

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Agricultural production has been declining in the District of Columbia, particularly since the turn of the century. Land formerly used for the production of crops or the pasturing of livestock has been utilized largely for residential and office construction (public and private) and for parks, streets, etc.

The approximate land area, in 1950, comprised 39,040 acres. At that time, only 1,265 acres were in farms. Two of the largest farms were institutional, belonging to the Federal Government. Neither of these were in operation in 1954. The following table portrays the trend in the number of farms and in the acreage of farmland and cropland harvested since figures were first gathered in a Federal Census of Agriculture.

Year	Number of farms	Land in farms	Cropland harvested ¹
		(Acres)	(Acres)
1950.....	28	1,265	266
1945.....	40	1,854	867
1940.....	65	2,341	1,017
1935.....	89	2,801	1,495
1930.....	104	3,071	1,737
1925.....	139	3,813	2,197
1920.....	204	5,668	2,230
1910.....	217	6,063	2,982
1900.....	269	8,489	3,396
1890.....	382	11,745	2,522
1880.....	435	18,146	4,568
1870.....	209	11,677	(NA)
1860.....	238	34,263	(NA)
1850.....	267	27,454	(NA)

NA—Not available.

¹ Prior to 1925, the data relate to the total acreage of crops for which figures are available.

Since the act of Congress providing for the 1954 Census of Agriculture expressly excluded the District of Columbia from the area for enumeration, an effort was made to ascertain if there were any data available from official sources. Agricultural activities most likely to be carried on in the National Capital area would be plant nurseries, greenhouses, vegetable gardens, and keeping of domestic animals and poultry. The Assessor's Office, particularly the Real Estate Tax Division, the Personal Tax Division, the Sales and Use Tax Division, and the Income and Franchise Tax Division, had no information identifying lands and other forms of property used for agricultural production.

The Health Department makes inspectional visits to dairy farms, dairy plants, etc., for sanitation purposes. A license is needed to raise livestock but none had been issued for 1954 with the exception of a livery stable that keeps riding horses for hire.

A horticulturist of the National Capitol Parks Division of the United States Interior Department named four establishments in the District of Columbia that were growing flowers or plants for sale. The Trees and Parks Division of the District Government confirmed the information concerning the raising of nursery and/or greenhouse crops for sale. An official reported he had observed no places raising vegetables or other crops for sale. In the 1950 Census of Agriculture 2 establishments reported nursery products grown for sale, 16 reported sales of flowers and/or flowering plants, and 10 reported sales of vegetables grown under glass and/or vegetable plants. Four farms reported vegetables grown in the open for sale. An establishment may be represented more than once in the above counts.

The 1950 Census of Agriculture recorded \$569,621 as the total value of sales of all farm products for 1949. Of this total, \$429,311 was represented by crops, \$139,810 by livestock and livestock products, and \$500 by forest products. The crop total comprised \$1,998 for field crops, \$3,575 for vegetables, \$206 for fruits and nuts, and \$423,532 for horticultural specialties.