AGRICULTURE

ECONOMICS

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

EFFICIENCY
On-farm employment in the agriculture sector accounts for 2.6 million jobs in the U.S. “On-farm employment” includes full- and part-time jobs.

Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2018
Between 2000 and 2019, the number of farms decreased from 2.17 million to 2.02 million, while farmland decreased from 945 million acres to 897 million acres.

USDA Economic Research Service, 2020
Between 1997 and 2018, the agriculture sector’s gross output increased from $206 billion to $366 billion while its share of the U.S. economy stayed steady at approximately 1%.

*Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019*
In 2017, the 2,042,220 farms accounted for roughly 40% of all U.S. land.

One dot on the map equals 2000 farms. A farm is defined as an area where $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

*USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2019*
Of Clean Water Act §319 funds that go to watershed projects, 30-40% annually address agricultural sources. These funds often work in conjunction with USDA program funding to implement innovative best management practices.

U.S. EPA, 2019
The agriculture sector was responsible for 10% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2018.

*U.S. EPA, GHG Inventory 2020*
The number of anaerobic digesters on U.S. livestock farms has grown from 25 in 2000 to 248 in 2018, a 1,000% increase. These digesters use bacteria to break down organic matter such as manure without oxygen. As the bacteria “work,” they generate biogas, a renewable energy source.

U.S. EPA, AgSTAR, 2018
Agriculture

Potential for U.S. Farms to Turn Methane into Energy

If all U.S. livestock farms had anaerobic digesters, they could collectively generate enough energy to power 1.3 million homes for one year.

8,100 Livestock Farms in the U.S.

Produce 186 billion ft³ Methane Gas

Which could generate 15.8 million megawatt hours of energy per year through anaerobic digestion

Enough to power 1.3 million homes

U.S. EPA, AgSTAR, 2018
In 2019, there were 5.3 million planted acres of cover crops across the contiguous U.S. Cover crops reduce the need for fertilizer, and improve soil structure, moisture, and nutrient content.

*Note: This is likely a low estimate because not all producers report their acreage to the Farm Service Agency.*

**USDA Farm Service Agency, 2019**
Restoration efforts to water bodies, some with multiple pollutants addressed, (largely from §319 grant funds) have led to a significant increase in water quality improvements across sectors. About 60% of these improvements were achieved with agriculture as a contributing source.

U.S. EPA, 2019
In 2017, the agriculture sector produced $369 billion of goods and used 1.16 quadrillion Btu of energy. Energy efficiency increased from $280 to $319 billion/quadrillion Btu between 2007 and 2017.

Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019 | Energy Information Administration, 2020
In 2018, GHG emissions from the agriculture sector were 619 MMTCO2e, while gross output was $366 billion. Between 1997 and 2018, the ratio of GHG emissions to gross output decreased from 2.76 to 1.69.

Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019 | U.S. EPA, GHG Inventory 2020
Since 2009, the value of agricultural output has consistently exceeded the value of agricultural input; the ratio of output value to input value has increased from 0.77 in 1990 to 1.06 in 2017.

USDA Economic Research Service, 2020
The agriculture sector includes crop production (NAICS 111) and animal production and aquaculture (NAICS 112). Establishments in this sector are involved in the production of crops, animal husbandry, and the harvest of fish and other animals from farms or their natural habitats.

Companies classified into these NAICS range from large, multinational agriculture and produce corporations to small, individually owned or family-owned farms.

For more information about the EPA Smart Sectors program, visit: [epa.gov/smartsectors](http://epa.gov/smartsectors).

For more information about the agriculture sector, visit:

- [U.S. EPA – Agriculture](http://www.epa.gov/agriculture)
- [U.S. EPA - AgSTAR](http://www.epa.gov/agstar)
- [U.S. EPA – Nonpoint Source Program](http://www.epa.gov/npdes)
- [U.S. EPA – Greenhouse Gas Inventory](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange)
- [U.S. Census Bureau, NAICS 111 and 112](http://www.census.gov/industries/naics/)
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](http://www.usda.gov/)