German Agriculture*

- More than half of Germany’s national territory is used for farming. Around 1 million people currently work full-time or part-time in approximately 285,000 agricultural holdings.
- One-third of Germany is covered in forests
- Germany’s farming sector is one of the four largest producers in the European Union. Germany is the largest pork producer, the largest milk producer, and the second largest beef & veal producer in the EU. Its top five commodities are milk, sugar, wheat, potatoes and barley.
- Other important commodities are fruits, vegetables, cattle, pork, poultry, wine, and beer
- German agriculture generates around 25% of its sales revenue from exports, which include high value-added specialty products, with meat and meat products ranking first, followed by dairy, sweet products and bakery goods.
- 46% of farmers earn majority of their income off the farm

Click here for more quick facts and figures on German agriculture from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Land Use

- 34% arable land and permanent cropland
- 30% forests
- 13% grasslands
- 60% land is leased
- 90 of farms are sole-proprietor; 10% partnerships, limited liability companies, cooperatives and private limited companies
Types of Farms

Government Support

2014 reform of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
The support funds provided by the EU are divided across two pillars. Direct payments to farmers (1st pillar) are linked to the farmers undertaking environmental measures. This consequently supports the agricultural sector in rendering services for the climate, for the preservation of diverse cultivated landscapes, and for sustainable production, and as a result leads Europe’s agricultural sector becoming more ecological. To provide this support, Germany has annual EU funds of approximately 4.8 billion Euros at its disposal up until 2020.

The so-called 2nd pillar supports programs of action for rural development. This money consequently benefits the regions first and foremost. The EU support for rural development (EAFRD support) provides an important basis for the funding of aid schemes in Germany. As the 2nd pillar of the CAP, Germany can use approximately 1.35 billion Euros of EU funds annually in the programming period 2014–2020. These EU funds, supplemented by national funds, serve to achieve a balanced development of rural areas and to contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources, to climate change mitigation, and to fostering a competitive agricultural sector.

Agriculture Social Security Policy
The BMEL’s agricultural social security policy flanks structural change in the agricultural sector and provides a stable foundation for giving due consideration to the social affairs of farmers and their families. Agricultural social security policy is also a creative, target-oriented policy for the benefit of active farmers and retired farmers still living on their farms, and consequently part of rural development policy. With this support, the agricultural social security system provides farmers and their families with financial protection against the vicissitudes of life (illness, need for long-term care, work-related accidents, reduction in earning capacity, old age and death of the insured person). Absorbing the financial impact of structural change is the responsibility of society as a whole and ensures that the country retains a productive agricultural sector. This is why the federal government provides financial aid under its agricultural social policy (around EUR 3.7 billion in 2014).

Additional Resources:
Federal Ministry of Agriculture
http://www.bmel.de/EN/Homepage/homepage_node.html
2012 Germany Agricultural Census
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Agricultural_census_in_Germany
German “Farm Bureau” – The German Farmers Association - Deutscher Bauernverband (DBV)
http://www.bauernverband.de/information-english
Mintec Global
https://www.mintecglobal.com/de/newsletter/lead-article/agricultural-food-industry-importance-germany/

*2014 Federal Ministry of Agriculture Report (BMEL)