



## Agriculture in New York State



### Introduction

New York is home to over 35,000 farms, covering approximately 7.3 million acres or nearly a quarter of the State's total land area. Located in all regions of the State, these farms generated over \$4.8 billion in revenue and contributed nearly \$2.4 billion to the State's gross domestic product in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

New York farms produce a rich array of agricultural commodities including milk and other dairy products; fruits, vegetables, and grains; livestock, poultry and eggs; and numerous other items ranging from maple syrup to hay.

Over 1,000 New York farms were certified organic in 2016, up 13 percent from 2015. The State ranked third in the nation in that fast-growing category in 2016, behind only California and Wisconsin. New York's organic farms comprised 7.4 percent of all those nationwide.

### A National Leader in Farm Products

New York is a national leader in the production of a wide range of agricultural goods. In 2017, the State was among the top five nationally for 15 popular farm products, as shown in Figure 1.

New York's long-established strength in dairy farming was reflected in its top ranking among the states for cottage cheese production, with nearly 27 percent of the U.S. total, as well as those for sour cream and yogurt. The State also continues to outpace most of the nation in the production of milk and the "all other cheese" category. Eight agricultural products made or grown in New York comprised over 10 percent of those products nationwide.

<sup>1</sup> Data for this report is drawn primarily from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2017-18 Agricultural Statistics Annual Bulletin supplemented by data from the USDA Agricultural Statistics Service, the USDA 2016 Certified Organic Survey, and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. See also the Office of the State Comptroller's March 2015 report, *The Importance of Agriculture to the New York State Economy*.

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New York vineyards covered 35,000 acres of farmland in 2017 and produced 187,000 tons of grapes, ranking the State below only California and Washington.

**FIGURE 1**  
New York Agricultural Products Ranked within the Top 5 Nationwide, 2017

	U.S. Rank	Share of U.S. Production
Cottage Cheese	1	26.7%
Sour Cream	1	19.5%
Maple Syrup	2	17.8%
Yogurt	1	15.8%
Cabbage	2	14.7%
Apples	2	11.4%
Snap Beans	2	11.3%
Calves	4	11.8%
Milk	3	6.9%
Corn for Silage	4	6.9%
All Other Cheese	4	6.8%
Milk Cows	3	6.6%
Italian Cheese	3	6.5%
Tart Cherries	5	3.1%
Grapes	3	2.5%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Note: Rankings based on number of units produced

In several categories, New York’s already high rankings among the states have inched higher in recent years. In 2011, New York ranked fourth for milk production; as of 2017, it was third. During the same period, New York’s rank among the states for the production of snap beans climbed from fourth to second and for maple syrup, from third to second.

While New York farms grow a wide range of fruits, apples and grapes are the top sellers. The New York Apple Association counts 25 varieties of apples grown in the State. In 2017, there were 40,000 acres of orchards which yielded 1.3 billion pounds of apples.

New York vineyards covered 35,000 acres of farmland in 2017 and produced 187,000 tons of grapes, ranking the State below only California and Washington.

Grapes grown in New York are primarily used for juices and wine. The State’s 57,000 tons of wine grapes were third in the nation in 2017. New York was the second highest producer of concord grapes used for juice, after Washington. From 2012 to 2017, the production of concord grapes in New York nearly doubled, from over 64,000 tons to 125,000 tons.

## Sales of Agricultural Products

Milk was by far the State's top agricultural commodity, with \$2.7 billion in sales representing more than half the total for all products. The 14.9 billion pounds of milk produced in 2017 were up by nearly 13 percent from five years earlier. Revenue from milk sales exceeded the next highest ranking product, corn, by more than three times. Figure 2 shows the top 10 agricultural commodities in the State.

New York's production of milk and related products relied on approximately 620,000 milk cows in 2017, 6.6 percent of the total nationwide. As shown in Figure 3, the five counties with the largest number of milk cows represented over 28 percent of the statewide total, with Wyoming County leading the way.

**FIGURE 2**  
Top Ten Agricultural Commodities by Sales in New York, 2017

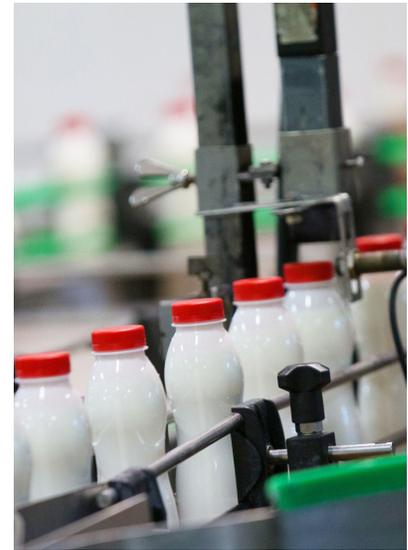
	Sales (thousands)		Sales (thousands)
Milk	\$ 2,713,984	Soybeans	\$ 110,903
Corn	\$ 772,572	Eggs	\$ 89,145
Hay	\$ 495,950	Grapes	\$ 69,078
Apples	\$ 343,076	Cabbage	\$ 59,580
Cattle & Calves	\$ 315,300	Potatoes	\$ 53,580

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FIGURE 3**  
Top Five Counties in New York for Milk Cows, 2017

	Number of Milk Cows	Percentage of State Total
Wyoming	47,500	7.7%
Cayuga	35,000	5.6%
St. Lawrence	34,500	5.6%
Genesee	29,500	4.8%
Jefferson	28,500	4.6%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture



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## Conclusion

Farmers in New York face a number of continuing challenges, including unpredictable weather and long working hours. For dairy farms that make up the largest proportion of the State's overall agricultural production, declining milk prices have cut revenues sharply, in some cases threatening family businesses. Tariffs, including those imposed recently on agricultural products by the nation's trading partners in response to those imposed by the federal government, have increased financial uncertainty for many farmers in New York and nationwide. Federal policies relating to visas for migrant workers and other immigration programs have increased restrictions on such workers, who play an important role in the State's agricultural workforce; such steps may add to the challenge of planting and harvesting on a timely basis. In addition, potential changes to federal farm aid policies and other agricultural programs may affect farmers in unpredictable ways.

Still, despite these and other challenges, New York's farms remain an essential part of the State, contributing to all levels of the economy through the jobs they support and the income they generate. Agriculture enhances New Yorkers' quality of life in other ways as well, including providing access to fresh, locally sourced food and preserving open space.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Census Bureau conduct a comprehensive Census of Agriculture every five years. Results of the 2017 Census of Agriculture are scheduled to be released in early 2019, providing more complete and updated data on agriculture's importance to the New York State economy.



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Prepared by the Office of Budget and Policy Analysis

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