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.

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).
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Crops</th>
<th>Yields</th>
<th>Harvested Acres</th>
<th>Average Yield/acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>205,151 tons</td>
<td>51,212</td>
<td>4.0 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn Silage</td>
<td>52,549 tons</td>
<td>2,596</td>
<td>20.2 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>60,589 bu.</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>68.5 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>35,962 bu.</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>89.7 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>102,869 bu.</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>103.1 bu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Sanpete County 2017 Crop Acres and Yields

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Cattle</td>
<td>49,349</td>
<td>56,496</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cows</td>
<td>18,154</td>
<td>16,998</td>
<td>-6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk Cows</td>
<td>6,460</td>
<td>7,476</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep &amp; Lambs</td>
<td>54,202</td>
<td>68,645</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 shepherder 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 desert 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.

Sources


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