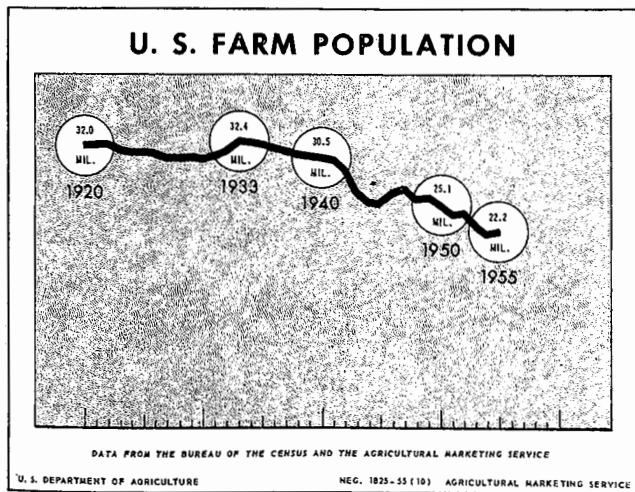


FARM POPULATION



The Nation's farm population continued to decline between 1950 and 1955. The decline amounted to nearly 3 million persons. During the same period total population increased from 151 million to 165 million persons. This means that the farm population comprised only 13.5 percent of the total population in 1955 compared with 16.6 percent in 1950.

Percentage of total population represented by farm population, 1950.—Since the last complete population Census was taken in 1950, the accompanying map shows the percentage of total population represented by farm population as of 1950. The overall pattern has not changed significantly during the last 5 years. The heaviest concentration of farm population still remains in the South. The proportion is particularly high in areas where

small tenant-operated cotton and tobacco farms are numerous and where there are many part-time and residential farms. Counties with a very low proportion of farm population are widely scattered. Highly urbanized counties account for many of the counties with less than 10 percent of the total population living on farms. In some counties with very few farm people, mining and forestry are more important activities than farming.

The regional distribution of farm population has changed only slightly during the last 35 years. In 1920, the regional distribution was as follows: Northeast, 8 percent; North Central, 32 percent; South, 53 percent; and West, 7 percent. In 1955, the Northeast had 9 percent of the total; the North Central, 32 percent; the South, 50 percent; and the West, 9 percent.

United States farm population.—The peak in farm population since 1920 was reached in 1933 when more than 32 million persons were living on farms. Since 1933, a persistent decline has occurred. A pronounced dip in the farm population curve during World War II accelerated this decline. Many who left the farm during the war did not return after its end.

Between 1950 and 1955 all regions lost farm population. The decline was below the national average in the Northeastern, North Central, and Western States and above it in the South.

A high degree of mobility is characteristic of the farm population of the United States. More than 2 million persons have moved to and from farms in nearly every year since 1921. During most of this period, the movement away from farms has exceeded the movement to farms. Only for a short time during the depression years and immediately after World War II was this trend reversed significantly. Net migration away from farms has been highest during periods of greatest opportunity for off-farm employment. These periods have also coincided with periods when mechanization of farming was progressing rapidly.