



PRINCIPAL CROPS

Wheat.—Wheat threshed in 1954 was 20 million acres less than in 1949. This sharp reduction in wheat acreage reflects largely the existence of an acreage allotment program in 1954 as contrasted with 1949 when acreage controls did not apply. This large reduction in acreage affected all of the major wheat areas, but the general pattern of wheat distribution remains essentially the same as that for 1949.

At present spring wheat is grown chiefly in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana. Secondary areas are found in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and western Minnesota. Only very scattered acreage is found elsewhere. Winter wheat is much more widely grown as may be observed by looking at the accompanying map. In a few instances, spring and winter wheat are grown in the same areas.

Oats.—The major concentration of oats is situated just east of the leading wheat-producing areas in the Great Plains States. The major oat-producing area also includes Iowa, southern Minnesota and Wisconsin, and northern Illinois. In the eastern part of the Corn Belt, oats are a less important crop than in the western part. Winter oats rather than spring-planted oats are grown in the Southern and the Pacific States.

Oats rank next to corn as the principal feed grain in the United States. The reliance formerly placed upon horses and mules for farm power and the widespread acceptance of oats as a good nurse crop for clover, timothy, and other tame grasses, along with the tolerance of oats for poor soils, help to explain the present importance of this crop in American agriculture.

Barley.—Most of the barley in the United States is produced in the 17 Western States and in Minnesota. The leading barley-

producing area is in eastern North Dakota and the adjacent Red River Valley area of Minnesota. Nearly a third of the total United States acreage is found in these two States. California is now second to North Dakota in acreage harvested, having lost its position as the leading State which it held during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the present century. Widespread diversion to barley of land taken out of wheat production in 1954, under the allotment program resulted in a marked increase in acreage of barley for that year. Some of the areas formerly important for their production of barley for malting purposes such as southeastern Wisconsin, southeastern South Dakota, southwestern Minnesota, and northwestern Iowa now grow very little barley. About two-thirds of the barley crop is now used for feed and one-third for malting. The latter use has increased from less than a fourth in 1939 to about a third now.

Rice.—The total acreage of rice threshed in 1954 was nearly three times as great as that in 1939. Production was greatly accelerated to accommodate export needs for areas where prewar trade channels had been disrupted by war. The production of rice in the United States is now mainly concentrated in 4 States, although production of rice has increased sharply during the last 5 years in some of the Delta counties of Mississippi. The coastal prairies of Louisiana and Texas, the prairie and lowland areas of eastern Arkansas and the adjacent lowlands of Mississippi, and the Sacramento Valley of California are the present rice-producing areas. All of these areas have heavy subsoils that retain irrigation water well and all areas have climates favorable to rice culture. Highly mechanized methods are now used in producing rice in the United States.