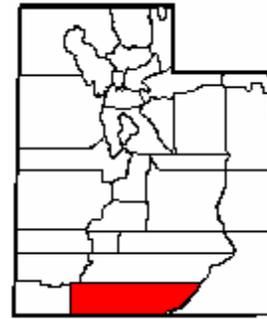




# Size and Scope of Kane County Agriculture 2019

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## Location

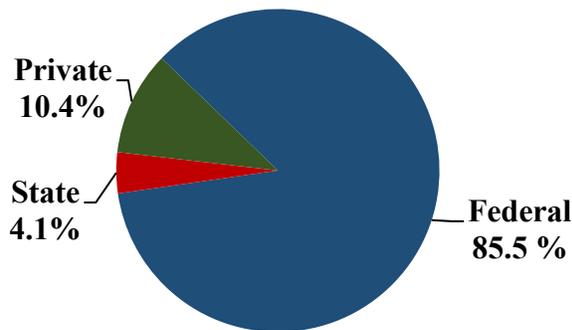
Kane County is located on the southern border of Utah. It borders Arizona on the south. Other surrounding Utah counties include Washington, Iron, Garfield, and San Juan. The economy consists of tourism, services, and agriculture. Some points of interest in Kane County are Lake Powell along the eastern border, Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. As of 2017, the population was estimated at 7,567.

The majority of land is federally owned and is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Much of the county is covered by Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The state-owned ground is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA). The private ground is primarily farm ground, grazing, and residential.

## Land Ownership

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

The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 128,697 acres in farms or ranches with an average size of 707 acres and an average value of \$1,814 per acre. The county had 4,862 acres in cropland of which 3,384 acres were harvested. In total, 6,896 acres of cropland and pasture were irrigated.



**Figure 1. Kane County Land Ownership.**

Source: 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book

## Growing Season

The growing season in Kane County averages about four and a half months. However, the growing season length can vary quite drastically between different areas of the county. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in four areas of Kane County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019).

The much shorter growing season in Alton, as compared to the other three areas highlighted, is primarily due to the relatively higher elevation in that area. Alton sits at approximately 7,041 ft. while Orderville, Kanab, and Big Water are at 5,449 ft., 4,970 ft., and 4,108 ft. respectively.

Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Alton	16.71 in	June 6	Sept. 25	112 days
Kanab	13.49 in	May 8	Oct. 18	167 days
Orderville	15.20 in	May 21	Oct. 4	1367 days
Big Water	6.68 in	April 10	Nov. 1	207.1 days

## Crop Production

Hay is the primary crop grown in Kane County. Total acres harvested and yields for 2017 are displayed in Table 2.

Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/Acre
Hay	8,897 tons	3,335	2.7 tons

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa begins by plowing or disking to a depth of 10 to 12 inches. The ground is then finish disked and land planed. Alfalfa is often planted with a cover crop using a surface drill. The ground preparation for the oat hay is the same with producers planting in the spring. Fall triticale or 3-way are also popular rotational cereal crops.

The crops are irrigated with sprinkler systems with the most prevalent being wheel lines. Pivot irrigation systems are also becoming popular in Kane County. The majority, about 95% of the irrigation water available in Kane County, is from the Virgin River and the Kanab Creek. The other 5% is drawn from deep wells in the area.

The most prevalent crop rotation practice is to leave alfalfa in for seven to eight years and then reestablish. Producers typically get three to four cuttings of alfalfa each year in areas with a longer growing season. At higher elevations, two harvests are usually the norm.

Producers purchase about 30% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) locally, with 50% bought in neighboring counties (Washington and Iron), and the remaining 20% purchased statewide. Farmlands surround towns and cities including Orderville, Alton, and the county seat Kanab, located on the Utah-Arizona border.

The majority of hay producers raise hay to feed their livestock in the winter and may sell surplus hay to neighbors or ship it out of county. Some hay producers sell high quality horse hay to the local, St. George, Las Vegas, or Indian Reservation markets.

## 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.

Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	8,213	8,493	3.4%
Sheep & Lambs	1,069	353	-67.0%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Most cattle operations are cow calf and calves are weaned and shipped to grass pastures or feedlots each fall. Higher elevation range lands are used for summer grazing pastures and lower elevation rangelands are used for winter grazing. Many producers feed their livestock hay in the fall and winter. Other producers will haul livestock long distances between summer and winter pastures.

## Farm Income and Age of Operator

Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$739,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$5,529,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$6,267,000, up \$1,584,000 from 2012 (\$4,683,000). The average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 53.3 in 2017, which ranked first in the state for youngest average operator age. There has also been a notable decrease in the principal operator average age since the previous census of agriculture in 2012 when the average age was 60.1. The average age of the principle operator is graphed below in figure 2 for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.

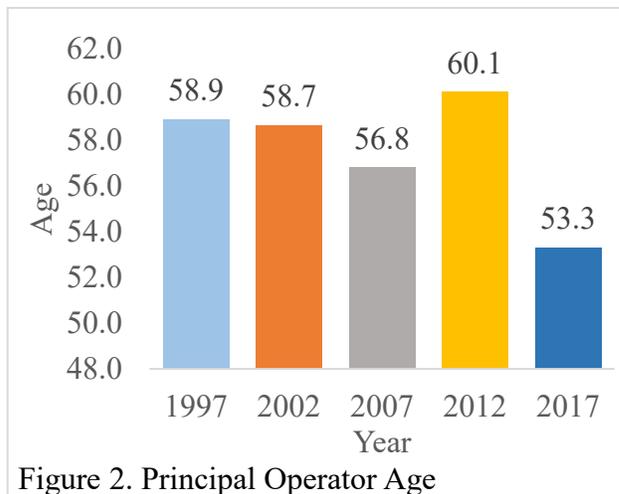


Figure 2. Principal Operator Age

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

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