

Native shrubs include wild plums and chokecherries, found throughout Nebraska. A variety of flowers, such as goldenrod, larkspur, columbine, wild roses and sunflowers, thrive throughout the state.

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.²¹

ECONOMY²²

Agriculture

Nebraska's economy revolves around its agriculture industry. In 2006, 93 percent of the state's land — 46.4 million acres — was farm and ranch land, most of it privately owned.

Producers have taken advantage of the state's fertile soil, abundant water, intensive cultivation and advanced farming methods to produce record-high crop yields in recent years. In 2004, gross cash receipts from farm marketing totaled nearly \$12 billion, and Nebraska had 48,000 farms that produced food for consumers in the United States and abroad.

Crop Production²³

Nebraska is a national leader in crop production. In 2005, Nebraska led the nation in production of Great Northern beans, grown in the western one-third of the state. The state ranked third in dry edible bean production; sixth in alfalfa hay production; third in sorghum grain production and corn for grain production; second in pinto bean production; seventh in sorghum silage production; and fifth in soybean production.

²¹ For more information about the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District and national wildlife refuges in Nebraska, see Page 154.

²² 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.

²³ See Pages 472 for a complete set of Nebraska's rankings in agriculture production.

Winter wheat, grown in southern and western Nebraska; soybeans, grown in eastern Nebraska; sugar beets, grown in western Nebraska; and wild hay, grown throughout Nebraska, also play significant roles 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, which is produced statewide. The state's livestock and poultry industries are the largest corn consumers.

Products relating to agriculture, such as irrigation systems and farm equipment, are manufactured in the state to support its agricultural economy. Agriculture equipment production companies often are an important part of many towns' local economies.

In recent years, producers and entrepreneurs have been exploring nontraditional uses for traditional crops. New types of cash crops also have been introduced, such as white and other specialty corn, vegetables, popcorn, milkweed and Christmas trees, to name a few.

Livestock Production

Nebraska also is a leader in livestock production. In 2004, livestock production and livestock products were a \$7.3 billion industry located throughout the state. In 2005, Nebraska ranked first nationally in commercial livestock slaughter and second in commercial cattle slaughter; third in total number of cattle and calves; and second in cattle on feed, fed cattle and calves marketed.

In 2004 the pork industry, located primarily in eastern Nebraska, was the fifth largest in the country, bringing in \$762 million in receipts annually.

Poultry production in eastern Nebraska and sheep production in eastern and western Nebraska also are important sectors of the state's economy.



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.

Manufacturing, which employed almost 400,000 workers in 2005, is a major employer among nonfarm industries, with most manufacturing sites located in the state's large urban areas. Douglas, Lancaster, Hall and Platte counties employ almost 49,000 workers in manufacturing. Food processing is the leading type of manufacturing, followed by the manufacturing of machinery and fabricated metal products.

The service sector, which includes health services and business services, generates the most earnings in Nebraska. Government ranks second in earnings generated, while manufacturing is third.

The service sector also employs more workers than any other industry. Government jobs, many of which are in Lincoln, employ the second-highest number of workers. Wholesale and retail trades, taken together, employ the third-highest number of workers, with general merchandise stores being the largest employer among retail establishments in the state.

Lincoln is a major employer in education, led by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and other institutions of higher education. Omaha is a major center for food processing, healthcare, insurance, trade, transportation and telecommunications. Livestock and grain exchanges also are in Nebraska's largest city.

Five Nebraska-based businesses 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
- ConAgra, a food processing and marketing company
- Union Pacific, a railway network operating in the western two-thirds of the United States
- Peter Kiewit Sons', an engineering and construction firm
- Mutual of Omaha, a mutual life and health insurance company

These corporations have their headquarters in Omaha.

Many other Fortune 500 companies have major operations in Nebraska. First Data Corporation, a provider of financial transaction processing services has several operating units in Omaha. Tyson Foods and Wal-Mart are Nebraska's largest private-sector employers.

Fortune 500 Companies Based in Nebraska, 2006²⁴

Company	Headquarters	Fortune 500 Rank	Revenues
Berkshire Hathaway	Omaha	13.	\$81,663,000,000
ConAgra	Omaha	143.	15,515,700,000
Union Pacific	Omaha	164.	13,578,000,000
Peter Kiewit Sons'	Omaha	483.	4,145,000,000
Mutual of Omaha Insurance	Omaha	491.	4,051,200,000

²⁴ Source: *Fortune* magazine, April 17, 2006.



Union Pacific Railroad Cars in North Platte's Bailey Yard

Largest Public Employers in Nebraska, 2005²⁵

Employer	Location	Employees
State of Nebraska Government (excluding university)	Statewide	18,653
U.S. Government (excluding Department of Defense)	Statewide	15,403
U.S. Air Force/Offutt	Omaha	11,137*
Omaha Public Schools	Omaha	8,073**
Lincoln Public Schools	Lincoln	5,900*
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Lincoln	4,915
University of Nebraska Medical Center	Omaha	3,411
City of Omaha	Omaha	2,800*
City of Lincoln	Lincoln	2,746*
Millard Public Schools	Millard	2,498*
Douglas County	Omaha	2,404*
Omaha Public Power District	Omaha	2,354
Nebraska Public Power District	Columbus	2,153
Central Community College	Grand Island	1,672*
University of Nebraska at Omaha	Omaha	1,328
Lancaster County	Lincoln	1,255*
US Veterans Hospital	Omaha	1,199
Air and Army National Guard	Lincoln	923*
University of Nebraska at Kearney	Kearney	893

²⁵ Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Omaha World-Herald. Those public employee numbers designated with an asterisk (*) are reported employment numbers in 2003 because 2005 numbers were not available. A double asterisk (**) are reported employment numbers in 2002 because more recent numbers were not available.

Largest Private Employers in Nebraska, 2005²⁶

Employer	Location	Employees
Tyson Foods, Inc.	Dakota City	11,000
Wal-Mart	Bellevue	9,755
Union Pacific Corp.	Omaha	7,200
Alegent Health	Omaha	6,675
First Data Corp.	Omaha	6,300
Mutual of Omaha Insurance Co.	Omaha	5,400
Hy-Vee Food Stores	Omaha	4,843
First National of Nebraska Inc.	Omaha	4,651
Nebraska Methodist Health System	Omaha	4,446
Burlington Northern	Omaha	4,400
BryanLGH Medical Center	Lincoln	4,200
ConAgra Inc.	Omaha	4,000
Cabela's Inc.	Sidney	3,887
Cargill Inc.	Blair	3,504
Swift & Co.	Omaha, Grand Island	3,168
Crete Carrier Corp.	Lincoln	3,040
Oriental Trading Company	Omaha	3,000
West Corp.	Omaha	2,800
Baker's Supermarkets (Kroger Co.)	Omaha	2,535
Creighton University	Omaha	2,500
Pamida/Shopko	Omaha	2,463
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center	Lincoln	2,393
Nebraska Furniture Mart	Omaha	2,166
Becton Dickinson	Columbus	2,100
B & R Stores Inc.	Lincoln	2,011
Smithfield Foods Inc. (formerly Farmland Foods)	Crete	1,857
Qwest Communications	Omaha	1,850
Target Stores	Statewide	1,781
Good Samaritan Hospital	Kearney	1,700
Father Flanagan's Boys & Girls Town	Omaha	1,700
UPS	Omaha	1,687
Werner Enterprises Inc.	Omaha	1,622
Omaha Steaks Inc.	Omaha	1,600
Chief Industries Inc.	Grand Island	1,600
Valmont Industries Inc.	Omaha	1,500
Ameritrade Holding Corp.	Omaha	1,500
Children's Hospital	Omaha	1,428
Buckle Inc.	Kearney	1,404
St. Joseph Hospital (Creighton Medical Center)	Omaha	1,350
Hormel Foods Corp.	Fremont	1,341
Wells Fargo Bank	Omaha	1,320
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.	Lincoln	1,300
Omaha World-Herald	Omaha	1,300
Commercial Federal Corp.	Omaha	1,266
Marriott Regional Center	Omaha	1,220
Bag N Save	Omaha	1,200
Info USA Inc.	Omaha	1,200
Runza National	Lincoln	1,200
CSG Inc.	Omaha	1,200
Regional West Medical Center	Scottsbluff	1,155
St. Francis Medical Center	Grand Island	1,140
Cox Communications	Omaha	1,100
Lozier Corp.	Omaha	1,100
Ameritas Acacia Mutual Holding Co.	Lincoln	1,100
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital	Lincoln	1,100
JC Penney Co.	Omaha	1,100
Gallup Organization	Lincoln	1,100
Vishay Dale Electronics Inc.	Columbus	1,100
Kawasaki Motors Manufacturing Corp. USA	Lincoln	1,060
Physicians Mutual Insurance Co.	Omaha	1,029
Faith Regional Health Services	Norfolk	1,020
Necco Inc., Constructors Inc.	Lincoln	1,000
Duncan Aviation	Lincoln	1,000

²⁶ Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Income and Earnings in Nebraska²⁷

	2001	2002	2003
INCOME²⁸			
Total Personal Income.....	\$49,300	49,872	52,755
Nonfarm earnings.....	36,479	37,659	39,347
Farm earnings.....	1,342	859	2,160
EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY²⁹			
Forestry, Fishing, and other ²⁷	149	146	149
Mining ²⁷	121	117	132
Construction.....	2,327	2,378	2,546
Manufacturing.....	4,684	4,816	4,953
Durable.....	2,315	2,302	2,344
Nondurable.....	2,369	2,514	2,610
Transportation and Warehousing.....	2,861	2,709	2,728
Wholesale Trade.....	2,072	2,090	2,133
Retail Trade.....	2,683	2,769	2,848
Finance and Insurance.....	2,555	2,693	2,868
Professional and Technical Services.....	2,242	2,788	2,381
Government and Government Enterprises.....	6,390	6,806	7,167
Federal, Civilian.....	1,012	1,054	1,123
Military ²⁷	620	704	779
State and Local.....	4,758	5,047	5,265

²⁷ Figures are in millions of dollars, except "Forestry, Fishing, and other," "Mining" and "Military," which are in thousands of dollars. Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.

²⁸ Farm earnings consist of proprietors' net farm income, wages of hired farm labor, pay-in-kind and officers' salaries of corporate farms.

²⁹ Earnings are the sum of wages and salaries, other labor income and sole proprietors' income.

Employment by Nonfarm Industries in Nebraska, 2005³⁰

Economic Activity	Number of Employed Workers
Services.....	361,478
Government.....	160,830
Trade (Wholesale and Retail).....	148,550
Manufacturing.....	99,886
Financial activities.....	64,310
Transportation and Utilities.....	51,209
Natural Resources and Construction.....	48,735

³⁰ Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, 2006