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**SPECIAL REPORTS**

**RANKING  
AGRICULTURAL COUNTIES**

*Prepared under the supervision of*

Ray Hurley, Chief

*Agriculture Division*

VOLUME V PART 3

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1952

**LEADING COUNTIES .  
LIVESTOCK and PRODUCTS  
CROPS .**

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## PREFACE

Volume V, *Special Reports*, is one of the final volumes presenting the results of the 1950 Census of Agriculture and related programs. Part 3, *Ranking Agricultural Counties*, presents statistics for selected items of inventory and agricultural production for the leading counties in the United States.

The 1950 Census of Agriculture was taken in conformity with the Act of Congress providing for the fifteenth and subsequent decennial censuses, approved June 18, 1929, as amended.

The compilation of statistics and the preparation of this special report was under the supervision of Ray Hurley, Chief, Agriculture Division, and Warder B. Jenkins, Assistant Chief. They were assisted by Godfrey Braun, Faie Silvers, Henry A. Tucker, and Charles Frazier. The maps were prepared under the supervision of Clarence E. Batschelet, Geographer.

November 1952.

**UNITED STATES CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: 1950**  
**REPORTS**

Volume I.—Counties and State Economic Areas.—Statistics for counties include number of farms, acreage, value, and farm operators; farms by size, by color and tenure of operator; facilities and equipment, farm labor, and farm expenditures; livestock and livestock products; specified crops harvested; farms and farm characteristics for commercial farms; farms classified by value of farm products sold, by type of farm, and by economic class; and value of products sold by source.

Data for State economic areas include farms and farm characteristics by size of farm, by tenure of operator, by type of farm, and by economic class.

Volume I will be published in 34 parts as follows:

Part	State or States	Part	State or States
1	New England States: Maine. New Hampshire. Vermont. Massachusetts. Rhode Island. Connecticut.	15	South Atlantic—Continued Virginia and West Virginia.
2	Middle Atlantic States: New York. New Jersey. Pennsylvania.	16	North Carolina and South Carolina.
3	East North Central: Ohio.	17	Georgia.
4	Indiana.	18	Florida.
5	Illinois.	19	East South Central: Kentucky.
6	Michigan.	20	Tennessee.
7	Wisconsin.	21	Alabama.
8	West North Central: Minnesota.	22	Mississippi.
9	Iowa.	23	West South Central: Arkansas.
10	Missouri.	24	Louisiana.
11	North Dakota and South Dakota.	25	Oklahoma.
12	Nebraska.	26	Texas.
13	Kansas.	27	Mountain: Montana.
14	South Atlantic: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia.	28	Idaho.
		29	Wyoming and Colorado.
		30	New Mexico and Arizona.
		31	Utah and Nevada.
			Pacific: Washington and Oregon.
		32	California.
		33	Territories and possessions.
		34	

Volume II.—General Report.—Statistics by Subjects, United States Census of Agriculture, 1950. Summary data and analyses of the data for States, for Geographic Divisions, and for the United States by subjects as illustrated by the chapter titles listed below:

Chapter	Title	Chapter	Title
I	Farms and Land in Farms.	VII	Field Crops and Vegetables.
II	Age, Residence, Years on Farm, Work off Farm.	VIII	Fruits and Nuts, Horticultural Specialties, Forest Products.
III	Farm Facilities, Roads, Trading Center, Farm Equipment.	IX	Value of Farm Products.
IV	Farm Labor and Farm Expenditures.	X	Size of Farm.
V	Farm Mortgages, Farm Taxes, Cash Rent.	XI	Color, Race, and Tenure of Farm Operator.
VI	Livestock and Livestock Products.	XII	Economic Class of Farm.
		XIII	Type of Farm.

Volume III.—Irrigation of Agricultural Lands.—State reports with data for counties and drainage basins and a summary for the United States, including number of enterprises, irrigation works and equipment, source of water, new capital investment since 1940, cost of irrigation water, number of farms and acreage irrigated, and quantity of water used for irrigation purposes.

The State reports will be issued as separate parts of Volume III as follows:

Part	State	Part	State
1	Arizona.	10	Nebraska.
2	Arkansas and Oklahoma.	11	Nevada.
3	California.	12	New Mexico.
4	Colorado.	13	North Dakota and South Dakota.
5	Florida.	14	Oregon.
6	Idaho.	15	Texas.
7	Kansas.	16	Utah.
8	Louisiana.	17	Washington.
9	Montana.	18	Wyoming.

Volume IV.—Drainage of Agricultural Lands.—State reports with statistics for counties and a summary for the United States. One part only. Data on land in drainage enterprises, number and types of enterprises, cost of drainage, indebtedness, assessments, and drainage works.

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## RANKING AGRICULTURAL COUNTIES

**Introduction.**—This report presents statistics for the leading counties in the United States for selected items of inventory and production according to the 1950 Census of Agriculture. The relative standing of these same counties is also shown for the corresponding period 5 years earlier, based on the 1945 Census of Agriculture.

The ranking of the counties was made on the basis of the extent to which they contributed to the United States total for the particular item of inventory or production. For most of the items, figures are given for the 100 ranking counties. For items for which production is centered in a restricted number of counties, the ranking has been limited to the 50 leading counties.

Ranking-county data usually pinpoint the areas of most intensive production. For many items, a very large part of the United States total is represented by these leading counties. Such data serve as a useful tool in studying and understanding the geography of agriculture. However, ranking-county data may fail to outline all of the intensive areas of production, as counties which are small either in total land areas or in farm land area may be outranked by counties having a larger total land area or farm area, but with smaller area of intensive production. This situation is indicated by a comparison of maps in figures 6 and 7. The map in figure 6 shows the pounds of whole milk sold for all counties. Areas of intensive sales are portrayed by the density of dots. The map in figure 7 shows the location of the 100 leading counties in pounds of whole milk sold. If the latter map were superimposed on the former, the number of dots outside the boundaries of the 100 leading counties would be considerable and their frequency would indicate some areas of high density of milk sales other than the 100 leading counties.

A different picture is revealed by a comparison of the maps shown in figures 52 and 53. One map locates the grapefruit-producing areas on the basis of the number of trees while the other map outlines the 50 leading counties for the number of grapefruit trees. No areas of high density of grapefruit trees lie outside of these ranking counties. There is, however, a wide range in the number of grapefruit trees among the 50 ranking counties. For example, Hidalgo County, Tex., the foremost county in grapefruit tree numbers, had 4,067,688 grapefruit trees, while De Soto County, Fla., which ranks 20th in grapefruit tree numbers, had only 94,806 trees.

Maps showing the distribution of the items are presented for most of the principal items.

**Method of ranking the counties.**—The leading counties were selected on the basis of their relationship to the United States total for the particular item of inventory or production. The rank of the county depends upon the size of the inventory or production item for the county.

Table 1 gives the 100 leading counties ranked according to one over-all measurement of total farm production. This grouping of counties was made on the basis of the gross value of all farm products sold. The gross value of all farm products sold represents mostly sales made in the calendar year preceding the date of the census. For crop items, the sales figures relate not to sales made in a calendar year but to the products of a calendar year sold or held for sale. For example, the figures for all farm products sold includes the sales of wheat, corn, and other

crops produced in the calendar year preceding the census date which had been sold as well as the farmer's estimated value for the portion which was expected to be sold. This total value also includes the sales of dairy products and of animals sold alive, for which data were secured for the calendar year preceding the census date.

The other groupings of counties are for related items or for individual items. For a combination of items the ranking was usually made on the basis of the gross value of sales or the value of inventories. For example, the leading counties in sales of all dairy products (whole milk, cream, butter, buttermilk, skim milk, and cheese) were determined according to the combined dollar volume of sales. Also, the principal livestock counties were selected on the basis of the combined dollar values of the numbers of livestock on hand.

For individual items of inventory, the selection of the leading counties was made on the basis of the actual numbers of animals on hand as shown by the census. Such rankings as those made for horses and mules, for cattle and calves, and for chickens 4 months old and over, were made on the basis of the inventory numbers.

Annual production of an item was not frequently used in making the selection of ranking counties. For such items as cattle and calves, hogs and pigs, chickens, chicken eggs, milk, etc., quantities sold rather than quantities produced were obtained by the census. For these and similar items, the leading counties would not be greatly different if they had been selected on the basis of production rather than quantities sold. For many items for which sales data were obtained, the listings of important counties were made on the basis of the number of units sold during the year with an additional ranking for these same counties according to dollar value of sales. Thus, for cattle and calves sold alive, the selection of counties was made according to the number of head sold in the calendar year preceding the census. Then, these same counties were ranked according to the gross amounts received from the sale of such animals, provided the county was among the first 100 counties in gross sales.

For crops, the ranking was usually made according to the acreage harvested. The production, when available, is given also with the acreage for the same counties and the relative ranking of the counties according to production is shown, provided that the county ranked among the first 100 in production. Soybeans harvested for beans was ranked only on production of beans. For crop items such as tree fruits, where acreage figures were not generally obtained, the ranking was made on the basis of the number of trees and an additional ranking was given also for quantity harvested.

**Definitions and explanations.**—Definitions are given here for only a few items. Reference should be made to the Introduction, Volume I, Statistics for Counties and State Economic Areas, of the reports for the 1950 Census of Agriculture, for definitions and explanations for other items.

**A farm.**—For the 1950 Census of Agriculture, places of 3 or more acres were counted as farms if the value of agricultural products in 1949, exclusive of home gardens, amounted to \$150 or more. The agricultural products could have been either for home use or for sale. Places of less than 3 acres were counted as farms only if the value of sales of agricultural

products in 1949 amounted to \$150 or more. Places operated in 1949 for which the value of agricultural products in 1949 was less than these minima because of crop failure or other unusual situation, and places operated in 1950 for the first time were counted as farms if normally they could be expected to produce these minimum quantities of farm products.

For 1945, the definition of a farm was somewhat more inclusive. Census enumerators were provided with the definition of a farm and were instructed to fill reports only for those places which met the criteria. Farms for Census purposes included places of 3 or more acres on which there were agricultural operations, and places of less than 3 acres with agricultural products for home use or for sale with a value of \$250 or more. For places of 3 or more acres, no minimum quantity of agricultural production was required for purposes of enumeration; for places of under 3 acres all the agricultural products valued at \$250 or more may have been for home use and not for sale. The only reports excluded from the tabulations were those taken in error and a few with very limited agricultural production such as only a small home garden, a few fruit trees, a very small flock of chickens, or the like. Reports for 3 acres or more with limited agricultural operations were retained if there were 3 or more acres of cropland and pasture, or if the value of products in 1944 amounted to \$150 or more when there was less than 3 acres of cropland and pasture.

**The Census date.**—The Census of 1950 was taken as of April 1 and that of 1945 was taken as of January 1. Since some classes of livestock vary considerably in number from month to month

within a given year, as well as from year to year, the ranking of counties for livestock numbers may be affected considerably because of both the month and the year in which the enumeration was made.

**Differences in rank of counties on basis of related items.**—In those tables presenting the ranking of counties according to two related items, the 100 leading counties for the one item seldom coincide with the 100 leading counties for the other item. The differences in the rank of counties on the basis of number of livestock sold and on the basis of the value of livestock sold, and the differences in the rank of counties on the basis of acreage harvested and on the basis of production for a particular crop, may be considerable. For example, Lamar and Limestone, both Texas counties, occupy respectively, 46th and 47th positions, according to the acreage of cotton harvested. However, these two counties are not among the 100 leading counties on the basis of production. Likewise, 28 of the leading 100 counties on the basis of acreage of wheat harvested in 1949 are not among the first 100 counties on the basis of wheat production.

**Rank determined on basis of data for 1 year.**—Since the ranking of counties was made on the basis of the data for a single year the relative position of a given county may have been influenced considerably by climatic factors or economic conditions prevailing during the year. For example, a severe freeze in January 1949 reduced the orange crop in San Bernardino County, Calif. This reduction in the orange crop was the principal cause for this county dropping from 9th in 1944 to 22d in 1949 in the list of the 100 leading counties based on the total value of farm products sold.