



About 358 million acres of the commercial forest land are privately owned and 126 million acres are publicly owned. The publicly owned forest land is held by Federal, State, and county and municipal governments. About 99 million acres are owned by the Federal Government; 19 million acres, by State governments; and 8 million acres, by county and municipal governments. Farm forests accounted for 165 million acres of the privately owned commercial forest land in 1950.

Distribution of forest land.—The distribution of the total forest area of the United States is shown on the accompanying map. Unproductive as well as productive forest areas are shown. Many of the unproductive areas are valuable for watershed protection purposes. The regional distribution of the total forest land area shown in the accompanying table will assist in locating the major areas of commercial and noncommercial forest land.

From the map, the influence of topography on the distribution of forest land may be observed. In the 31 Eastern States, most of which were originally forested, several rough hilly areas have remained largely forested. In the Western States, rainfall has a marked influence upon the distribution of forest land. However, topography is a major factor in determining rainfall distribution and hence the distribution of the major forested areas. In the 11 Western States, the heaviest rainfall occurs on the windward western slopes of mountains. Because of the favorable rainfall conditions, these wet windward slopes in California, Oregon, and Washington have some of the most luxuriant forests in the United States. In contrast, many of the leeward mountain slopes and the lower parts of windward slopes are covered with chaparral and other noncommercial forest types.

In parts of the Great Plains and 11 Western States, areas that were originally covered by grass vegetation have been invaded by brush-type vegetation which is detrimental to the grazing value of the land. One of the largest brush-invaded areas is in western Texas. The invasion of brush accounts for the relatively high density of woodland in such areas.

Woodland in farms.—For the United States as a whole, woodland in farms accounts for more than a sixth of the farm area. The highest regional proportion is in the Southeastern States where half of the land in farms is woodland. In the Western States, much of the woodland in farms has relatively little commercial value except for northern Idaho and western Oregon and Washington and California. In the East, farm woodlands are generally classified as commercial forest land, but the amount of income derived from the woodland part of the farm varies from practically nothing to a substantial part of the total farm income.

The increase in total woodland and forest land, which amounted to several million acres, reflects a change taking place over the last two decades, particularly in parts of the Southern, Northeastern, and Lake States. Forest surveys completed since 1950

have more fully indicated the gradual reversion of considerable acreages of pastureland and cropland to forest land in these parts of the country.

Much of the decline between 1949 and 1954 in woodland in farms occurred in Texas where more of the brushland area was included in other pasture not cropland and not woodland rather than as a part of woodland pastured. The decline in land in farms during the last 5 years in forested regions also accounts for an appreciable transfer of forest land from land in farms to the nonfarm area.

Woodland pastured.—This part of the woodland area can either be considered as a part of the total pastureland area or part of the total woodland in farms. Its value as pasture has already been discussed under pastureland. In some areas, such as in the longleaf-slash pine forests of the Southeastern Coastal Plain, it is possible to use the forest for pasture without detracting very much from the timber value of the forest. In other areas such as the hardwood forests of the Northeastern, Lake, and Corn Belt States, the use of woodland for pasture is generally not compatible with good forest management.

Woodland not pastured.—The heaviest concentration of non-pastured woodland in farms is located in the Appalachian and Southeastern States. These are also regions with much woodland used for pasture as is shown by the accompanying map. The dominance of such cash crops as cotton, tobacco, and peanuts over extensive parts of these two regions is an important factor accounting for a high proportion of the farm area remaining in forests. Much woodland in this part of the South is physically suitable for crop production. On the other hand, a considerable acreage of woodland in farms in areas of rough topography is not likely to be used for crops or even pastured. These forest areas are often not operated properly from the standpoint of good forest management.