



MEMORANDUM

To: AHC Member Organizations
From: American Horse Council
Date: March 5, 2009
Re: 2007 Census for Agriculture Results Released

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released the results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture which was conducted by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The census results can be found at www.agcensus.usda.gov.

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years and is a count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and many other areas. For the 2007 Census of Agriculture, a farm is defined as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

The census found that the number of farms in the U.S. has grown 4 percent and the operators of those farms have become more demographically diverse in the past five years. A total of 2,204,792 farms in the United States were counted, a net increase of 75,810 farms. Nearly 300,000 new farms have begun operation since the 2002 census. Compared to all farms nationwide, these new farms tend to have more diversified production, fewer acres, lower sales and younger operators who also work off-farm.

The latest census results show a continuation in the trend towards more small and very large farms and fewer mid-sized operations. Between 2002 and 2007, the number of farms with sales of less than \$2,500 increased by 74,000. The number of farms with sales of more than \$500,000 grew by 46,000 during the same period. Census results show that the majority of U.S. farms are smaller operations. More than 36 percent are classified as residential/lifestyle farms, with sales of less than \$250,000 and operators with a primary occupation other than farming. Another 21 percent are retirement farms, which have sales of less than \$250,000 and operators who reported they are retired.

The 2007 census counted a total of 4,028,827 horses and 283,806 mules, burros and donkeys. This was an increase from the 2002 census results which reported 3,644,278 horses and 105,358 mules, burros and donkeys. A total of 575,942 operations with horses were counted. Because the census focuses on agriculture production and only counted farms on which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, a significant part of the U.S. equine population would not have been counted, such as recreational facilities and backyard horses.

1616 H Street NW 7th Floor • Washington DC 20006 • 202-296-4031 • Fax 202-296-1970

Email: AHC@horsecouncil.org • Web Address: www.horsecouncil.org