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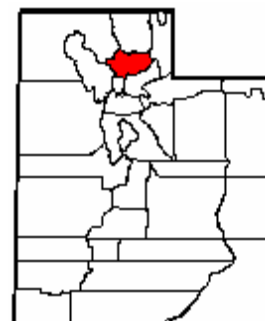
AG/Farmland/2020-02/pr

Size and Scope of Weber County Agriculture 2019

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Location

Weber County is located in the northern part of the state and borders the Great Salt Lake. The county has an area of 659 sq. miles, including 576 sq. miles of land and 83 sq. miles of water. By land area, it is the second smallest county in Utah. The Wasatch Mountain Range occupies the eastern portion of the county while the western portion extends into the Great Salt Lake.

Land Ownership

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

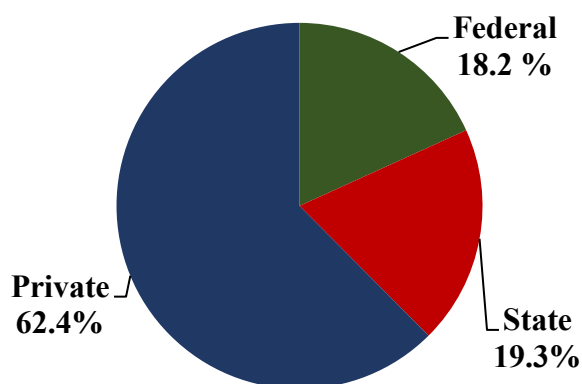


Figure 1. Weber County Land Ownership.

Source: 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book

The majority of the federally-owned ground is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the military control the remaining federal ground.

The state-owned ground is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA). Portions of the state-owned land are wildlife preserves. The private ground is primarily farm ground and grazing areas.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 94,361 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 75 acres and an average value of \$9,319 per acre. The county had 28,259 acres in cropland of which 22,238 acres were harvested. A total of 27,169 acres of cropland and pastureland were irrigated.

Growing Season

The growing season in Weber County averages over four and a half months. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in three areas of Weber County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019).

Table 1. Weber County Annual Precipitation and Average Frost-Free Days

Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Pine View Dam	30.5 in	May 23	Sept. 24	125 days
Weber Basin Pump	25.5 in	May 10	Oct. 14	155 days
Ogden Pioneer PH	20.6 in	Apr. 30	Oct. 16	171 days

Crop Production

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

Table 2. Weber County 2017 Crop Acres and Yields

Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/Acre
Hay	52,743 tons	16,226	3.3 tons
Wheat	98,200 bu.	862	113.9 bu.
Corn Grain	18,140 bu.	89	203.8 bu.
Corn Silage	69,658 tons	2,788	25.0 tons
Barley	40,023 bu.	591	67.7 bu.

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa begins by spraying herbicide in the fall or early spring to kill the weeds prior to disking. The seedbed is then prepared and planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains,

except the majority of small grains are planted in the fall, e.g. winter wheat.

The most common crop rotation that farmers practice is leaving alfalfa in for five to seven years, plant corn, small grains, or a specialty crop for two years, and 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 producers buy the remaining 75% in a neighboring county. Most of the hay grown in the county is fed to livestock within the county or the neighboring region.

Several specialty crops are typically grown in the county including onions, pumpkins, melons, tomatoes, peppers, squash, peaches, and apples.

Flood irrigation continues as the most common method for irrigating field crops, but subsurface drip is becoming increasingly popular among specialty crop growers. Sources of irrigation water include a vast system of ditches and canals supplied by the Ogden River, Weber River, and their tributaries.

Livestock Production

The inventories of the major classes of livestock produced in the county as of 2017 compared with 2012 inventories are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Major Livestock Commodities

Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	19,827	19,294	-2.7%
Beef Cows	6,825	5,731	-16.0%
Milk Cows	4,582	4,545	-0.8%
Sheep & Lambs	656	4,818	634.5%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Calves born in the spring are typically weaned in the fall at approximately 500 lbs. They are fed and fattened locally until they are sold, usually by mid-winter. During this time, they may grow to 900+ lbs. Many calves are typically shipped to contracted buyers, sold locally, or sent out of the state for sale.

The majority of cows spend the winter in local pastures feeding on supplemental hay.

Farm Income and Age of Operator

Weber County has seen growth in farm revenues. Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$24,734,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$24,709,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$49,443,000, up nearly \$10 million from 2012 (\$39,872,000). The average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 58.8 in 2017, which is a notable decrease since 2012 (60.6) as it breaks an increasing trend since before the 1997 census of agriculture. The principal operator age is displayed in Figure 2 for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.

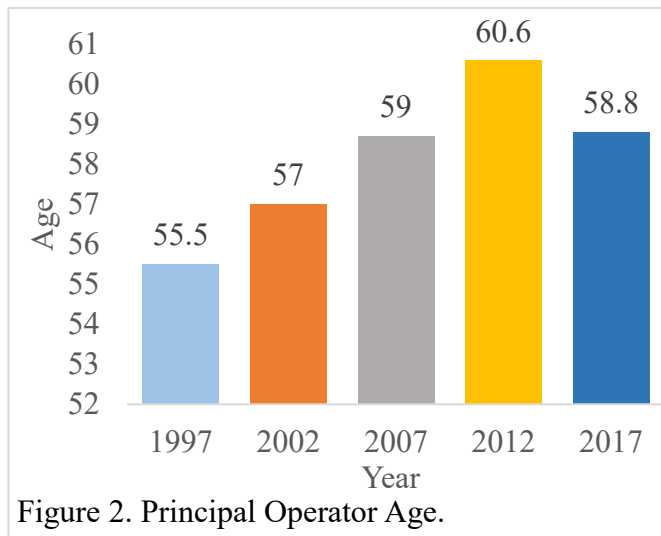


Figure 2. Principal Operator Age.

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

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/>

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