

# A Look at Alabama Agriculture



Capital: Montgomery

Population: 4,708,708

Founded: December 14, 1819 (22<sup>nd</sup>)

State Bird: Yellowhammer

State Tree: Southern Pine

State Flower: Camellia

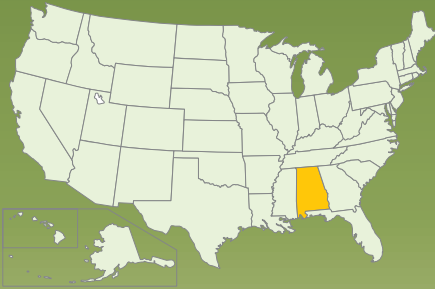
Number of Counties: 67

Largest City: Birmingham - 236,620

Number of Farms: 48, 500

Average Farm Size: 186 acres

Total Farmland: 9 million acres



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## Climate & Soil

- Alabama has a mild climate.
- January temperatures average about 51° F in the southern part of the state, and about 46° F in the north.
- July temperatures average about 80° F throughout the whole state.
- Senate Joint Resolution No. 107, adopted by the Legislature of Alabama on April 22, 1997, made soils of the Bama Series the official state soil of Alabama. Soils of the Bama Series are well suited to cultivated crops, pasture, hay, woodland, and most urban uses.
- The central and western counties in Alabama are known as the “Black Belt” because of the dark surface colors of many of the soils. Most of the soils in the Black Belt region of the state are used for timber production and pasture.
- Soil is one of Alabama’s most important natural resources. As the natural medium for the growth of land plants and the support for buildings and roads, it is a coveted natural resource. It is vital to agriculture and forestry as well as to urban development, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

## Crops & Livestock

- Alabama is one of the country’s leading cotton producers. However, cotton only accounts for approximately 3.5% of the total farm and forestry income.
- Alabama ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for peanut production with 636,900,000 pounds produced in 2008.
- Several Alabama farmers grow sweet potatoes, in fact, Alabama ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for sweet potato production.
- Greenhouse, nursery and sod are also an important source of the farm income with receipts for 2007 totaling \$264.8 million ranking Alabama 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation.
- Alabama raises catfish. The industry earned \$91 million dollars in 2009 in sales.
- Alabama’s top livestock commodity is broiler or meat chicken. It accounted for \$2.6 billion in cash receipts in 2008.
- The top five agricultural commodities for 2008 were broiler chickens, cattle and calves, chicken eggs, greenhouse and nursery products, and cotton.

## General

- Farmland covers about 28% of the state.
- Alabama ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in commercial forest land, with 22.9 million acres.
- Total farm and forestry receipts were over \$5.6 billion for 2008.