

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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**March 17, 2006**

In recognition of national agriculture week, I thought I would share some facts about agriculture in Grundy County which I hope you will find of interest. The source of much of the information comes from the 2002 Census of Agriculture as collected by the United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service. The importance of agriculture to small communities must not be underestimated. In addition to the production of a safe and stable food supply, farmers tend to purchase many of their inputs from local businesses which help to support their friends and neighbors.

Keep in mind that these numbers have likely changed since this report was released. However, it is a picture of where things were at a point in time. In the last census, there were 724 farms in Grundy County which was down from the previous census. The average farm size in Grundy County is 448 acres (that compares to a statewide average of 350 acres). The median farm size is 271 acres which means that one half of the total 724 farms are larger than 271 acres and the other half is smaller than 271 acres. Three hundred twenty four thousand one hundred thirty nine acres of land make up the farms in the county. This is also down from the previous census.

The average market value of production per farm was \$193,844 in 2002, which was up one percent from the 1997 census. Total market value of production for the county is \$140,343,000 with crop sales accounting for \$92,431,000 and livestock sales accounting

for \$47,912,000 of the total value. There were 149,650 acres in corn production (in 2005 there were 157,000 acres), 141,506 acres in soybean production (in 2005 there were 134,000 acres) and 5,205 acres producing forage, corn silage and oats. Livestock sales included 374,104 hogs and pigs, 21,386 cattle and calves, 1,478 sheep and lambs and 1,275 broilers and other meat-type chickens. Other commodity groups of interest include vegetable production valued at \$18,000, milk and other dairy products valued at \$816,000 and other crops and hay valued at \$521,000.

Other demographics that you might find of interest are that 539 of the 724 farmers consider farming their primary occupation. Principal operators are primarily male (693) and 31 female operators. The average age of the principal operators is 53.6 years of age. With the increasing age of our farm operators, we need to find ways to help get young farmers started in order to help sustain our rural communities. If current trends continue, the number of farms will continue to decrease, the average age of farmers will continue to rise and the average size of farms will continue to grow.

If you would like more information, please contact the Grundy Office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.