

noted that the number of years does not necessarily refer to the total years of farm experience. For a farm operator who moved from another farm, the years represent only a part of his experience as a farmer. The number of years of occupancy on his farm may not represent the total years of farm experience even on the farm operated on the census date. The operator may have spent his childhood or his teen years on that particular farm. Farmers who had partially retired from active farming and had turned over the management of their farms to their sons or other persons often found it advantageous to take active charge of the farming operations again when the sons or other persons left for the armed services or for war industry. For such operators, the enumerator should have reported the year the operator resumed the operation of the farm.

When the data are presented in tables for 1945 only, they are given in terms of the replies to the question, and are referred to as "Year of occupancy." In the tables in which figures are presented for other census years, the statistics are presented as "Years on farm" rather than as "Year of occupancy" in order that they may be more readily compared with those for previous years.

Information on years on farm has been obtained for each census beginning with 1910. The 1945 inquiry read "Year the operator began to operate this farm (continuously)." The wording of the question for the Censuses of 1925 to 1940 was similar to that for the 1945 Census except for the omission of the word "continuously." In 1930, the inquiry asked for the month, as well as the year, of occupancy. For the 1920 and 1910 Censuses, the schedule inquiry, instead of asking for the year of occupancy of the farm operator on the census date, asked for the number of years and months the operator had operated that particular farm.

In reporting the year when the operator began to operate the farm, there was a discernible tendency in each census to report the year the operator first lived on the farm regardless of whether he was the operator at that time, whether he had operated the farm continuously since that date, or whether the operation had qualified as a farm in previous censuses. Insofar as the results of this inquiry are used to reflect the stability of operators on particular farms, this tendency has had no appreciable effect on the usefulness of the data.

Because of variation in the census dates of the several censuses, it was not possible to translate the data into year-on-farm groups so as to make exact comparisons from one census to another. For the 1945, 1935, and 1925 Censuses, when the census date was January 1, the year of occupancy could be translated into years on farm without difficulty. For these years, however, the less-than-1-year group may have been distorted to some extent because of operators who had moved on their farms on January 1, or later, of the census year. January 1 is an important moving date in many areas. In the 1945 Census, there were 238,210 operators who reported 1945 as the year of occupancy, although the census date was January 1. This large number may be explained, in part, by the fact that the 1945 enumeration, because of wartime conditions, required a longer than normal period for completion, the average date of enumeration falling between March 16 and March 31. For 1940, when the census date was April 1, the number of years intervening between the year of occupancy and the census year was considered the number of years on farm; 1940 being considered as less than 1 year. In 1930, the month and year of occupancy were obtained, and the month, as well as the year, was taken into account in determining the less-than-1-year and the 1-year groups.

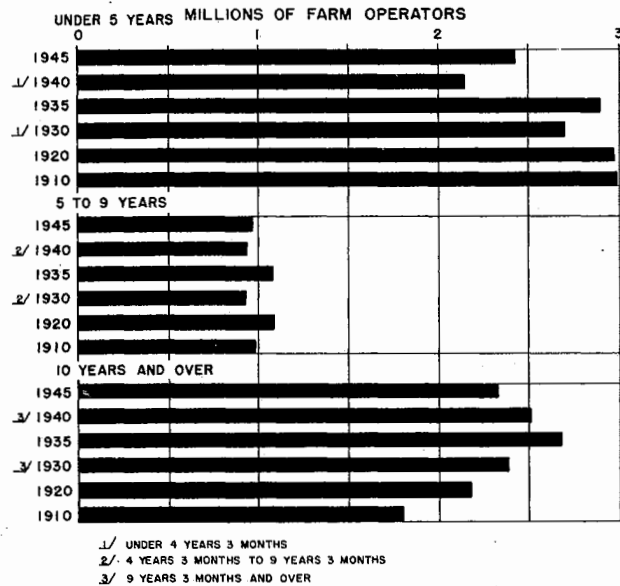
because of the differences in the wording of the questions and differences in the classifications used in the various censuses, the user, in making comparisons for the various census years, should consider the respective length of the periods represented. These differences are indicated in table 4. In this table the columns represent the number of calendar years from the census date. For each census year there are shown: (1) the year of occupancy represented by each column; (2) the exact periods included in the classifications expressed as years and months from the census date, also braces to indicate just how these periods tie in with the calendar years; (3) the United States total for each classification; and (4) the proportion of all farm operators represented in each classification. The particular column, in which each of these totals is entered,

indicates the year-on-farm group in which this particular classification is shown in the other tables.

In comparing the distributions showing the number of years on farm for the several censuses, the date of enumeration, along with the prevailing moving time of farmers, should be considered. When the classification is based on calendar years, each year-on-farm group represents considerable overlapping as to crop years. That is, some of the operators moved in the spring and produced a crop on that farm that year, while others moved in the fall after harvesting a crop that same year on some other farm. Changes in the number of farms from one census to another, insofar as such changes represent places qualifying as farms at one census and not at another, should also be taken into account in comparing the distributions for the several censuses. Many tracts of land with limited agriculture were included in the census figures in 1945. Some of these had been inactive farms in previous years. The operators of these farms may have reported the year they moved on these places. This is particularly important in respect to the New England States, especially in the comparisons for 1945 and 1940.

In comparing the average number of years on farm (available only for 1945 and 1940), the method of calculating the average should also be taken into account. The average year of occupancy was obtained by making a summation of the years of occupancy and dividing the total by the total number of operators reporting. The resulting quotient was shown as a whole number. For example, if the average was in excess of 1931, but less than 1932, the average year of occupancy was shown as 1931. In translating this average into number of years on farm, the average year of occupancy was subtracted from the census year. Consequently, the averages are not strictly comparable, the average for the 1945 Census tending to be larger than that for the 1940 Census because of the difference in the census date. In the classification by years on farm the reverse was true, since the less-than-1-year group for the 1945 Census was considered as including all of 1944, as well as 1945, while for the 1940 Census it included only 1940.

YEARS ON FARM - NUMBER OF OPERATORS REPORTING, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1910 TO 1945



Between 1940 and 1945, there was a considerable change in operators on farms because of persons going from farms into the armed services and into industry. New operators, many with previous farm experience, took up farming because of its essential nature, particularly in times of great demands for food production. During this period there was also a considerable increase in the number of farms bought and sold. Consequently, the 1945 Census figures for years on farm show, in general, a