



Missouri Economy Indicators

Agritourism

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines [agritourism](#) as a commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism that educates and/or entertains visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch or business owner. Producers are exploring agritourism to diversify and grow farm-based revenues as consumers drive interest in these opportunities. Agritourism can be part of a strategy to revitalize rural economies, educate the public about agriculture and preserve agricultural heritage.

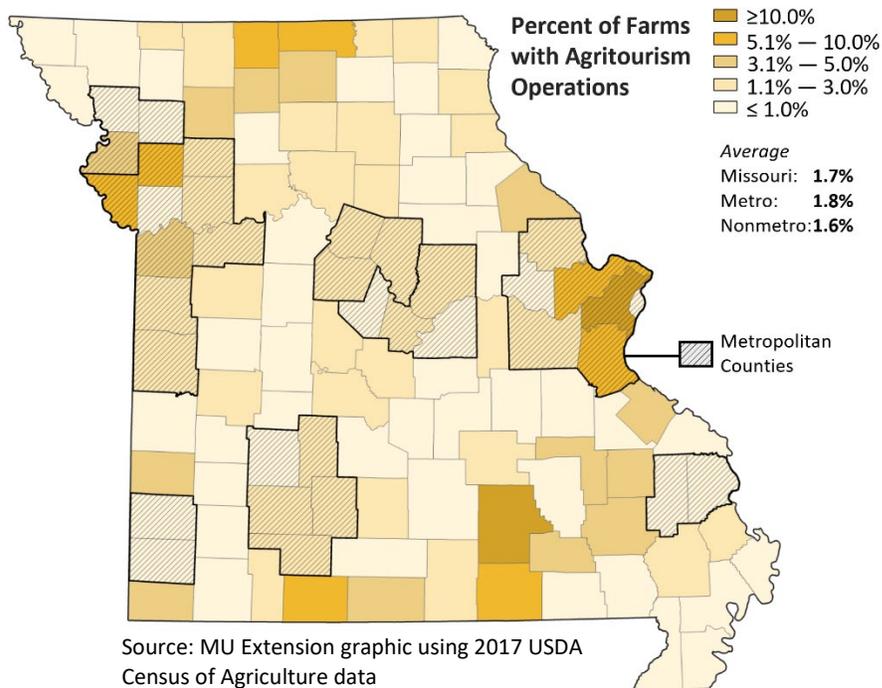
Agritourism takes many forms: U-pick farms; wineries; on-farm markets; pumpkin patches, corn mazes and Christmas tree farms; demonstration farms; farm camps, tours and stays; and hunting leases, among others. According to the latest Census of Agriculture, farm agritourism [revenue tripled](#) between 2002 and 2017 and accounted for 5.6% of U.S. farm-related income in 2017. Adjusted for inflation, agritourism revenue grew from \$704 million in 2012 to nearly \$950 million in 2017. The 2022 Census of Agriculture, currently underway, will shed light on how these trends have changed.

Agritourism Adoption in 2017

Missouri's 651 agritourism operations were clustered around St. Louis (64) and Kansas City (68), and in the southeast (Carter, Dent, Oregon and Shannon counties) near the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (26). These three regions account for roughly a quarter of the state's agritourism establishments.

Overall, 37% of agritourism operations are in metro counties, compared to 63% in nonmetro counties. These operations typically cluster near metro areas, natural amenities or outdoor recreation.

Agritourism in Missouri by County, 2017



Like Missouri, national statistics show that farms and ranches in less populated areas are more likely to adopt agritourism, although those in more densely populated areas typically earn more revenue. Female operators, older operators and operators of large cattle or horse ranches are more likely to report agritourism income. Grape, fruit, tree nut and specialty livestock farms — and more generally, farms that offer opportunities for visitor interaction and engagement — tend to garner the largest share of agritourism income.

Agritourism Diversifies Farm Revenue

Half of the nation's agritourism operations reported less than \$5,000 in agritourism receipts the last time Census of Agriculture data was collected in 2017. Rather, it seems that agritourism is driven by a small number of successful farms.

Missouri data suggest the state had a higher share of farms that were starting to explore agritourism activities; two-thirds of all farms reported total sales of less than \$5,000. As seen in the figure to the right, Missouri's border states have similar shares of operations by receipts.

Missouri farms reported total agritourism sales of \$15.6 million in 2017. Higher grossing operations with sales of \$25,000 or more, 13% of reporting farms, drove nearly all (86%) agritourism receipts. Estimating an average agritourism income of nearly \$24,000 per operation, Missouri ranked 4th among border states. The state's average agritourism sales were higher than Tennessee, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas and Oklahoma but lower than Nebraska, Illinois and Kentucky; these figures are shown in the chart on the right.

Additional Notes and Resources

- The Missouri Farm Bureau and Missouri Department of Agriculture maintain lists of farm operations with agritourism activities. Find an agritourism operation [near you](#).
- Explore the nation's [agritourism hotspots](#) in a video from Exceed.
- Maple syrup production, typically associated with the northeastern U.S., is another way to diversify farm activity. A [recent Exceed report](#) explores what this industry looks like in Missouri.
- Learn about agritourism best practices at: <https://agritourism.localfoodeconomics.com/best-practices/>

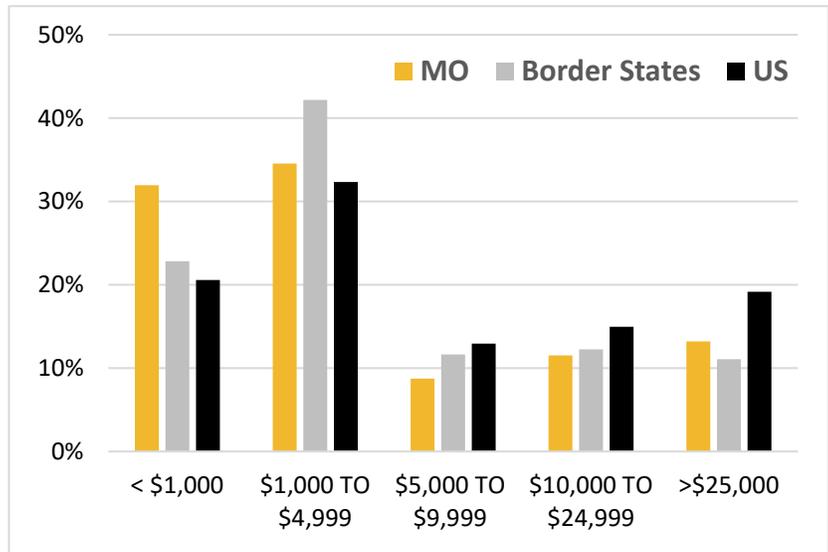
All Missouri Economy Indicators briefs in this series are available at <http://muext.us/MissouriEconomyIndicators>

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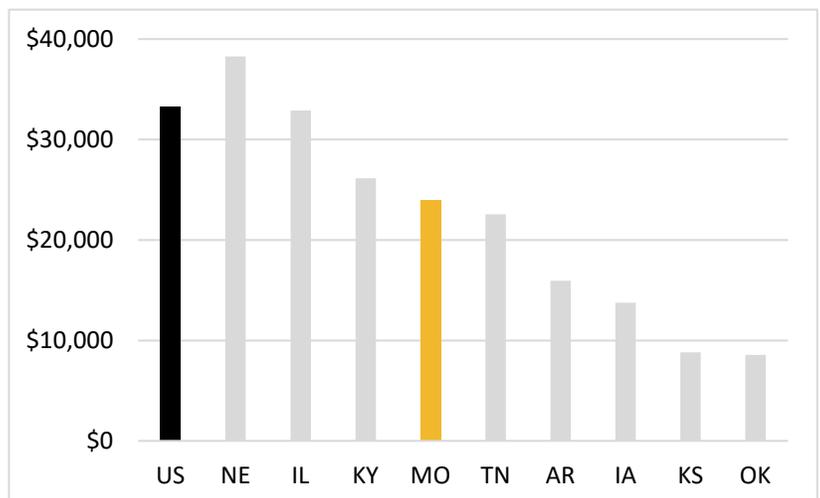
Agritourism Operations by Receipts, 2017

Missouri had a higher percentage of small operations than the U.S.



Source: MU Extension graphic using 2017 Census of Agriculture data

Average Agritourism Income per Operation, 2017



Source: MU Extension graphic using 2017 Census of Agriculture data