



Size and Scope of Sanpete County Agriculture 2019

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Location

Sanpete County is located in the center of Utah. Surrounding Utah counties include Carbon, Emery, Sevier, Millard, Juab, and Utah. The population was estimated at 30,035 in 2017. The county seat is Manti and the largest city is Ephraim.

Land Ownership

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

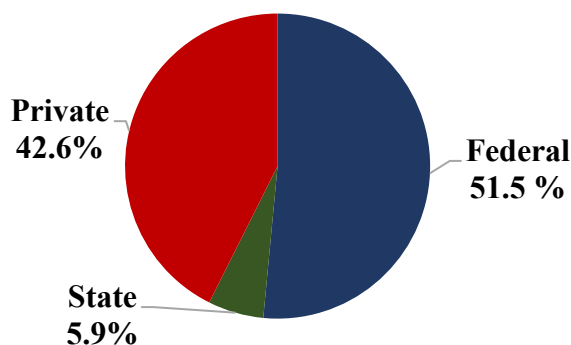


Figure 1. Sanpete County Land Ownership

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). 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 301,691 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 301 acres and an average value of \$2,820 per acre. The county had 71,661 acres in cropland of which 57,963 acres were harvested. There were a total of 76,489 acres of cropland and pastureland that were irrigated.

Growing Season

The growing season in Sanpete County averages about 4 months. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in three areas of Sanpete County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019).

Table 1. Sanpete County Annual Precipitation and Average Frost-Free Days				
Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Manti	12.77 in	May 24	Sept. 26	125.6 days
Moroni	10.12 in	June 2	Sept. 18	109.2 days
Ephraim	11.65 in	May 26	Sept. 23	121.0 days

Crop Production

The major crops grown in Sanpete County with 2017 yields and total acres harvested are displayed in Table 2. Additional crops such as corn (grain), vegetables, etc. were also produced, but yields with acreages were not reported in the 2017 census of agriculture.

Table 2. Sanpete County 2017 Crop Acres and Yields			
Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/acre
Hay	205,151 tons	51,212	4.0 tons
Corn Silage	52,549 tons	2,596	20.2 tons
Wheat	60,589 bu.	885	68.5 bu.
Oats	35,962 bu.	401	89.7 bu.
Barley	102,869 bu.	998	103.1 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 disking. The ground is then harrowed and planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains except Roundup is not typically used prior to tillage and planting. About 98% of all grain is planted in the spring of the year.

The most prevalent crop rotation that producers practice is seven years in alfalfa production, and two years in small grains. Most of the small grains are cut and baled into hay for livestock feed in late June and July. A small portion is harvested with a combine and sold to local feed mills for livestock feed in late July and August. The straw is baled and sold for livestock bedding or mixed with high quality forages for livestock feed. Producers typically get two to three cuttings of alfalfa each year. About 25% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) are purchased locally while the remaining 75% are bought in a neighboring county.

Sources of irrigation water include the Sevier River and its tributaries. North Sanpete farms rely on snowmelt and run off from small mountain streams that feed into the Sanpitch River. A reservoir was designed for North Sanpete but never built. With no reservoir to hold water for late season irrigation, North Sanpete farms have lower late season crop production. South Sanpete utilizes reservoirs to hold water for improved late season crop production. Most of the cultivated land is sprinkler irrigated with pivots, wheel lines and hand lines. A small portion of the cultivated land still uses flood irrigation.

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. Sanpete County is the number one sheep producing as well as turkey producing county in Utah. In 2017, total turkey inventory for the county was reported at 3,050,306.

Table 3. Major Livestock Commodities			
Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	49,349	56,496	14.5%
Beef Cows	18,154	16,998	-6.4%
Milk Cows	6,460	7,476	15.7%
Sheep & Lambs	54,202	68,645	26.6%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Sheep production in Sanpete County consists of mostly shed lambing in the spring around April. The sheep will graze farm ground and the foothill pastures from April through June. During the months of July through September, most of the sheep herds are transported to Federal Forest grazing permits where they are tended to by a sheepherder on horseback with stock dogs. In the fall, lambs are marketed and sold to lamb feeding companies throughout the western U.S. The fall is breeding season. The bucks are put with the ewes and graze for a few months on crop aftermath. The sheep herds are then transported to federal dessert grazing permits in southwestern Utah where they spend the winter. Sheep are sheered in March and April in preparation for lambing season. The wool is bagged and pooled together to be sold to national and international markets.

Farm Income and Age of Operator

Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$20,706,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$151,051,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$171,757,000, up over \$24 million since the previous census of agriculture record from 2012 (\$147,407,000). The average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 55.6 in 2017. The principal operator average age is graphed below in Figure 2 for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.

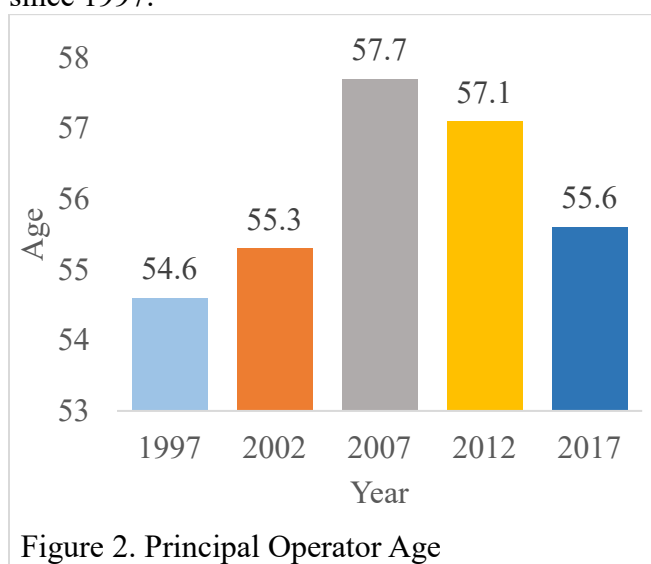


Figure 2. Principal Operator Age
Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

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

Utah Association of Counties. (2017). 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book. Murray. Retrieved from <https://uac.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2017-Utah-Counties-Fact-Book.pdf>

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

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This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Ken White, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.