

A Look at Pennsylvania Agriculture



Capital: Harrisburg

Population: 12,287,150

Founded: December 12, 1787

State Bird: Ruffed Grouse

State Tree: Hemlock

State Flower: Mountain Laurel

Number of Counties: 67

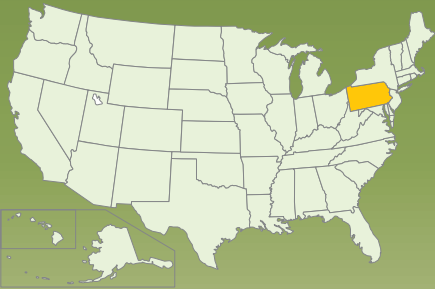
Largest City: Philadelphia-6.2 million

Nickname: Keystone State

Number of Farms: 63,200

Average Farm Size: 124 acres

Total Farmland: 7.8 million acres



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Climate & Soil

- Pennsylvania has climates that are generally known as humid continental because of the effect of the Atlantic. There are distinct seasonal variations and an abundance of rainfall.
- Lowland Pennsylvania has comparatively long summers and mild winters, with growing seasons ranging from five to seven months. Mean annual temperatures range from about 50 - 54°F.
- In Upland Pennsylvania, summers are short and winters are comparatively severe. The growing season is commonly no more than three to four months long, and the mean annual temperature ranges from about 44 - 49°F.
- Rainfall averages 42" a year.
- The best agricultural soils tend to be found in southeastern Pennsylvania.
- Most valleys in central Pennsylvania have less fertile soils and have been abandoned as farming areas, while higher elevations have never been farmed.

Crops & Livestock

- Pennsylvania ranks the first nationally in producing mushrooms with annual production of 443 million pounds.
- Winter wheat is an important crop in the southeast whereas Buckwheat is a major crop in the northeast. Other important crops include potatoes, oats, rye, barley, and a variety of truck crops.
- Pennsylvania also grows apples, cherries, peaches, and grapes.
- The sale of livestock and livestock products accounts for 69% of Pennsylvania's farm income.
- Milk production is the leading segment of the agricultural industry, with annual sales of 2.1 billion and 6.7% of the nation's total supply in 2008.
- The total value of all cattle, hogs, and sheep was 1.59 million in 2000. The combined value of the poultry production from broilers, eggs, and turkeys, plus the value of chicken sales was 644 million in 2000.

General

- The value of agricultural exports including food and forest products was 960 million during 1999.