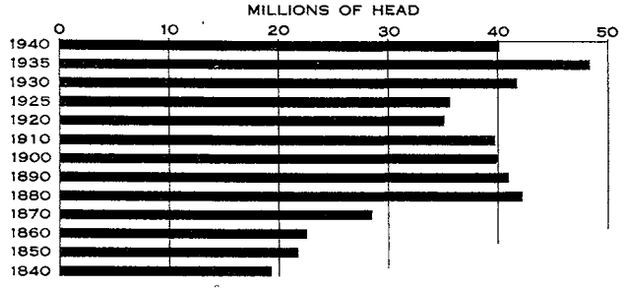
SHEEP

Inventory.—As of April 1, 1940 a total of 40,129,261 sheep and lambs over 6 months old were enumerated. This compares with 48,357,506 sheep and lambs of all ages on January 1, 1935, and with 41,780,146 over 6 months old and an additional 15,194,958 under 6 months old on April 1, 1930. Of all sheep enumerated, 35,579,506 were reported to be ewes over 6 months old April 1, 1940, with 34,000,286 shown as ewes 1 year old and over January 1, 1935, and with 38,097,572 reported as ewes over 6 months old April 1, 1930. Enumerations made as of January 1 find larger numbers of sheep and lambs on feed for slaughter than when enumerations are made as of April 1. Old ewes and ewe lambs in these feeder flocks are nominally out of the picture in weighing breeding potentialities.

CHART 10. SHEEP - NUMBER IN THE UNITED STATES: 1840 - 1940



(BASE FIGURES, AGE GROUPS INCLUDED, AND DATE OF ENUMERATION SHOWN IN TABLE 3.)

The user of these statistics should be cognizant of the fact that western range sheep, which comprise more than 40 percent of the total, offer great obstacles to complete coverage in any enumeration. It has been pointed out that most of the large western flocks are migratory. Some flocks may find grazing in as many as three or four States during the course of a year. January enumerations most likely will find such sheep on winter grazing or feeding grounds. April enumerations may find them still in winter grazing areas, or en route to, or on, spring lambing grounds, or even en route to, or on, summer grazing areas. The nomadic character of these western sheep makes coverage difficult and affects location of sheep enumerated by States, especially when the enumeration date changes from January to April. The annual surplus from these western flocks, beyond the needs for replenishment or planned expansion of breeding stock, regularly moves from late summer range to be fattened for slaughter markets. These fattening areas may be in irrigated areas of the range States themselves, or farther east on winter wheat and alfalfa pastures of the Great Plains, or in more or less concentrated feeding areas of the Corn Belt. To avoid some of the difficulties, the enumerators were instructed in the 1940 Census to make every effort to locate sheep owners who lived in their districts or who had established commensurate holdings in their districts in securing range permits or grazing licenses, even though their sheep were elsewhere on the date of enumeration. The intent of the 1940 Census was to locate western range sheep in the district where the ranch headquarters established the owner's right to grazing permit and license.

On April 1, 1940 the census shows that 13 States each had in excess of one million sheep over 6 months old on farms. This compares with 16 States with over a million sheep of all ages on January 1, 1935. The three States having over a million sheep in 1935 that failed to qualify in the 1940 Census are Michigan, Minnesota, and Kentucky. The reason is quite obviously the change in date of enumeration and the fact that those States regularly have large numbers of sheep on feed January 1 that will have gone to market by April 1. Texas still leads all States in sheep numbers by a large margin. The 1940 numbers in that State on April 1 were 8,447,809 as compared with 7,026,543 on January 1, 1935. In the 1940 Census Wyoming with 3,079,384 sheep, takes second rank, displacing Montana which is now third, with 3,009,814.

The number of farms reporting sheep and lambs in 1940 was 584,935. This compares with 635,384 farms in 1935, with 583,578 in 1930, and with 430,738 in 1925. It should be kept in mind that a change in date of enumeration can have considerable influence on this count. Many farms having sheep on feed in January will have no sheep on hand April 1.

Wool production.—The 1939 wool clip was 289,772,976 pounds from 36,264,192 sheep shorn, compared with the 1934 clip of 338,682,406 pounds from 42,910,749 shorn. A clip of 295,964,506 pounds from 38,283,567 shorn was found in 1929. These are the 3 largest clips recorded since the census series began in 1839. Of the 1939 clip, 207,510,003 pounds, or 71.6 percent of the total, was taken in the States comprising the Pacific and Mountain Divisions, plus Texas and South Dakota. In Texas, alone, 21.7 percent of the 1939 clip was enumerated. The average weight per sheep and lamb shorn is available beginning with 1919, and shows a higher yield each successive census. The average for 1939 was 8.0 pounds; for 1934 was 7.9 pounds; for 1929 was 7.7 pounds; for 1924 was 7.6 pounds; and for 1919 was 7.3 pounds. Weight per fleece taken is available for three earlier censuses and shows, for 1909, an average of 6.8 pounds; for 1899, an average of 6.3 pounds; and for 1889, an average of 5.1 pounds. Average per fleece tends to be lower than average per sheep shorn because of twice-a-year shearing in some localities.

GOATS

Inventory.—The number of goats and kids over 4 months old enumerated on farms April 1, 1940, was 4,175,047. The 1935 Census recorded 4,093,441 goats of all ages as of January 1 of that year and 1930 Census, 4,821,294 goats of all ages as of April 1. The record need not be taken as indicating a material decrease or even any decrease in goat population since 1930, as that census must have included large numbers of spring kids. The first-ranking States in numbers in 1940 were: Texas with 2,894,756 goats, or 69.3 percent of the total; New Mexico with 162,568; Arizona with 152,467; Missouri with 141,593; and Oregon with 102,087.

The 1940 Census also obtained the number of Angora goats and kids over 4 months old April 1, and the pounds of mohair clipped in 1939. The number of Angora goats of the specified age reported in 1940 was 3,298,451 of which 2,723,553 were in Texas, 137,645 in Arizona, 133,351 in New Mexico, 91,053 in Missouri, and 86,731 in Oregon. In 1930 the census found 3,785,127 Angora goats and kids of all ages as of April 1.

The number of farms reporting goats of all kinds in 1940 was 127,158, however, only 23,734 farms reported having Angora goats, and only 21,657 farms reported mohair clipped in 1939, showing that the area of mohair production is even more concentrated than goat population. In fact, Texas accounts for 82.6 percent of the Angoras, and the 5 first-ranking States account for 96.2 percent and about the same proportion of mohair produced.

Mohair production.—The 15,351,332 pounds of mohair reported clipped in 1939 is the largest production ever recorded by the Census. The clip enumerated for 1934 was 12,818,512 pounds, and for 1929 was 14,460,572 pounds. This 1939 production of mohair compared with the 1929 production would indicate that numbers of Angoras have actually increased since 1930, not decreased. There is evidence that many goats in southern States, usually referred to as "brush goats" have in recent years been crossbred with Angora rams, and that the progeny of these crosses are now being clipped. These crossbred goats are low yielding and tend to lower the general average yield of mohair per goat clipped.

Goats milked.—For the first time the census covered numbers of milk goats and enumerated 118,896 that were "milked during any part of 1939" on 33,232 farms. Since 876,596 goats were enumerated that were not classified as Angoras and only 118,896 were reported milked in 1939, it is apparent that there is still a large population of goats that class as "brush goats." Their chief utility seems to be the clearing up of brush pastures, wood lots, and rough land, but they also contribute to the supply of kid and goat meat in southern and southwestern States. The number of goats milked averaged only 3.6 per farm reporting. However, in some areas there were producing flocks of considerable size. Some of these larger flocks were adjacent to large city markets, but the largest ones were in the southwest where much of the milk was used for the manufacture of cheese.