Understanding Farm Households: The New Census of Agriculture

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Agricultural households differ in the extent to which the farm provides a living.

- Some entirely rely on farm income
- Some earn income from other sources
  - Off-farm employment
  - Nonfarm business self-employment
  - Transfer income
  - Other forms of ‘passive’ income
- Some even share net farm income with other households
Wide variety of farm household and farm ownership arrangements influences:

- Who makes farm decisions
- Who works on the farm
- How farm operation costs, earnings and wealth are shared
2002 Census of Agriculture provides:

- Expanded demographic data for all farm operators
- Multiple job-holding on and off the farm for all farm operators
- Income sharing relationships across households
Three key questions explored:

- Who is involved in the farm operation beyond the traditional ‘principal operator’?

- Are those engaged in farming as operators engaged in other paid work?

- Does income earned from farming accrue to a single or to multiple households?
Question 1:
Who is involved in farm beyond the traditional ‘principal operator’?

- How many ‘other operators’ are there?
- What are their characteristics?
Average age of principal farm operator in Census of Agriculture:

2002:  55.3 years

1997:  54.0 years

Percent of principal farm operators living more than 10 years on same farm: 72.1 percent
U.S. Farm Operators Who Are Not Principal Farm Operators, 2002 Census of Agriculture\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Origin</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one race</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Preliminary data.
Farm Women as Portion of Other Farm Operators, 2002 Census of Agriculture

- Black or African American: 52
- White: 62.7
- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin: 52
- More than one race: 66.9
- Asian: 62
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 67.8
- Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander: 60

aPreliminary data.
Survey of U.S. Farm Women

1. Penn State University
2. Economic Research Service
3. National Agricultural Statistics Service
Penn State Survey of U.S. Farm Women found that 53% of farm women in the U.S. considered themselves as “the main operator or one of the main operators” of the farm.
Specific Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Principal farm operator</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Full agricultural partner</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Business manager</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agricultural helper</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. No involvement</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
U.S. Farm Women as Main Farm Operators*

*higher concentrations in blue
Age Structure of U.S. Principal Farm Operators, 2002 Census of Agriculture\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{a}Preliminary data.
Total Farm Operators Classified As Principal Operators, 2002<sup>a</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 years</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 years</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64 years</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years or more</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Preliminary data, 2002 Census of Agriculture.
Question 2:
Are those engaged in farming as farm operators engaged in other paid work?
Change in Off-farm Employment, 1980-2001

% off-farm employment

Farm men

1980
Rosenfeld
48

2001 Penn State:
All
53
Working-Age
59

Farm women

1980
Rosenfeld
37

2001 Penn State:
All
52
Working-Age
62
Off-farm Employment of U.S. Farm Women*

*higher concentrations in blue
Principal Farm Operators Also Employed at Another Job, 2002 Census of Agriculture

Preliminary data, 2002 Census of Agriculture.
200 or more days working off-the farm by principal operator in 2002:

- 39.08% for all principal farm operators
- 71.34% for all principal farm operators reporting work off the farm
For women principal farm operators:

- About as likely to work off-farm
- Less likely to work 200 days or more

For Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin principal farm operators:

- More likely to work off-farm
- Less likely to work 200 days or more, if working
Other Farm Operators Who Are Employed Off-farm, 2002

- Asian: 49.8%
- Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander: 53.4%
- Black or African American: 54.9%
- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin: 55.38%
- White: 57.6%
- Women: 57.7%
- More than One Race: 61.6%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 64%

*aPreliminary data.*
Question 3:
Is the income earned from the farm operation accrue to only one household?
Sharing of Net Income of Farm Across Numbers of Households, 2002

Percent U.S. Farms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Preliminary data.*
Observations: 2002 Census of Agriculture provides answers to new questions of policy relevance.
1. Fuller accounting of labor resources on farms
2. Age distribution of farm operators
3. Prevalence of traditionally underrepresented groups
4. Extent of interactions with nonfarm labor markets
5. Sharing of farm household resources across households