

North Dakota Farms and Farm Size: 1997 and 2002

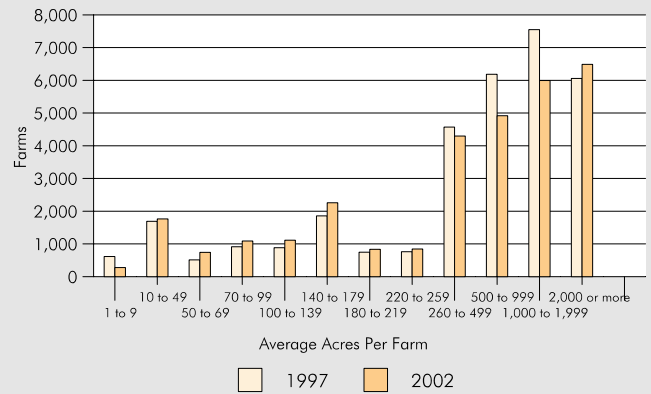
According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in North Dakota fell to 30,619 in 2002, a 5.3 percent decline from 32,348 in 1997. During the same time, average farm size rose from 1,227 acres to 1,283 acres in North Dakota, a 4.6 percent increase (Table 1).

Between 1997 and 2002, North Dakota saw the largest decline in farms among those averaging 1,000 to 1,999 acres. The second largest loss was among those farms averaging 500 to 999 acres (Figure 1). The number of larger farms, those with 2,000 acres or more, grew by 427 farms. The number of farms averaging less than 260 acres grew by 938 farms.

While many North Dakota counties showed sizeable losses in the number of farms over the last five years, 16 of North Dakota's 53 counties showed an increase in the number of farms. The largest increase was in Walsh County with a gain of 100 farms, followed by Nelson County with a gain of 92 farms (Table 1).

The 2002 Census of Agriculture contains the first census data set on a coverage-adjusted basis representing all farms to the county level. The 1997 Census of Agriculture files were reprocessed, using the new procedures, to provide comparable data for 1997 and 2002. For more information, go to <http://www.usda.gov/nass/events/news/methodology.htm>.

Figure 1. Number of North Dakota Farms by Average Size 1997 to 2002



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), <http://www.usda.gov/nass>.

Figure 2. Change in Number of Farms and Average Farm Size in North Dakota by County: 1997 to 2002

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), <http://www.usda.gov/nass>

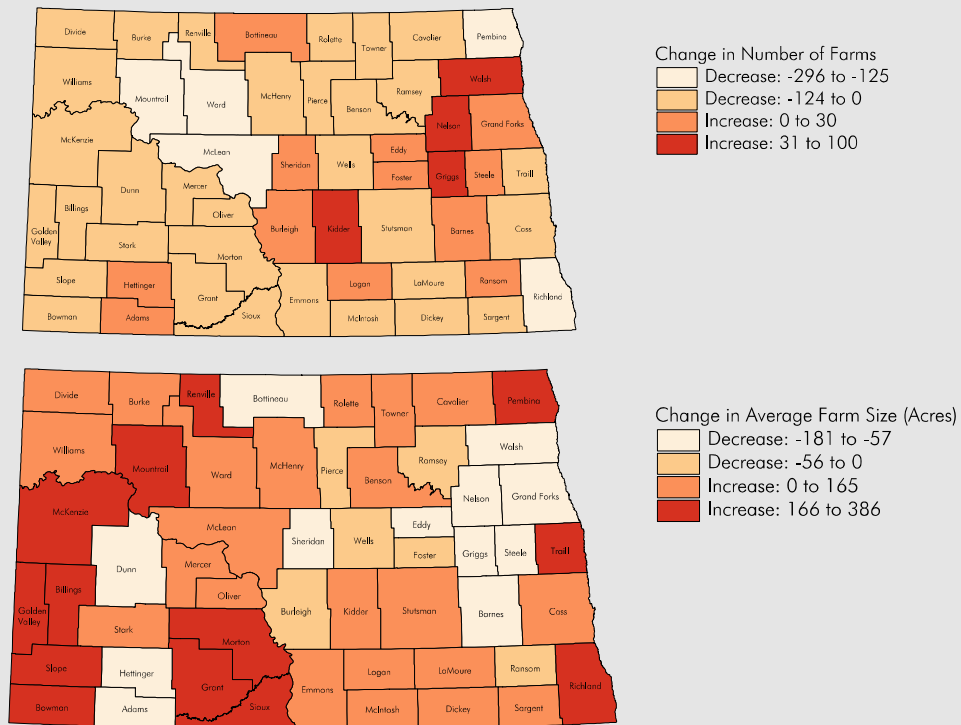


Table 1. Total Number of Farms and Average Farm Size in North Dakota by County: 1997 and 2002

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), <<http://www.usda.gov/nass>>

Area	Number of Farms				Average Size of Farms (Acres)			
	1997	2002	Change: 1997 to 2002		1997	2002	Change: 1997 to 2002	
			Numeric	Percent			Numeric	Percent
North Dakota	32,348	30,619	-1,729	-5.3	1,227	1,283	56	4.6
Adams	381	394	13	3.4	1,641	1,535	-106	-6.5
Barnes	815	838	23	2.8	1,082	1,023	-59	-5.5
Benson	634	567	-67	-10.6	1,203	1,293	90	7.5
Billings	251	238	-13	-5.2	3,159	3,407	248	7.9
Bottineau	859	879	20	2.3	1,136	1,079	-57	-5.0
Bowman	371	360	-11	-3.0	1,883	2,109	226	12.0
Burke	506	455	-51	-10.1	1,228	1,319	91	7.4
Burleigh	937	946	9	1.0	953	915	-38	-4.0
Cass	1,008	961	-47	-4.7	1,132	1,173	41	3.6
Cavalier	702	607	-95	-13.5	1,256	1,349	93	7.4
Dickey	554	533	-21	-3.8	1,062	1,125	63	5.9
Divide	566	532	-34	-6.0	1,323	1,430	107	8.1
Dunn	634	582	-52	-8.2	2,076	1,900	-176	-8.5
Eddy	310	325	15	4.8	1,140	1,073	-67	-5.9
Emmons	777	699	-78	-10.0	1,051	1,199	148	14.1
Foster	297	309	12	4.0	1,258	1,239	-19	-1.5
Golden Valley	258	231	-27	-10.5	2,250	2,513	263	11.7
Grand Forks	847	863	16	1.9	936	876	-60	-6.4
Grant	615	548	-67	-10.9	1,542	1,928	386	25.0
Griggs	381	423	42	11.0	1,038	896	-142	-13.7
Hettinger	461	489	28	6.1	1,549	1,392	-157	-10.1
Kidder	531	584	53	10.0	1,340	1,360	20	1.5
LaMoure	646	621	-25	-3.9	1,051	1,090	39	3.7
Logan	415	445	30	7.2	1,268	1,298	30	2.4
McHenry	953	901	-52	-5.5	1,115	1,250	135	12.1
McIntosh	531	526	-5	-0.9	957	1,081	124	13.0
McKenzie	705	632	-73	-10.4	1,645	1,888	243	14.8
McLean	1,043	918	-125	-12.0	1,120	1,193	73	6.5
Mercer	497	456	-41	-8.2	1,097	1,176	79	7.2
Morton	954	855	-99	-10.4	1,275	1,493	218	17.1
Mountrail	807	682	-125	-15.5	1,263	1,566	303	24.0
Nelson	506	598	92	18.2	1,070	889	-181	-16.9
Oliver	341	307	-34	-10.0	1,150	1,315	165	14.3
Pembina	653	524	-129	-19.8	980	1,171	191	19.5
Pierce	513	487	-26	-5.1	1,106	1,090	-16	-1.4
Ramsey	562	554	-8	-1.4	1,187	1,148	-39	-3.3
Ransom	527	528	1	0.2	992	948	-44	-4.4
Renville	409	353	-56	-13.7	1,282	1,493	211	16.5
Richland	962	813	-149	-15.5	897	1,096	199	22.2
Rolette	547	523	-24	-4.4	921	971	50	5.4
Sargent	485	469	-16	-3.3	1,030	1,077	47	4.6
Sheridan	392	393	1	0.3	1,255	1,193	-62	-4.9
Sioux	196	179	-17	-8.7	3,549	3,925	376	10.6
Slope	274	259	-15	-5.5	2,743	2,944	201	7.3
Stark	853	774	-79	-9.3	946	1,004	58	6.1
Steele	305	318	13	4.3	1,391	1,261	-130	-9.3
Stutsman	1,040	988	-52	-5.0	1,217	1,230	13	1.1
Towner	451	418	-33	-7.3	1,288	1,313	25	1.9
Trail	504	427	-77	-15.3	1,022	1,240	218	21.3
Walsh	805	905	100	12.4	902	839	-63	-7.0
Ward	1,262	966	-296	-23.5	986	1,148	162	16.4
Wells	624	579	-45	-7.2	1,199	1,154	-45	-3.8
Williams	891	858	-33	-3.7	1,355	1,376	21	1.6

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Fewer and Larger Farms in North Dakota

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in North Dakota fell to 30,619 in 2002, a 5.3 percent decline from 32,348 in 1997. During the same time, average farm size rose from 1,227 acres to 1,283 acres in North Dakota, a 4.6 percent increase.

This month's "Population Bulletin," a monthly publication from the North Dakota State Data Center at North Dakota State University, focuses on recently released farm data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, <<http://www.usda.gov/nass>>. Between 1997 and 2002, North Dakota saw the largest decline in farms among those averaging 1,000 to 1,999 acres (a loss of 1,554 farms). The second largest loss was among those farms averaging 500 to 999 acres (a loss of 1,266 farms). The number of larger farms, those with 2,000 acres or more, grew by 427 farms. The number of farms averaging less than 260 acres grew by 938 farms. "The trend shows that mid-sized farm operators are the ones who are struggling the most in North Dakota. Between 1997 and 2002, we lost more than 20 percent of the farms in the 500 to 1,999 acre category. These farms accounted for 42 percent of all farms in 1997," said Richard Rathge, director of the State Data Center. The farm profile in North Dakota is becoming more dominated by large and small operators. In 2002, 44 percent of all farms had fewer than 500 acres and represented only 7 percent of total acres in farming. In contrast, 21 percent of the farms in the state were larger than 2,000 acres and accounted for 62 percent of total acres.

Five counties throughout North Dakota experienced losses of 100 farms or more between 1997 and 2002: Ward (-296), Richland (-149), Pembina (-129), McLean (-125), and Mountrail (-125).

While many North Dakota counties showed sizeable losses in the number of farms over the last five years, 16 of North Dakota's 53 counties showed an increase in the number of farms. The largest increase was in Walsh County with a gain of 100 farms, followed by Nelson County with a gain of 92 farms.

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