



September 2019

AG/Farmland/2019-04pr

Size and Scope of Beaver County Agriculture 2019

Ryan Feuz, Post-Doctoral Researcher

Ryan Larsen, Assistant Professor

Mark Nelson, County Director



Location

Beaver County is located in the west central part of the state. As of July 2018, the population was estimated at 6,580.

The county is bordered on the west by Nevada. Other surrounding Utah counties include Millard, Sevier, Piute, Garfield, and Iron. The west side of the county includes rolling desert hills with some lightly forested mountainous areas. On the eastern edge of the county lies the Tushar Mountains.

Beaver County is so named because of the many beaver that once lived there and today shares its name with the county's largest city and county seat. In its past the county relied heavily on crops, livestock, and mining. Its primary economic base today comes from livestock, transportation, and trade.

Land Ownership

The land ownership within the county is divided as shown in Figure 1.

All of the federally-owned ground is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service (USFS). The

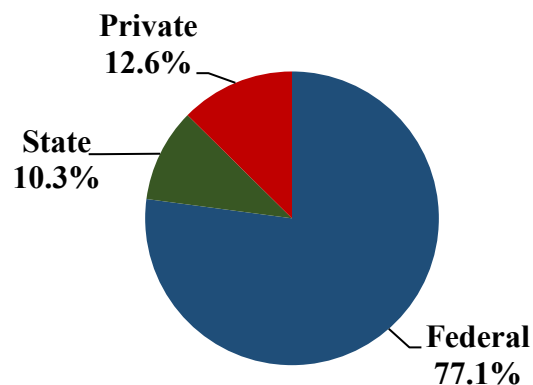


Figure 1. Beaver County Land Ownership

Source: 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book

state-owned ground is primarily part of wildlife preserves Utah School and Institutional Trust Land with a sizeable portion under the jurisdiction of the Administration (SITLA). The private ground is primarily farm ground and grazing areas.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 157,030 acres in farms and ranches in the county with an average size of 577 acres and an average value of \$2,226 per acre. The county had 44,416 acres in cropland of which 37,496 acres

were harvested. A total of 40,240 acres of cropland and pastureland were irrigated.

Growing Season

The growing season in Beaver County averages a little less than 4 months in length. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in two areas of Beaver County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019).

Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Beaver	11.35 in	June 6	Sept. 15	101 days
Milford	10.27 in	May 28	Sept. 25	119days

Crop Production

The major crops grown in Beaver County with 2017 yields and total acres harvested are displayed in Table 2.

Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/acre
Hay & Haylage	153,125 tons	31,924	4.8 tons
Corn silage	68,191 tons	2,702	25 tons
Corn grain	400,861 bu.	2,140	187 bu.

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa is begun by spraying Roundup in the fall or early spring to kill the quack grass prior to disking. The ground is then harrowed and planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains except Roundup is not typically used prior to planting grains. About 85% of all grain is planted in the spring of the year.

The most prevalent crop rotation that producers practice is to leave alfalfa in for seven years, plant oats, 3 way, or corn for two years, then replant

alfalfa. Producers typically get three to four cuttings of alfalfa each year. About 25% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) are purchased locally while the remaining 75% is bought in a neighboring county. Some of the crops are used to feed producers' own livestock. Corn is mostly sold to Smithfield Foods Inc. and fed to the large hog operation in the county. Most of the alfalfa hay is shipped to large dairies in California or exported to China and Japan.

Major sources of irrigation water include ground water and a number of small streams. The majority of the farmers have converted their irrigation systems over to pivots. Some wheel lines are still used and many of the pastures are still flood irrigated.

Livestock Production

The major classes of livestock produced in the county along with their associated inventories as of 2017 compared with 2012 inventories are listed in Table 3. Beaver County also has substantial hog production. There were 1,375,275 hogs reported as sold in 2017. Total inventory was not reported. The main producer in the area is Smithfield Foods, Inc.

Many of the calves are sold and shipped to the feedlots in the Midwest. The milk goes to the local cheese plant located in Beaver; Dairy farmers of America.

Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	21,164	27,146	28.3%
Beef Cows	12,870	13,035	1.3%
Milk Cows	736	1,700	131.0%
Sheep & Lambs	232 ^a	638	175.0%

^a 2002 value used as 2007 and 2012 were not reported
Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Farm Income and Age of Operator

Beaver County ranks first among all Utah counties in the categories of total cash receipts and total livestock revenue. Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$20,061,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$237,947,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$258,008,000. The high agricultural receipt values demonstrate the relatively favorable agriculture conditions in the county compared to other Utah counties. The age of the primary farmer

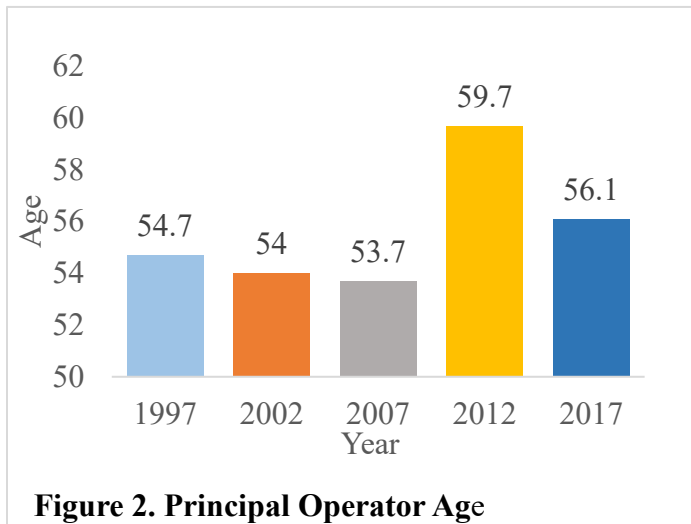


Figure 2. Principal Operator Age

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

or rancher was 56.1 in 2017, which is a notable decrease since 2012 (59.7), but still higher than earlier census years. The principal operator age is graphed below in Figure 2 for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.

Sources

- United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (2019). 2017 Ag Census Data. Retrieved from: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/Census_Data_Query_Tool/index.php
- Utah Association of Counties. (2017). 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book. Murray. Retrieved from <https://uac.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2017-Utah-Counties-Fact-Book.pdf>
- Utah Climate Center. (2019). Retrieved July 10, 2019, from Utah State University: <https://climate.usu.edu/>

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Ken White, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.