

worked off their farms in 1939 was 18.5 percent greater than the total number of days of such work reported for 1934 and 26.2 percent greater than reported for 1929. The average number of days worked off the farm was 137 days in 1939 as compared with 97 days in 1934 and 100 days in 1929. Also the proportion of all operators reporting 100 days or more of such work in 1939 represented a much higher ratio than was reported for either of the other 2 Censuses.

The wording of the inquiry regarding the number of days of work of farm operators off their farms has varied somewhat for the different censuses. This may have affected, to some slight extent, the comparability of the data for the different years. At the 1930 census only "work for pay" was specified and the word "income" did not appear in the question. This possibly tended to exclude work performed off the farm by operators who were self-employed. At the 1935 census the inquiry specified "Work for pay or income" as did the inquiry for the 1940 census. In the 1935 census the inquiry specified work "not connected with farm you operate." This possibly resulted in a few reports of work spent as operator on a different farm in 1934 than the one being operated on January 1, 1935. Both the 1940 and the 1930 schedules specified "the farm you operated," thus tending to exclude work on some other farm operated. In both 1930 and 1935 a parenthetical instruction directed that "labor exchanged" was to be omitted. In 1940 no reference was made either on the schedule or in the instructions to the enumerator in regard to exchanged labor. In all three censuses, if no days were worked off the farm "None" was to be inserted in reply to the inquiry for the number of days worked off the farm. These replies were tabulated for the Censuses of 1940 and 1935 but were not tabulated for the Census of 1930.

The inquiry carried on the 1935 schedule regarding the kind of work off the farm merely asked for the principal occupation on the days worked off the farm. On the basis of this inquiry farm operators reporting work off their farms were classified as to whether such work was principally "agricultural" or "nonagricultural." However, for 15.2 percent of the reports the occupation either was not specified or was not sufficient for classification. The 1935 inquiry did not call for the industry. The 1935 classification is presented for comparison with the 1940 break-down as to kind of work but obviously the figures are not strictly comparable. Lack of comparability is due in part to the relatively large number of operators who could not be classified and in part to the fact that the work of each operator had to be classed either as "agricultural" or "nonagricultural." Probably, however, comparatively few farm operators worked at both agricultural and nonagricultural jobs since only 4.1 percent of all farm operators reporting work off their farms in 1939 reported both nonfarm work and work on other farms. The 1930 Census schedule carried no inquiry as to the kind of work off the farm.

**Age of farm operator.**—The numbers of farm operators classified into six groups according to their age on April 1, 1940 are presented by divisions and States in table 11. The average age of the farm operator is also shown in this table. These data were tabulated by color and tenure of the operator. However, for the northern and western States, figures are shown only for all operators and for nonwhite operators in each tenure class. The age distributions for white operators in these States would be practically the same as for all operators since relatively few nonwhite operators are represented in the totals. If separate data are desired for white operators in these States, they may be obtained by subtraction.

Comparable figures, where available, are shown for earlier censuses in the tables presenting United States totals. In table 11, in which age distributions for each color and each tenure class are presented by divisions and States, comparable data are shown for 1930 only. In table 13 age distributions for owners and tenants only are presented by divisions and States for each decennial census from 1890. Strictly comparable figures on age of farm operators are available only for the decennial censuses beginning with 1910. However, statistics collected as a part of the censuses of population for 1890 and 1900 include a classification of occupants of farm homes by age groups. While these data are on a slightly different basis, the relative age distribution in each tenure class is approximately comparable with the age distribution of

farm operators presented for the 1910 and subsequent decennial censuses. Therefore, the figures for these years are included in the tables but the reader is cautioned that the figures are not strictly comparable.

An average age of farm operators was obtained for the first time at the 1940 Census. This average represents the sum of the individual ages divided by the number of farm operators who reported their age. In the 1920 and 1930 reports figures on the average age of operators for 1920 and 1910 are given in the text discussion, but these represent computations based on the age distributions rather than true averages.

Additional statistics on the age of farm operators are presented in chapter IV (Farm Mortgages and Farm Taxes) of this volume. In that chapter, the ages of owner operators are shown by mortgage status. County figures relating to the age of farm operators are presented in volume I and, also, in the Second Series State Bulletins of the 1940 Census of Agriculture Reports. These county figures are limited to the average age of farm operators classified by color and by tenure; and are also given for owner operators classified by mortgage status.

The average age of farm operators on April 1, 1940 was 48.0 years. Only 1 farm operator in 5 was under 35 years of age and about 1 in 25 was under 25 years. More farmers fall in the 45- to 54-year group than in any other 10-year age interval. This indicates that up to this age more persons begin operating farms on their own account than quit farming and that after this age the number ceasing to farm exceeds those who are beginning. Each census for which the age of farm operators is available has shown that on an average the age of farm operators is greater than that recorded at the preceding census. The proportion of farm operators 45 years old and over in 1910 was 46.3 percent, in 1920 it was 48.1 percent, in 1930 it was 52.7 percent, and in 1940 it was up to 58.3 percent.

AGE OF FARM OPERATORS - NUMBER OF OPERATORS REPORTING, BY TENURE, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1910 - 1940

