

INFORMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin
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2016 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

The 2016 Census of Agriculture was released May 10, 2017. You can find the census here:

www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/ca2016

This Census counted 193,492 farms in Canada, a 5.9% decrease from the previous census in 2011. This rate of decline was the lowest in the last 20 years. Although farm numbers have declined, the area of cropland in Canada increased by 6.9% from 2011 to 93.4 million acres being farmed in Canada in 2016.



YUKON CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE DATA

The Census of Agriculture captures key data from the agriculture sector in the different regions of Canada, including Yukon. It can be used to understand the general trends of the industry.

In 2016, Yukon had 142 farms captured in the agriculture census which is an increase of 9.2%, compared to the 130 farms reported in the 2011 census. This is opposite to the national trend and for Yukon is a change from the downward trend in farm numbers from previous census years.

Year	2016	2011	2006	2001
Number of farms	142	130	148	170

Although farm numbers captured in the census are an indicator of the growth or decline of the industry, a deeper look into the data provides insight into the state of Yukon's industry. The following is a summary and interpretation of the data reported by Statistics Canada.

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CROP PRODUCTION

Over the years, hay has been the driver of Yukon's agriculture industry in terms of the number of farms, acres and revenue. Hay is still the largest portion of Yukon's agriculture industry. But according to the census the number of farms in hay have seen a slight decline or have been relatively flat over the last four censuses, ranging from a low in 2011 of 1,867 hectares to a small rebound in 2016 of 1,930 hectares. The number of farms producing hay is down by two in 2016.

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

There's an old country song by Gene Autry that comes to mind "back in the saddle again"... I'm excited to be back working with our farmers, gardeners and ranchers once again. We are focused on our clients and are there for you through the highs and lows of growing in our great territory. I've been with the Ag branch on and off for the past 15 years and have worked with a number of you. We've worked through a number of issues, whether it be the weather, wildlife, plant nutrition, or the neighbour's horses, I was always impressed with the hard work you all put into the stewardship of your lands and animals.

There are a number of priorities we'll be working on at the branch over the next many months. We are in the process of negotiating alongside the other provinces and territories to build the next national policy framework. Growing Forward 2 ends in March 2018, and a new policy is needed to fund the projects and continued growth of our industry.

We are continuing to implement the Local Food Strategy to increase Yukon's ability to be self-sufficient in food production. We are modernizing the *Pounds Act*. (We haven't updated the definition of livestock since 1902!) There is a reference to Neat Cattle, referring to horns, not the state of their pens. Since the practice of free ranging livestock has ceased, livestock control in the past decade has largely consisted of removing stray and feral animals from highway corridors. The *Pounds Act* needs to be updated to harmonize with other legislation, which gives us an opportunity to ensure it meets current livestock control program requirements.

We will continue to deliver lands through the spot land process and through the planned land disposition process. We are also working on a number of Agriculture-Wildlife conflict related issues from the elk to sheep and bears.

We will be there for you. All of us at the Ag branch are very proud of the growth in the industry these past years. Whether it be the very good quality hay produced in the territory, the Yukon grown vegetables available into the following spring on store shelves, the quality meats and slaughter services, or the growth of alternate crops such as haskap. As you move forward with your business plans please feel free to contact our office so we can help connect your operation with the services we offer.

I want to extend our congratulations to Mandalay Farms for getting a layer operation up and running. It is not an easy task getting everything rolling in the territory. We'll all benefit with local, fresh eggs on our store shelves.

Once I get on top of the files here in the office, I plan to spend some time out in the field with you.

May the rains rain when you need and the sun shine when you harvest.

Matthew Ball
Director, Agriculture branch

MOBILE ABATTOIR AND INSPECTED RED MEAT SLAUGHTER SERVICES UPDATE

The contract for operation of the mobile abattoir was up for competition this spring and was rewarded to current operators Tum Tum's Black Gilt Meats. This provides users of the mobile unit some consistency on whom to contact to book a slaughter. It also provides Whitehorse farmers two options for inspected slaughter of red meat.

The other option is Naturally Northern Meats, a fixed location just north of Whitehorse in the Grizzly Valley area. Naturally Northern, on top of operating a fixed location abattoir, also offers cutting, wrapping, sausage, jerky and smoking services. For more information about Naturally Northern Meats and how to book a slaughter, cutting, or both, you can contact them at naturallynorthernfarms@gmail.com or 992-0251. They also have a Facebook presence at www.facebook.com/NaturallyNorthernMeats

To book the mobile abattoir contact Tum Tum's at tumtum@yukonfood.com or call them at 393-4628. Mobile slaughter service for red meat livestock is available May through November. A yearly application must be approved before you can book the service. Contact Jesse Walchuk at the Ag branch for information on completing your application. You must have an approved application prior to booking the mobile abattoir. (Please allow at least 30 days for processing your application.)

To contact Jesse, call 667-3043 or email jesse.walchuck@gov.yk.ca

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE CONTINUED

Farms reporting	2016	2011	2006	2001
Hay	62	64	66	75
Vegetables (excluding greenhouse vegetables)	28	24	25	18
Fruits, berries and nuts	16	13	10	10
Greenhouse in use	24	26	30	29

Area in production (hectares)	2016	2011	2006	2001
Hay	1,930	1,867	1,924	2,154
Vegetables (excluding greenhouse vegetables)	19	13	15	10
Fruits, berries and nuts	24	12	10	4
Greenhouse in use (square meters)	3,212 m ²	3,591 m ²	4,962 m ²	4,989 m ²

Vegetable and fruit production is up, with more acres and farms in production compared to the previous four censuses. These changes in the census numbers in fruit and vegetables support the increased availability of local food at our markets, as demonstrated in the *Yukon Farm Products and Services Guide* as well as in Yukon stores and restaurants. There has been a steady decline in production under glass over time, likely due to increased sales from distributors importing out-of-territory stock.

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

The livestock data indicates a growth in the cattle, pork, and poultry sectors. Cattle numbers are up, with 14 farms and 245 animals recorded in the 2016 census. The number of farms raising pork and total number of pigs has increase dramatically according to the census data. There has been a six-fold increase in pig production since 2001.



Yukon has seen a decline in sheep and goats, elk and horses in the territory over the last few years. With the decline in horses, one would expect this to have an impact on hay production, but as indicated in the previous summaries, hay is relatively flat, indicating that it is possibly moving from horses to other livestock, notably cattle, or that there are more horses staying in Yukon in the winter and fewer being shipped south for winter graze.

Livestock	2016		2011		2006		2001	
	Farms	Livestock	Farms	Livestock	Farms	Livestock	Farms	Livestock
Cattle and calves	14	245	13	213	10	220	11	192
Pigs	28	482	7	56	7	160	11	73
Sheep and lambs	4	54	4	72	2	x	3	x
Goats	11	85	6	90	7	113	6	36
Horses & ponies	45	429	50	615	58	629	79	818
Llamas & alpacas	6	34	6	29	5	21	4	22
Rabbits	11	487	4	30	-	-	-	-
Elk (wapiti)	4	35	4	64	4	74	6	129

Poultry	2016		2011		2006		2001	
	Farms	Birds	Farms	Birds	Farms	Birds	Farms	Birds
Total hens and chickens	49	6,798	28	3,601	29	6,301	35	9,319
Broilers, roasters & Cornish	20	2,732	13	2,221	14	2,028	12	2,154
Turkeys	12	289	5	190	9	265	13	294
Other poultry	13	166	6	41	7	93	8	161

The poultry industry over the long term has been recovering from the loss of a large egg and meat producer. Partridge Creek Farms slowly ceased production around the 2006 census. Although the production of eggs is still less than the 2001 census when Partridge Creek Farms was operating, farm numbers and total hens have increased since the 2011 census to 6,798 birds from 3,601. For meat, today's numbers exceed production from 2001, with more farms and more birds in the territory. This is approximately a 20% growth in the number of meat birds.

LAND USE IN THE TERRITORY

From 2001 to 2016, the number of farms has fluctuated from a high of 170 in 2001 to the 142 farms reporting in 2016. The apparent decline in number of farms is not reflected in changes to the land base, which has seen very little change between 2006 and 2016. The total farmed area was highest back in 2001, and lowest in the 2006 census. The recovery in farm numbers in 2016 was not reflected in the total farm area. The farm area data shows a marginal decrease in 2016 of 10,330 hectares from 10,646 hectares. Land in production in 2016 has also decreased compared to the previous 2011 census. This is surprising given the increases seen in farms reporting crop and livestock production. There is an increase in use of leased land, and a drop in area owned, which may indicate increased utilization of grazing leases.

Farms, farm area, production	2016	2011	2006	2001
Number of farms reporting	142	130	148	170
Total farm area	10,330	10,646	10,125	11,865
Total land in production (crops and pasture)	6,801	6,893	6,269	7,424
Area owned	6,421	7,606	-	6,962
Area leased from governments	3,517	2,688	2,834	4,362

How farmers manage production and the use of some inputs is changing. Some of the conventional inputs generally associated with hay production are down, with a decrease in area using commercial fertilizer and irrigation. In contrast there is an increase in the number of farms using irrigation since the 2006 census, but with a decrease in total acres. This change could be associated with the increase in vegetable and fruit production.

Herbicide use has fluctuated between the census years, although the number of farms using herbicides is down since 2006. There has been a steady number of farms



following certified organic standards since the last census.

Management		2016	2011	2006	2001
Total land in production	Number of farms	184	178	176	187
	Hectares	6,801	6,893	6,269	7,424
Herbicides	Number of farms	11	13	19	11
	Hectares	298	202	359	256
Commercial fertilizer	Number of farms	30	34	30	55
	Hectares	802	931	1,153	1,609
Total area of land irrigated	Number of farms	40	34	33	47
	Hectares	318	453	749	565
Certified organic products for sale	Number of farms	7	8	2	-

RECEIPTS AND CAPITAL

Another key indicator used to assess the health of Yukon agriculture industry from the data in the agriculture census is farm receipts, capital and operating expenses tables. When compared to other years, 2016 is the only year where reported gross farm receipts exceed operating expenses, with farm receipts exceeding operating expenses by \$382,000.

In 2016 Yukon farms reported \$4.3 million in total gross receipts, showing a steady growth of the industry since 2006, and higher than what was reported in the 2001 census, with 170 farms reported.



Capital is another highlight for farmers already in the industry, with a two-fold increase since 2001, most of which is coming from the increased value in land and buildings. Livestock values have increased since 2006, but remain lower than the values reported in 2001, which is surprising, given the growth in the meat sector. This could be attributed to the decrease in the number of horses reported (818 horses reported in 2001 and 429 in 2016).

Receipts and Capital	2016	2011	2006	2001
Total gross farm receipts	\$4,261,133	\$3,689,642	\$4,080,385	\$4,194,864
Total farm business operating expenses	\$3,879,482	\$3,727,611	\$4,258,435	\$4,748,443
Total farm capital	\$108,425,446	\$86,563,618	\$66,118,480	\$50,206,295
Total value of land and buildings	\$97,098,060	\$75,365,745	\$55,956,890	\$39,982,120
Value of land and buildings, owned	\$84,953,610	\$71,770,745	\$52,268,040	\$37,256,090
Value of all farm machinery and equipment	\$9,651,225	\$9,749,600	\$9,019,750	\$7,972,408

Value of livestock and poultry | \$1,676,161 \$1,448,273 \$1,141,840 \$2,251,767

DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationally, one of the concerns highlighted in the census is the decreasing number of farms and the increasing age of farmers. In Yukon, an increase in the number of farms resulted in an increase in the number of farm operators. Yukon is also seeing an increase in the number of females being reported as farm operators.

Number of farms and operators	2016	2011
Farms	142	130
Operators	215	195
Males	125	115
Females	90	75

The average age for Yukon farmers has decreased, highlighted by the increased number of farmers in the 35 to 54 age bracket and the number of farmers under 35 years reporting to the agriculture census. The older than 55 years category remains steady.

Age of Farm operators per farm	2016	2011
Average age of farm operators	53.3	54.4
under 35 years	15	10
35 to 54 years	100	70
55 years and over	105	105

OTHER CENSUS DATA

Some of the other Census data that was collected for the first time in the 2016 shows trends relevant to the agriculture industry. Technology used for planning and managing farm business, production of renewable energy and some new sources of income are reported in the 2016 census. Reporting direct sales provides insights into how farmers are managing sales.

Collecting data on succession planning helps understand what is being done in regards to the increasing age of farmers and how farmers are planning for retirement. Expect succession planning to climb as retiring farmers transition away from everyday farming activities.

Categories	2016
Technologies	
Computers/laptops for farm management	64
Smartphones/tablets for farm management	39
GIS mapping (e.g., soil mapping)	4
Direct sales	
All farms reporting	67
Farms reporting unprocessed agricultural products sold	67
Farms reporting value-added products sold	9
Farms reporting using farm gate sales, stands, kiosks, U-pick	61
Farms reporting using farmers' markets	20
Farms reporting using Community Supported Agriculture	4
Farms reporting using other methods	2
Succession planning	
All farms reporting a succession plan	3
Renewable energy producing systems	

If you have any question or would like to find out more about the data available Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture website at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/ca2016>. If you are not able to find the data you are interested in, you are encouraged to contact the Agriculture branch and we can help: agriculture@gov.yk.ca or 667-5838.

H A Y
 HOW DO I DETERMINE QUALITY?

It is that time of year when farmers are pulling hay off the field and livestock owners are sourcing out their winter feed options. For livestock owners, supporting locally grown hay is a good idea not just because Yukon hay is high quality, but buying local supports the whole community and gives buyers a direct contact when you have questions or concerns about your hay. Locally sourced hay also reduces the introduction of new weeds and invasive plants that may be hitching a ride in hay entering the territory.

But how do we know that Yukon farmers are producing high quality hay? What can farmers do to help their customers? There are many things that determine the quality of the hay. Farmers in Yukon are well aware that timing of harvest is crucial to get top quality hay that is not overly matured or has been overly weathered due to untimely rain. Both producers and customers are aiming for hay that:

- Contains little to no mold.
- Has a fresh hay smell and the right amount of green color.
- Free of foreign material (such as sticks) and weeds, specifically any poisonous plants.
- Has a lot of forage leaves in the bale, few coarse stems and minimal seed heads.

HAY TESTING

On top of a visual inspection of hay, a hay test can also help with assessing the quality and provide valuable information on feed quality. The benefits of testing your hay include:

- Provides more specific information regarding the quality of feed

- Aids in determining how much hay the animal needs, avoids underfeeding or overfeeding the animal,
- Reduces the risk for deficiencies and disease outbreaks in animals and leads to healthier and more productive livestock.

Generally, samples are tested for moisture, dry matter, crude protein, Ca, P, K, Mg, Na, and acid detergent fiber content. There are some other tests or calculated values added to the results depending on the type of animals the hay is intended for (i.e. cattle or horses) and/or based on concerns raised by the owner. If you are not producing your own hay, and purchasing hay, please ask your hay supplier to see if they already have this information.

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR HAY TESTED?

The Agriculture branch provides hay testing for producers and livestock owners. The branch forwards hay samples on to a lab in Manitoba that specializes in forage testing.

For livestock owners who would like to submit a hay sample, please bring in a large freezer bag (8" x 10") full to the Agriculture branch office. Grab the sample from a few different locations/areas of your hay supply. This will help in getting more accurate results from the lab analysis. Indicate where it is from, the year if it is older hay, and any other descriptors that help identify the sample, along with types of animals it is intended for and your contact information.



Hay core sampler. This tool takes multiple small samples across different bales which provides a more representative sample from your hay shed.

For Yukon hay producers, the Agriculture branch will come out and take hay samples, talk to you about your hay and consult on what information you are looking for. One of the main benefits of having the Ag branch out to sample your hay, is we have a bale/core sampler. The bale sampler can take multiple small samples across different bales which provides a more representative sample that will reduce error in the results from the lab.

If you require any additional information regarding hay testing, please contact:
 Randy Lamb, Agrologist
 Randy.lamb@gov.yk.ca
 393-7410

MINISTERS SIGN NEW CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ranj Pillai, joined Canada's agriculture ministers in signing the new Canadian Agricultural Partnership in St. John's, Newfoundland. The agreement was reached on Friday, July 21, 2017 between the federal, provincial and territorial ministers on a five-year, \$3 billion investment that will come into effect on April 1, 2018.

"I was pleased to represent Yukon's agricultural sector at last week's meetings. This new agreement is an important part of achieving our goal of increasing local food production. I look forward to engaging with Yukon's farmers and market gardeners to discuss how this new funding will be implemented."

–Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Ranj Pillai

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership will strengthen the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector, ensuring continued innovation, growth and prosperity. In addition, producers will continue to have access to a robust suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership will focus on six priority areas:

- Science, Research, and Innovation – Helping industry adopt practices to improve resiliency and productivity through research and innovation in key areas;
- Markets and Trade – Opening new markets and helping farmers and food processors improve their competitiveness through skills development, improved export capacity, underpinned by a strong and efficient regulatory system;
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change – Building sector capacity to mitigate agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, protect the environment and adapt to climate change by enhancing sustainable growth, while increasing production;
- Value-added Agriculture and Agri-food Processing – Supporting the continued growth of the value-added agriculture and agri-food processing sector;
- Public Trust – Building a firm foundation for public trust in the sector through improved assurance systems in food safety and plant and animal health, stronger traceability and effective regulations; and
- Risk Management – Enabling proactive and effective risk management, mitigation and adaptation to facilitate a resilient sector by working to ensure programs are comprehensive, responsive and accessible.



Canada's Ministers of Agriculture met in July 20 and 21 and signed the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Ranj Pillai is fourth from left.

This agreement is a priority for ministers to implement a seamless transition from the current policy framework to the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Extensive consultations with industry and Canadians informed the development of the new agreement, which builds on the success of previous federal, provincial and territorial agricultural frameworks. Governments will continue to work closely with the sector as Canadian Agricultural Partnership programs are developed and implemented reflecting the diverse needs across Canada.

INFORMATION is:

A Yukon government newsletter published by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture branch. If you would like to add or remove your name from the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article, contribute a story, or post an advertisement, please feel free to contact us.

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