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OREGON'S LIVESTOCK, HUNTING, AND FISHING ECONOMY

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Miranda Vargas Cervantes is a first-generation college student at the University of Notre Dame. She is currently in her sophomore year studying strategic management. This summer she will be working with the CSI team located in Oregon to research the Department of Transportation as well as concerns about hunting and fishing.



Serra Kirsch recently earned a Masters in Economics from Portland State University, where she specialized in empirical macroeconomics and international finance. Before that, she spent two years conducting research in health economics, focusing on the impact of tobacco control policies. She completed her undergraduate education in Industrial Engineering and Economics in Istanbul. Growing up in Turkey, she developed a strong interest in working on emerging markets.

ABOUT COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

Common Sense Institute is a non-partisan research organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of Oregon's economy. CSI is at the forefront of important discussions concerning the future of free enterprise and aims to have an impact on the issues that matter most to Oregonians. CSI's mission is to examine the fiscal impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Oregonians are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI employs rigorous research techniques and dynamic modeling to evaluate the potential impact of these measures on the economy and individual opportunity.

TEAMS & FELLOWS STATEMENT

CSI is committed to independent, in-depth research that examines the impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Oregonians are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI's commitment to institutional independence is rooted in the individual independence of our researchers, economists, and fellows. At the core of CSI's mission is a belief in the power of the free enterprise system. Our work explores ideas that protect and promote jobs and the economy, and the CSI team and fellows take part in this pursuit of academic freedom. Our team's work is informed by data-driven research and evidence. The views and opinions of fellows do not reflect the institutional views of CSI. CSI operates independently of any political party and does not take positions.

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INTRODUCTION

Oregon's livestock, hunting, and fishing sectors contribute to the state's rural economies, natural-resource industries, and food system. Their economic footprint extends beyond agricultural production to recreation, processing, retail, and other related industries across the state.

In 2026, Initiative Petition 28 proposed removing existing exemptions from Oregon's animal-cruelty laws for practices including livestock slaughter, hunting and fishing. The measure fell short of the valid signatures needed to qualify for the November 2026 ballot.ⁱ In response, a separate effort has emerged to place constitutional protections for hunting, fishing, farming, ranching and related activities before voters in 2028.ⁱⁱ Initiative Petition 25 has cleared the initial sponsorship-signature threshold and is moving through the ballot-title process. A similar constitutional right-to-hunt-and-fish proposal was introduced in the 2025 Oregon Legislature but did not advance beyond the Senate Committee on Rules.ⁱⁱⁱ These debates have increased attention on the economic role of the industries that could be affected by changes in how livestock production, hunting, and fishing are regulated.

This brief examines the scale of these activities in Oregon, including their contribution to sales, employment, and economic output, as well as where livestock and poultry production are concentrated geographically. Together, these measures provide a snapshot of the role livestock production, hunting, and fishing play in Oregon's economy and communities.

KEY FINDINGS

- Livestock and poultry generated \$2.12 billion in sales in 2022, about 31% of Oregon agricultural sales; cattle and calves accounted for \$1.22 billion.
- Oregon outpaced the U.S. in employment growth across animal production and aquaculture, fishing, hunting and trapping, and support activities for animal production. Private employment in these industries increased about 45% in Oregon from 2001 to 2025, compared with about 30% nationally.
- Livestock-related employment is far outpacing crop production in Oregon. From 2001 to 2025, employment in animal production and aquaculture grew about 48%, while support activities for animal production grew 142%; crop-production employment increased just 6%. A broad ban affecting livestock production would therefore put at risk the fastest-growing portion of Oregon's agricultural employment base.
- Oregon's agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector generated \$5.5 billion in GDP in 2025. From 2001 to 2024, real output increased about 34% in Oregon compared with about 62% nationally, with most of the difference concentrated in farms.
- Livestock activity is geographically concentrated, with major sales and employment centers in counties including Morrow, Malheur, Tillamook, Marion, and Clackamas.

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW BY THE NUMBERS

Oregon's 2022 Census of Agriculture counted 35,547 farms with \$6.77 billion in agricultural product sales. Livestock, poultry, and their products generated \$2.12 billion—about 31% of statewide farm sales.^{iv} Cattle are a primary component of Oregon's livestock sector, accounting for \$1.22 billion in sales in 2022—the largest share of livestock and poultry sales statewide, followed by milk from cows at \$559 million and poultry and eggs at \$228 million.

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing generated an estimated \$1.2 billion in spending in Oregon in 2019 and supported 11,661 jobs, according to an Earth Economics study cited by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Adjusted for inflation, ODFW estimates that spending at approximately \$1.47 billion in 2024 dollars.^v

EMPLOYMENT

Oregon's agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector employed 51,952 private-sector workers in 2025, with 55,830 covered jobs in total when federal and state government employment is included. Private employment in animal production and aquaculture, fishing, hunting and trapping, and support activities for animal production grew about 45% in Oregon from 2001 to 2025, compared with about 30% nationally. These figures reflect covered payroll jobs and therefore do not include self-employed operators and certain other workers outside the unemployment-insurance system.

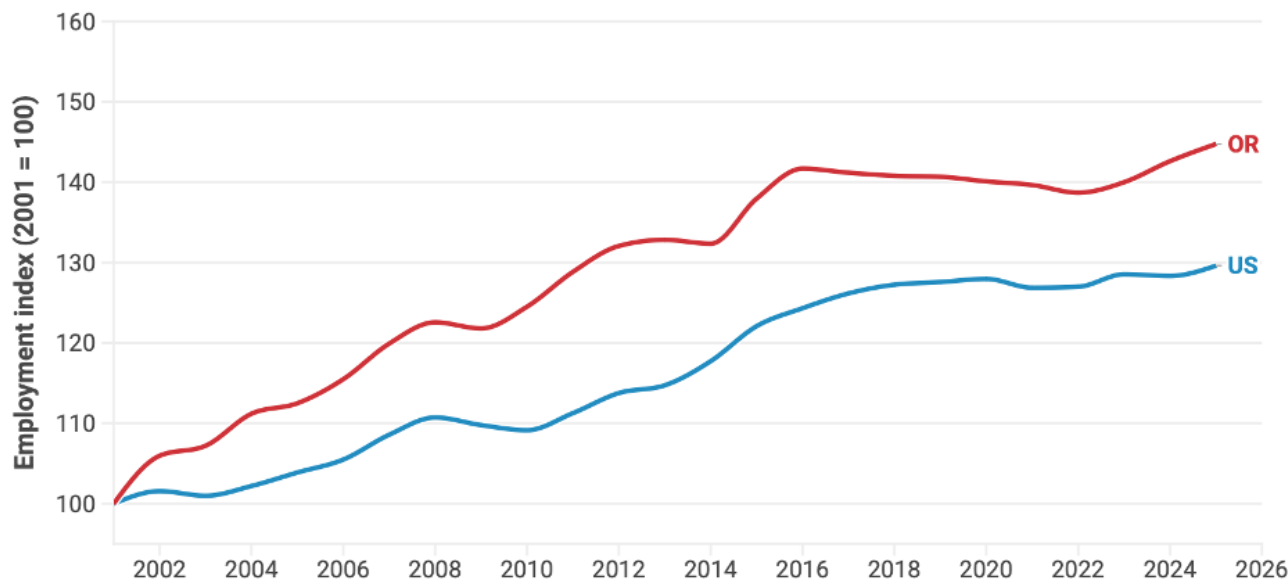
Within Oregon agriculture, employment trends also differed substantially by industry. From 2001 to 2025, employment in animal production and aquaculture increased about 48%, compared with about 6% in crop production. This indicates that animal production has been a comparatively faster-growing source of agricultural employment in the state.

The broader NAICS 11 total spans several distinct industries. In 2025, most private employment was concentrated in crop production and support activities for agriculture and forestry, while animal production and aquaculture accounted for 3,875 jobs and fishing, hunting and trapping for 237.

FIGURE 1.

Oregon Employment Growth in Animal Production, Fishing, Hunting and Related Support Industries Outpaced the U.S.

Private covered employment in animal production and aquaculture (NAICS 112), fishing, hunting and trapping (NAICS 114), and support activities for animal production (NAICS 1152), indexed to 2001 = 100, 2001–2025.



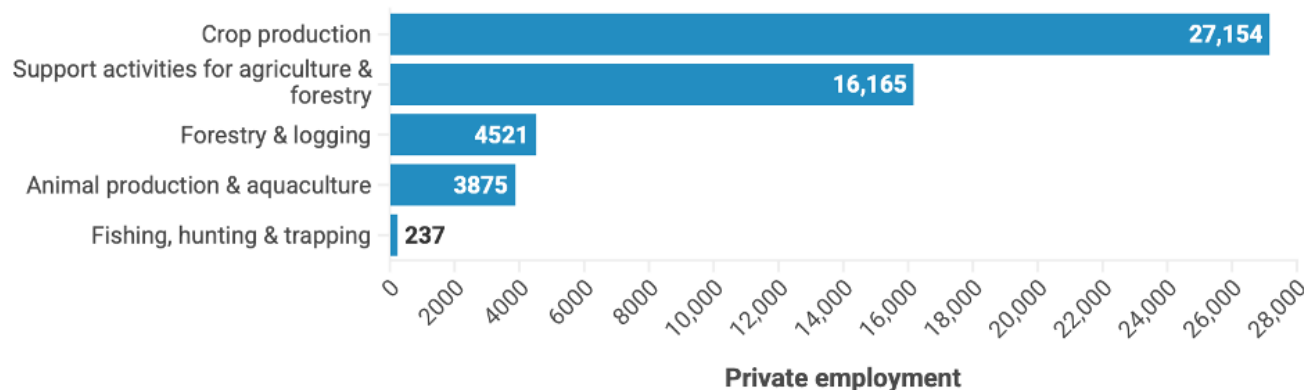
Source: Oregon Employment Department and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Common Sense Institute calculations. • Covered payroll employment; excludes self-employed workers and certain workers not covered by unemployment insurance.



FIGURE 2.

Most NAICS 11 Jobs in Oregon Are in Crop Production and Support Activities

Private covered employment in Oregon's agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector (NAICS 11), by 3-digit industry, 2025.



Source: Oregon Employment Department, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). • Covered payroll employment; excludes self-employed workers and certain workers not covered by unemployment insurance.



ECONOMIC OUTPUT AND WAGES

Oregon's agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector generated \$5.5 billion in state GDP in 2025. Over the longer term, however, nominal GDP growth in Oregon's sector has trailed the national trend, and a gap remains when output is measured in real terms. From 2001 to 2024, real output increased about 34% in Oregon compared with about 62% nationally. Most of that difference was concentrated in farms, which BEA defines as crop production and animal production and aquaculture (NAICS 111–112): real farm output increased about 21% in Oregon compared with 63% nationally. By contrast, real output in forestry, fishing and related activities (NAICS 113–115) increased about 46% in Oregon and 50% nationally. These output trends differ from the employment pattern described above, where animal-related employment in Oregon grew faster than the national rate. The difference may partly reflect industry composition: Oregon's employment growth in these industries has been concentrated in animal production and related support activities, particularly support activities for animal production.

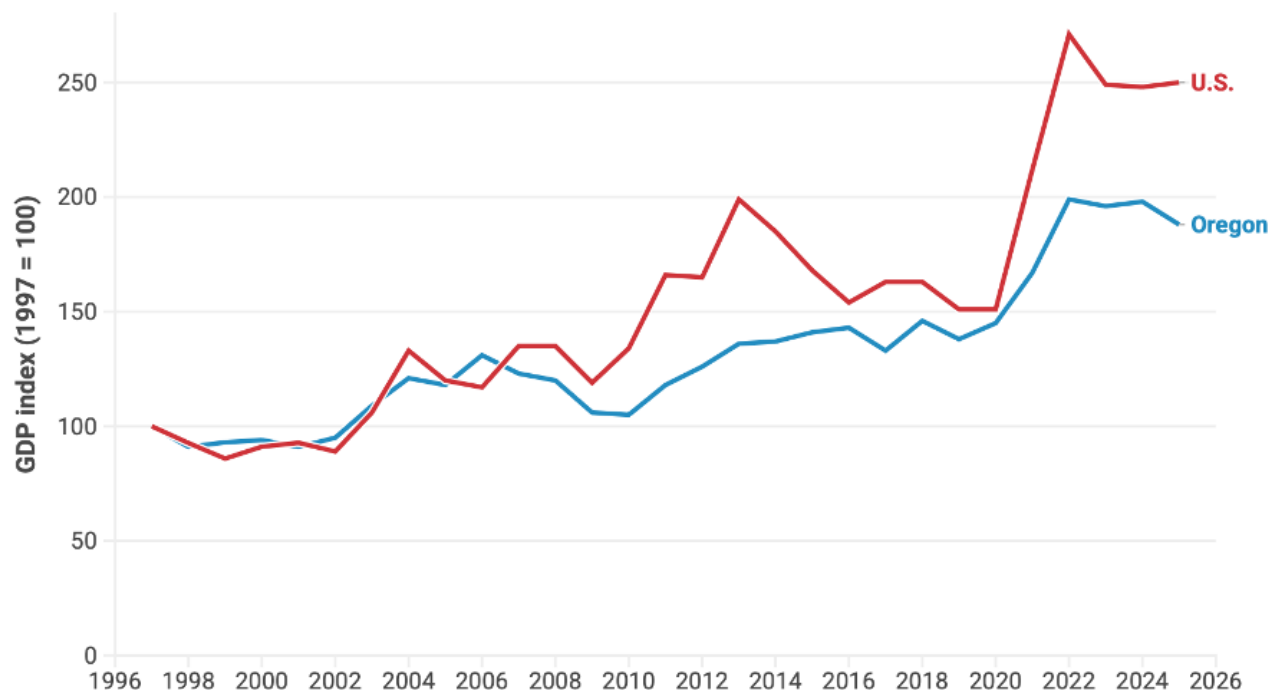
In 2025, average annual wages were \$49,655 across agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, compared with \$71,936 across Oregon's private sector overall. Average annual wages were \$47,632 in animal production and aquaculture and \$71,182 in fishing, hunting and trapping.

Separately, recreation spending associated with hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing supports employment across a range of industries. A 2019 Earth Economics study estimated that **\$1.2 billion in related spending supported 11,661 jobs and \$385 million in labor income statewide.** Fishing accounted for roughly **\$397 million in spending and \$124 million in labor income,** while hunting accounted for about **\$228 million in spending and \$73 million in labor income.**

FIGURE 3.

Oregon's Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting GDP Growth vs. U.S.

Current-dollar GDP index, 1997 = 100, 1997–2025.



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, SAGDP2, Gross Domestic Product by State.

FIGURE 4.

Average Annual Wages Across Oregon's Animal-Related Industries

Private-sector average annual wages, selected industries, 2025.

2025 industry	Average annual wage
Oregon private sector overall	\$71,936
Animal Production & Aquaculture	\$47,632
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping	\$71,182
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting overall	\$49,655

Source: Oregon Employment Department, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 2025. • Average annual wages reflect covered payroll employment and exclude self-employed workers and certain workers not covered by unemployment insurance.

GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION

Livestock and poultry sales are concentrated in a relatively small number of Oregon counties. In 2022, Morrow County reported the highest value of livestock, poultry, and related product sales at roughly **\$495 million**, followed by Malheur County at about **\$307 million**. Tillamook, Marion, and Clackamas also reported substantial animal-related sales, reflecting distinct regional specializations across the state.

The composition of that activity varies by region. **Cattle and calf sales are especially important in Eastern Oregon**, with Morrow and Malheur among the state's largest reported markets. **Dairy production is a major component of the North Coast economy**, particularly in Tillamook, **while poultry and egg production is concentrated more heavily in the northern Willamette Valley**, including Clackamas County.¹

Private employment in animal production and aquaculture and fishing, hunting and trapping also varies considerably across the state. Among counties with published 2025 employment data, Tillamook reported 453 jobs in these industries, followed by Morrow with 387 and Marion with 321. Malheur and Clackamas each reported more than 230 jobs, while several other counties had smaller concentrations. County-level employment data are suppressed for some areas to protect confidential employer information, and support activities for animal production are not included because comparable county-level detail is unavailable.

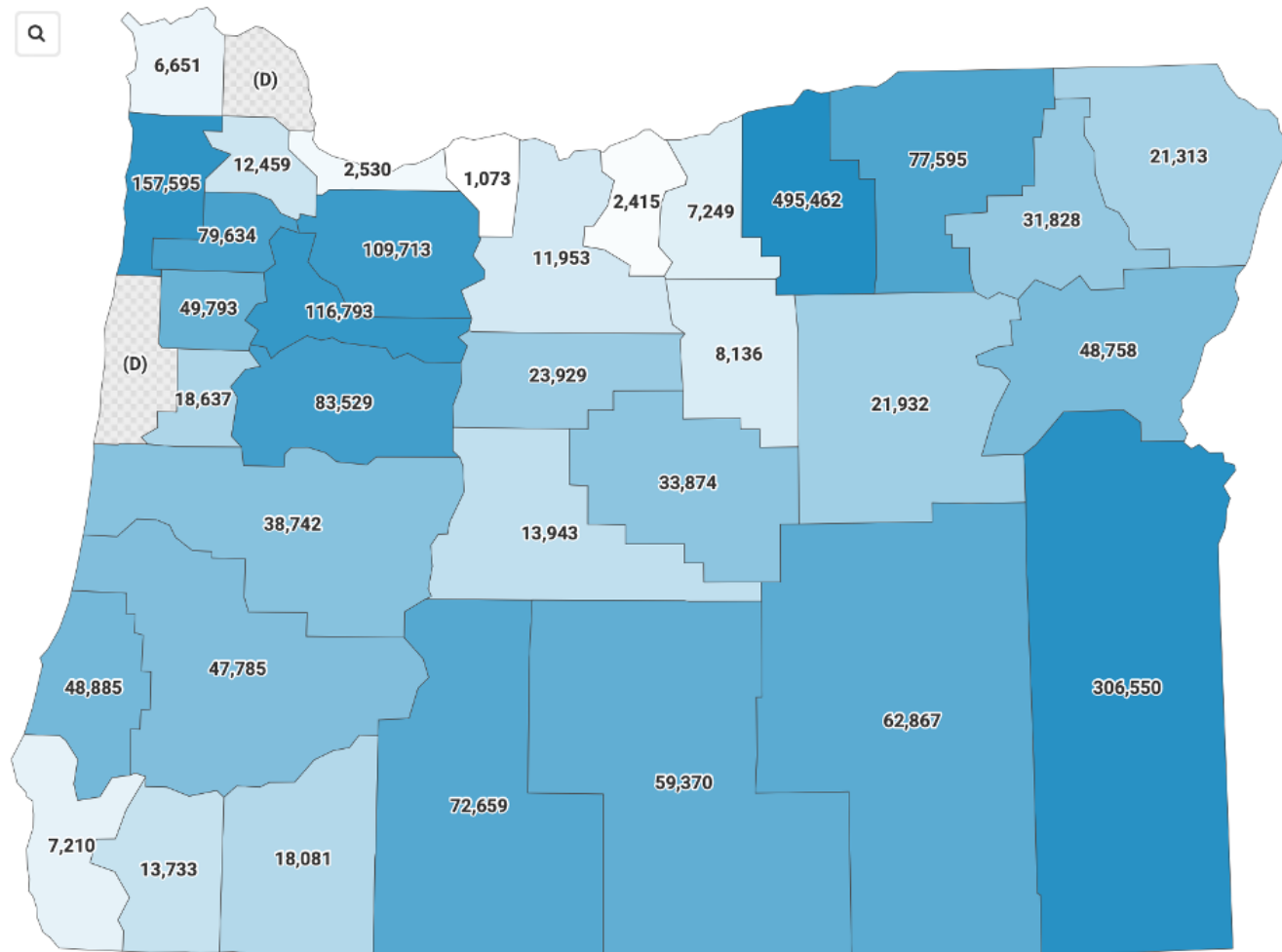
¹ Some county-level commodity values are withheld by USDA to protect individual operations, so published figures do not always permit definitive rankings within each segment.

FIGURE 5.

Livestock and Poultry Sales Are Concentrated in Several Oregon Counties

Market value of livestock, poultry, and their products sold by county, 2022.

Sales (\$ millions)



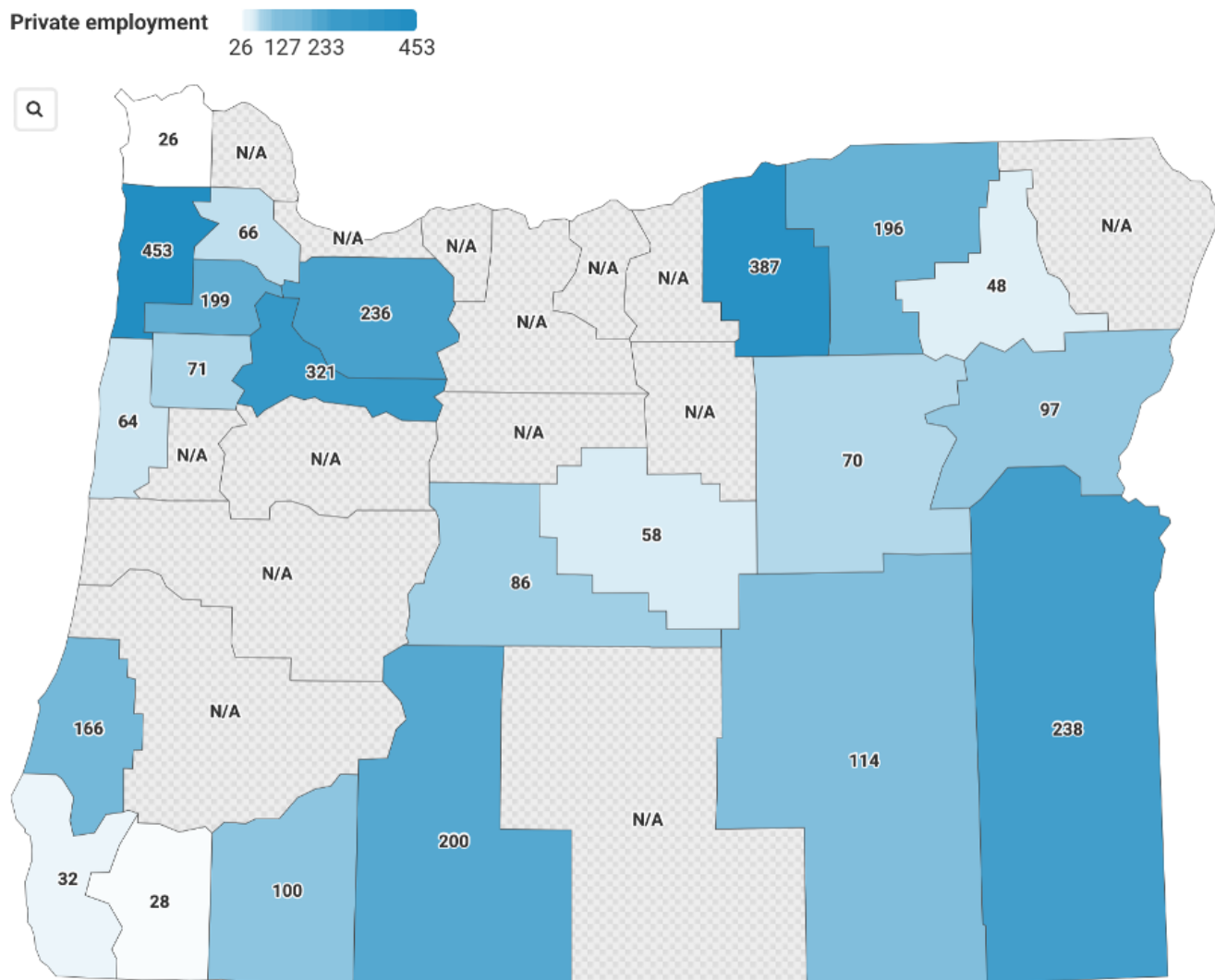
Source: USDA, 2022 Census of Agriculture. • Values for Columbia and Lincoln counties are withheld by USDA to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.



FIGURE 6.

Animal Production, Fishing and Hunting Employment Across Oregon Counties

Private covered employment in animal production and aquaculture (NAICS 112) and fishing, hunting and trapping (NAICS 114), by county, 2025.



Source: Oregon Employment Department, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Common Sense Institute calculations. • The Oregon Employment Department suppresses some county-level employment values to protect confidential employer information; those counties are shown in gray. Support activities for animal production (NAICS 1152) are not included because county-level detail is not available.



SOURCES

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- iv. U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2022 Census of Agriculture
- v. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Economic Impact of Hunting, Sport Fishing and Wildlife Viewing. Updated October 25, 2024.