



Economic Development: 1999 Lander County Agricultural Statistics

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Agriculture ranks second only to mining in its contribution to the Lander County economy. This fact sheet is designed to provide an overview of important statistics relating to Lander County and its agricultural sector.

Lander ranks twelfth of seventeen Nevada counties in terms of population, currently estimated at 7,010. The county encompasses 5,686 square miles or 3,639,102 acres of land, of which 90.7 percent is administered by the federal government, Table 1. Extensive mountainous areas in the southern part of the county are within the boundaries of Toiyabe National Forest. These federally administered lands, however, contribute significantly to the agricultural sector as they provide seasonal grazing for resident livestock herds. Privately owned land in farms comprises 13 percent of the Lander county land area. Most of the privately owned land is located in the northern part of the County in and around the Reese River Valley. A wide belt of "checkerboard" land resulting from the western railroad development crosses the northern panhandle of the county The 1997 Census of Agriculture, the most recent census, reported that there were 76 farms and ranches within the county encompassing 486,017 acres for an average size of 6,395 acres.

Lander County, in the heart of the Great Basin, has rugged high desert terrain. Fertile valleys are located along streams between the several mountain ranges running through the County. Key areas of agricultural production include Austin, Reese River, and Battle Mountain.

Table 1. Lander County Demographics, Area, and Agricultural Data
Table with 2 columns: Category and Value. Rows include Population (7,010), Size (3,639,102 acres / 5686 square miles), Number of Farms and Ranches (76), Land in Farms (486,017 acres), Average size (6,395 acres), Cropland (31,536 acres), and Irrigated Farm Land (25,546 acres).

Table 2 provides an overview of Lander County's agricultural sector for the 1999 production period.

Cattle and calves were the county's largest contributor to agricultural sales at \$5,084,027 or 45 percent of the counties agricultural sales. Current statistics show the January 1 cattle and calf inventory for Lander County at 19,000.

Alfalfa hay, the states leading crop, is Lander's second highest value agricultural commodity. Alfalfa hay is produced on 13,000 acres in the county with an average per acre tonnage of 3.8. The 50,000 tons annually produced are marketed as high quality dairy, export grade hay and livestock feed. During 1999 alfalfa hay recorded \$4,124,900 or 37 percent of the counties total agricultural sale.

Ranking third in the commodity sales is other hay with a value of \$1,801,800, or 16 percent of the total. This sector of hay includes native hay, grain hay, improved grasses, and timothy. Production covers approximately 11,000 acres at a rate of 2.1 tons per acre. Note that this is the average over all other hays

The last major agricultural enterprise reported would be the sheep and lamb industry. This enterprise makes up 2% or \$188,333 of the agricultural sales. Current data report the January 1 inventory at 5000 head of sheep and lambs.

Alfalfa Hay		\$4,124,900
Other Hay		\$1,801,800
	Total Hay	\$5,926,700
Cattle and Calves		\$5,084,027
Sheep and Lambs		\$188,333
	Total Livestock	\$5,272,361
All Hay and Livestock		\$11,199,061

Information to compile this fact sheet was attained from the 1999-2000 Nevada Agricultural Statistics Service's Annual Report and the 1997 Census of Agriculture. Data is collected in the spring and published in the fall following the production period Thus the one year lag timeframe. These agencies appreciate the support of Lander County producers that provide survey information. Questions regarding statistics used in this fact sheet should be directed to the Authors.

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