

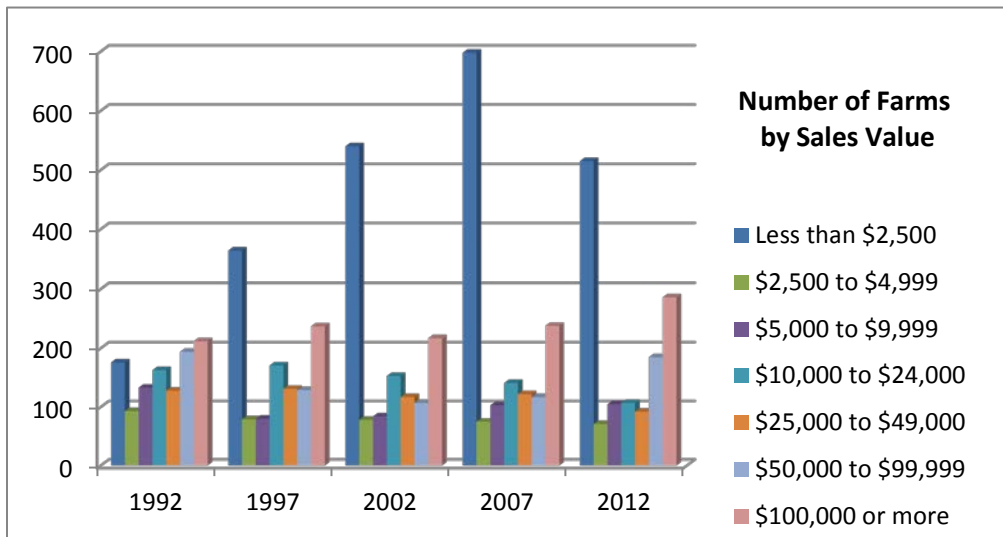


Agriculture

Farms

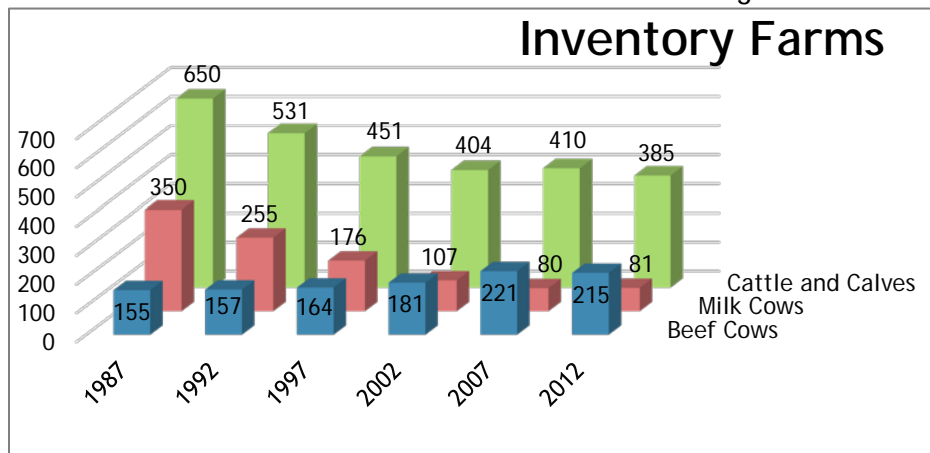
Rice County agricultural census has been useful in developing planning documents. Here are a few brief views of the trends in farm sizes, values, and farmers.

The Agricultural Censuses provide valuable insight into the overall farming operations that dominate the landscape in Rice County. As shown on this graph, the number of farms in each



earning range has not significantly changed in the recent past except for the smallest group: \$2,500 or less. The general trend with farms earning larger values from their products is in a slight decline.

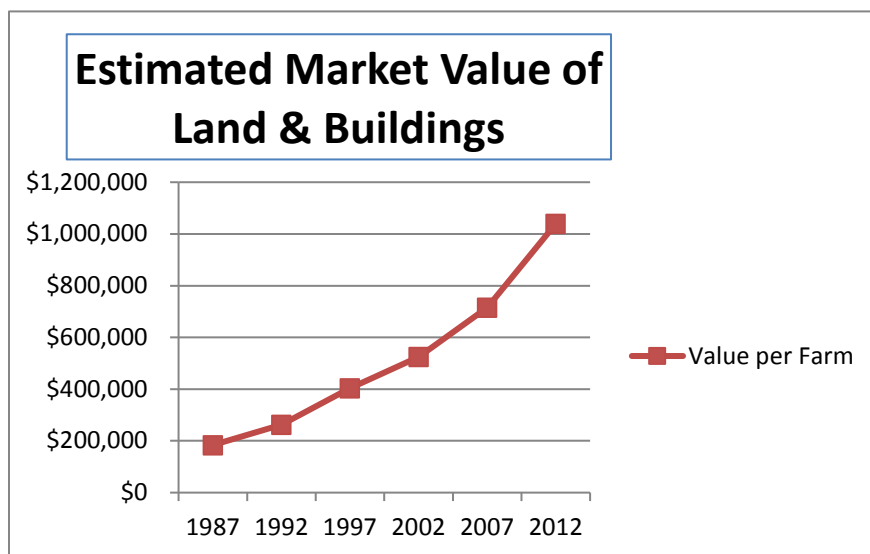
The agriculture of today, and that of yesterday, is changing and evolving to remain competitive in a global economy. Planning for these changes and recognizing the need for adjustments in agriculture will be important for farmers and non-farmers alike in order to preserve the agricultural economy of Rice County.



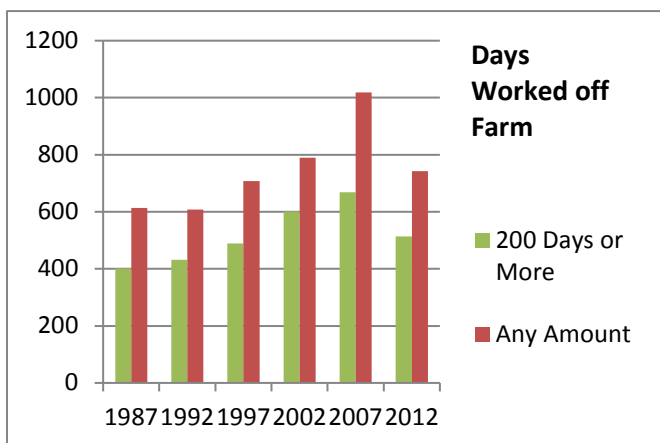
Another of the most significant trends in Rice County is the decrease in the dairy herds and in the total number of dairy farms. Dairy production is changing because it is such a market-driven industry. Since 1945, the preferences of consumers have shifted to low-fat products. Farms selling milk in Rice County since 1987 number less than one-quarter of what they did in the 1970s, while herd sizes have also decreased. The shift to fewer and larger farms in Rice County has been occurring since the late 1970s.

This shift has occurred due to an aging farming population, higher costs, difficulty of maintaining the competitive posture of the family farm, and the attractiveness of higher paying manufacturing jobs in urban areas.

Shown in this table are some of the real pressures driving many of the growth decisions made by area farm owners and operators.



In Rice County, the farmers earning at least some of their income in off-farm work is ever-increasing. This trend should continue as the farm crisis continues. The significant increase in hobby farmers is also reflected in the increase of the number of operators who have reported working days off of the farm.



Farming operations and their overall makeup are not the only things changing in agriculture in the county. The Agricultural Census provides valuable insight into the overall farming operations that dominate the landscape in Rice County.

<https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/index.php>