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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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1996 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE - CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM OPERATIONS 2

- There were 276,548 farms in Canada on May 14, 1996, according to the Census of Agriculture. The number of farms has been declining over the past 55 years. However, the decline since the 1991 Census was the smallest ever between censuses.
- While their overall numbers were down, farms have been getting bigger. For example, those with gross farm receipts of $100,000 or more accounted for 30.2% of all farms in 1996, double the proportion in 1981.
- The livestock herd increased in the East, but gains in Western Canada were even stronger. Farmers diversified their crops in response to export markets and a broader range of consumer demands.
- Gross farm receipts increased significantly between 1990 and 1995, outpacing the rise in operating expenses. Receipts were up 21.2%, compared to 16.9% for operating expenses.

1996 Census of Agriculture

Today, Statistics Canada makes its first release from the 1996 Census of Agriculture with data which show in detail what was happening on Canadian farms on May 14, 1996. Data on number of farms, crops, land use, livestock and poultry, operating expenses and gross farm receipts are now available at Canada, provincial and sub-provincial levels.

Summary tabulations, which present a wide range of farm data at Canada and provincial levels, are now available at no charge to clients ordering the publication *Agricultural profile of Canada* (93-356-XPB, $39). This publication, as well as provincial profiles will be released in July 1997.

For a complete list of Census of Agriculture tables and data, see the release in today's Daily. The User Services Unit of the Census of Agriculture can produce tables to meet your special requirements, subject to confidentiality constraints.

For more information, or to order summary tabulations or standard and custom data, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre, or User Services, Census of Agriculture (1-800-465-1991; Internet: *villros@statcan.ca)*. To order publications, call 1-800-267-6677.

1996 Census of Agriculture - Characteristics of farm operations

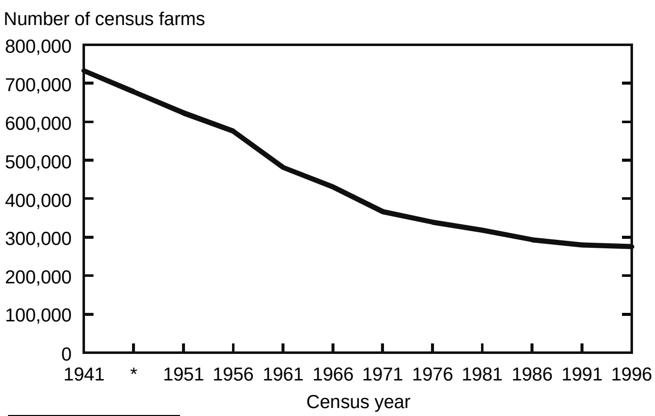
Today, Statistics Canada makes its first release from the 1996 Census of Agriculture with data which show in detail what was happening on Canadian farms on May 14, 1996.

This release is the first of three such announcements from the Census of Agriculture. It provides a national overview of changes in agriculture between 1991 and 1996 for numerous characteristics, including the number of farms, crops, land use, livestock and poultry, operating expenses and gross farm receipts.

On May 14, 1996, the day of the Census of Agriculture, there were 276,548 farms in Canada that met the Census definition. This included 1,593 farms producing only Christmas trees, which were covered for the first time in 1996. A census farm is an agricultural operation that produces an agricultural product intended for sale.

When farms producing only Christmas trees were excluded from the total (for purposes of comparison with previous censuses), the number of farms was 274,955, a 1.8% decrease since 1991. This decline was the smallest between censuses since the peak of 732,832 in 1941.

Decline in farms between 1991 and 1996 smallest since 1941 peak



* *Full census data do not exist for 1946*

The provinces which gained farms since the 1991 Census were British Columbia (+12.6%), Alberta (+3.0%), Nova Scotia (+1.0%) and Newfoundland (+0.8%). Ontario reported the most farms, followed by Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The livestock herd increased in the East, but gains in Western Canada were even stronger. Farmers diversified their crops in response to export markets, a broader range of consumer demands and the availability of new crop varieties.

The proportion of farms in Canada on which operators used computers to help manage the business doubled since the 1991 Census, and was about eight times higher than in 1986.

Data from the 1996 Census of Agriculture will be released on two more occasions. A report containing information on the age, sex, residence status, hours devoted to on-farm and off-farm work, types of non-agricultural businesses operated and farm-related injuries of farm operators is scheduled for release this fall. It will produce a picture of the men and women who make the day-to-day management decisions on Canadian farms.

A third report from the 1996 Census of Agriculture-Population 2B database is scheduled for release in the fall of 1998. It will provide an in-depth look at Canadian farm operators and their families, and will compare

Note to readers

The term "farm" in this release means "farms as defined by the Census". Farms counted in the Census include all agricultural operations producing at least one of the following products for sale: crops (field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, exotic animals); poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, exotic birds); animal products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or other agricultural products (greenhouse or nursery products, Christmas trees, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products).

Farm operations producing only Christmas trees were included for the first time in the 1996 Census of Agriculture. Farms which produced Christmas trees along with other agricultural products were included in censuses prior to 1996, even though there were no specific questions on Christmas tree production or area.

Both the Censuses of Agriculture and Population were conducted on May 14, 1996, nearly three weeks earlier than the traditional early June date. The mid-May date had little impact on most of the characteristics featured in the Census of Agriculture. Data on field crops however, were affected since many farmers reported "seeding intentions" rather than actual areas seeded. To ensure that 1996 Census field crop data could be compared to previous census data, a follow-up was conducted for crop operations which reported less than 90% of their crop area seeded on May 14. Updated or confirmed seeded areas obtained during this follow-up became the official census figures for field crops.

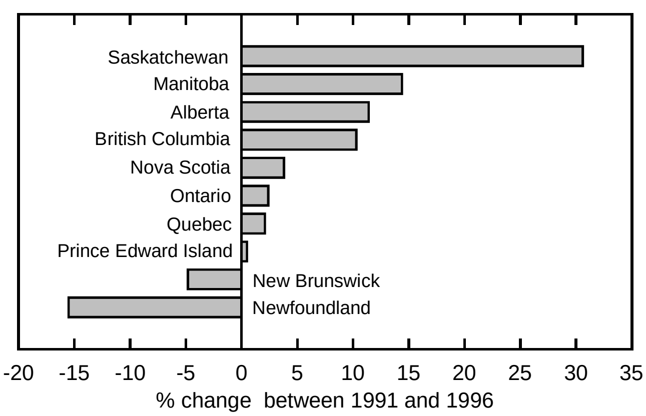
them with the general labour force on variables such as principal occupation, education and income.

FARMS: Fewer in number, but they're getting bigger

While overall numbers of farms have been declining, the size of farms in terms of gross sales has been increasing. (To make comparisons with previous Censuses of Agriculture more accurate, all 1996 farm number figures exclude those farms that produced only Christmas trees.)

Nationally between 1991 and 1996, the number of farms with gross receipts of $100,000 or more (constant 1995 dollars) increased 10.9% to 83,090. These larger farms increased in number in all provinces except Newfoundland and New Brunswick. Saskatchewan had the highest percentage increase at 30.6%, reflecting strong crop prices in 1995.

Farms with gross receipts of $100,000 or more (constant 1995 dollars) up in eight provinces



Note to readers

Census of Agriculture in context

Farmers' optimism at the time of the Census was tempered by some uncertainties. There was a promise of unparalleled high grain prices resulting from a combination of 20-year lows in world wheat stocks and a poor winter wheat crop in the United States. However, the optimism among grain growers from the forecast of high grain prices was frustrated by a cold, wet spring in 1996. Poor conditions delayed tilling and seeding, and in some cases, the shortened growing season limited the choice of crops to seed.

In 1995, the federal government announced that the nearly 100-year-old Crow's Nest Pass Agreement, along with the Feed Freight Assistance Program would end later that year. These programs had subsidized the rail transportation of grain and grain by-products to West Coast ports and to markets in Central and Eastern Canada. Their termination reflected the general trend of reduced government program payments to the agricultural sector.

In early 1996, beef producers found themselves at the top of the "beef cycle". After years of expansion in the beef herd, there was now a greater supply of cattle ready for market than the market demanded. This resulted in low producer prices for all types of cattle, from feeder calves to slaughter animals, to replacement females for the breeding herd.

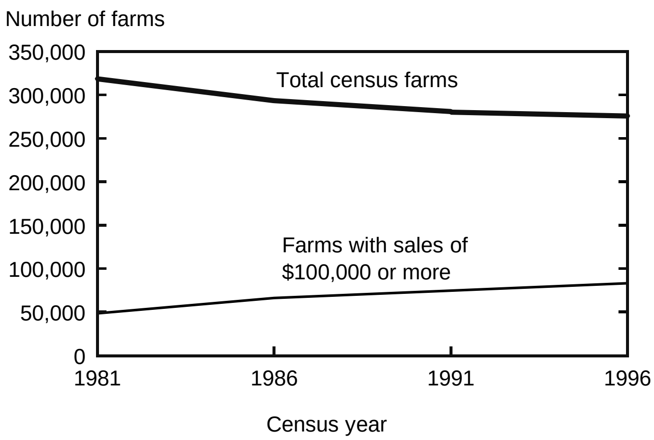
In contrast, demand in the hog industry outstripped the Canadian supply in early 1996, leading to strong prices.

Access to international markets had become more secure in recent years with trade liberalization agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This, combined with a relatively low Canadian dollar, contributed to strong export markets for agriculture in early 1996. The United States and the Pacific Rim continued to open their markets to Canadian grain, live cattle and hogs, and beef and pork products.

Increasingly, health-conscious Canadian consumers demanded a growing variety of fresh and unique foods in their diets. Consumer interest in natural and herbal remedies also offered Canadian farmers options for diversification.

These larger farms also made up a growing proportion of all farms in Canada. Farms with gross farm receipts of $100,000 or more accounted for 30.2% of all farms in 1996, double the level of 15.3% reported in 1981 (constant 1995 dollars).

Farms with gross receipts of $100,000 or more (constant 1995 dollars) increasing



In Quebec, farms reporting at least $100,000 in gross farm sales accounted for 38.9% of the total, the highest proportion in any province in 1996. Prince Edward Island was close behind with 35.0%. British Columbia had the lowest proportion of larger farms (15.7%).

Rate of decline in farm numbers has slowed

The number of farms in Canada has declined steadily since the 1940s but the rate of decline has slowed. A 1.8% decrease between 1991 and 1996, for example, contrasts with the drop of 4.5% between 1986 and 1991.

Five provinces – Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island – experienced smaller declines between 1991 and 1996 than during the previous intercensal period. The most notable deceleration took place in Prince Edward Island, where the decline of 6.8% since 1991 was substantially smaller than the 16.7% loss between 1986 and 1991.

British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland all gained farms since 1991 and contributed to slowing the national rate of decline in numbers of farms.

Number of census farms, 1991 and 1996

	1991	1996		1996
	Number of census farms	Excluding farms producing only Christmas trees[1]	% change	Including farms producing only Christmas trees
Canada	**280,043**	**274,955**	**-1.8**	**276,548**
Newfoundland	725	731	0.8	742
Prince Edward Island	2,361	2,200	-6.8	2,217
Nova Scotia	3,980	4,021	1.0	4,453
New Brunswick	3,252	3,206	-1.4	3,405
Quebec	38,076	35,716	-6.2	35,991
Ontario	68,633	67,118	-2.2	67,520
Manitoba	25,706	24,341	-5.3	24,383
Saskatchewan	60,840	56,979	-6.3	56,995
Alberta	57,245	58,990	3.0	59,007
British Columbia	19,225	21,653	12.6	21,835

[1] *Farms producing only Christmas trees are excluded to make 1996 data comparable to previous censuses.*

Hay, horse farms spurred increase in British Columbia

There were 21,653 farms in British Columbia, up 12.6% since 1991. British Columbia and Newfoundland were the only provinces to record an increase during the past five years as well as between 1986 and 1991.

The strong growth in British Columbia occurred across the province, with Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland showing the largest absolute increases. Expansion since the last census occurred in hay and fodder farms, horse farms and poultry and egg farms. The horticulture sector also increased with numbers of vegetable, fruit and greenhouse operations all up in 1996.

The increase in the number of farms in British Columbia was driven by operations of relatively small size. Between 1991 and 1996, farms with gross sales of less than $10,000 (constant 1995 dollars) increased 14.7% to 11,400. This increase in smaller farms represented about half of the overall gain of 2,428 farms in the province.

Beef sector major factor in Alberta

The number of farms in Alberta reached 58,990 in 1996, up 3.0% since the last Census. Between 1986 and 1991, Alberta experienced a 0.9% decline.

The increase in Alberta was due primarily to growth in the beef sector where the number of farms rose 10.0% to 25,849. The number of farms producing primarily hay and fodder also increased significantly.

There was a large percentage increase in fruit, vegetable and greenhouse operations, although the absolute numbers of these farms remained small.

While relatively small and relatively large farms, in terms of gross receipts, increased between 1991 and 1996, farms which reported gross sales between $10,000 and $100,000 (constant 1995 dollars), declined 5.4% to 29,207.

Farms with less than $10,000 in sales increased 14.9%, while those with $100,000 or more rose 11.4%.

Most of the increase in the number of farms occurred around Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary as farmers attempted to meet the demands of local consumers and niche markets while minimizing transportation costs.

One out of every four farms in Canada was a beef farm

There were more beef farms (71,961) than any other type, according to the Census. Beef farms represented 26.0% of the national total. They outnumbered the next most prevalent type of farm, small-grains, by more than two-to-one. (Small-grains farms exclude farms which specialized in wheat.)

Beef farms ranked in the top three farm types in all provinces except Newfoundland. Farms producing primarily small grains ranked second, and wheat farms third, at the national level. The second and third ranked farm types each accounted for about 11% of all farms.

About one-third of farms (35.9%) in Saskatchewan specialized in wheat in 1996. The top three farm types in Saskatchewan – wheat, small-grains and cattle – represented just over three-quarters (78.2%) of all farms in the province.

In contrast to the degree of specialization in Saskatchewan, Ontario's top three farm types (beef, dairy and oilseeds) accounted for 45.0% of all farms. Ontario's agricultural industry is much more diversified than Saskatchewan's. It would be necessary to include the top nine farm types in Ontario to reach the same proportion as Saskatchewan's top three.

LIVESTOCK: Exports drove big jumps in red meat sector

Strong export markets drove big increases in the red meat sector between 1991 and 1996, as domestic demand was relatively flat.

According to the 1996 Census of Agriculture, there were 4.7 million beef cows in Canada, a 22.3% increase since the 1991 Census. Beef cow numbers rose in every province between 1991 and 1996; however, the West experienced higher growth (+23.4%) than the East (+16.3%). Western Canada accounted for 84.1% of the national total, an increase from 82.7% in 1986.

The number of hogs in Canada increased 8.1% to a near record 11.0 million, as farmers responded to strong export markets for both live hogs and pork products. Although the number of hogs increased in both the East and West, growth in Western Canada was slightly higher at 9.6%, compared to 7.1% in Eastern Canada.

Consequently, Western Canada's share of hogs increased to 40.2% of the national total, a strong gain from 34.3% in 1986.

Canada has traditionally been a net exporter of live animals and a net importer of red meat products. The liberalization of trade in North America and on the world scene, along with Canada's relatively low dollar has created demand for both live animals and meat products. The United States is Canada's largest trading partner in this sector, while the Pacific Rim is an emerging market for Canadian meat products.

In addition, rationalization of the processing industry has occurred over a number of years in the beef sector, increasing processing capacity particularly in Western Canada. For pork, the rationalization has been slower, and further investments will be required in some provinces to take advantage of growing export opportunities.

Number of beef cows and hogs

		1986	1991	1996
Beef Cows				
Canada	**Total**	**3,242,041**	**3,828,630**	**4,680,585**
Eastern Canada	Number	561,902	640,691	745,255
	Share	17.3%	16.7%	15.9%
Western Canada	Number	2,680,139	3,187,939	3,935,330
	Share	82.7%	83.3%	84.1%
Hogs				
Canada	**Total**	**9,756,569**	**10,216,083**	**11,040,462**
Eastern Canada	Number	6,414,797	6,166,273	6,602,104
	Share	65.7%	60.4%	59.8%
Western Canada	Number	3,341,772	4,049,810	4,438,358
	Share	34.3%	39.6%	40.2%

More hens and chickens

There were 102.3 million hens and chickens in Canada in 1996, up 7.8% from the 1991 Census. About two-thirds of them were in Eastern Canada.

As was the case for beef cows and pigs, the national flock of hens and chickens grew faster in the West. Between 1991 and 1996, the flock in Western Canada increased 10.5%, compared to 6.5% in Eastern Canada.

Continued decline in dairy cows, farms

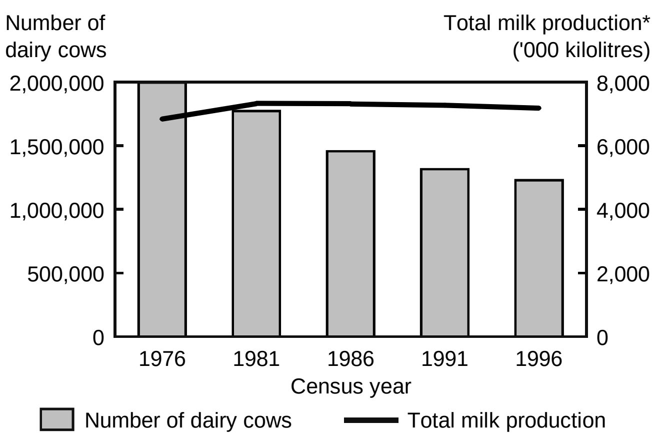
According to the 1996 Census of Agriculture, there were just over 1.2 million dairy cows, a 6.6% decline since 1991.

There was an even larger decline in the number of farms with dairy cows. Those farms declined 20.9% to 30,926. The net result was an increase in the average herd size, from 34 cows per farm in 1991 to 40 in 1996.

Although dairy cow numbers have been steadily declining, milk production has remained fairly constant. Increased production per dairy cow has been achieved through improved breeding, feeding and milking techniques, including an increase to three milkings per day from the traditional two by some operations.

While dairy cow numbers declined in both Ontario (-8.6%) and Quebec (-8.3%), the two provinces still dominated the dairy industry with 71.4% of all dairy cows. Quebec led the nation with 471,855 dairy cows, 38.4% of the total.

Milk production stable despite fewer dairy cows



* Total milk production from *The dairy review (23-001QXPB).*

More bison, elk, goats on the hoof

Many non-traditional livestock species have increased on farms since the last census, while data on some species are available for the first time from the 1996 Census of Agriculture. Much of the growth resulted from consumer interest in a wide variety of foods, often through the hotel and restaurant trade.

There were 125,819 goats in 1996, up 42.8% since 1991. Ontario accounted for more than one-third (36.0%) of all goats, with Alberta accounting for another one-quarter (26.2%). Goat milk provides an alternative to cow milk for people with lactose-related milk allergies. The Canadian market for goat meat has also expanded.

The number of bison almost tripled to 45,437 in 1996 from 15,775 in 1991. The West accounted for 89.5% of the 1996 total, with Alberta having the largest provincial bison herd at 22,782.

In addition, Canadian farms had 69,883 deer and elk in 1996. Four provinces accounted for 86.6% of these animals – British Columbia (27.9%), Ontario (22.5%), Saskatchewan (20.9%) and Alberta (15.3%).

Deer and elk are raised for meat, hides and velvet. The most valuable product from these animals is the velvet from their antlers, most of which is exported. Asian cultures have long used velvet products, believing that their use maintains strength, energy and general good health. It is often eaten as a delicacy, brewed in teas and included in health products.

Though not raised particularly for meat, llamas and their close cousins, alpacas, are being used for a number of purposes, including fibre production, guarding sheep from predators and as companion animals. There were 8,669 llamas on Canadian farms in 1996, more than four times the total of 2,028 in 1991. Western farms had the majority of llamas (84.9%).

CROPS: One of the worst springs on record

As the Census of Agriculture was being conducted on May 14, 1996, one of the biggest problems farmers faced was poor weather conditions. That spring was one of the worst on record in many growing areas in Canada because of cold, wet conditions.

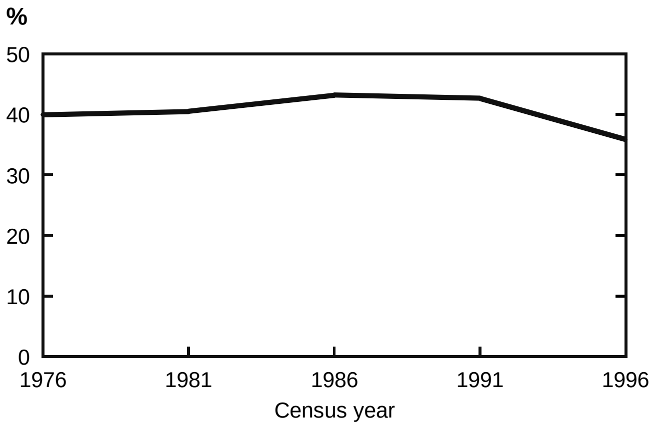
Farmers in many parts of southern Ontario could not get on their land because it was too wet. Flooding was a problem, particularly in parts of the Prairies. In some cases, the risk of a shortened growing season limited the crops a farmer could seed. In a few extreme cases, land that farmers had planned to crop was in fact not seeded at all.

Farms diversifying

As expected, wheat remained Canada's largest crop in 1996. However, even with more than 30.7 million acres, it commanded a substantially smaller proportion of total field crop area than at any time in the past 20 years.

In 1996, 35.8% of all field crop area was seeded to all types of wheat, including winter wheat, down from 42.6% in 1991 and 43.2% in 1986. The decline in wheat acreage was primarily the result of farmers diversifying into other crops.

Wheat, as a proportion of total field crop area, at its lowest point in 20 years



Crop farmers have been diversifying into other crops and livestock to take advantage of export markets, new crop varieties and new processing capacity. In addition, they have been cultivating non-traditional crops to cash in on higher prices. As a result, a number of crops have shown significant growth since 1991.

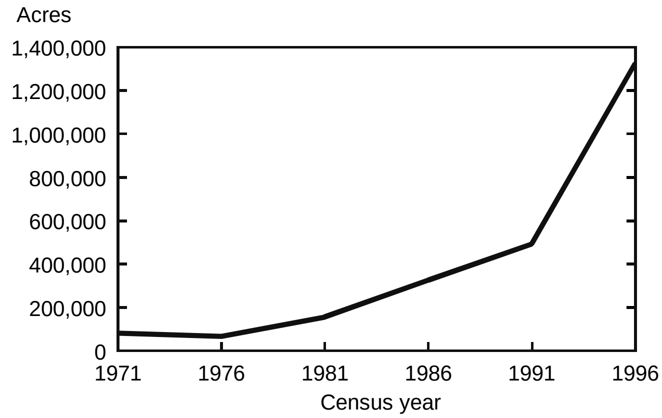
After wheat, the second largest crop in terms of area in Canada was hay and fodder. In 1996, farmers grew 15.3 million acres of hay and fodder, an increase of almost one million acres during the past five years, mainly due to higher alfalfa acreage. There were 8.9 million acres of alfalfa in 1996, up 11.4% over 1991.

In part, the increased hay and fodder area reflects feed requirements for the higher numbers of cattle since the last census.

Farmers grew 2.2 million acres of soybeans in 1996, up 46.5% from 1991. Ontario's total of 1.9 million acres, which was up 36.1% over 1991, represented 88.5% of the national soybean acreage. In Quebec, soybeans have taken off since the last census. Quebec farmers grew 238,934 acres of soybeans in 1996, nearly four times the area reported in 1991. New varieties, well-suited to Quebec's growing conditions, were behind this increase.

The 1996 Census records show 1.3 million acres of dry field peas, more than double the 495,649 acres reported in 1991. The area of dry field peas rose steadily between 1976 and 1991. The dramatic increase during the last five years was directly related to export opportunities. Exports of dry peas in 1996 were about 800,000 metric tonnes, four times the quantity exported in 1991.

Area of dry field peas in 1996 more than double 1991 level



P.E.I. potato acreage up substantially

Prince Edward Island farmers increased their share of the national potato acreage from 25.7% in 1991 to 29.1% in 1996.

In total, Canadian farmers grew 371,421 acres of potatoes in 1996, up 22.8% from 1991. Potato area increased in every province, although the growth in two provinces was particularly strong – Prince Edward Island (+39.0% to 108,158 acres) and Manitoba (+41.6% to 70,063 acres). Gains were in response to increased processing capacity, primarily for export markets.

Since the 1991 Census, Manitoba has captured second place in potato acreage, which was traditionally held by New Brunswick. Farmers in New Brunswick grew 54,064 acres in 1996.

Impressive gains in greenhouse industry

There was a major expansion in the greenhouse industry between 1991 and 1996. According to the Census, there were just under 139 million square feet under glass, plastic or other protection, a 41.0% increase over 1991. This area is the equivalent of about 3,200 acres.

All provinces realized gains in greenhouse area between 1991 and 1996. Ontario had the largest absolute increase in area (17.4 million square feet) which raised its total to 63.3 million square feet.

Flowers (cut flowers, bedding and potted plants) accounted for 54.2% of greenhouse area in use on May 14, 1996, compared to 33.0% for greenhouse vegetables and 12.8% for other greenhouse products such as seedlings.

Culinary and medicinal herbs, and ancient grains, gaining ground

Growing demand for medicinal herbs, and shifting consumer tastes, have led to an increase in a number of specialty crops in Canada, although they are not particularly large in terms of total acreage.

Farmers grew 5,814 acres of ginseng in 1996, about two-thirds of it in Ontario, and another 28.1% in British Columbia. In total, about 450 farms reported growing ginseng. A slow-growing, high-value crop, ginseng is produced primarily for export to Asia, where it is a staple in traditional Chinese medicine. In 1996, over one million kilograms of ginseng roots were exported, almost 80% of which was destined for Hong Kong. Ginseng takes three to four years to produce. Fields must be covered with mulch and shade material to simulate the plant’s native woodland habitat. Ginseng demands well-drained, sandy-loam soil, much like that for tobacco. That is why most of Canada’s ginseng is grown in the traditional tobacco area of southwestern Ontario.

Herbs have been gaining favour in Canada, both for culinary and medicinal purposes. In 1996, there were thousands of acres of these crops. For example, 9,300 acres of coriander were reported on the Census, virtually all (about 98%) in Saskatchewan. Both the leaves and seeds of the coriander plant are used in cooking to add a piquant flavour to dishes.

About 480 farms grew 1,046 acres of garlic in Canada in 1996. Well known for both culinary uses and medicinal uses such as reducing high-blood pressure and as an antibiotic, this crop has expanded from 156 acres in 1991.

Ancient grains such as spelt, which has been a staple in Ethiopia for centuries, are being grown in Canada. There were 2,038 acres of spelt recorded on the 1996 Census of Agriculture, mostly in Ontario.

New data on Christmas trees

According to the Census, there were 126,197 acres of Christmas trees on farms in Canada. It was the first time that the Census sought such information.

Eastern Canada had more than three-quarters of the acreage devoted to Christmas tree production. Quebec had 24.2% of the national total, largest of any province. Nova Scotia was second at 22.7%, and Ontario was close behind with a 22.1% share.

About 3.2 million Christmas trees were harvested in 1995 on 2,194 farms. In terms of trees harvested, Quebec led the way with 32.5% of the national harvest. Most Christmas trees harvested in Canada were exported to the United States (2.1 million trees in 1995).

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY: Use in farm management almost doubled

As farm operations become larger and more specialized, computer technology becomes a valuable tool for making production decisions.

In 1996, 21.2% of all farms in Canada had a personal computer used for farm management, compared with 11.0% in 1991 and 2.7% in 1986. It should be noted that computers which were in farm households, but were not used for farm management applications are not included in the Census of Agriculture figures.

Rural residents, including farmers, often face challenges in accessing computer technology in part because of inadequate phone lines in some areas. However, improvements are being made. In November 1996, the last "party line" in Manitoba was converted to a private telephone line. Party lines have also been eliminated in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Other provinces are systematically replacing shared telephone lines and converting to touch-tone service. Computer use may also expand as alternatives are found to urban-based Internet providers, and the associated long-distance charges are reduced.

Computer use varied by province, farm type, and farm size

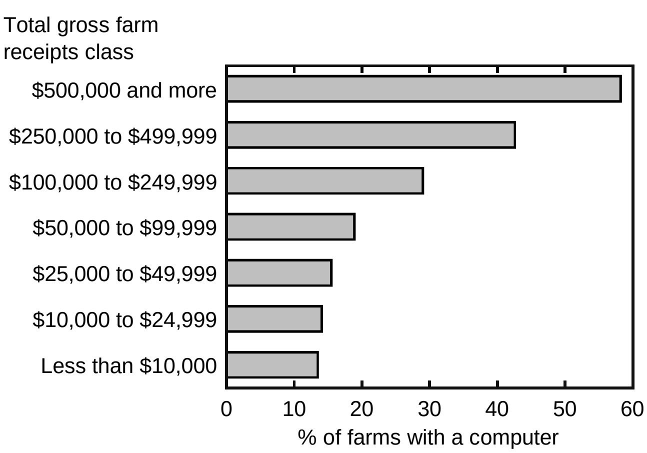
Almost one quarter (23.6%) of farms in British Columbia had a computer in 1996, the highest of any province. Only two others – Alberta (22.9%) and Quebec (22.1%) – were above the national average.

Proportion of census farms with a computer for farm management

	1986	1991	1996
	% of farms with a computer		
Canada	**2.7**	**11.0**	**21.2**
Newfoundland	2.6	9.8	15.1
Prince Edward Island	1.5	8.1	20.3
Nova Scotia	2.7	10.3	19.9
New Brunswick	2.2	9.5	17.6
Quebec	2.0	9.1	22.1
Ontario	3.0	11.3	20.9
Manitoba	2.1	8.6	18.9
Saskatchewan	2.4	11.1	19.9
Alberta	3.0	12.2	22.9
British Columbia	3.5	14.3	23.6

Operators of larger farms more often had a computer for farm management. In 1996, 58.2% of farms reporting $500,000 or more (constant 1995 dollars) in gross farm receipts had a computer, up from 42.1% in 1991 and 18.3% in 1986. The relative complexity of management for these large farms is one factor in explaining this situation.

Higher proportion of larger farms had a computer for farm management



Use of computers varied considerably among farm types. Poultry and egg farms were the highest users in 1996, with 33.7% incorporating a computer into their management, followed by hog farms (33.5%) and dairy farms (27.5%). In all other farm categories, fewer than 25% used a personal computer for farm management.

Poultry and egg, hog and dairy farms share two general characteristics which may explain their high use of computers. First, they tend to have relatively high gross farm receipts compared to other farm types. Secondly, those three sectors have adopted high-tech extensively in other aspects of their business, such as computerized feeding systems and monitoring systems for buildings. This may reflect a high acceptance rate of technology in general among the operators of these farm types.

Increase in gross farm receipts outpaced rise in operating expenses

Gross farm receipts increased significantly between 1990 and 1995, outpacing the rise in operating expenses. Receipts in constant 1995 dollars rose 21.2% to $32.2 billion. Farm operating expenses, which did not include depreciation or capital cost allowance, reached $26.6 billion, up 16.9%. (This data excludes farms that produced only Christmas trees so that comparisons with previous Censuses of Agriculture are more accurate.)

Interest expenses represented 6.8% of total expenses in 1995, compared to 11.7% in 1990. Between 1990 and 1995, they declined 31.9% to $1.8 billion.

Lower interest rates, as well as a drop in the number of farms reporting interest expenses, were behind the decline. Overall, 160,657 farms reported interest expenses, down 7.1% from 1990.

For more information on this release, contact Lynda Kemp (613-951-3841), Census of Agriculture, or Media Relations (613-951-4636). □

Census of Agriculture: Highlights

	1991	1996 Excluding Christmas tree only farms[1]	% change	1996 Including Christmas tree only farms[1]
CENSUS FARMS[2]				
Total census farms	280,043	274,955	-1.8	276,548
Farms with gross farm receipts of $100,000 or more [3]	74,905	83,090	10.9	83,140
	acres*	acres*		acres*
LAND				
Land in crops	82,799,535	86,286,077	4.2	86,286,078
Summerfallow	19,573,092	15,470,113	-21.0	15,470,590
Total pasture land[4]	49,679,356	49,315,756	-0.7	49,325,445
All other land [5]	15,371,074	16,864,333	9.7	17,085,362
Total land on census farms	167,423,057	167,936,279	0.3	168,167,475
Average census farm size	598	611	2.2	608
FIVE MAJOR CROPS[6]				
1) Spring wheat (excluding durum)	29,463,938	24,634,614	-16.4	24,634,614
2) Total hay and fodder crops	14,389,621	15,347,397	6.7	15,347,397
3) Barley	11,180,156	12,951,236	15.8	12,951,236
4) Canola	7,762,385	8,726,366	12.4	8,726,366
5) Durum wheat	4,942,648	5,079,392	2.8	5,079,392
LAND MANAGEMENT				
Area irrigated [7]	1,774,297	2,114,310	19.2	2,115,549
Area applied with commercial fertilizer[7]	53,280,448	61,610,180	15.6	61,634,601
Area treated with herbicides [7]	53,371,080	57,471,617	7.7	57,488,309
Area tilled retaining most of the residue on surface	17,522,247	21,663,137	23.6	21,663,137
Area tilled incorporating most of the residue into soil	49,387,997	37,891,866	-23.3	37,891,867
Area of no-till	4,821,406	11,346,533	135.3	11,346,533
	# of animals	# of animals		# of animals
LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY				
Total cattle and calves	12,972,038	14,893,034	14.8	14,893,034
Total beef cows	3,828,630	4,680,585	22.3	4,680,585
Total dairy cows	1,315,178	1,227,732	-6.6	1,227,732
Total sheep and lambs	935,891	864,850	-7.6	864,850
Total pigs	10,216,083	11,040,462	8.1	11,040,462
Total hens and chickens	94,872,875	102,255,149	7.8	102,255,149
	(1995 dollars)	(1995 dollars)		(1995 dollars)
RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES[3]				
Total gross farm receipts	26,577,357,571	32,201,238,975	21.2	32,230,356,237
Average gross farm receipts	94,905	117,115	23.4	116,545
Total interest expense	2,666,471,241	1,814,585,015	-31.9	1,816,395,996
Average interest expense	15,418	11,295	-26.7	11,271
Total operating expenses	22,792,275,131	26,644,079,984	16.9	26,669,926,814
Average operating expense	81,388	96,903	19.1	96,439
	$	$		$
CAPITAL AND DEBT				
Total farm capital value [8]	131,210,056,423	156,113,413,831	19.0	156,468,941,335
Average capital value	468,535	567,778	21.2	565,793
Total farm debt outstanding [9]	23,742,992,000	25,776,995,000	8.6	

Census of Agriculture: Highlights

[1] Christmas tree only farm operations were enumerated for the first time in the 1996 Census of Agriculture. Farms which produced Christmas trees as well as other agricultural products were included in censuses prior to 1996. To allow for comparison to previous census data, Christmas tree only farms have been excluded from the second column of the table.

[2] Farm operations enumerated in the 1996 Census of Agriculture include all agricultural operations producing at least one of the following products for sale: Crops (field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); Livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock); Poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry); Animal Products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or Other Agricultural Products (greenhouse or nursery products, Christmas trees, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products).

[3] Receipts and expenses refer to the year prior to census year, i.e., 1995 (1990). These figures are expressed in constant 1995 dollars. Constant dollar conversion accounts for changes in farm product and input prices. Constant dollars allow for analysis of financial trends over time while maintaining parity with the base year. Farm business operating expenses collected on the Census of Agriculture refer to the calendar or fiscal year prior to census year and do not include depreciation or capital cost allowance.

[4] Total pasture combines tame or seeded pasture and natural land for pasture.

[5] All other land includes Christmas tree area.

[6] These are the five largest crops in terms of area seeded.

[7] Data refer to the year prior to census year, i.e., 1995 (1990).

[8] Farm capital includes the value of all land, buildings, machinery, equipment (including passenger vehicles), livestock and poultry. Values for livestock and poultry inventories reported in the census are derived from data on average farm prices for the respective types of livestock and poultry. The values for land and buildings as well as machinery and equipment are reported by respondents. Farm capital does not include the value of crops in the field or in storage, or farm inputs on hand, such as fertilizer and seed.

[9] The source of total farm debt outstanding data is Agriculture Economic Statistics; Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 21-603-UPE. These figures represent the total amounts of debt outstanding to agricultural producers as of December 31 of 1990 and 1995.

** Land area is reported in acres. One acre equals 0.40 hectares or 1.18 arpents.*

1996 Census of Agriculture: Data, products and services

All farm variables are now available from the 1996 Census of Agriculture at Canada, provincial and sub-provincial levels including: number of farms, crops, land use, land management practices, livestock and poultry, farm machinery, operating expenses and gross farm receipts.

Summary tabulations presenting data for all farm variables at Canada and provincial levels are now available, at no charge, to persons ordering the publication *Agricultural profile of Canada*, (93-356-XPB, $39). This publication (plus provincial profiles) will be released in July 1997.

In October 1997, the following farm operator variables will be available at Canada, provincial and sub-provincial levels: age, sex, residence status, hours of farm and non-farm work, types of non-agricultural businesses operated, and farm-related injuries.

In October 1998, variables from the 1996 Census of Agriculture-Population 2B database will be available at Canada and provincial levels, including: marital status, labour force activity, income, and education.

In June 1997: *Historical overview of Canadian agriculture*, (93-358-XPB, $49), data publication; semi-custom data service;

Data publications in July 1997: *Agricultural profile of Canada*, (93-356-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of the Atlantic provinces*, (95-175-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of Quebec*, (95-176-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of Ontario*, (95-177-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of Manitoba*, (95-178-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of Saskatchewan*, (95-179-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of Alberta*, (95-180-XPB, $39); *Agricultural profile of British Columbia*, (95-181-XPB, $39);

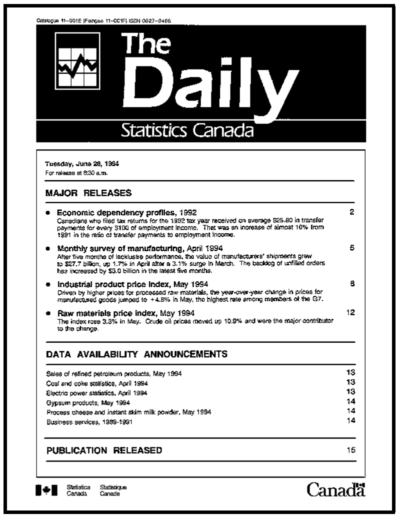
In Fall 1997: 1996 Census of Agriculture CD-ROM Release 1, (93F0031XCB, $2,500); *Profile of Canadian farm operators*, (93-359-XPB, $39), data publication;

In Fall 1998: 1996 Census of Agriculture CD-ROM Release 2, (93F0031XCB, $2,500, or free for those who purchased Release 1);

In Spring 1999: *Canadian agriculture at a glance*, (96-325-XPB, $49) analytical publication.

The User Services Unit of the Census of Agriculture can tailor data products to meet your special requirements, subject to confidentiality constraints. Custom tabulations allow users to create personalized tables from the 1996 Census of Agriculture and historical databases. Thematic maps can also be produced to clients' specifications.

Users may obtain a schedule of upcoming releases for data and products from the 1996 Census of Agriculture. For more information or to order summary tabulations or standard and custom data contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre, or User Services, Census of Agriculture, toll-free at 1-800-465-1991 or (613) 951-2889. The User Services e-mail address is *villros@statcan.ca*. To order publications call toll free 1-800-267-6677.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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Economic dependency profiles,** 1992 — 2
  Canadians who filed tax returns for the 1992 tax year received on average $25.80 in transfer payments for every $100 of employment income. That was an increase of almost 10% from 1991 in the ratio of transfer payments to employment income.
- **Monthly survey of manufacturing,** April 1994 — 5
  After five months of lacklustre performance, the value of manufacturers' shipments grew to $27.7 billion, up 1.7% in April after a 3.1% surge in March. The backlog of unfilled orders has increased by $3.0 billion in the latest five months.
- **Industrial product price index, May 1994** — 8
  Driven by higher prices for processed raw materials, the year-over-year change in prices for manufactured goods jumped to +4.6% in May, the highest rate among members of the G7.
- **Raw materials price index,** May 1994 — 12
  The index rose 3.3% in May. Crude oil prices moved up 10.9% and were the major contributor to the change.

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