



**AgEcon** SEARCH  
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

*The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library*

**This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.**

**Help ensure our sustainability.**

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search  
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>  
[aesearch@umn.edu](mailto:aesearch@umn.edu)

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*



## Farmland Ownership in Illinois: New Highlights from USDA Survey

Todd Kuethe

Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics  
University of Illinois

September 24, 2015

*farmdoc daily* (5):176

---

Recommended citation format: Kuethe, T. "[Farmland Ownership in Illinois: New Highlights from USDA Survey](#)." *farmdoc daily* (5):176, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, September 24, 2015.

Permalink: <http://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2015/09/farmland-ownership-in-illinois-new-highlights.html>

---

The USDA recently released the results of the 2014 [Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land \(TOTAL\)](#). TOTAL is a special study and part of the Census of Agriculture that collects data from landowners and landlords of agricultural land, including non-operator landlords. The survey collected data in the 48 contiguous states on landlords' acres rented out, income, expenses, assets, debt, land transfer plans, and more. One of the most striking findings of the survey is that Illinois leads the nation in total agricultural rent at \$3.8 billion. This article explores some additional highlights of Illinois landlords from the report.

Table 1 shows the number of landlords by ownership arrangement for Illinois, the Midwest, and the nation as a whole. TOTAL defines the Midwest as Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. The results suggest that non-operator landlords – landowners who rent out agricultural land but do not operate land themselves – account for the majority of landowners in each of the three geographic definitions: 88.1% in Illinois, 84.9% in the Midwest, and 86.9% in the contiguous US. Illinois, for example, had 131,337 total landlords in 2014, only 15,684 of which are farm operators.

The non-operator landlords are further classified by five ownership types, the most common of which is individual ownership, accounting for 46.8% of all landlords in Illinois. Trusts were the second most common ownership arrangement at 18.2% of all landlords. Corporations and other arrangements each account for approximately 3% of landlords. Further, the proportion of landlords by ownership type and operation status is roughly equivalent across the three geographic definitions.

TOTAL reports that in 2014, Illinois was home to 15.88 million acres of rented farmland (including cropland and pastureland). Figure 1 shows how the land was divided among the ownership arrangements reported in Table 1. While only 11.9% of landlords also operate a farm (operator landlords), these landowners account for 16.8% of total rented acres which suggests current operators tend to rent larger tracks, all else being equal. The same relationship can also be observed for Corporation and Trust ownership arrangements. While Trusts account for just 3.3% of all landlords, for example, they represent 5.3% of the rented acreage in Illinois.

---

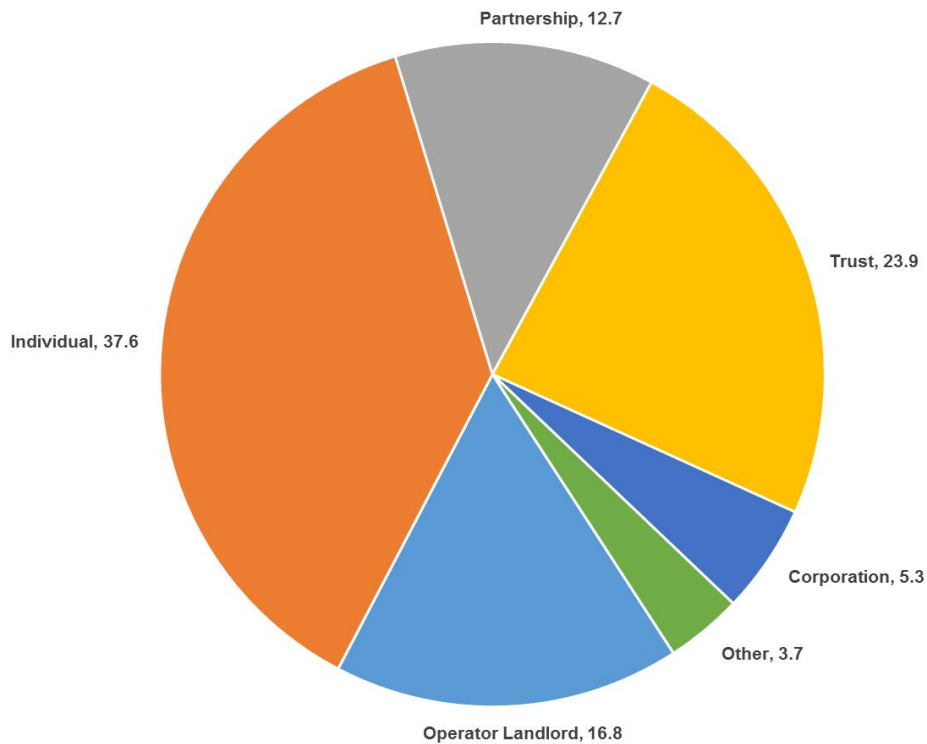
We request all readers, electronic media and others follow our citation guidelines when re-posting articles from *farmdoc daily*. Guidelines are available [here](#). The *farmdoc daily* website falls under University of Illinois copyright and intellectual property rights. For a detailed statement, please see the University of Illinois Copyright Information and Policies [here](#).

Finally, in Illinois, the land held by non-operator landlords was valued at nearly \$90 billion in 2014, at 82% of the total value of agricultural real estate in the state. Of the \$3.8 billion dollars in rent paid for Illinois agricultural land in 2014, 78.1% was paid to non-operator landlords. Among non-operator landlords, the majority of rent is captured by Individuals and Partnerships, at 58.0%.

**Table 1: Landlords by Ownership Arrangements, 2014**

	Illinois	Midwest	USA
<b>Operator Landlord</b>	<b>15,684</b>	<b>107,955</b>	<b>280,044</b>
<b>Non-operator Landlord</b>	<b>115,653</b>	<b>607,263</b>	<b>1,851,796</b>
Individual	61,515	344,044	1,092,551
Partnership	21,700	118,759	361,826
Trust	23,871	100,239	249,632
Corporation	4,362	26,877	91,011
Other	4,205	17,344	56,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>131,337</b>	<b>715,218</b>	<b>2,131,840</b>

Figure 1: Share of Rented Acreage by Ownership Arrangement, Illinois, 2014



**Table 2: Rent and Asset Values by Ownership Type in Illinois, \$Billions, 2014**

	Rent Received	Value of Land and Buildings
<b>Operator Landlord</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>18.7</b>
<b>Non-operator Landlord</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>89.2</b>
Individual/Partnership	1.7	48.3
Corporation/Trust	1	33.3
Other	0.1	4.5
Multiple*	0.1	3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>107.8</b>

\*Refers to non-operator landlords who rent out agricultural land under more than one ownership arrangement.

## References

USDA Census of Agriculture. "Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL)." Last Modified September 8, 2015, accessed September 24, 2015.  
<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/TOTAL/>