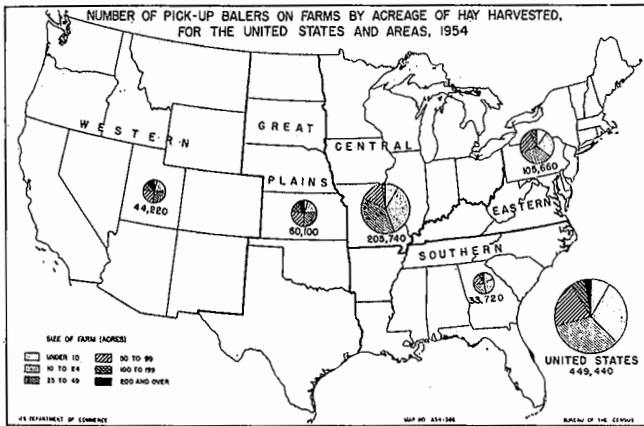


group. Another 46 percent of the pick-up balers were on farms ranging in size from 100 to 260 acres. These farms are most numerous in the Central and Eastern States and many of the livestock farms are in this size group. More than half of the pick-up balers reported in the Southern region were on farms of 260 or more acres in size. In the Great Plains and Western areas, large numbers of balers were reported on ranches and farms with 500 or more acres of land.

Harvested hay acreage is a better indicator of need for a baler than is total acres of land in the farm. When the farms are segregated by acres of hay, and numbers of pick-up balers reported, the data show that many farmers with 10 to 25 acres of hay have pick-up balers. For example, about 8 percent of all pick-up balers were reported by farmers who harvested less than 10 acres of hay on their own farms, and more than a third of the balers were owned by farmers who reported less than 25 acres of hay. Undoubtedly many such farmers did custom baling and some of them may have owned their balers jointly with other farmers. About 90 percent of all pick-up balers were reported by farmers who had less than 100 acres of hay. This group, of course, includes the majority of farms in the United States. In the Great Plains and Western areas about half of the balers were reported on farms having more than 50 acres of hay.

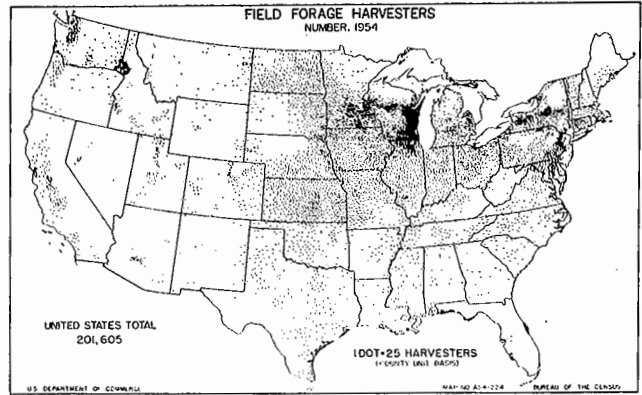


FIELD FORAGE HARVESTERS

Harvesting of corn and other green crops for silage is a slow, tiresome job when the crops are cut by hand or with a binder, loaded by hand or elevator, and unloaded into the silage cutter by hand. For many years farmers looked to the time when this heavy job could be made easier. Finally, the field forage harvester, a machine that cuts and chops green forage crops into desirable lengths as it is driven over the field, brought the long-sought solution of the problem. The first field forage harvesters were used around 1920, almost exclusively for harvesting row crops, mainly corn for silage. In time the field forage harvester was improved and equipped with attachments for doing several jobs. Many of the harvesters on farms in 1954 were equipped to harvest row crops, cut and chop standing grass and legume crops, and to pick up and chop from the windrow such crops as hay and straw.

Field chopping as of today is a relatively quick, easy, labor-saving way of harvesting forage crops. The increase in the use of this machine has been rapid since World War II. According to estimates of the United States Department of Agriculture there were about 81,000 field forage harvesters on farms in 1950. By November 1954 over 200,000 were reported on farms. Although the field forage harvester is dis-

tributed throughout all farming areas, the heavy concentrations are in the principal dairy areas where chopping corn and grass for silage is common. In some areas the machine is used to some extent for chopping grass for green feed and for chopping hay.



Harvest machines, like the field forage harvester, require relatively large investments. Economic use of such machines depends largely on the volume of crops to be harvested year after year. On many of the larger farms there are adequate quantities of crops for their use. But many farmers with limited acreages on their own farm find it desirable to do contract work for others or to own such machines jointly with one or more other farmers. In November 1954, half of all forage harvesters reported by farmers were on farms of less than 260 acres in size. These farms of less than 260 acres represent about 73 percent of all farms in the United States. Farms between 260 and 500 acres in size had 28 percent of all forage harvesters in 1954.

Geographically, farmers in the central area reported almost half of the forage harvesters in 1954. Concentration was particularly heavy in the eastern dairy area of Wisconsin. More than 80 percent of the forage harvesters reported in the central area were on farms between 100 and 500 acres in size. In the Eastern States many of the smaller dairy farms have a large proportion of their crop acreage in corn and grass for silage. Almost 40 percent of the forage harvesters in this area were reported by farmers having less than 180 acres of land, while in the Great Plains area less than 7 percent of the forage harvesters were on farms of this size. In both the Great Plains and Western areas almost a fourth of the forage harvesters were on farms of 1,000 or more acres.

