

Highlights of Recent Farm Sector and Rural Economy Performance

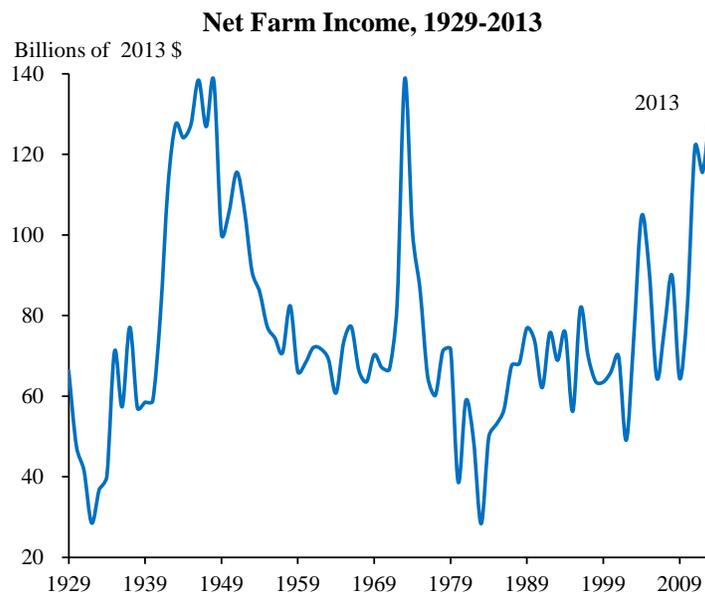
Rural communities and our nation's agriculture sector embody the American value that hard work and dedication should be rewarded. Rural America contributes to economic growth, a strengthening Middle Class and building America's competitiveness for the future.

The past five years represents one of the strongest periods in our Nation's farm economy. Not only does American Agriculture put food on the table of American families at affordable prices and provide raw material for a range of vital purposes, it also supports one out of every twelve jobs in the economy. The hard work done on the farm is felt throughout our economy, particularly when agriculture is thriving.

The Farm Bill offers an opportunity to build on recent progress in the farm sector and rural economy noted below. The Farm Bill provides long-term certainty about the next five years of U.S. farm policy for America's farmers, ranchers and producers. The Farm Bill also boosts trade and honors our commitments while helping our farmers and ranchers export a record amount of product around the world. The importance of the Farm Bill goes well beyond the role of agriculture, by providing technical assistance and financing for long-term investments in the future of rural communities. The Farm Bill also facilitates investments in local and regional food systems, and the development of economically-important local markets and food hubs.

FARM SECTOR PERFORMANCE

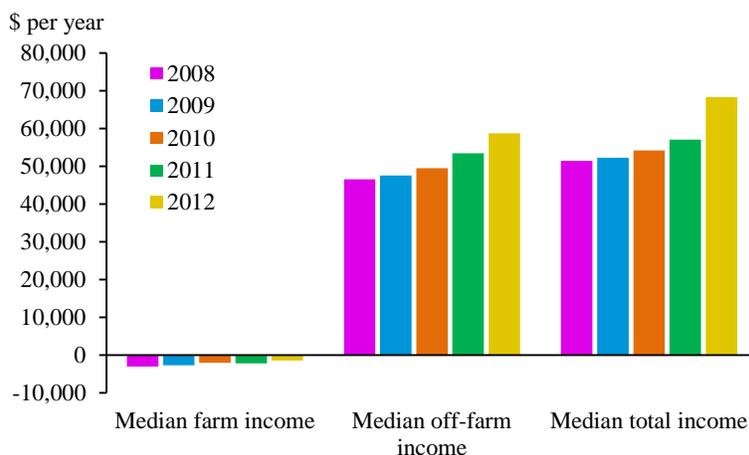
- **Net farm income is forecast to be \$131 billion in 2013.** After adjusting for inflation, 2013's net farm income is up 46% percent from 2008 and is expected to be the highest since 1973.



Note: Data for 2013 are forecasts.
Source: USDA Economic Research Service.

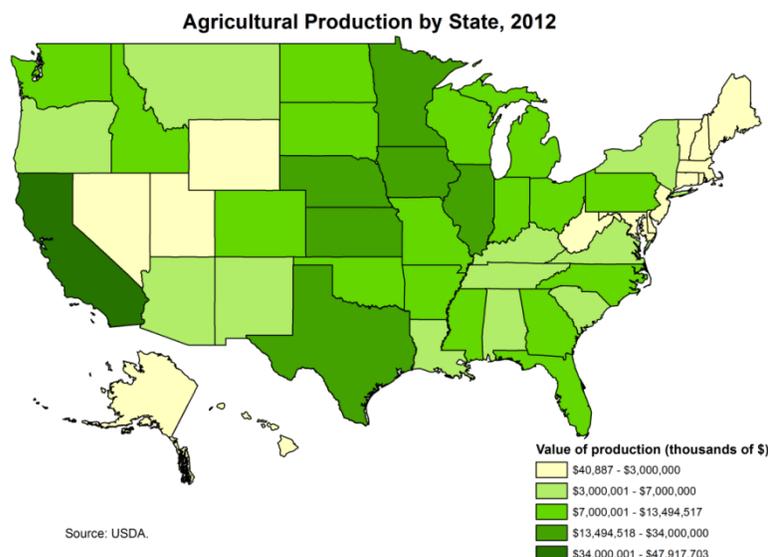
- **Net cash income—which measures the difference between cash expenses and the combination of commodities sold during the calendar year plus other sources of farm income—is forecast at \$129.7 billion, up 37% in real terms since 2008.** 2013’s forecast would be the fourth time net cash income, after adjusting for inflation, has exceeded \$100 billion since 1973.
- **Almost all of this growth in U.S. agricultural output was due to increased productivity growth.** All States contribute to agricultural production, which exceeded \$444 billion in 2012. By 2011, total farm production was nearly 1.6 times larger than the value of production in 1948, and U.S. total agricultural output grew at an average annual rate of 1.49 percent over this period.
- **Values of livestock and crops are rising.** In 2013, the value of livestock production is expected to be 20% higher in 2013 than in 2008. The national value of crop production is expected to be nearly 17% higher in 2013 compared to 2008 levels.
- **Median farm household income increased each year from 2008 to 2012.** The increase largely reflects greater income from off-farm sources, where most farm households earn all of their income. In 2013, projected median total farm household income is expected to remain essentially unchanged, at \$68,414.

Median Farm Income, Median Off-Farm Income, & Median Total Income of Farm Operator Households, 2008-2012



Note: Differences between 2012 estimates and estimates from prior years reflect changes in survey methodology and implementation associated with the 2012 Agricultural Resource Management Survey in addition to changes in the economic situation of farm households
 Source: USDA, Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Management Survey.

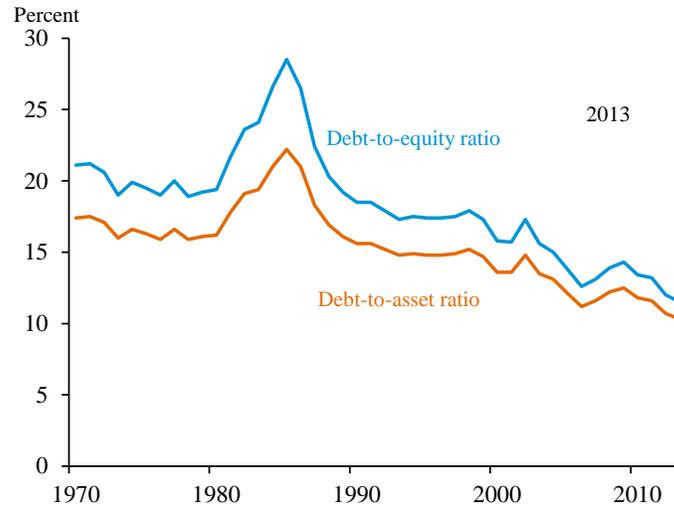
- **Michigan contributed over \$9.3 billion to the Nation’s value of agricultural production in 2012, ranking 18th amongst the 50 States. After adjusting for inflation, the State’s value of production in 2012 is up more than 16% percent from 2008.**
 - *Most of the value of Michigan’s agricultural products are feed grains, milk and other dairy products and oilcrops.* Michigan ranks 4th in value of sales for cut Christmas trees, 7th for fruits, trees nuts, and berries, and 6th for nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod.



- **Increases in farm asset values are expected to continue to exceed increases in farm debt, leading to another new record high for farm equity in 2013.** The most important factors affecting the value of U.S. farm sector assets, debt, and wealth (equity) in 2013 are net farm income and borrowing costs.
 - *Farm asset values are expected to have risen 7 percent in 2013.* The projected rise in farm sector assets in 2013 is due mainly to an expected 7.5-percent increase in the value of farm real estate. Farmland values are expected to continue rising, given the relative strength of commodity prices, accommodating interest rates, and expectations of continued favorable net returns both from the market and from government programs, including crop insurance.

- **Confirming the strength of the farm sector's solvency, both the debt-to-asset ratio and debt-to-equity ratio are expected to reach historic lows in 2013.** The farm sector's debt-to-asset ratio is expected to continue its decline, falling from 10.7 percent at the end of 2012 to 10.3 percent by the end of 2013. The debt-to-equity ratio is expected to decline from 12.0 percent in 2012 to 11.5 percent in 2013.
 - *With such historically low levels of debt relative to assets and equity, the sector is better insulated from the risks associated with commodity production.* These risks include adverse weather, changing macroeconomic conditions in the U.S and world economies, and any fluctuations in farm asset values that may occur due to changing demand for agricultural assets.

Farm Sector Debt Ratios, 1970-2013

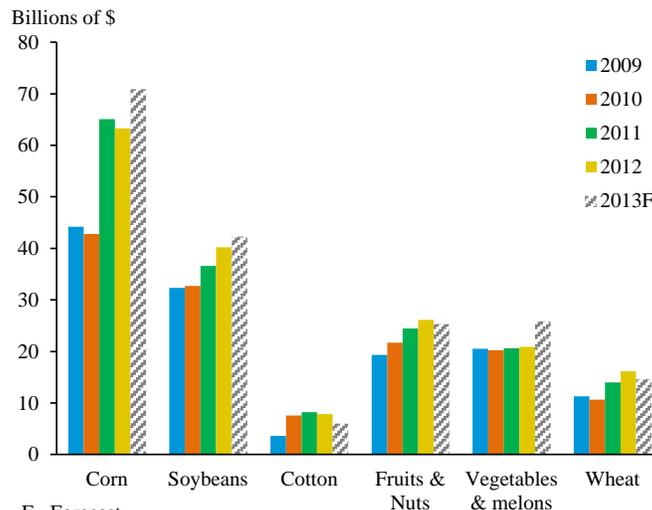


Note: Data for 2013 are projections.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics Data as of November 26, 2013

- **Partial-year data and USDA forecasts point to solid gains in the value of U.S. agricultural production in 2013.** The value of crop, livestock, dairy, and poultry production are all expected to experience solid gains in 2013 as U.S. farm operations rebound from the 2012 drought.
 - *Increases in the value of corn for grain, hay, soybeans, poultry, eggs, and milk are leading the overall increase in production values. Crops particularly benefited from large production increases that, under historical marketing patterns, will likely go into storage for sale in 2014.*

U.S. Value of Production for Selected Crops, 2009-2013



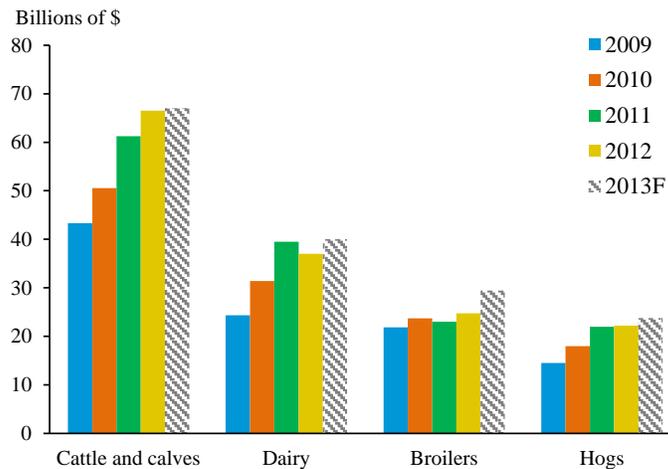
F= Forecast

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics

- *The value of livestock, dairy, and poultry receipts is expected to increase in 2013, reflecting especially large gains in broilers, milk, and hogs. Gains in broiler receipts reflect higher*

expected prices and increases in both domestic use and exports. Higher forecast milk receipts reflect an expected increase in production sold at considerably higher average prices. Higher forecast hog receipts reflect a predicted increase in domestic and export hog sales at a higher annual average price. Chicken egg receipts are expected to be up 8.8 percent in 2013 while turkey receipts are expected to decline 8.1 percent relative to 2012.

U.S. Value of Production for Selected Livestock, 2009-2013



F = Forecast

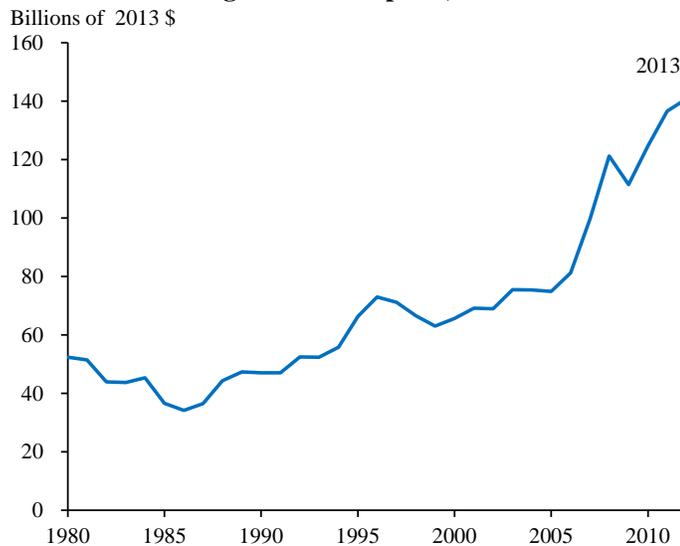
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics Data as of November 26, 2013

- **The Farm Bill provides assistance to farmers and ranchers, and specialty crop producers, when they need it most through improved access to crop insurance programs.** Crop insurance is a critical risk mitigation tool for producers, particularly those facing drought. The new Farm Bill provides over \$200 million to allow better crop insurance coverage for beginning farmers and ranchers by reducing their premiums during their first five years of farming. The Farm Bill also directs RMA to develop whole farm insurance products, which can help specialty crop growers better obtain insurance for their diverse operations.

TRADE

- **American agriculture set a new record for exports in Calendar Year 2013, with a level of \$144.1 billion.** The agriculture sector and farm exports have been one of the brightest points for the U.S. economy. U.S. agricultural exports have out-paced U.S. agricultural imports since 1960, generating a surplus in U.S. agricultural trade. In 2012 agricultural exports supported nearly 1 million American jobs.

U.S. Agricultural Exports, 1980-2013



Source: USDA Economic Research Service, Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade; U.S. Department of Commerce, deflated using chained price index.

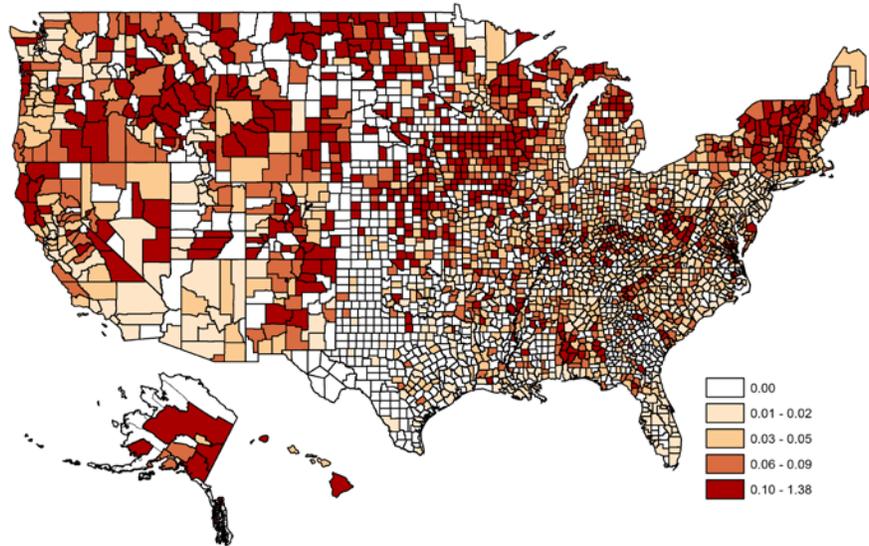
- **The period 2009-2013 stands as the strongest five-year period for agricultural exports in our nation's history with a total export value of more than \$657 billion.** Compared to the previous five-year period from 2004-2008, U.S. agricultural exports from 2009-2013 increased by a total of more than \$205 billion in real terms. The value of bulk commodities exported has trended upwards at a 10 percent growth rate per year since 2005.
- **Provisions in the new Farm Bill boost trade while continuing commitments to developing markets at home and abroad will be key to maintaining strong farm incomes over the next 5 years.** The Farm Bill authorized USDA's efforts to boost trade, which are estimated to generate a return of \$35 in economic benefits for every one dollar invested. These programs help approximately 70 U.S. agricultural producer organizations, each representing hundreds or thousands of producers, expand commercial export markets for their goods abroad.
 - *The Farm Bill also facilitates export financing of U.S. agricultural exports.* This helped generate sales of more than \$4.1 billion of U.S. agricultural exports in 2012 – including high-valued products like port, forest products, almonds, fish and fresh fruit.

INVESTMENTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES AND CREATING NEW MARKETS

- **The U.S. has reached historic levels of investment in rural communities and infrastructure.** The Obama Administration's efforts have
 - Extended new or improved broadband service for more than 7 million Americans and 364,000 rural businesses.
 - Improved or constructed more than 90,000 miles of electric line; invested in 6,700 water and wastewater projects for nearly 20 million Americans, creating or saving more than 150,000 jobs.

- Carried out more than 8,000 community facilities projects reaching nearly 31 million rural Americans.
- Helped more than 627,000 rural families to buy, refinance or repair a home.
- Provided grants and loans to assist nearly 60,000 rural small and mid-sized businesses in creating or saving more than 300,000 jobs.
- **The importance of the Farm Bill goes well beyond the role of agriculture.** The Farm Bill authorizes and directs the work of USDA-Rural Development, which provides technical assistance and financing for long-term investments in the future of rural communities. Among other forms of assistance, the Farm Bill:
 - Continues through 2018 the authorities for rural development programs essential for community economic development – including programs that finance investments in broadband, telecommunications, distance learning and telemedicine, entrepreneurship, and business development and growth.
 - Continues an emphasis on small business development, job creation, and growth.
 - Advances growth of local and regional food systems, including on-farm businesses.
 - Prioritizes and reserves 10% of funding in various programs for investments that are part of a long-term economic development strategy for a region, to ensure investments are strategic, focused, and crafted with maximum input from the local community.
- **To help producers take advantage of the multi-billion dollar marketing opportunity arising from increased demand for locally-produced foods, USDA has made historic investments to support these expanding markets.** Through Farm Bill-authorized programs, USDA supports the development of physical infrastructure, often in partnership with private lenders, and provides technical assistance or support to organizations engaged in marketing, food safety or production research and training, and other areas.
 - *Between 2009 and 2012, USDA supported over 2,600 projects nationwide to build new market opportunities in local and regional foods.* Farm Bill-authorized conservation, credit and risk management programs are supporting producers as they venture into these new markets. For example, since 2009, USDA has provided assistance to create more than 10,800 high tunnels – low-cost greenhouses that extend the growing season and conserve soil and water – on farms around the country through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A longer growing season allows farmers to provide their communities with fresh, local food later into the year.
- **Increasing the number of farmers markets across the country.** Through support of local and regional food systems, the Administration has helped increase the number of farmers markets nationwide, reaching 8,144 in 2013 – up from fewer than 5,000 in 2008.

Farmers Market per 1,000 people, 2012

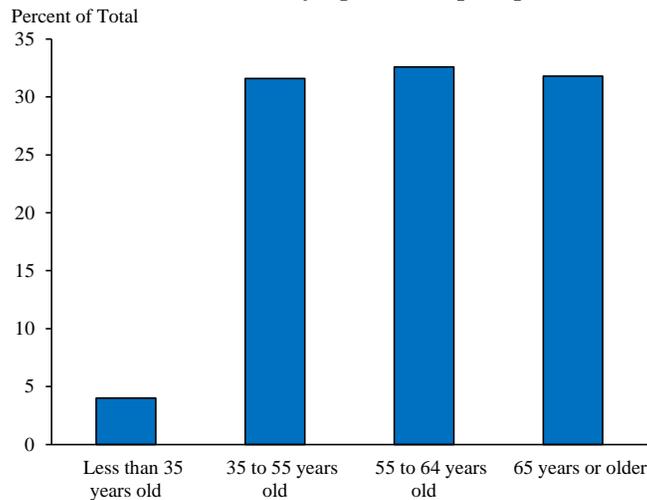


Source: USDA

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS

- **In 1982, 38 percent of farms were beginning farms and by 2011, 22 percent had an operator with 10 years or less of experience.** Now, some of these farmers want to slow down or retire; but they have no one to take over their operation. That challenges us to find new ways to help transition farms to the next generation.

Distribution of Farms by Age of Principal Operator



Source: USDA Agricultural Resource Management Survey (2011).

- **Farm Bill programs have assisted beginning family farmers and invested in services that help already existing family farmers stay prosperous and stay on their land.** The new Farm Bill will place additional resources and emphasis on beginning farmers, specialty crop producers, such as those

who grow fruits and vegetables. In addition, the new Farm Bill will place added emphasis on recruitment and support of U.S. veterans to begin successful farming and ranching operations.

- *These programs have provided farm operating and ownership loans to help over 35,000 small and medium sized businesses.* USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program has provided training and assistance to over 40,000 young and beginning farmers in 48 states. Through 2012, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Transition Incentive Program has provided more than 1,700 contracts which encourage exiting CRP enrollees to rent or sell their land to beginning farmers. These contracts allowed beginning farmers to farm over 275,000 acres of farm or ranch land in 26 states.
- **Helping veterans.** The Farm Bill being signed today provides additional preference and priority for U.S. veterans seeking assistance under USDA programs.