

# 2017 CENSUS of AGRICULTURE

## California Fast Facts

### SMALL FARMS ARE GROWING

Small farms (< 50 acres) make up over 60% of the total farms (70,521) in the state. Despite California's loss of 4 farms a day between 2012 and 2017, over 1000 new farms between 1 and 9 acres have been started since 2012.

### LOSS OF MID-SIZED FARMS

Mid-sized farms (between 10 and 140 acres) saw the most dramatic decline between 2012 and 2017, losing nearly 5,500 farms. By comparison, California only lost 626 farms 140 acres and larger in the same timeframe.

### FARMS WITH MINORITY PRINCIPAL PRODUCERS

Classification of Principal Producer	2017 No. of farms	2012 No. of farms
New and Beginning (< 10 years operating)	19,115	16,493
Young (< 35 years old)	4,505	3,221
Female	30,576	13,984
Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish Origin	9,491	9,815
Asian-American	4,069	4,802
Black	302	345
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander +	306	321
Native American or Native Alaskan	1,041	1,192



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### PRINCIPAL PRODUCER COUNT

Classification of Principal Producer	2017 No. of principal producers	2012 No. of principal producers
New and Beginning (< 10 years operating)	25,584	16,493
Young (< 35 years old)	5,403	3,221
Female	32,155	13,984
Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish Origin	11,192	9,815
Asian-American	5,274	4,802
Black	326	345
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	342	321
Native American or Native Alaskan	1,172	1,192

In 2012, the Census recorded only one principal producer per farm, hence, the number of principal producers and number of farms with those principal producers are the same. In 2017, though, up to four principal producers per farm were recorded, so producer and farm numbers are appropriately different. Some of the dramatic increases in principal producers of a certain demographic (ex. female) can be explained by this classification change between 2012 and 2017.



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### LOOKING DEEPER

- While the census lists that there are 70,521 farms in California, it is important to note that this number includes ranches. To gain a more accurate sense of the cropland in California, one can refer to the number of irrigated farms; this serves as a proxy for tallying crop-producing farms. The 2017 census recorded 52,362 irrigated farms in California.
- A *producer* is defined as "a person who is involved in making decisions for the farm operation. Decisions may include decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, livestock management, and marketing. The producer may be the owner, a member of the owner's household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper." The census recorded up to four producers per farm.
  - A *principal producer* is a producer that self-identified as a primary decision maker for the farm. We chose to report the principal producers in order to reflect minority farmers with a larger stake in their agriculture business.



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