

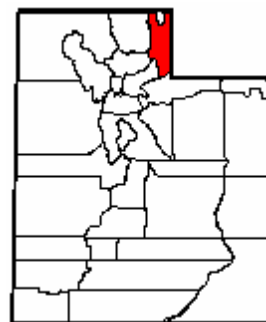


Size and Scope of Rich County Agriculture 2019

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Location

Rich County is located in the northeast corner of Utah. The county contains roughly half of Bear Lake and is bordered by Idaho on the north and Wyoming on the east. Other surrounding Utah counties include Summit, Morgan, Weber, and Cache. In 2017, the population was estimated at 2,391. The largest town is Garden City, primarily supported by the tourism industry surrounding Bear Lake. The county seat is Randolph.

Land Ownership

Figure 1 shows the division of land ownership within the county.

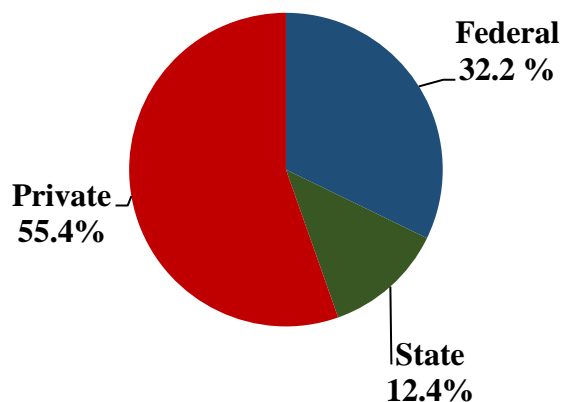


Figure 1. Rich County Land Ownership

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 private ground is primarily farm ground and grazing areas.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 374,947 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 2,343 acres and an average value of \$873 per acre. The county had 70,648 acres in cropland of which 41,118 were harvested. There were 42,422 acres of cropland and pastureland that were irrigated in 2017.

Growing Season

The growing season in Rich County averages approximately three months. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in two areas of Rich County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019). The growing season can vary quite drastically between various areas within Rich County, but in general, is relatively short as compared to other Utah counties. The short growing season is primarily due to the high elevation of the county. The elevation in Rich County varies from 5,968 feet in Garden City to just over 9,200 feet at Bridger Peak.

Table 1.
Rich County Annual Precipitation and Average Frost-Free Days

Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Randolph	12.38 in	June 27	Aug 21	54.7 days
Bear Lake State Park	14.14 in	May 28	Sept 25	124.8 days
Laketown	12.20 in	June 14	Sept 10	89.2 days

Crop Production

Table 2 displays the major crops grown in Rich County, with 2017 yields and total acres harvested.

Table 2. <i>Rich County 2017 Crop Acres and Yields</i>			
Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/Acre
Hay	93,791 tons	40,701	2.3 tons
Barley	92,568 bu.	1,223	75.6 bu.

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

The majority of the crops are fed to local livestock. The county also has significant raspberry production. The annual harvest of raspberries brings in tourists from the surrounding region as the community promotes the raspberry harvest through holding “Raspberry Days,” a well-known, community-supported event.

Crops are typically irrigated, with flood irrigation accounting for about 70%, pivot, 10%, wheel lines, 15%, and hand lines, 5% (A. Romesser, rangeland management specialist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, personal communication, October 31, 2019).

Livestock Production

Table 3 lists the major classes of livestock produced in the county, along with their associated inventories as of 2017 compared with 2012 inventories.

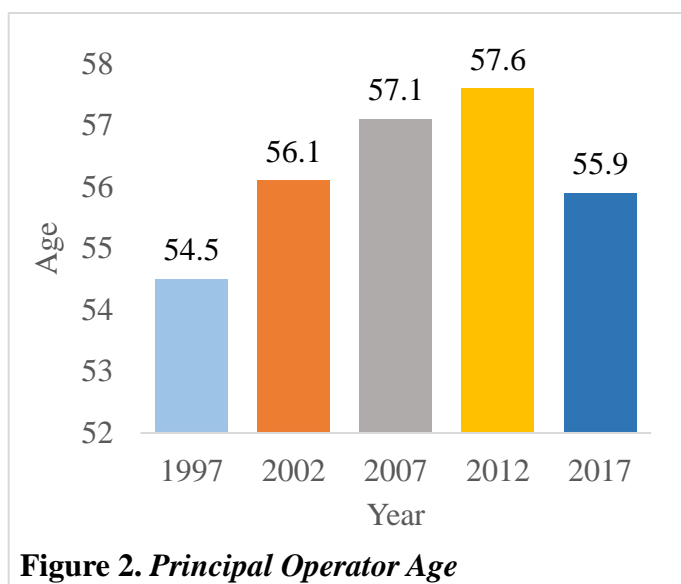
Table 3. <i>Major Livestock Commodities</i>			
Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	44,384	39,726	-10.5%
Sheep and Lambs	9,221	7,501	-18.6%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Due to the harsh winter in Rich County, most of the calves, excluding replacement heifers, leave the county for feeding over the winter. With no local livestock auction in the county, most calves are marketed through video auctions, while approximately 15% are sold to an order buyer. In the fall, cows and sheep graze the field aftermath until snowfall, at which point they are fed hay for the remainder of the winter. A few producers take their cows, and one takes sheep, to the desert range for wintering.

Farm Income and Age of Operator

Cash receipts from 2017 crops within Rich county equaled \$3,555,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$18,519,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$22,074,000. The average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 55.9 in 2017. Figure 2 graphs the principal operator age for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.



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

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