

Iron County Agriculture Profile

Economics Department

Iron County

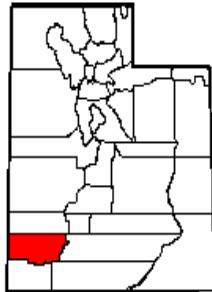
AG/Econ/county-2005-14

E. Bruce Godfrey, Extension Specialist
 Chad Reid, Iron County Agent
 Dale Baker and Spencer Parkinson,
 Research Assistants

Area: 3,298 square miles
 (2,110,720 acres)

Population: 35,741
 (U.S. Census Bureau
 Estimate, 2003)

County seat: Parowan

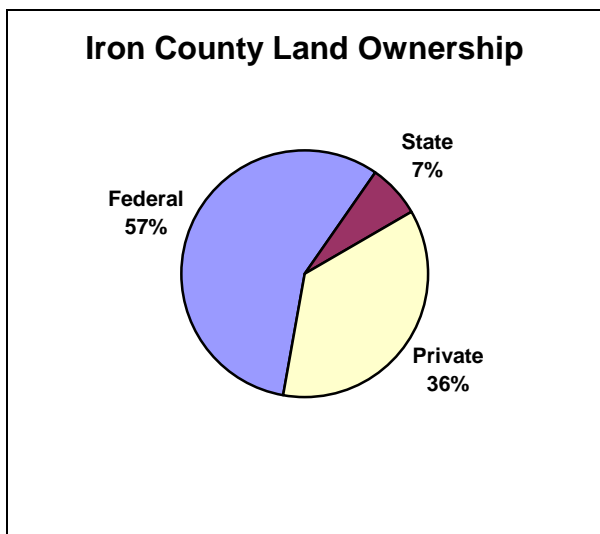


Location

Iron County is located in the south western portion of the state and is bordered by Nevada on the west.

Land Ownership

The land ownership within the county is divided as follows:



Source: (Utah County Fact Book, 2002)

The majority of the federally-owned ground is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The state owned ground is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA). Portions of the state owned land are wildlife preserves. The private ground is primarily farm ground and grazing areas.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 479,102 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 1094 acres and an average value of \$808 per acre. The county had 89,991 acres in cropland of which 63,197 were harvested and 68,705 were irrigated. The value of livestock and crops produced was listed at \$77,400,000.

Agricultural Snapshot

The major crops grown in Iron County with 2004 yields and total acres harvested were:

2004 Primary Crops	Yields	Total harvested acres	Average yield/acre
All alfalfa hay	263,000 tons	54,000	4.9 tons
Other hay	16,000 tons	4,500	3.6 tons
Corn silage	9,500 tons	500	19 tons
Wheat (2003)	110,000 bu	1,200	92 bu
Barley	22,000 bu	200	110 bu

In 2003 county production statistics (2004 Utah Agricultural Statistics), Iron County was the highest producing county for potatoes. It was second in production of alfalfa hay and hogs. The county had the fourth largest inventory of sheep and the fifth highest in “All cattle and calves.”

Iron County was ranked third in total cash revenue from crop production.

Typical ground preparation for planting alfalfa is begun by spraying Roundup in the fall or early spring to kill the quack grass prior to disking. The ground is then harrowed and planted. The procedure is the same for planting small grains, except Roundup is typically not used prior to planting grains. About 98% of all grain is planted in the spring of the year.

The most prevalent crop rotation practice is to leave alfalfa in for seven years, plant oats for two years, then replant alfalfa. Producers typically get three to four cuttings of alfalfa each year. About 75% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) are purchased locally while the remaining 25% of those is bought in a neighboring county.

Irrigation water sources include ground water in addition to several small streams.

Growing Season

The growing season in Iron County averages about three months. Following are some of the details on climatology in three areas of Iron County.

Iron	Climate Characteristics			
County locations	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze -free period
Cedar FAA Airport	11.49 in	May 19	Oct 2	135 days
Modena	10.28 in	May 31	Sept. 23	116 days
Parowan Power Plant	12.23 in	May 23	Sept. 29	129 days

The major classes of livestock produced in the county along with their associated inventories as of January 2004 were:

Livestock Type	Number of Head
All Cattle & Calves	22,000
Beef Cows	9,000
Milk Cows	2,500
Sheep & Lambs	24,000

For more information visit these Web sites:

<http://utahreach.org/iron/visitor/about.htm>

<http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/htmlfiles/ut/ut.ppt.html>

<http://climate.usu.edu/utahclim/freeze/default.htm>

<http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/summary/listut.html>

http://www.utahweather.org/UWC/utahs_climate/climate_of_utah.html

<http://biology.usgs.gov/s+t/SNT/noframe/gb150.htm>

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work. Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jack M. Payne, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University.