

USDA COUNTS FARMS BECAUSE AMERICA COUNTS ON FARMERS



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL)

nass.usda.gov/go/total

Last year, nearly 40,000 of your fellow farmers and ranchers received this survey. Your participation in ARMS ensures that policy makers and others, including farmers and ranchers like you, base decisions on facts that come straight from the source.

ARMS is conducted in three phases that continue throughout the year. Growers are surveyed during the following data collection periods:

ARMS 1: Survey participant screening
May - July

ARMS 2: Chemical use and production practices
October – December

ARMS 3: Costs and returns (Replaced by TOTAL for 2024) January - April

For more information about ARMS, visit:
nass.usda.gov/go/total

For analysis of ARMS data, visit:
ers.usda.gov/arms

In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018, Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435, codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35 and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed in identifiable form to anyone other than employees or agents.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Updated October 2024



For 2024, we combined the Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) survey with the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) to more easily gather information on land ownership, production, practices, and economic well-being of America's farm households. This information is used by farm groups, agribusiness, Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and others who make decisions that shape the landscape of U.S. Agriculture.

As part of the Census of Agriculture program, TOTAL is mandatory by law (U.S. Title 7, U.S. Code and CIPSEA, Public Law 107-347). These same laws guarantee complete confidentiality of your responses. The report cannot be used for purposes of taxation, investigation or regulation. The privacy of individual Census records is also protected from disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act.



Some of the key uses of TOTAL and ARMS include:

- The Risk Management Agency uses ARMS data to understand levels of farm income and risk management tools used by farmers.
- The Cooperative Extension System uses ARMS-based data about farm sizes and types to better target farmer education programs.
- ARMS data underpin USDA's estimates of net farm income and demonstrate agriculture's contribution to the gross domestic product.
- When considering Federal disaster assistance for producers, policymakers rely on ARMS as a source of baseline data.
- ARMS provides annual cost-of-production estimates required by Congress for more than 15 commodities covered under farm-support legislation.
- TOTAL is the only data source that offers an operator-landowner perspective on the use of debt financing in U.S. agriculture.
- TOTAL will provide information needed to project and understand trends and impacts in land transfers in the next twenty years.
- TOTAL data on lease arrangements and lease structure will play an important role in how government commodity programs affect farm production and returns.
- TOTAL will provide the only comprehensive source of demographic information of farmland owners in the United States.
- TOTAL results will help determine the appropriate incentives and potential benefits of land-based environmental policies.