



Land from which hay was cut.—The distribution of the acreage of all tame and wild hay except soybean, cowpea, peanut, and sorghum hay is shown for 1954 by the accompanying map. When the distribution of cattle is compared with that of land from which hay was cut, it may be noted that areas growing hay are usually areas where cattle are also reported. But in several areas in which hay is a minor crop considerable numbers of cattle are grown. These are located mainly in the southern third of the country where cool-season temperatures are high enough to permit grazing during most of the year provided moisture is adequate and plants that will yield forage in all seasons are available.

In 1954 in the Northeastern States, the land from which hay was cut accounted for half of the cropland harvested. This region, in which dairying is a major type of farming and which has relatively long winters, needs a big hay crop. In the Appalachian, Lake States, Northern Plains, Mountain, and Pacific regions, land from which hay was cut accounted for approximately a fifth to a third of the cropland harvested. In the Corn Belt, about a sixth of the cropland harvested was in hay crops; and in the Southeastern, Delta, and Southern Plains States only about a tenth of the cropland harvested was accounted for by hay crops.

The principal tame hay crops are alfalfa, clover, and timothy, small grains cut for hay, and lespedeza. In 1954, alfalfa accounted for 45 percent of the total acreage of tame hay. Clover and timothy, which are grown together and separately, accounted for 29 percent of the acreage. Small grains and lespedeza, respectively, accounted for 8 and 6 percent of the tame hay acreage.

Wild hay.—Most of the wild hay is cut in the Northern Plains States where selected areas of pasture and grazing land are cut for hay. The principal wild hay area, which is a north-south trending belt in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska lies

mainly to the west of the areas where nonirrigated alfalfa is most heavily concentrated. In the Western States some of the wild hay is cut from land along streams that can be irrigated by spreading water over bordering rangeland.

Alfalfa.—The most widely grown hay crop is alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures. The only major area in which alfalfa is of little importance is in the Southeastern States, where a humid climate and sandy soils are not conducive to its production. Soils with adequate lime are the most favorable soils for growing alfalfa. In the Western States, it is a major irrigated crop. It has been widely used in irrigated areas to build up organic matter in soils which under semiarid and arid climates had very little natural organic matter. In the Northern Plains, a considerable acreage of alfalfa is grown without irrigation. It is grown not only for hay but also for seed. Hardy varieties grown in these States are not so easily damaged by winter killing as are varieties grown in warmer areas.

The largest concentration of alfalfa acreage is in the southern part of the Lake States and the northern part of the Corn Belt where soils favorable for its production coincide with areas in which dairying is the major type of farming.

Clover and timothy.—In 1909, the acreage of clover and timothy hay amounted to nearly 37 million acres. In 1954, only 17 million acres were cut for hay. Less emphasis on timothy as a hay crop is noticeable. Part of this decline in the acreage of timothy is associated with the decrease in number of horses used as draft animals.

Most of the timothy and clover cut for hay is grown in the North Central and Northeastern States. It is still the major hay crop on many soils that are not suited to production of the higher yielding and better quality alfalfa hay. Timothy and clover as a hay crop is not as expensive to seed and is less likely to suffer damage from winter killing than alfalfa.