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[Average Age of Farmers Continues To Rise](#)

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has released the results of the [2017 Census of Agriculture](#), a count of our nation's farms and ranches and the people who run them. This is the first accounting of our nation's farm population since 2012, providing a new outlook on the future of U.S. agriculture.

The results should concern us all: the number of young farmers is not keeping pace with the number of farmers aging out of the field. The average age of primary producers increased from 58.3 in 2012 to 59.4 in 2017. The average age of all producers also increased from 56.3 to 57.5 years from 2012 to 2017. Although the number of primary producers under 35 increased by nearly 2,000, primary producers over 65 now outnumber farmers under 35 by more than 6 (6.41) to 1. Previously a ratio of 5.85 to 1, this widening gap reveals a crisis of attrition in agriculture as farmers retire without a successor in place.

Enterprising young people face an uphill battle in establishing themselves in agriculture given prohibitive land prices, student loan debt, lack of skilled farm labor, and limited health care options. Our federal farm policy must do more to address these barriers to entry and support our next generation of farmers and ranchers. Young farmers rely on funding for key farm bill programs, and additional data collection efforts on farmland ownership are needed to inform policy solutions.

Inability to access farmland was the number one challenge reported by participants in our 2017 National Young Farmer Survey. The census data confirm that across the country we are losing quality farmland at a rapid pace. Land in farms has decreased by 14,310,081 acres and the total number of farms has decreased by 67,083 farms. Average farm size increased by seven acres over the five years since the 2012 Census, highlighting continued consolidation of farming operations across the sector.

The 2017 Census data underlines the urgency of the National Young Farmers Coalition's work. Sophie Ackoff, Vice President of Policy and Campaigns, says, "The latest census results should be seen as a call to action. The small uptick in the number of primary producers under 35 is not nearly enough to replace those aging out and retiring. The U.S. needs more young farmers to ensure healthy food for our communities and to steward our water, air, and soil resources into the future."

Unfortunately, the number of Latinx and non-white primary producers did not increase. Ninety-five percent of U.S. primary producers surveyed identified as White; the number of Black, Latinx, Asian American, and Native American primary producers all decreased between 2012 and 2017.

Despite these concerning trends, the Coalition is thrilled to see an increase in the number of female farmers represented in agriculture. Forty-one percent of farmers in their first 10 years of farming are women and the total number of female principal operators increased by nearly 70%.

"We hope that these new findings will lead to a concerted effort across government to support young farmers, especially young farmers of color, in entering into viable careers in agriculture," said Ackoff.

The National Young Farmers Coalition (the Coalition) is a national advocacy network of young farmers fighting for the future of agriculture. Visit us on the web at youngfarmers.org, and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

[Performance Lamb Weigh Sites](#)

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR

AUGUST 1-11  Presented By U.S. Cellular

Performance Lamb Division



This program emphasizes the exhibitor's ability to select and raise lambs which will be evaluated on rate of gain, visual appraisal and ultra-sound carcass merit. The Performance Lamb Division is non-terminal.

Those who wish to exhibit in the 2019 Wisconsin State Fair Performance Lamb Division must have their lambs weighed at one of the designated locations.

If you would like to participate in the Performance Lamb Division, but there is not a weigh-in site listed within 60 miles of your residence, please contact the Wisconsin State Fair Agriculture Office via email at entryoffice@wisstatefair.com or by phone at 414.266.7051 prior to May 1st.

2019 Weigh Sites

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USDA Announces Sign-Up Period for Updated Conservation Stewardship Program

The next deadline for [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP) applications to be considered for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2019 is May 10, 2019. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest up to \$700 million for new enrollments and contract extensions in fiscal year 2019. The 2018 Farm Bill made several changes to this critical conservation program, which helps agricultural producers take the conservation activities on their farm or ranch to the next level.

"CSP continues to be a very effective tool for private landowners working to achieve their conservation and management goals," said Angela Biggs, NRCS state conservationist in Wisconsin. "It is the largest conservation program in the United States with more than 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled."

While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by May 10, 2019, to ensure their applications are considered for 2019 funding.

Changes to the Program

The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes NRCS to accept new CSP enrollments from now until 2023, and it makes some important improvements to the program. These updates include:

- NRCS now enrolls eligible, high ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres. For fiscal 2019, NRCS can spend up to \$700 million in the program, which covers part of the cost for producers implementing new conservation activities and maintaining their existing activities.
- Higher payment rates are now available for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations.
- CSP now provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities and a special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.

About the Program

CSP is offered in Wisconsin through continuous sign-ups. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP is for working lands including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of a tribe.

For additional information about CSP, contact your [local USDA service center](#).

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From Rodrigo Werle, UW-Extension Weed Specialist:

Check my interview with Dr. Shawn Conley (video): [Strategies to Promote Early-Season Soybean Canopy Closure](#)

Syngenta's Tavium herbicide (dicamba + S-metolachlor) has been [registered by EPA for use in dicamba-tolerant \(Xtend\) crops](#).

Four dicamba products are now registered for use in Xtend crops (through 12/2020): Engenia, FeXapan, XtendiMax and Tavium. *Applicators must complete dicamba training prior to applying these products.*

Soybean Management Strategies to Facilitate Timely Winter Wheat Establishment In 2019

ADAPTED FROM ORIGINAL ARTICLE WRITTEN BY DR. ADAM GASPAR AND DR. SHAWN P. CONLEY

Winter wheat acres across WI have declined over the past few years due to late grain harvests, disease concerns (FHB or scab) and poor wheat prices, however anyone that lives and works in WI knows that a base number of cereal acres are needed to support the dairy industry (straw and land to summer haul manure). As farmers get ready to kick off the 2019 growing season here are a few suggestions to help get your 2019/20 winter wheat crop established on time. ([Continue Reading](#))

Weekly Emails Online!

<http://columbia.uwex.edu/ag-calendar-and-deadlines/>

The Ag Reporter "Snapshot" is presented to you each week by George Koepp, Columbia County UW-Extension Agriculture Agent. If you have any questions about these articles or need other ag-related information, please contact George at 608-742-9682 or by email george.koepp@ces.uwex.edu.