



UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS – Census of Agriculture 2018 – Metadata review

U.S. Virgin Islands is one of the territories collectively referred to as “U.S. Outlying Areas”. For statistical purposes, it is recorded as a separate entity in the World Census of Agriculture Database (in the Americas Region). Consequently, results related to the United States of America bear only upon the continental territory of the country.

1. Historical outline

The first Census of Agriculture (CA) was conducted in the United States Virgin Islands (U.S. Virgin Islands) in 1920 and the second in 1930, in conjunction with the first decennial World Agricultural Census. Other censuses were conducted at a ten-year interval through 1960 when, starting with the census taken in 1964, the U.S. Virgin Islands were included in the quinquennial (five-year) Agricultural Census Plan. Successively, the dates were adjusted in order to coincide with economic censuses and, consequently, the subsequent agricultural censuses were conducted in 1978 and 1982. After 1982, agricultural censuses were reverted to a five-year cycle. The fifteenth CA in the U.S. Virgin Islands was conducted in 2018.

2. Legal basis and organization

Legal framework

The CA is required by law under the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997, Public Law 105-113 (Title 7, United States Code, Section 2204g). The law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a census of agriculture every fifth year. The CA 2018 in the U.S. Virgin Islands was conducted in accordance with a Cooperative Agreement approved by the Director of the Census and Survey Division of National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and by the University of the Virgin Islands, Cooperative Extension Service.

Institutional framework and international collaboration

The NASS of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the government agency responsible for conducting the CA 2018 in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The CA 2018 was conducted with the cooperation and assistance of the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture (DA). The NASS provided technical assistance at various levels, while the DA of the U.S. Virgin Islands was responsible for recruiting and training local officers and field staff and supervising local administrative matters. The census was funded by the United States Federal budget.

Census staff

The CA 2018 of the U.S. Virgin Islands employed one project manager, one crew leader/supervisor, and approximately 25 enumerators and they received special training in accordance with instructions prepared by NASS. The training included practice in interviewing and filling out the report form plus detailed discussion of the enumerator's instructions.

3. Reference date and period

Reference day: the day of enumeration for inventory items such as livestock, poultry, machinery and equipment.

Reference period: the calendar year, from 1 January to 31 December 2018, for crop production, crop and livestock sales, expense data, etc.

4. Enumeration period

The enumeration was conducted from May to September 2019.

5. Scope of the census and definition of the statistical unit

The **census scope** covered agricultural activities (crop and livestock production).

The **statistical unit** was the farm, defined as any place from which USD 500 or more of agricultural products produced and sold, or normally would had been sold, during the calendar year 2018.

Community-level data

There were no community-level data collected along with the census.

6. Census coverage

Geographic coverage

The CA 2018 covered the entire territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Cut-off threshold and other exclusions

The CA 2018 conducted in the U.S. Virgin Islands covered “all places” from which USD 500 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the 12-month period between 1 January and 31 December 2018.

7. Methodology

Methodological modality for conducting the census

The classical approach was used in the CA 2018.

Relation to other censuses

No relationship with other censuses.

Frames

The CA 2018 frame consisted of a list of farm operators compiled by the University of the Virgin Islands, Cooperative Extension Service, and the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture.

Complete or/and sample enumeration methods

The census was a complete enumeration of all farms from the frame, according to census scope.

Sample design (if sampling was used)

Not applicable.

Data collection methods

Data collection was done by means traditional face-to-face interviews. The information was collected in paper forms (PAPI method).

Questionnaire(s) and items covered

Only one questionnaire (report form) was used for data collection. The questionnaire covered 14 out of the 23 essential items recommended in the WCA 2020.¹

8. Use of technology

Questionnaires collected using the PAPI method were scanned. OMR was used to capture categorical responses and to identify the other answer zones in which some type of mark was present. The census results were disseminated online, through the USDA website.

9. Data processing

The NASS undertook the data processing activities. Each report form was reviewed and coded prior to data entry and subjected to a thorough computer edit. Report forms not meeting the census farm definition were voided. Missing information was derived using reported data for similar type and size farms in nearby areas. The cleaned data were then tabulated by the computer and reviewed by analysts. Prior to publication, tabulated totals were reviewed by analysts to identify inconsistencies and potential coverage problems and trend discrepancies.²

¹ The following essential items were not covered: (i) 0104 Sex of agricultural holder; (ii) 0107-Main purpose of production of the holding; (iii) 0407-Number of permanent crop trees in scattered plantings (for each tree crop); (iv) 0411-Use of each type of fertilizer; (v) 0501-Type of livestock system; (vi) 0503-Number of female breeding animals; (vii) 0601-Use of agricultural pesticides; (viii) 0801-Household size by sex and age groups; (ix) 0903-Number and working time of employees on the holding by sex.

² Comparisons were made with previous census data, as well as other available data. Tallies of all selected data items for various sets of criteria which included, but were not limited to, geographic levels, farm types, and sales levels were reviewed. When necessary, data inconsistencies were resolved.

10. Quality assurance

Ten percent of the captured data were keyed a second time for quality control. If differences existed, an adjudicator handled resolution. This was used to grade the performance of the keyers, who were required to maintain a certain accuracy level or receive additional training. The measured error rate for the entire survey was 0.39 percent.

In CA 2018, efforts were made to measure error associated with the adjustments for farm operations that were on the list of farm operators, but did not respond to the census report form. This error measurement was developed from the standard error of the estimates at the island level, where appropriate, and were expressed as coefficient of variation (CV). Every estimate has a corresponding CV published with it.

11. Data and metadata archiving

Completed report forms were automatically checked in by scanning devices that identified each case by the bar code in the address label of the form. The report forms were then scanned to create images used for data keying. Data from each report were subjected to a detailed computer edit.

Agriculture Census website, United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/index.php>

12. Data reconciliation

There was no reconciliation process of CA 2018 data.

13. Dissemination of census results and microdata

The CA 2018 final report was published in July 2019. The census report included methodological notes and the census questionnaire and is available on the NASS website. Published data are available in searchable database of NASS, Quick Stats. The access of external users to the CA microdata was not provided.

14. Data sources

United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2017 Census of agriculture, Virgin Islands of the United States (2018) Territory and Island Data, Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Part 54, AC-17-A-54, Washington, D.C., United States of America. (also available at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Outlying_Areas/usvi.pdf).

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