

Socioeconomic overview of the farm population, 2011

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The Canadian farm population totalled 650,395 persons in 2011, accounting for 1 out of every 50 Canadians.

Results from the Agriculture–National Household Survey (Ag-NHS) linkage show that Ontario had the largest farm population at 174,905 in 2011, representing 26.9% of the national total. Alberta was home to 20.0% of the total, followed by 16.0% in Saskatchewan and 15.6% in Quebec.

The average household size in the Canadian farm population in 2011 was 2.9 persons, compared with 2.5 persons in private households in the total population.

The median income for economic families in the farm population was \$74,604 in 2010, similar to the median income of \$76,458 in the total population.

Immigrants represented 6.9% of the farm population, compared with the 20.7% immigrant share of the total population. Ontario not only had the largest farm population, but also the highest number of immigrants in the farm population, almost 15,000, representing 8.6% of the provincial farm population. British Columbia, in turn, was the province with the largest proportion of immigrants in its farm population at 19.8%.

The top three places of birth reported by the immigrant farm population in 2011 were the Netherlands (19.4%), the United Kingdom (14.8%) and the United States (12.8%). In comparison, the three most frequently reported places of birth for immigrants in the total population were India, China and the United Kingdom. Over one-third of the immigrant farm population (34.4%) arrived in Canada prior to 1971, compared with 18.6% of immigrants in the total population. Among more recent arrivals, 31.8% of immigrants in the total population came to Canada between 2001 and 2011, compared with 14.6% of the immigrant farm population.

In 2011, 72.3% of the farm population reported English as their mother tongue, while 17.0% reported French. For the farm population that reported a mother tongue other than English or French, the most frequently reported languages were German (4.7%) and Dutch (1.8%). In comparison, the most frequently reported mother tongues after English and French in the total population were Punjabi (1.3%) and Chinese (1.2%).

In 2011, 82.6% of the farm population reported a religious affiliation compared with 76.1% of the total population. For the farm population reporting a religious affiliation, the most frequently reported were Roman Catholic (38.5%), the United Church (18.8%) and Lutheran (5.6%). In the total population, the most frequently reported religious affiliations were Roman Catholic (50.9%), the United Church (8.0%) and Anglican (6.5%).

Canadian farm operators

Canada had 292,795 farm operators in the Ag-NHS database in 2011. Male operators totalled 212,185, or 72.5%, while female operators totalled 80,605, or 27.5%. British Columbia reported the largest proportion of female operators at 36.5%.

The median age of farm operators in 2011 was 54 years, compared with 49 years for the total self-employed labour force. In 2011, 48.2% of farm operators were aged 55 or older, compared with 33.2% of the total self-employed labour force.

Over half of farm operators in 2011 had completed postsecondary education (51.6%), compared with 65.8% of the self-employed labour force. The proportion of farm operators completing postsecondary education was larger for female operators (58.8%) than male operators (48.9%). Of the 24,055 operators under the age of 35 in the Ag-NHS database, 59.5% reported postsecondary education.



Note to readers

This report, the final data release from the 2011 Census of Agriculture, provides a socioeconomic profile of Canada's farm population. It was produced by linking data from the 2011 Census of Agriculture with data from the 2011 National Household Survey and the 2011 Census of Population. This 2011 Agriculture–National Household Survey (Ag-NHS) linkage provides socioeconomic data for Canada's farm population, farm operators and farm families.

The **farm population** is defined as farm operators as well as individuals in their households. The Ag-NHS database does not include the farm population in the territories or those that were residents of collective dwellings.

An **economic family** is a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law, adoption or a foster relationship. Farm economic family or farm family refer to an economic family where at least one person is a farm operator. The two terms are used interchangeably in this report.

An **immigrant** refers to a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant or a permanent resident and who landed in Canada prior to May 10, 2011.

Mother tongue is the first language a person learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the 2011 National Household Survey.

The **self-employed labour force** refers to persons that were in the labour force and self-employed with or without a business, as well as unpaid family workers that were 15 years or older at the time of the 2011 National Household Survey.

A **farm operator** is a person involved in the management decisions of a census farm that was aged 15 years or older. Up to three farm operators could be reported per farm.

Available in CANSIM: tables 004-0100 to 004-0129.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 3438, 3901 and 5178.

The report [Get to know Canadian farmers and their families](#) is now available on our website.

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