

# Estimating Arkansas Farmland Values Based on Historic Index Numbers

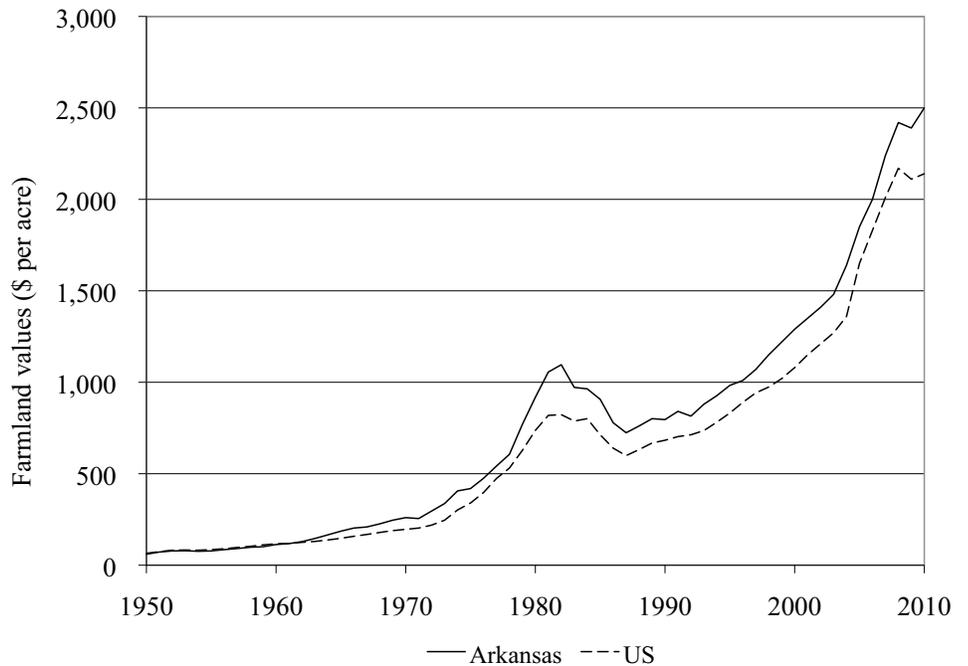
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Farmland values have generally increased over the past 60 years (Figure 1). A few exceptions to this general trend have occurred – most notably during the 1980s when Arkansas farmland values decreased by 34 percent between 1982 and 1987. However, this decrease during the 1980s followed a nearly 200 percent increase in farmland values during the 1970s. The farmland value high, set in 1982, was exceeded 16 years later in 1998. Between 1992 and 2008, Arkansas farmland values increased an average of 11 percent per year, with a low of 2.8 percent in 1996 and a high of nearly 13 percent in 2005.

Although a decrease in land values occurred in 2009, the 2010 values exceeded the previous high set in 2008.

Historic farmland values are of interest to farmers, landowners, investors and policy makers. The farmland value index in Table 1 can be used to estimate farmland value in a given year if the value was known for any other year since 1950. The Guide to Using the Arkansas Farmland Value Index section accompanies Table 1. Index numbers were calculated based upon the year 1982; therefore, the index value for 1982 equals 100.

**Figure 1. Arkansas and U.S. Farmland Values**  
(Source: USDA, ERS and NASS)



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**Table 1. Index Numbers<sup>1</sup> of Arkansas Farmland Values**

Year	Index (1982 = 100)	Year	Index (1982 = 100)	Year	Index (1982 = 100)
1950	5.47	1971	23.27	1992	74.36
1951	6.57	1972	27.01	1993	80.29
1952	7.12	1973	30.75	1994	84.58
1953	7.21	1974	37.04	1995	89.69
1954	6.93	1975	38.23	1996	92.15
1955	7.12	1976	43.34	1997	97.63
1956	7.76	1977	49.45	1998	104.93
1957	8.30	1978	55.29	1999	111.31
1958	8.94	1979	70.26	2000	117.70
1959	9.22	1980	83.76	2001	123.18
1960	10.31	1981	96.35	2002	128.65
1961	10.77	1982	100.00	2003	135.04
1962	11.77	1983	88.69	2004	149.64
1963	13.32	1984	87.96	2005	168.80
1964	15.15	1985	82.76	2006	182.48
1965	16.97	1986	71.08	2007	204.38
1966	18.52	1987	66.06	2008	220.80
1967	19.07	1988	69.43	2009	218.07
1968	20.62	1989	73.08	2010	228.10
1969	22.45	1990	72.63		
1970	23.72	1991	76.73		

Source: USDA-NASS

<sup>1</sup>Index numbers, based on 1982 = 100, are calculated from USDA sources including NASS and ERS.

Some years have been revised compared to previous versions of this table due to updates from the Census of Agriculture.

## Bottom-Line Considerations

Index numbers are based on nominal values and are not based on real values adjusted for inflation or purchasing power. Although it is useful for estimating the value of Arkansas farmland relative to another point in time, the index number only provides a single piece of information to include with other information in the decision-making process.

The value of farmland fluctuates for a variety of reasons and provides opportunity for farmers,

landowners and investors. With a continued change in the market for Arkansas farmland, owners and potential owners of farmland can use index numbers based upon USDA information to estimate the value of land given a known value in another year. Estimated farmland values do not substitute for land appraisals and may deviate from true market value for any number of reasons, including land improvements, buildings and facilities, pressure from development and urban sprawl, mineral rights and previous farm production management practices.

## Guide to Using the Arkansas Farmland Value Index

The index for farmland values can be used to estimate the farmland value for a past year or to estimate the value of farmland in the current year, depending upon the given information. If the value of farmland is known in any year, the value can be estimated for any other year since 1950 with the farmland value index.

### Estimating the farmland value for a past year

The farmland value for a past year can be estimated with the formula:

$$\text{farmland value from past year} = \text{current farmland value} * \frac{\text{index from past year}}{\text{index for current year}}$$

**Hypothetical Example 1:** Current land values are \$2,250 per acre. What was the value of this land in 1987? Using the table, the index for 1987 and 2009 are 66.06 and 218.07, respectively.

$$\text{Estimated 1987 farmland value} = \$2,250 * \frac{66.06}{218.07}$$

Estimated 1987 farmland value equals \$682 per acre.

### Estimating the current farmland value based on the value in a past year

Current farmland values can be estimated using past values with the formula:

$$\text{current farmland value} = \text{farmland value from past year} * \frac{\text{index for current year}}{\text{index from past year}}$$

**Hypothetical Example 2:** My relative paid \$225 per acre for land in 1969. What is the estimated value of this land today? Using the table, the index for 1969 and 2009 are 22.45 and 218.07, respectively.

$$\text{Estimated 2009 farmland value} = \$225 * \frac{218.07}{22.45}$$

Estimated 2009 farmland value equals \$2,186 per acre.

## Data Resources

- Before 1994: USDA-ERS Value of Land & Buildings Per Acre. Stock Number 87012. January 1995.  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/archive/87012/>
- After 1994: USDA-NASS. Agricultural Land Values and Cash Rents Annual Summary.  
<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1446>

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