

# Facts About Farmers and Agriculture



Jobs Farmers Do (Pre-3rd) was written to educate youth about the importance of farmers and what they really do on the farm. This supplemental guide provides the basics of the farm related skills to help educate those who educate. This guide includes definitions, answers to frequently asked questions, fun facts, and additional resources for teachers to utilize in their classrooms.

## What exactly is agriculture?

Agriculture (noun) - The art or science of cultivating the ground, including the harvesting of crops, and the raising and management of livestock.

## What exactly is a farmer?

The Agriculture Department defines a farm operator as a person who operates a farm, either doing the work or making day-to-day decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, feeding and marketing. The operator might be the owner, a member of the owner's household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter or a sharecropper.

## So why do I care about agriculture?

Without America's farm and ranch families we would not have nutritious affordable food to eat each and everyday! America's farmers and ranchers work hard to harvest crops and manage livestock so food can be put on the table for our citizens and many other people around the world. We are lucky to be able to enjoy an abundant supply that is among the safest in the world, thanks to our farmers and ranchers.



## What else do farmers and ranchers do besides producing food?

Farmers and ranchers also produce fiber, fuel and shelter. They produce food, fiber, fuel and shelter while protecting the environment. They do this by using modern conservation and tillage practices, which decreases the loss of soil through erosion. They also utilize new technologies like global position satellite systems and state-of-the-art tractors and combines.



## Is agriculture just related to farming?

No, agriculture reaches far beyond the farm and is important to everyone. Agriculture includes farmers as well as the many urban and suburban residents who process, package and transport our food to America's consumers.

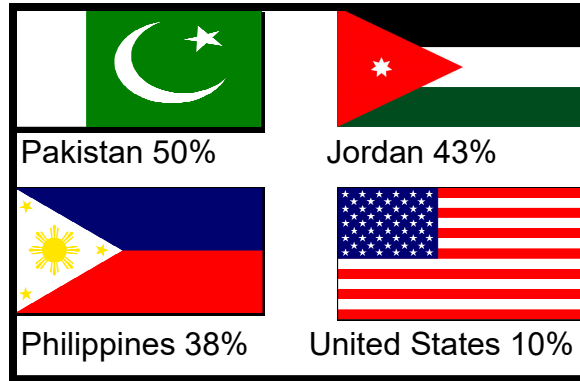


# Why Are We Thankful for U.S. Farmers and Ranchers?



## Because, we pay so little for food!

U.S. consumers spend just **10 percent** of their disposable income on food each year, while those in other countries spend much more. This is due to how efficient and productive America's farm and ranch families are.



## Because, one farmer feeds 168 people!

America's farmers are the world's most productive. Today, each U.S. farmer produces food and fiber for 168 people annually in the United States and abroad.



## Because, they treat their animals with respect!



America's farmers and ranchers care deeply about the health and well-being of their animals. They care because their job is to provide healthy food for consumers, including their own families. They care for their animals seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Everyday they provide food, water and shelter to their animals. They also protect them from disease, injury and predators.

## Because, they conserve and protect our environment!

More than half of America's agricultural producers intentionally provide habitat for wildlife. Farmers and ranchers use funding from the Farm Bill for conservation, they prevent soil erosion, preserve and restore wetlands, clean the air and water, erosion on croplands by using conservation tillage practices. Since 1982 the erosion rate by water on U.S. croplands has been reduced by more than 40 percent.



## Because, they contribute to a

Agricultural exports contribute to a strong U.S. Economy. About 24 percent of all U.S. agricultural products are exported yearly including 114 million tons of grains and feed, 4 million tons of poultry meats and 2 million tons of fresh vegetables. The U.S. produces 41.9% of corn in the world. In, 2008 \$115.5 billion worth of American agricultural products were exported around the globe.

Sources: USDA-ERA; USDA FAS

## strong U.S. economy!

strong U.S. Economy. About 24 percent of all U.S. agricultural products are exported yearly including 114 million tons of grains and feed, 4 million tons of poultry meats and 2 million tons of fresh vegetables. The U.S. produces 41.9% of corn in the world.



## Because, we use agriculture products every single day!

Products we use in our everyday lives come from plants and animals produced by America's farmers and ranchers. We would not have baseball bats, leather equipment and balls, shoes, paper, ink, film, tires, surgical sutures, x-ray film, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, lumber, hand tools and crayons.



# What Do U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Produce?

**Total Annual Production: 2,207,504,580,000 pounds**



Grains (Corn, Wheat, Oats, Rice, Barley, Rye, Sorghum and Millet)  
**881.8 billions of pounds**



Hay and Silage **525.9 billions of pounds**



Oilseeds (Soybeans, Sunflowers, Peanuts, Canola, Cottonseed, Mustard Seed, Flaxseed, Rapeseed and Safflower) **197.1 billions of pounds**



Dairy Products **189.7 billions of pounds**



Horticulture (Vegetables, Citrus, Non-citrus Fruits and Nuts) **138.0 billions of pounds**

Cotton, Tobacco, Sugarbeets, Sugarcane **122.3 billions of pounds**



Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Coffee, Ginger Root, Hops, Peppermint Oil, Spearmint Oil and Taro  
**43.2 billions of pounds**



Poultry (Turkeys and Broilers) **43.1 billions of pounds**



Beef and Veal **26.6 billions of pounds**



Pork **23.3 billions of pounds**



Eggs **11.3 billions of pounds**



Dry Beans, Peas, Lentils **4.1 pounds**



\* Livestock products account for fewer pounds than crops, but almost half the value of farm receipts.



# What Does One Acre of Land Produce?



**An acre is about the size of a football field.**

**One acre of land can produce many different types of crops, depending on many factors, like types of soil, rain fall amounts, temperatures and how much the sun shines.**



## **Cotton: 810 pounds**

A bale of cotton weighs about 480 pounds. One bale can be used to make 215 pairs of jeans or 313,600 \$100 bills.



## **Oranges: 31,000 pounds**

Oranges were very expensive and eaten only on special occasions or holidays, such as Christmas, until the early 1900s.



## **Wheat: 2,694 pounds (44.5 bushels)**

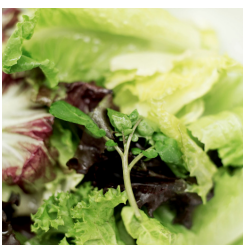
One bushel of wheat produces about 42 pounds of flour, which can be used to make 42 loaves of bread or 42 pounds of traditional pasta. One bushel of whole wheat yields even more: 64 pounds of flour to make 64 loaves of bread or 64 pounds of pasta.



## **Sweet Corn: 11,500 pounds**

## **Potatoes: 39,500 pounds**

Corn and potatoes are two of several American crops introduced to Europe and other continents during the last 500 years.



## **Lettuce: 35,600 pounds**

Crisphead, butterhead, romaine and leaf are the four main types of lettuce. All are low in calories with a high water content.



## **Strawberries: 46,500 pounds**

Respondents to a recent national survey labeled strawberry lovers as "health conscious, fun-loving, intelligent and happy."

Source: "Food & Farm Facts" produced by American Farm Bureau Federation  
North Dakota Commission; National Cotton Council of America;  
California Strawberry Commission; USDA-NASS

# How Much Do I Eat in a Year?

America's Farmers and Ranchers produce healthy safe food so U.S. consumers have enough to eat each and every year.



Fresh Vegetables  
202.2 pounds



Flour & Cereal  
Products  
196.9 pounds



Fresh Fruits  
126.2 pounds

Red Meats  
116.9 pounds



Fats & Oils  
86.7 pounds



Poultry  
85.4 pounds



Eggs  
245 eggs



Cheese  
32.7 pounds



Rice  
20.5 pounds

Milk  
21 gallons

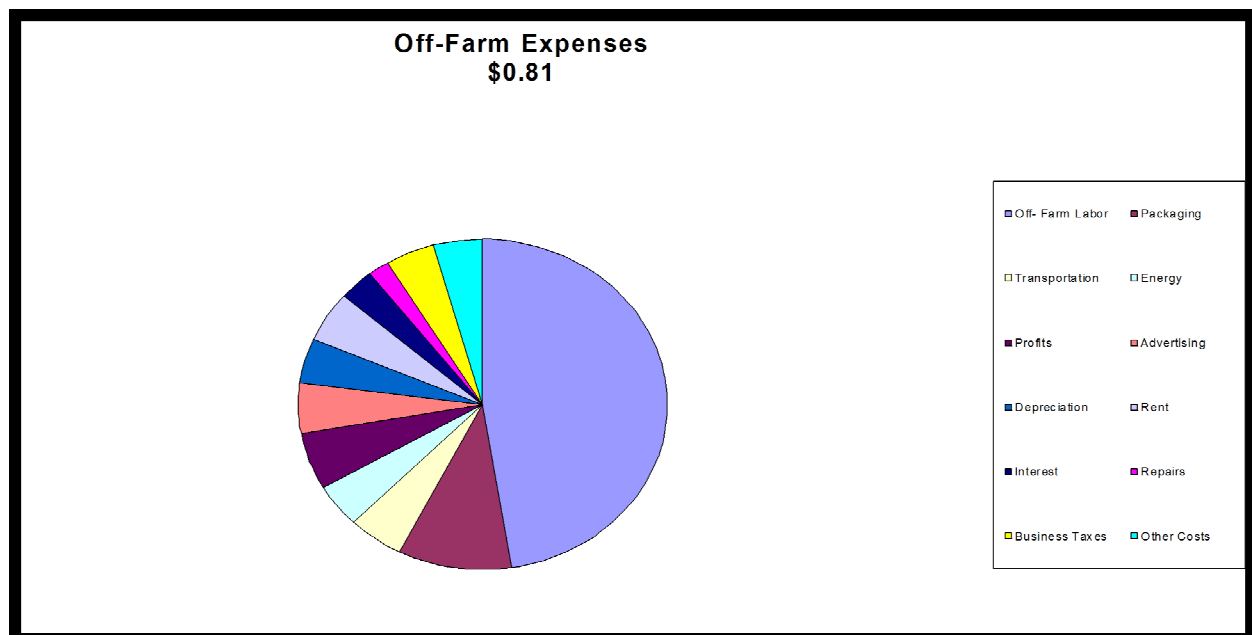
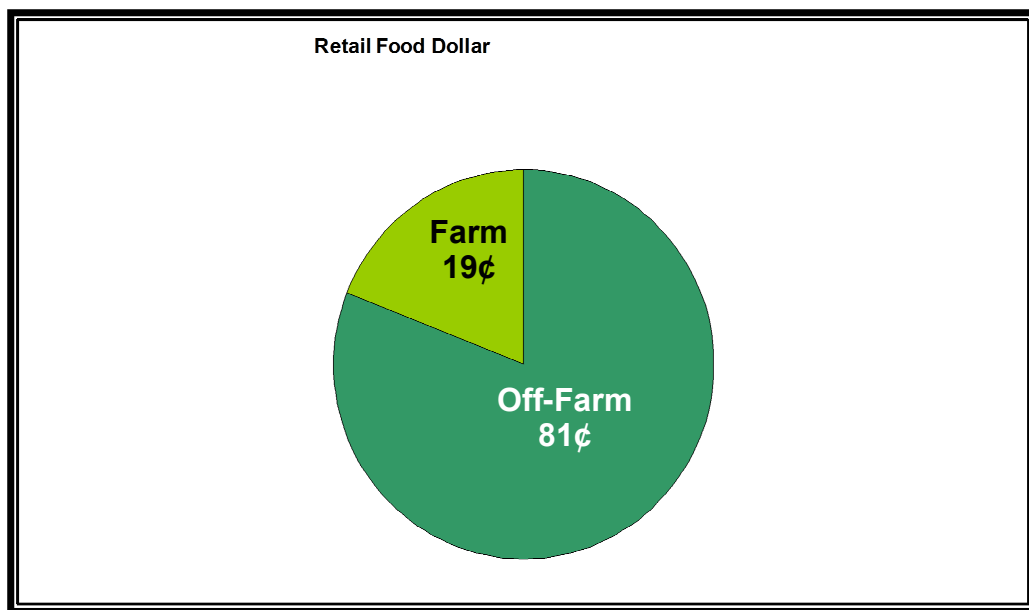




# Where Does My Food Dollar Go?



**Farmers and Ranchers** receive **only 19 cents** of every retail dollar spent on food that is eaten at home and away from home. In **1980**, farmers received **31 cents** out of every retail dollar spent on food in America. **Off-Farm** cost account for **81 cents** of every retail dollar spent on food.



# Farm Facts

## Farms

United States.....2.2 million  
Kansas ..... 65,500

## Average Farm Size

United States..... 418 acres  
Kansas ..... 707 acres

## Farm Ownership

United States.....98%  
Kansas .....97.4%  
.....Farms owned by individuals, family partnerships or family corporations

## Total Land in Farms

United States..... 922 million acres  
United States– Percent of Total Land.....40.8%  
Kansas ..... 46,345,827 acres  
Kansas– Percent of Total Land .....88.6%

## Farm Operators

United States..... 2,204,792  
Kansas ..... 65,531

## Women Farmers

United States ..... 306,209  
Kansas ..... 7,943

## Average Farmers Age

United States..... 57 years old  
Kansas ..... 57.7 years old

## Top 5 Agriculture Commodities

### United States

1. Corn
2. Cattle and Calves
3. Dairy Products
4. Soybeans
5. Broilers

### Kansas

1. Cattle and Calves
2. Wheat
3. Corn
4. Soybeans
5. Sorghum Grain

### Percent of US Value

- 12.9%
- 13.9%
- 4.0%
- 3.7%
- 40.8%

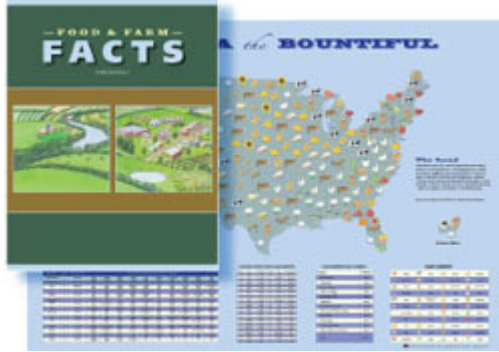


# Additional Resources

Most of the information in “Fact About Agriculture and Farming” packet came from the “**Food & Farm Facts**” booklet that Farm Bureau produced.

Food & Farm Facts materials can be purchased at

<http://www.fb.org/index.php?fuseaction=materials.farmfacts>



**American Farm Bureau**, The Voice of Agriculture, has a lot of information that can be found on their website including additional Ag links, meeting a farmer, testing your Ag I.Q.

<http://www.fb.org/index.php>



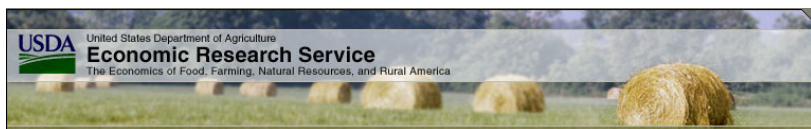
**Kansas Farm Bureau** has additional Ag accurate books that provide information about agriculture with lesson plans. There is a great deal of information about Kansas agriculture on this website including agriculture educational resources and classroom project ideas.

<http://www.kfb.org/ageducation/default.htm>



**Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom** provides information for students and teachers and classroom resources.


<http://www.ksagclassroom.org/>



For more statistics about farming visit **United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service** at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/>.

*Provided by Kansas Farm Bureau to educate young people, parents and teachers about where our food comes from. America's food supply is safe, affordable and abundant but also vastly misunderstood by the consuming public.*

*It is the intention of Kansas Farm Bureau to improve the public's knowledge about the importance farming and ranching plays in our quality of life.*

 **KANSAS FARM BUREAU®**  
The Voice of Agriculture®