

MOTORTRUCKS ON FARMS

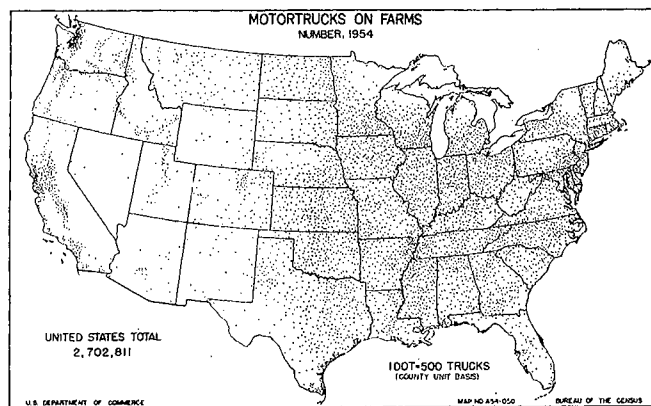
Delivery of crops and livestock to market and of supplies to the farm always has been a sizable job. Before the motortruck became available, fat cattle, sheep, and even hogs were often driven on foot to local points of delivery. Horses drawn wagons and sleds were used to haul crops to market and supplies back home. In the sparsely settled Plains region, it sometimes required more than 1 day to deliver a load of produce. In that region and in other northern agricultural areas, bobsleds were used extensively to haul grain and other produce to market when snow covered the ground. In areas where rainfall was heavy, early dirt roads often became impassable for a team with a load of any size in spring and winter.

The motortruck appealed to farmers. Although the mileage of improved roads in 1920 was small, and motortrucks were far from foolproof, there were 139,000 motortrucks on farms. The number continued to increase rapidly, even through the post World War I years of adjustment. Only during the severe depression years of the 1930's did number of motortrucks on farms decrease.

In November 1954, farmers reported about 2.7 million trucks on their farms. These were widely distributed throughout the country. They were most numerous in areas where farms are numerous and in areas where a relatively large percentage of the total land area is in harvested crops. In most sections of the Corn Belt and in the southern portion of the Lake States, crop-land accounts for more than half of the total land.

In these areas motortrucks are relatively numerous in relation to total land area. This is true also in some areas of the Appalachian and Northeast States, and in some of the irrigated and humid areas of the Pacific Coast States where farms tend to be small and where intensive crops are widely grown.

In the more arid areas, where farms are of large size and only a small percentage of the total land is in farms, there are relatively few motortrucks. Nevada, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, together had less than 3 percent of farm motortrucks reported in November 1954.

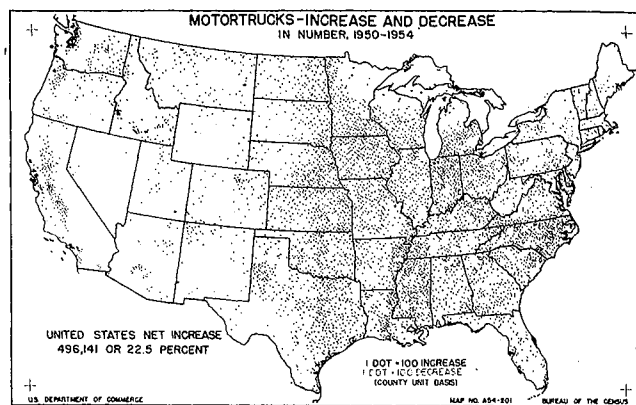


From April 1950 to November 1954 total motortrucks on farms increased from 2.2 million to 2.7 million, or by 23 percent. Increases were reported in all States except New York, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, where moderate decreases were reported.

Counties reporting increases in numbers of motortrucks since the 1950 Census were numerous and widely distributed throughout the country. The pattern of increase by counties followed rather closely the pattern of total distribution of motortrucks. In the Northeast States, total numbers of motortrucks on farms changed but little from April 1950 to November 1954 and relatively few counties in this area reported increases in numbers of motortrucks. In the more arid areas of the country, and in the north-

ern portions of the Lake States truck numbers increased in many counties.

Counties reporting declines in the number of motortrucks tend to be concentrated in the Northeast States. Scattering counties in other areas also reported declines in the number of motortrucks. In general the counties in which motortruck numbers declined from April 1950 to November 1954, had relatively large expansion in nonfarm population and farm consolidation.



FARMS REPORTING MOTORTRUCKS

In 1920, only 132,000 of the 6,448,000 farms in the United States reported motortrucks. Since 1920, each Census has shown increases in the number of farms reporting motortrucks. From 1920 to 1930 the increase in number of farms reporting motortrucks occurred in all areas, and ranged from a low of about 400 percent in the Northeast and Corn Belt States to more than 900 percent in the Mississippi Delta, Southern Plains, and Lake States.

During the years of relatively low prices and adjustment from 1930 to 1940, numbers of farms with motortrucks increased moderately in all areas, except in the Lake States, Corn Belt, and Northeast. From 1940 to November 1954, farms reporting motortrucks increased by 1,269,000, or by 134 percent. Of this increase, 43 percent occurred between 1945 and 1950.

The pattern of increase in farms reporting motortrucks since 1940 has varied widely in the different areas. Percentage increases in the Southeastern, Appalachian, and Mississippi Delta States, areas in which mechanization lagged for some time, have consistently been substantially above the average since 1940. In the Southern and Corn Belt areas, relative increases in numbers have been above average, and in the Pacific, Mountain, and Lake States increases since 1940 have been less than the average for all areas. In the Northeast States the number of farms reporting motortrucks has declined slightly since 1945, primarily because of large reductions in numbers of farms.

MOTORTRUCKS PER FARM

In November 1954, about 85 percent of the farms reporting motortrucks had only 1, and about 4 percent reported 3 or more. Number of motortrucks per farm is closely associated with size and type of farm business and distance to markets. In the areas east of the Mississippi River, few farms reported more than one motortruck. But in the Great Plains and Western areas where hauling distances are greater and where considerable quantities of grain, sugar beets, fruits, vegetables, and other cash crops are grown for sale, farms reporting two or more trucks were most numerous. In the western area, a fifth of the farms reporting motortrucks had 2 trucks, and 10 percent had 3 or more.