

Before white settlers arrived in Nebraska, buffalo and beaver populations were significant. Today, buffalo are never seen outside game preserves. The beaver population, after being diminished by trappers, has become more plentiful in recent years. Other animals in Nebraska include white-tail and mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, antelope, bobcats, foxes, coyotes, badgers, squirrels, prairie dogs, muskrats, skunks, raccoons, rabbits and opossums.

Game birds, especially pheasants, grouse, ducks, geese and quail, are plentiful in Nebraska. The state's waters yield a variety of fish, including bass, carp, catfish, crappie, perch, pike, trout and walleye. The Platte River and lakes in the Sandhills serve as "rest stops" for many migratory birds, including the famous Sandhill cranes (see previous page).

Another migration rest stop of international significance is the Rainwater Basin district in south-central Nebraska. Within this district, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages more than 23,000 acres of wetlands and adjacent tall-grass prairie to provide habitat for migratory birds and resident wildlife.²²

ECONOMY²³

Agriculture

Nebraska's economy revolves around its agriculture industry. In 2020, 92 percent of the state's land — 45.2 million acres — was farm and ranch land. Cash receipts from farm marketing contribute more than \$21 billion to Nebraska's economy. Producers have utilized the state's fertile soil, abundant water and technological advances to produce record-high crop yields in recent years.

Crop Production²⁴

Nebraska is a national leader in crop production. In 2019, Nebraska led the nation in production of Great Northern beans, grown in the western one-third of the state. The state ranked second in proso millet, pinto bean and light red kidney bean production; third in corn for grain production; fourth in soybean and all dry edible bean production; fifth in soybean exports and alfalfa hay production; sixth in all hay production; seventh in sugar beet and sunflower production; and eighth in winter wheat production. Potatoes also play a significant role in the state's agricultural economy.

Nebraska's top cash crop is corn. Each year, more than 8 million acres of the state's land is planted in corn. The state's livestock, poultry and ethanol industries are the largest corn consumers.

Products relating to agriculture, such as irrigation systems and farm equipment, are

²² For more information about the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District and national wildlife refuges in Nebraska, see Pages 141-144.

²³ Information for this section compiled from the following sources: Nebraska Department of Agriculture; Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Nebraska Department of Labor; Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce; Bureau of Business Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; *Fortune* magazine.

²⁴ See Page 455 for a complete set of Nebraska's rankings in agriculture production.

manufactured in the state. Agricultural businesses are an important part of Nebraska's economy, with one in three jobs in the state relating to the agricultural industry.

Livestock Production

Nebraska also is a leader in livestock production and livestock and poultry can be found on half of the state's farms. There are 22 million acres of rangeland and pastureland in the state, half of which are in the Sandhills. In 2020, Nebraska was second in the nation in all cattle and calves and all cattle on feed. In 2019, the state ranked second in commercial red meat production. In 2018, Nebraska was first in beef and veal exports, third in cash receipts from all livestock and products and sixth in all hogs and pigs on farms.

Turkey, poultry, dairy, sheep and goat production add diversity and play an important role in the state's economy as well.



Cattle Ranching in Nebraska

Other Industries

Although agriculture dominates Nebraska's economy, more of Nebraska's income has come from other industries in recent years.

In 2019, the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program reported an average of 972,763 jobs in Nebraska. Health care and social assistance, retail trade and manufacturing are the private industry sectors that employ the greatest number of Nebraskans. More than 135,000 individuals work in the health care and social assistance industry, which is the state's largest employer. Utilities, which paid the highest average weekly wage in the state in 2020, is concentrated in the state's large urban areas.

Lincoln is a major employer in education, led by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and other institutions of higher education. The city has a higher proportion of educational services and public administration employees than the state as a whole. Omaha is a major center for the finance and insurance industries. Nebraska's largest city also is home to livestock and grain exchanges.

Five Nebraska-based businesses, all of which are headquartered in Omaha, are in the Fortune 500, *Fortune* magazine's annual list of the largest industrial and service

corporations in the United States based on revenue. These five are:

- Berkshire Hathaway, a diversified holding and investment firm
- Union Pacific, a railway network operating in the western two-thirds of the United States
- Mutual of Omaha, an insurance and financial services company
- Peter Kiewit Sons', an engineering and construction firm
- TD Ameritrade Holding, a brokerage firm

Fortune 500 Companies Based in Nebraska, 2020²⁵

| Company | Headquarters | Fortune 500 Rank | Revenues |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Berkshire Hathaway | Omaha | 6 | \$254,616,000,000 |
| Union Pacific | Omaha | 149 | 21,708,000,000 |
| Mutual of Omaha | Omaha | 300 | 10,455,700,000 |
| Peter Kiewit Sons' | Omaha | 307 | 10,283,000,000 |
| TD Ameritrade Holding | Omaha | 486 | 6,016,000,000 |

²⁵ Source: fortune.com, 2020

Income in Nebraska, 2019²⁶

| Income ²⁷ | 2019 |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Total Personal Income | 104,333,990 |
| Nonfarm earnings | 74,968,643 |
| Farm earnings | 1,359,090 |

²⁶ Figures are in thousands of dollars. Source: BEA Personal Income and Earnings by NAICS Industry, 1st quarter 2019.

²⁷ Farm earnings consist of proprietors' net farm income, wages of hired farm labor, pay-in-kind and officers' salaries of corporate farms.

Employment by Major Occupation in Nebraska, 2019²⁸

| Occupation | Number of Employees |
|---|---------------------|
| Office and Administrative Support | 133,340 |
| Sales and Related | 94,910 |
| Transportation and Material Moving | 93,340 |
| Food Preparation and Serving | 83,160 |
| Production | 73,080 |
| Healthcare Practitioners | 62,390 |
| Education, Instruction and Library | 61,220 |
| Management | 52,180 |
| Business and Financial Operations | 49,230 |
| Construction and Extraction | 46,420 |
| Installation, Maintenance and Repair | 42,090 |
| Healthcare Support | 37,600 |
| Computer and Mathematical | 30,740 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance | 29,610 |
| Personal Care and Service | 22,880 |
| Protective Service | 16,580 |
| Community and Social Service | 13,360 |
| Architecture and Engineering | 11,250 |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media | 11,050 |
| Life, Physical and Social Science | 8,550 |
| Legal | 5,300 |
| Farming, Fishing and Forestry | 3,780 |
| TOTAL | 982,040 |

²⁸ Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, State Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2019.