

FARM FACTS

State of Tennessee

- Nearly half of Tennessee's land area, or 11.8 million acres, is in farmland.
- Tennessee has 14 million acres of forests of which 80% is owned by private, non-industrial landowners, many of them farmers. Forestry earns the state totaling \$10 billion annually and supports 78,000 jobs.
- There are 91,000 farms in Tennessee averaging 130 acres in size and ranging from small ten-acre tobacco and livestock farms in the east to large row crop farms of 5,000 acres or more in the west.
- Gross income at the farm level totals more than \$2.2 billion each year for Tennessee farmers. Agriculture earns Tennessee \$20 billion annually, providing more than 200,000 jobs.
- Cattle and calves are the largest source of farm income in Tennessee, totaling more than \$409 million in 2001 or 19% of total farm revenue.
- Tennessee's top crops in 2001 include cotton, \$186 million; tobacco, \$172 million; soybeans, \$147 million; nursery, \$142 million; corn, \$135 million; floriculture, \$58 million; wheat, \$50 million; and hay, \$40 million.
- Poultry is the second largest source of farm income in Tennessee, earning \$364 million in 2001.
- Tennessee is third in the nation in the total number of equine with 190,000 head. Only Texas and California have more.
- Tennessee ranks seventh in the nation in the value of equine sold totaling \$48.6 million in 1998; and, assets including animals, land, buildings and equipment associated with equine total nearly \$5 billion.
- Tennessee is a national leader in the development and use of "no-till" farming, a soil conserving practice where the ground is not plowed before planting seed.
- Farmers use soil conservation practices on 66% of Tennessee's 3 million acres of crop land compared to only 15% just a decade ago.
- Over 21,000 students are enrolled in high school agriculture education programs in Tennessee, preparing for careers in farming, ag-marketing, communications, education, sales and other services.
- Tennessee has the largest 4-H Club membership in the nation, with 200,000 members.

United States

- Nearly two million people, or about 2% of the population, farm or ranch in the US, however, more than 15% are employed in farm-related jobs including processing, marketing and sales.
- In the 1960s, one farmer supplied 25.8 persons in the U.S. and abroad. Today, one farmer supplies food for 129 people, 97 in the U.S. and 32 abroad.
- Farmers are producing meat lower in fat and cholesterol, resulting in retail cuts which are 15% leaner today.
- Today, farmers utilize satellite technology for “precision farming” which boosts crop yields and reduces waste by accurately applying seed, fertilizer and crop protectors to local soil conditions.
- Farming makes for a large capital investment – farmers pay anywhere from \$97,000 for an average 160 horse-power tractor to \$170,000 for a four-wheel drive model.
- In the 1930’s, a farmer could harvest an average of 100 bushels of corn by hand in a nine-hour day. Today’s combines can harvest 900 bushels of corn per hour or 100 bushels of corn in less than seven minutes.
- The efficiency of U.S. farmers benefits consumers. Americans spend less than 11% of their income on food compared with 17% in Japan, 27% in South Africa and 53% in India.
- It takes the average American only 40 days to earn enough disposable income to pay for his or her yearly food supply.