



Figure 33.

IRRIGATION

Irrigated farms and acreage.—The United States, in 1954, contained 324,437 farms reporting some irrigation. These farms reported 29,799,482 acres irrigated or 2.6 percent of all farmland. The farms reporting irrigation represented 6.8 percent of all farms and 8.0 percent of commercial farms. The average size of commercial irrigated farms was 109.7 acres in 1954, an increase of 8.5 acres since 1949. There were 17,820 more irrigated farms in 1954 than in 1949. In 1954, 58.6 percent of all the irrigated farms were full-owner operated and 23.0 percent were part-owner operated. Of all the irrigated land in farms, 34.2 percent was operated by full owners and 38.5 percent by part owners. Tenants operated 16.8 percent of the irrigated farms and 20.2 percent of the irrigated land. Managers operated 1.6 percent of all the irrigated farms and 7.1 percent of all irrigated land.

Regional variations.—Irrigation is of considerably greater importance in the relatively arid West than in the eastern portions of the country. In the 17 Western States and Arkansas, Florida, and Louisiana, 301,870 farms reported 29,183,428 acres irrigated in 1954. The most extensive areas of irrigation are found in the far western States such as Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, and Cali-

fornia. In Nevada, for example, 87.8 percent of the farms reported some irrigation, whereas, in North Dakota, only 0.6 percent of the farms were irrigated. In the 20 States, the irrigated cropland harvested was reported for 271,160 farms and amounted to 24,419,703 acres or 90.1 acres per farm.

The tenure of operators of irrigated farms varied among the States. In Colorado, about one-fourth of the irrigated farms, and 22.4 percent of all farms, were tenant operated. However, in Utah where 85.0 percent of all farms were irrigated, only 5.1 percent of the irrigated farms and 5.6 percent of all farms were operated by tenants. In Louisiana and Arkansas a relatively small percent of all farms were irrigated, but all the rice was produced by irrigation; in these two States, respectively, 30.3 and 43.1 percent of the irrigated farms were tenant operated.

The pattern of tenure on irrigated land in farms is similar to that suggested by the number of farms. In Nebraska, in 1954, 42.5 percent of the irrigated land was tenant-operated. Arkansas, with 37.7 percent tenant-operated and Louisiana, with 34.8 percent, had relatively larger proportions of their irrigated land in farms operated by tenants. Managers operated 24.1 percent of the irrigated farmland in Florida where a large part of the truck-crop production is irrigated.