

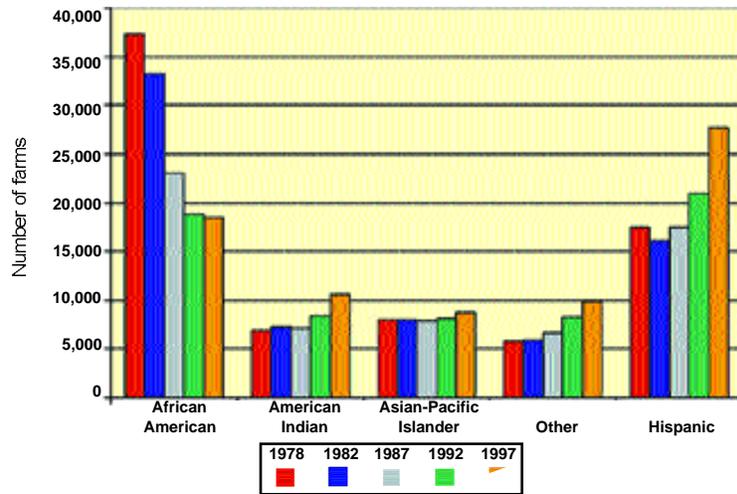
# Appendix A

## Facts

### Agriculture

- There are less than two million farms in the United States today, far less than the peak of 6.5 million farms in the 1920s (ranches are included in all uses of the word “farm”).
- The amount of land on U.S. farms peaked at about 1.2 billion acres in the 1950s and declined to a little more than 0.9 billion acres in 1997. The amount used for crops plus idled cropland has remained about 0.4 billion acres since the 1920s.
- The current market value of U.S. farmland is more than one trillion dollars, or \$1,030 per acre on average. Cropland values were highest (\$3,460 per acre) in the Pacific region and lowest (\$668 per acre) in the Northern Plains region.
- The total value of U.S. agricultural commodities sold in 2000 was \$191 billion.
- With less than one percent of the world’s farmers, 4.5 percent of the world’s population and 7 percent of the world’s land, the U.S. produces more than 20 percent of the world’s cotton, 46 percent of the world’s soybeans, 13 percent of the world’s wheat and 41 percent of the world’s corn.
- Most (99 percent) of U.S. farms are family owned, family-held corporations or partnerships.
- Only 0.05 percent of U.S. farms (0.3 percent of all farmland) are non-family corporations with more than 10 stockholders.
- More than half of U.S. farms (14 percent of all farmland) average less than \$10,000 in sales a year (1.5 percent of all U.S. agricultural sales). Average net farm income for these small farms is negative, but non-farm income brings the total family income to near the community average.
- Fifty percent of farm acreage is on the 435,000 farms (22.8 percent of all farms) with sales between \$50,000 and \$500,000 a year. These middle-sized farms, whose numbers are rapidly dwindling, account for 36.6 percent of total sales.
- Fifty-six percent of total sales stem from the 70,000 farms (3.6 percent of all farms) with sales over \$500,000 a year.
- U.S. agricultural exports account for about 25 percent of gross cash farm receipts. These exports are pivotal in farm profitability.
- In 1999, average farm household income was \$64,347 compared to \$54,842 for average U.S. household income. But only \$6,359 of the farm income average came from farming activities.
- In 1997, 26 percent of all farmers were 65 years of age or older, and the average age was 54.3 years. In 1978, only a little more than 15 percent of all farmers were above retirement age. Ninety-seven percent of farmers are White/non-Hispanic.

FIGURE A-1.

Number of farms operated by minorities,  
1978 to 1997

- Most of the traditional USDA payments go to the “grain and oilseed” farmers, 98.7 percent of whom are White/non-Hispanic and whose lands comprise 22 percent of total farm acreage.
- The number of farms operated by Hispanics increased 58.6 percent during the 10 years from 1987 to 1997. The number of farms operated by Asians, American Indians and women is also rising steadily.
- The number of farms operated by African Americans has steadily declined, from a peak of 925,710 farms in 1920 to 18,451 farms in 1997.

### Forestland

- Four-fifths, or nearly 393 million acres, of this nation’s timber land (capable of 20 cubic feet of wood per year) is non-federal.
- The forest products industry accounts for more than seven percent of the total U.S. manufacturing output, employs 1.7 million people and ranks among the top 10 manufacturing employers in 46 states.
- Nationwide harvest of timber is expected to increase from slightly more than 16 billion cubic feet in 1991 to nearly 22 billion cubic feet in 2040. More than 80 percent of the increase in harvest is expected to be on non-federal forests.
- Eighty-five percent of the wood products consumed in this country come from U.S. forests.
- It is estimated that urban and community forests provide a variety of environmental and social benefits, estimated to be worth \$3 billion per year nationwide.
- In the continental United States, non-federal forests store an estimated 38.6 billion metric tons of carbon (90 percent of the national total), and Alaskan forests store an additional 16 billion metric tons.
- Forests are the source of approximately 60 percent of the nation’s total stream flow.

# Appendix A

## Urban

- Sixty-seven percent of the American public support measures to preserve farmland and open space.
- Fifty-eight percent of this country's counties are seriously concerned over loss of farmland because of expected growth in coming years, and 61 percent are seriously concerned over the loss of wildlife.
- More than 50 percent of the counties surveyed by General Accounting Office report a moderate to high concern for unsightly commercial development, traffic congestion, air and water pollution and the need for new infrastructure.
- About 45 percent of new construction from 1994 to 1997 occurred in rural areas.
- New housing construction averaged about 1.5 million units per year, with single-family home construction at more than 1 million per year. Forty-five percent of new housing construction from 1994 to 1997 occurred in rural areas.

## Grazing lands

- Approximately 1.1 billion acres of public and private land in the United States are classified by the government as grazing land.
- The nation's grazing lands total 588 million acres of non-federal land and include pasture land, rangeland and grazed forestland. Combined, pasture land and rangeland amount to nearly 526 million acres, or 35 percent of non-federal land.
- Private and public grazing lands usually are stocked with more than 60 million cattle and eight million sheep, supporting a livestock industry that annually contributes \$78 billion in farms sales to the U.S. economy.
- There are 785,672 cattle farm and ranches in the United States, totaling 474,966,508 acres, and 29,938 sheep and goat operations, totaling 20,359,376 acres.

## Wildlife habitat

- Wildlife species have important ecologic, economic and aesthetic benefits for society. Their abundance is to a large extent a result of how the land is treated.
- All land is wildlife habitat, but the quality varies greatly and is often determined by how the land is used.
- Seventy-nine percent of the United States is in non-federal ownership, and therefore most habitat is managed by private landowners.
- White-tailed deer populations may be too abundant in some portions of their range, the result of favorable habitat, harvest management strategies and decreases in populations of natural predators.
- Small-game populations and populations of species associated with grassland, early successional regimes (for example, scrub-shrub) and

farmland habitats have declined in recent decades. The northern bobwhite is an example of one such species whose populations have exhibited significant declines for more than three decades.

- Studies revealed that fields enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program had from 1.4 to 10.5 times greater bird abundances than did cropped fields. Nest abundance in CRP fields was reported to be from 8.8 to 27 times greater than nest abundance in cropped fields.
- The combined effect of CRP and the amelioration of drought conditions since 1993 in the Northern Plains region resulted in a dramatic recovery of waterfowl populations (and populations of Le Conte's sparrow) that was substantially greater than if either CRP or the favorable weather had been absent.
- By establishing needed vegetation, CRP has improved habitat; prevented loss of topsoil; improved water quality by reducing sediment, pesticide and fertilizer runoff; and provided billions of dollars in environmental benefits over the life of the program.
- CRP and the Wetlands Reserve Program combined represent less than 2.4 percent of non-federal wetlands in this country. Excellent opportunities for habitat management also exist on working lands through judicious selection of management practices that yield multiple resource benefits.

#### Sources

American Farm Bureau Federation 2000; Best et al. 1998; Brady 1985; Bureau of Labor Statistics undated; Economic Research Service undated; Flather et al. 1999; Follett et al. 2001; General Accounting Office 2000; NASS 1998, 2000a, b; NRCS 2000a; National Research Council 1998; Ryan et al. 1998; Sampson and DeCoster 1997; Samson et al. 1998; The Statistical Abstract of the United States undated; Warner and Brady 1994.