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# **Understanding Farm Households: The New Census of Agriculture**

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**2004 Agricultural Outlook Forum  
February 2004**



## **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**

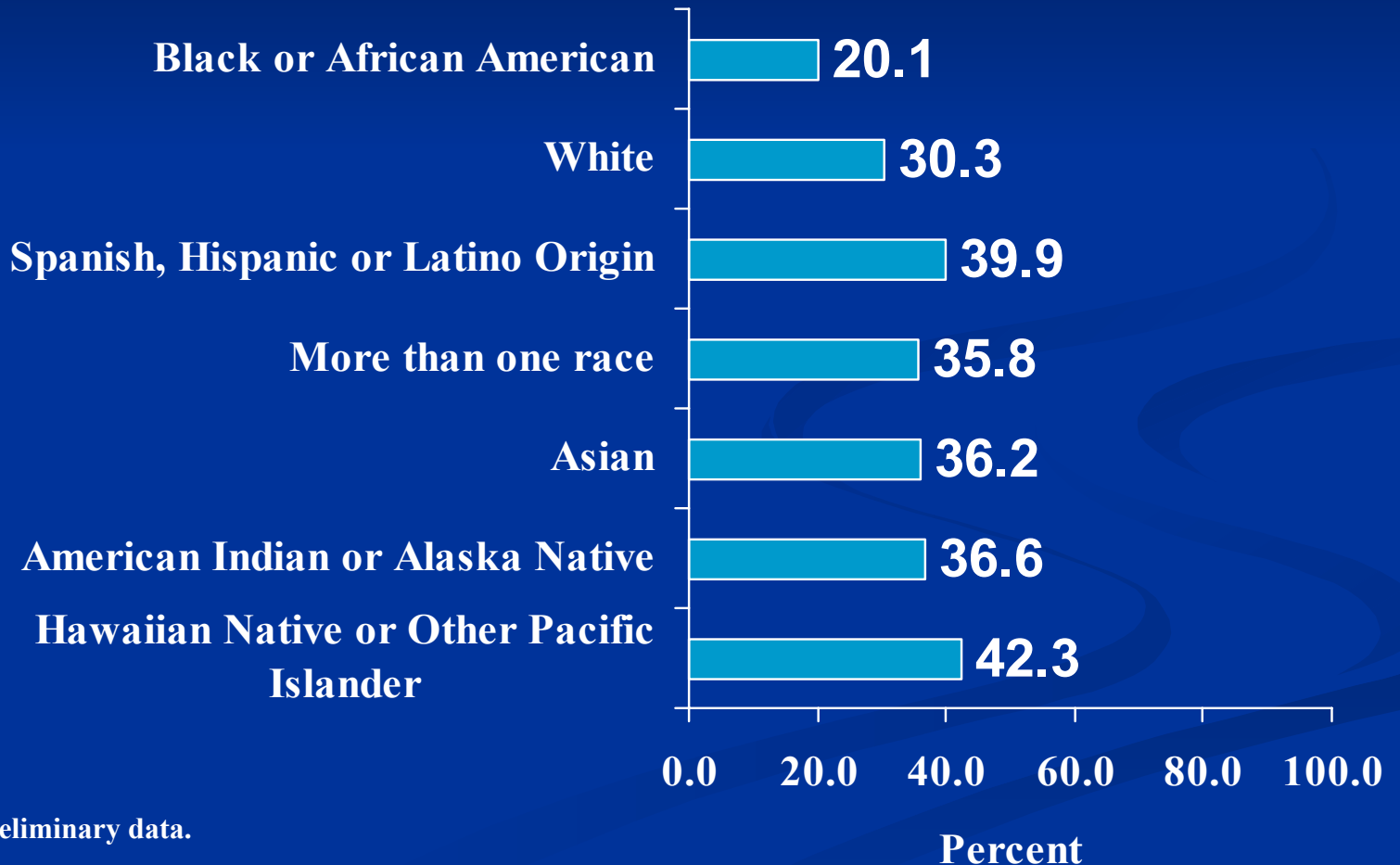
**1997: 54.0 years**

**Percent of principal farm operators living more than 10 years on same farm:  
72.1 percent**





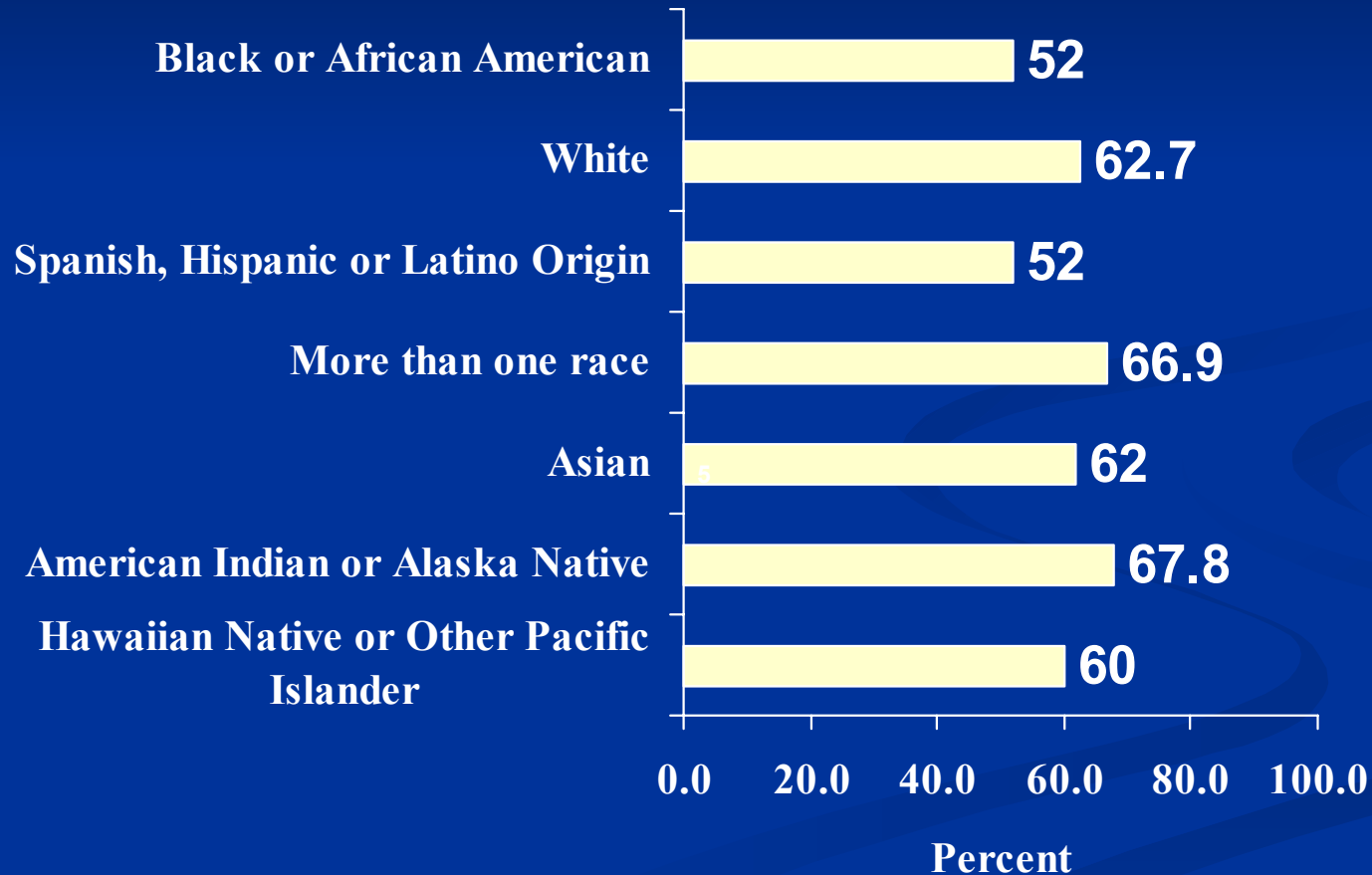
# U.S. Farm Operators Who Are Not Principal Farm Operators, 2002 Census of Agriculture<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Preliminary data.



# Farm Women as Portion of Other Farm Operators, 2002 Census of Agriculture<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Preliminary data.



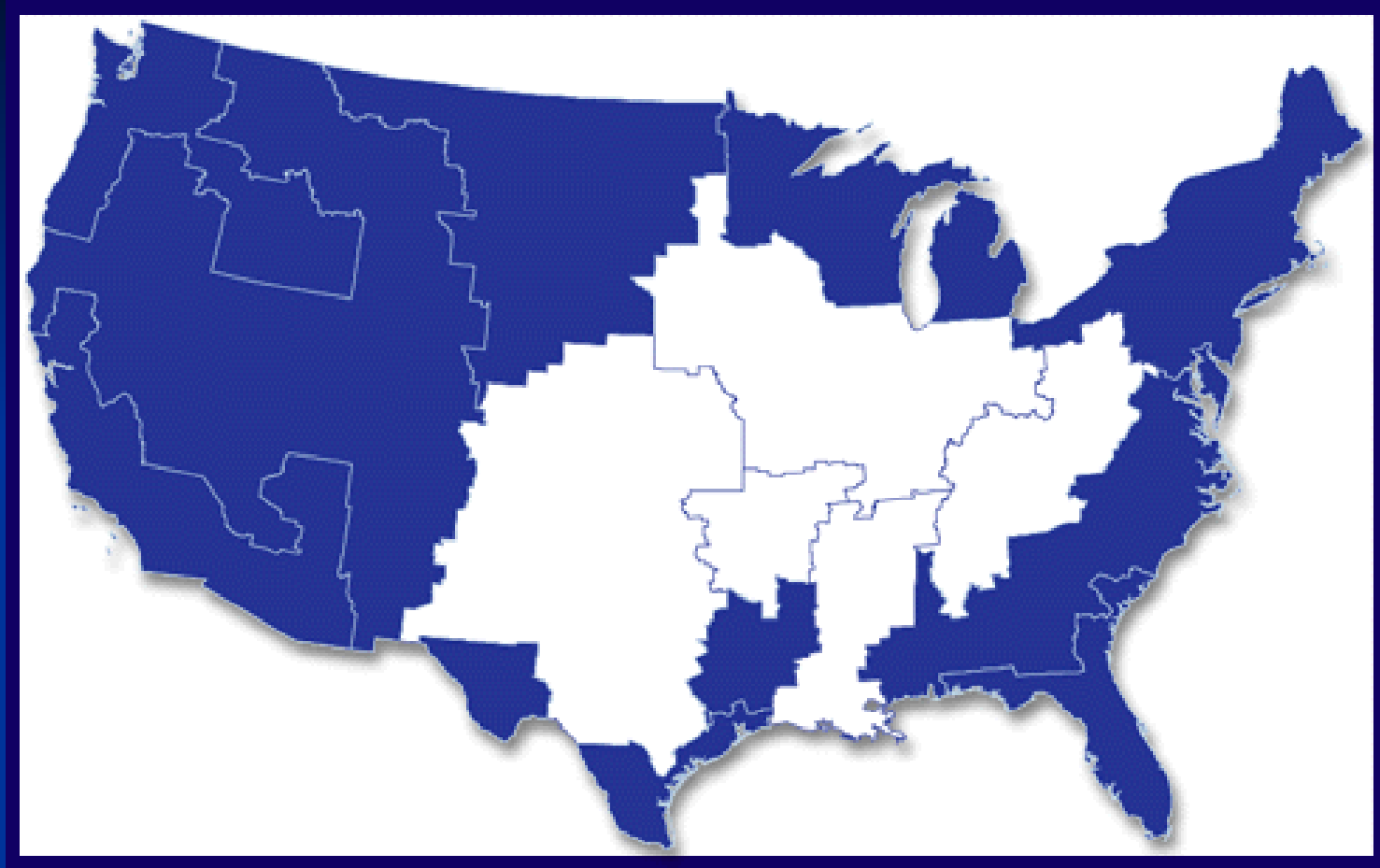


**Penn State Survey of U.S. Farm Women found that 53% of farm women in the U.S. considered themselves as “the main operator or one of the main operators” of the farm.**



## Specific Roles

	<u>%</u>
1. Principal farm operator	9.6
2. Full agricultural partner	30.8
3. Business manager	7.2
4. Agricultural helper	33.0
5. No involvement	19.4

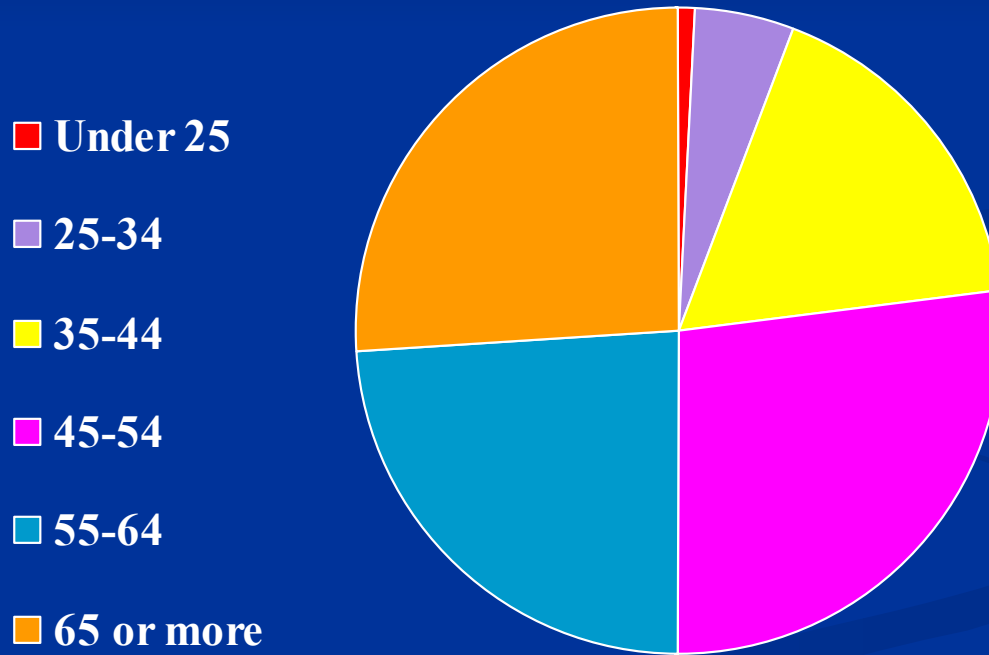


## U.S. Farm Women as Main Farm Operators\*

\*higher concentrations in blue



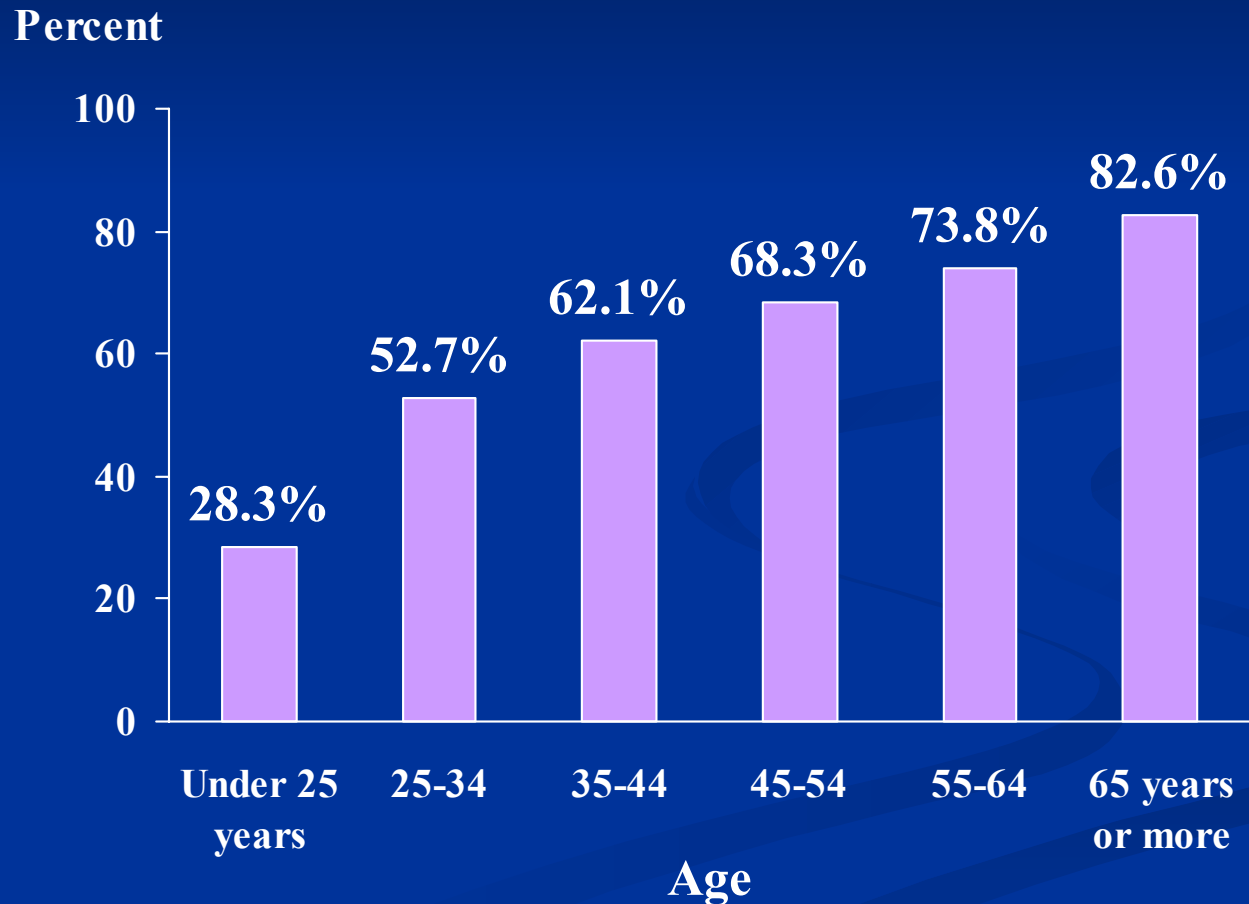
# Age Structure of U.S. Principal Farm Operators, 2002 Census of Agriculture<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Preliminary data.



# Total Farm Operators Classified As Principal Operators, 2002<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Preliminary data, 2002 Census of Agriculture.





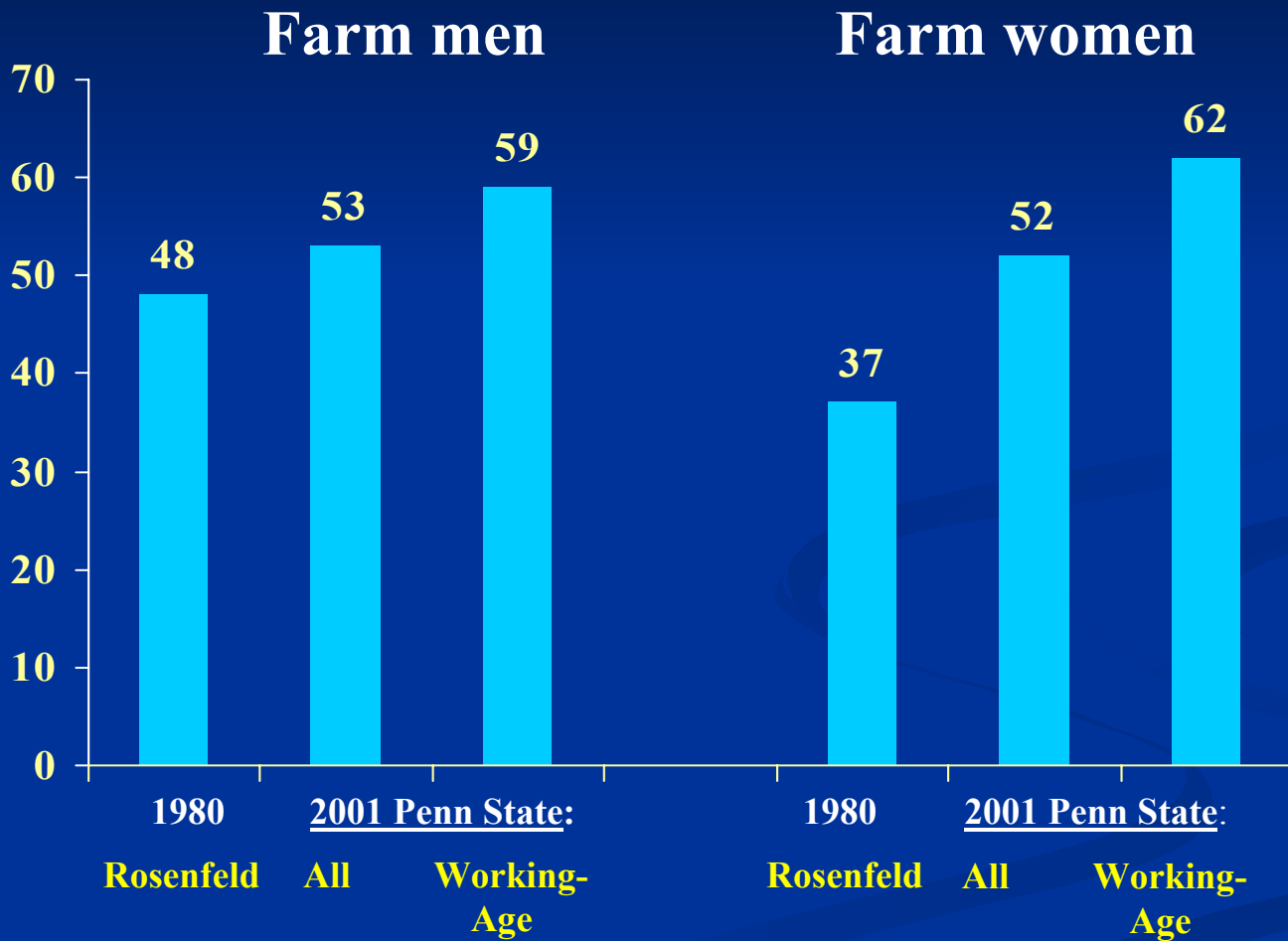
## Question 2:

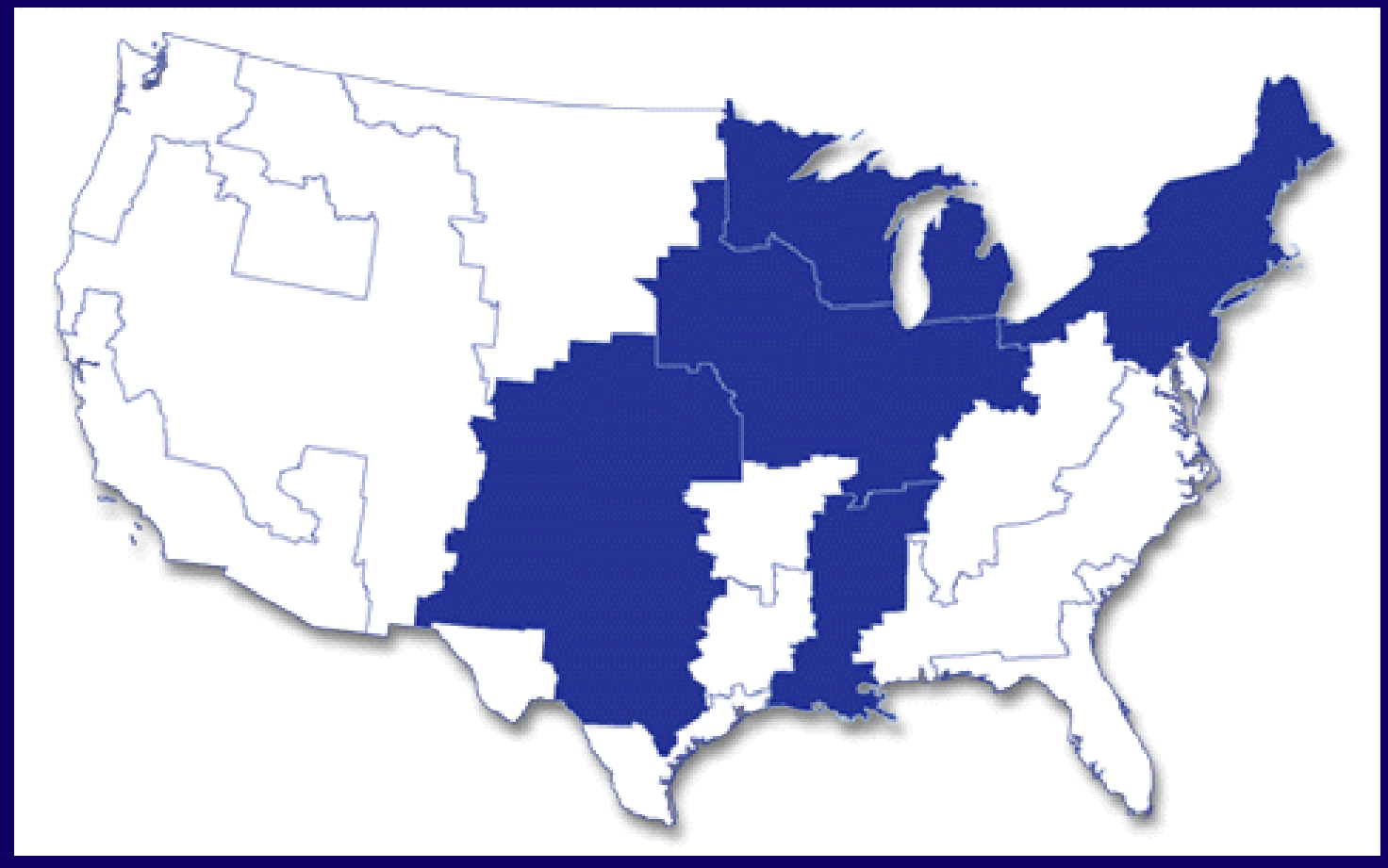
**Are those engaged in farming as farm operators engaged in other paid work?**



# Change in Off-farm Employment, 1980-2001

% off-farm employment



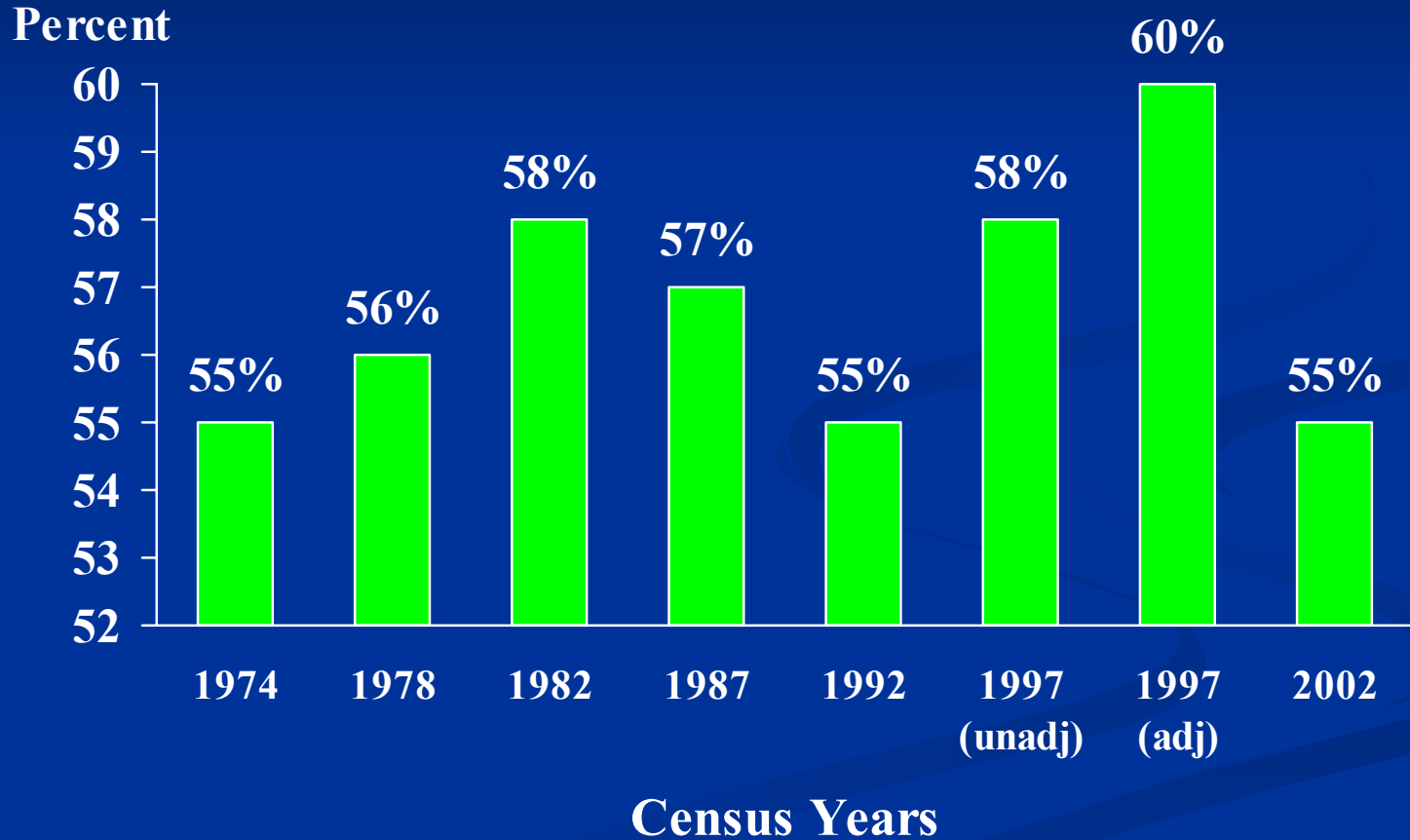


## Off-farm Employment of U.S. Farm Women\*

\*higher concentrations in blue



# Principal Farm Operators Also Employed at Another Job, 2002 Census of Agriculture



<sup>a</sup>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:**

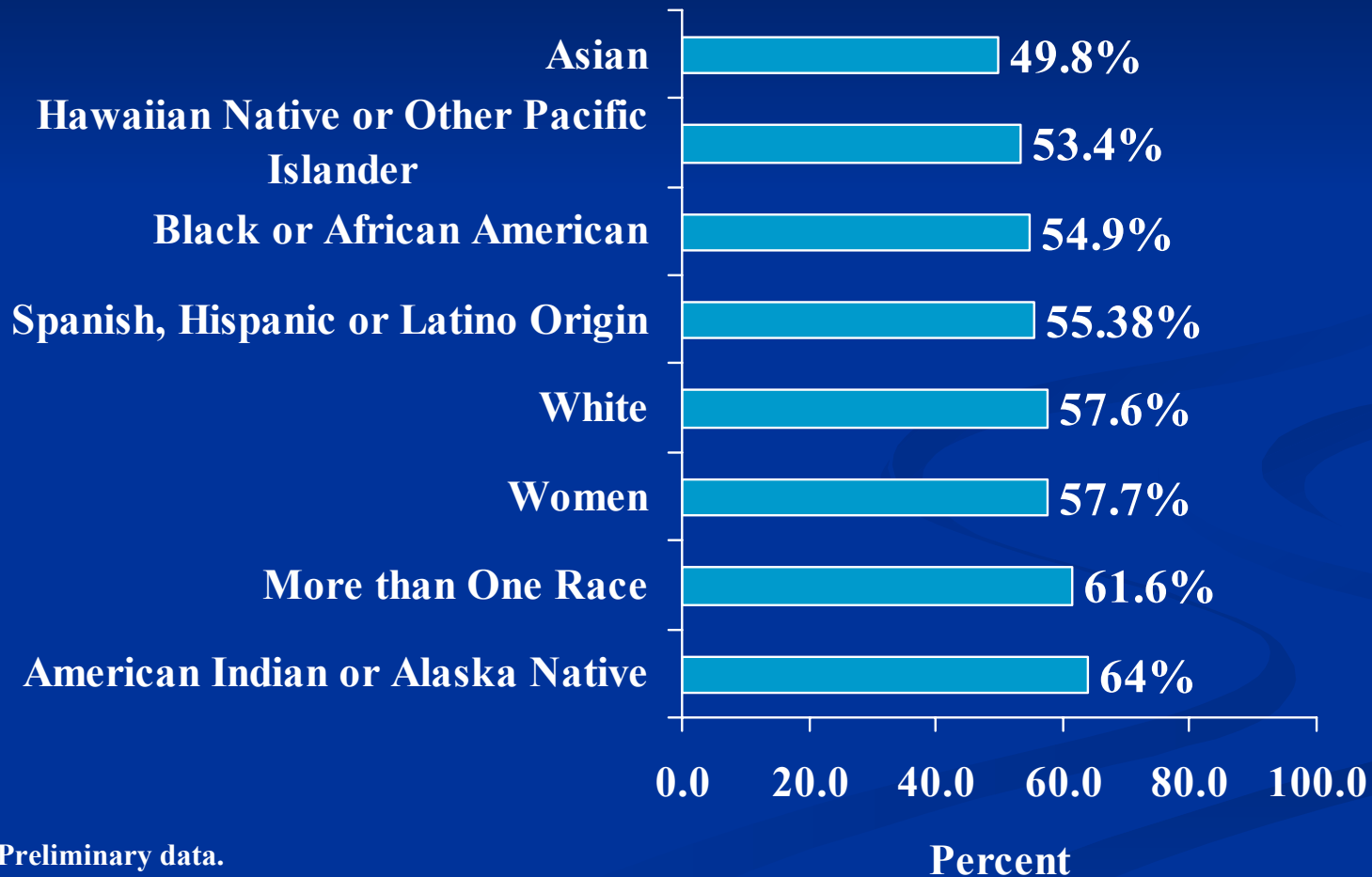
- **About as likely to work off-farm**
- **Less likely to work 200 days or more**

## **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



<sup>a</sup>Preliminary data.



### **Question 3:**

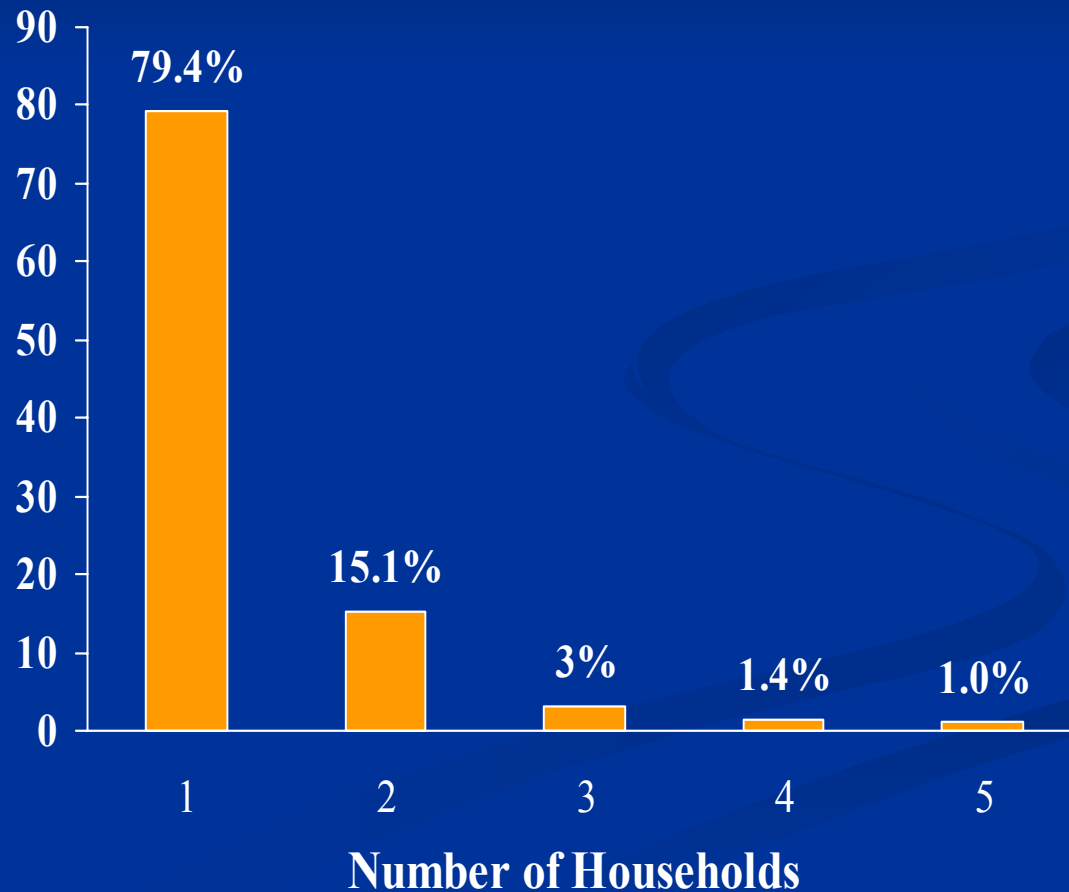
**Is the income earned from the farm operation accrue to only one household?**





# Sharing of Net Income of Farm Across Numbers of Households, 2002

Percent  
U.S. Farms



<sup>a</sup>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**