



Commercial farms as a percentage of all farms.—In 1954, about 70 percent of all farms were classified as commercial farms. The accompanying map shows that more than three-fourths of the farms are commercial farms in most of the Corn Belt, the Great Plains, and the northern Mountain States. The lower Mississippi Valley, parts of the Middle Atlantic and Southeastern Coastal Plain, and some areas in the Northeast also have a high proportion of commercial farms. Very few commercial farms are located in parts of several Southern States.

Average size of commercial farms.—Marked contrast in the average size of commercial farms between the Western and Eastern States is shown by the accompanying map. Only in Florida among the 31 Eastern States do commercial farms average 500 acres or more in any of the State economic areas.

The size of farm is affected by such factors as the type of agricultural operations, size of ownership units, topography, and climatic conditions. Small commercial farms averaging less than 100 acres in size for State economic areas are found principally in parts of the South where small cropper-operated farms associated with the growing of cotton and tobacco are numerous. In some areas in the Northeast where vegetable production is of particular importance, the average size of commercial farms is also less than 100 acres.

Commercial farms and ranches average 500 acres or more in size over much of the 11 Western States and the western part of the 6 Great Plains States. Land that is suitable only for grazing and has a very low carrying capacity accounts for a considerable acreage in the West. This means that a commercial farm or ranch in that region must comprise a large acreage if it is to be an economic unit. Commercial farms which are lo-

cated mainly on irrigated land are not nearly so large as the ranches that depend mainly on nonirrigated grazing land.

Average value of land and buildings per acre.—The 1954 Census of Agriculture shows that the value of land and buildings per acre increased 29 percent over the value reported for 1950. Values increased most sharply in Arizona and Florida with Indiana, Georgia, Maryland, Montana, and Washington also showing significant increases. Only 8 States had increases of less than 15 percent. Most of these were New England States.

The accompanying map shows the distribution of counties according to the 1954 average value of farmland and buildings per acre. The three largest concentrations of land and buildings having an average value per acre of \$200 and over are in the Corn Belt, Northeastern, and Pacific States. The high values in the Northeastern States, which extend from southern New England to Washington, D. C., reflect the influence of urbanization on the value of farmland located near large centers of population. A similar influence may be observed in the Pacific States where the highest average per acre values of land and buildings are in part associated with the large metropolitan centers of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. Increases in the value of irrigated land are also reflected in overall increases in the value of land and buildings in the Pacific States and in some other parts of the Western States.

The most extensive contiguous area with high land values per acre is in the Corn Belt States. In this area, high average values may be attributed primarily to the productive capacity of the land.

Many scattered counties with high average per acre values for land and buildings can generally be associated with urban centers or with areas having a high proportion of irrigated land in the Western States.