

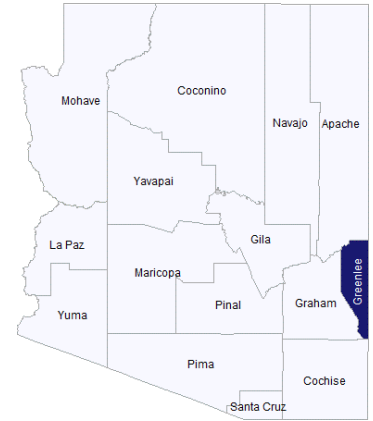
Greenlee County, AZ

Overview

Greenlee County is located in eastern Arizona along the New Mexico border. It is bordered by Apache County to the north and Graham county to the west. As of 2022 the population was just under 9,302 with the 100% of the county’s population residing in rural areas. Major population centers include Clifton and Duncan.

Top industries in Greenlee County include copper mining and mining-related industries. On-farm agriculture has a small footprint, accounting for less than 1% of all private employment and less than 1% of county GDP.

Characterized by its rugged, mountainous terrain, Greenlee County also has a relatively small proportion of land in farms (2%). Much of the land in Greenlee County is public land, or government-owned. Ranchers in Greenlee County lease land from public agencies for grazing. Greenlee County accounts for less than 1% of Arizona’s total agricultural cash receipts.



Map of Greenlee County, Arizona

Indicator	Greenlee County	Arizona
Land Area (square miles)	1,842	113,591
Land in Farms (Crops, Grazing) (square miles)	36	39,883
Population (2022)	9,302	7,359,197
Annual Average Population Growth Rate (2010-22)	1.0%	1.2%
Percent of Population Over 65 (2022)	14.5%	18.8%
Percent Population Rural (2020)	100.0%	10.7%
Total Employment (2022)	5,511	3,075,427
Share Federal, State, & Local Government Employment (2022)	10.3%	13.5%
GDP (2022)	\$2.3 billion	\$475.7 billion
Ag, Forestry, & Hunting GDP (on-farm only) (2022)	\$20.5 million	\$2.6 billion

Industry	Location Quotient
Copper, nickel, lead, and zinc mining	1,205.58
Support activities for metal mining	547.17
Other metal ore mining	287.95
Support activities for rail transportation	116.77
Water supply and irrigation systems	39.44
Construction and mining (except oil well) machinery and equipment merchant wholesalers	38.34
Natural gas distribution	34.09
Other nonresidential exterior contractors	33.17
Bowling centers	32.13
Corn farming	28.97

Top 10 Private Industries in Greenlee County by Establishment LQ, 2022

An economy can be characterized by the industries that make up the “base” of the economy. A common way to measure this is with location quotients (LQs). LQs are the ratio of a particular industry’s share of employment within a region to the same industry’s share of national employment. An industry with a LQ greater than 1.25 is considered part of the economic base, exporting goods and services and bringing money into the region. LQs also help identify a region’s areas of specialization. Higher LQs indicate greater specialization. Due to the size of Greenlee County’s economy and concentration of employment in a small number of large firms, non-disclosed data prevents presenting employment location quotients for the county. Therefore LQs are calculated based on the number of businesses. Greenlee County’s economy is heavily mining dependent, with copper, nickel, lead, and zinc mining ranking first by establishment LQ. Water supply and irrigation systems, and corn farming, are agriculture or agriculture-related industries that rank in the top 10.

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Every 5 years, U.S. Department of Agriculture releases the Census of Agriculture, the most comprehensive source of information on agricultural production by county. The Census provides information on the number of farms, types of crops and livestock produced, and farm characteristics, among other information. A farm is defined as any establishment that produced and sold, or could have sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural products in the Census year. The following information comes from the most recent 2022 Census of Agriculture.

Farms

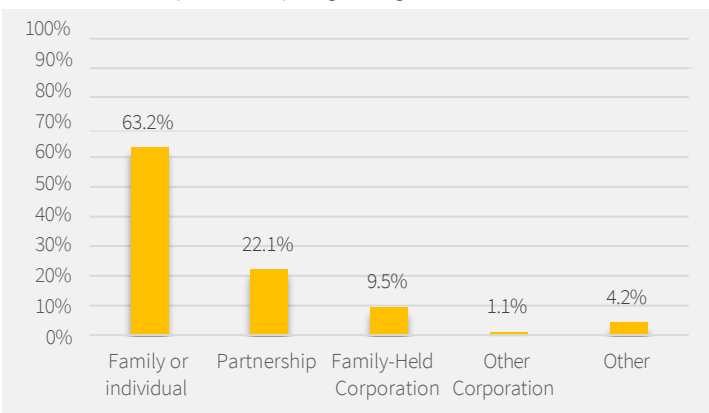
There were 95 farms in Greenlee County in 2022, covering 4,659 acres of cropland (100% of harvested cropland irrigated) and 18,610 acres of pastureland (8% irrigated). The average farm size was 245 acres, significantly smaller than the state average of 1,528 acres.

Of 95 total farms, 41 had less than \$2,500 in sales and 10 had more than \$100,000 in sales. A majority (63%) of county farms are family- or individually-held farms, 22% are partnerships, and 10% are family-held corporations.

Farms are classified by the type of agricultural products they produce. When a farm or ranch produces more than one agricultural product, they are classified by the product that constitutes more than 50% of their sales. The most common type of operation in Greenlee County is beef cattle ranching and farming (43 farms), followed by sugarcane farming, hay farming, and all other crop farming (20 farms).

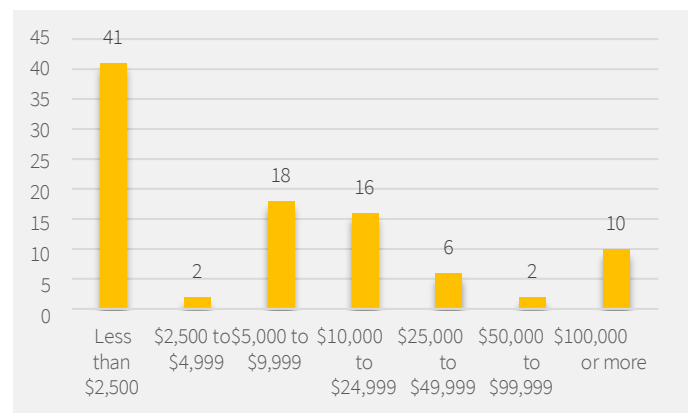
While the number of farms is helpful in understanding how many farms “specialize” in different types of agricultural production, it does not reflect the magnitude or scale of production by commodity, which is better captured by sales or cash receipts (next page).

Greenlee County Farms by Legal Organization, 2022



Source: USDA

Greenlee County Farms by Annual Sales, 2022



Source: USDA

Greenlee County Farms by Industry, 2022

Category	Farms
Total farms	95
Oilseed and grain farming	1
Vegetable and melon farming	3
Fruit and tree nut farming	3
Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production	3
Other crop farming	20
Cotton farming	0
Sugarcane farming, hay farming, and all other crop farming	20
Beef cattle ranching and farming	43
Cattle feedlots	0
Dairy cattle and milk production	0
Hog and pig farming	4
Poultry and egg production	0
Sheep and goat farming	4
Aquaculture and other animal production	14

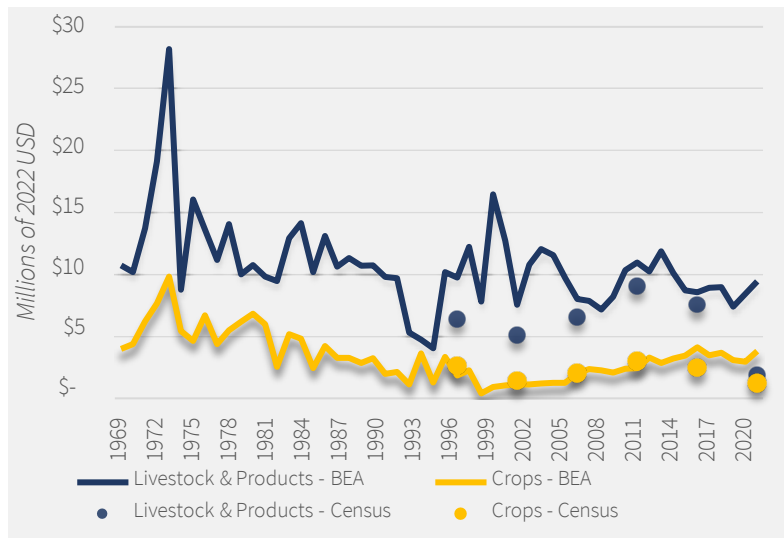
Source: USDA

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Production & Marketing

Greenlee County is a livestock-dominant county, with an estimated 60% of county cash receipts originating from sales of livestock. Its most significant commodity in terms of sales generated is cattle and calves with \$1.7 million sold in 2022. The county had \$1.2 million in sales of field crops in 2022, most of which were feed crops supporting livestock production, such as corn and hay.

Greenlee County Agricultural Cash Receipts, Crops & Livestock, 1969-2022



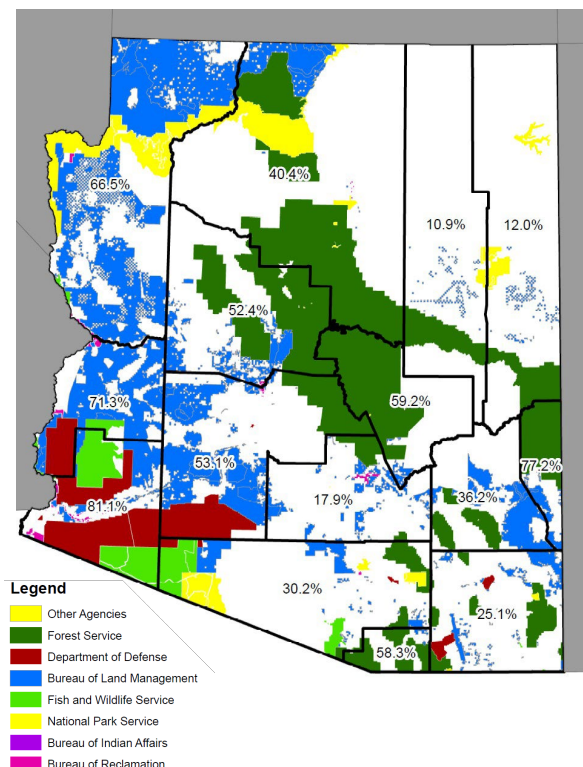
Source: USDA&BEA

Ranching & Public Lands

Greenlee County has the second highest share of federal lands of all counties in Arizona at 77.2% (Yuma County has 81.1%). As a livestock-dominant county, many Greenlee County livestock producers rely on federal grazing leases for grazing their livestock. The Forest Service (FS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are the two federal agencies that issue grazing permits. Approximately 64% of Greenlee County's land area is managed by the FS and 13% is managed by the BLM.

Ranching on public lands presents a series of unique considerations for producers. Wildland fire is one issue that affects livestock producers, particularly those operating in forested areas. Greenlee County has been significantly impacted by wildland fire in recent years. In the summer of 2011, the Wallow Fire burned a large portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Greenlee and Apache counties. As one of the largest fires in the state's history, grazing activity was disrupted for livestock producers who were forced to flee and move livestock to safety. Additionally, grazing on public lands requires coordinating with one or many land managers, complying with federal or state regulation, obtaining permits, and paying fees. These considerations have implications for operations and the cost of doing business (Arizona Ranching Budgets: 2016, Teegerstrom & Tronstad, 2017).

Share of County Area in Federal Lands and Type



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Irrigation Water Use

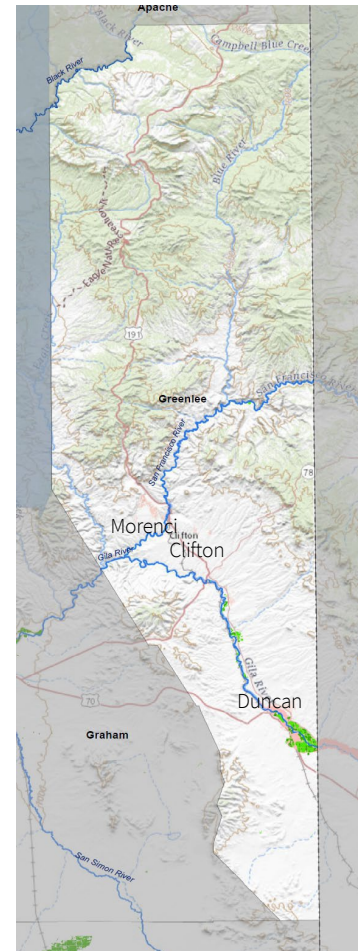
In Arizona, agriculture accounts for about 75% of the state’s water use. More than half of withdrawals for agricultural uses in the state are from surface water. In some areas of the state with high demand, groundwater withdrawals for irrigated agriculture are limited by the 1980 Groundwater Management Act. This legislation established five Active Management Areas (AMA) as well as other Irrigation Non-Expansion Areas (INA) where groundwater pumping and expansion of irrigated agriculture are limited. There is no land in Greenlee County within an AMA or INA.

Irrigated crop production in Greenlee County is concentrated in the Gila River Valley near Duncan, Arizona. The Gila River runs through portions of the county and use of Gila River water is governed according to the Globe Equity Decree of 1935, among other water rights settlements, both finalized and ongoing. Aside from agriculture, mining is an important water use in Greenlee County, responsible for roughly one-third of county water use.

For more information on water in Greenlee County, please visit the University of Arizona Water Resource Research Center county water factsheets by clicking [here](#) or scanning the QR code →



Greenlee County Water Map



About Us

Extension Regional Economic Analysis Program

The Extension Regional Economic Analysis Program (EREAP) conducts applied research and economic analysis addressing economic development issues around Arizona. We work serving the needs of Cooperative Extension and its stakeholders, such as Arizona agricultural and agribusiness industries, natural resource users and organizations, and regional economic groups, to provide specialized analysis and targeted information. For more information or to contact us, please click [here](#) or scan the QR code to visit our site →

