

In 1954, almost 58 percent of all farms reporting field tractors were in the Corn Belt, Lake, and Great Plains States, distributed as follows: Corn Belt, 24.4 percent; Lake States, 14 percent; Northern and Southern Plains States, 19.3 percent. It was in these areas that farmers bought tractors most rapidly in the early days of farm mechanization. It is in these States and in the Northeast area where number of farms reporting tractors has increased considerably less than average during the last 10 years. The greatest relative increase in farms reporting tractors during the last 10 years has been in the Appalachian, Southeast, and Mississippi Delta areas, where mechanization was relatively slow in getting started.

Although the number of field tractors on farms in 1954 is 18 times the number in 1920, the number of crop acres has changed very little. Consequently, total crop acres per field tractor decreased during the period from 1,417 to 71, or by almost twenty-fold. The downward trend has been pronounced in each of the 10 areas shown in the map. In November 1954, the smallest average crop acres per field tractor was 35.5 in the Northeast and the largest was 140.1 in the Northern Plains States.

FARMS REPORTING ONE OR MORE FIELD TRACTORS

As farmers became more dependent on tractor power and tractor-drawn and tractor-mounted equipment, many bought a second or a third tractor. Consolidation of farms into larger operating units also helped to increase the average number of tractors per farm. In the early days of tractor use, few farms had more than one tractor. As late as 1940 the average number of field tractors per farm reporting tractors was 1.1. By 1954 the average had risen to 1.6.

In November 1954, 61 percent of the 2.8 million farms reporting field tractors reported one tractor, 28 percent reported 2, 8 percent reported 3, and 3 percent reported having 4 or more tractors.

Regionally, the largest percentage of tractor farms reporting 4 or more field tractors per farm in 1954 was in the Western States (7 percent), and the second largest was in the Great Plains States (4.4 percent). A relatively large proportion of the farms reporting only one field tractor each was in the Southern States (82 percent), followed in rank by the Eastern States where 69 percent of the tractor farms reported only one tractor each.

