



October 2020

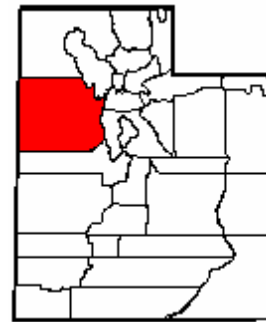
AG/Farmland/2020pr-13

Size and Scope of Tooele County Agriculture 2019

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Location

Tooele County is in northwestern Utah. It borders Nevada. Other surrounding Utah counties include Box Elder, Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, and Juab. As of 2017, the population of Tooele County was estimated at 67,456. The Great Salt Lake Desert covers much of the western portion of the county while the eastern portion contains many small towns outside of Salt Lake City. Tooele County is the second-largest county in Utah.

Land Ownership

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

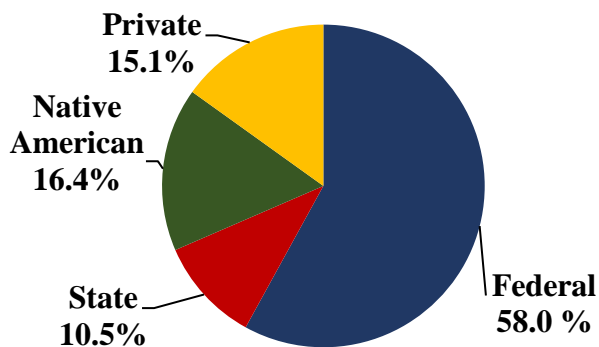


Figure 1. Tooele County Land Ownership

Source: 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book

The BLM and USFS manage 67% of the federal lands in Tooele County. The remaining federal land is controlled by the Department of Defense. The state-owned land is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA). Portions of the state-owned land are wildlife preserves, Utah state parks, and recreational areas. The private ground is primarily farmland and grazing areas.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 348,934 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 646 acres and an average value of \$1,375 per acre. The county had 21,726 acres in cropland, of which 16,663 were harvested. A total of 21,894 acres of cropland and pastureland were irrigated.

Growing Season

The growing season in Tooele County averages about four-and-a-half months. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in four areas of Tooele County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019). Ibapah is located in the southwest corner of the county. Tooele is toward the eastern border in the center of the county. Vernon is toward the southeast corner, a little over 20 miles south of Rush Valley. Wendover airport is toward the northwest corner of the county.

Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Ibapah	10.7 inches	June 20	Aug. 30	72 days
Tooele	17.3 inches	May 7	Oct. 15	162 days
Vernon	10.2 inches	June 2	Sept. 20	112 days
Wendover WSO Airport	4.6 inches	Apr. 19	Oct. 22	186 days

Crop Production

Hay is the major crop grown in Tooele County. Total acres of hay harvested in Tooele County as well as yields are displayed in Table 2. Most hay producers in Tooele County feed their hay to their own livestock, with a few of the larger producers selling small bales to local horse and livestock owners.

Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/Acre
Hay	46,991 tons	14,523	3.2 tons

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa is begun by plowing and then disking. The ground is then harrowed and planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains.

The most prevalent crop rotation that producers practice is to leave alfalfa in for seven years, small grains for one to two years, and then replant alfalfa.

Producers typically get three cuttings of alfalfa each year. About 25% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) are purchased locally while the remaining 75% are bought in a neighboring county.

The majority (about 40%) of the irrigation water available in Tooele County comes from deep wells. Another 30% is drawn from the Grantsville, Vernon, and Tooele reservoirs. The remaining 30% comes from the Vernon Creek and Deep Creek. The majority of irrigation in the county uses sprinklers; either hand lines, wheel lines, or pivots. Flood irrigation is relatively uncommon in the county.

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.

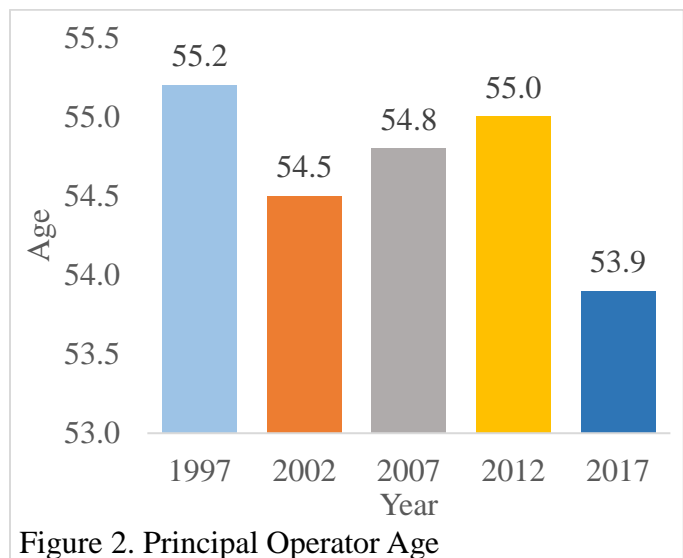
Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	22,163	20,402	-8.6%
Beef Cows	15,411	13,060	-15.3%
Sheep and Lambs	3,272	9,658	195.2%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Most of the livestock producers (cattle and sheep) in Tooele County are relatively small. The animals not kept and fed hay through the winter are generally sold in livestock auctions. The largest livestock producer in the county is vertically integrated, retaining their calves to finish within their own feedlot. Some producers market their livestock through video auctions, while others route them through local livestock auctions. Many producers within the county winter cows on the desert. Many sheep and cattle producers from outside the county take advantage of the winter grazing available within Tooele County as well.

Farm Income and Age of Operator

Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$6,497,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$34,256,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$40,753,000, which is nearly identical to the previous census year in 2012 when total cash receipts were \$40,386,000. In 2017, the average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 53.9. This is a notable decrease from the 2012 Census of Agriculture when the average age was 55 and is the lowest average age since before the 1997 Census of Agriculture. The principal operator average age is graphed below in Figure 2 for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.



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). Utah State University. Retrieved July 10, 2019, from <https://climate.usu.edu/>.

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