

The map of "Major Land Use Regions" presents a regionalization based on a grouping of major land uses. The associations of major uses are superimposed upon the principal natural land use regions which in turn are based on the differences in physical conditions that are significant determinants of land use.

In the next two maps presented in this section, the major uses of all land and nonfarm land are compared with total land area by farm-production regions.

Land capability is compared with total land area by farm-production regions in the last map in the section. This map is based on estimates of land capability compiled in 1948 and 1949 by the United States Soil Conservation Service on the basis of individual

farm plans completed at that time and supplemented by estimates for areas where data from farm plans were not available. These land-capability estimates are the result of a program being carried out by the Soil Conservation Service to classify different kinds of land systematically on the basis of the characteristics that determine the capability of the land to produce permanently. Eight general classes are used. Land in Classes I, II, and III can be cultivated with differing degrees of attention to conservation practices. Class IV land should generally be used for crops only once in 6 years or more. Land in Classes V, VI, and VII is unsuited for cultivation, but it can be used for pasture and forestry. Class VIII land is suitable only for wildlife, watersheds, and similar uses.

## TYPE OF FARMING

Early type-of-farming studies in the United States were concerned mainly with a geographic regionalization of agriculture. In the 1930 Graphic Summary of American Agriculture, a map was presented which divided the United States into 12 major agricultural regions. The eastern humid area was divided into 8 regions. These regions were based mainly upon the dominance of a particular crop or type of farming. In the West, the 4 regions were based on the use of land for grazing or crops.

The most recent study of types of farming was completed in 1950. In this study, the United States was divided into 165 generalized type-of-farming areas, 61 subregions, and 9 major agricultural regions.

The distribution of farming is closely related to a number of physical, biological, and economic conditions. The type-of-farming pattern reflects the influence of these conditions or forces. Regional divisions show particularly the influence of climate, topography, and soils. In the humid Eastern States, type-of-farming regions tend to have an east-to-west orientation which reflects the significance of temperature. Soils are an important factor influencing the type of farming. This is indicated for example by the close agreement between the prairie soils and the Corn Belt. In the West, rainfall, altitude, and the availability of water for irrigation are the major physical influences upon type of farming.

