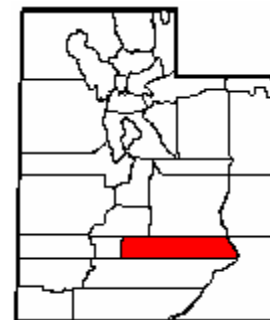


## Size and Scope of Wayne County Agriculture 2019

*Ryan Feuz, Post-Doctoral Researcher*  
*Ryan Larsen, Assistant Professor*  
*Trenton Wilde, Extension Assistant Professor*

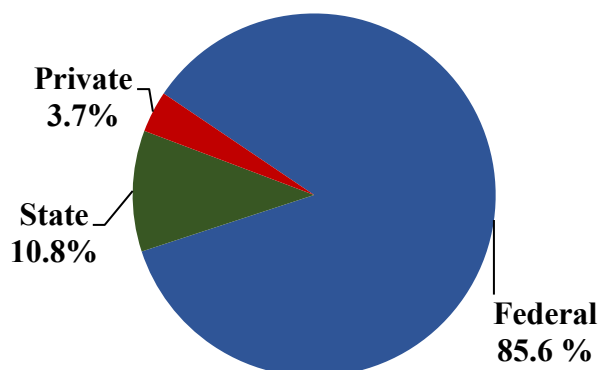


### Location

Wayne County is located in the southeast quadrant of the state. Surrounding counties include Emery, Grand, San Juan, Garfield, Piute, and Sevier. The Green River forms the eastern boarder of the county. The county seat is Loa. Capitol Reef National Park and Canyonlands National park are both in Wayne County.

### Land Ownership

The land ownership within the county is divided as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Wayne County Land Ownership**  
Source: 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book

The majority of the federally owned ground is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Portions are maintained as national parks and recreation areas. The state-owned ground is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA). Portions of the state-owned land are wildlife preserves. The private ground is primarily farm ground and grazing areas.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 42,751 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 205 acres and an average value of \$4,539 per acre. The county had 14,587 acres in cropland of which 13,336 acres were harvested. There were 16,552 acres of cropland and pastureland that were irrigated.

### Growing Season

The growing season in Wayne County averages about 4.5 months; however, the majority of farming is in western Wayne County (Loa area) where the growing season is less than 90 days. While growing seasons in the eastern part of the county can be significantly longer due to the lower elevation, the mostly desert landscape of the eastern part of the county is prohibitive of extensive agriculture production. Table 1 displays some of the details on

climatology in three areas of Wayne County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019).

<b>Table 1. Wayne County Annual Precipitation and Average Frost-Free Days</b>				
<b>Location</b>	<b>Annual Precip.</b>	<b>Last spring freeze</b>	<b>First fall freeze</b>	<b>Freeze-free period</b>
Hanksville	5.66 in	May 5	Oct. 5	155 days
Hans Flat Ranger Station	9.83 in	May 6	Oct. 17	165 days
Loa	7.67 in	June 14	Sept. 7	86 days

## Crop Production

The major crops grown in Wayne County with 2017 yields and total acres harvested are displayed in Table 2.

<b>Table 2. Wayne County 2017 Crop Acres and Yields</b>			
<b>Primary Crops</b>	<b>Yields</b>	<b>Harvested Acres</b>	<b>Average Yield/acre</b>
Hay	46,027 tons	12,898	3.6 tons
Corn Silage	3,035 tons	153	19.8 tons
Barley	3,529 bu.	57	61.9 bu.

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa is begun by spraying Roundup in the fall or early spring to kill the quack grass prior to plowing. The ground is disked and harrowed and then planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains except Roundup is not typically used prior to planting grains. About 98% of all grain is planted in the spring.

The most prevalent crop rotation is to leave alfalfa in for 7 years, plant small grains for 2 years, then replant alfalfa with a small grain nurse crop. Producers typically get three cuttings of alfalfa each

year. About 75% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) are purchased locally while the remaining 25% are bought in a neighboring county.

The majority of the crops are fed to local livestock over the winter months. This includes both mother cows as well as a few feedlots in the county.

Virtually all of Wayne County is under sprinkler irrigation. There are very few pivots. The majority of the sprinklers are wheel lines due to small fields. Most of the irrigation is gravity flow eliminating the expense of pumping. Irrigation water sources include the Fremont River and its tributaries as well as a few ground wells.

## Livestock Production

The inventories of the major classes of livestock produced in the county as of 2017 compared with 2012 inventories are listed in Table 3.

<b>Table 3. Major Livestock Commodities</b>			
<b>Livestock</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>% Change</b>
All Cattle	16,958	18,156	7.1%
Beef Cows	9,830	9,821	0.0%
Milk Cows	668	731	9.4%
Sheep & Lambs	7,462	7,575	1.5%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Most beef calves are weaned in the late fall and either sold or retained in their own feedlots for the winter. Most calves that are sold at weaning are videoed and sold through satellite auctions earlier in the summer with delivery at weaning using a sliding weight formula. The majority of the balance of the calves are sold through the local sale barns. Several of the larger operators in the county feed their own calves through the winter and sell them in the late spring. Most of these calves go to Midwest feedlots for finishing. There is very little retained ownership through slaughter. Although many mother cows are

fed hay through the winter, there are also many taken to the desert to winter.

The sheep in the county are grazed most of the year. Some feed is fed during lambing and between transitions to summer/winter ranges. Most lambs are sold through private contracts in the fall of the year and are sent to feedlots after sale.

**Farm Income and Age of Operator**

Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$2,470,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$14,659,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$17,129,000, down just over \$3 million since the

previous census of agriculture record from 2012 (\$20,362,000).

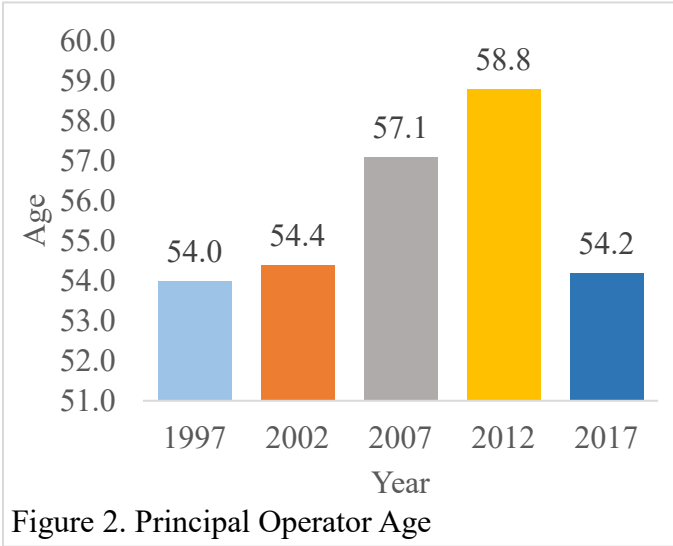
The average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 55.4 in 2017. This is a notable decrease since the previous census of agriculture in 2012 when the average principal operator age was 59.1. The principal operator average age is graphed below in Figure 2 for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.

**Sources**

United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (2019). 2017 Ag Census Data. Retrieved from: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online\\_Resources/Census\\_Data\\_Query\\_Tool/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/Census_Data_Query_Tool/index.php)

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Utah Climate Center. (2019). Retrieved July 10, 2019, from Utah State University: <https://climate.usu.edu/>



Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

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