

## SUWANNEE COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

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### Highlights

Suwannee County is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in Florida by sales of livestock, poultry, and their products, and is the 7<sup>th</sup> ranked county by value of all farm products sold (USDA). Crop, livestock, and forestry production generated industry output of \$425.8 million, and those sectors accounted for 1,810 direct jobs in 2015 (Hodges et al.).

### Overall Economy

Indicator	2015 Level	2010-15 Change	Indicator	2015 Level	2010-15 Change
Population <sup>1</sup>	43,651	+3%	Gross Regional Product <sup>4</sup>	\$1.0 billion	+13%
Total Employment <sup>2</sup>	16,503	+5%	Median Household Income <sup>1</sup>	\$37,368	-5%
Employer Establishments <sup>1</sup>	682	-1%	Unemployment Rate <sup>3</sup>	5.5%	-4.3%
Nonemployer Businesses <sup>1</sup>	2,413	+2%	Persons in Poverty <sup>1</sup>	23.6%	+2.7%

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. <sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. <sup>3</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <sup>4</sup>Implan Group, LLC.

The Suwannee County economy grew 13% between 2010 and 2015, reaching a gross regional product of \$1.0 billion. Total employment increased 5%, and the unemployment rate fell by 4.3 percentage points. The number of nonemployers has risen, but the number of employer establishments has declined slightly. Despite the recent economic growth, median household income has fallen and the poverty rate has increased.

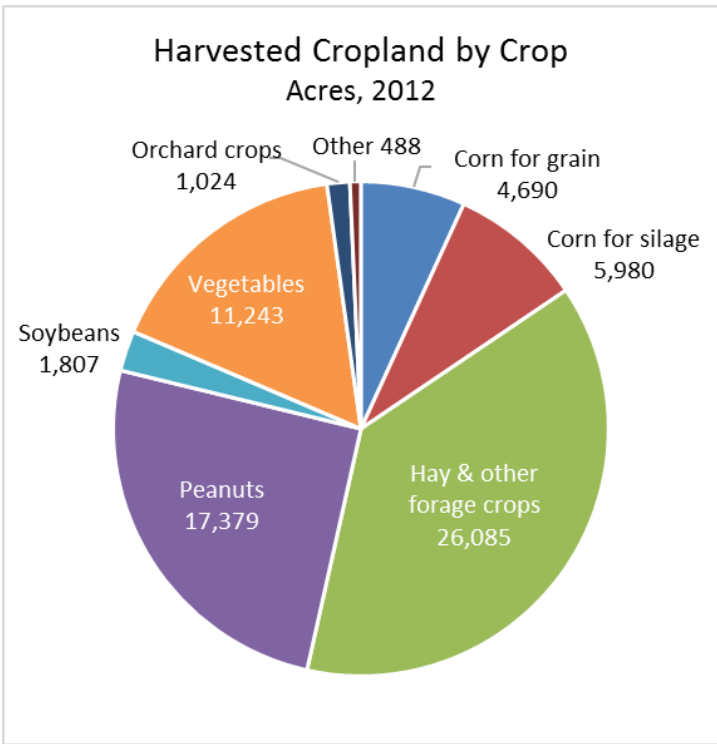
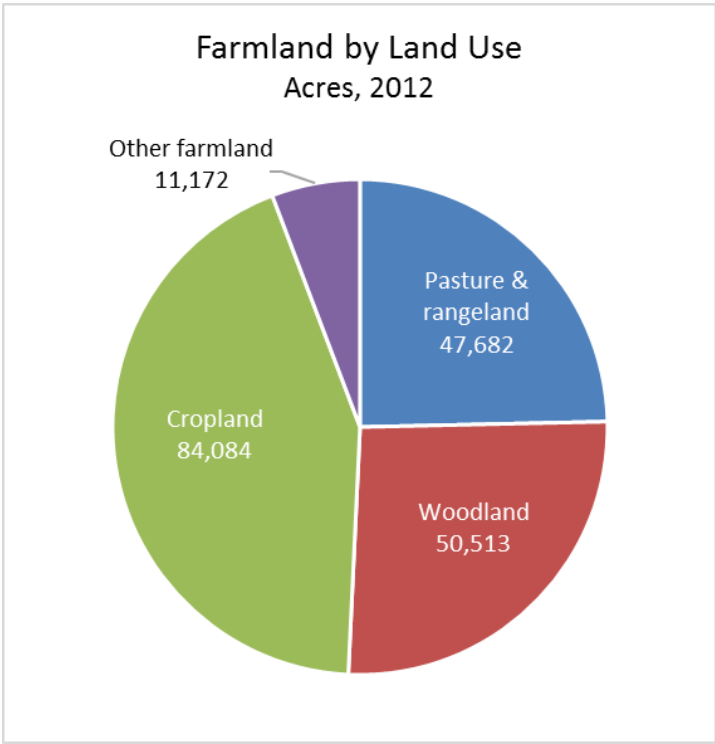
### Farm Overview

Indicator	2012 Level	2007-12 Change	Indicator	2012 or 2015 Level	5-Year Change
Number of Farms <sup>1</sup>	1,266	+18%	Cash Receipts from Marketings (2015) <sup>2</sup>	\$348,516,000	+37%
Farmland Acres <sup>1</sup>	193,451	+15%	Crop Receipts (2015) <sup>2</sup>	\$87,504,000	+10%
Median Size of Farm <sup>1</sup>	47 acres	+4%	Livestock Receipts (2015) <sup>2</sup>	\$261,012,000	+50%
Farms, ≥ 1000 Acres <sup>1</sup>	35 (3%)	+40%	Farm Earnings (2015) <sup>2</sup>	\$137,273,000	+88%
Farms, < 10 Acres <sup>1</sup>	39 (3%)	-38%	Average Net Cash Farm Income (2012) <sup>1</sup>	\$54,467	-1%
Farms, < \$250K Sales <sup>1</sup>	1,132	+18%	Primary Occupation Farming (2012) <sup>1</sup>	686 (54%)	+25%

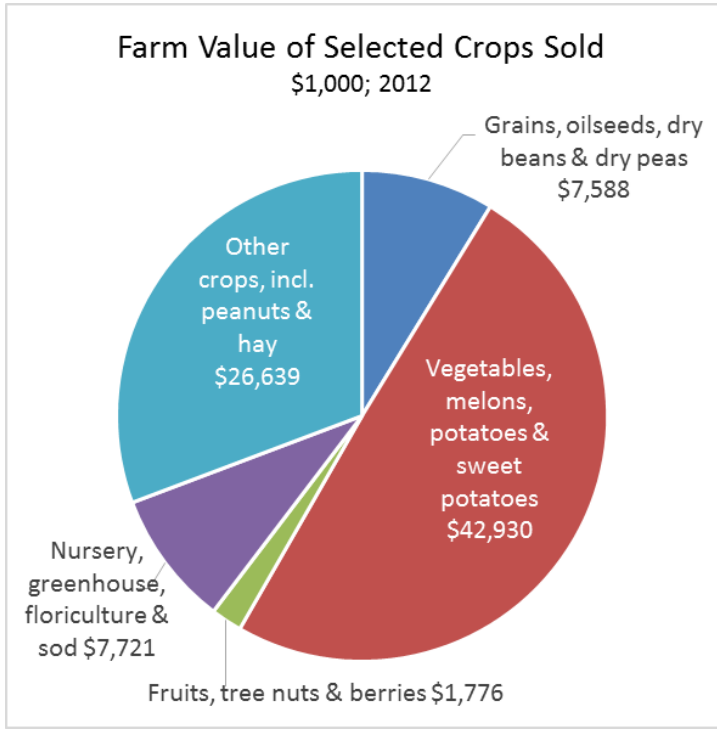
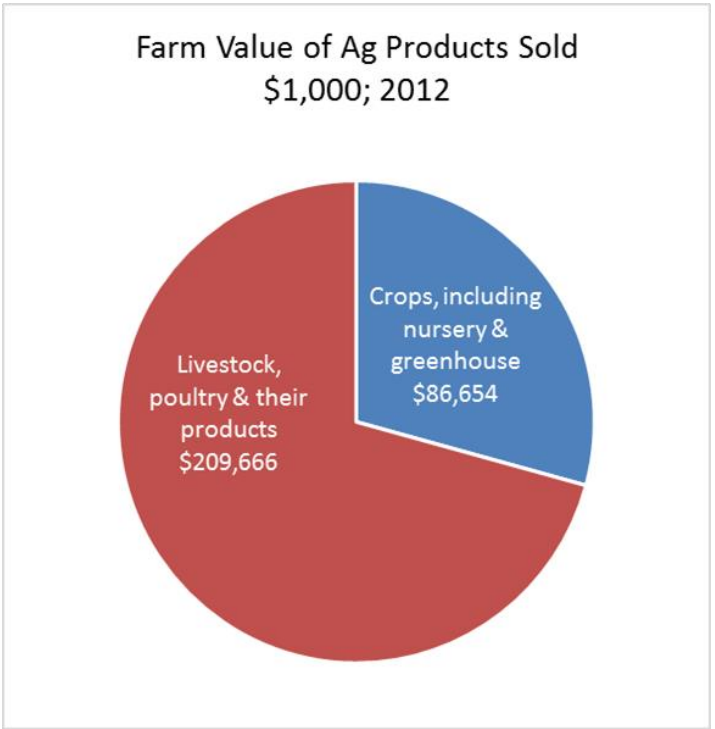
<sup>1</sup>USDA Census of Agriculture. <sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

During the inter-census period, 2007-2012, the number of farms in Suwannee County increased 18% to 1,266 farms, and farmland acreage increased 15% to 193,451 acres. The number of farms with more than 1,000 acres grew, while the number of farms with less than 10 acres declined. The median size of farms (47 acres) and the percentage of farm operators reporting farming as their primary occupation (54%) both increased. Livestock receipts rose 50%, and crop receipts rose 10% over the 2010-2015 period. Total cash receipts from sales of farm products reached \$348.5 million in 2015.

Note: All 5-year changes are shown as percent change from starting point, except for unemployment rate and persons in poverty, which are calculated as the absolute difference in percentage.



The largest portion of Suwannee County farmland is classified as cropland, followed by woodland, then permanent pasture and rangeland. Farm woodlands include natural or planted woodlots and timber tracts associated with a farm, as well as pastured woodland, but do not include non-farm commercial timberland. Of the cropland harvested in 2012, hay and other forage crops accounted for the largest acreage (26,085 acres), followed by peanuts (17,379 acres). In 2012, livestock, poultry, and animal products accounted for about 71% of the value of agricultural products sold. Among crop categories, the vegetable, melon, potato, and sweet potato category had the highest value, accounting for 50% of the farm value of crops sold in 2012.



Data source: USDA, 2012 Census of Agriculture. Some county data are withheld (nondisclosed).

### Agricultural Land Use Trends, Acres

Agricultural Classification	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	5-Yr Change
Timberland	121,127	121,900	138,265	135,155	133,770	134,729	+11%
Grazing Land	47,094	46,499	48,592	49,371	48,180	46,897	0%
Orchards or Groves	441	461	470	483	450	423	-5%
Cropland	28,883	28,270	27,156	30,816	32,341	32,875	+14%
Ornamentals	238	285	305	310	362	362	+52%
Poultry, Bees, or Tropical Fish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Dairies or Feedlots	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Improved Agricultural	116,630	116,576	114,376	112,495	111,941	110,317	-5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>314,411</b>	<b>313,990</b>	<b>329,163</b>	<b>328,631</b>	<b>327,044</b>	<b>325,602</b>	<b>+4%</b>

Data source: Florida Department of Revenue

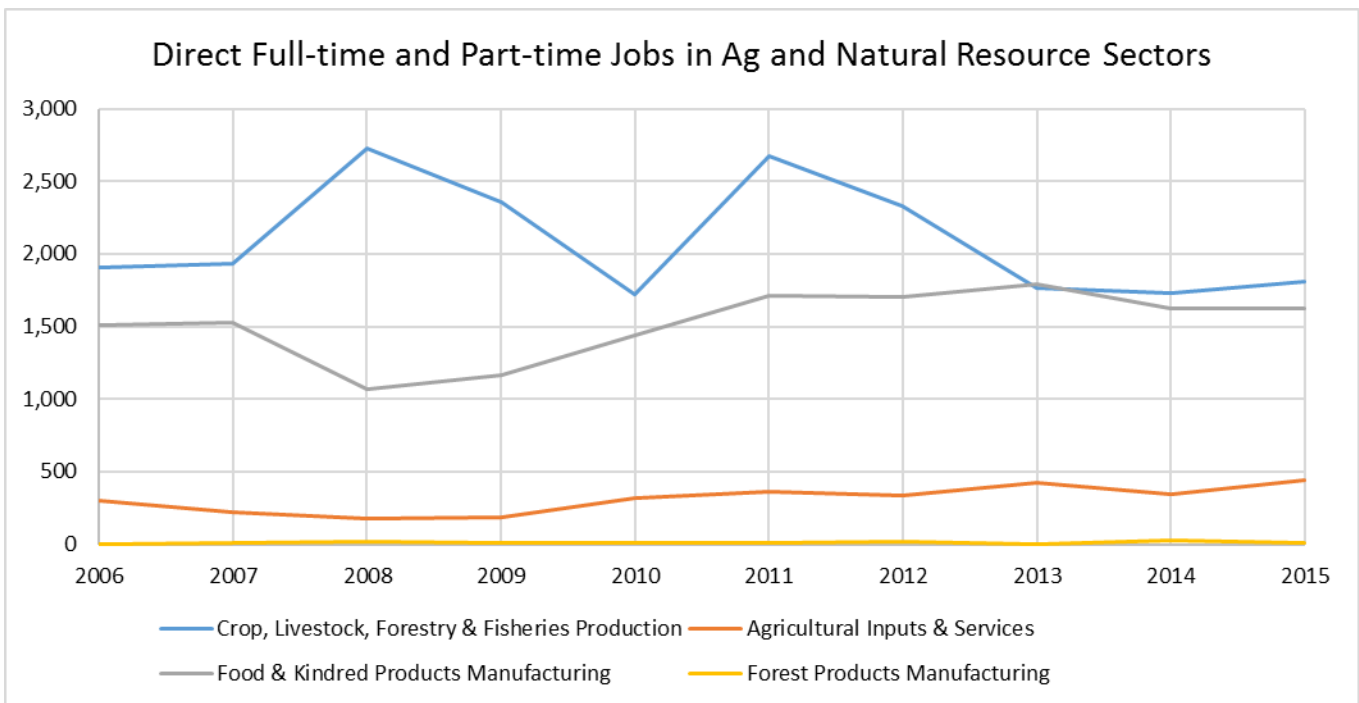
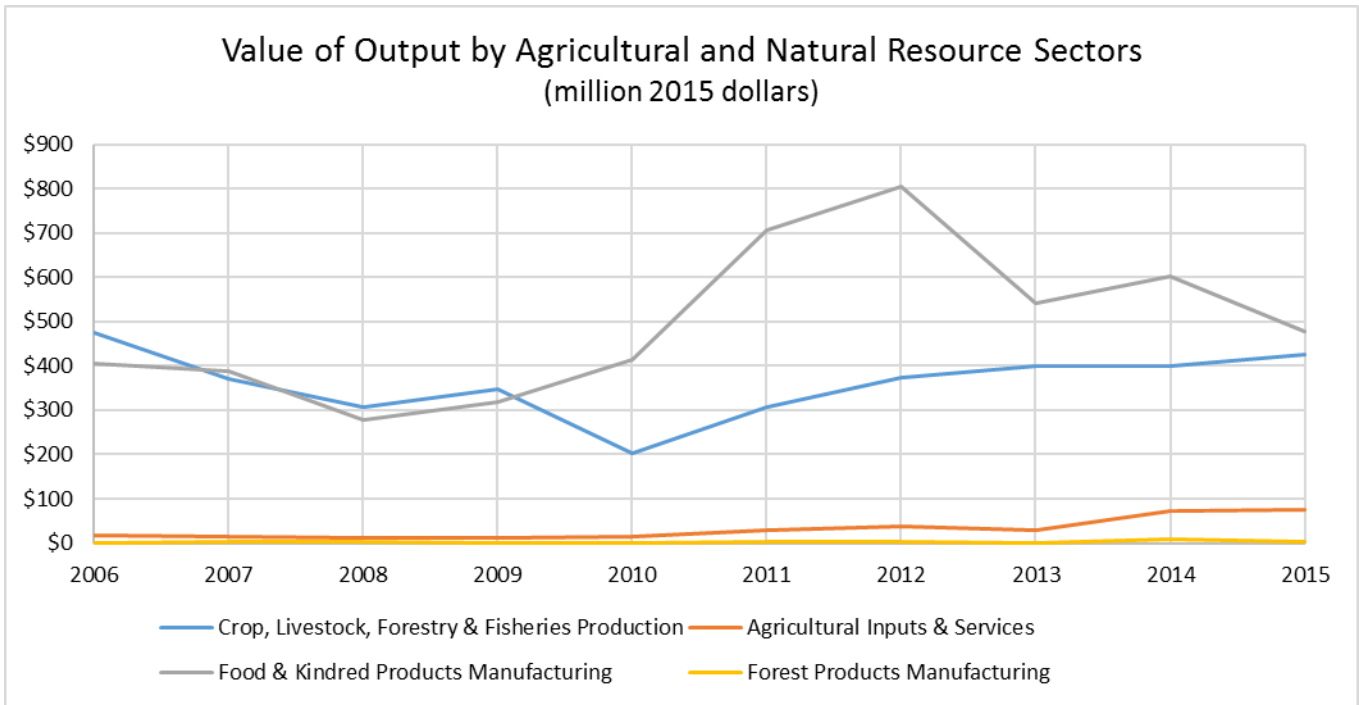
The county property appraiser tracks land-use classifications annually. More than 134,729 acres were in timberland in 2015, an 11% increase from 2010. Much of the land classified as timberland is not counted as farmland by the USDA. In Suwannee County poultry and dairy land is classified as grazing land. The amount of grazing land stayed about the same, but cropland increased 14%. Land classified as improved agricultural, which includes parcels that have both agricultural production and a single-family dwelling, declined 5%. Total land in agricultural classification increased 4%.

### Economic Contribution of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Food Industries, 2015

Sector	Direct Output (\$ million)	Value Added Impacts (\$ million)	% of GRP	Direct Jobs	Total Job Impacts
Poultry & egg production	\$183.8	\$47.7	4.7%	225	321
Dairy cattle & milk production	\$65.0	\$48.8	4.8%	144	474
Other crop farming	\$47.5	\$45.6	4.5%	647	927
Vegetable & melon farming	\$42.2	\$43.4	4.3%	148	411
Beef cattle ranching & farming	\$23.4	\$8.8	0.9%	133	172
Greenhouse, nursery, & floriculture	\$16.2	\$16.4	1.6%	78	173
Forestry, forest products, and timber production	\$13.9	\$21.6	2.1%	129	288
Support activities for ag & forestry	\$11.5	\$12.3	1.2%	157	189
Commercial logging	\$9.4	\$10.4	1.0%	74	125
Grain & cotton farming	\$5.9	\$4.8	0.5%	14	57
Fruit farming	\$3.6	\$3.5	0.3%	39	56
Other animal production	\$3.3	\$1.4	0.1%	19	19
Commercial hunting & trapping	\$0.1	\$0.0	0.0%	3	4
<b>Total Farm, Forestry, &amp; Fisheries Production</b>	<b>\$425.8</b>	<b>\$264.7</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>1,810</b>	<b>3,216</b>
Food & kindred products manufacturing	\$476.7	\$88.9	8.8%	1,622	1,863
Food & kindred products distribution	\$91.2	\$56.8	5.6%	1,244	1,351
Agricultural inputs & services	\$76.2	\$29.6	2.9%	441	676
Mining	\$10.5	\$11.9	1.2%	38	136
Forest products manufacturing	\$2.0	\$0.7	0.1%	8	11
Nature-based recreation	\$0.2	\$0.0	0.0%	5	6
<b>Total Agriculture, Natural Resources, &amp; Food</b>	<b>\$1,082.5</b>	<b>\$452.6</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>5,168</b>	<b>7,259</b>

Data source: Hodges, A.W., M. Rahmani, & C.D. Court. 2017. Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida in 2015. % of GRP is the value-added impact as a percent of gross regional product.

The poultry and dairy sectors are the two largest primary production sectors by economic output, but in terms of value-added impacts, vegetable and melon farming and other crop farming are at similar levels to poultry and dairy. Total crop, livestock, and forestry production generated economic output of \$425.8 million, total value-added impacts of \$264.7 million, and total job impacts of 3,216. When other food, forestry, and natural resource-related sectors are added, the total value-added impact rises to \$452.6 million (45% of gross regional product) and total job impacts amount to 7,259 (44% of total employment). The 5-year trends in agricultural and natural resource sectors, both in terms of value and jobs, have been positive, but the 10-year trends are less pronounced.



Data source: Hodges, A.W., M. Rahmani, & C.D. Court. 2017. Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida in 2015.