

Cattle Production

Cattle sales up; inventory and number of farms with cattle down since 2017



ACH22-20/December 2024

In 2022, U.S. cattle and calf sales totaled \$89.4 billion, accounting for 16.5% of all U.S. agriculture sales. This was an increase of \$12.2 billion, or 16%, since 2017, while the number of cattle and calves sold (69.1 million head) decreased 1% since 2017. The top five states accounted for over half of cattle and calf sales. Although the value of sales increased, the end of year cattle inventory of 88 million head decreased 6% from 2017. The number of farms involved with cattle production also decreased 17%.

\$88 million
cattle



732,123
farms



\$89.4 billion
sales

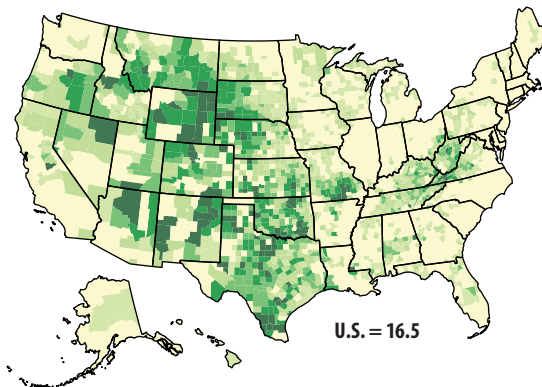


Number and Location

Every state raised and sold cattle but the top five states – Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Colorado – accounted for 57% of the nation’s cattle sales in 2022 with \$51 billion. The top five states sold 77% of fed cattle at 18.9 million head. Six counties had over \$1 billion in cattle sales; these counties were in Texas, Kansas, and Nebraska.

The top five counties for inventory of beef cows were in Nebraska, Nevada, and South Dakota, while the top five counties for inventory of cattle on feed were in Texas, Kansas, California, and Nebraska.

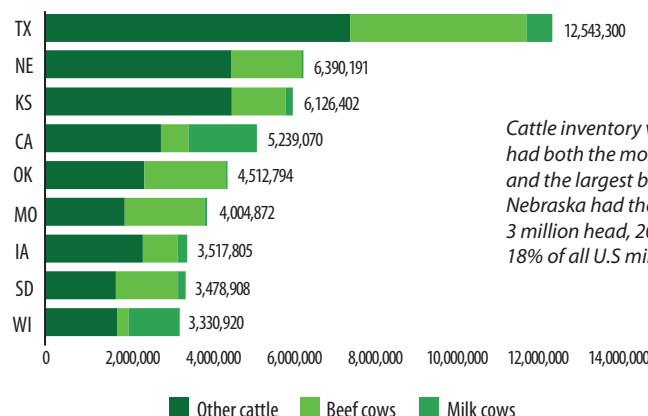
All Cattle Sales as Percent of Agriculture Sales, by County, 2022



Top States	(\$ bil)
Texas	15.5
Kansas	13.6
Nebraska	12.2
Iowa	5.0
Colorado	4.7
Oklahoma	3.9
California	3.7
South Dakota	3.1
Missouri	2.2
Idaho	2.2

Beef cows accounted for 33% (29.2 million head) of all cattle inventory, while milk cows (9.3 million head) accounted for 11%. The remaining 49.4 million head were other cattle (calves, steers, heifers, and bulls).

Top States Year End Cattle Inventory in Head, by Type, 2022



Cattle inventory varied regionally by type. Texas had both the most cattle with 12.5 million head and the largest beef cow herd of 4.4 million cows. Nebraska had the largest fed cattle inventory with 3 million head, 20% of all fed cattle. California had 18% of all U.S. milk cows with 1.7 million head.

	2017	2022	% change
All Cattle and Calves			
Cattle Sold (mil)	69.8	69.1	-1.0%
Inventory (mil)	93.6	88.0	-6.1%
Farms	882,692	732,123	-17.1%
Beef Cows			
Inventory (mil)	31.7	29.2	-7.9%
Farms	729,046	622,162	-14.7%
Cattle on Feed			
Cattle Sold (mil)	24.6	24.4	-0.8%
Farms	25,776	22,613	-12.3%
Total Sales (bil)	77.2	89.4	15.8%

The number of steers and heifers raised and sold as fed cattle was 24.4 million head, down less than 1% from 2017.

SNAPSHOT

Beef Producers, 2022

Number = 930,680 on 534,633 farms specializing in beef.*

Number = 20,629 on 11,186 farms specializing in cattle feedlots.**

	Beef Farming	Cattle Feedlots	All U.S.
	(percent)		
Sex			
Male	63	72	64
Female	37	28	36
Age			
<35	9	14	9
35 - 64	52	55	53
65+	39	31	38
Years farming			
10 or less	28	21	30
11 or more	72	79	70
Lived on their farm	77	75	70
Worked off farm			
No days	35	42	38
1 to 199 days	22	20	22
200+ days	43	38	40
Primary occupation			
Farming	41	58	42
Other	59	42	58
With military service	9	6	9
Race			
American Ind/Alaska Native	2.4	0.4	1.7
Asian	0.3	0.1	0.7
Black/African American	2.1	0.1	1.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Isl	0.1	0.1	0.1
White	94.0	99.1	95.4
More than on race	1.1	0.2	0.9
Hispanic	4.1	1.2	3.3
Average age (years)	58.3	54.9	58.1

* Farms specializing in beef cattle farming or ranching as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS); more than half of the farm's sales came from raising cattle (including cattle for dairy herd replacements).

** Farms specializing in cattle feedlots as defined by NAICS; more than half of the farm's sales came from feeding cattle for fattening.

Data collected for up to four producers per farm.

About the Census

The Census of Agriculture, conducted once every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Results from the 2022 and earlier censuses are available at national, state, and county levels.

See the searchable database Quick Stats, downloadable PDF reports, maps, and a variety of topic-specific products.

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Producer Characteristics

The number of producers specializing in beef cattle farming and ranching represented the largest share of all U.S. producers of any specialization at 28%. Their characteristics resembled U.S. producers overall. Producers specializing in cattle feedlots tended to be younger (54.9 years) than U.S. producers (58.1 years) and were more likely to consider farming their primary occupation (58%) compared to 41% of producers specializing in beef farming and ranching and 42% of all U.S. producers.

37 The percent of beef producers who were women.

Farm Characteristics

	Beef Farming and Ranching	Cattle Feedlots	All Farms
<i>Farms specializing in beef farming, excluding feedlots, numbered 534,633 and accounted for 28% of all U.S. farms, while 11,186 cattle feedlots accounted for less than 1% of all U.S. farms.</i>			
Number of Farms	534,633	11,186	1,900,487
Cattle and calf sales (\$ bil)	32.2	43.6	89.4
Economic Class <i>(sales and government payments)</i>		Beef Farming	Cattle Feedlots
		<i>(percent of total)</i>	
<i>The majority (90%) of farms specializing in beef farming and ranching had sales and government payments of less than \$100,000.</i>			All Farms
< \$10,000		55	1
\$10,000 - \$99,999		35	39
\$100,000 - \$499,999		8	24
\$500,000 - \$999,999		1	10
\$1,000,000 +		1	26

Average Farm Characteristics





	Beef Farming	Cattle Feedlots	All Farms
Avg. acres	628	1,096	463
Avg. sales	\$67,285	\$4,100,196	\$285,762
Avg. government payments	\$18,998	\$32,767	\$21,599
Avg. expenses	\$72,345	\$3,404,548	\$223,175
Avg. net cash farm income	\$4,228	\$729,176	\$79,790

Production Expenses

The production costs of farms specializing in beef production totaled \$76.8 billion, up 11% from 2017. At \$30.1 billion, livestock purchases were the largest expense item, accounting for 39% of production expenses.

	(\$ bil)
Livestock purchases	30.1
Feed	21.2
Repairs and supplies	3.6
Hired labor	3.0
Fuels	2.6
Rent	2.3
Interest	2.2
Other expenses	11.8

Among Beef and Cattle Feedlot Farms

-  **77%** Had internet access
-  **18%** Hired farm labor
-  **97%** Were family farms
-  **31%** Had positive net income