

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack On 2012 Census Of Agriculture Preliminary Results

By Administrator

Monday, 24 February 2014 17:07 - Last Updated Monday, 24 February 2014 17:07

RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released the following statement on the 2012 Census of Agriculture preliminary results:

“The preliminary data released today provide a snapshot of a strong rural America that has remained stable during difficult economic times. We have slowed significantly the loss of farmland, which has totaled 72 million acres since 1982. New tools provided in the 2014 Farm Bill will help to further slow and reverse this trend.

The data confirm that farm income is at a record high. However, the prolonged drought and lack of disaster assistance have made it more difficult for livestock producers and mid-sized farms to survive. The 2014 Farm Bill guarantees disaster assistance and provides additional stability for farmers and ranchers.

A bright spot in the data is the slight increase in young farmers and the stable number of small farms and large-scale farms. This reflects our work to grow both local and regional food systems and exports, but we must do more for mid-sized operations. The 2014 Farm Bill will expand support for beginning farmers and new market opportunities for all producers.

Finally, the data illustrate the strength of diversity in crop production, markets, people and land use across the agricultural sector. While the aging nature of the farming population is a concern, we are hopeful that as we attract and retain the next generation of talent into rural America, this trend can also be reversed.”