



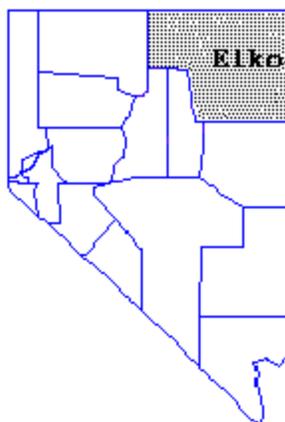
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Bringing the University to You

Fact Sheet-00-41

Economic Development: 1999 Elko County Agricultural Statistics

William Riggs, Extension Educator
Martin Owens, State Statistician



Elko county was organized as a political subdivision of Nevada in 1869. The economy is based on traditional agriculture, mining, and casino/resort industries. This fact sheet is designed to provide an overview of important statistics relating to Elko County and its agricultural sector.

Elko ranks fourth of seventeen Nevada counties in terms of population, currently estimated at 50,620. The county encompasses 17,135 square miles or 10,990,186 acres of land of which 71.5 percent is administered by the federal government, Table 1. Elko county is home to four Native American reservations serving the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley and the Elko, South Fork, and Wells Bands of the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone. A wide belt of "checkerboard" land resulting from the western railroad

development crosses the central part of the county. 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 26 percent of the Elko county land area. The 1997 Census of Agriculture, the most recent census, reported that there were 402 farms and ranches within the county encompassing 2,855,472 acres for an average farm size of 7,103 acres.

Elko County typifies a true "Cow County" with vast plush grazing lands surrounded by rugged mountains. The county ranked fourth in the nation in number of beef cows tabulated in the 1997 Census of Agriculture. Agricultural production is focussed around the Ruby Mountains including Wells, Clover, Star, and Ruby Valleys, Lamoille, and Jiggs. Other areas of agricultural include the areas of North Fork, Mountain City, and Tuscarora along the Independence Mountain Range, the ranching communities of O'Neil and Jarbidge in the North Eastern portion of the county and the areas along the Humbolt River including Metropolis, Elko, Deeth, Haleck and Carlin.

Table 1. Elko County Demographics, Area, and Agricultural Data	
Population	50,620
Size	10,990,186 acres 7,135 square miles
Number of Farms and Ranches	402
Land in Farms	2,855,472 acres
Average size	7,103 acres
Cropland	237,443 acres
Irrigated Farm Land	205,189 acres

Figure 1 and Table 2 provide an overview of Elko County's agricultural sector for the 1999 production period.

Cattle and calves were the county's largest contributor with \$44,150,765 worth of commodity sales, 67 percent of the county total. Current statistics show the January 1, 2000 cattle and calf inventory for Elko County at 165,000.

Ranking second in the commodity sales is other hay with a value of \$15,327,000, or 23 percent of the total acres. This sector of hay includes native hay, grain hay, improved grasses, and timothy. Production covers approximately 131,000 acres at a rate of 1.5 tons per acre. The majority of this hay is used on farm for winter supplemental feeding in livestock operations.

Alfalfa hay, the states leading crop but ranks third in terms of agricultural commodity production in Elko County. Alfalfa hay is produced on 21,000 acres in the county with an average per acre tonnage of 3.4. The 71,000 tons annually produced are used in livestock operations or sold to outside markets. During 1999 alfalfa hay recorded \$5,961,900 or 9 percent of the counties total agricultural sale.

The last major agricultural enterprise reported would be the sheep and lamb industry. Elko County is the state's largest sheep and lamb producing county. This enterprise makes up 1% or \$753,333 of the agricultural sales. Current data report the January 1, 2000 inventory at 20,000 head of sheep and lambs.

Figure 1.

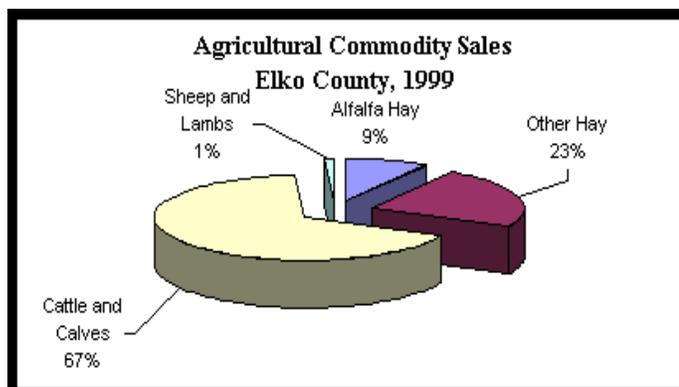


Table 2. 1999 Sales by Commodity Elko County.

Alfalfa Hay	\$5,961,900
Other Hay	\$15,327,000
Total Hay	\$21,288,900
	\$0
Cattle and Calves	\$44,150,765
Sheep and Lambs	\$753,333
Total Livestock	\$44,904,098
	\$0
All Hay and Livestock	\$66,192,998

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 Elko County producers that provide survey information. Questions regarding statistics used in this fact sheet should be directed to the Authors.

**UNIVERSITY
OF NEVADA**

The University of Nevada, Reno is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, creed, national origin, veteran status, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation in any program or activity it operates. The University of Nevada employs only United States Citizens and aliens lawfully authorized to work in the United States.