



Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Statement on the Release of the 2022 Census of Agriculture

Statement

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 13, 2024 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offered the following statement today, following the release of the [2022 Census of Agriculture](#).

“Today’s Census of Agriculture Report underscores it’s imperative that we continue to deliver agriculture policies that create multiple streams of income and new, more competitive models for small- and mid-sized farms. A combination of trade wars, the pandemic and policies that furthered a ‘get big or get out’ mentality pushed more people out of farming in the five years since the last Census, than in any other Census period this century. America, and especially our rural communities, cannot afford this trajectory toward larger, but fewer, farms.

“In response to those challenges, the Biden-Harris Administration has undertaken historic efforts to grow independent meat and poultry processing capacity in nearly every state, to bolster local and regional food systems so that farmers can sell directly to customers within their communities, and to create new revenue streams through renewable energy and ecosystem markets, the impacts of which are not yet captured in today’s report. All of these actions are enabling America’s farmers to be less reliant on a few large, consolidated monopolies, making farming more viable for the next generation, and making our food system more resilient for everyone who eats.

“There are some early signs that this approach is working: over the first three years of the Biden-Harris Administration, the United States experienced the highest net farm income on record, and we’ve also seen growth in the rural population for the first time in a decade. There is more work to do to ensure we maintain strong momentum in terms of farm income, and to make sure that income is equitably distributed among farms of all sizes so more can stay in business and contribute to their local economies. Today’s report is a wake-up call to everyone who plays a role in agriculture policy or who shares an interest in preserving a thriving rural America – we are at a pivotal moment, in which we have the opportunity to hold tight to the status quo and shrink our nation’s agriculture sector further, or we can choose a more expansive, newer model that creates more opportunity, for more farmers.”

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