

NOTES TO DATA USERS



JULY 1997

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General Notes

1. The 1996 Census of Agriculture was conducted on May 14, 1996.
2. A census farm is an agricultural operation that produces at least one the following products intended for sale: crops (field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, exotic animals, etc.); poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, exotic birds, etc); animal products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or other agricultural products, Christmas trees, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products)
3. The definition of a census farm was expanded to include commercial poultry hatcheries and operations that produced only Christmas trees.

Conversion Factors

The following factors are used in this publication to convert between different units of measurement:

1 acre = 0.404 685 6 hectares
1 hectare = 2.471 acres
1 arpent = 0.845 acres (for respondents in Quebec who reported land areas in arpents)
1 square foot = 0.092 903 04 square metres
1 square metre = 10.763 91 square feet
1 kilogram = 2.204 622 6 pounds
1 pound = 0.453 592 4 kilograms

Rounding

Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to the use of conversion factors or the rounding of fractions to whole numbers.

Expanded Definition of a Census Farm

The definition of a census farm was expanded for the 1996 Census of Agriculture to include commercial poultry hatcheries and operations that produced only Christmas trees. Across Canada, a total of 138 commercial poultry hatcheries and 1,593 operations producing only Christmas trees were counted for the first time as census farms.

Headquarters Rule

Many agricultural operations in Canada are composed of numerous parcels of land in a number of locations. These different locations are often situated in several geographic areas (such as townships or counties). In these situations, the "headquarters rule" assigns all data collected for the agricultural operation to the geographic area where the farm headquarters is located.

Incompletely Enumerated Indian Reserves and Indian Settlements

Some Indian reserves and Indian settlements were incompletely enumerated in 1996, as enumeration was either not permitted or was interrupted before it could be completed. As a result, it was not possible to identify any census farms on these particular reserves and settlements. The impact of the missing data is very slight at the larger geographic levels (Canada, province, census agricultural region), but the impact is more significant for those census divisions and census consolidated subdivisions in which the affected reserves and settlements are located.

For more information and a list of the names and locations of the 77 incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements, please refer to *Population and Dwelling Counts*, Catalogue no. 93-357-XPB.

Notes on Variables

The data validation process identified some instances in which data either were not directly comparable to data from previous censuses or were of reduced quality primarily due to coverage or response errors. After a thorough investigation of each case, the following notes were developed to identify the affected variables and to explain the situation associated with each.

Operating arrangements

The order and wording of the questions in this section have changed since 1991. In the past, individual or family holdings were being over-reported. The changes introduced in the 1996 questionnaire contributed to an increase in the number of operations that were reported as being legally incorporated compared with previous censuses.

Dry coloured beans

"Dry coloured beans" includes chick peas, which are also known as garbanzos.

Land in crops

Some operators reported unplanted land intended for crops as idle land (a component of "All other land") since at the time of the Census of Agriculture, they were uncertain as to whether this land would be planted. This situation only affected farms not included in the Progress of Seeding Follow-up.

Tame or seeded pasture

The name and definition of this variable has changed from the previous census. In 1991, it was called "Improved land for pasture or grazing." Consequently, some respondents may have reported differently in 1996 than in 1991, thereby affecting the comparability of the data for those years.

All other land

For comparability with 1991 data, "All other land" includes Christmas tree area.

Area in crops and summerfallow

Some operators reported unplanted land intended for crops as idle land (a component of "All other land") since at the time of the Census of Agriculture, they were uncertain as to whether this land would be planted. This situation only affected farms not included in the Progress of Seeding Follow-up.

Herbicides, insecticides, fungicides

Operators can apply insecticides and fungicides to the same land; therefore, the sum of the responses to these two 1996 questions is not comparable to the response to the single 1991 question which asked for the total area on which insecticides or fungicides were used.

The area of land that has been treated with herbicides, insecticides and fungicides is under-reported. Some respondents reported chemical expenses, but did not report any corresponding areas to which these chemicals were applied. Telephone follow-up with a sample of these respondents confirmed that some respondents had mistakenly reported for 1996 instead of 1995, as requested. This explained their response because at the time the questionnaire was completed in 1996, the chemicals purchased had not yet been applied.

Manure application methods

Operators may apply manure using more than one method of application on the same land. Consequently, the sum of the responses to the four 1996 questions concerning manure application methods is not comparable to the response to the single 1991 question which asked for the total area on which manure was applied.

Poultry production

The 1995 production data reported for chickens (i.e., broilers, roasters and Cornish) and turkeys somewhat underestimate actual production on a liveweight basis because some producers reported on an eviscerated basis.

Cattle and calves

The earlier census date in 1996 affects comparability with previous censuses due to the lower percentage of calvings that would have taken place by May 14 compared with the first week of June, when previous censuses were taken.

Due to response errors, the size of the dairy herd in Manitoba has been overstated, while the size of the beef herd has been understated. The total number of cattle and calves, however, is not affected.

Pigs

Due to response errors, data for the two weight categories of "All other pigs"—pigs under 45 lbs (20 kg) and pigs 45 lbs (20 kg) and over—have been combined.

Colonies of bees

As in 1991, some undercoverage occurred in 1996 (primarily of smaller operations).

Value of farm machinery and equipment

In 1991, agricultural operators reported the farm machinery and equipment located on their operations on Census Day, regardless of ownership. For the 1996 Census of Agriculture, operators were asked to report all farm machinery and equipment that they owned or leased. This change in reporting limits the comparability of these data.

Value of land and buildings

In Ontario, the total value of farm land and buildings owned, and rented or leased from others, is lower than that reported in 1991. This is primarily because the total value in the four counties (Peel, Halton, York and Durham) bordering on Metropolitan Toronto, which account for about 25% of the provincial figure, has decreased by 30% since 1991.

Farm business operating expenses

The 1991 and 1996 data for "All other farm business operating expenses" are not comparable because three expenditures that had been included in this expense category in 1991 (packaging materials, repairs and maintenance to farm buildings and fences, and insurance premiums) became separate categories in 1996.

Farm type

As a result of refinements to the farm typing procedures in 1996, some census farms that reported tame hay were typed differently in 1996 than in previous censuses.

Purchases of capital assets and capital improvements

There has been some under-reporting of the amount paid for: new cars and other passenger vehicles used in the farm business; new farm trucks; new farm machinery and equipment; and used farm vehicles, machinery and equipment. This is primarily the result of respondents reporting the net value of a purchase (i.e., the amount paid minus any trade-in value) instead of the total amount paid.

Maple tree taps

As in 1991, there has been some undercoverage of operations with maple tree taps in 1996.