



# Crossroads Resource Center

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## ***Tools for Community Self-determination***

### **Food and Farm Economy of Northern New Mexico**

*Mora, Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Santa Fe, & Taos Counties*

Compiled for  
**New Mexico Acequia Association**  
by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center  
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#### **Northern New Mexico:**

236,000 residents (13% of New Mexico) earn \$7.8 billion of income each year.

#### **Highlights from U.S. Agriculture Census (2002)**

##### *Farms and ranches*

- 2,876 farms and ranches (19% of New Mexico's)
- 5.6 million acres in farms and ranches
- 312,000 acres of cropland (6% of total acreage in region)
- 31,000 acres of this land is harvested (0.5% of region's acreage)
- Average size 1,957 acres (66% of New Mexico average)
- Average value of land and buildings \$663,121 (95% of state average)
- 1,319 (46%) farms are less than 50 acres
- 449 farms (16%) are 1,000 acres or more
- The number of farms in New Mexico fell 45% from 32,000 in 1940 to 17,500 in 2006 [ERS]

##### *Cash receipts*

- Total farm sales \$52 million [*Note: The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports considerably higher figures for both crop sales and production costs, as noted below. The reasons for this are not known.*]
- Total sales of livestock and livestock products \$39 million (75% of total sales)
- Total crop sales \$13 million (25% of total sales)
- 63% of the farms (1,805) sell less than \$2,500 of farm products (sales of farms in this category fell \$498,000 (38%) — from \$1.3 million in 1997 to \$802,000 in 2002)
- 83% of farms (2,384) sell less than \$10,000 (sales of farms in this category fell \$2.4 million (40%) — from \$6 million in 1997 to \$3.6 million in 2002)
- 3% of farms (81) sell more than \$100,000 (sales of farms in this category fell \$3 million (8%) — from \$39 million in 1997 to \$36 million in 2002)
- 2,027 farms (70%) reported a net loss in 2002 (compares to 61% rate for New Mexico)
- 314 farms collect \$1.6 million of federal subsidies

*Livestock*

- 75% of region's farm sales are livestock or related products
- The number of farms selling livestock fell 34% from 1997 to 2002, while sales dropped 17%
- 98,999 cattle and calves on 1,391 farms and ranches in the region (6% of state's)
- 56,000 of these are beef cattle
- 48% of cattle live on 37 ranches with 500 or more head
- 27% of cattle live on ranches with less than 10 head
- 69,000 cattle sold — 6% of the state's sales
- 58 milk cows
- 251 hogs and pigs
- 6,776 sheep and lambs (4% of New Mexico) raised on 234 farms
- 10,416 layer hens
- 81 farms sell \$99,000 of poultry products

*Crops*

- 7 farms raise corn for grain (no data on production)
- 9 farms raise corn for forage (8,205 acres raise 145,000 tons)
- 15 farms raise edible beans (sales figures not reported by USDA)
- 12 farms raise wheat (no data on production)
- 12 farms raise oats (52 acres produce 2,385 bushels)
- One farm raises barley
- Three farms raise sorghum
- Three farms produce potatoes
- 1,012 farms raise 71,000 tons of forage crops
- 71 farms (2% of region's) have 206 acres in vegetable production (sales suppressed by USDA)
- 465 farms (16% of region's) have 1,284 acres of orchard
- Fruit and nut sales increased from \$410,000 in 1997 to \$1.1 million in 2002
- 46 farms raise greenhouse and nursery crops (total sales of \$1.6 million)
- 12 farms raise Christmas trees or woody crops

**County-by-county Ag Census highlights for 2002:**

**Mora County**

- 89% of total farm sales (\$13 million of \$14.6 million) are cattle and calf sales
- Inventory of cattle and calves: 26,427
- Ranks first in New Mexico for acres devoted to production of Christmas trees (8 farms; acreage and sales data not reported by USDA)
- Ranks second in state for production of short-rotation woody crops (25 acres)
- Ranks third in New Mexico for llama inventory (372)
- Ranks fourth in state for oat acreage (sales data not reported by USDA)
- Ranks fifth in state for grass and grass seed acreage (84 acres)

**Rio Arriba County**

- Ranks first in New Mexico for apple acreage (683 acres)
- Ranks second in state for sweet corn acreage (76 acres)

- Ranks second in state for farm inventory of horses and ponies (2,874)
- Ranks second in state for turkey inventory (number not reported by USDA)
- Ranks third in New Mexico for acres devoted to nursery stock (80 acres)
- Ranks fourth in New Mexico for number of laying hens (5,836)
- Ranks sixth in state for poultry and egg sales (\$73,000)
- Ranks eighth in New Mexico for fruit, tree nut and berry sales (\$554,000)
- Ranks ninth in New Mexico for forage acreage (12,230 acres)
- Ranks ninth in state for number of sheep and lambs (4,599)
- 68% of county's farm sales (\$7.1 million of \$10.5 million) are cattle and calf sales.
- Inventory of cattle and calves is 22,499

### **San Miguel County**

- Ranks fifth in New Mexico for inventory of hogs and pigs (count not released by USDA)
- Ranks seventh in state for farm inventory of horses and ponies (1,956)
- Ranks eighth in state for acreage of oats (30)
- 87% of farm sales (\$10.7 million of \$12.3 million) are cattle and calf sales
- Inventory of cattle and calves is 39,112

### **Santa Fe County**

- Ranks fifth in New Mexico for sales of grains & oilseeds (\$5.6 million — nearly half of all farm sales for the county)
- Ranks fifth in state for apple acreage (150 acres)
- Ranks fifth in state for corn silage acreage (8,205 acres)
- Ranks sixth in New Mexico for nursery, greenhouse, floral, and sod sales (\$1.5 million)
- Ranks sixth in state for acreage devoted to corn for grain (count not reported by USDA)
- Ranks sixth in state for number of laying hens (2,170)
- Ranks eighth in New Mexico for sales of poultry and eggs (\$23,000)
- Ranks ninth in New Mexico for acreage devoted to wheat production (count not reported by USDA)
- 22% of farm sales (\$2.5 million of \$11.8 million) are cattle and calf sales
- Inventory of cattle and calves is 10,961

### **Taos County**

- Ranks first in New Mexico for number of pigeons raised on farms (760)
- Ranks second in state for acreage devoted to Christmas trees (count not reported by USDA)
- 53% of farm sales (\$1.8 million of \$3.4 million) are cattle and calf sales
- 82% of crop sales (\$498,000 of \$607,000) are hay sales

### **State of New Mexico**

- Ranks seventh in U.S. for sales of milk and dairy products from cows (\$730 million)
- Sales of cattle and calves amount to \$534 million
- Inventory of cattle and calves is 1,590,769
- Hay is third-largest sale item (\$105 million) and first in acreage (335,872 acres)

- Wheat is second in acreage (161,341 acres), followed by corn silage (93,381 acres), grain sorghum (67,226 acres) and cotton (53,045 acres)

### **Farm Production Balance [Bureau of Economic Analysis]**

The region's farms have sold \$77 million of crops and livestock each year, on average, since 1981 (25 years). However, it has required \$91 million to produce these commodities, for an average loss of \$14 million each year (18% of sales). This is a total production loss of \$343 million since 1981. During this time, farmers have lost money selling crops and livestock each year except 1993, because production costs exceeded cash receipts, despite holding production costs at a steady level [*Data in this section are in 2005 dollars*].

Losses have been even deeper in more recent years. On average, the region's farms lost \$32 million per year from 2001-2005.

Data on federal subsidies are incomplete. Subsidies were quite low until 2001. For some years, data are not available. From 2001-2005 the region's farmers collected an average of \$3.6 million in subsidies, far less than is needed to fully compensate for production losses.

Farm families also earned \$5.5 million in farm-related income (cash rents for land, custom work for neighbors, etc.) on average, each year from 1981 to 2005. However, this type of income has fallen from its peak of \$15 million per year in 1988.

Overall, the region's farmers earned \$45 million less from farm production in 2005 than they had earned in 1969 (in 2005 dollars).

Cash income for crops has held steady at about \$10 million per year since 1969. Cash receipts for livestock, however, fell \$72 million (64%) from 1969 to 2005, from \$114 million to \$41 million. This means the decline of the farm economy is primarily due to the fall in cash receipts for livestock.

Of the \$91 million spent for production expenses, an estimated \$45 million is spent on inputs sourced outside of the region.

### **Consumers**

The region's consumers buy \$592 million of food each year. \$329 million of this is eaten at home, and \$262 away from home. At least \$400 million of the food consumers buy is produced outside the region. *Region, county and state food markets are summarized below.*

83,000 (36%) of the region's residents earn an income lower than 185 percent of the poverty rate. At this income level, children in school qualify for free and reduced school lunches.

### **Summary of Farm and Food Economy**

On average, the region's farms and ranches spend \$14 million more producing crops and livestock than they receive by selling these products. In the process of producing at a loss, the region's farmers buy about \$45 million of farm inputs that come from outside the region. Meanwhile, the region's consumers buy about \$400 million of food from outside. Overall, this is a flow of \$460

million dollars each year away from the five-county region. This loss amounts to *six times* the total value of all food commodities produced in the region.

If the region's consumers purchased 15% of their household food needs directly from farmers and ranchers, this would bring \$49 million of new income to farmers each year — *three times* the amount needed to cover farmers' annual production losses, and almost 14 times the average amount of federal farm subsidies now received by the region's farmers.

### **Household markets for food**

#### **Northern New Mexico: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 72
Fruits & vegetables	58
Cereals and bakery products	43
Dairy products	37
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	119

**Note** that the regional market for meats is nearly equal in value to the *entire worth* of all crops and livestock now produced by the region's farmers and ranchers.

#### **Mora County: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 1.5
Fruits & vegetables	1.3
Cereals and bakery products	0.9
Dairy products	0.8
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	2.6

#### **Rio Arriba County: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 11.5
Fruits & vegetables	9.4
Cereals and bakery products	6.9
Dairy products	6.0
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	19.2

#### **San Miguel County: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 8.5

Fruits & vegetables	6.9
Cereals and bakery products	5.1
Dairy products	4.5
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	14.2

**Santa Fe County: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 40.3
Fruits & vegetables	32.7
Cereals and bakery products	23.9
Dairy products	21.0
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	67.1

**Taos County: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 9.7
Fruits & vegetables	7.9
Cereals and bakery products	5.8
Dairy products	5.1
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	16.2

**State of New Mexico: markets for food eaten at home**

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 520
Fruits & vegetables	423
Cereals and bakery products	309
Dairy products	272
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	867

**Household Markets for Energy (Five-county region)**

	<i>millions</i>
Gasoline and motor oil	204
Electricity	91
Natural gas	35
Fuel oil	7

**Key data sources:**

**Bureau of Economic Analysis data on farm production balance**

<http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis/>

**Food consumption estimates from Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey**

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm>

**U.S. Census of Agriculture**

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>

**USDA/Economic Research Service food consumption data:**

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/>

**USDA/ Economic Research Service farm income data:**

<http://ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/finfidmu.htm>

**For more information:**

To see results from *Finding Food in Farm Country* studies in other regions of Minnesota, Iowa, California, Hawaii: <http://www.crcworks.org/fffc.pdf>.

To read the original *Finding Food in Farm Country* study from Southeast Minnesota (written for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation): <http://www.crcworks.org/ff.pdf>.

To view a PowerPoint presented by Ken Meter at a plenary appearance to the Community Food Security Coalition in October 2006: <http://www.crcworks.org/crcppts/cfsc06.pdf>.

To link to further analysis of farm and food economies in the U.S.:  
<http://www.crcworks.org/rural.html>.

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