



Crossroads Resource Center

7415 Humboldt Ave. S. / Minneapolis, Minnesota 55423 / 612.869.8664
kmeter@crcworks.org www.crcworks.org

Tools for Community Self-determination

Navajo County, Arizona Local Food Economy

Highlights of a data compilation

by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis) for
Northern Arizona University — Center for Sustainable Environments

June 25, 2006

Navajo County (Arizona)

106,000 residents hold \$1.6 billion in annual purchasing power (2004).

The county's ranches & farms (2002)

Land:

- 291 ranches and farms. This is 4% of Arizona's total. Navajo County had 402 farms and ranches in 1997.
- 46 (15%) of county farms and ranches are 1,000 acres or more, and 144 (49%) are less than 50 acres.
- Land in farms and ranches was 4.6 million acres in 2002, 17% more than in 1997.
- Navajo County has 17% of Arizona's farm and ranch land.
- 28,195 acres of cropland.
- 6,467 acres of irrigated land.
- Average value of land and buildings per ranch/farm is \$2.8 million.

Ownership:

- 54 Native American-operated farms, 20 Hispanic.
- 35 farms are operated principally by women.

Sales:

- \$26.7 million of crops and livestock sold.
- \$26.1 million of livestock and products sold.
- Thus, 98 % of agricultural sales are livestock or livestock products.
- The number of farms/ranches selling livestock, poultry and related products fell 40% from 1997 to 2002 (303 to 181), while the amount of products sold remained steady at \$26 million.
- 166 farms and ranches sold less than \$2,500 per year.
- 81% of county farms reported net losses in 2002.
- 13 farms collected \$96,000 in federal support payments. Note that the Bureau of Economic Analysis reports far more government payments than does USDA (See below).

Cattle & Dairy:

- 207 ranches and farms hold an inventory of 22,179 cattle. 11,073 (half) were sold in 2002.
- County cattle sales totaled \$6.6 million in 1997, but similar data were not reported for 2002.
- 4,934 cattle weighing less than 500 pounds were sold by county ranchers. This is 80% of total cattle sold.
- Navajo County sold 2% of the cattle sold in Arizona in 1997.
- The County's cattle inventory was 32,240 in 1997.
- 62% of Navajo County's cattle inventory lived on 9 ranches with 500 or more cattle (2002).
- 40% of the county's cattle ranches raised fewer than 10 animals.
- 17 farms raise 149 milk cows. 16 of these farms have less than 10 cows. One has over 100.
- 39 farms produce 5,364 tons of forage crops (hay, etc.)

Other livestock & animal products:

- 10 farms sell hogs and pigs (There were 19 such farms in 1997).
- 28 farms sell sheep and lambs. One of these farms has over 1,000 sheep. 19 have less than 25 sheep each.
- 7 farms sell poultry and eggs, selling a total of \$2,000 of products. This is a sharp decline from the 15 farms that sold \$16,000 of poultry and eggs five years before.
- 20 farms sell 195 laying hens.
- 2 farms sell broiler chickens.
- 2 farms sell turkeys.

Vegetables & Melons (some farmers state that Ag Census data does not fully represent vegetable production):

- 10 farms sell vegetables raised on 57 acres.
- 1 farm raises cantaloupes.
- 1 farm raises squash.
- 4 farms raise 44 acres of sweet corn.
- 1 farm raises tomatoes.

Fruits (some farmers state that Ag Census data does not fully represent fruit production):

- The county has 23 farms with a total of 47 acres of orchards.
- 20 farms raise 34 acres of apples.
- 3 farms raise 5 acres of apricots.
- 3 farms raise 8 acres of peaches.

Grains:

- 7 farms sell corn for grain.
- 6 farms sell 4,400 tons of corn for silage.
- 2 farms sell sorghum.
- 2 farms sell wheat for grain.

Direct and organic sales:

- The Ag Census does not reveal how many organic products were sold in Navajo County.
- 69 farms in Arizona sold \$3.4 million of organic food products in 2002.
- 23 farms sell \$65,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a decrease of 44% in the number of farms (41 in 1997) and a 5% increase in direct sales from 1997 to 2002.

Ranking in Arizona:

- Ranks first in Arizona in number of hogs and pigs.
- Ranks second in Arizona in number of goats.
- Ranks fourth in Arizona in number of sheep and lambs.
- Ranks fourth in Arizona in acres of corn for grain.
- Ranks fifth in Arizona in acres of sweet corn.

Balance of Cash Receipts and Production Costs (BEA):

Navajo County ranchers and farmers sell \$28 million of food commodities per year (1998-2004 average), yet spend \$34 million to raise them, losing an average of \$6 million in production costs each year.

81% of the county's farms and ranches reported a net loss in 2002 (Ag Census). Producers have endured a total loss of \$40 million over the last 7 years, with only one year of positive cash flow selling crops and livestock. Navajo County farmers and ranchers earned \$15 million less from selling food products in 1969 than they earned in 2004 (in 2004 dollars).

Farmers and ranchers earn another \$500,000 per year of farm-related income — primarily custom work, rental income — and collect another \$400,000 of federal supports, to help cover the costs of farming (seven-year average for 1998-2004). Note that the Bureau of Economic Analysis reports far more government payments than does USDA (See above).

The county's consumers:

Navajo County consumers spend \$187 million buying food each year, including \$109 million for home use. Most of this food is produced outside the region. Only \$65,000 of food products (0.2%) are sold by farmers directly to consumers.

Farm and food economy summary:

Farmers lose \$6 million each year producing food commodities, and also spend \$14 million buying outside inputs, while consumers spend \$160 million buying food from outside. This is a total loss to the region of \$180 million of potential wealth *each year*. This loss amounts to nearly 7 times the value of all food commodities raised in the region.

Navajo County: markets for food (2004):

	<i>millions</i>
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	\$ 28
Fruits & vegetables	19
Cereals and bakery products	12
Dairy products	14
“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, & oils	35

Key data sources:

Bureau of Economic Analysis data on farm production balance

<http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis/>

Food consumption estimates from Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm>

U.S. Census of Agriculture

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>

USDA/Economic Research Service food consumption data:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/>

USDA/ Economic Research Service farm income data:

<http://ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/finfidmu.htm>

For more information:

To see results from *Finding Food in Farm Country* studies in other regions of Minnesota, Iowa, California, Hawaii: <http://www.crcworks.org/fffc.pdf>.

To read the original *Finding Food in Farm Country* study from Southeast Minnesota (written for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation): <http://www.crcworks.org/ff.pdf>.

To view a PowerPoint presented by Ken Meter at a keynote appearance to the Minnesota Rural Partners Summit in July, 2005: <http://www.crcworks.org/metersummit05.pdf>.

To get a brief list of essential food facts, many of which are cited in the presentation above, <http://www.crcworks.org/foodmarkets.pdf>.

To link to further analysis of farm and food economies in the U.S.: <http://www.crcworks.org/rural.html>.

Contact Ken Meter at Crossroads Resource Center
<kmeter@crcworks.org>
(612) 869-8664