

# Importance of Agriculture in South Dakota

Agriculture has long been South Dakota's leading industry, and livestock production is an important part of that industry. Agriculture has a \$17.8 billion impact on the state's economy, nearly double that of the next leading industry. Livestock production made up \$5.7 billion of that total.

South Dakota's farm and ranch families are the number one reason our state has remained a leader in agricultural and livestock production. Their commitment to producing a safe and healthy product while protecting the land and water in their community has helped make South Dakota the ideal place to live, work and raise a family.

Agriculture is not only our leading industry, but a respected tradition in South Dakota. Many generations have made their living from the land; let's not prevent future generations from having that same opportunity. When we work together, we can keep our family farms and ranches growing.



Ag United was developed through a collaboration of farm organizations that support livestock production and development and includes the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, South Dakota Corn Growers Association, South Dakota Farm Bureau, South Dakota Pork Producers Council and the South Dakota Soybean Association.



# Livestock's Impact in South Dakota

**DID  
YOU  
KNOW?**

- ◆ South Dakota farmers & ranchers raised 1.74 million feeder cattle in 2004 and only 400,000 were finished in-state.
- ◆ Farmer-owned SD Soybean Processors produce 620,000 tons of soybean meal and 11 SD ethanol plants produce 1.3 million tons of distiller's grains annually.
- ◆ One milk cow will eat 3 tons of hay and 1,460 lbs. of distiller's grains over the course of a year.
- ◆ It takes 150 lbs. of soybean meal to feed a growing hog from wean-to-finish.

## South Dakota Statistics

## National Rank

Number of Farms	31,736	27
Avg. Farm Size	1,380 acres	8
Avg. Net Income per Farm	\$28,448	12

## South Dakota Livestock

All Cattle & Calves Inventory, 2005	3,750,000 head	6
Cattle & Calves Sold	2,707,872 head	8
Market Value, Cattle & Calves Sold	\$1,693,838,000	7
Milk Cows Inventory, 2005	80,000 head	26
Market Value, Milk & Dairy Products Sold	\$156,498,000	29
Hogs & Pigs Inventory	1,375,506 head	11
Hogs & Pigs Sold	3,773,503 head	11
Market Value, Hogs & Pigs Sold*	\$254,108,000	12

**Market Value of all Livestock Sold & their Products** **\$2,258,715,000**

**Market Value of all Crops Sold** **\$1,575,910,000**

**Total Market Value of all Agricultural Products Sold** **\$3,834,625,000**

*Information taken from the 2002 Census of Agriculture. 2005 inventory information obtained from the SD Ag. Statistics Service.*

*\*Value does not reflect 11 SD counties where data is withheld to avoid disclosing individual farm information.*



This publication brought to you by:  
Ag United for South Dakota  
and South Dakota soybean farmers.



# The Value of Livestock Production in Custer County

Statistics		Rank*
Population, 2004 Estimate	7,665	23
Number of Farms	303	46
Avg. Farm Size	1,944 acres	22
Land in Farms	589,032 acres	
Avg. Age of Principle Operator	57.7	
Avg. Net Income per Farm	\$7,058	62

Livestock		
All Cattle & Calves Inventory, 2005	22,000 head	59
Cattle & Calves Sold	20,464 head	57
Market Value, Cattle & Calves Sold	\$9,826,000	62
<b>Local Economic Impact</b> (multiplier: 1.96**)	<b>\$19,258,960</b>	

**Market Value of all Livestock & their Products Sold** **\$11,536,000**

## Crops

The leading crop in Custer County is wheat. 64,000 bushels of wheat were harvested on 2,500 acres in 2004. The market value of all crops sold in Custer County equals **\$935,000**.

**Total Market Value of all Agricultural Products Sold** **\$12,471,000**

*Information taken from the 2002 Census of Agriculture. 2005 inventory information obtained from the SD Ag. Statistics Service.*

\* A statewide ranking out of 66 counties in South Dakota.

\*\* A multiplier is a tool used to measure the additional economic activity generated by direct livestock sales in a given community. Multiplier values obtained from the Economics Dept. at South Dakota State University

All livestock operations of 1,000 Animal Units (AU) or more must meet or exceed all state regulations, established by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In addition, each county may establish regulations through their local zoning plan.

*1,000 AU = 1,000 beef cattle, 700 dairy cows or 2,500 feeder-to-finish hogs.*

## Livestock Production a Viable Option for South Dakota Farm Families

The average annual living expenses for a family of four in South Dakota are nearly \$40,000, but the average annual net income from farm and ranch activities in South Dakota is only \$28,448. In order for South Dakota's farm and ranch families to make a living farming full-time, we must allow and encourage these families to grow their businesses.

Many families are also welcoming home high-school and college graduates who want to return to the farm. With farm land prices at record highs, livestock production is a more feasible way to incorporate returning children and their young families into the family farm.

South Dakota has an abundance of land, feed resources, and dedicated farm families to continue to be a national leader in livestock production. Let's not promote poverty by fighting against South Dakota's farm and ranch families who want to expand the life they love. Rather, let's promote prosperity by appreciating and supporting them as they produce food for the world while investing in South Dakota's future.

### Human & Animal Population Density – County Comparison

	Lancaster County, PA	Sioux County, IA	Minnehaha County, SD	Custer County, SD
Area in sq. miles	949	768	809	1,558
Population, 2004	470,658	32,180	157,366	7,665
Population per sq. mi.	496	42	194	5
All Cattle	255,700	221,653	59,883	22,000
Milk Cows	107,600	20,152	4,486	300
Hogs & Pigs	386,800	869,086	50,959	--

**Please note:** Lancaster County in Pennsylvania has almost **500** people per square mile while Custer County has only **5**. However, Lancaster County also has a tremendous livestock population; they have **9** times more cattle than Custer County. In Sioux County, Iowa the population is larger than 63 of the 66 counties in South Dakota, yet they have over half as many hogs as the entire state of South Dakota.

*Information taken from 2002 Census of Agriculture.*