

Women Farmers

The USDA Economic Research Service released a report in April 2013 about the “Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms,” by Robert Hoppe and Penni Korb. This report found that “the share of U.S. farms operated by women nearly tripled over the past three decades, from 5% in 1978 to 14% by 2007.”

The following is interesting information from the report.

- **Women-operated farms increased in all sales classes.** Between 1982 and 2007, the number of women-operated farms grew from 121,600 to 306,200, with increases in all sales classes.
- **Most women-operated farms are very small.** Since 1982, a majority of women-operated farms have had annual sales of less than \$10,000.
- **Five percent of women-operated farms (15,400 farms) had sales of \$100,000 or more in 2007.** Most of these farms specialized in grains and oilseeds, specialty crops, poultry and eggs, beef cattle, or dairy.
- **Nearly half of farms operated by women specialized in grazing livestock.** In 2007, 45 percent of women-operated farms specialized in raising beef cattle other than in feedlots (23 percent), horses and other equines (17 percent), or sheep and goats (6 percent).
- **Women-operated farms specializing in poultry, specialty crops, grains, or dairy had the most sales.** Although these farms totaled only 21 percent of women-operated farms, they generated 72 percent of sales from all women’s farms.
- **Counting secondary operators increases the number of women farmers to 1 million.** Most secondary women farm operators (96 percent) were on farms whose principal operator was a man, generally the woman’s husband.

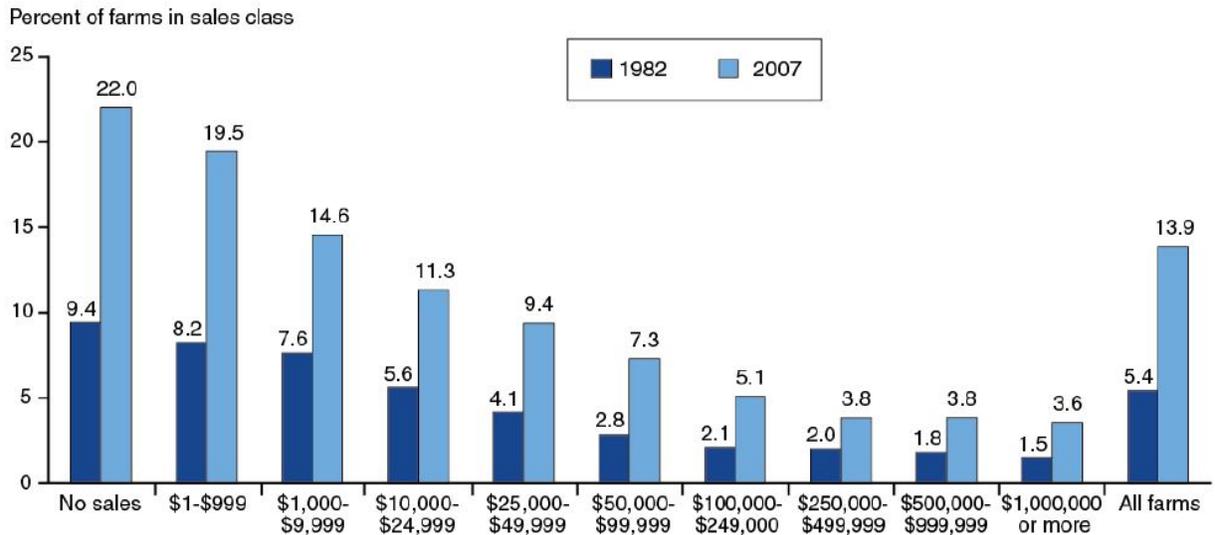
This information can be useful to plan outreach for female producers. Organizations such as Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) and Women, Land and Legacy (WLL) provide opportunities to reach women in the agriculture sector. Programs that offer financial assistance for grazing and specialty crop practices can be emphasized, such as EQIP. While agriculture is still dominated by men, women are significantly increasing their involvement.

The study was conducted using data from the Census of Agriculture (data from 1978 – 2007) and the Agriculture Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

To view the full report, go to <http://ers.usda.gov/media/1093194/eib111.pdf>

Share of farms and ranches operated by women in each sales class, 1982 and 2007

Women operators increased their share of farms and ranches in all sales classes



Note: Sales classes are expressed in constant 2007 dollars, using the Producer Price Index (PPI) for farm products to adjust for price changes.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, compiled from the 1982 and 2007 Censuses of Agriculture.

Source: “Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms” by Robert Hoppe and Penni Korb

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