

U. S. Hog Breeding Herd Structure

Released September 22, 2006, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For information on *U. S. Hog Breeding Herd Structure* call Bruce Boess at 202-720-3106, office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

Annual Pigs Per Breeding Animal Continues To Increase

The U.S. Hog Breeding Herd Structure report provides an official periodic review of efficiency trends and changes in the structure of the breeding herd. This report compares the current 2005 production year data to the 2003 production data released in the previous report, published September 2004.

In 2005, the efficiency of the U.S. hog breeding herd continued to steadily increase with the average number of pigs per year per breeding animal again on the rise. The average number of annual pigs per breeding herd animal (including sows, gilts and boars) was 17.4 in 2005, up from 16.9 in 2003.

This steady increase in the average number of pigs per breeding animal is largely due to the increase in the number of litters per sow per year. This increase in productivity has continued to be a factor in the breeding herd stability since 2000 (Charts 1 and 2). Additionally, the increase in pigs per breeding animal for operations with less than 5,000 head is largely attributed to the decrease of less efficient operations of fewer than 1,000 head and an increase in the amount of operations with 1,000 to 4,999 head.

Reported changes in 2005 for U.S. hog operations with more than 5,000 head include:

- The number of operations increased to 2,360, up from 2,270 in 2003.
- These large operations accounted for 82 percent of the pig crop, an increase from 79 percent in 2003.
- The litter rate averaged 9.09 pigs per liter, up from 8.99 in 2003.
- The number of pigs per breeding animal per year increased from 17.24 pigs to 17.77 pigs, an increase of 0.53 pigs or 3 percent.

Reported changes in 2005 for U.S. hog operations with less than 5,000 head include:

- The number of operations decreased to 64,970, down from 71,450 in 2003. The majority of this decline was in operations with less than 500 head.
- These operations of less than 5,000 head accounted for 18 percent of the pig crop, a decrease from 21 percent in 2003.
- The litter rate averaged 8.66 pigs per liter, up from 8.48 in 2003.
- The number of pigs per breeding animal per year increased from 15.62 in 2003 to 16.01 in 2005, an increase of 0.39 pigs or 2 percent.

Feeder pig imports have become more of a factor in the structure of the U.S. breeding herd. The U.S. imported 5.3 million Canadian feeder pigs from December 2004 - November 2005, down 6 percent from the same period a year earlier but up 11 percent from two years ago. (Source: Foreign Agricultural Service and Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau). These imports account for approximately 16 percent of Canada's annual pig crop. (Source: Statistics Canada, Agricultural Division). These feeders, if domestically produced, would require approximately 5 percent more U.S. breeding inventory annually.

Survey Procedures and Methodology

The December *Hogs and Pigs* report includes published estimates for each of the 50 states. The quarterly *Hogs and Pigs* reports in March, June, and September include individual published state estimates for the 17 major producing states, combined with 13 non-published states. Estimates from the remaining 20 states which are only published in December are carried forward each quarter.

A random sample of roughly 12,800 U.S. producers is surveyed to provide data for the December report. A sample size of approximately 10,000 is sampled for each March, June and September survey. Survey procedures ensure that all hog and pig producers, regardless of size, have a chance to be included in the survey. Large producers are sampled more heavily than small operations.

Hog and pig estimates are prepared by the Agricultural Statistics Board after reviewing recommendations and analysis submitted by each field office. National and state survey data are reviewed for reasonableness with each other, with estimates from past years and using a balance sheet. The balance sheet begins with the previous inventory estimate, adds the estimates of births and imports, and subtracts the estimates of slaughter, exports, and deaths. This indicated ending inventory level is compared to the Agricultural Statistics Board estimate for reasonableness.

Note

This special release is only available on the NASS website at: www.nass.usda.gov.

Chart 1

U.S. Hogs and Pigs

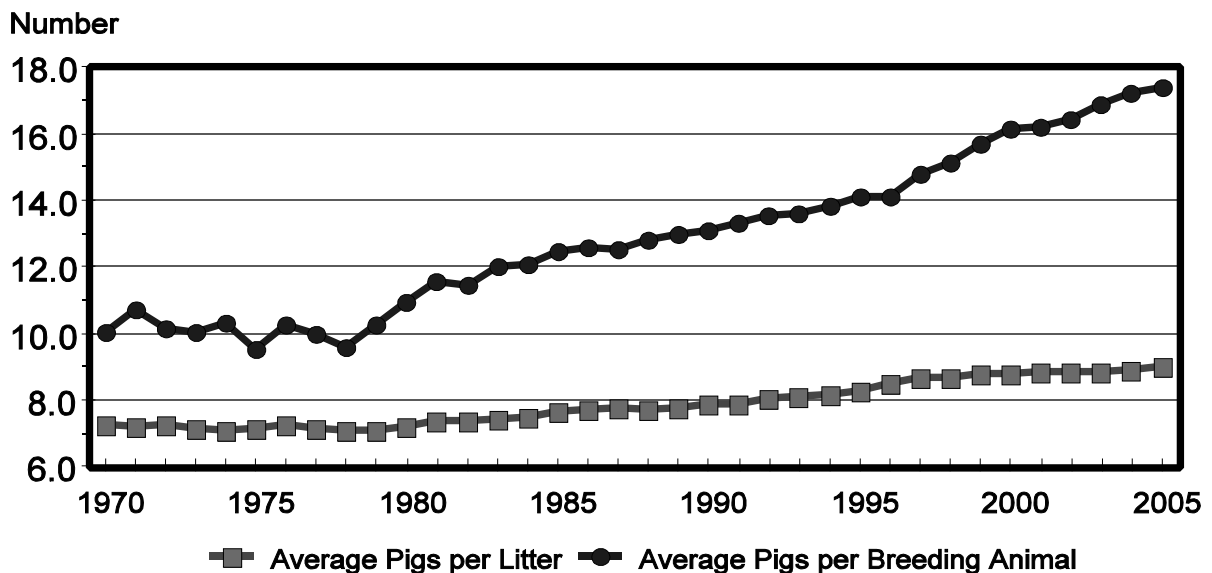


Chart 2

U.S. Hogs and Pigs

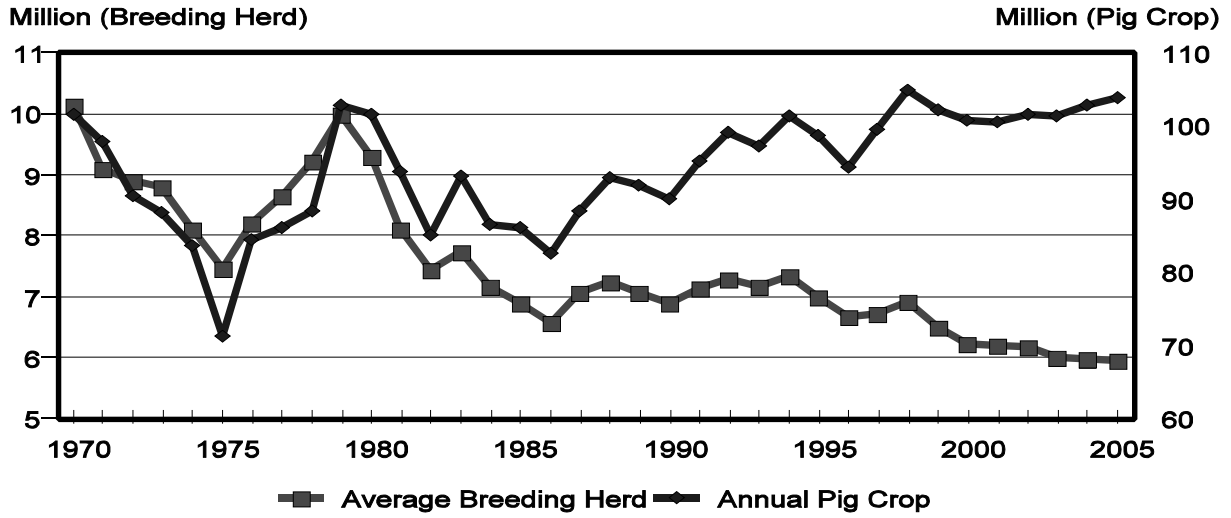


Chart 3

U.S. Annual Pig Crop Distribution

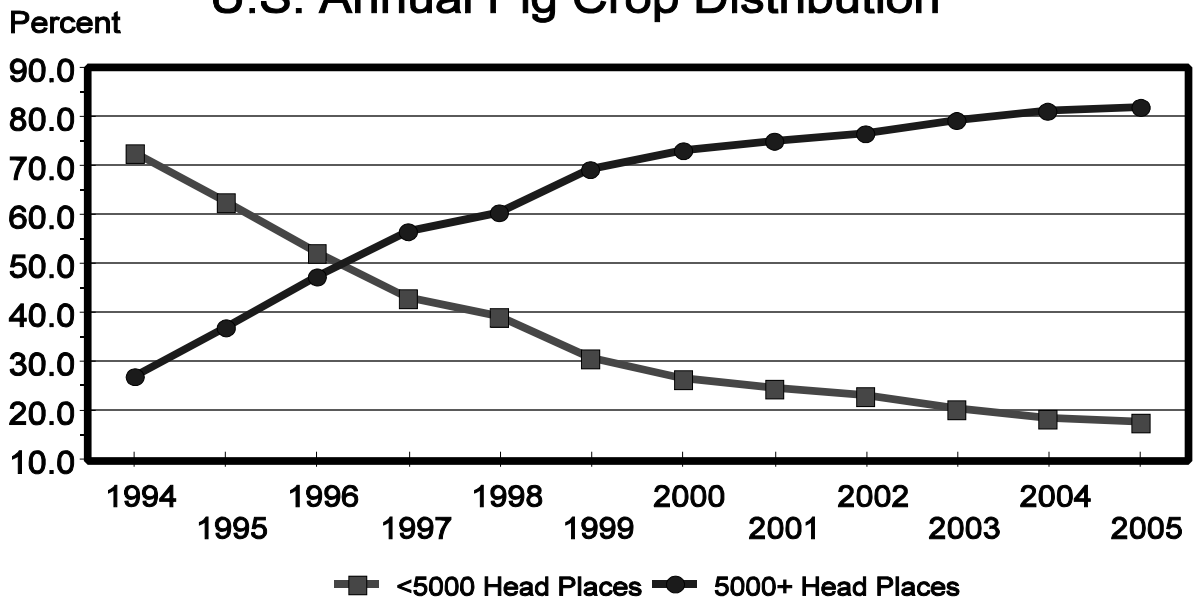


Chart 4

U.S. Hogs Operations 5000+ Head

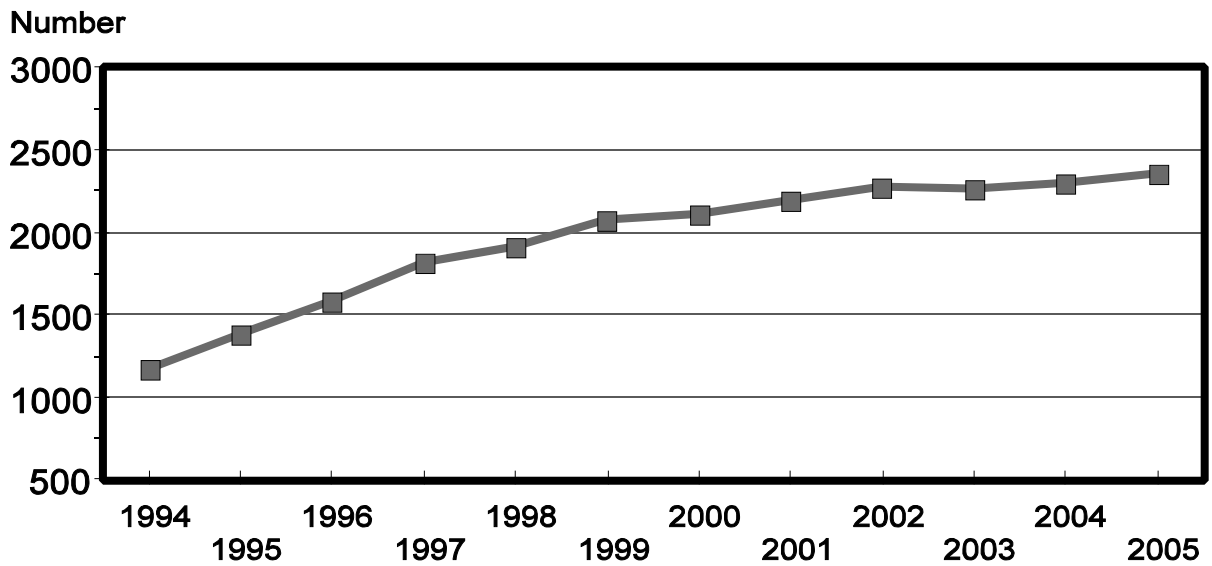


Chart 5

U.S. Hogs Operations <5000 Head

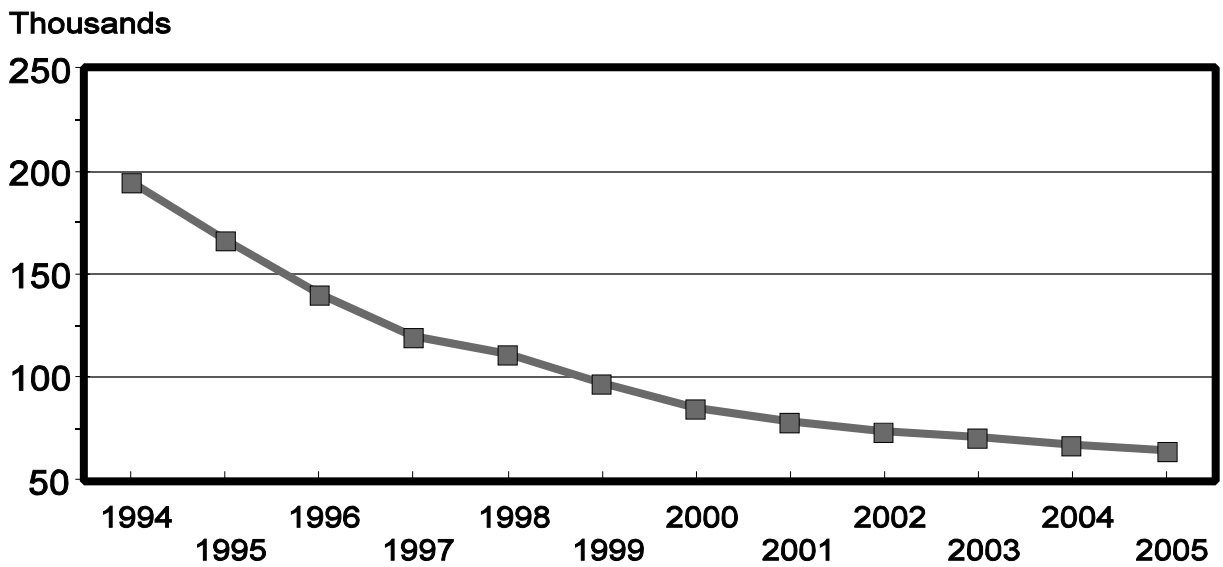


Chart 6

U.S. Annual Litter Rate

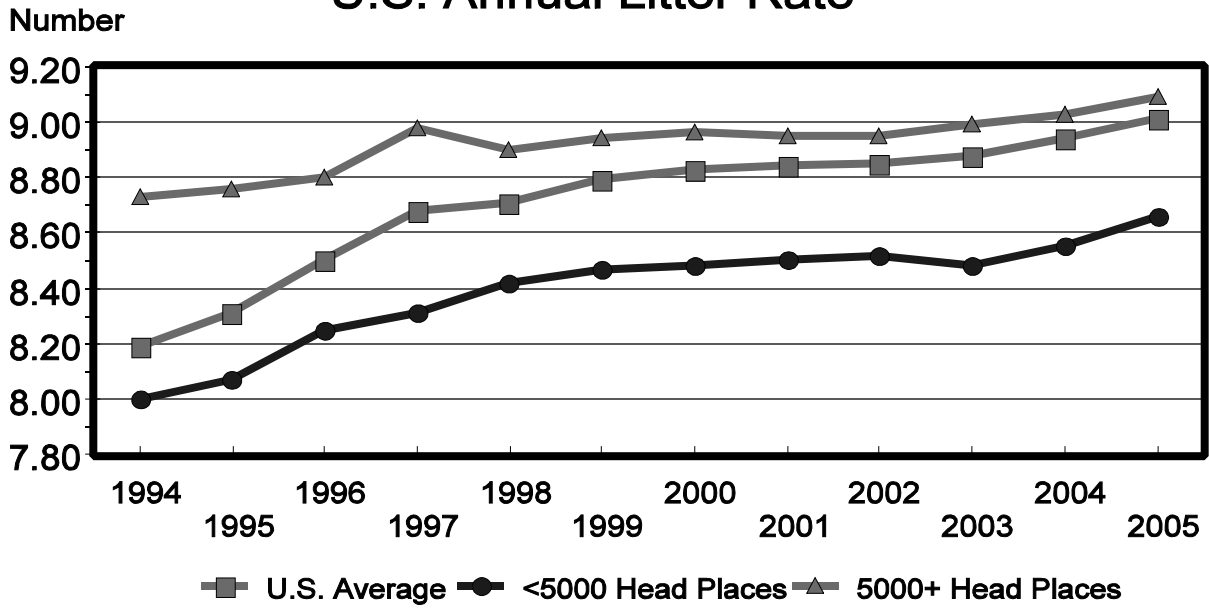
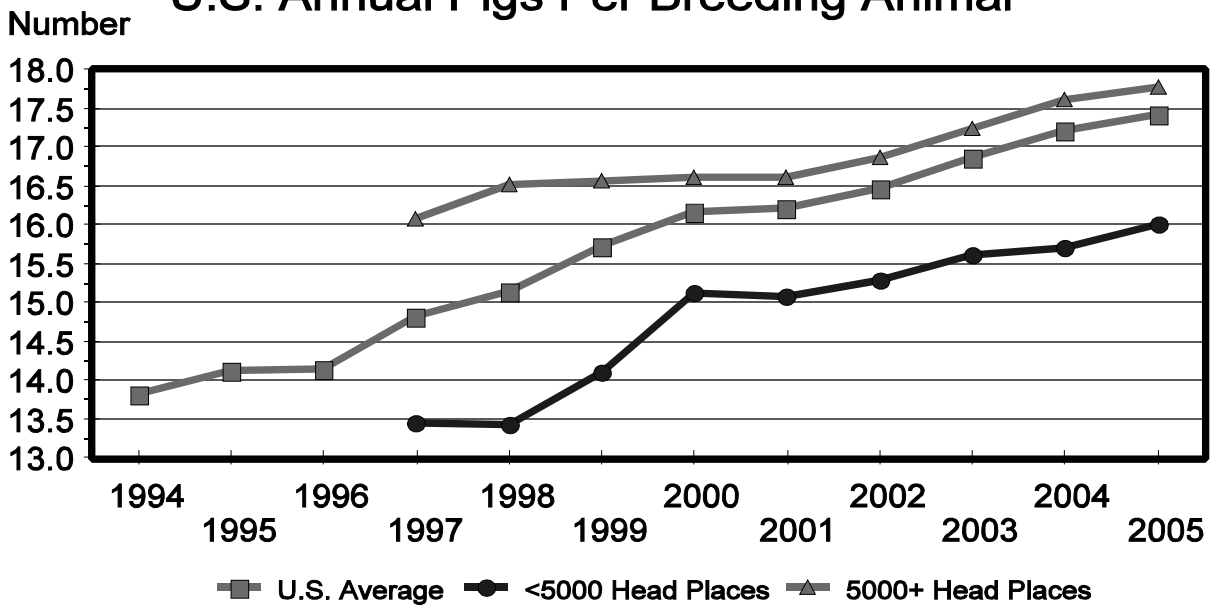


Chart 7

U.S. Annual Pigs Per Breeding Animal



Terms and Definitions

Boar: A male hog, usually kept for breeding purposes.

Bred: A pregnant female animal.

Breeding herd: Animals used for reproduction, including sows, gilts, and boars.

Farrowing: The process of giving birth in hogs.

Feeder Pig: A young pig, usually recently weaned and at least 8 weeks old or 40-100 pounds in weight, to be fed for slaughter.

Gestation Period: The time during embryo and fetus development, from conception to birth. 112-115 days for swine (approximately 3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days for hogs).

Gilt: A female pig that has never farrowed.

Herd: A group of animals (especially cattle, horses, swine), collectively, considered as a unit in farming or grazing practice.

Hog Operation Types:

1. Nursery: A swine facility where weaned pigs are raised until they reach the size of feeder pigs.

2. Farrow-to-Wean: A swine facility that includes breeding stock and new born pigs that are not yet weaned. The weaned pigs are sold to other producers to raise until they are sold for feeder pigs (see "Nursery") or are raised until they are marketed for slaughter (see "Finish").

3. Farrow-to-Feeder: A swine facility that includes breeding stock and pigs ranging from newborn to feeder pig size. The feeder pigs are sold to the producers (see "Finish") to raise until they are marketed for slaughter.

4. Farrow-to-Finish: A swine facility that includes breeding stock pigs and are raised from birth until sold for slaughter.

5. Finish: A swine facility that includes market hogs, but not breeding stock, that are fed until they are sold for slaughter.

Hog Places: An operation having one or more hog or pig on hand at any time during the year.

Imports: The goods and products that a country buys from foreign countries.

Litter: A group of pigs farrowed by a sow in one farrowing.

Litter Rate: Number of pigs saved per farrowing, normal 6-12, range 0-16 pigs, average 8-10.

Operation: Establishments primarily engaged in production of crops or plants, vines and trees (excluding forestry operation) and/or the keeping, grazing or feeding of livestock or poultry for animal products, for animal increase or value increase.

Pig: A young hog weighing less than 120 pounds.

Pig Crop: The number of pigs produced by a given number of sows, usually expressed as the percent of pigs weaned to sows bred.

Sow: Female pig that has farrowed at least once.

Swine: A hog or a pig.

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