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A Monthly Insight into the USDA's Food and Agricultural Education Information System

FAEIS News

Changes in Median Age of Professors from 2006 to 2011

As we look at the educational pipeline, the demographics of professors play a critical part. In preparing this newsletter, we found that the median age of assistant professors decreased from 40 in 2006 to 39 in 2011. Likewise, the median age of associate professors decreased from 51 in 2006 to 50 in 2011. But the median age of full professors *increased* from 57 in 2006 to 59 in 2011. The data indicate this increase is due to fewer faculty members being promoted to the level of full professor and an increase in full professors deferring retirement beyond the age of 65. Review the full reports on [faculty age](#), [change in faculty age](#), and [faculty headcount](#).

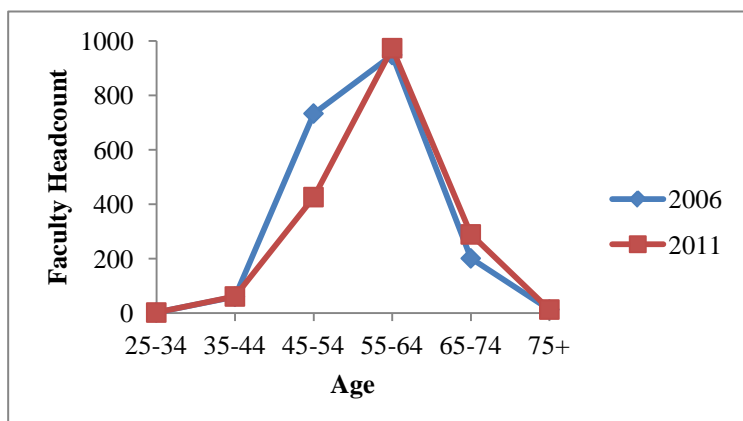
Comparing the Age of Full Professors in 2006 and 2011

This newsletter investigates the change in the age of full professors over time in the program areas of agriculture, family and consumer/human sciences, and natural resources and conservation. We included higher education institutions with complete faculty data for 2006 and 2011. In total, 46 higher education institutions were used in the analysis. [Click here](#) for a complete list of the 46 institutions included in the analysis.

Figure 1 offers the headcount of full professors by age in the combined program areas of agriculture, family and consumer/human sciences, and natural resources and conservation. Based on our analyses we found the following results.

- The total headcount for full faculty decreased by **9.8%** from 1957 in 2006 to 1764 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 45-54 years decreased by **41.9%** from 733 in 2006 to 426 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 65-74 years increased by **43.8%** from 201 in 2006 to 289 in 2011.

Figure 1. Headcount of Full Professors by Age (n=46 institutions).



Comparing the Age of Full Professors in Specific Academic Areas

We next examined the age of full professors over time in the program areas of agriculture and family and consumer/human sciences.

Figure 2 offers the headcount of full professors by age in the program area of agriculture. Based on our analyses we found the following results for full professors in agriculture.

- The total headcount for full faculty decreased by **8.9%** from 1419 in 2006 to 1293 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 45-54 years **decreased** by **38.9%** from 552 in 2006 to 337 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 65-74 years **increased** by **46.1%** from 141 in 2006 to 206 in 2011.

Figure 3 offers the headcount of full professors by age in the program area of family and consumer/human sciences. Based on our analyses we found the following results for full professors in family and consumer sciences.

- The total headcount for full faculty decreased by **16.4%** from 250 in 2006 to 209 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 45-54 years **decreased** by **48.8%** from 82 in 2006 to 42 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 55-64 years **decreased** by **6.5%** from 138 in 2006 to 129 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 65-74 years **increased** by **47.8%** from 23 in 2006 to 34 in 2011.

Figure 2. Headcount of Full Professors by Age for *Agriculture* Programs (n=46 institutions).

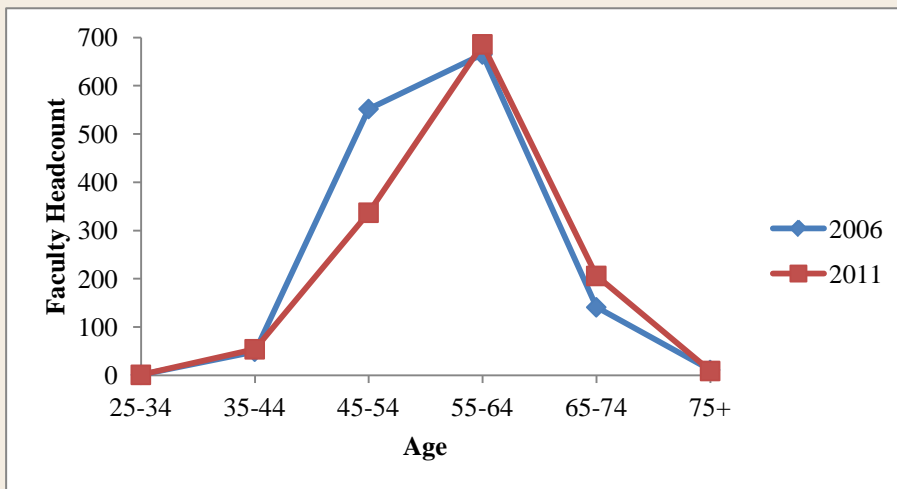
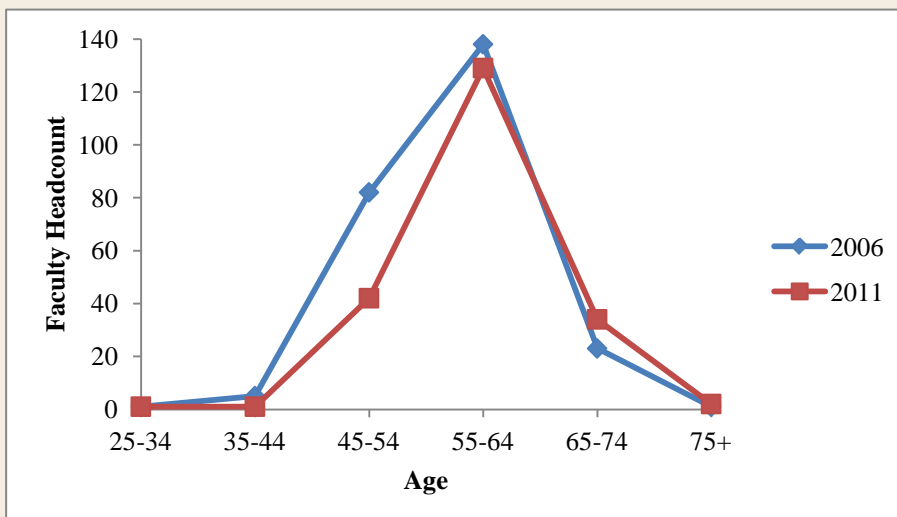


Figure 3. Headcount of Full Professors by Age for *Family and Consumer/Human Sciences* Programs (n=46 institutions).



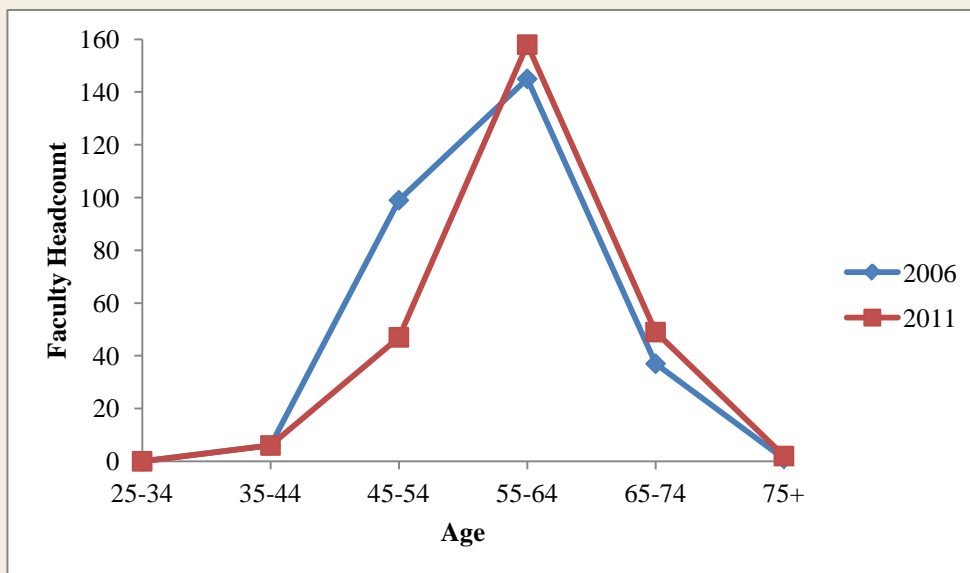


Comparing the Age of Full Professors Over Time in Natural Resources and Conservation

We next examined the age of full professors over time in the program area of natural resources and conservation. Figure 4 offers the headcount of full professors by age in the program area of natural resources and conservation. Based on our analyses we found the following results for full professors in natural resources and conservation.

- The total headcount for full faculty decreased by **9.0%** from 288 in 2006 to 262 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 45-54 years **decreased** by **52.5%** from 99 in 2006 to 47 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 55-64 years **increased** by **9.0%** from 145 in 2006 to 158 in 2011.
- The number of full professors from 65-74 years **increased** by **32.4%** from 37 in 2006 to 49 in 2011.

Figure 4. Headcount of Full Professors by Age for *Natural Resources and Conservation* Programs (n=46 institutions).



The Program Areas of Agriculture, Family and Consumer/Human Sciences, and Natural Resources and Conservation



Photo courtesy of John McCormick

The program area of agriculture is made up of the following academic areas:

- Agricultural economics, agricultural business and management
- Agricultural mechanization and engineering
- Agricultural production operations
- Agricultural public services
- Agricultural and food products processing
- Agriculture, general
- Animal sciences
- Applied horticulture/horticultural business services
- Equestrian/equine studies and animal sciences
- Food science and technology
- International agriculture
- Landscape architecture
- Plant sciences
- Soil sciences

The program area of natural resources and conservation is made up of the following academic areas:

- Environmental science and studies
- Fisheries and wildlife
- Forestry
- Natural resources conservation and management
- Natural resources recreation

- Range science and management
- Watershed science and management
- Wood science/products

The program area of family and consumer/human sciences is made up of the following academic areas:

- Apparel and textiles
- Culinary arts and related sciences
- Family and consumer economics
- Family and consumer sciences/human sciences business services
- Family and consumer sciences, general
- Foods, nutrition and related sciences
- Hospitality administration/management
- Housing and human environments
- Human development, family studies and related services
- Work and family studies



Photo courtesy of Jim Stroup

On behalf of USDA-NIFA and our partner organizations, the FAEIS team says THANK YOU to all who have contributed their time and data to make this report possible.

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