



FarmResponse Definitions:

Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Farm

A farm is defined as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year. Since the definition allows for farms to be included even if they did not have at least \$1,000 in sales, but normally would have, a system is developed by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for determining when a farm normally would have.

Farm Operator and Principal Farm Operator

Farmers may call themselves "farm operator" or "farmer". The farm operator is the person who runs the farm, making day-to-day management decisions. The operator could be an owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant, and/or a partner. If land is rented or worked on shares, the tenant or renter is the operator.

Family Farm

The general concept of a family farm is one in which ownership and control of the farm business is held by a family of individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Family ties can and often do extend across households and generations. Historically, it was not uncommon for the family farm to provide all of the labor for the farm and to own all of the land and capital of the farm. That is no longer true today, although the extent to which individual farms hire nonfamily labor, rent-in land or other capital, or contract for various farm services varies greatly across farms. In short, the organization of family farms changes over time.

There is no hard-and-fast definition of a family farm. In its program of analyzing the well-being of farm operator households using microdata, the ERS definition of family farms has changed over time. A preferred definition of a family farm would allow for organizational changes in the ways in which operators structure their farm businesses as they respond to changes in technology, the marketplace, and policies, but would still capture the general concept of a family farm in which a family unit maintains majority control and ownership.

Farm Operator Household

Farm operator households are those who share dwelling units with principal farm operators of family farms. The farm operator household population excludes the households of farm operators that do not live with the principal operator.

Household income from other farming activities: A household may earn income from more than one farm. The other farming activities can include operating another farm or renting out farmland from another farming operation to another operator. Income from these sources is included in the farm operator household's earnings from farming activities.

It is important to note that the earnings of the operator household from farming activities as defined in the USDA measure is not a complete measure of the return provided by the farm. It excludes nonmoney income, in particular, the rental value of a farm-owned dwelling. In addition, farm losses, or negative farm earnings, of the operator household can reduce the income taxes paid on off-farm sources of income. The measure also excludes increases in inventories, which the household could potentially sell for cash.

Household off-farm income: Off-farm income can be classified as earned or unearned. Earned income sources are those that require a household member to allocate their labor or management time to the activity. This includes wages and salaries and off-farm self-employment income. Unearned income sources are passive or transfer income, such as from interest, dividends, private pensions, Social Security, veterans' benefits, and other public programs.

Farm Typology

The ERS farm typology groups relatively similar farms. The complete typology has eight groups, which are defined by the farm's gross cash income, the primary occupation of the principal operator, and whether the farm is a family farm (see [Updating the ERS Farm Typology](#), EIB-110, April 2013). The collapsed farm typology combines the seven farm typology groups into three groups:

- **Residence farms:** Farms with less than \$350,000 in gross cash farm income and where the principal operator is either retired from farming or has a primary occupation other than farming.
- **Intermediate farms:** Farms with less than \$350,000 in gross cash farm income and a principal operator whose primary occupation is farming.
- **Commercial farms:** Farms with \$350,000 or more gross cash farm income and nonfamily farms.

Note: Nonfamily farms are excluded from the commercial farm group in the reporting of household statistics. Gross cash income includes the farm's sales of crops and livestock, government payments, and other farm-related income but excludes revenues that do not accrue to the farm, such as the value of production accruing to share landlords or production contractors.

Beginning Farmer/Rancher

Beginning farmers and ranchers as those who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less either as a sole operator or with others who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less. Beginning farmers tend to be younger than established farmers and to operate smaller farms or ranches, some of which may provide no annual production. Beginning farmers often face obstacles getting started, including high startup costs and limited availability of land.

Ranch

A ranch is a **large farm for raising cows, horses, sheep or other livestock** and typically where large acreage is required for grazing.

When it comes to ranches specialized in beef cattle operations, a farm is considered a ranch at around **440 acres of land**. Small family farms are considered to be small ranches at around 200 acres of land. A large family farm is considered a large ranch from 1,400 acres.

However, you will rarely hear a farmer that raises pigs, call his farm a pig ranch and will refer to themselves as a pig farmer. When in doubt, just ask how a producer identifies themselves.

The following information is excerpted from the Texas Farm Bureau. It may help in understanding the designation of farmer versus rancher, as well as how they think, and what they value.

What are the key differences between farmers and ranchers?

Farmers grow crops. They plow, plant, spray, and harvest. Farmers talk about seed, fertilizer, soil health and tractors.

Ranchers raise livestock. They know livestock breeds, animal husbandry and stocking rates.

A farmer will own tractors, plows, spray rigs and combines. Some have irrigation equipment like pivot sprinklers. These tools of the trade are vital for growing, harvesting, and transporting crops.

Ranchers use pickup trucks and stock trailers, UTVs and squeeze chutes. Horses are still used to work cattle. Tractors, feed troughs, windmills and cattle panels round out the gear needed to successfully raise healthy animals for market.

Farmers love the land. They work hard to make sure soil is in optimal condition. From no-till and cover crops to residue management and soil amendments, farmers employ an array of techniques in the quest for soil health.

Ranchers love the land, too. They use land not suitable for farming—it's too rocky or too dry or muddy, too brushy, or too steep. Ranchers fence pastures and rotate grazing to keep land in tip-top shape.

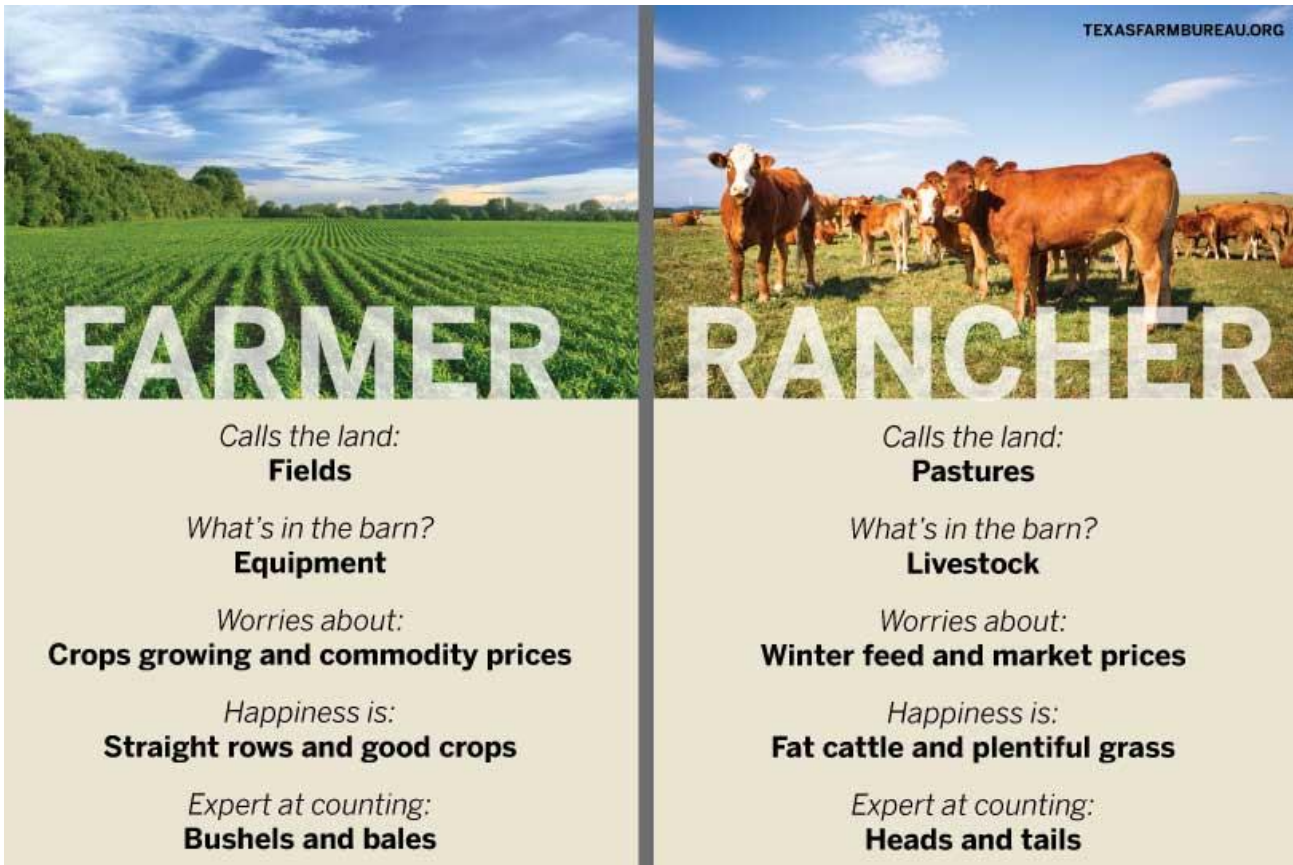
Farmers find beauty in neatly plowed furrows, lush green plants, and fruitful harvests.

Ranchers love wide-open spaces and sleek, healthy cattle. Straight fences and sturdy posts can make a rancher downright giddy.

A farmer's worst day is an early freeze or when a crop gets hailed out. Sugarcane aphids, boll weevils, grasshoppers and corn earworms are some of the nastiest pests farmers know.

A rancher's saddest day is losing an animal. Predators, disease, injury, and difficult births are major sources of worry for a rancher. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and blizzards are tough to endure when the safety of the herd is uncertain. Many ranchers won't evacuate in the face of danger without making sure their animals are safe first.

Farmers grow food crops like grains, vegetables, fruit, and nuts or raise fiber such as cotton, Texas' number-one crop. Ranchers primarily produce meat. Hides are used to make leather, and sheep and goats can be sheared for their wool and mohair.



Texas Farm Bureau

AgriSafe inserted: Ranchers tend to have large volumes of livestock with more than 1,000 acres, usually thousands. Cattle ranches have "roundups" usually once or twice a year gathering all livestock on the ranching land for the purpose of healthcare and branding.

A producer with smaller herds of cattle may call themselves a cattle farmer, or sheep farmer verses a cattle rancher or sheep rancher, usually less than 1,000 acres.

Some farmers may raise crops and animals for personal reasons or to diversify their production.

Where does Forestry and Fishing fit in the Agricultural picture?

From the USDA: The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats.

What does forestry mean in agriculture?

Forestry is the means **by which trees can be produced as a renewable resource for wood or biomass** for direct timber sales, production of trees for ornamental plantings or woody material for composite products or for use as a combustion energy source.

AgriSafe inserted:

Forestry and Fishing are industries typically included in grant language when addressing farmers and ranchers. But these professionals sometimes don't feel a close alignment with farmers and ranchers as they see their

industries as very different. They will not typically identify themselves as farmers, but as fisherman or foresters. Forestry (harvesting timber) and Fishing are both **very** dangerous occupations.

The following information is from the USDA website:

Farmworkers

Hired farmworkers are found in a variety of occupations, including field crop workers, nursery workers, livestock workers, graders and sorters, agricultural inspectors, supervisors, and hired farm managers. The majority are wage and salary workers, hired directly by farmers, but some are employees of agricultural service companies, including farm labor contractors, custom harvest providers, and management service providers. Many industrywide employment estimates also include support personnel on farms, such as human resource managers, sales agents, and truck drivers. Women are an increasing share of the hired farm workforce.

Many hired farmworkers are foreign-born people from Mexico and Central America, with many lacking authorization to work legally in the United States. In recent years, farmworkers have become more settled with fewer migrating long distances from home to work, and fewer pursuing seasonal follow-the-crop migration. More than 80 percent of hired crop farmworkers are not migrant workers but are considered settled, meaning that they work at a single location within 75 miles of their home. This share is up from 41 percent in 1996-98, reflecting a profound change in the nature of the crop farm workforce.

Among the small share of remaining migrant workers, the largest group is "shuttlers," who work at a single farm location more than 75 miles from home and may cross an international border to get to their worksite. Shuttlers made up about 10 percent of hired crop farmworkers

Additional relevant definitions

Elevator

A building or terminal where grain is elevated and stored or transferred to an alternate mode of transportation.

Pen

The act of gathering livestock

Stalk

Trunk or stem of crops like corn or grain sorghum.

Header

The end of a combine that acts like scissors to harvest the crops.

Hybrid

Seed produced by cross-pollinated crops.

Cab

The portion of the tractor where farmers ride.

Market animal

Livestock bred and raised for food consumption.