

Farm, Field, and Future

A Look at Agriculture in Box Elder

Box Elder Summit 2025

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Utah Department of Workforce Services

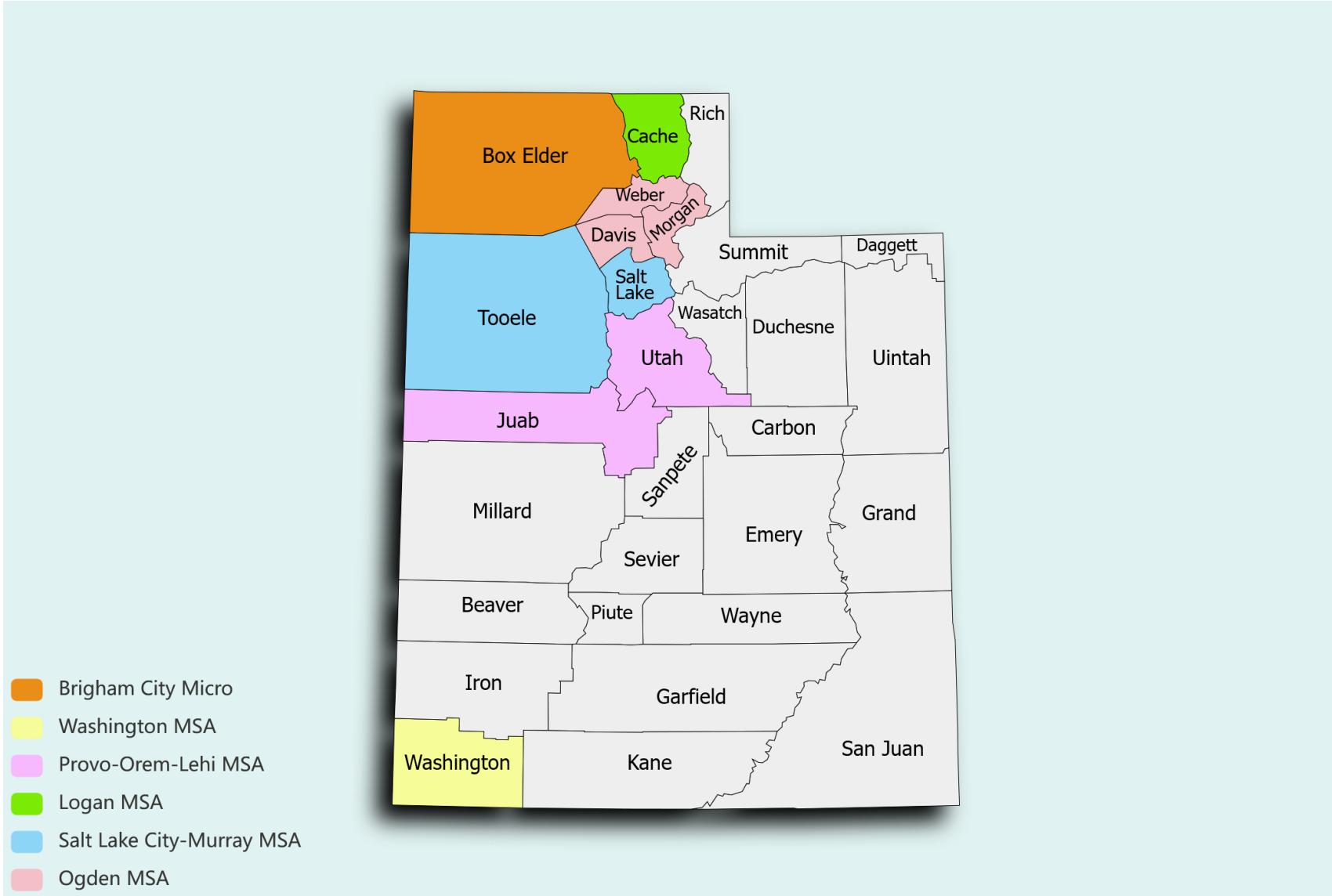
September 24, 2025

Overview

- 1. Does agriculture in Box Elder still matter? (Don't get mad, it's yes)**
- 2. NASS**
- 3. Farm**
- 4. Field**
- 5. Future**

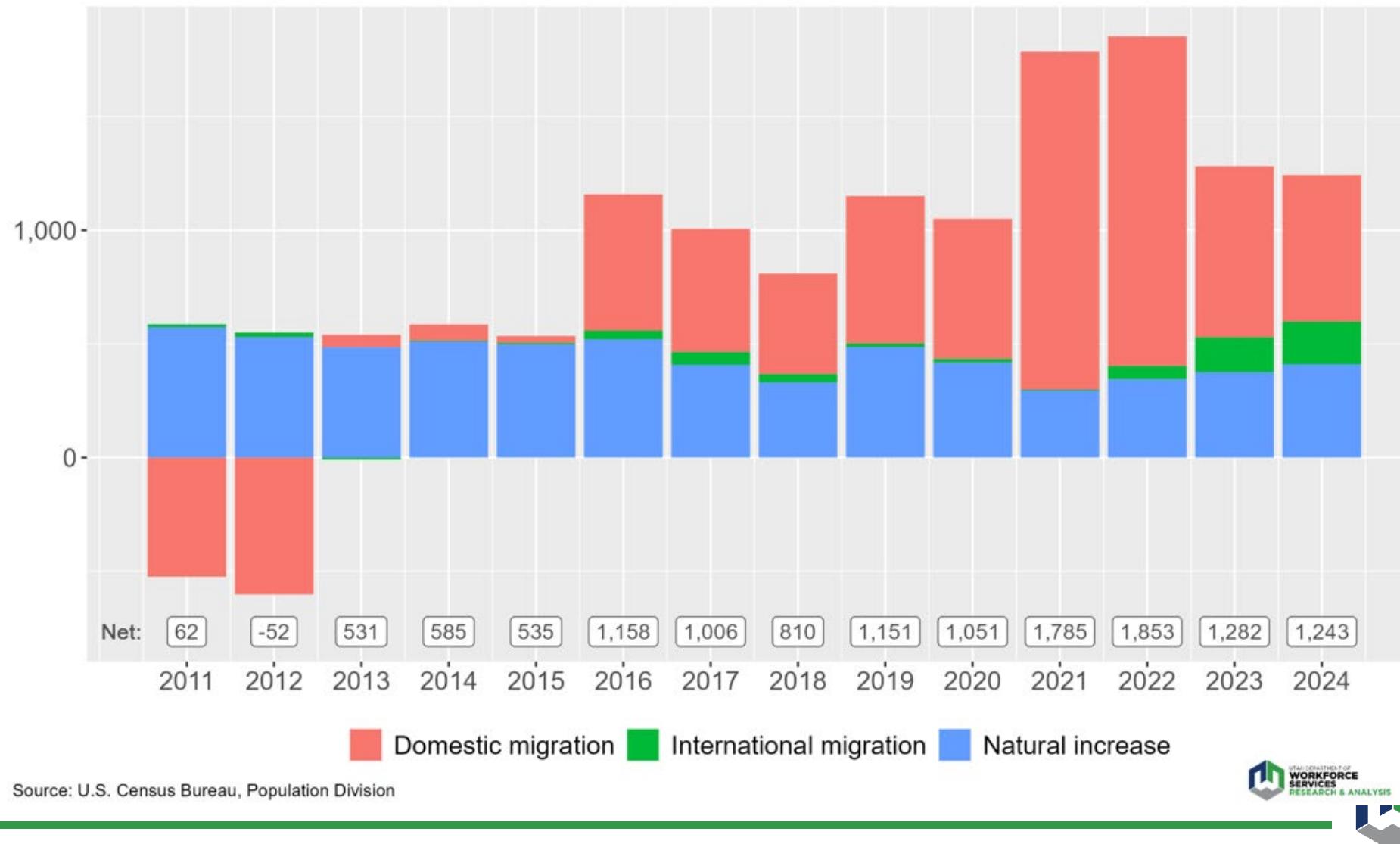


Box Elder is getting bigger...



Components of Population Change

Box Elder County: Components of population change

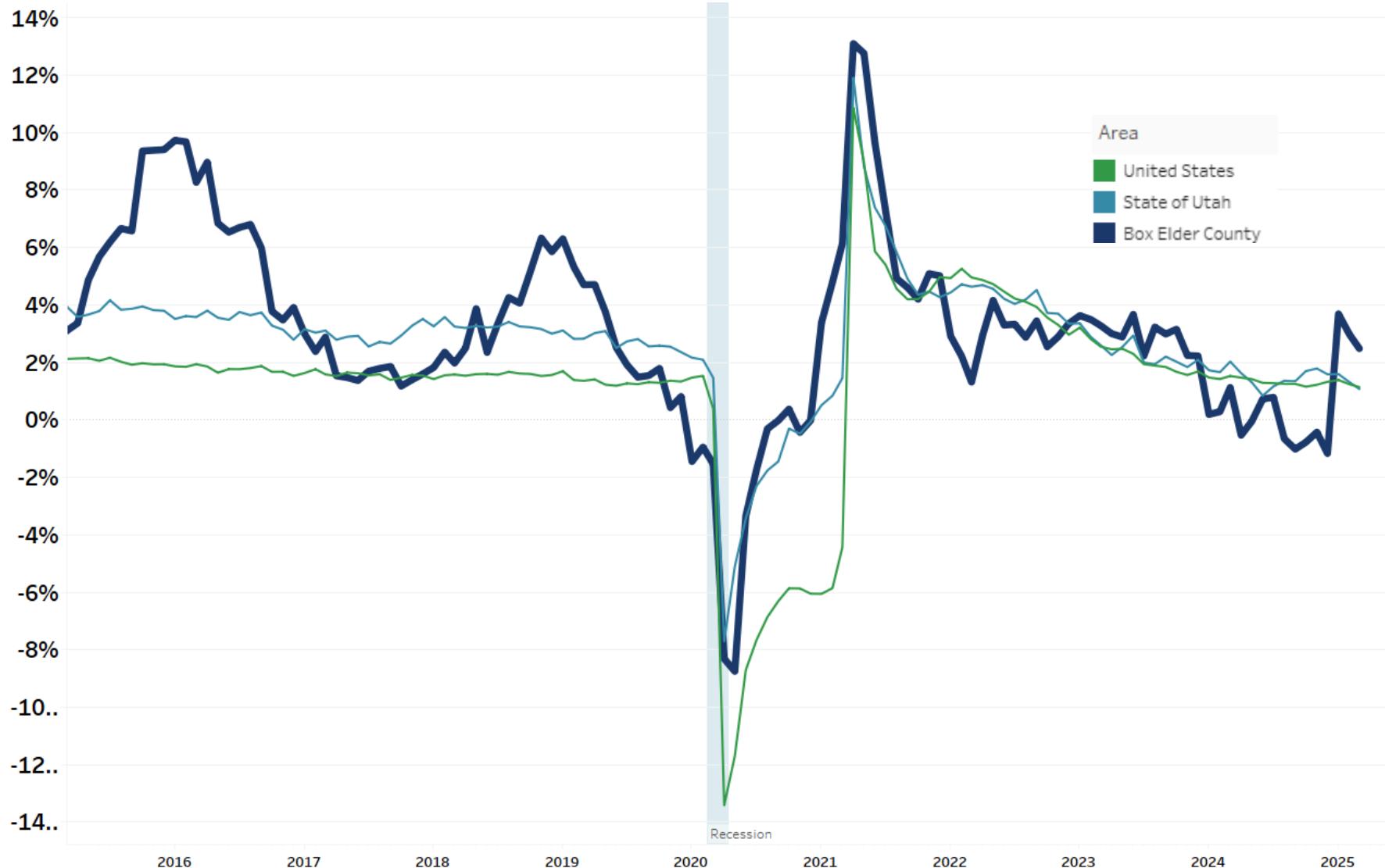


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division



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Nonfarm Job Growth Positive



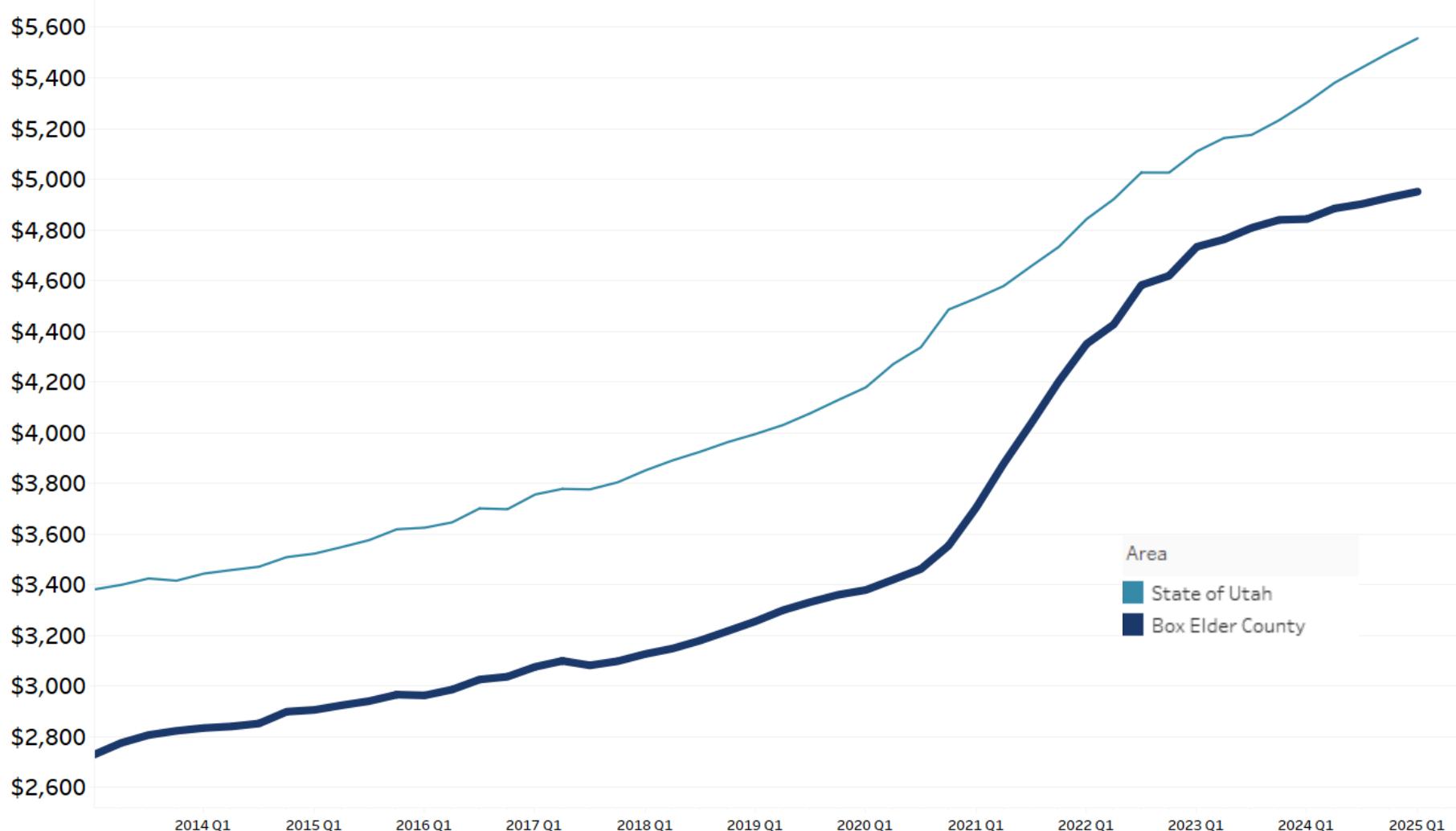
Box Elder Employment by Industry, March 2025

Employment Share 12 Months ending March 2025**

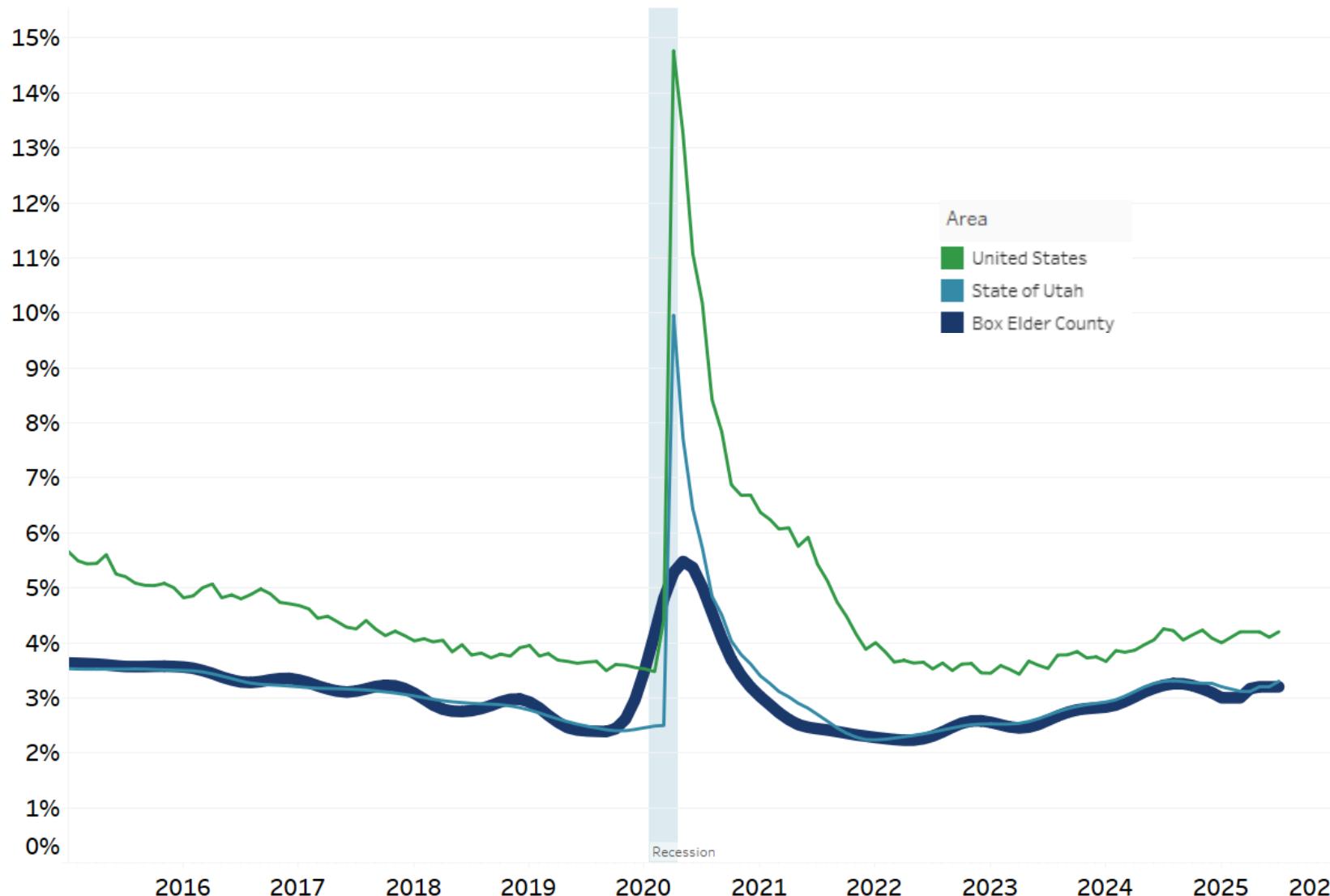


Wage Growth Stalling

Four-Quarter Moving Average

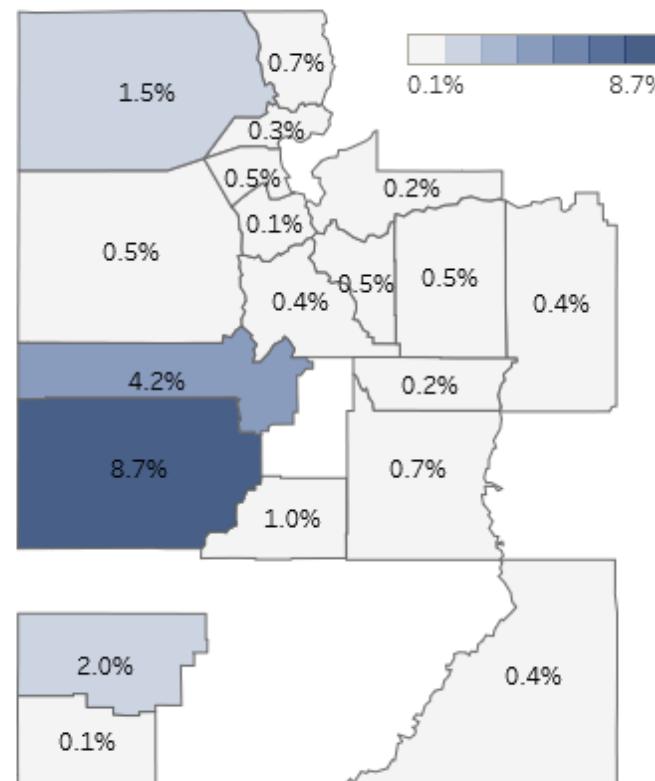


Unemployment Rate, July 2025

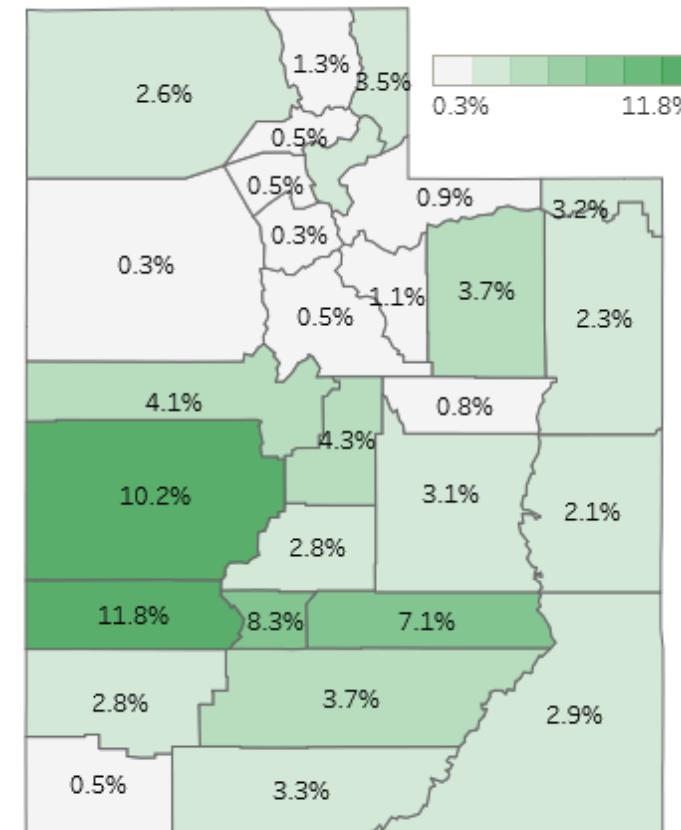


How Can We Look at Agriculture?

2023 Covered Agricultural Employment as a Percent of Total Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Jobs

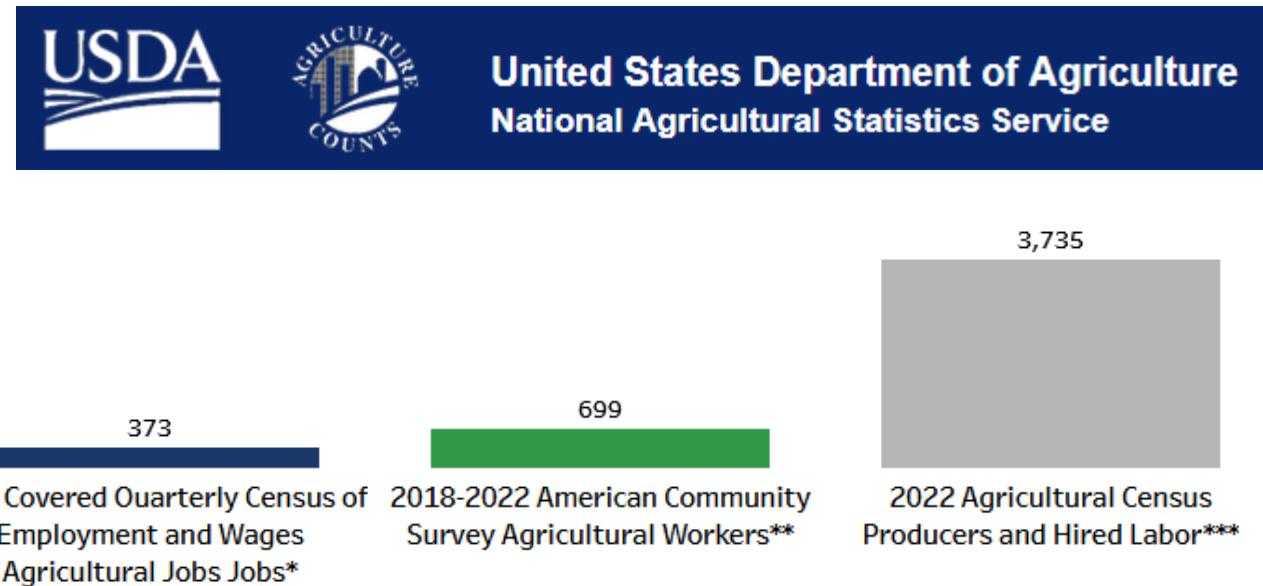


2018-2022 American Community Survey Agricultural Workers as a Percent of Total Workers



How Can We Look at Agriculture?

1. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
2. Runs the Census of Agriculture every 5 years
3. Mandatory, mailed to every farm → higher coverage
4. Captures hired, unpaid, migrant, and seasonal labor
5. Covers small & UI-exempt farms missing from QCEW
6. More ag-specific detail than ACS household survey
7. County level data since 1997
8. **NASS shows agricultural employment as (seasonally) the 3rd largest industry in Box Elder.**
9. \$ values adjusted to 2023 (not native to NASS)

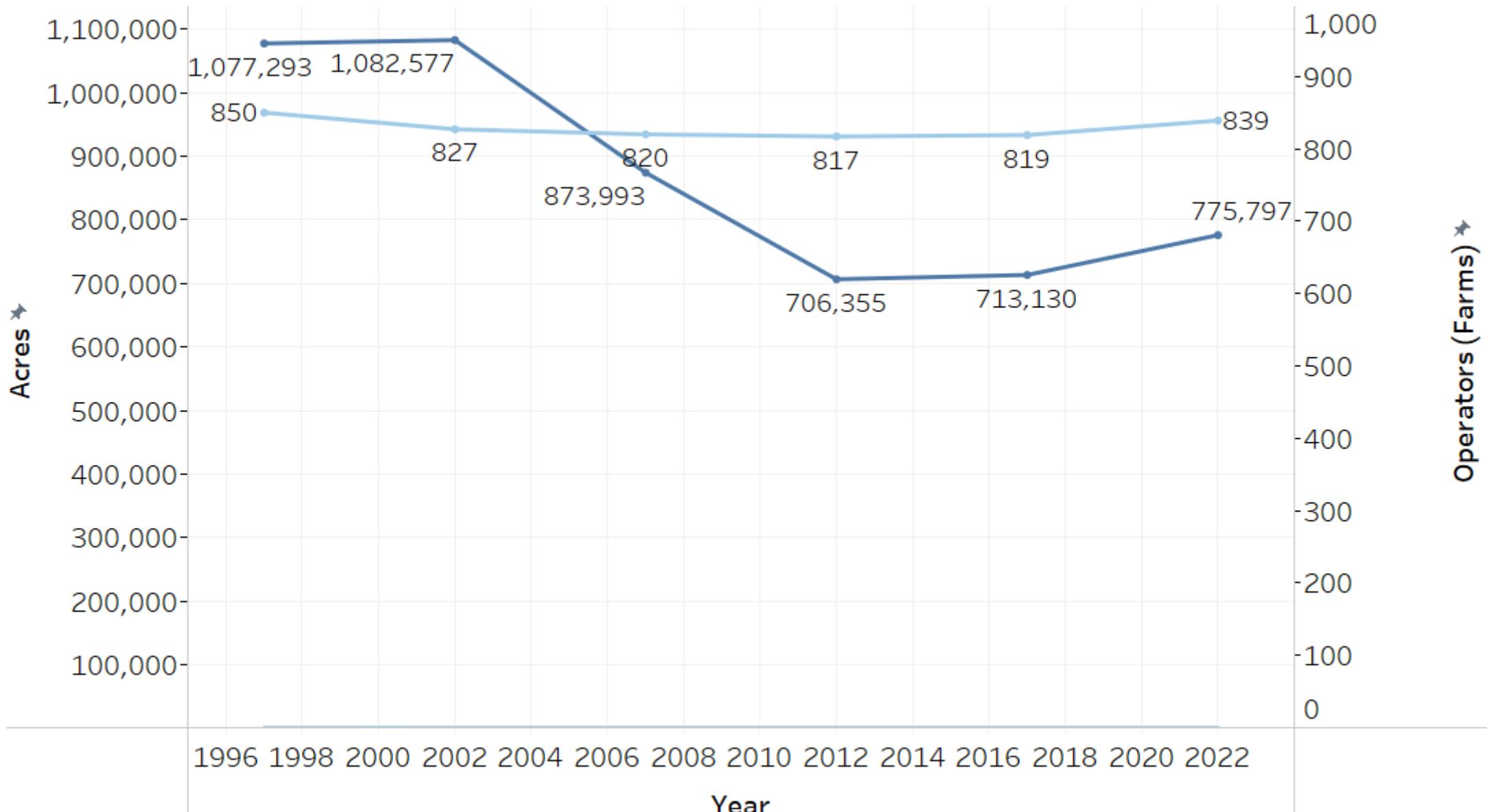


Farm



September 24, 2025

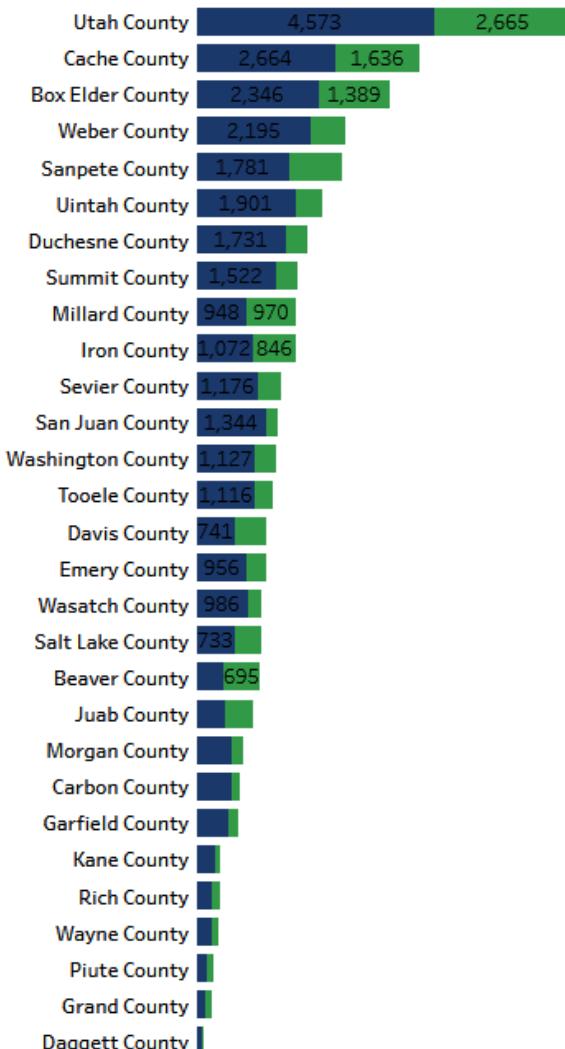
Acres and Operators (Farms)



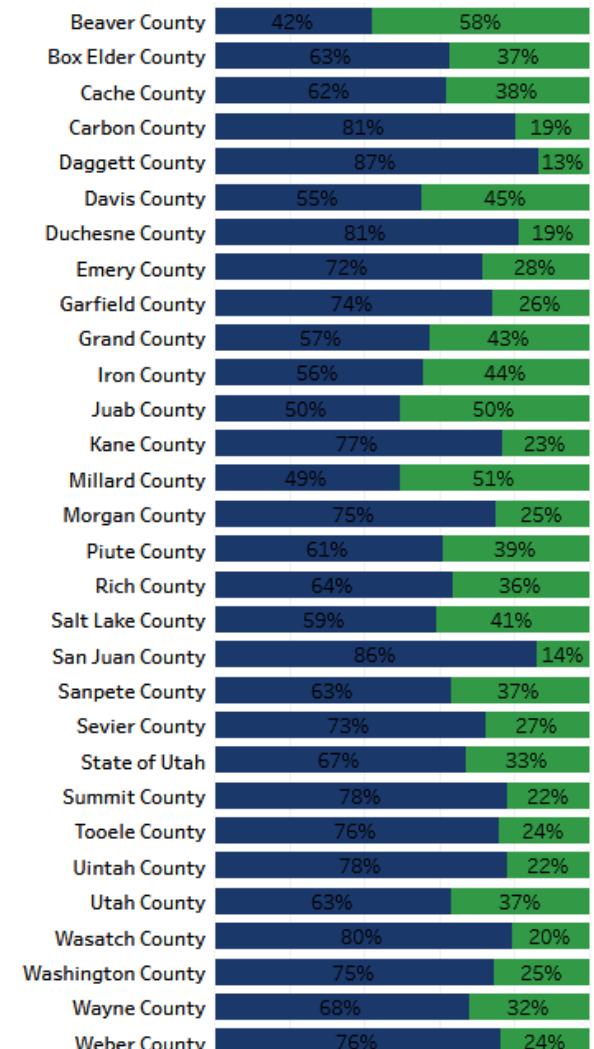
Who is doing the work?

1. Utah agriculture relies heavily on producers themselves — two-thirds of the statewide farm workforce are producers, one-third are hired workers.
2. County patterns vary: Box Elder, Cache, and Weber employ large numbers of hired workers, while rural counties lean more on producers.
3. Labor mix matters: areas with more hired workers face different challenges in wages, seasonality, and workforce stability.

Producers and Hired Workers*



Share of Producers and Hired Labor*



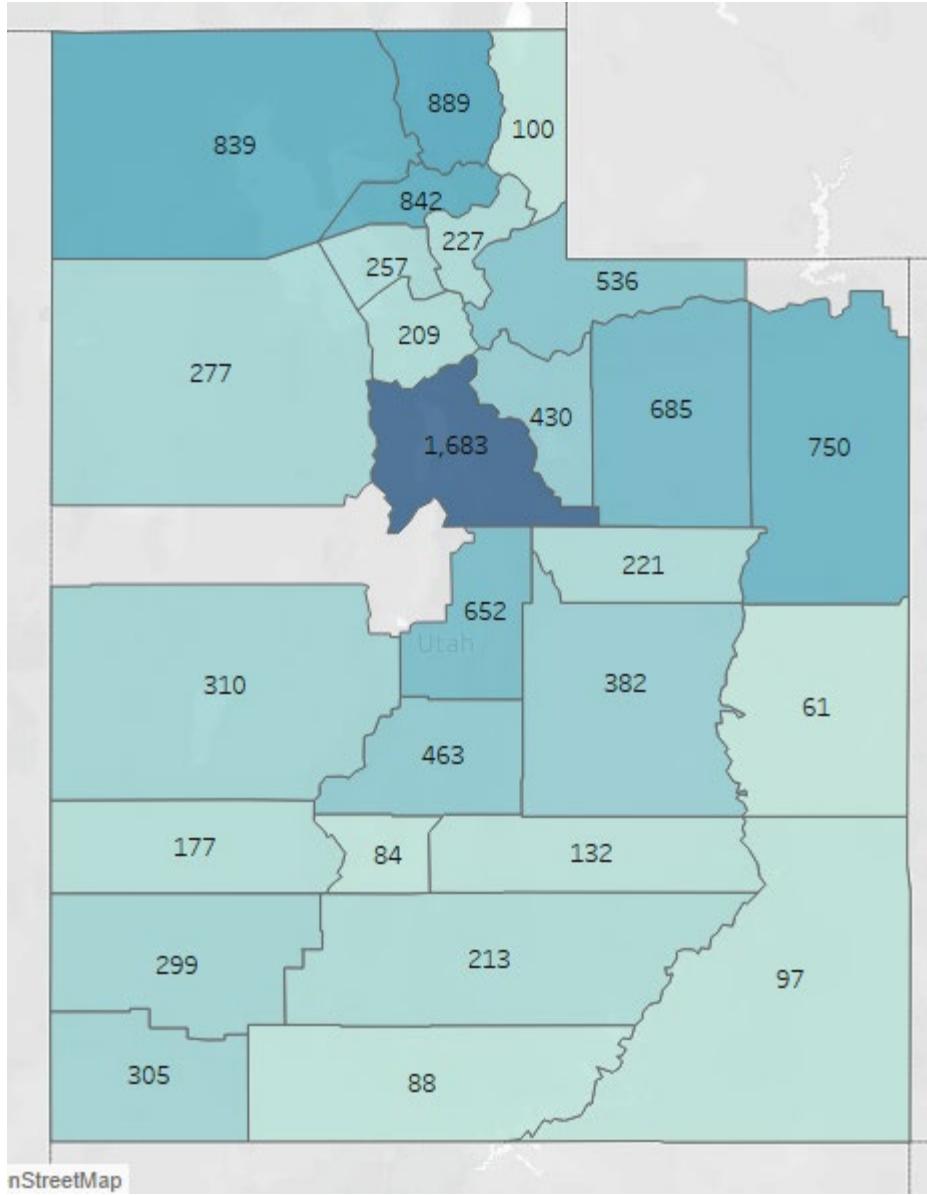
*Does not include unpaid workers.

Source: 2017 Agricultural Census. Updated December 2024, next update 2029.



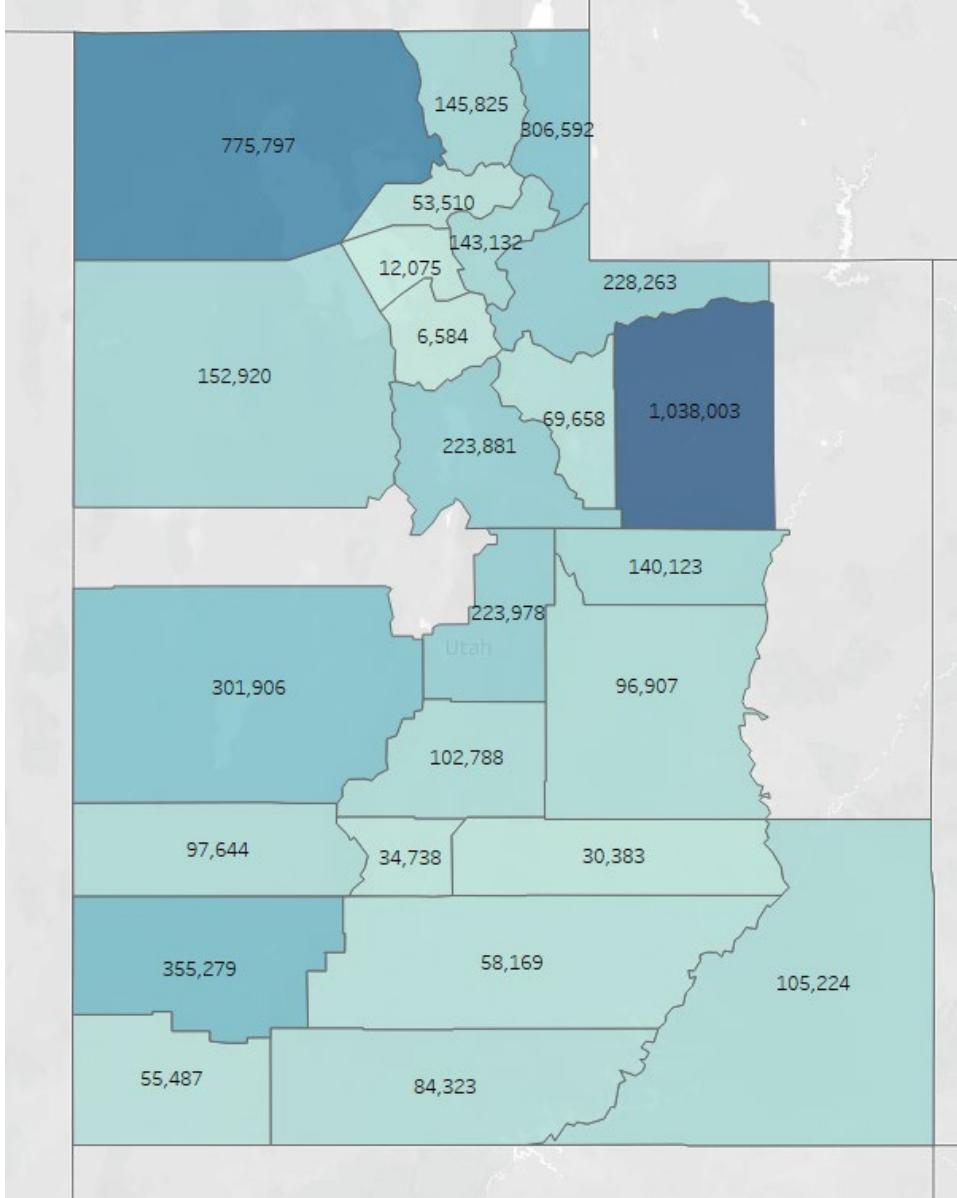
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4th in Total Operators (Farms)

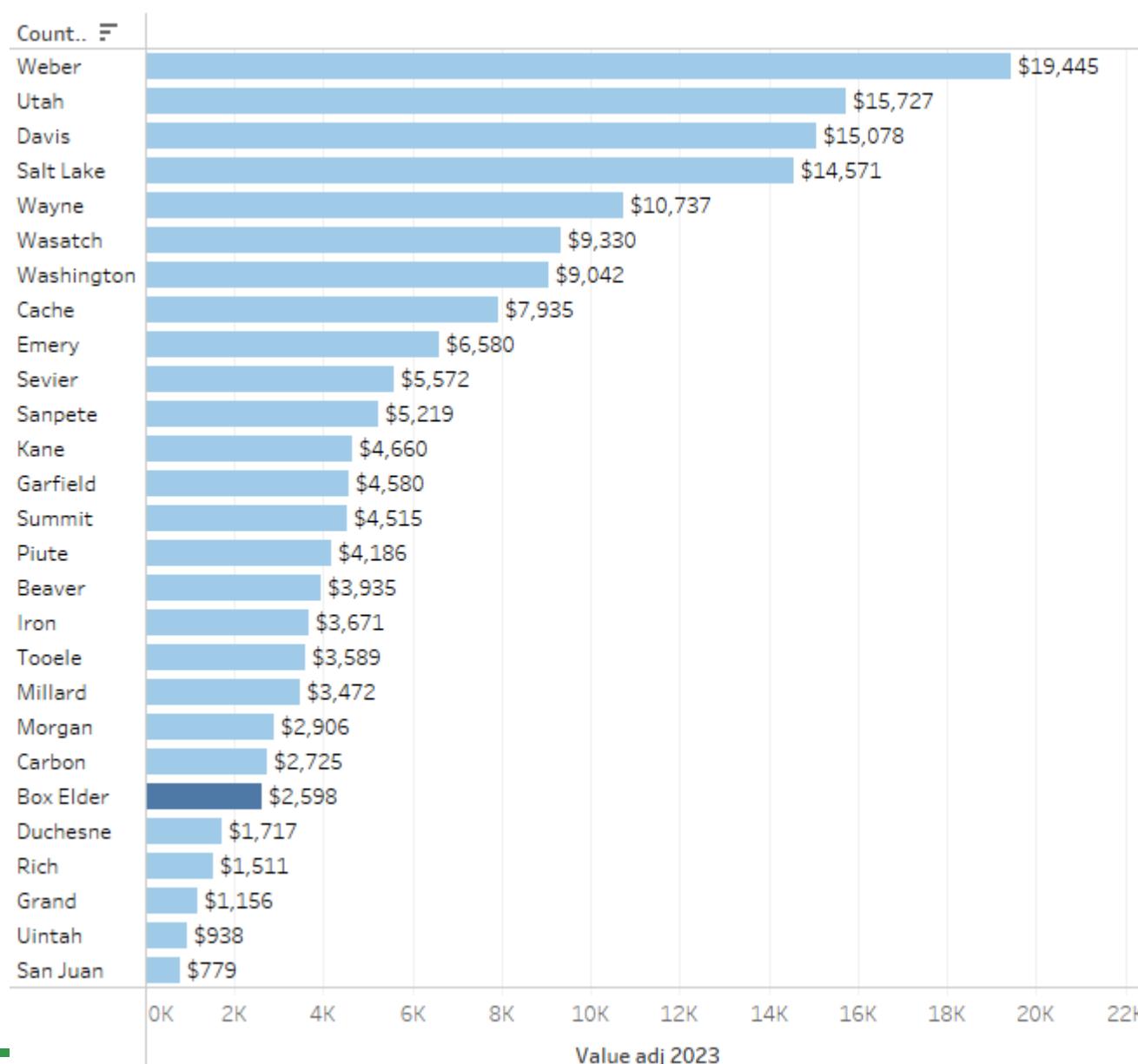


nStreetMap

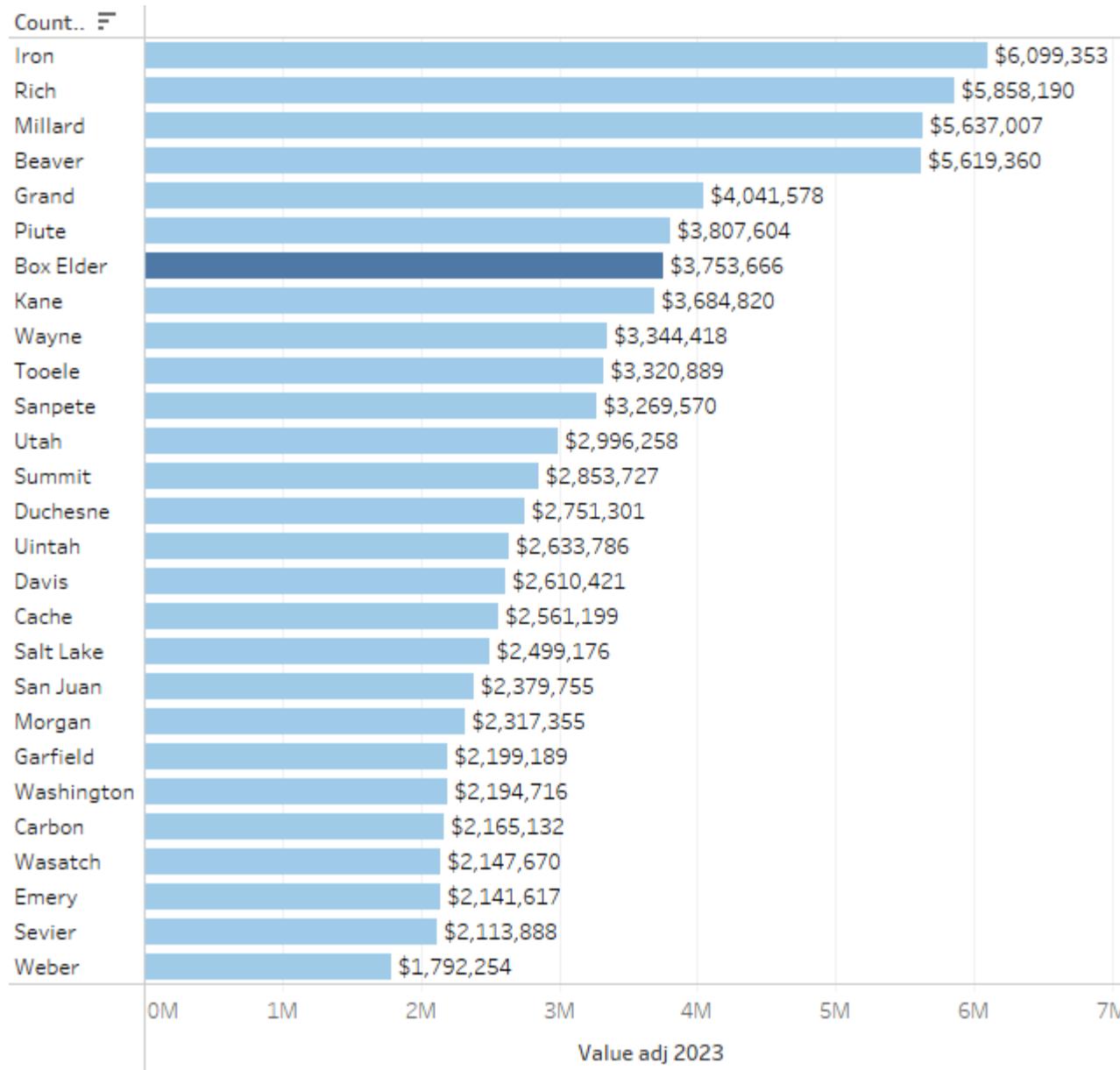
2nd in Total Acres in County



2022 \$ / Acre, 2023 adjusted.



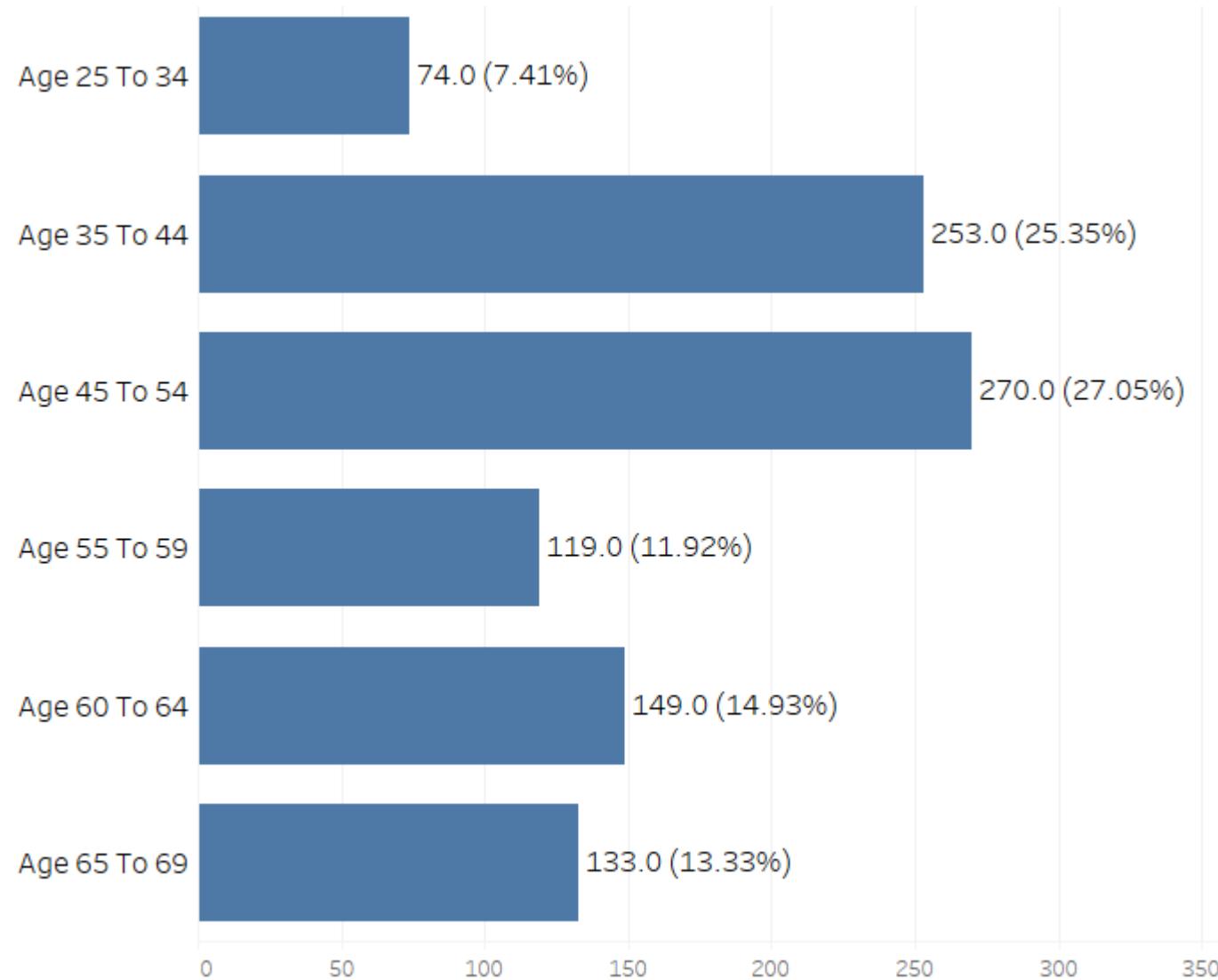
2022 \$ / Operation, 2023 adjusted.



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Age Distribution, 1997

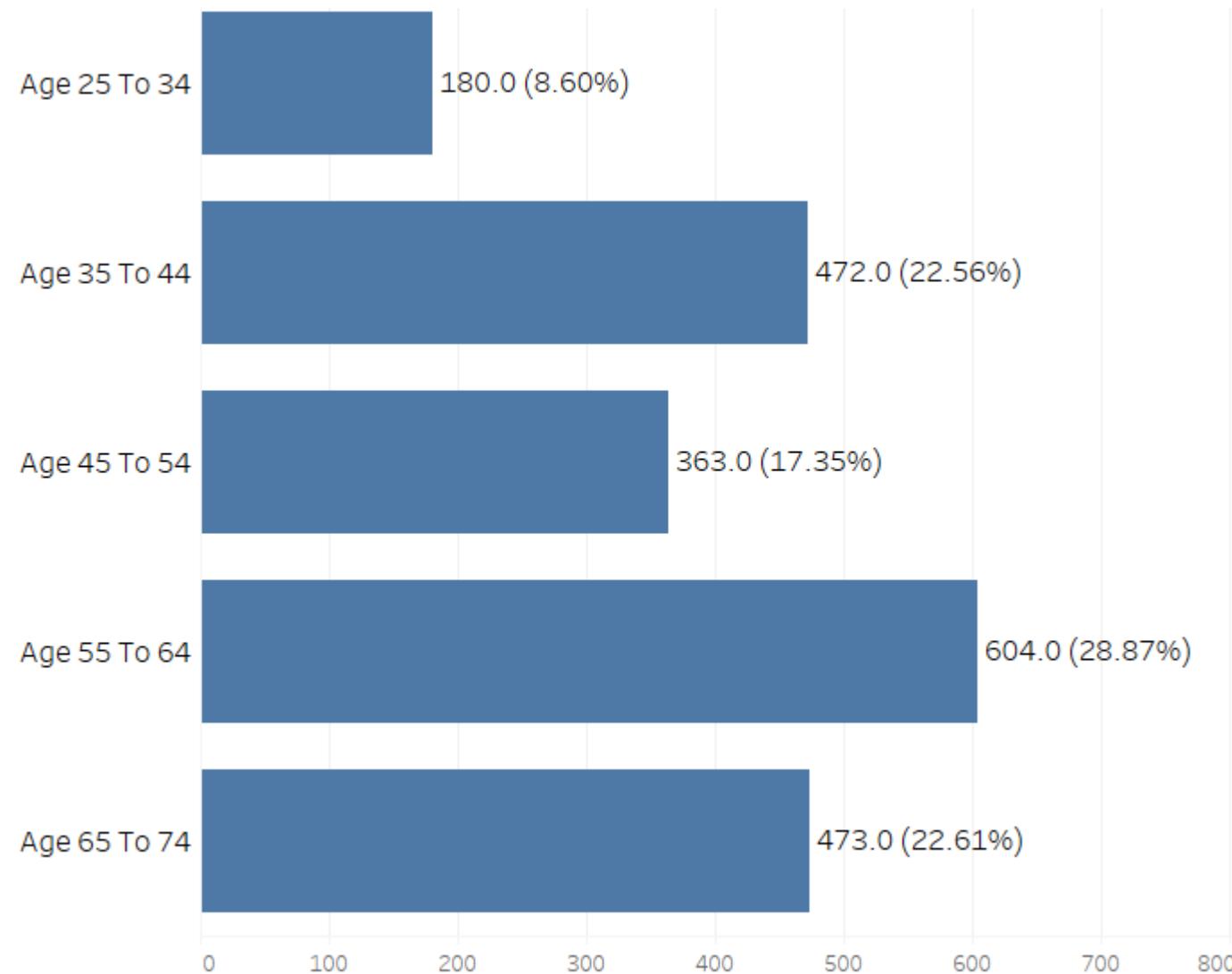
In 1997, 59.81% of producers (farm owners, not hired workers) were below 54. (Box Elder specific)



Age Distribution, 2022

By 2022, this dropped to 48.51% of producers (farm owners, not hired workers) below 54. (Box Elder specific).

They added a whole new age category up to 74 for 2017 and 2022.

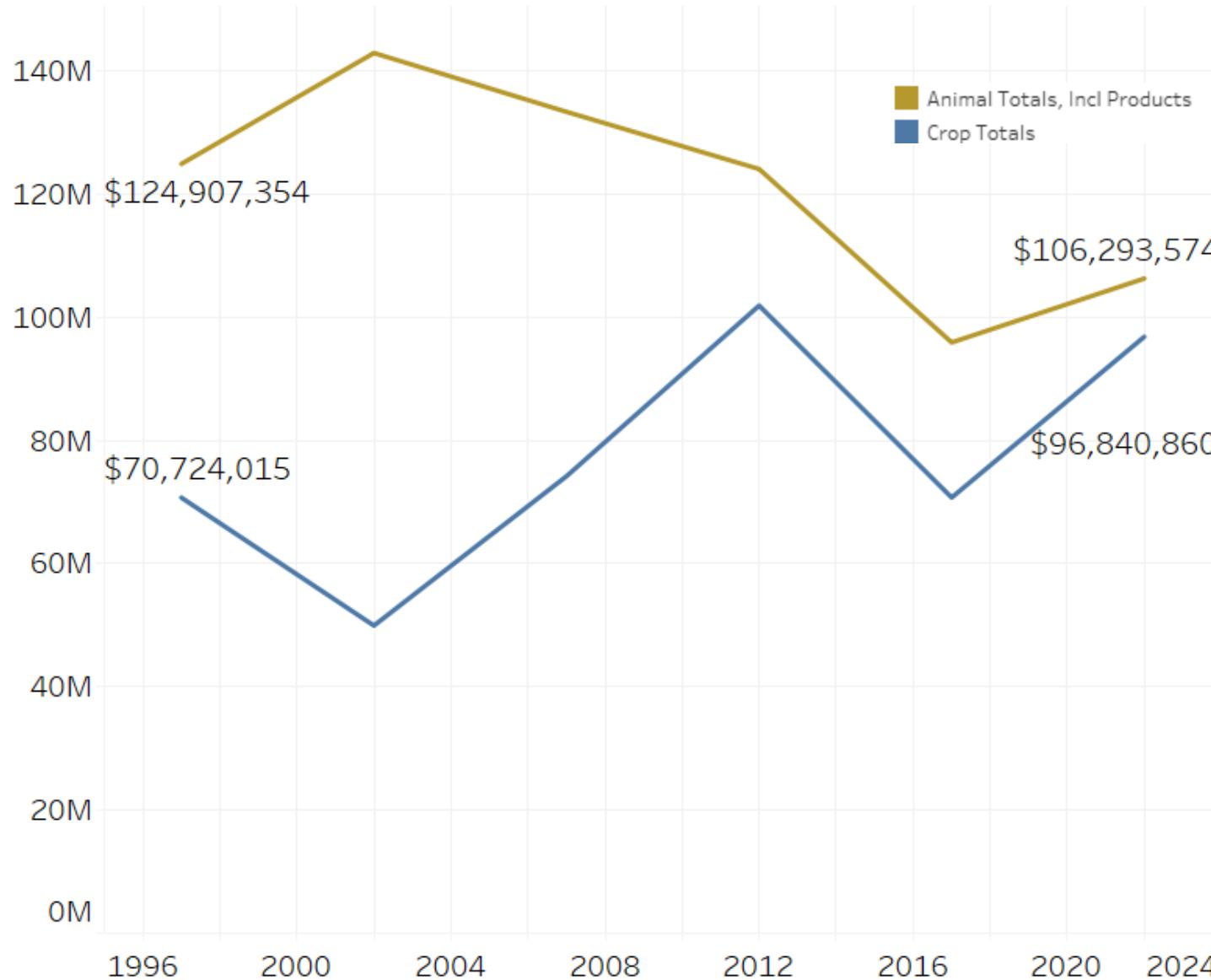


Field

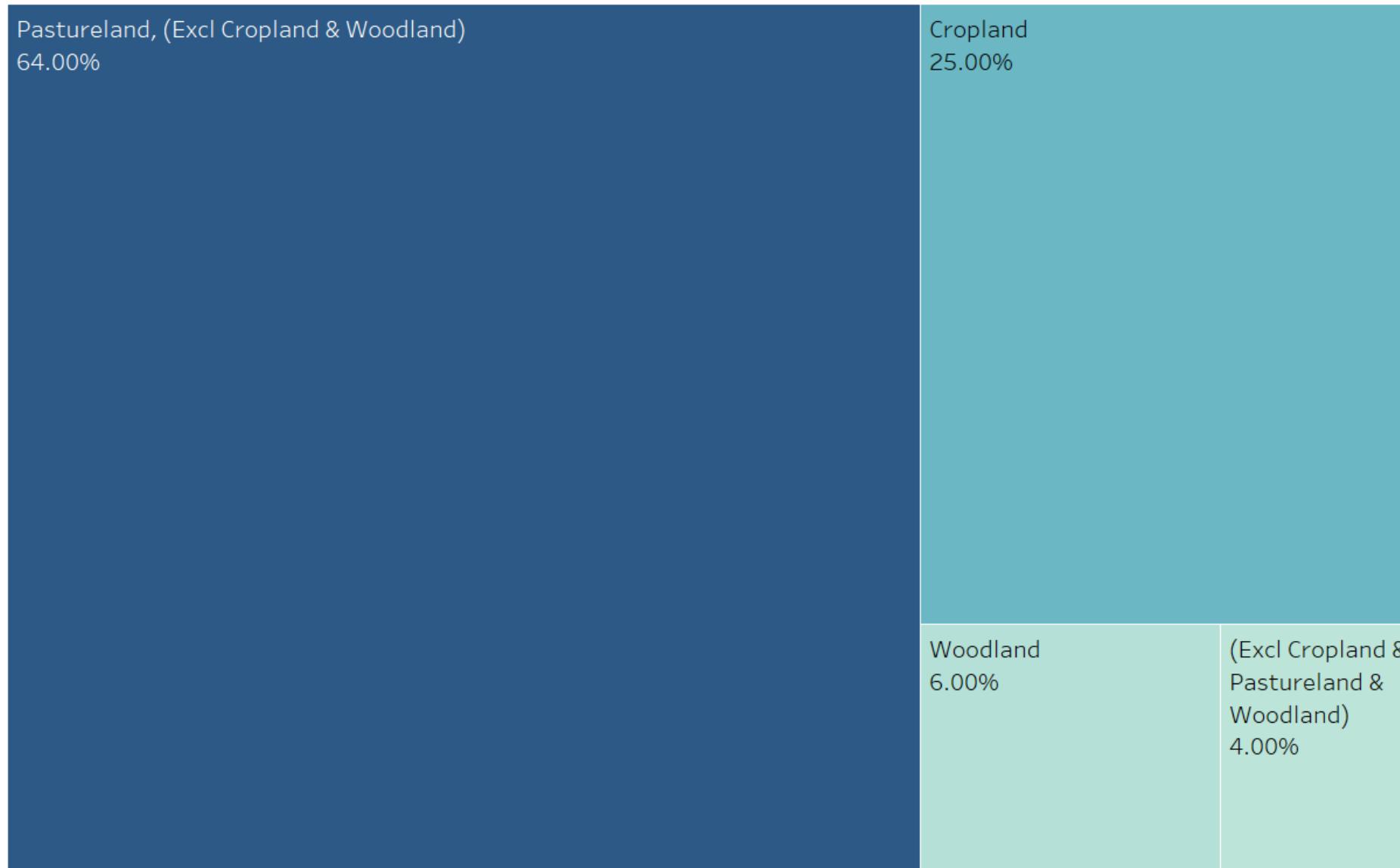


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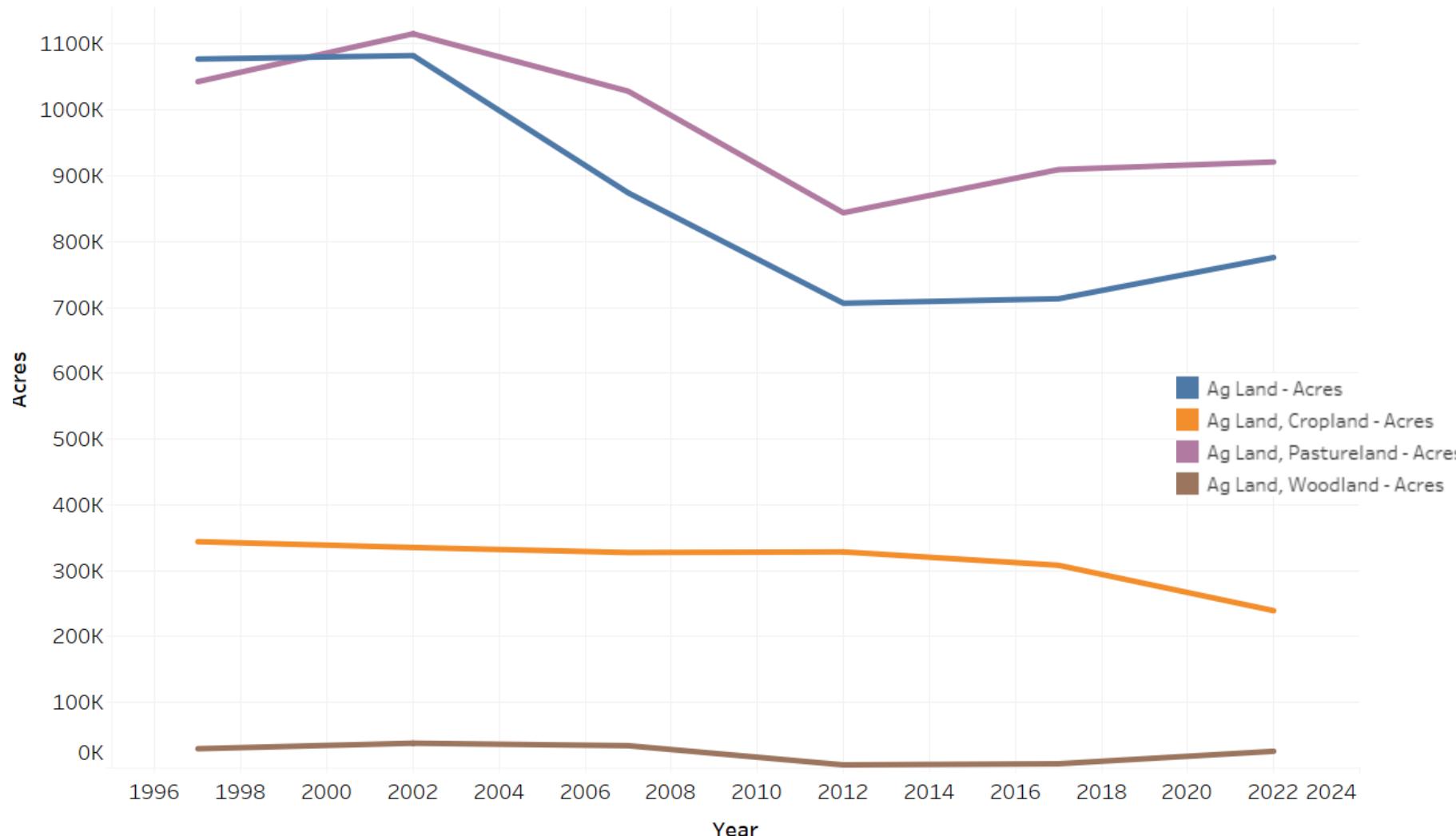
Farm Income, Adjusted to 2023



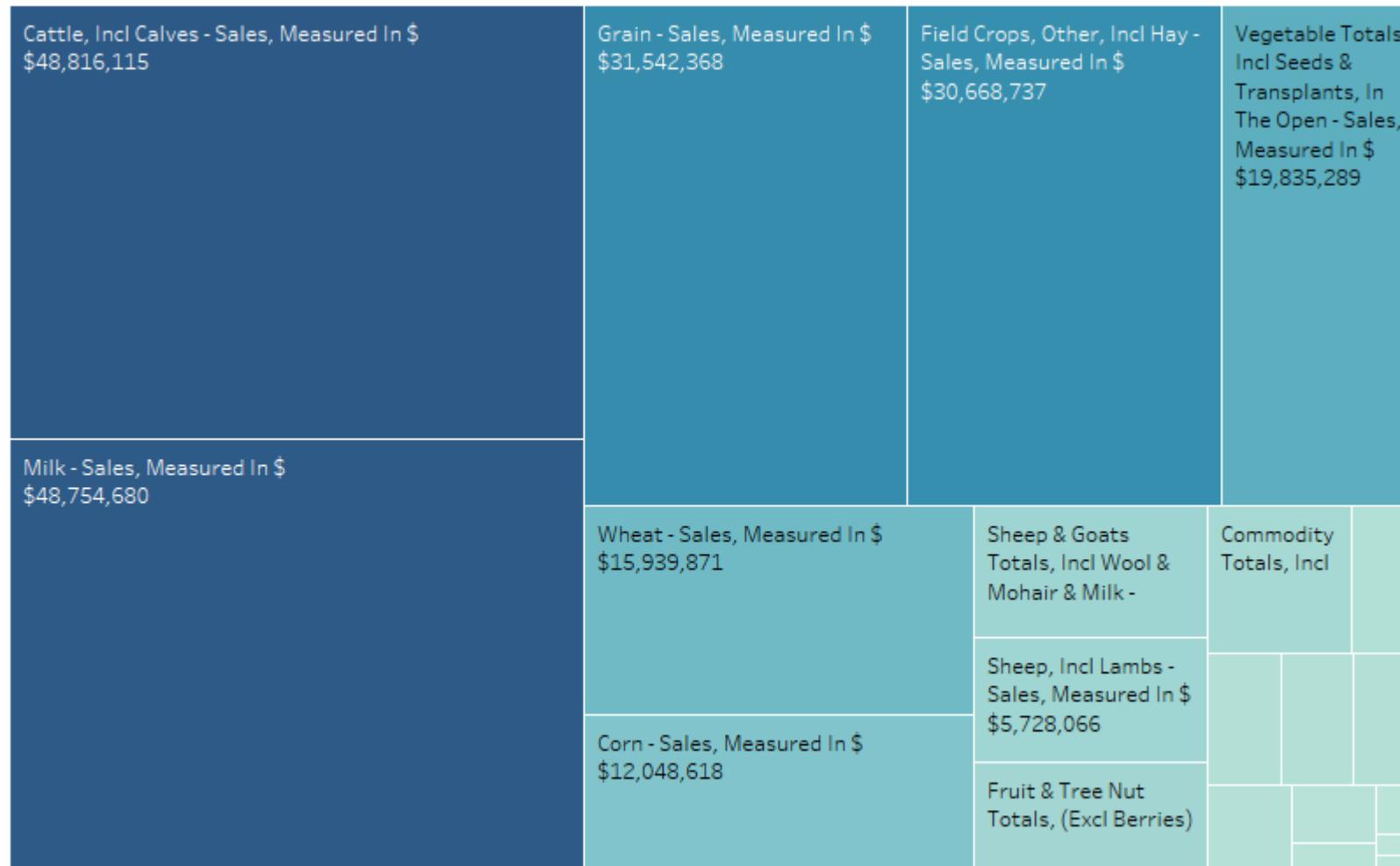
Division of Agricultural Land in Box Elder



Division of Land



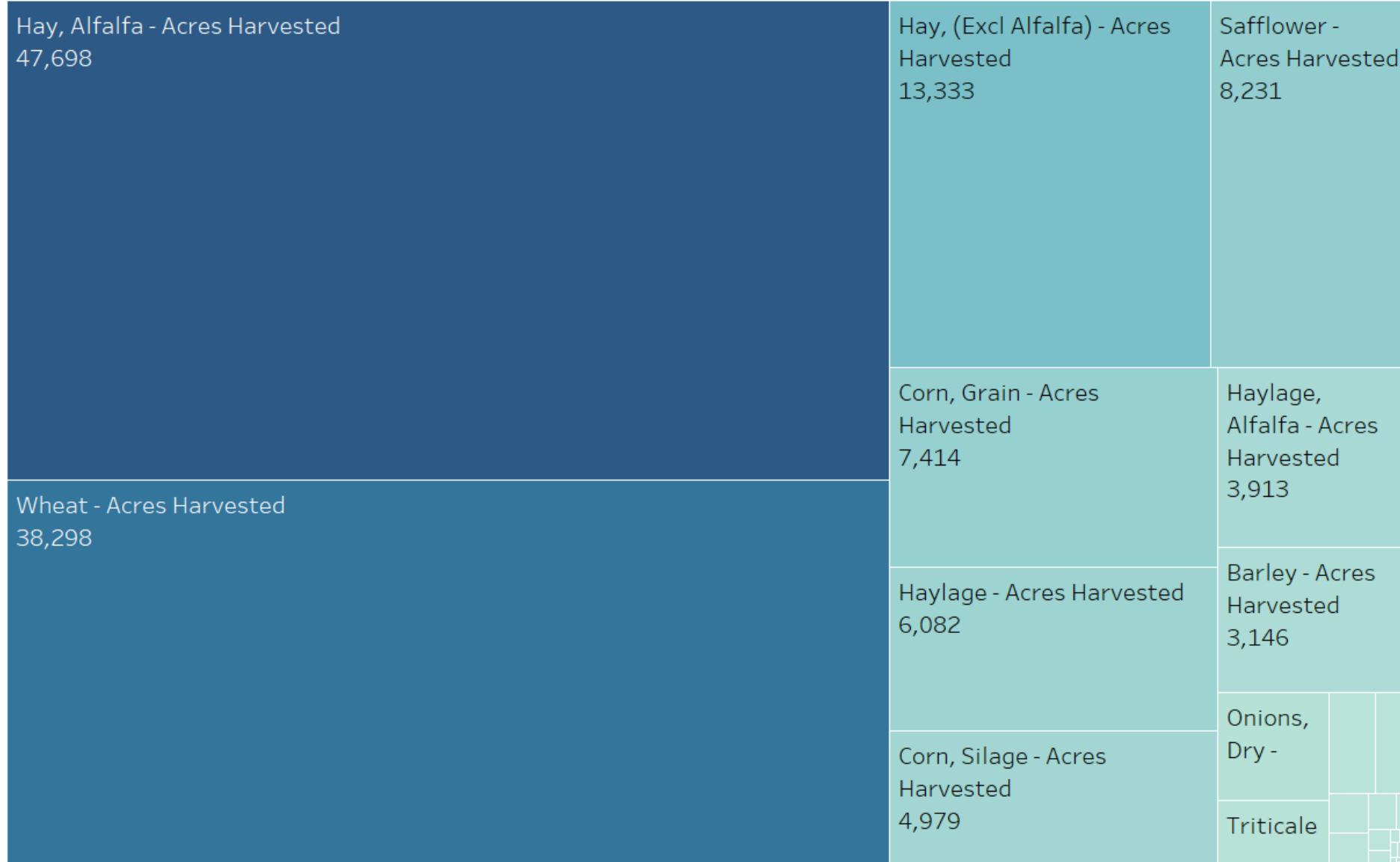
Box Elder Detailed Sales, 2022



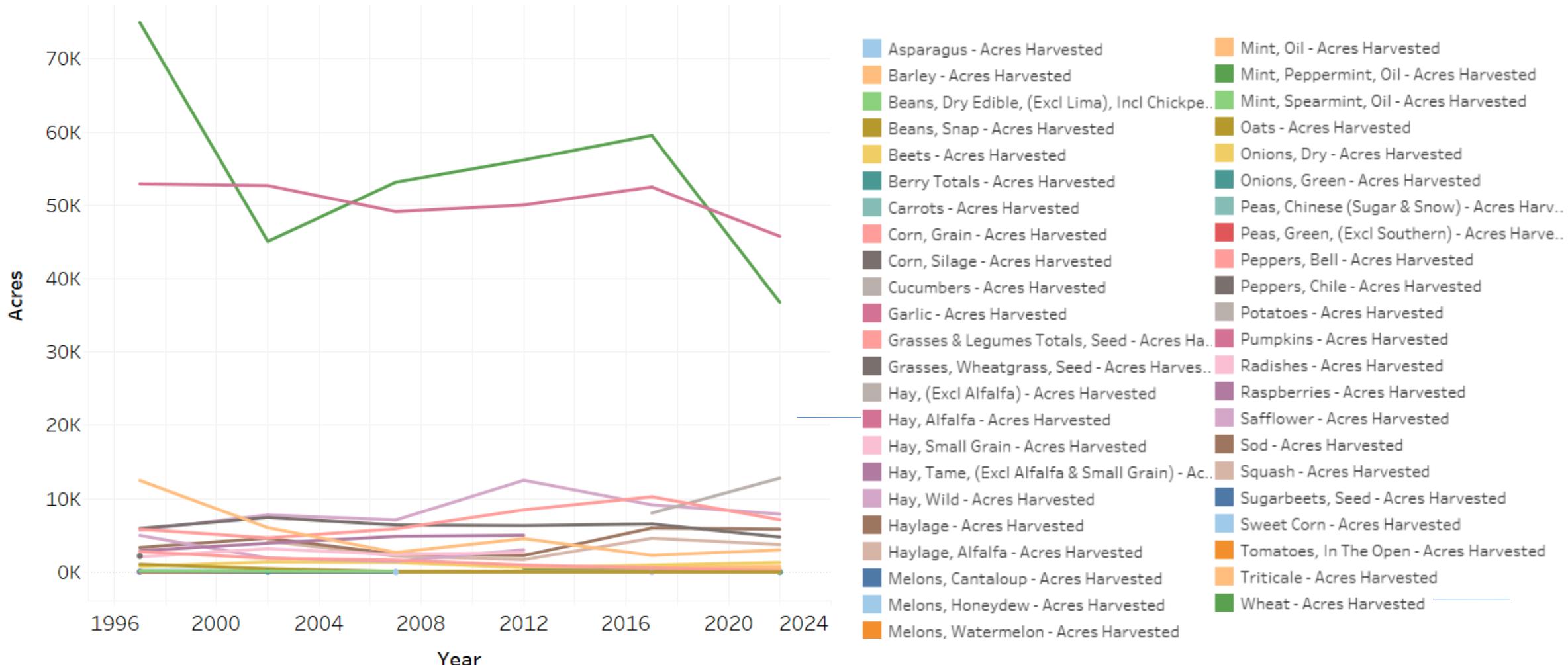
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Box Elder Cropland Use by Acre, 2022

No soybean!



All Crops (Harvested), 1997-2022

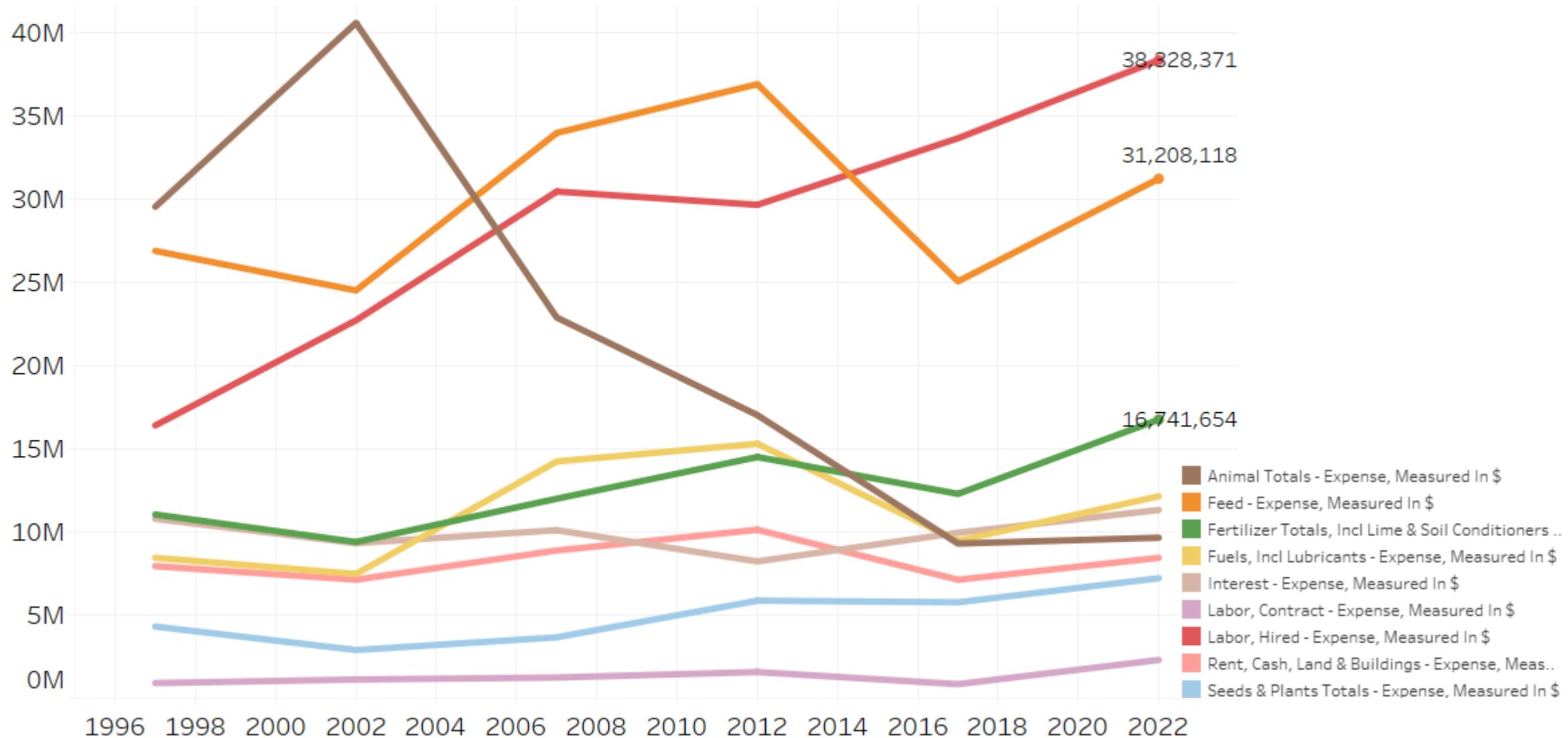


Future

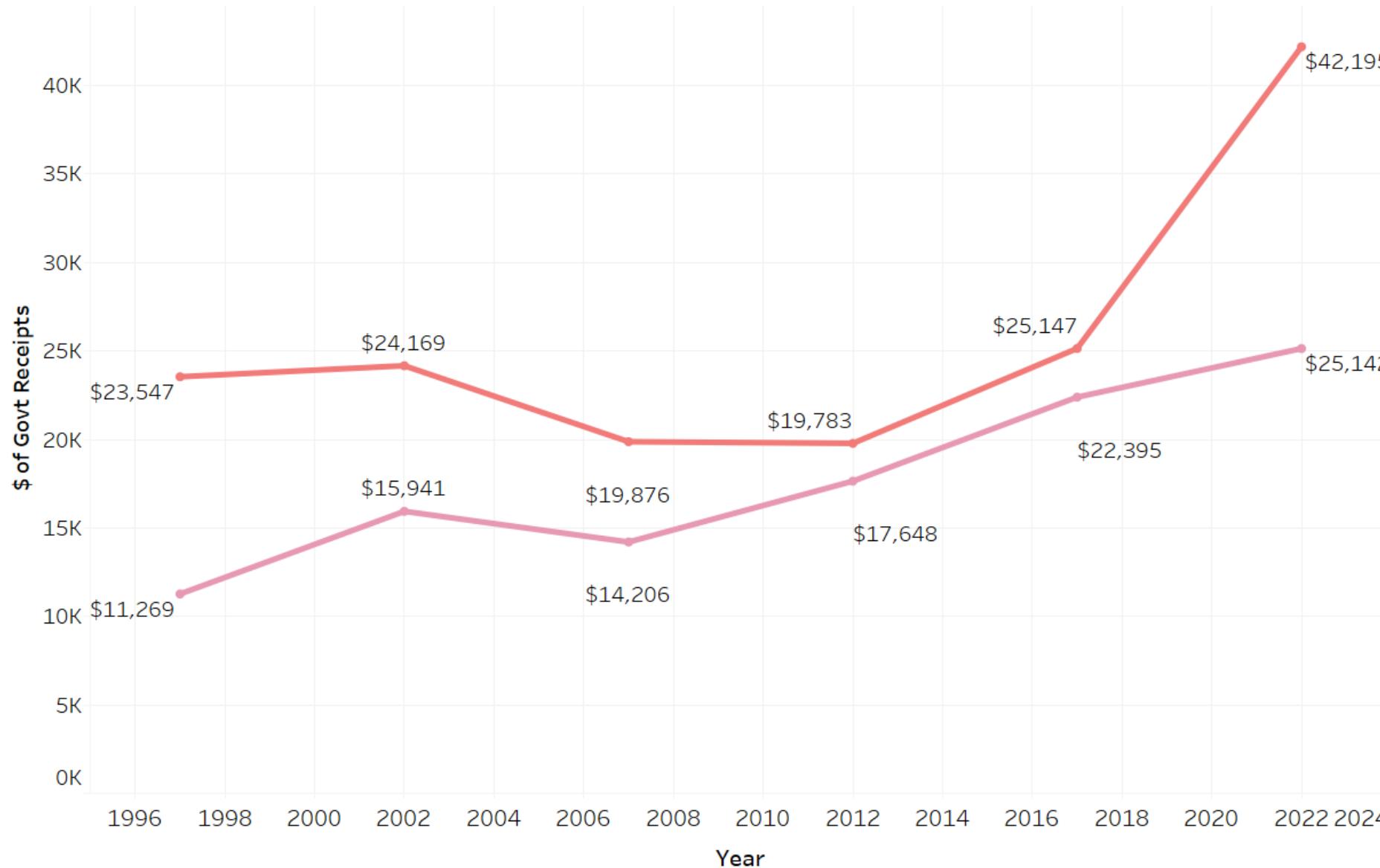


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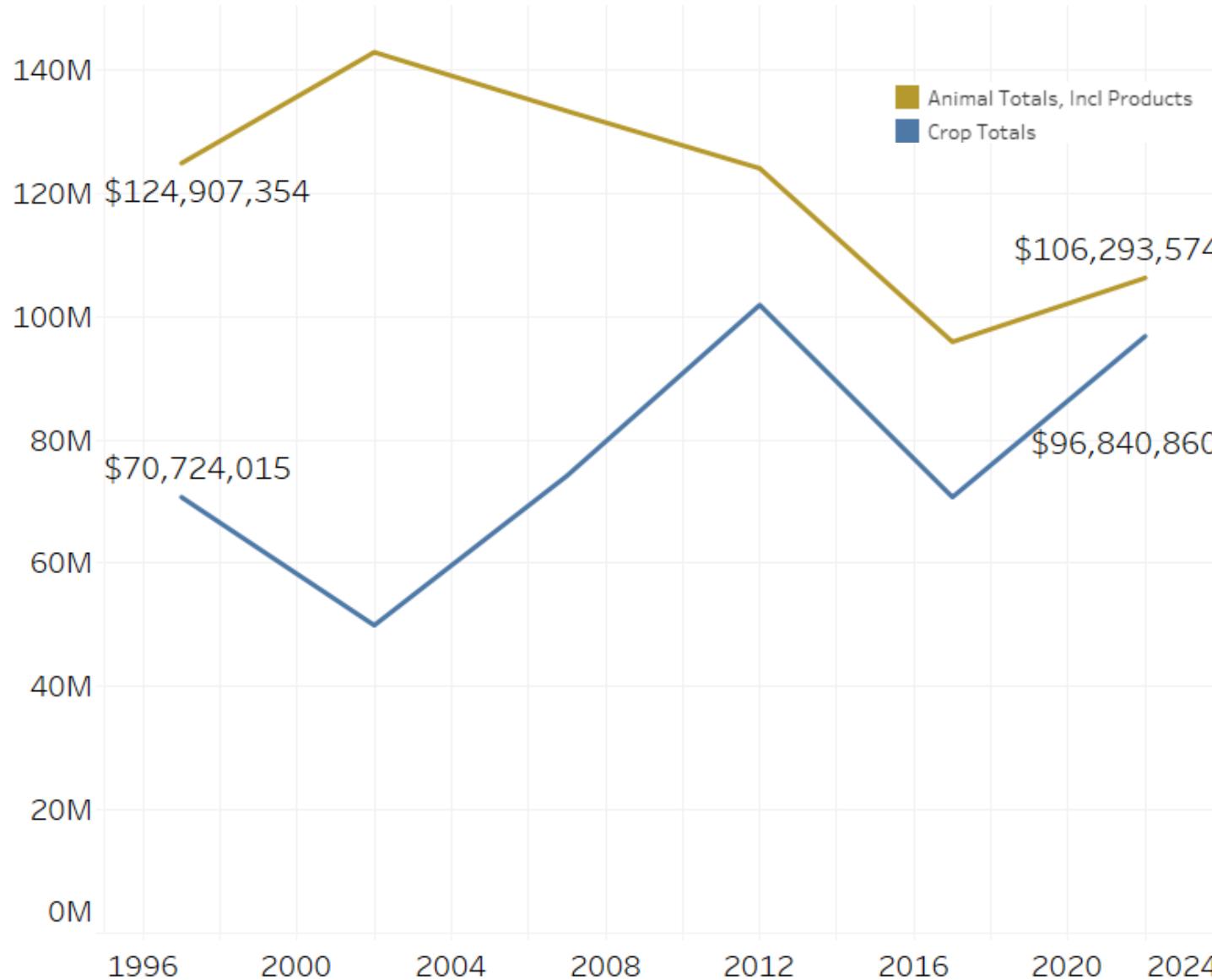
Farm Expenses



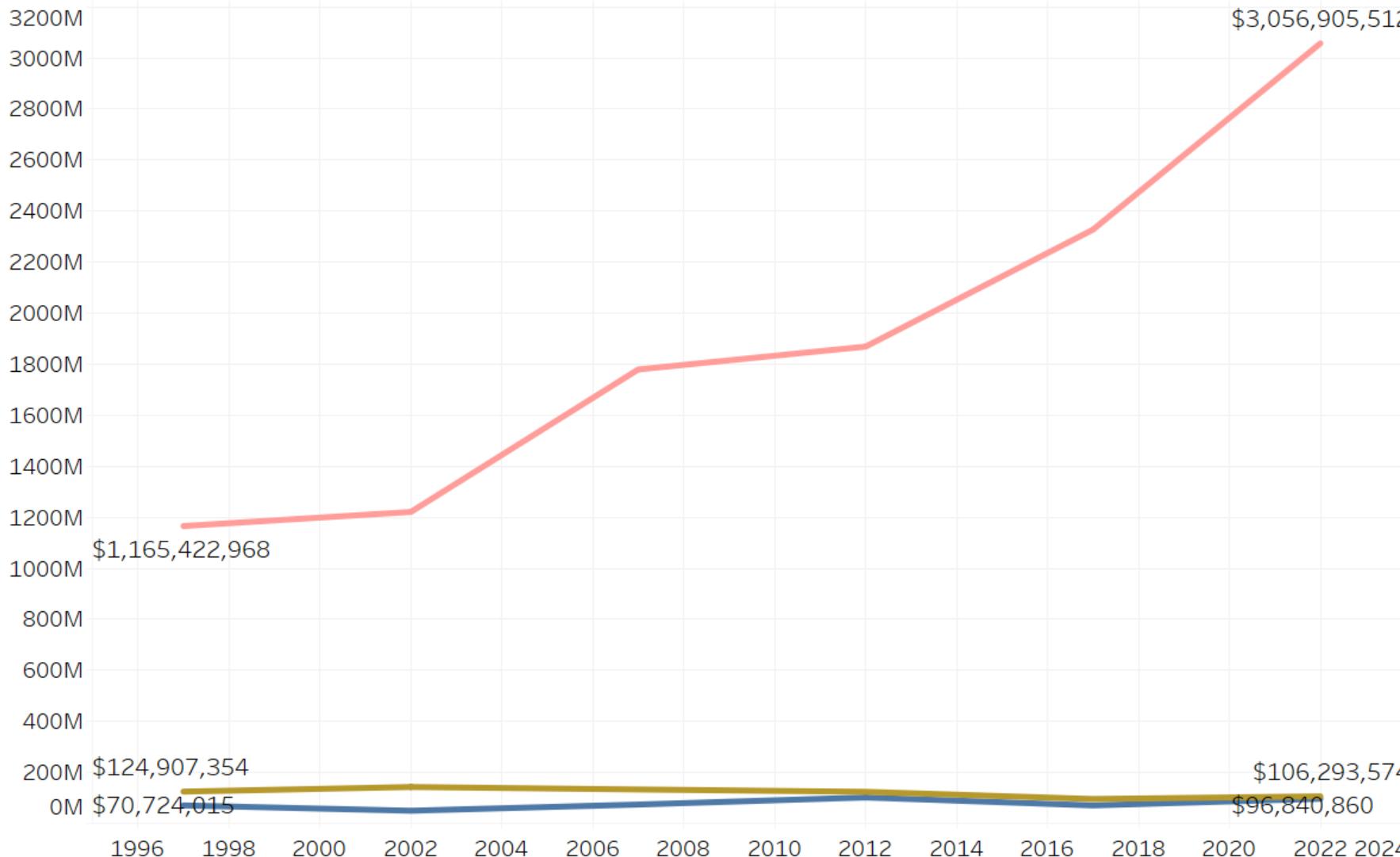
Low Dependency on Fed. Govt. Aid.



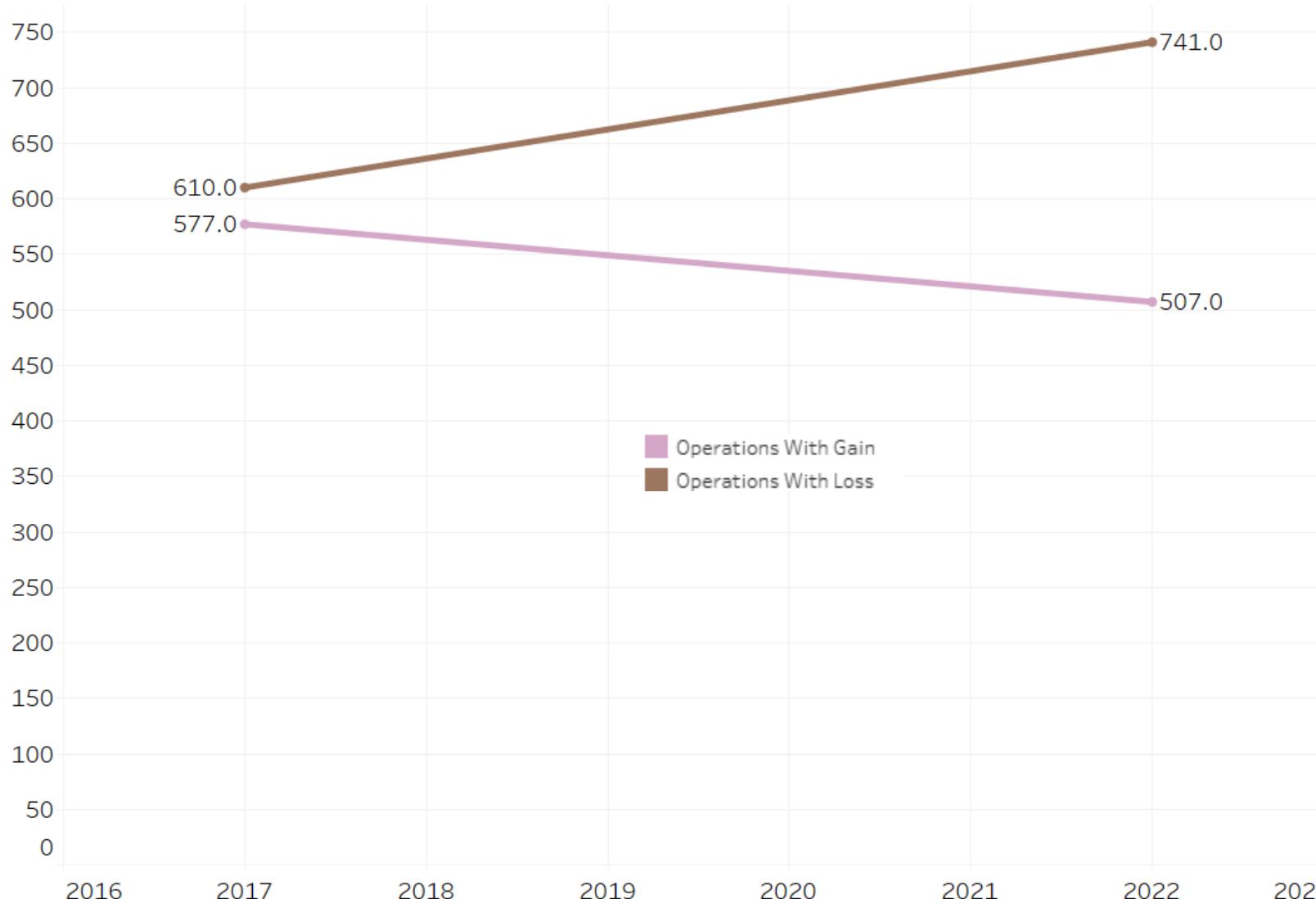
Farm Income, Adjusted to 2023



Runaway Value of Land



Operations with Gain/Loss



'Once it's gone, it's gone:' Box Elder County farmer preserving farming land for farming

Raegan A. Edelman Tremonton Leader Jul 23, 2025 0

In 1997, Thayne Tagge bought a farm on a whim after a summer searching for good peaches.

"They don't have to buy it from me," Tagge explained. "I'm giving it to them. But they don't get to sell it either. They have to use it — to farm it, to keep it going."

"This land, it's beautiful, it's a work of art. They call this the 'million-dollar view,'" Tagge said, standing above the orchards with a full view of Willard Bay, thriving orchards and even the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. "The best place to grow fruit is the best place to plant a home, too — everybody wants to build here."

"What I notice is that after the first, second or third generation, there's a quarrel that starts. One guy sticks around and keeps farming's daddy's property, right? And the other siblings get nothing from it, and then there's this big clash where they say, 'you either buy me out or we got to sell it,'" Tagge explained. "Usually they can't afford to buy them out, and selling is the only option."

"Less than 3% of our fruits and vegetables are grown in Utah," Tagge said. "Ninety-seven percent are trucked in. So when you stop at a fruit stand, or a farmer's market, you're not just buying a peach — you're casting a vote."

A vote for local food. For family farming. For keeping this land in trees instead of rooftops.

HJ NEWS



The market is creating a lot of pressure that is not entirely positive to agriculture.

Coordinated local and state ordinances may help address community concerns.

Save the Fruit Highway, Peach Days, Bring-Your-Tractor-To-School Day, without sacrificing economic prosperity.

Local Actions

Brigham City Council puts 192-acre rezone for housing development on hold for revisions, resident concerns about loss of agricultural land

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September 03, 2025

By Nelson Phillips Staff writer nphillips@benewsjournal.com

Box Elder County approves three new Ag protection areas

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July 09, 2025

By Nelson Phillips Staff writer nphillips@benewsjournal.com

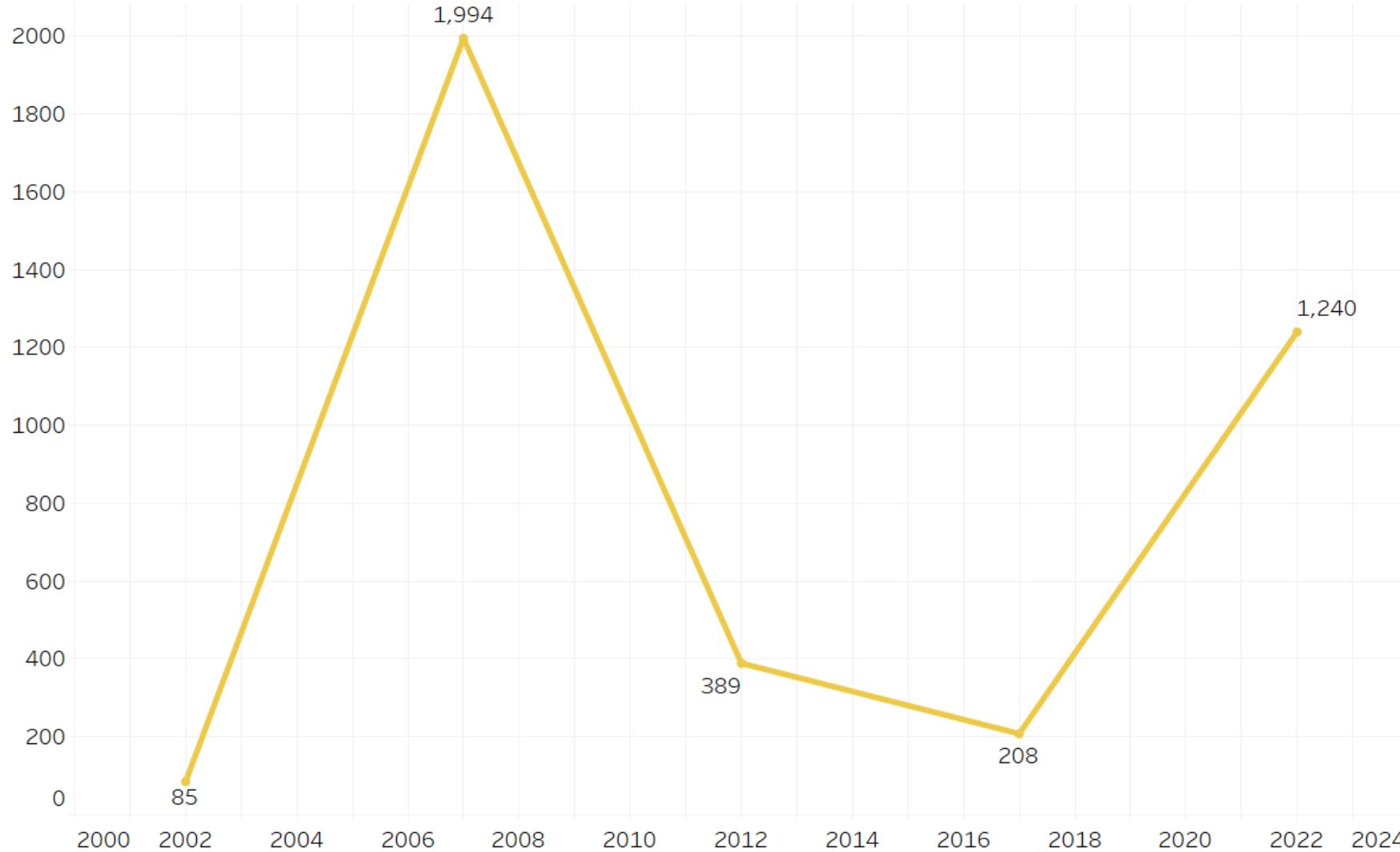
Ag heritage zone approved for 573 acres near Thatcher

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September 03, 2025

By Nelson Phillips Staff writer nphillips@benewsjournal.com

Honey, You're so Sweet



1,240 hives at ~50,000 bees per hive is 62 million bees.

Box Elder's population was about 64,000 in 2024 (ACS).

That's almost 1000 domestic bees per person.

It's a little less than 600-700 worker bees per pound of honey in their working life (6 weeks) which gets us...

~1.4 pounds of honey per person per year.

Questions?

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