

in Arizona and New Mexico. Very substantial gains were also recorded in other grazing areas of the West. These increases in grazing lands in farms do not necessarily mean that more lands in these areas are being used for agricultural purposes. Most of these lands were formerly used as open range or grazed under permit. See preceding discussion under "Land in farms."

Most of the changes in number of farms and in farm acreage since these data were first secured in 1850, particularly up to about 1900, were due to the opening to settlement of vast areas of new land which caused a westward migration of persons to take up these lands. By 1900, all the better lands had been taken and settlement had reached the semiarid regions of the Great Plains. Since 1900, more and more land in the Great Plains area has been incorporated in farms and each census shows some evidence of the struggle to settle the area. Each census has also shown some decreases in portions of this general area where operators were driven out, generally, by drought conditions. Many of these abandoned lands were taken over by the farm operators who remained or by new settlers. A general tendency has been toward larger and larger farms, which are better suited to the area. Also, particularly in recent years, there has been a definite shift in the utilization of the land, with less acreage in crops and more in pasture. Rather large increases in number of farms and land in farms also occurred during this period throughout the Mountain and Pacific States. Other areas settled since the turn of the century include cut-over lands of the upper Great Lakes region, which were largely settled by 1920, and the upper delta areas of the Mississippi River where especially heavy increases in number of farms occurred between 1910 and 1930.

Not all changes in the number of farms have resulted from the settlement of new lands. Much of the variation, especially in more recent years, has been due to changes in size of operations. In this connection, see chapter II, "Size of farms," this volume. The general trend of population away from farms as recorded by the Censuses of 1940, 1930, and 1920, farm mechanization, and shifts toward more extensive types of agriculture in some areas, have tended toward consolidation of small farms into larger operating units. On the other hand shifts to more intensive and specialized types of agriculture have, in some instances, resulted in the breaking down of larger holdings into smaller operating units. The "back-to-the-farm" movement in the depression years was also accompanied by some decreases in the size of farms. From the Civil War to about 1910 the breaking up of plantations in the South accounted for much of the increases in farms in that area, although the bringing of new lands under cultivation was also a factor of importance. Abandonment of farm lands coupled with some consolidations account for most of the rather general decreases in number of farms in the northeastern dairy States, and in much of the Corn Belt since 1900. Decreases in much of the Cotton Belt recorded in the Censuses of 1920 and 1925 may be attributed to rather widespread abandonment of farms due to the boll weevil. Much of this land, however, had been brought back under cultivation by 1930. In some counties, urban centers have encroached upon the farm lands materially reducing the county totals.

In 1940 land used for crops amounted to 341,822,447 acres, a decrease of 4.9 percent as compared with 1930. This decrease was rather widely distributed, with the largest losses in the Great Plains States and was partly attributable to the agricultural production control programs and partly to severe drought conditions in the Great Plains area. The least changes were in the South Atlantic, East South Central, and Pacific States. Much of this land taken out of crop production during the decade had apparently been shifted to idle or fallow land, including land used for soil improvement crops, and also to pasture as indicated by increases in plowable pasture acreage. As previously noted, in the discussion of the various classes of land, some of the increase in plowable pasture may have resulted from schedule differences. Up to and including 1930, every decennial census had shown increases in crop acreage, although throughout much of the period for which data are available some losses occurred in the older settled areas of the East. These losses were especially heavy in the decade from 1920 to 1930 and were rather generally distributed over most

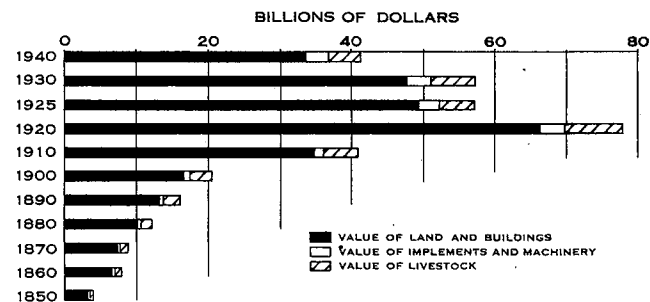
of the originally forested areas in the eastern part of the country.

**Value of farm property.**—Values are given in this chapter for the following specified classes of farm property:

1. Value of farms (land and buildings)
2. Value of farm buildings
3. Value of farm implements and machinery
4. Value of livestock

The values shown for these specified classes of farm property do not accurately represent the total value of farm property; as certain classes of livestock, particularly young animals, have been omitted, as have the values of crops and livestock products on hand.

#### VALUE OF SPECIFIED CLASSES OF FARM PROPERTY IN THE UNITED STATES: 1850-1940



Except for the Census of 1935, values for land and buildings, implements and machinery, and livestock, have been secured for all censuses beginning with 1850, and for buildings beginning with 1900. In 1935, values were secured for land and buildings and livestock, but not for buildings or for implements and machinery.

Questions for the value of the farm (land and buildings), farm buildings, and implements and machinery were included on the 1940 schedule and the figures therefor represent enumerated entries. The 1940 values for livestock, however, were calculated by multiplying the numbers of livestock of each species and class in each county, by county unit prices obtained cooperatively by the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Census. The values for livestock for 1935, 1930, and 1925 were obtained in the same manner as for 1940, except that for the Census of 1935 the calculations were made on a State basis using State unit prices, and for 1925 on a county basis using unit prices for crop reporting districts, each consisting of a group of contiguous counties. Prior to 1925 livestock values were obtained by enumeration. Refer to chapter VII, "Livestock and livestock products," for the items included in the livestock values shown for each census.

In reporting the total value of the farm (land and buildings) the enumerators were instructed to obtain from each farm operator a value representing the market value of the farm, that is, the amount that would be received by a willing seller from a willing buyer and not at a forced sale. This value was to include all the land in the farm whether owned, rented from others, or managed for others, and all the buildings and improvements thereon as of April 1, 1940. For institutional farms, and for establishments where farming was combined with nonfarm activities, only the acreage and the value of land and buildings actually used for farm purposes were to be included. The value will not necessarily relate solely to a farm's agricultural possibilities. The reported value may be due in part to the proximity of the farm to a city, to the presence of minerals, or to buildings as in the case of a country estate. The inclusion of nonagricultural values does not affect the total value, appreciably, in most States, but the totals for some counties, particularly those near urban centers and in country estate areas, are much higher than would be justified if the values were due entirely to farm earnings.