

# LOUISIANA FARM LABOR



## New and Beginning Producers in Louisiana Highlights From the 2017 Census of Agriculture

The latest U.S. Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture is out, and the numbers for new and beginning (N&B) producers are in. “New and beginning producers” is defined by the USDA as “producers operating on any operation for 10 years or less.” What makes this group so important? With the aging of the U.S. farm sector, having newly engaged farmers entering agriculture is key for the farm sector and the farm economy.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture (2017 Ag Census) collected data for up to four people in an operation, providing more information on the people who are involved in day-to-day farm activities and decision-making. Hence, for the first time we have more insight on the new and beginning producer population. To see the difference, let us compare the 2012 and the 2017 Ag Census numbers.

**Table 1. New and Beginning Producers: 2017 and 2012**

	All producers (2017)	All principal producers (2017)	Primary producers (2017)	All operators (2012)	Principal operators (2012)
Years on present farm					
Under 5 years	469,377	344,312	241,306	319,039	171,550
5 to 9 years	495,022	379,110	269,230	501,875	297,548
Years on any farm					
Under 5 years	474,198	344,001	237,838	NA	NA
6 to 10 years	434,076	330,939	234,522	NA	NA

*Note: In 2017, data were collected for a maximum of four producers per farm. In 2012, all operator data were collected for a maximum of three operators per farm. Principal operator data are for one operator per farm. A primary producer in 2017 is equivalent to a principal producer in 2012.*

*Source: USDA NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture*

Based on the definition of new and beginning (N&B) producers, in 2017, there were 908,274 N&B producers in the U.S. operating 8,718 farms. Of them, 13,097 (1.44%) were located throughout Louisiana. Of the Louisiana N&B producers, 10,027 producers (about 77%) indicated that they were principal producers within the farm. This document highlights important statistics and features of Louisiana N&B producers.

**Demographics.** A common misconception regarding N&B farmers is that they are younger than more well-

established farmers. The time a person is involved in agricultural activities and not the person’s age is what determines N&B farmer status. The average age of an N&B producer in Louisiana during 2017 was 48 years old. The majority (47.4%) of these producers were between the ages of 45 and 64, with 5,955 producers and 4,750 principal producers falling within this age range. However, most of these producers seem to be between the ages of 55 and 64 (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Louisiana New and Beginner Producer Age Profile**

Age	All Producers	All Principal Producers
Under 25 years	4.08%	1.87%
25 - 34 years	16.51%	15.71%
35 - 44 years	21.15%	20.95%
45 - 54 years	22.32%	23.04%
55 - 64 years	23.15%	24.33%
65 - 74 years	10.31%	11.21%
75 years and older	2.47%	2.88%

Source: USDA NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture

Of the 13,097 N&B producers, 7,667 (58.54%) were male producers and 5,430 (41.46%) were female producers. Furthermore, 6,558 male and 3,469 female N&B producers were reported as principal producers of their operations. In terms of U.S. total numbers, men made up 59.30% of the new and beginning producer population, while females made up the remaining 40.70% of the population.

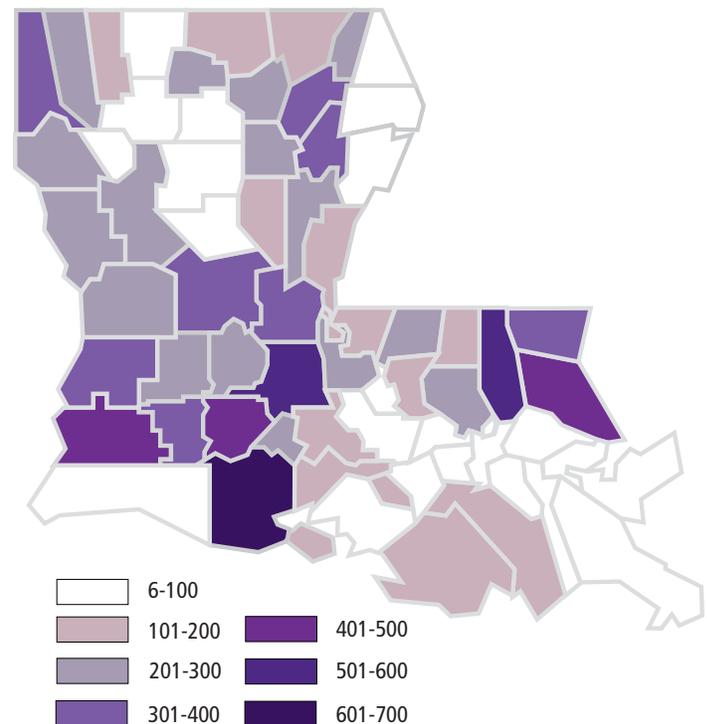
The majority of the N&B producers in Louisiana were white, with 11,897, which is about 91%. Moreover, 91.37% of the white N&B producers indicated that they were principal producers. The Ag Census reported that Black or African American were about 7% and Spanish, Hispanic or Latino were around 2%. The next cohort, American Indian or Alaska native, were close to 1% of the Louisiana N&B producers. Asian and native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander had the smallest concentration of N&B producers with 28 and 5 producers, respectively. Table 3 provides the numbers by each group.

**Parish Data.** Within Louisiana, Vermillion, St. Landry, Tangipahoa, St. Tammany, Calcasieu and Acadia parishes have the largest number of N&B producers, with 670, 506, 504, 499, 478, and 462 producers respectively. Most new and beginning producers reside in south Louisiana. These same parishes also have the highest concentration of new and beginning principal producers (see map).

**Table 3. Louisiana New and Beginner Race and Ethnic Background**

Race	All Producers	All Principal Producers
White	11,897	9,162
Black or African American	925	667
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	276	199
American Indian or Alaska Native	119	89
More Than One Race Reported	105	76
Asian	28	16
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	5

Source: USDA NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture



## Farm Operations at a Glance

**Farm Size.** In total, there were 8,718 farms operated by new and beginning farmers. New and beginning principal producers operated 7,796 farms throughout Louisiana. These farms varied in size, the most common farm size being between 10 and 49 acres (see Table 4).

The cost of purchasing land can be a deterrent for N&B farmers. In addition, negotiating affordable leasing options can be a challenge. Louisiana N&B producers were found to own more land than leasing land; 7,777 individuals owned the land in their farms, and only 2,524 people rented or leased the land in which their farm was located. Full owners of farmland totaled 6,194 farmers.

**Table 4. Louisiana New and Beginning Farmers Operation Information**

Farm Size	Any Producer	Any Principal Producer
1-9 acres	20.37%	21.46%
10-49 acres	38.45%	39.11%
50-179 acres	25.05%	24.59%
180-499 acres	8.66%	8.36%
500 or more acres	7.47%	6.48%

Source: USDA NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture

**Economic Class.** Economic class classifies farms by summing the market value of agricultural products that a farm sells and the amount of federal farm program payments that a farm receives. Most N&B producers (3,059 producers and 2,794 principal producers) in Louisiana had farms with an economic class of less than \$1,000. As we see, the distribution of N&B producers in Louisiana is skewed toward the lower end of economic class (see Table 5).

**Loans and Federal Farm Program Payments.** This section accounts for extra payments received by Louisiana new and beginning farmers. Most new and beginning farmers, (1,642 in the Census of Agriculture), received federal farm payments other than CCC and conservation loans. The specifics of these payments are not specified in the aggregate data. In addition, 619 producers and 553 principal producers received payments related to land conservation, which is an important feature of Louisiana (see Table 6).

**Table 5. Louisiana New and Beginning Farmer Farm Economic Class**

Economic Class	Any Producer	Any Principal Producer
Less than \$1,000	35.09%	35.84%
\$1,000 - \$2,499	14.42%	14.89%
\$2,500 - \$4,999	12.63%	12.66%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	12.38%	12.44%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	10.60%	10.49%
\$25,000 - \$49,000	4.85%	4.66%
\$50,000 or more	10.04%	9.02%

Source: USDA NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture

**Table 6. Louisiana New and Beginner Farmer Loan and Federal Farm Payment Programs**

Payment	Any Producer	Any Principal Producer
Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Loans	1.27%	1.19%
Conservation Reserve, Wetlands Reserve, Farmable Wetlands, etc.	27.03%	27.43%
Other Federal Farm Payment	71.70%	71.38%

Source: USDA NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture

## Louisiana New and Beginning Producers Versus U.S. New and Beginning Producers

In 2017, new and beginning producers in Louisiana made up 1.44% of the total U.S. new and beginning producer population. This shows that there are a small number of producers who have been

farming or ranching for 10 years or less located throughout Louisiana in comparison to other states in the U.S. Overall, the data from Louisiana new and beginning producers is consistent with the U.S. Total data.

## Glossary:

**Commodity Credit Corporation loans.** This category includes nonrecourse marketing loans for wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, oats, cotton, rice, soybeans, Austrian winter peas, honey, dry edible peas, lentils, chickpeas, peanuts, sunflower seed, flaxseed, canola and other rapeseed, safflower, mustard seed, crambe, sesame seed, wool and mohair. (Appendix B, Ag Census 2017)

**Farm with sales of less than \$1,000.** This category includes farms with sales of less than \$1,000 but having the potential for sales of \$1,000 or more. Some of these farms had no sales in the census year. It provides information on all report form items for farms that normally would be expected to sell agricultural products of \$1,000 or more. (Appendix B, Ag Census 2017)

## For more information:

Ag Census (2017). New and Beginning Producers. "Selected Farm Characteristics" [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1,\\_Chapter\\_1\\_State\\_Level/Louisiana/st22\\_1\\_0069\\_0069.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Louisiana/st22_1_0069_0069.pdf)

Ag Census (2017). New and Beginning Producers. "Selected Producers Characteristics" [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1,\\_Chapter\\_1\\_State\\_Level/Louisiana/st22\\_1\\_0070\\_0070.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Louisiana/st22_1_0070_0070.pdf)

Ag Census (2017). Census of Agriculture. "Full Report" [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/#full\\_report](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/#full_report)

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