

HORSE FARMS AND EQUINE POPULATIONS IN MICHIGAN¹

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Equine Population in Michigan The USDA census reported 104,949 horses and ponies and 1,676 mules, burros and donkeys (106,625 total equine) in Michigan in 2002², up 22,211 (27%) from the 82,740 horses and ponies and 1,274 mules, burros and donkeys (84,014 total equine) reported in 1997.³

The number of equine sold in 2002 was 11,615, up from 11,243 in 1997, a modest 372 (.3%) increase in animals sold. It appears from this data that the increase in horse farms and equine population is unrelated to equine as a for-profit farming activity. It is more likely explained by the rapid rise in the recreational use of horses,⁴ many of which are kept on residentially zoned properties of 10 acres or less.

Equine on Michigan Farms Horses and ponies were kept on 14,988 farms in 2002, up 3,085 farms (26%) from 11,903 farms in 1997. Another 545 farms kept 1,676 mules, burros and donkeys in 2002, while in 1997, 1,674 mules, burros and donkeys lived on 605 farms.

Of farms with equine, 346 farms of less than 10 acres reported they had sold equine, while 1,781 farms between 10 and 49 acres reported equine sales. In farms larger than 49 acres, as farm size increased, the numbers of those farms marketing equine generally decreased. Of the 3,286 Michigan farms marketing equine, 2,941 were less than 140 acres. Only 2 of the 495 farms of 2000 acres or more reported sale of equine.

Apparent Correlation Between Growth of Michigan's Equine Population and the Numbers/Size of Michigan Farms The number of farms 1 - 9 acres in size increased from 15,243 in the 1997 census to 18,603 in the 2002 census (the most recent census year), an increase of 2,260 farms that are 1 - 9 acres in size (a 15% increase). These farms average 5 acres in size and utilize

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the data presented is Michigan data from the United States Department of Agriculture 2002 Census of Agriculture by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

² The Michigan Department of Agriculture equine census, using numbers compiled by the Michigan Agricultural Statistical Service (MASS) and the Michigan Equine Monitoring Service (MEMS), reported there were 130,000 horses, ponies, donkeys and mules in Michigan in 1996.

The larger numbers in Michigan's MEMS/MASS equine census can possibly be explained by that census' capture of equine that were owned and kept on properties not reported as "farms" under the USDA census because they had no sales or production and did not declare their horse activities an agricultural business for tax purposes.

³ If the percent increase in equine reported between 1997 and 2002 were extrapolated to Michigan's 1996 MEMS/MASS 130,000 equine census figure, the number of equine in Michigan in 2002 would be 165,000. Given the more comprehensive data gathering of the MAS census, this number likely more accurately reflects the actual equine population of Michigan in 2002. A 2005 American Horse Council survey reported 243,000 equine in Michigan. A new Michigan MASS census is planned for 2006. It will provide current definitive data on Michigan's equine population as well as data on the economic impact of the State's equine industry.

⁴ The Michigan Horse Council's 2004 Report to the American Horse Council's State Horse Councils Advisory Committee reported that recreational horseback riding was growing faster than any other segment of the horse industry in Michigan, with more than half of MHC's sixty-plus 2003 organizational members coming from the recreational segment of the equine industry, the great majority of them trail riding organizations.

15,635 acres of land, of which 2000 acres on 601 farms are used for pasture or grazing only. Farms of this size constitute 6.1% of all farms in Michigan.

Farms that are 2000 acres or more also showed an increase in their numbers, from 374 in 1997 to 495 in 2002. These largest of Michigan farms constitute only .9% of farms in Michigan, but they average 3,109 acres per farm and utilize 1,539,125 acres of land.

Farms of 10 - 49 acres declined from 20,322 in 1997 to 18,605 in 2002, a decrease of 1,717 farms (9%). Even so, farms in this size category represented 35% of all farms in Michigan. They average 27 acres in size and utilize 506,635 acres of land. 57,012 acres on 6,219 farms are used for pasture or grazing only.

Farms in every other size category⁵ experienced declines in their numbers. Notwithstanding, a total of 16,190 farms use 409,296 acres for pasture or grazing only.

Apparent Correlation Between Location of Michigan's Equine and Michigan Farm Values

While the average value of a Michigan farm's land and buildings is \$2,667 per acre, the per-acre value of land and buildings on farms 1 - 9 acres in size is \$25,100. The value on farms 10-49 acres is \$7,024 per acre. On farms of 50-69 acres, the value drops to \$4,056 an acre, and it falls to \$3,308 per acre on farms from 70 - 99 acres. For all other farm sizes, the value of farm buildings per acre ranges between \$2,100 and \$2,900.

The two smallest farm size categories, given their size, also have a disproportionately high per-farm value, with 25% of 1-9 acre farms having a value between \$100,000 and \$199,000 and another 25% with a value between \$200,000 and \$499,000. A third, 6,777 farms, between 10 - 49 acres have a land-and-buildings value of between \$100,000 and \$199,000, nearly another third, 5,410, have a value between \$200,000 and \$499,000, and another 551 are valued between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000.

⁵ There are nine farm-size categories, in addition to the three cited above. They are: 50-69 acres; 70-99 acres; 10-139 acres; 140-170 acres; 180-219 acres; 220-259 acres; 260-499 acres; 500-999 acres; and 1,000-1,999 acres.