

# Economic & Policy Update

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## 2022 Tobacco Census Data for Kentucky

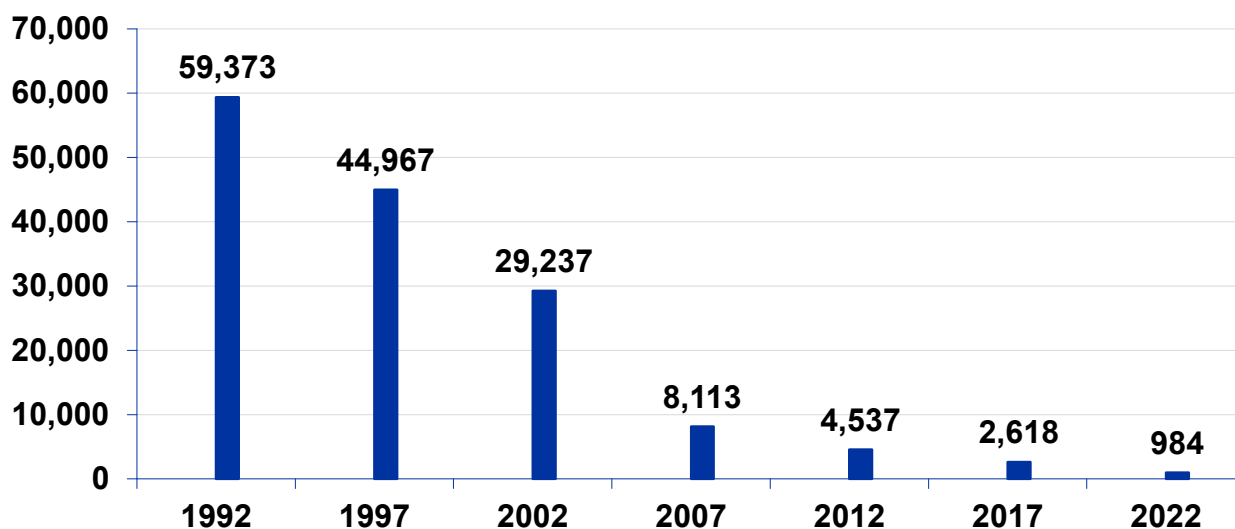
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The USDA conducts an agricultural census every five years with the latest released on February 13, 2024, reflecting data compiled from farm operations in 2022. Below are some highlights from the 2022 Ag Census pertaining to Kentucky's tobacco sector which arguably has experienced the largest structural change of any sector and state in U.S. agriculture over the past two decades.

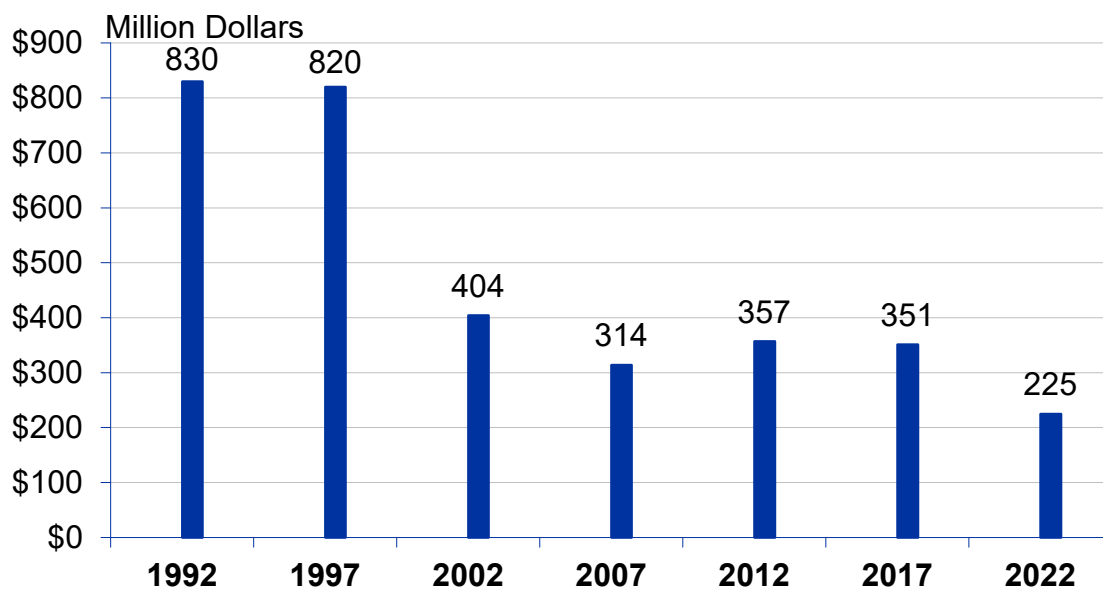
- Kentucky farms with tobacco acres in 2022 totaled 984, down from 2,618 farms in 2017 and nearly 60,000 farms back in the early 1990s. The value of Kentucky's tobacco production totaled \$225 million in 2022, compared to \$351 million in 2017 and a reduction of more than 70% from record levels exceeding \$800 million in the 1990s.

Figure 1: Number of Farms Growing Tobacco in Kentucky (Census Years)



Source: USDA Ag Census

**Figure 2: Value of Kentucky Tobacco Production**



Source: USDA Ag Census

- Kentucky remains the U.S. state with the largest number of tobacco farms, but its share has declined from 42% of U.S tobacco farms in 2017 to 33% in 2022. North Carolina remains number two in tobacco farms with 822 farms, followed by Pennsylvania (377), Tennessee (241), and Virginia (170).

**Table 1: Number of Tobacco Farms by State**

State	Tobacco Farms (2022)	% of 2022 U.S. Tobacco Farms	Tobacco Farms (2017)	% of 2017 U.S. Tobacco Farms	Tobacco Farms (2012)	Tobacco Farms (2007)	Tobacco Farms (2002)	Change Since 2002
Kentucky	984	33%	2,618	42%	4,537	8,113	29,237	-97%
North Carolina	822	28%	1,294	21%	1,682	2,662	7,850	-90%
Pennsylvania	377	13%	812	13%	1,312	1,152	897	-58%
Tennessee	241	8%	598	10%	935	1,610	8,206	-97%
Virginia	170	6%	306	5%	558	895	4,184	-96%
Others	393	13%	609	10%	990	1,802	6,603	-94%
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>2,987</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,237</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,014</b>	<b>16,234</b>	<b>56,977</b>	<b>-95%</b>

- The average size of tobacco production per farm in Kentucky was 44.9 acres in 2022, compared to 30.8 acres in 2017, 19.4 acres in 2012, 10.8 acres in 2007 and 3.8 acres in 2002.
- In 2022, 143 (or 15%) of Kentucky tobacco farms grew more than 100 acres of tobacco, while 47% had less than 15 acres.

- Christian County remained the Kentucky county with the largest number of farms growing tobacco in 2022 with 77 farms, followed by Daviess and Todd with 50 farms, Graves with 49 farms and Todd with 42 farms.
- Not a single Kentucky county showed an increase in the number of farms growing tobacco in 2022 vs 2017, compared to 12 counties increasing the number of farms growing tobacco in the 2017 Census.
- Breckinridge County lost the greatest number of tobacco farms in the 2022 Census with a reduction of 76 farms, followed by Todd (-75), Christian (-60), Barren (-56) and Daviess (-56).
- Christian County remained the #1 Kentucky tobacco county by value of production in 2022 with \$44.2 million of sales followed by Calloway County (\$15.4 million), Barren County (\$13.9 million), Todd County (\$13.3 million) and Graves County (\$8.4 million).

**Table 2: Kentucky Tobacco Farms by Acres**

Acres	Number of Farms	Percent of Farms
Less than 5 Acres	175	18%
5.0 to 14.9 Acres	284	29%
15.0 to 24.9 Acres	92	9%
25.0 to 49.9 Acres	177	18%
50.0 to 99.9 Acres	113	11%
More than 100 Acres	143	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>100%</b>

USDA Ag Census data regarding tobacco farms is also broken down by county and market value in a downloadable spreadsheet, [Ag Census Tobacco Farms \(2022-2022\)](#).

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