

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: 1945

prior to 1940. In the 1930 and 1920 Censuses of Population, a count was made of the number of farm families which count was roughly comparable with the number of households living on farms and therefore with the number of occupied farm dwelling units in 1940. Probably the number of occupied farm dwelling units is roughly comparable with the number of occupied dwellings on farms, since the number of dwelling units exceeded the number of residential structures in 1940 by less than 2 percent.

In the 1920, 1930, and 1940 Censuses of Population, there were specific instructions to consider as farm dwelling units all units located on farms. The exclusion of rented dwellings in the 1945 Census of Agriculture had an appreciable effect on the comparability of the figures for dwellings on farms with earlier censuses, especially the 1940 Census.

Although the 1920, 1930, and 1940 Censuses of Population and Agriculture were taken concurrently by the same enumerators, it is probable that the number of dwellings counted as on farms was different from the number that would have been counted if only a census of agriculture had been taken in those years. The instructions for the 1920 Population Census stated definitely that members of families living on tracts of land enumerated as farms should be recorded in the farm population and also specified that families of hired farm laborers who, although not living on farms, were living in rural areas outside of incorporated places should be reported as farm population. The instructions for the 1930 Census of Population provided that a family was to be reported as living on a farm "If the family lives on a farm, that is, a place for which a farm schedule is made out and which is also locally regarded as a farm." The instructions for 1940 did not specifically state that households living on tracts of land enumerated as farms on the agriculture schedule should be regarded as farm households, though this might have been inferred, since the same enumerator was collecting both population and farm data at the same time. Nor did the instructions preclude the reporting of a household as living on a farm if the members of the household thought of themselves as residing on a farm, even though the agricultural operations did not warrant the preparation of a farm schedule.

It is particularly significant that in 1940 the excess of the number of occupied dwelling units on farms over the number of farms was two or three times as great as for any of the other censuses. In 1940, the excess of number of occupied dwelling units on farms over the number of farms amounted to 1,092,049 while for the other censuses the excess ranged from 302,861 in 1920 to 547,862 in 1935. In a study of matched reports for the 1940 Censuses of Agriculture and Population covering 0.1 percent of the farms and of the rural-farm households, it was found that in the census of population about 14 percent of the households which had been classed as "farm" could not be identified with a specific farm schedule. The number of such households (amounting to 996,000 when expanded to represent a United States total) was about three times the number identified with farms but not classified as farm resident households by the population census (300,000 households).

In the decennial censuses of population, all households were visited and each household was classified as "farm" or "nonfarm." In the mid-decennial censuses of agriculture (not taken in connection with population censuses), only farm-operator households were visited, and any additional households identified as on the farm were reported by the farm operator. Consequently, it is likely that, in the population censuses, more dwellings were identified as on farms than in the censuses of agriculture.

Some variations in the number of occupied dwellings on farms may be caused by differences in enumeration date. The censuses of 1945, 1935, 1925, and 1920 were taken as of January 1, a period when the farm population is seasonally low, whereas the censuses of 1940 and 1930 were taken as of April 1.

Because of the tie-in of farm population with places enumerated as farms, the number of farms enumerated in the various censuses of agriculture has had an important effect on the total number of farm dwellings enumerated. The following table presenting figures on number of farms and number of occupied dwellings, as enumerated in the various censuses, gives a comparison of changes in the number of farms with changes in the number of dwellings on farms.

NUMBER OF FARMS AND NUMBER OF OCCUPIED DWELLINGS OR FAMILY UNITS ON FARMS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1920 TO 1945

[Figures for States are in table c]

ITEM	1945	1940	1935	1930	1920
Number of farms.....	5,859,169	6,096,799	6,812,350	6,288,648	6,448,348
Increase (+) or decrease (-) over preceding census..	-257,630	-715,551	+523,702	-159,695	-----
Number of occupied dwellings or family units.....	6,288,577	7,188,848	7,380,212	6,668,681	6,751,204
Increase (+) or decrease (-) over preceding census..	-920,271	-171,364	+691,531	-82,523	-----
Average per farm (based on all farms).....	1.07	1.16	1.08	1.06	1.05
Excess of number of occupied dwellings over number of farms.....	+409,408	+1,092,049	+547,862	+380,033	+302,861

It should be noted that the number of occupied dwellings per farm, except for 1940, differs very little between one census and another.

Farms with limited agricultural operations are of particular significance with respect to the number of farms enumerated in the various censuses because many such places are included or excluded as farms, depending upon the circumstances that prevailed at the time of the census. Many such places represent marginal farms which are in and out of production or vary as to the extent of production, depending upon economic conditions. Also, because of differences in price level, such places may conform with the minimum requirements to be classified as farms at one census and not at another. Largely because only half as much agricultural production (by reason of higher prices) was required to qualify a place of under 3 acres as a farm in 1945 as in 1940, there were 98,966 farms of under 3 acres reported in 1945, as compared with 35,977 in 1940. Although the Census definition of a farm specified a minimum of \$250 for the agricultural production only for places of under 3 acres, it is probable that this minimum also influenced, to some extent, the enumeration of places of 3 acres or more. Many of the places having limited agricultural production are small in size. Variations from one census to another in the numbers of small farms enumerated, especially those under 10 acres, indicate, in part, the influence that such farms have on the number of dwellings on farms (see chapter II). Marginal farms, however, are not restricted to those of small acreages. In the 1945 Census, about 1 farm in 10 reported less than \$250 for value of products sold or used by farm households and more than 1 in 5 reported less than \$500. In 1940, with a price level of farm products approximately half that in 1945, about one-fifth of the farms reported less than \$250 in value of products.

Some of the difference in the number of dwellings enumerated on farms in the various censuses represents neither new construction nor the disappearance of dwelling structures. In addition to the changes in classification, as "farm" or "non-farm," of dwellings on marginal places, depending upon whether such places were or were not enumerated as farms, the consolidation of farms into larger operating units or the division of farms into smaller operating units may result in fewer or more

NUMBER OF OCCUPIED AND UNOCCUPIED DWELLINGS, FOR THE UNITED STATES AND REGIONS: 1945 AND 1935

