Fast Facts About Agriculture & Food

**Did you know? Independence Day** is one of the top food holidays in the U.S., with Americans spending $7.5 billion on July 4th cookouts each year.

**2 million** farms dot America’s rural landscape. About 98% of U.S. farms are operated by families – individuals, family partnerships or family corporations ([America’s Diverse Family Farms, 2020 Edition](https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=100011)).

One U.S. farm **feeds 166 people** annually in the U.S. and abroad. The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 billion by 2050, which means the world’s farmers will have to grow about 70% more food than what is now produced.

**About 11%** of U.S. farmers are serving or have served in the military.

Cattle and calves, corn, and soybeans are the **top three U.S. farm products.**

**86%** of U.S. ag products are produced on family farms or ranches.

Farming accounts for about **1%** of the U.S. gross domestic product.

After accounting for input costs, farmers and ranchers receive only **8 cents out of every dollar** spent on food at home and away from home. The rest goes for costs beyond the farm gate: wages and materials for production, processing, marketing, transportation and distribution.

In 2018, **$139.6 billion** worth of American agricultural products were exported around the world. The United States sells more food and fiber to world markets than we import, creating a positive agricultural trade balance.

**25%** of all farmers are beginning farmers (in business less than 10 years); their average age is 46.

About **8% of U.S. farms market foods locally** through direct-to-consumer or intermediated sales.

Americans enjoy a food supply that is **abundant, affordable and among the world’s safest**, thanks in large part to the efficiency and productivity of America’s farm and ranch families..

The pounds of feed (grain, forage, etc.) a dairy cow needs to eat to produce 100 pounds of milk has **decreased by more than 40%** on average in the last 40 years..

**One acre of land** can grow a variety of crops, including 50,000 pounds of strawberries or 2,784 pounds (46.4 bushels) of wheat.

Farm programs typically cost each American just pennies per meal and account for less than **one-half of 1%** of the total U.S. budget.

The number of farm operators of **Spanish, Hispanic or Latino** origin is higher than ever, up 13% to 112,451. There also are more **Black** farm operators (45,508, up 2%).

More than half of America’s farmers intentionally provide **habitat for wildlife**. Deer, moose, birds and other species have shown significant population increases for decades.

One day’s production for a high-producing dairy cow yields **4.8 pounds of butter, 8.7 gallons of ice cream or 10.5 pounds of cheese**.

Careful stewardship by America’s food producers has spurred a **34% decline** in erosion of cropland by wind and water since 1982.

On any given day, one in eight Americans will eat **pizza**.

Americans throw away **about 25%** of the food they purchase for at-home consumption.

Farm and ranch families comprise **less than 2%** of the U.S. population.

A whopping **40%** of all food grown and produced in the U.S. is never eaten.

Total U.S. corn yield (tons per acre) has increased more than **360%** since 1950.

**About 25%** of U.S. farm products by value are exported each year.

Of the **10%** of disposable income Americans spend on food each year, 46% is for food eaten at home and 54% is for food eaten away from home.

**Women** make up 36% of the total number of U.S. farm operators; 56% of all farms have at least one female decision-maker.

Many Americans **celebrate holidays with food**, spending a total of nearly $14 billion each year.

*Information on this page may be shared via social media, etc., and was published in the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture’s*[*Food and Farm Facts book (2019 edition)*](https://www.agfoundation.org/resources/food-and-farm-facts-2019)*. An updated version of the book will be available in fall 2021. Visit*[*AgFoundation.org*](http://www.agfoundation.org/)*for additional information and resources.*