



Crossroads Resource Center

7415 Humboldt Ave. S. / Minneapolis, Minnesota 55423 / 612.869.8664
kmeter@crcworks.org www.crcworks.org

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>.

Contact Ken Meter at Crossroads Resource Center
<kmeter@crcworks.org>
(612) 869-8664