

Study shows agriculture and forestry dominate Alabama economy

February 13 2013, by Jim Langcuster

(Phys.org)—Agriculture and forestry contribute \$70.4 billion annually to Alabama's economy and account for 22 percent of the state's workforce, according to a study released today.

"The findings from this study are a powerful tool for our industry," said Leigha Cauthen, executive director of the Alabama Agribusiness Council. "This research highlights the importance of agriculture to our state's economy by providing reliable and credible facts we can use as advocates for the state's farmers, agribusinesses and rural landowners."

The report titled "Economic Impacts of Alabama's Agricultural, Forestry, and Related Industries" was a collaborative effort of the Agribusiness Council, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University and other businesses and organizations. It revealed that, in addition to remaining Alabama's largest economic engine, agriculture and forestry are the state's second largest employer.

According to the study, every \$1 million in direct sales of Alabama agricultural and timber products generates 10 jobs.

Extension System Director Gary Lemme said the report shows how [agricultural research](#), education and outreach pay dividends for the state.

"Aside from providing a detailed picture of this sector of Alabama's economy, the study's findings also underscore the strong case for continued investment in agriculture and forestry," Lemme said.

Timber production and processing lead all farm and forestry sectors in economic impact, generating \$21.4 billion annually and employing 122,020 Alabamians. Poultry and eggs top traditional farm commodities in production and processing with \$15.1 billion in economic impact and 86,237 jobs.

Alabama's other top crops, in order of [economic impact](#), are: greenhouse, nursery and floriculture; [beef cattle](#); cotton; and soybean, corn and [wheat production](#).

The study also examined commodities unique to Alabama's economy, including peanuts and catfish. Peanuts contribute \$211.4 million annually to Alabama's economy and 2,046 jobs. Catfish accounts for \$158.2 million and 5,829 jobs.

"We produce and process a wide diversity of products that not only are consumed here in Alabama but are exported to every corner of the world," Lemme said. "The main goal of the study is to demonstrate the enormous and often understated presence of this sector, its enduring influence and, most important of all, its immense potential to all Alabamians and public policy officials."

Provided by Auburn University

Citation: Study shows agriculture and forestry dominate Alabama economy (2013, February 13) retrieved 1 May 2024 from

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