

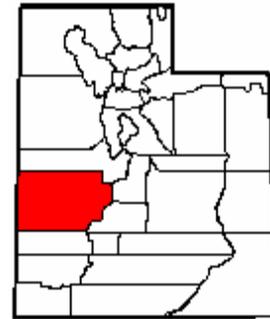


Size and Scope of Millard County Agriculture 2019

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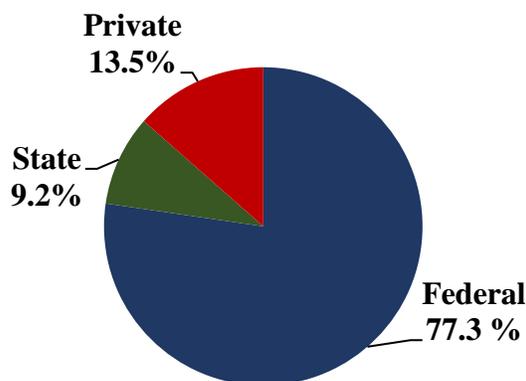
Location

Millard County borders Nevada on the west. It is in the center of the western border of Utah. Surrounding Utah counties include Juab, Sanpete, Sevier, and Beaver. The population was estimated at 12,863 in 2017. The county has a total area of 6,828 square miles, making it the third largest county in Utah. The Sevier desert covers much of the county with the Pahvant Mountains forming the eastern county boundary.

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.

Land Ownership

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



The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 481,539 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 736 acres and an average value of \$2,043 per acre. The county had 145,965 acres in cropland of which 112,567 acres were harvested. A total of 122,680 acres of cropland and pastureland were irrigated.

Growing Season

The growing season in Millard County averages about four-and-a-half months. Table 1 displays some of the details on climatology in three areas of Millard County according to the Utah Climate Center (2019).

Figure 1. Millard County Land Ownership

Source: 2017 Utah Counties Fact Book

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

Location	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze -free period
Delta	7.9 inches	May 18	Sept. 27	133 days
Fillmore	14.9 inches	May 16	Oct. 3	141 days
Garrison	7.4 inches	May 30	Sept. 24	118 days

Crop Production

Millard County is one of the primary agricultural production regions in the state. In 2017, Millard County ranked first out of all Utah counties in production of hay (2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture). It is also one of the larger producing counties of barley, corn, and wheat. The major crops grown in Millard County with 2017 yields and total acres harvested are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2.
Millard County 2017 Crop Acres and Yields

Primary Crops	Yields	Harvested Acres	Average Yield/Acre
Hay	384,539 tons	81,658	4.7 tons
Barley	292,195 bu.	3,246	90.0 bu.
Wheat	567,576 bu.	6,097	93.1 bu.
Corn, Grain	1,158,068 bu.	6,027	192.1 bu.
Corn, Silage	199,088 tons	8,958	22.2 tons

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa begins in the Delta area. The rest of the county uses mostly pivots spraying Roundup to kill the quack grass prior to disking.

Most hay is planted in the fall of the year after a grain crop. The ground is then harrowed and planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains with the exception of using Roundup. Typically, Roundup is not used prior to planting grains, as grains are less susceptible to large weed infestations and producers have the ability to control many weeds within grains more cost effectively using a broadleaf herbicide as weeds emerge. About 98% of all grain is planted in the spring of the year.

The most prevalent crop rotation practice is to leave alfalfa in for four to five years, plant corn or small grains for one to two years, then replant alfalfa. Producers typically get three to four cuttings of alfalfa each year. About 25% of all inputs, such as seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and so forth, are purchased locally while the remaining 75% are bought in a neighboring county.

The majority of the hay in the county is sold to the dairies in California or exported to China, Japan, or Korea. Approximately 20% is kept locally, 40% is exported, and 40% is sold into California. Delta also has locally owned and operated cubing and hay press plants such as Paramount Cubing. It has been in business since 1975 and purchases much of its alfalfa supply locally as well as throughout the Rocky Mountains to produce high quality alfalfa feed cubes. Their product is sold to customers spanning an area from Hawaii to Texas who demand premium hay with convenient storability (Paramount Cubing, 2019).

Irrigation

Approximately half of the hay is irrigated by flood irrigation. Many producers in the area have laser leveled their fields to optimize flood irrigation practices. Laser leveling increases irrigation efficiency and drainage. Laser leveling for flood irrigation also leads to less water and labor used for each irrigation, and the water can be applied more evenly. Flood irrigation is the typical practice in the

and a few wheel lines. In the Delta area, the water comes from the Sevier River. In the east side of the county (Fillmore area), the majority of the water comes from wells with a lesser portion coming from the mountain reservoirs.

Livestock Production

Millard County ranks among the top of Utah counties for both beef cow and milk cow inventory. The inventories of the major classes of livestock produced in the county as of 2017 compared with 2012 inventories are listed in Table 3.

About 25% of cattle are wintered in the desert while the rest of the cows are fed hay in pastures. Most of the calves are fed in the county until January and February and then they are sold and sent to the feedlots in the Midwest. Approximately 10% of calves are retained while the rest are sold. The majority of the calves are sold to cattle buyers. Some producers also use video auctions.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture reports that there were 20 dairy operations within the county. The county’s dairy operations are mainly located near the Delta area, with additional producers also in the Fillmore and Holden areas. Much of the milk produced is sold to Danone North America where it is used in yogurt production at the West Jordan, Utah, Dannon yogurt plant (Jessop, 2018).

Delta is also home to a large egg production facility owned and operated by Cal-Maine Foods. The facility has operated since 1998. Until recently, the facility housed approximately 1.4 million hens. Currently the facility is undergoing extensive expansion to allow for housing of cage-free hens. Upon project completion, total hen capacity will grow to nearly 3.4 million hens. Much of this expansion responds to California regulation and subsequent demand for cage-free produced eggs (Poultry Times, 2019).

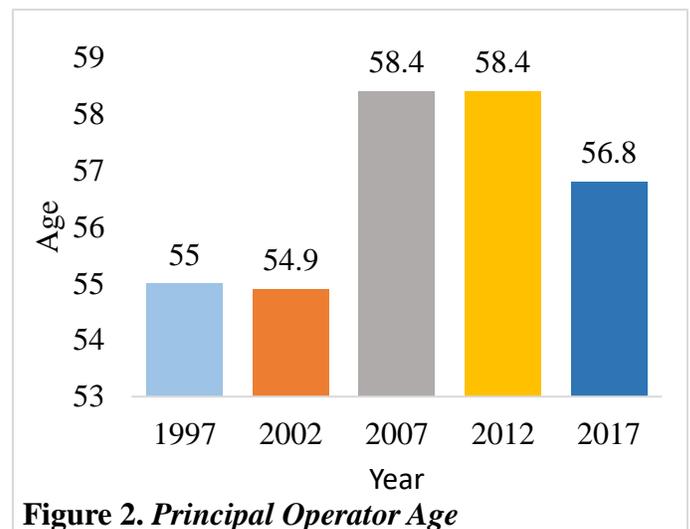
Table 3.
Major Livestock Commodities

Livestock	2012	2017	% Change
All Cattle	70,779	56,875	-19.6%
Beef Cows	25,352	18,754	-26.0%
Milk Cows	16,421	12,299	-25.1%
Sheep and Lambs	2,624	2,500	-4.7%

Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Farm Income and Age of Operator

Cash receipts from 2017 crops equaled \$85,460,000 and cash receipts from livestock totaled \$94,500,000. Total 2017 cash receipts were \$179,959,000, nearly identical to the previous census of agriculture record from 2012 (\$180,624,000). The average age of the primary farmer or rancher was 56.5 in 2017, which is a notable decrease since 2012 (59.7). Figure 2 below graphs the principal operator age for all USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture years since 1997.



Source: 2017 USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture

Sources

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