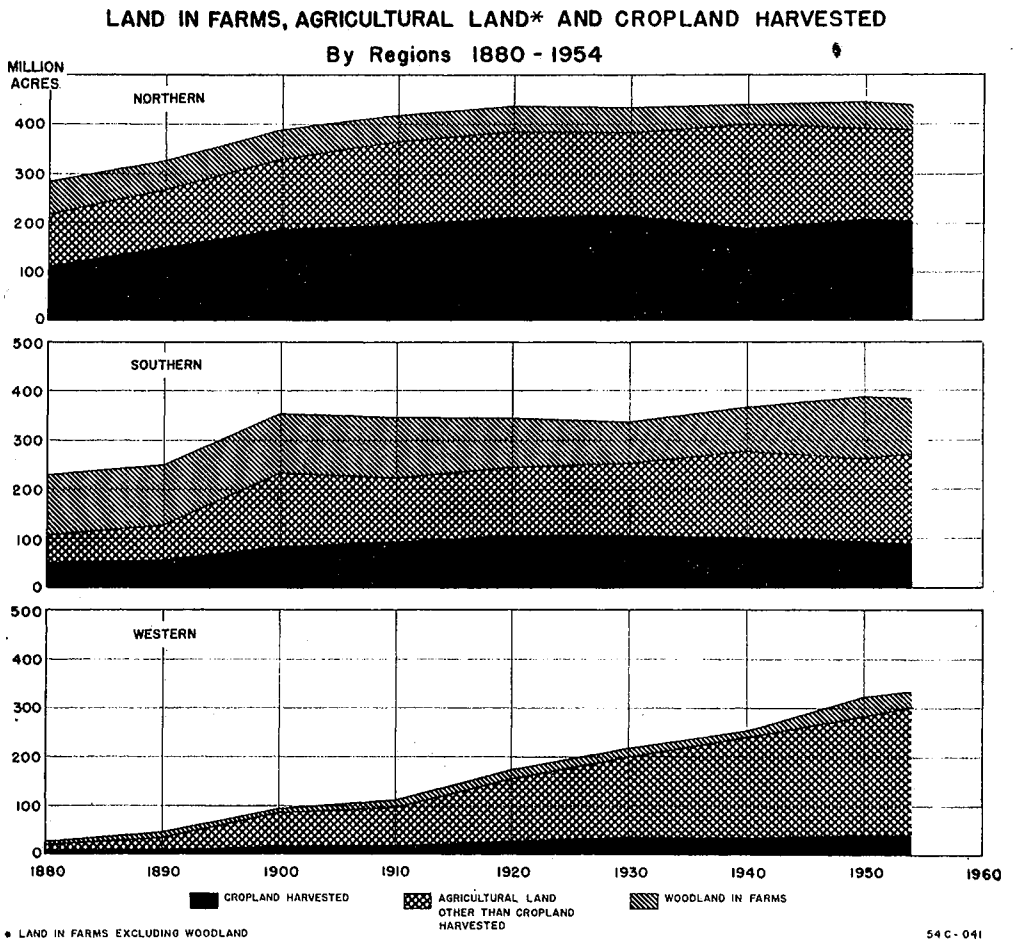

REGIONAL TRENDS IN LAND USE

The general trends of land in farms, agricultural land (excludes woodland), and cropland harvested are shown for the Northern, Southern, and Western States in the accompanying chart. In all three groups of States, land in farms and agricultural land increased in nearly all decades until 1940. Cropland harvested reached a peak acreage in the Northern and Southern regions in 1930, while the peak acreage for the Western States was reported by the 1950 Census of Agriculture.

Several important contrasts in trends exist among farm-production regions within these three groups of States. These regional changes in land in farms, agricultural land, and cropland harvested are summarized briefly:

Northern States:

(1) **Northeastern States.**—Nearly uninterrupted decline since 1900 in land in farms, agricultural land, and cropland harvested characterizes this region. Abandonment of agricultural land in the face of competition from midwestern agricultural areas and urban and industrial expansion into agricultural areas have contributed greatly to this decline.

(2) **Lake States.**—Substantial increase occurred until 1920. Fluctuation in land in farms and agricultural land has prevailed since 1920. Cropland harvested more than doubled between 1880 and 1920. During the last 35 years, it has increased from 35 to 37 million acres.

(3) **Corn Belt.**—Land in farms reached a peak of 147 million acres in 1900 and since then it has fluctuated between 146 and 138 million acres. Agricultural land reached its first peak in 1910 and since has ranged between 119 and 127 million acres. Cropland harvested reached a peak of 80 million acres in 1920. After some decline in intervening years, cropland harvested totaled 77 million acres in 1954.

(4) **Northern Plains.**—Nearly uninterrupted increase of land in farms and agricultural land characterizes this region. Cropland harvested reached a high point of 85 million acres in 1930. Drought frequently reduced the acreage harvested during the 1930's, but since World War II crops have been harvested from nearly 80 million acres of cropland each year.

Southern States:

(5) **Appalachian.**—Land in farms has dropped from a high of 96 million acres in 1900 to 76 million acres in 1954. Agricultural land accounted for 50 to 55 million acres between 1900 and 1950. In 1954, it dropped to 46 million acres. Cropland harvested has fluctuated between a high of 25 million acres and a low of 19 million acres in 1954.

(6) **Southeastern States.**—Land in farms reached a peak in 1950 largely because large grazing areas in Florida have been included as land in farms in recent years. Cropland harvested has declined by 8 million acres from a peak of 24 million acres in 1920.

(7) **Mississippi Delta.**—The highest acreage of 51 million acres of land in farms was reported in 1950. Agricultural land increased from 15 million acres in 1880 to 32 million acres in 1940, 1945, and 1950, and then declined slightly in 1954. Cropland harvested has declined 3½ million acres from the 1940 peak.

(8) **Southern Plains.**—A fivefold increase in land in farms during the last 75 years characterizes this region. Pronounced fluctuations in the acreage of agricultural land are explained in part by difficulties in applying definitions of open and woodland pasture in the areas of brush infestation in Texas. Cropland harvested has declined about 11 million acres from the peak of 46 million acres reached in 1930.

Western States:

(9) **Mountain States.**—Land in farms, agricultural land, and cropland harvested have all increased during the 75-year period. The inclusion of more of the grazing area in farms, gains in the acreage irrigated, and development of dry-farming practices are responsible for these increases.

(10) **Pacific States.**—The trend in the three Pacific States has been very similar to that in the Mountain States. Land in farms, agricultural land, and cropland harvested have all more than tripled during the 75-year period covered by the accompanying chart.