



Agriculture By The Numbers: New York Farming is Big Business

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Highlights

- Milk production accounted for nearly half of New York's agricultural sales in 2010. New York was the nation's fourth-largest milk producer, with \$2.2 billion in sales.
- New York ranked first among all states in the production of cottage cheese and sour cream, and third in the production of Italian cheese.
- New York is a leader in yogurt production, with several major companies located in the State. Yogurt production reached 553.7 million pounds in 2011, an increase of 140 percent since 2008.
- Apples are New York's largest fruit crop, and the State ranked second in the nation for apple production in 2010.
- The grape, grape juice and wine industries contributed more than \$3.7 billion in economic benefits to the State's economy in 2008.
- New York ranked second nationwide in wine production and third in grape production for wine and juice in 2010.
- New York was the second-largest U.S. producer of maple syrup and cabbage in 2010, and the third-largest producer of corn for silage.
- In 2010, the State ranked fourth in the nation for the production of both tart cherries and pears, and ranked eighth for strawberries.
- 18 counties had agricultural sales of more than \$100 million in 2007, and seven (Suffolk, Wyoming, Cayuga, Genesee, Wayne, Ontario, and Livingston) had sales of more than \$150 million.
- As cited in our recent report on farmers' markets, income from direct-to-consumer farm sales in New York reached \$362 million in 2009 (10 percent of total sales), an increase of 52.4 percent since 2000.
- The average farm in New York is smaller than 200 acres, or about half the national average.

New York State is a leading agricultural state with 36,300 farms that produced \$4.7 billion in products in 2010. New York ranks among the largest producers in the nation for some products, including ranking second in wine production.

Farming has been a way of life in New York for generations, but farmers face many economic challenges, including tight profit margins, limited access to credit and rising property taxes.

While farming in New York is mainly a small, family business, its economic impact is great. Farming supports thousands of jobs beyond the farm in a variety of industries and services, such as food processing, trucking and tourism. In addition, farms protect open space and improve public health by meeting the rising demand for nutritious, locally grown food.

Regional Profiles

As discussed below, most of the State's regions contribute to New York's agricultural prominence.

Finger Lakes

The Finger Lakes region (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties) accounted for nearly 30 percent of the State's total farm sales.¹ Wyoming County was the State's largest producer of milk and corn silage (i.e., animal feed), and Wayne County was first in apple production. The region is also known for its 95 wineries, which are a major tourist attraction.

North Country

The North Country (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties) accounted for 14 percent of statewide sales. The region is the State's second-largest producer of milk and other dairy products. Jefferson and St. Lawrence were among the State's top ten agricultural counties in 2007.

¹ The report uses agricultural sales data from the most recent census (2007) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Central New York

Central New York (Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego counties) accounted for 12 percent of agricultural sales statewide. Almost two-thirds of the region's sales came from milk and other dairy products. Other key products are cattle and calves, grains and beans. Cayuga is a large producer of milk, soybeans and corn.

Southern Tier

The Southern Tier (Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins counties) accounted for 11 percent of statewide sales, and nearly two-thirds of the region's sales were from milk and dairy products. Steuben had the most sales in the region. Schuyler has about half of the region's 54 wineries.

Western New York

Western New York (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara counties) accounted for 11 percent of the State's agricultural sales. Along with milk and dairy, the region is strong in fruit production. The region has 41 wineries, with Chautauqua leading the State in grape production.

Capital District

The Capital District (Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, and Washington counties) accounted for 8 percent of New York's agricultural sales. Milk and other dairy products accounted for more than half the region's sales. Washington County is one of the State's top producers of corn silage.

Long Island

Suffolk County on Long Island led the State in agricultural sales with more than \$240 million in 2007. Suffolk is New York's top producer of floriculture, pumpkins and sod. The County's 76 wineries are mostly located on the East End. The Long Island Wine Council estimates that about 1.3 million tourists visit East End wineries annually.

Hudson Valley

In the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties), Orange County is one of the State's top producers of vegetables. Ulster County was second in apple production. The region also has 39 wineries, which help attract tourists to the region.

Mohawk Valley

In the Mohawk Valley (Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, and Oneida counties), milk and other dairy products accounted for more than 60 percent of the region's agricultural sales. Herkimer had one of the State's highest inventories of bee colonies, pigeons and squab.

Commodity Rankings

In 2010, New York's top six commodities were milk, corn grain, corn silage, hay, apples, and floriculture (see Figure 1). The State ranked fourth or higher nationwide in five of its top ten products.

Figure 1
Top Agricultural Commodities in New York (2010)

| | Market Value (in millions) | Share of State Total | U.S. Rank |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Milk | \$2,212.0 | 47.3% | 4 |
| Corn Grain | 460.2 | 9.8% | 18 |
| Corn Silage | 311.2 | 6.7% | 3 |
| All Hay | 260.8 | 5.6% | 26 |
| Apples | 233.1 | 5.0% | 2 |
| Floriculture | 183.1 | 3.9% | 7 |
| Cattle and Calves | 167.0 | 3.6% | 33 |
| Soybeans | 147.3 | 3.2% | 22 |
| Cabbage (Fresh) | 74.4 | 1.6% | 2 |
| Sweet Corn (Fresh) | 71.1 | 1.5% | 4 |
| Potatoes | 69.1 | 1.5% | 12 |
| Grapes | 68.4 | 1.5% | 3 |
| Eggs | 66.2 | 1.4% | 20 |
| Onions (Summer) | 54.2 | 1.2% | 5 |
| Wheat | 40.5 | 0.9% | 29 |
| Snap Beans (Fresh) | 39.2 | 0.8% | 4 |
| Squash | 36.8 | 0.8% | 4 |
| Pumpkins | 35.1 | 0.8% | 3 |
| Other | 144.0 | 3.1% | - |
| Total | \$4,673.9 | 100.0% | 28 |

Source: U.S Department of Agriculture; OSC analysis

New York was the second-largest producer of wine in the nation behind California, producing 36 million gallons of wine in 2010. The volume of wine grape production, which accounted for about 35 percent of the State's grape production, rose by 17 percent in 2010.

According to the New York Wine and Grape Foundation, New York had 374 wineries in 2012 (including nine in New York City), more than triple the number in 2000. Three-quarters of the wineries were located in three areas: the Finger Lakes and surrounding counties, Long Island, and the Hudson Valley. According to a study conducted by the Stonebridge Research Group, New York grape, grape juice and wine industries contributed more than \$3.7 billion in economic benefits to the State's economy in 2008. The study also estimated that the number of tourist visits to New York wineries approached 5 million in 2008.