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Other livestock and poultry in Canada

by Mitra Rostami

Horses, donkeys and ducks: identifying key trends in other livestock and poultry

While Canadian livestock and poultry often consist of more traditional animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens and turkeys, Canadian farms raise a host of other livestock and poultry. These belong to the “[other livestock](#)” and “[other poultry](#)” categories.

The Census of Agriculture captures only animals located on census farms. Thus, it does not include all livestock and poultry in the country. Data users should be aware that census data may underreport the quantities of other livestock and other poultry.

Other livestock

In 2016, 45,925 agricultural operations reported having at least one type of other livestock as part of their operations. This represents 23.7% of farms in Canada.

While some farms keep livestock for farm work or for predator control, other farms raise livestock to diversify farm income and meet the demands of niche markets. Although 45,925 farms reported having at least one type of other livestock, other livestock was the predominant type of production—based on gross farm receipts—of only 18,584 farms.

Table 1
Number of agricultural operations raising other livestock, by farm type, Canada, 2016

Farm type	Number of agricultural operations
Goat	867
Horse and other equine	10,507
Fur-bearing animal and rabbit	284
Animal combination	5,749
All other miscellaneous animal	1,177
All farm types	193,492

Note: Farm type is based on the major source of farm receipts.

Source: CANSIM table 004-0200.

On average, “other livestock” [farm types](#) tend to fall into lower receipts classes. In 2016, 17.7% of all farms reported gross farm receipts below \$10,000. The proportion of farms in this receipts class was higher for the “other livestock” farm types (Table 2).

Table 2
Percentage of agricultural operations raising other livestock with gross farm receipts below \$10,000, by farm type, Canada, 2016

Farm type	Percentage of agricultural operations with gross receipts below \$10,000
Goat	41.3
Horse and other equine	43.2
Fur-bearing animal and rabbit	20.8
Animal combination	26.7
All other miscellaneous animal	30.8
All farm types	17.7

Note: Farm type is based on the major source of farm receipts.

Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

In addition, a higher proportion of “other livestock” farm operators reported working off their farms, compared with farm operators as a whole. In 2016, 44.4% of all operators reported working off the farm. Apart from fur-bearing animal and rabbit type farms, the proportion of operators who worked off the farm was higher on “other livestock” farms (Table 3).

Table 3
Percentage of farm operators reporting off-farm work, by farm type, Canada, 2016

Farm type	Percentage of operators who report off-farm work
Goat	57.2
Horse and other equine	59.8
Fur-bearing animal and rabbit	39.7
Animal combination	53.0
All other miscellaneous animal	60.0
All farm types	44.4

Note: Farm type is based on the major source of farm receipts.

Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Similarly, when it comes to on-farm work, a smaller proportion of “other livestock” operators than of farm operators as a whole reported more than 40 hours per week. In 2016, 37.5% of all farm operators reported working more than 40 hours per week on their farms. With the exception of fur-bearing animal and rabbit type farms, the proportion of “other livestock” operators who worked more than 40 hours per week on the farm was lower (Table 4). On horse and other equine type farms, 19.6% of operators worked more than 40 hours per week on the farm, while 45.1% worked less than 20 hours per week on the farm.

Table 4
Percentage of farm operators reporting more than 40 hours per week of on-farm work, by farm type, Canada, 2016

Farm type	Percentage of farm operators reporting more than 40 hours per week of on-farm work
Goat	30.6
Horse and other equine	19.6
Fur-bearing animal and rabbit	47.3
Animal combination	35.1
All other miscellaneous animal	21.8
All farm types	37.5

Note: Farm type is based on the major source of farm receipts.

Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

“Other livestock” farm types tend, on average, to have more female-only operations than all farm types as a whole. In 2016, 7.2% of all farm operations had exclusively female operators, with 60.1% of operations being male-only. While all “other livestock” farm types had a greater proportion of female-only operations, horse and other equine type farms were by far the most likely to have female-only operations. Of the 10,507 horse and other equine type farms (which had 15,516 operators), 19.1% had female operators exclusively, 36.6% had only male operators, and 44.2% had both male operators and female operators.

Table 5
Percentage of agricultural operations, by sex of operators and farm type, Canada, 2016

Farm type	Male only	Female only	Male and female
	percent		
Goat	34.4	15.1	50.5
Horse and other equine	36.6	19.1	44.2
Fur-bearing animal and rabbit	58.8	7.7	33.5
Animal combination	45.9	8.4	45.7
All other miscellaneous animal	48.1	10.5	41.5
All farm types	60.1	7.2	32.7

Note: Farm type is based on the major source of farm receipts.

Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Horses and ponies¹

Horse and other equine type farms were the most prevalent “other livestock” farm type, with 10,507 farms classified in this category based on the value of their principal activity.

Horses and ponies were the most commonly reported type of other livestock, both in number of animals and in number of farms reporting. In 2016, 39,164 agricultural operations reported horses or ponies, a 17.5% decrease from 2011. In the same period, the number of horses and ponies dropped 25.7% to 291,561 head. Horses are commonly considered luxury items, and given the increase in associated costs, the number of horses has declined.

The largest proportion of agricultural operations reporting horses but not classified as horse or other equine type farms were farms for beef and feedlot type farms.

Donkeys

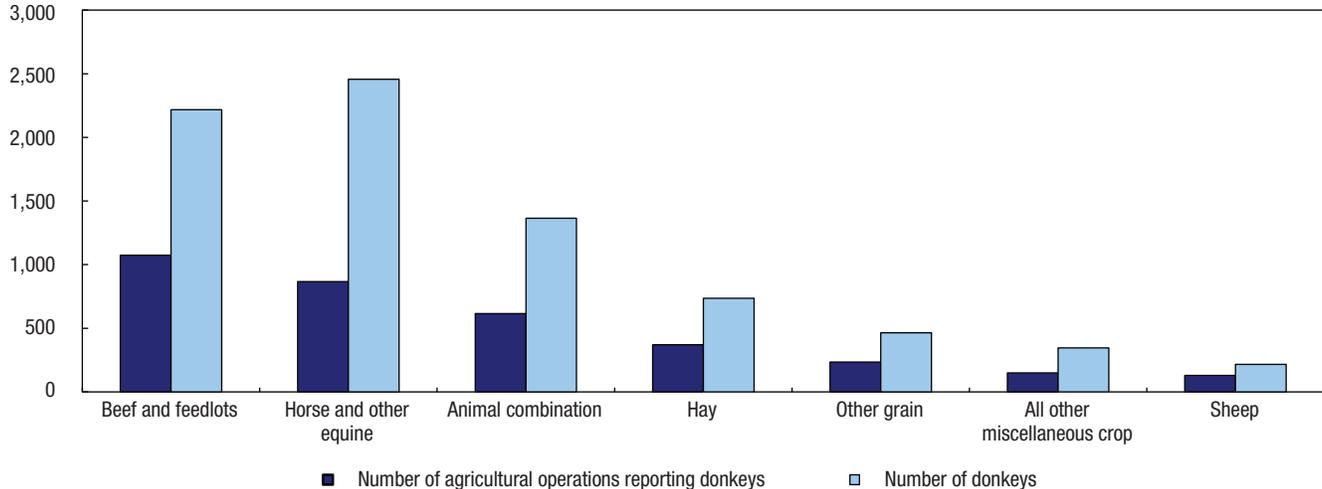
Like horses, donkeys and mules were reported across farm types, particularly in beef and feedlot type farms, and in horse and other equine type farms. Donkeys and mules are often intended to protect flocks of sheep and, occasionally, even herds of cattle. In some cases, they may still be used to help with work on the farm.

While the highest proportion of donkeys and mules were found on horse and other equine type farms (27.8%), one-quarter (25.1%) were found on farms for beef cattle ranching and farming, including feedlots, and 2.4% on sheep farming operations. In 2016, 3,967 farms reported having donkeys and mules in Canada, for a total of 8,832 donkeys and mules. This is a 20.0% decline from 11,041 donkeys and mules in 2011.

Chart 1

Total agricultural operations reporting donkeys and number of donkeys, by farm type, Canada, 2016

number



Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

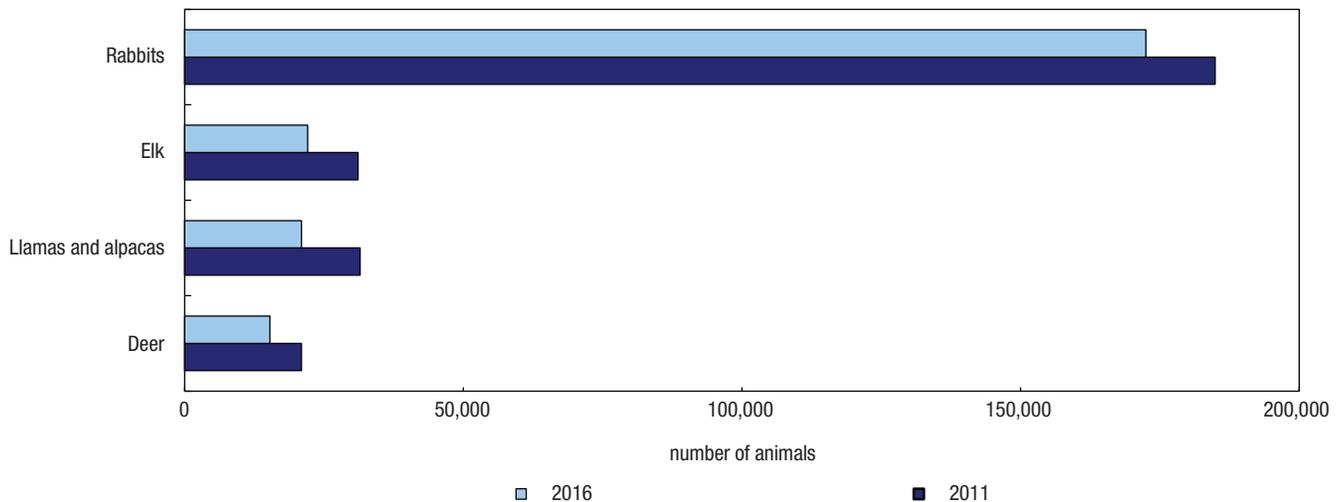
1. The number of horses reported in the Census of Agriculture does not represent all the horses in Canada. Given the Census of Agriculture's definition of [agricultural operation](#), horses used for racing or kept for personal use on non-agricultural operations are not captured by the census and are not included in the totals.

Other animals

Less prevalent livestock, such as rabbits, elk, llamas and alpacas, and deer, all saw a decrease in the number of animals reported in the 2016 Census, compared with the 2011 Census (Chart 2).

In 2016, the majority of deer (58.1%) were reported in Quebec. Alberta and Saskatchewan accounted for most reported elk, with a combined 85.3% of animals. Over 90.0% of rabbits were reported in Ontario and Quebec.

Chart 2
Total number of animals, by type of livestock, Canada, 2011 and 2016



Source: CANSIM table 004-0224.

Other poultry

In 2016, 5,223 agricultural operations reported having at least one type of **other poultry** as part of their operations. This represents 2.7% of farms in Canada, a slight increase from 2.2% of farms in 2011. In 2016, 50 farms accounted for four-fifths of the 3 million birds reported in other poultry.

Ducks

Ducks were the most commonly reported type of other poultry, both in number of birds and in number of farms reporting. In 2016, 2,862 agricultural operations reported ducks, a 24.8% increase from 2011. The number of ducks in Canada increased 32.2% to 1.7 million birds.

The United States accounted for 95.4% of Canada's duck meat exports in 2016 and saw a 61.0% increase in quantity since 2012. Exports to Japan also jumped rapidly in the first half of 2017, exceeding four times the quantity exported in all of 2016. Mexico, which recently reopened its borders to Canadian poultry, saw an increase in duck meat exports in the first half of 2017 as well.²

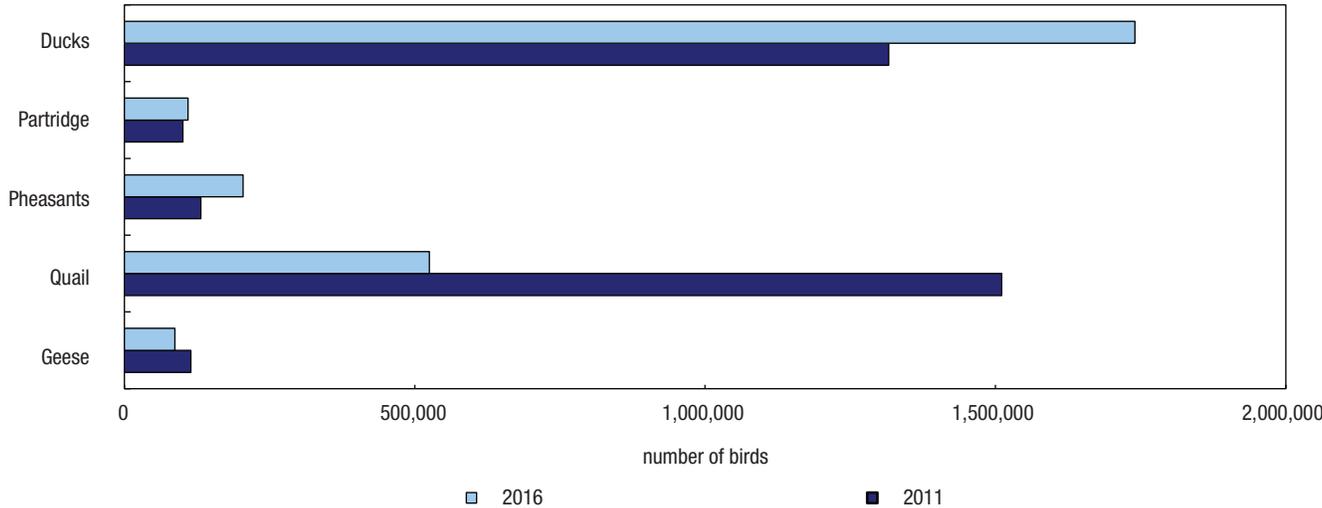
The increase in the number of ducks was largely driven by Ontario and Quebec. In these two provinces, the number of ducks increased 44.7% to 1.4 million, representing 80.8% of all ducks in Canada in 2016. The top 10 farms reporting ducks in Canada accounted for two-thirds of all reported ducks.

2. Statistics Canada. 2017. Special tabulation based on World Trade Atlas database (accessed September 18, 2017).

Other

Other types of poultry saw varying changes in the number of birds reported in 2011 and 2016. While the number of geese and quail decreased, the number of pheasants and partridge increased at the national level in the five-year period.

Chart 3
Total number of birds, by type of poultry, Canada, 2011 and 2016



Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Terms

Other livestock includes all livestock kept on agricultural operations except cattle, pigs or sheep—for example, horses, donkeys, fox, wild boars and chinchillas.

Other poultry includes all poultry kept on agricultural operations except pullets, hens, turkeys, broilers, roasters and Cornish chickens—for example, geese, ducks, ostriches, pheasants and emus.

Farm type: Farm type is established through a procedure that classifies each census farm according to the predominant type of production. This is done by estimating the potential receipts from the inventories of crops and livestock reported on the questionnaire and determining the product or group of products that makes up the majority of the estimated receipts. For example, a census farm with total potential receipts of 60% from hogs, 20% from beef cattle and 20% from wheat would be classified as a hog and pig farm. The farm types presented in this document are based on the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Census farm: An operation is considered a census farm (agricultural operation) if it produces at least one of the following products intended for sale:

- Crops: hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed
- Livestock: cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock
- Poultry: hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry
- Animal products: milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat
- Other agricultural products: Christmas trees, sod, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, honey or bees, maple syrup and its products.

The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are not included in the national totals because of the different definition of agricultural operation in those territories and because of confidentiality constraints.