

PEANUT FARMS

Peanuts were first cultivated in this country in eastern Virginia. After the Civil War, peanuts spread rapidly into other Southern States, probably by soldiers who had fought in the Virginia campaigns. The commercial development of the industry actually began with the erection of modern cleaning plants. A factory for cleaning peanuts was established in New York in 1876 and in Norfolk, Va., a short time later. As peanut production extended to other States peanut factories were built throughout the South.

The most rapid growth in production came in the Cotton Belt, notably in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Texas. Because of the advance of the boll weevil from Texas eastward, which greatly reduced returns from cotton, farmers sought other crops and enterprises. As peanuts offered a source of income either from the direct sales of nuts or from the sale of hogs fed on peanuts, this crop rapidly became an important enterprise on many of the farms in the Southern States.

At present, there are three distinct regions in which most of the production of peanuts is concentrated. These are: (1) The Virginia-North Carolina area; (2) Southeastern or the Georgia-Alabama-Florida area; and (3) Southwestern or the Oklahoma-Texas area. Some peanuts are grown in several of the other Southern States. Figure 18 shows the percentage of cropland harvested in 1954 that was in peanuts. Figure 19 shows the farms that reported peanuts in 1954 as a percentage of all farms.

Although this crop is a major enterprise on many farms in the three specialized regions, it is one of the minor cash crops for the United States as a whole. In 1954 peanuts were grown on 3.2 percent of all farms (see Table 32). The acreage of peanuts for

all purposes represented 0.5 percent of the acreage of all harvested crops, and income from peanuts was 0.4 percent of the total cash farm income in the United States. This was a decrease from the 0.7 percent of the total cash farm income for each of the years 1944 and 1949. The percentage of farmers reporting peanuts has decreased each Census year since 1934, but the percentage of cropland harvested in peanuts was the same each Census year from 1934 to 1944.

TABLE 32.—NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FARMS REPORTING PEANUTS, PERCENTAGE OF CROPLAND HARVESTED IN PEANUTS, AND PERCENTAGE CASH INCOME FROM PEANUTS IS OF TOTAL CASH INCOME FROM CROPS AND TOTAL CASH FARM INCOME, BY CENSUS PERIODS, UNITED STATES: 1929 TO 1954

Year	Farms reporting peanuts for all purposes		Percent of cropland harvested in peanuts	Percent cash income from peanuts is of—	
	Number	Percent of all farms		Cash income from crops ¹	Total cash farm income ¹
1954.....	151,227	3.2	0.5	0.9	0.4
1949.....	225,191	4.2	.8	1.6	.7
1944 ²	309,021	5.3	1.1	1.7	.7
1939.....	491,365	8.1	1.1	1.1	.5
1934.....	576,985	8.5	1.1	.9	.4
1929.....	326,253	5.2	.7	.6	.3

¹ Estimates of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
² Peanuts grown with other crops for all purposes were not obtained in 1944 for Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

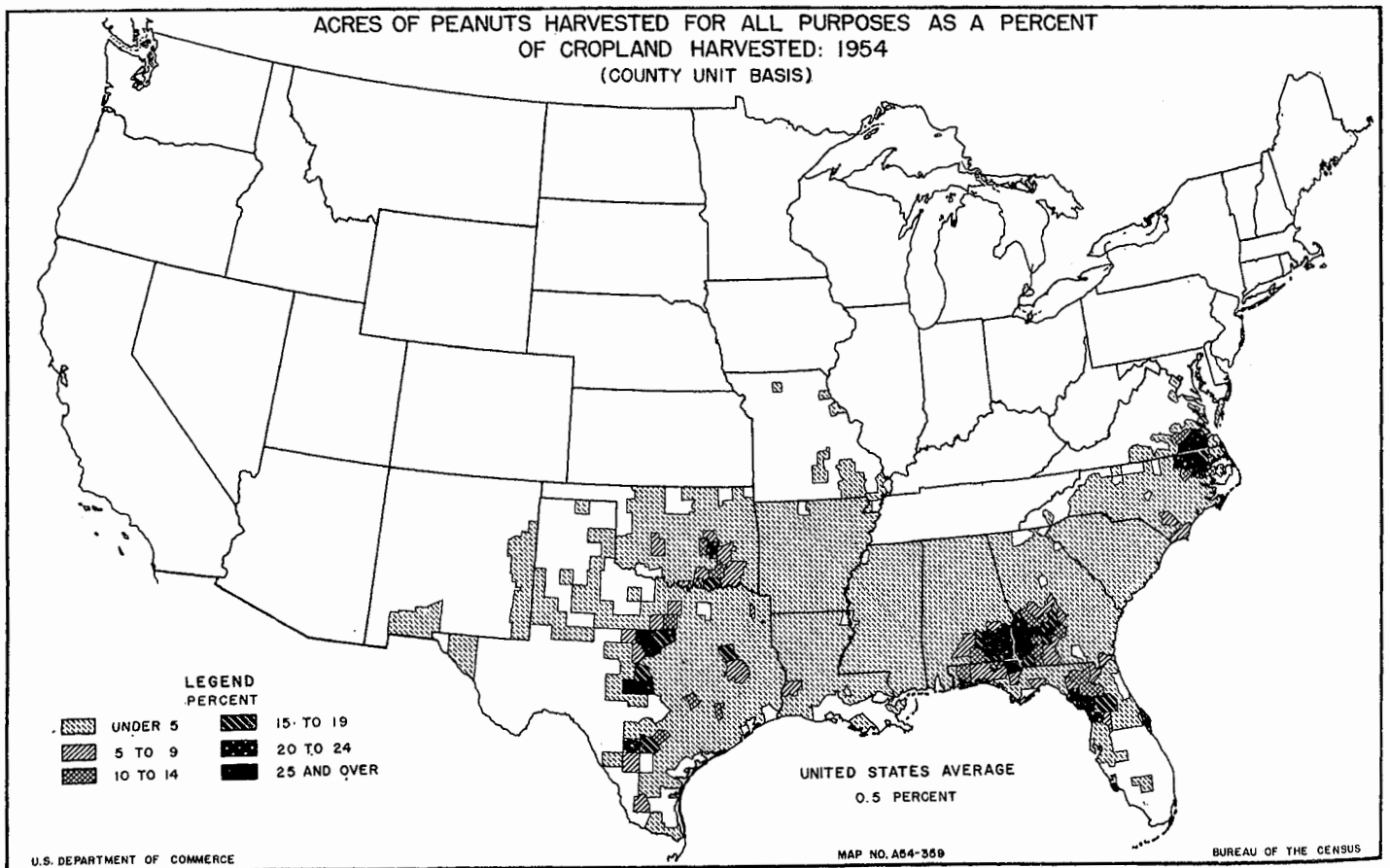


FIGURE 18