

Census of Agriculture

Provincial Profiles

Alberta Farm and Farm Operator - Highlights

Definitions

A **Census farm** is an agricultural operation that produces at least one of the following products that are intended for sale:

- **Crops**
 - Hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, and seed.
- **Livestock**
 - Cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, and other livestock.
- **Poultry**
 - Hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, and other poultry.
- **Animal Products**
 - Milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, and meat.
- **Other Agricultural Products**
 - Christmas trees, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products or cream, eggs, wool, furs, and meat.

Farm Operators

Farm Operators are those responsible for the day-to-day management and/or financial decisions made in the operation of a farm or an agricultural operation. Operators can be owners, tenants or hired managers of the agricultural operation.



This can include those responsible for management decisions pertinent to particular aspects of the farm, such as planting and harvesting, capital purchases, and marketing.

An agricultural operation may have more than one operator, e.g. husband and wife; father and son; two brothers; father, son and wife; etc.

Since 1991, the census form has enabled farmers to report up to three operators for each farm, which is why there are more operators than farms.

2016 Statistics Canada Highlights

Key Highlights

On May 10, 2017, Statistics Canada released farm and farm operator data from the 2016 Census of Agriculture for Canada and the provinces. The following are some key highlights for Alberta farm operators.



- ↓ On May 10, 2016 the Census of Agriculture counted 57,605 farm operators in Alberta, down 7.2 per cent from 62,050 in 2011. This decline was not unique to Alberta as numbers were down for all provinces.
- ↓ Alberta reported 40,638 census farms in 2016, a 6.0 per cent decline from 2011, but in line with the national trend of declining farm numbers across all provinces.
- ↑ Alberta had the second highest proportion of female farm operators with 30.8 per cent, compared to 28.7 per cent nationally.
- ↑ Farm operators 55 years and older represented the highest proportion of farm operators (56.5 percent).



- For the first time in twenty-five years, the proportion of farm operators under 35 years increased.



- The average age of farm operators in Alberta was 55.7, above the national average age of 55.0 years.



- Alberta farm operators reported 16,661 paid full-time or part-time agricultural working employees in 2016, up 6.8 per cent from 2011 (15,598 employees).



- Farms with one operator represented 40.3 per cent of Alberta farms in 2016 (40.5 per cent in 2011), while farms with two operators represented 59.7 per cent of farms (59.5 per cent in 2011).



- Alberta farm operators reported that 27,245 had paid non-farm work in the calendar year prior to the census, down from 32,245 in 2011.

Alberta Farm and Farm Operators

The number of farm operators in Alberta fell 7.2 per cent in 2016, to 57,605 (62,050 in 2011), in line with lower farm numbers. The decline in farm operators was not unique to Alberta and was evident across Canada. Nationally, farm operator numbers dropped 7.5 per cent to 271,935.

The rural population in Alberta represents 16.4 per cent of the provincial population, down from 16.9 per cent in 2011.

The number of farms in Alberta has continued to decline as well. From 2011 to 2016, the number of farms declined 6.0 per cent to 40,638 (43,234 in 2011).

This trend of declining farm numbers has been consistent over the last twenty years. As the average farm size increases (up 5.9 per cent to 1,237 acres from 2011) and the number of farms continues to decrease, it is likely that the number of Alberta farm operators will continue to decline as well.

Farm Operator Age

The average age of Alberta farm operators in 2016 was 55.7 years, up from 54.5 years in 2011. This was quite similar to the national trend where average age was 55 years, up from 54 years in 2011.

The proportion of operators “55 years and over” has been increasing (see Figure 1), and accounted for 56.5 per cent of operators in 2016 (49.6 per cent in 2011), while the proportion of operators in the “35 to 54 years” age class fell to 35.0 per cent (43.1 per cent in 2011).

For the first time in twenty-five years, the proportion of farm operators in the “under 35 years of age” increased. The proportion of farm operators “under 35 years of age” rose to 8.5 per cent, up from 7.3 per cent in 2011.

Farm Operator Sex

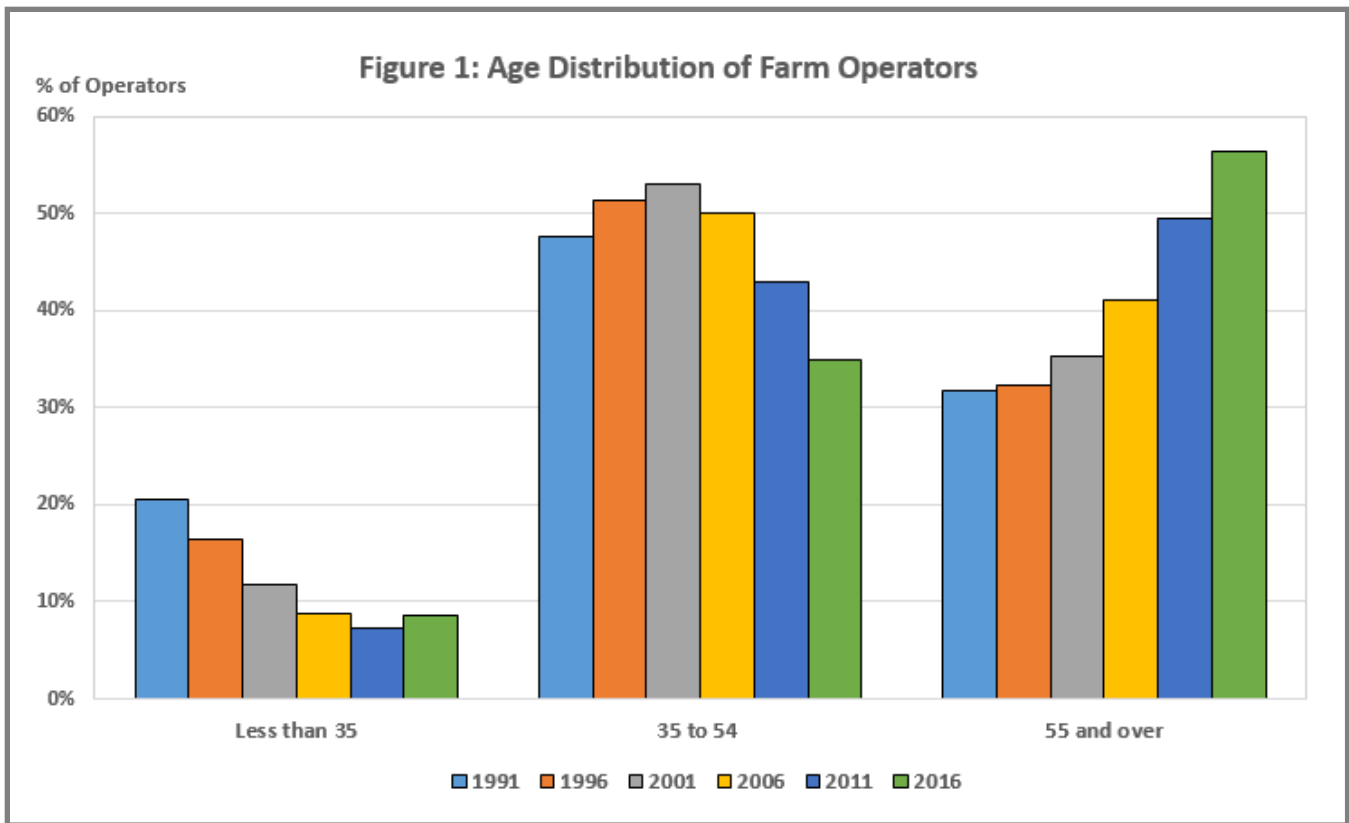
In 2016, there were 39,845 (69.2 per cent) male operators and 17,760 (30.8 per cent) female operators in the province. Nationally, the split was 28.7 per cent female and 71.3 per cent male.

Among provinces, Alberta had the second highest proportion of female operators (30.8 per cent) behind British Columbia (37.6 per cent). Since 1991, the proportion of female farm operators in Alberta has increased about 4.0 per cent.

From the 57,605 farm operators in Alberta, 40.3 per cent were on single operator farms (40.5 per cent in 2011), while 59.7 per cent were on farms with two or more operators (59.5 per cent in 2011).

Of the farms with a single operator, 87.9 per cent were male and 12.1 per cent female, from 91.5 per cent and 8.5 per cent respectively in 2011.

Of the farms with two or more operators, 56.5 per cent were male and 43.5 per cent were female, from 57.1 per cent and 42.9 per cent respectively in 2011.



Paid Non-Farm and Farm Work

The percentage of Alberta farm operators reporting paid non-farm work declined from the previous census, down to 47.3 per cent (27,245 operators), compared to 52.0 per cent in 2011 (32,245 operators).

For those that did report paid non-farm work, the majority of operators (63.9 per cent) had up to 40 hours of work per week, while the remainder (36.1 per cent) had non-farm work of more than 40 hours per week. In 2016, 30,355 operators reported no paid non-farm work, up from 29,805 operators in 2011.

A total of 9,565 Alberta farms reported having a total of 33,498 year-round (full or part-time), seasonal, or temporary employees in 2015. Of total employees, 50.3 per cent were seasonal or temporary (58.8 per cent in 2010), while 49.7 per cent were year-round (full or part-time), compared to 41.2 per cent in 2010.

To Learn More:

For more detailed information, please visit the Statistics Canada website:
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/ca2016>

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