



**April 2019**

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# 2017 Census of Agriculture: Kentucky produce snapshot

*By Matt Ernst, independent writer*

The USDA in April released the 2017 Census of Agriculture results, and the data on produce acreage reflects on-farm realities for specialty crop growers in Kentucky and beyond.

The census results show many trends continue in U.S. agriculture: fewer total farms; farm production value increasing among larger farms; increasing age of farm operators; and fewer farms “in the middle,” in terms of both farm size and value of sales.

Other trends shown in the census data are well-known to specialty crop growers. Nationally, one in four farms is operated by a beginning farmer with less than 10 years in farming. These farms are smaller, producing less market value than the average farm, and may be more likely to have a female named as the primary operator.

Small farms also tend to sell products direct to consumers and institutions. Sales direct to consumers reached nearly \$3 billion in 2017, with sales to institutions and retailers exceeding \$10 billion, according to USDA.

National totals for field vegetable production show how farms in “the middle” continue to decline, the gap widening between very small farms and very large farms.

The number of farms with a vegetable harvest rose 3 percent nationally from 2012 to 2017; however, the area of vegetables harvested from fields declined, from 4.49 million acres to 4.37 million acres.

The reason? More very small vegetable farms and consolidation of very large vegetable farms. Farms harvesting less than 5 acres went

**Continued on Page 2**

**What's inside**  
TN webinar series ..... 2  
CCD resources update ..... 3

**Coming up**

**May 4** - Illinois Hemp Growers Summit, Chicago. For details, [click here](#).

**May 22** - Understanding and Managing Soil Biology for Soil Health and Crop Production webinar, 2 p.m. EDT. Part of the Organic Farming Research Foundation and eOrganic Soil Health and Organic Farming Webinar Series. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

**May 29** - MarketReady/Food Systems Innovation Center Packaging Value-Added Products webinar, 12:30 p.m. EDT. Details coming soon at <https://www.uky.edu/marketready/>.

**June 27** - Organic No-Till Market Farming (and Summer Greens Production) field day, 9 a.m.-noon EDT, Rough Draft Farmstead, Lawrenceburg, KY. For details and to register, [click here](#).



## Continued from Page 1

from 46,794 in 2012 to 50,814 in 2017. Farms harvesting 1,000 or more acres of vegetables declined from 910 to 845.

Kentucky bucked that trend, as the Commonwealth's total field vegetable acreage increased from 7,196 acres in 2012 to 8,320 in 2017.

Vegetables grown under protection (greenhouse and high tunnel) also increased. The total value of vegetables grown under protection increased nearly \$1.5 million from 2012 to 2017, with 165 new operations. That makes sense, given the number of new high tunnels established across Kentucky since 2012.

Census data also show Kentucky growing a more diverse vegetable mix. Acreage was steady to declining for standbys like melons, sweet corn, cucumbers, pumpkins and tomatoes. But total vegetable acreage increased. Two reasons for the increase: 1) acreage rebounds in peppers (both bell and chile) and squash (both summer and winter); and 2) big increases in crops with 75 or fewer total acres.

The list of these "smaller" crops reads like a Who's

Kentucky Fruits and Vegetables: By the Numbers				
Year and Acreage	2017	2012	2007	1997
Vegetables (harvested)	8,320	7,196	7,535	4,722
Orchards (planted)	3,342	3,092	3,861	4,102
Berries (total planted)	900	866	772	n/a
Grapes (total planted)	565	626	618	96
Vegetables (protected, sq. ft)	1,483,286	954,291	498,218	n/a

Who of crops that are important for growers selling direct through farmers markets, CSAs and direct-to-institution: head and leaf lettuce, broccoli, onions, sweet potatoes, greens and spinach, eggplant, carrots, beets, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, garlic, radishes and fresh cut herbs. These crops, combined, increased from 304 harvested acres in 2012 to nearly 800 acres in 2017.

Fruit acreage is another sign of continued diversification among Kentucky's produce growers, as fruit production increased both in acreage totals and the number of operations. Apple acreage continued to decline, as it has since the 1980s; but other tree fruits and berries are on the rise. The biggest fruit boost came in orchards with less than 5 acres.

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service has a new online portal making it easier to find data from the Census of Agriculture this year. It is available at [nass.usda.gov](http://nass.usda.gov).

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## Webinar series to offer insights into marketing, farm management

*From the Center for Profitable Agriculture*

7 Habits for Effective Farmers, a webinar series hosted by Tennessee's Center for Profitable Agriculture, will cover a variety of topics related to effective farm business management, marketing and planning. This free webinar series, which will be held the first Wednesday of each month from May through November, will benefit direct farm marketers, value-added agriculture entrepreneurs and agritourism operators. Webinars, which feature speakers from University of Tennessee Extension, the UT Institute of Agriculture, the Center for Profitable Agriculture, and the University of Kentucky, will cover such topics as Business Planning and Recordkeeping, Budgeting, Evaluating Financial Health, Production Risk Management, Goal Setting and Marketing, Farm Safety and Stress

Management, and Succession Planning. The one-hour webinars will begin at noon Eastern time, 11 a.m. Central.

[Click here](https://utk.questionpro.com/a/TakeSurvey?tt=O0wN/agD6fE%3D) for additional information about the webinars. To receive links to the webinar sessions, register online at <https://utk.questionpro.com/a/TakeSurvey?tt=O0wN/agD6fE%3D>. Contact Iris Cui at [xcui10@utk.edu](mailto:xcui10@utk.edu) or 931-648-5725 if you have questions.

The webinars are brought to you by the Center for Profitable Agriculture, Tennessee Farm Bureau, Southern Extension Risk Management Education, and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2018-70027-28585.

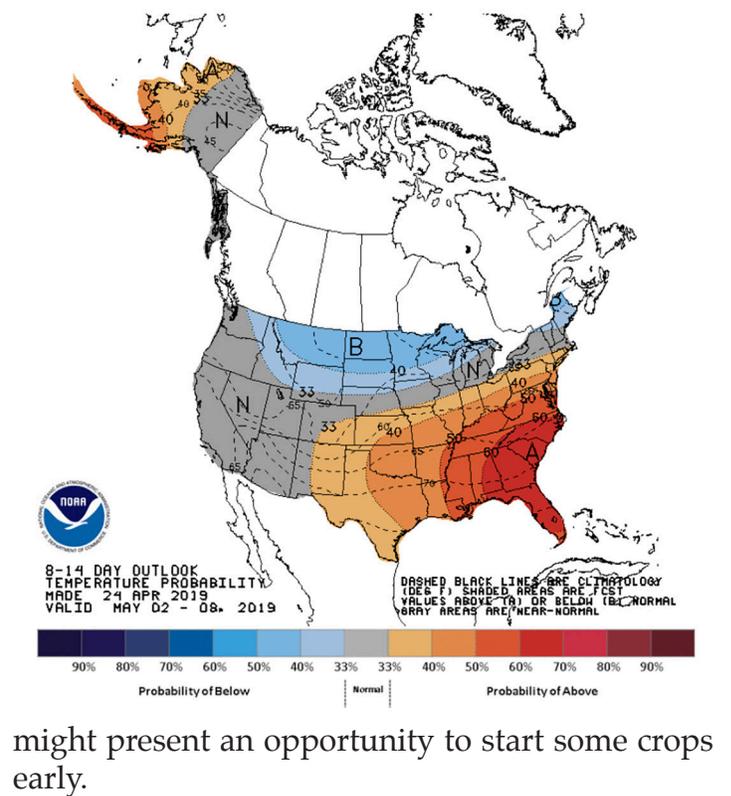
# Warmer and wetter than average trend continues

By Joshua Knight, Senior Extension Associate, Horticulture

Though a non-typical cold weather pattern is predicted to move across the Dakotas in the first week of May, it is not forecasted to reach down to the Commonwealth. The eastern half of the U.S., including Kentucky, is predicted to be overall warmer than average for the entire month of May.

The wetter than average trend will continue into early May, but might very well drop off in the latter half of the month, while the deep south will continue to receive more precipitation than average.

Typically, the last frost for the season occurs between April 15<sup>th</sup> in the western part of the state and May 18<sup>th</sup> in the eastern part of the state. The warm days we have had alongside the prediction of warmer than average temperatures for May



might present an opportunity to start some crops early.

## Beginning Farmer and Rancher grants deadline coming up May 16<sup>th</sup>

From the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture offers Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Grants to fund collaborative projects designed to help beginning farmers start to farm. The purpose of the program is to provide educational resources, trainings, outreach efforts, and/or mentoring programs. Successful projects bring together community partners that are willing to work together to improve the sustainability of America's next generation of farmers.

Eligible entities include government, higher education and non-profits. The application deadline is May 16<sup>th</sup>. Funding amounts range from less than \$50,000 for a simplified one-year project, up to \$100,000 per year for three years for standard grants, and \$200,000 per year for three years for large standard grants, for a maximum request of \$600,000. For additional information, [click here](#).

## CCD resources update

See new irrigation page, revised profiles

A list of irrigation publications and other resources from the University of Kentucky and elsewhere is now available on the Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) website at <https://www.uky.edu/ccd/water>. This list is the first step in an effort by the CCD and University of Kentucky Department of Horticulture faculty to develop a package of irrigation resources for growers in Kentucky and throughout the region.

Updated resources this month include our crop profile on [Bamboo \(CCD-CP-77\)](#), and our [Selling Farm Products at Farmers Markets \(CCD-MP-6\)](#) and [Grower Cooperatives \(CCD-MP-17\)](#) marketing profiles.

Look for more new and updated resources in the coming months on the CCD website at [www.uky.edu/ccd/](http://www.uky.edu/ccd/).

# Derby Festival events showcase KY Proud

*From the Kentucky Department of Agriculture*

FRANKFORT — Kentucky Derby Festival revelers can enjoy Kentucky Proud foods and beverages in events throughout the annual celebration of the Commonwealth's signature event.

The Derby Festival's Kentucky Proud WineFest, April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>, gives guests the opportunity to sample wines from more than a dozen Kentucky wineries. The annual celebration of local wines will begin at 5 p.m. each day at the Belvedere at Waterfront Park in Louisville. For more information, go to [discover.kdf.org/winefest](http://discover.kdf.org/winefest).

At the Great Steamboat Race Presented by IBEW Local 369 on May 1<sup>st</sup>, Four Roses Bourbon of Lawrenceburg will provide a special bourbon tasting aboard the Belle of Cincinnati. The Burger Bar will feature products from Kentucky Proud members Beef Solutions, Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese, Pop's Pepper Patch, Salad Days Farm,

Townsend Sorghum, Blue Dog Bakery, Bourbon Barrel Foods, and Derby-Pie<sup>®</sup> from Kern's Kitchen. For details, including ticket prices, go to [discover.kdf.org/great-steamboat-race](http://discover.kdf.org/great-steamboat-race).

In keeping with the "Superheroes" theme in the Republic Bank Pegasus Parade on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Kentucky Proud float will salute Kentucky farmers who are military veterans, reservists and active duty. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture founded Homegrown By Heroes in 2013 as a distinct Kentucky Proud brand to identify farm products produced by farmers who served and continue to serve our country in the military. To find out more about the Pegasus Parade, go to [discover.kdf.org/pegasusparade](http://discover.kdf.org/pegasusparade). Kentucky Proud is the official brand for agricultural products grown, raised, processed, and/or manufactured in Kentucky. To learn more about Kentucky Proud, go to [kyproud.com](http://kyproud.com).

## GAPs Online Produce Safety Course scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

*From the Produce Safety Alliance*

The next English GAPs Online Produce Safety Course will begin on May 1<sup>st</sup> and run through May 21<sup>st</sup>. This course is intended to improve your understanding of GAPs to guide assessment of risks and implementation of practices to reduce risks on fresh produce farms. Additional GAPs Online Produce Safety Course sessions are scheduled for Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> through Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>, and Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> through Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Taking this course will not result in your farm being "GAPs Certified." GAPs certification is done by a third party and involves the successful completion of an on-farm audit.

It is also important to consider that the GAPs Online Produce Safety Training Course is not currently equivalent to the required supervisor training described in the FSMA Produce Safety Rule 21 CFR Subpart C § 112.22(c). This GAPs Online Produce Safety Training Course may, however, satisfy training requirements as described in the FSMA Produce Safety Rule in §§ 112.21(a) and (b).

The Produce Safety Alliance website maintains a list of upcoming [Grower Training Courses](#) that meet the requirement in § 112.22(c) of the FSMA

Produce Safety Rule.

To register for any session of the GAPs Online Produce Safety Course, [click here](#). A minimum of 10 people must be registered, and class size is limited to 25 people. The cost is \$225. Once the course opens, it is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day for three weeks so you can complete it as your schedule allows. All course requirements must be completed within the three-week window. [Click here](#) for more information about the online course.

For food safety resources in Kentucky, visit <http://www.uky.edu/ccd/foodsafety>.

### Thanks for reading!

If you know someone who would enjoy our newsletter, or you're not subscribed yet yourself, visit [www.uky.edu/ccd/newsletter](http://www.uky.edu/ccd/newsletter) and click "Subscribe Now." Or call Brett Wolff at 859-218-4384, or Christy Cassady at 859-257-1477. Stay up to date with the Center on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ccduky/>

*Christy Cassady*

Christy Cassady, Extension Specialist

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