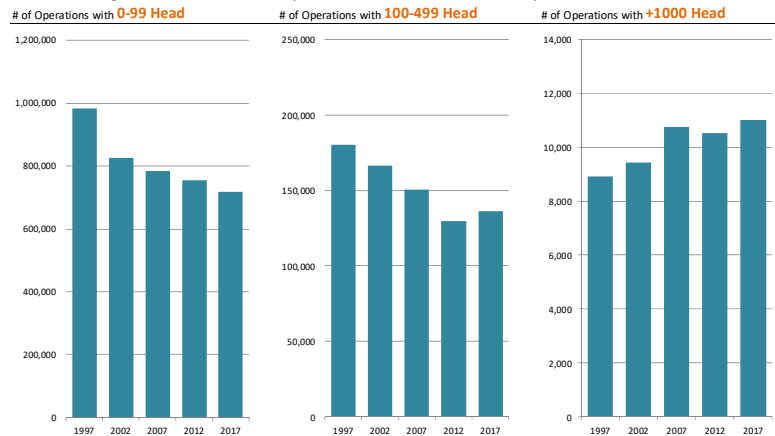


USDA yesterday released the **much anticipated results of the 2017 Census of Agriculture**. The census is conducted every five years and it is the most comprehensive accounting of US agriculture. The Census allows researchers, policy makers and industry to have a very granular view of US agricultural activities, information that is simply unavailable through the other surveys conducted by USDA. The purpose of this letter is mostly to inform you that the information is there and available for free to all. **Whether you are interested in knowing the distribution of cattle, hogs and poultry in the US, or what production was at the county level in Iowa or how farm structure has evolved in recent years, you can find all that information by consulting the Census results.** One very welcome addition to the Census release this year has been the inclusion of a data query tool. All those interested can find the new tool at the link below.

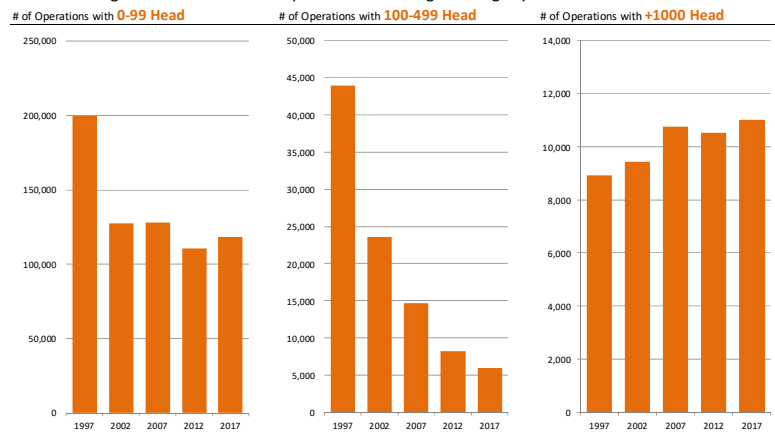
[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick\\_Stats/CDQT/chapter/1/table/1](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/CDQT/chapter/1/table/1)

To use, the new tool, all you have to do is select what level of data you want, national/state/county, what sort of information you are looking for and then drill down to the level of detail you wish to review. Update the grid and it's all there, including comparisons to the previous 20 years. The charts to the right show an illustration of a topic that has always been of interest to us, **the structural shift in US livestock production**. The first chart to the left shows that still most cattle operations in the US have fewer than 100 head of cattle. According to the 2017 Census, there were a total of 882,692 cattle/calf operations. Of this total, 717,635 operations or 81% of the total, had fewer than 100 head of cattle. The number of small cattle operations has been in steady decline in the last 20 years. Currently the number of small cattle operations are about 26% lower than in 1997. While operations that have 1-9 cattle are only slightly lower than twenty years ago, operations with 50-99 cattle are down 36% compared to where they were back then. As the number of small operators has been steadily declining, large producers continue to expand. **In 1997 there were 8,925 operations with over 1000 head of cattle. In 2017, that number had grown to 11,018, a 23% increase.** The number of operations with over 5000 head is up 50% compared to 20 years ago. The total inventory of all cattle and calves in 2017 is now estimated at 93.648 million head compared to the Jan 1, 2017 inventory based on the annual survey that was reported to be 93.705 million head. **About 17.8 million head of cattle or 19% of the total were in operations that had over 5000 head.** On the other hand, operations with less than 100 head of cattle accounted for around 19% of the overall inventory as well. In other words, 81% of the cattle operations had less than 20% of the overall cattle inventory. The number of beef cows in 2017 was reported to be 31.722 million head. The bulk of those cows (73%) were in operations that had between 20 and 500 head of beef cows.

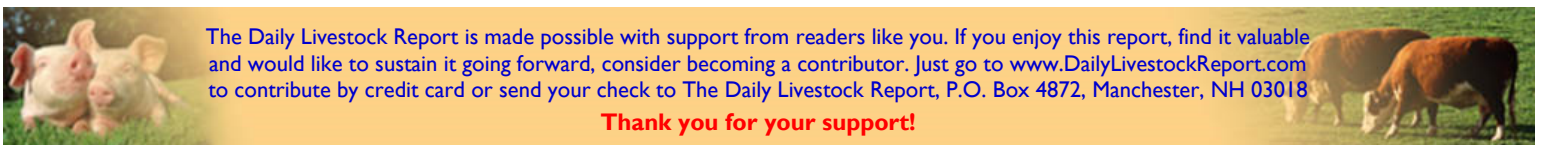
USDA 2017 Ag. Census. Number of Operations with Cattle & Calves by Firm Size. Source: USDA-NASS



USDA 2017 Ag. Census. Number of Operations with Hogs and Pigs by Firm Size. Source: USDA-NASS



Hog production has also changed dramatically in the last 20 years. While the number of farms with just a few hogs has not changed much, there has been a dramatic shift towards bigger and more integrated hog farms. Consider that in 2017 there were 118,562 operations with fewer than 100 head, 40% lower than 20 years ago but about 7% higher than five years ago. On the other hand, the number of hog operations with between 100 and 999 head has declined from 43,878 head in 1997 to just 5,992 head in 2017. The number of large operations, those with over 5000 head has been growing and in 2017 it was reported to be 3,600, about double what it was in 1997. **About 52.7 million hogs or 73% of the total US hog inventory was in operations with over 5000 head.**



The Daily Livestock Report is made possible with support from readers like you. If you enjoy this report, find it valuable and would like to sustain it going forward, consider becoming a contributor. Just go to [www.DailyLivestockReport.com](http://www.DailyLivestockReport.com) to contribute by credit card or send your check to The Daily Livestock Report, P.O. Box 4872, Manchester, NH 03018

**Thank you for your support!**

The Daily Livestock Report is published by Steiner Consulting Group, DLR Division, Inc.. To subscribe, support or unsubscribe please visit [www.dailylivestockreport.com](http://www.dailylivestockreport.com).

The Daily Livestock Report is not owned, controlled, endorsed or sold by CME Group Inc. or its affiliates and CME Group Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any and all responsibility for the information contained herein. CME Group®, CME® and the Globe logo are trademarks of Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Inc.

Disclaimer: The Daily Livestock Report is intended solely for information purposes and is not to be construed, under any circumstances, by implication or otherwise, as an offer to sell or a solicitation to buy or trade any commodities or securities whatsoever. Information is obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but is in no way guaranteed. No guarantee of any kind is implied or possible where projections of future conditions are attempted. Futures trading is not suitable for all investors, and involves the risk of loss. Past results are no indication of future performance. Futures are a leveraged investment, and because only a percentage of a contract's value is required to trade, it is possible to lose more than the amount of money initially deposited for a futures position. Therefore, traders should only use funds that they can afford to lose without affecting their lifestyle. And only a portion of those funds should be devoted to any one trade because a trader cannot expect to profit on every trade.