Jefferson County - Overview of Agriculture

**Overview**

1. Number of Farms – 1434 in 2007 (up from 1421 in 2002)

   
   - “Principal operator by primary occupation” = Farming (44%)
   
   - i.e. Only 44% of farms list farming as their main occupation

3. Land in Farms – 244,238 acres in 2007
   
   - 69.0% of county’s land area is in farms
   
   - 190,189 acres cropland
   
   - Average size of farm = 170 acres
   
   - 90 farms over 500 acres
   
   - 568 farms less than 50 acres

4. Hired Farm Labor - 2007
   
   - 267 farms hire farm labor
   
   - 1756 farm workers
   
   - $25,358,000 payroll
   
   - 117 farms hire 3 or more workers

**Agricultural Economic Impacts**

   
   - $209,294,000 Total (up 51% from 2002)
   
   - Livestock, poultry and products (59% of total)
   
   - Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops (41% of total)

   - 27.5% of farms have a Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold greater than $50,000. There are lots of small farms – 38.4% have sales less than $2,500.

6. Farm Production Expenses – 2007
   
   - $160,869,000 Total
   
   - Livestock Purchased - Feed - Electricity
   
   - Seed, fertilizer & chemicals - Labor - Petroleum Products
   
   - Repairs, maintenance, supplies - Custom work - Cash rent
   
   - Interest - Property taxes

   
   - Agriculture provides jobs for 10,849 county residents (23% of total)
   
   - Agriculture accounts for $1.51 billion in county economic activity (33% of total)
   
   - Agriculture contributes $442.6 million to the county’s total income (21.6% of total)
   
   - Agriculture pays over $40.2 million in taxes (does not include all property taxes paid to local schools)

OVER
**Diversity**

8. Top 5 production areas - 2002
   - milk ($34 million), grain ($29 million), eggs ($25 million), nursery stock and sod ($25 million), vegetables ($7 million)

9. Dairy is the major business - 2007
   - 158 dairy farms (down from 196 in 2002)
   - 14,669 dairy cows (down from 15,867 in 2002)
   - Each dairy cow produces $15,000 to $17,000 of economic activity

10. Other livestock/poultry – 2007
    - 40,884 head cattle and calves (includes dairy)
    - 160 beef cow farms (up from 148 in 2002)
    - 13,088 hogs and pigs sold
    - 2,163,391 layers and pullets sold

11. Crops needed for livestock production and cash sale – 2007
    - 84,650 acres of corn for grain
    - 40,458 acres of soybeans
    - 27,321 acres of forages (alfalfa, grass)
    - 5,185 acres of winter wheat

    - $10.9 million in economic activity
    - 222 full-time jobs
    - Many seasonal workers

13. Vegetable Crops – 2007
    - 47 farms- 2,668 acres
    - 14 orchards

**Quality of Life Considerations**

14. Farm and rural families are an important part of the county’s identity and culture

15. Residents place a high value on open space and agricultural land

16. Agricultural role and the environment

17. Agricultural role and tourism

18. Agricultural enterprises are a focus area in the county’s emerging economic vision

**Sources of Information:**


2. 2004 Wisconsin and the Agricultural Economy by Steve Deller, professor of agriculture and applied economics, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, UW-Madison and Community Development Specialist, UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension.