

Characteristics of Sheep & Goat Producers in Missouri



College of Agriculture
Cooperative Extension

Dr. Ye Su

Assistant Professor of
Agribusiness

**Reviewed by: Dr. Mohan
Acharya**

Edited By: Janice Curtiss

LUCE #23-10(11)-FS003

According to the [2017 Census of Agriculture](#), Missouri's sales of sheep and goats sector increased by 22% from the 2012 census report. Though sheep and goat sales accounted for only 0.19% of all agricultural products sold in Missouri^{1,2}, the numbers have been growing and consumer demand has increased. This fact sheet provides a snapshot of the characteristics of the sheep and goat producers in Missouri using the 2017 Agriculture Census data.

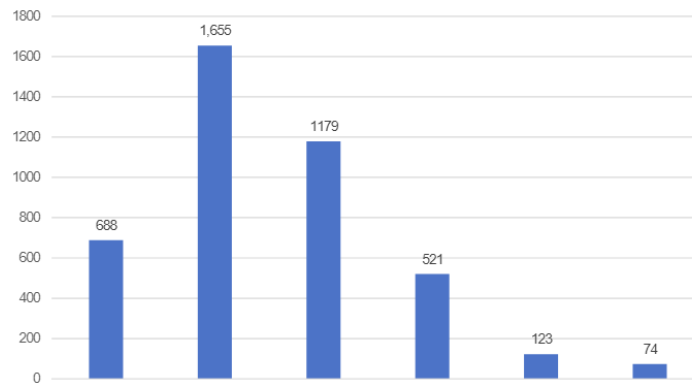
Number of producers:

There were 4,240 sheep and goat producers in Missouri in 2017. These producers provide sheep and goat meats, wool, mohair, milk, and relevant products, generating \$20,440,000 in sales. Almost 98.6% of sheep and goat farms were owned by families³.

Farm acreage:

Over half of the sheep and goat farms had less than 50 acres. Among them, 688 had less than 10 acres and 1,655 farms had 10 to 49 acres, the largest in the group (Figure 1). The second largest group is farms with 50 to 179 acres (1179, 28%). Overall, 83% of the farms had less than 180 acres, 30% smaller than the average farm size of Missouri (291 acres). Only 74 farms (2% of the sample) had 1000 acres or more.

Figure 1. Missouri's Sheep and Goat Farms by Acreage

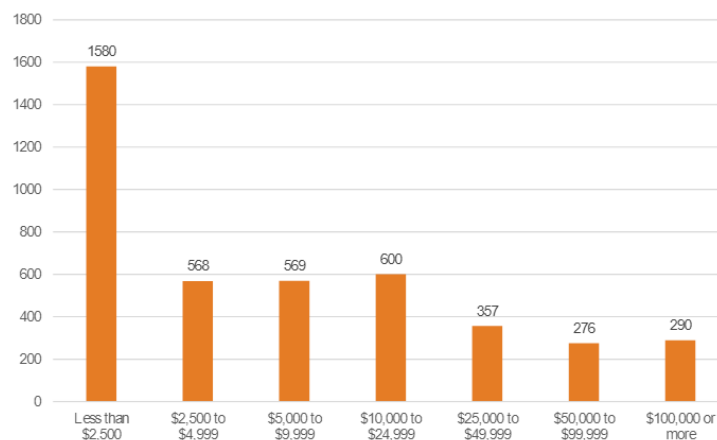


Farm sales:

1580 farms (37%) had sales of \$2,500 or less during 2017 (Figure 2), 276 had sales of \$50,000 - \$100,000, and 290 had sales of \$100,000 or more. Most family farms (93%) had annual gross cash farm income (GCFI) of less than \$150,000.

Based on sales and the acreage of the farms, more than 90% of the sheep and goat farms are small or low-sales farms in terms of size⁴.

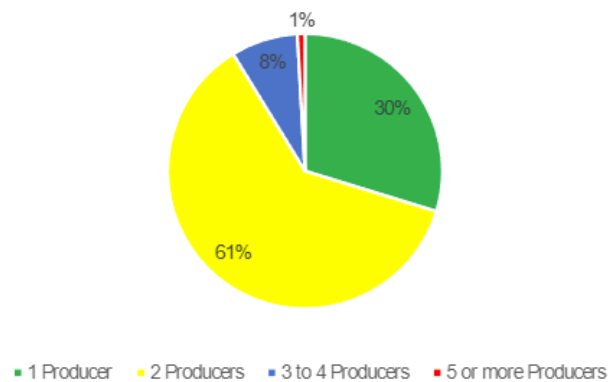
Figure 2. Missouri's Sheep and Goat Farms by the Value of Sales



Employees:

61% of sheep and goat farms in Missouri were operated by two producers, 30% by one, 8% by three to four, and 1% was operated by more than five producers (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Missouri's Sheep and Goat Farms by Employees



New and Beginning Producers⁵:

2017 Agriculture Census does not provide facts on this information. Using the 2012 Census⁶, among 3821 sheep and goat farms, 39% were operated by producers with 10 years or less farming experience.

Gender:

75% of the producers were females, producing 62% of the total sales.

Race:

Most producers were Caucasian, contributing almost all the sales.

Ethnicity:

3% of producers were Hispanic, contributing 1% to the total sales.

KEY POINTS

Most sheep and goat farms in Missouri are either small in size, have lower farm sales, or have a fewer number of employees. This makes them less competitive due to the lack of economies of scale.

A large number of new and beginning farmers in the sheep and goat industry implies that they need additional assistance and more information to improve their businesses as indicated by recent sheep and goat surveys.

More research and deeper investigations on the sheep and goat producers are needed to help -policymakers design suitable programs for the development of the industry to better serve consumers in Missouri.

References:

¹ USDA NASS (2019). 2017 Census of Agriculture, State Profile: Missouri.

² In 2017, Missouri's sheep & goat industries ranked 14 in the U.S. in terms of sales.

³ Family farm is any farm where the majority of the business is owned by an operator and individuals related to the operator, including relatives who do not live in the operator's household. USDA defines a farm as any place that produced and sold—or normally would have produced and sold—at least \$1,000 of agricultural products during a given year. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-structure-and-organization/farm-structure-and-contracting/>

⁴ Farm size is measured by annual gross cash farm income (GCFI)—a measure of the farm's revenue (before deducting expenses) that includes sales of crops and livestock, payments made under agricultural federal programs, and other farm-related cash income including fees from production contracts. Small farms have GCFI of less than \$350,000, Low-sales farms have GCFI of less than \$150,000. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-structure-and-organization/farm-structure-and-contracting/>

⁵ Farmers have less than 10 years of experience.

⁶ USDA NASS (2014). 2012 Census of Agriculture.