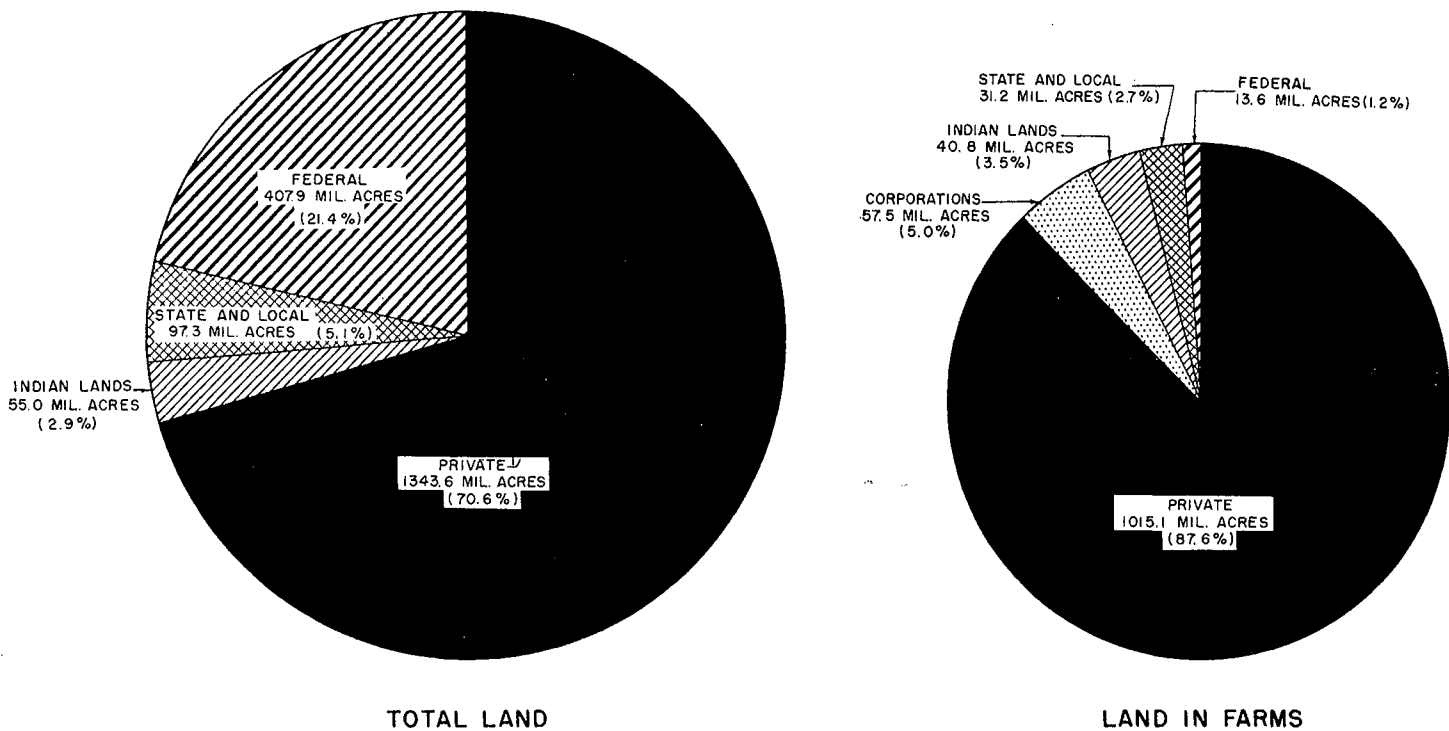


OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND LAND IN FARMS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1954



⌋ INCLUDING CORPORATIONS

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Figure 4.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Public and private ownership.—Although title to more than one-fourth of the land area of the United States rests with Federal, State, or local governments, only 3.9 percent of the land in farms is publicly owned. Most of the land in farms owned by government is of low productivity and the acreage that is employed in agricultural production is devoted almost entirely to grazing.

Of the total land area of continental United States, 407.9 million acres, or 21.4 percent, are owned by the Federal Government; 80.3 million acres, or 4.2 percent are owned by State governments; and an estimated 17 million acres, or 0.9 percent, are owned by local governments. The Federal Government, in addition to the land it owns, also administers 55 million acres of Indian lands. The 11 Western States comprising the Western Region contain 88.5 percent of the Federal land, and the proportion of Federal land in some States—such as Nevada, 87.1 percent; and Utah, 70.2 percent—exceeds one-half the total land area of the State.

Ownership of land in farms.—The land ownership policy of the United States, after the Preemption Act of 1830, is characterized by its emphasis on the maximization of fee simple ownership by individuals. With the exception of the lands of the 13 original colonies and the present borders of Texas, most of the land in the United States has at some time been owned by the Federal Government. To promote the settlement and development of this country the Federal Government disposed of much of its land to States, schools, railroads, and individuals with the result that much of the land now under the direct control of the Federal Government is either in no economic use or in uses of general

rather than individual interest. The principal exceptions, of course, are timber and grazing lands.

The two principal agencies which deal with the use of Federal grazing lands are the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior. The Forest Service in 1954 was responsible for permits and leases on 77.1 million acres of grazing land, and the Bureau of Land Management, for 175.7 million acres.

Grazing land held by individual ranchers on a permit basis from the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management is not included in "land in farms" as determined by the Censuses of Agriculture.

(Continued on page 188)

TABLE 2.—ALL LAND AND LAND IN FARMS BY TYPE OF OWNER, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1954

(Land in farms by type of owner based on a sample of approximately 200,000 farms)

Type of owner	All land (farm and nonfarm)		Land in farms		Percent in farms
	Million acres	Percent distribution	Million acres	Percent distribution	
Total.....	1,903.8	100.0	1,158.2	100.0	60.8
Private, including corporate.....	1,343.6	70.6	1,072.6	92.6	79.8
Private.....	(NA)	(NA)	1,015.1	87.6	(NA)
Corporate.....	(NA)	(NA)	57.5	5.0	(NA)
Public.....	560.2	29.4	85.6	7.4	15.3
Federal.....	407.9	21.4	13.6	1.2	3.3
State and local governments...	97.3	5.1	31.2	2.7	32.1
Indian lands.....	55.0	2.9	40.8	3.5	74.2

NA Not available.