 - 40 Hours per Week	13,520	12,050
More Than 40 Hours per Week	12,865	9,835

Number of Operators

(9) Average number of hours per week worked for the agricultural operation.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding

— **Figures not comparable or questions not asked on 2011 Census of Agriculture questionnaire**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2011 and 2016

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