

FIGURE 5.

This picture of the importance of the public lands in the operation of the ranches in the 11 Western States is further illustrated by Figure 3. There is a high proportion of land in farms in the States of the upper Mississippi Valley, and the percentage of land in farms becomes less to the west of the Plains States. The map shows that, in most of the 17 Western States, pastureland in farms dominates the land use picture. Most of this pastureland in farms is rangeland used by stock ranches. Evidently, west of what is described as the transition zone of the Plains States, the use of rangeland by the stock ranches is a major feature of land use throughout the stock-ranching areas.

A further illustration of the land use areal importance of the stock ranch in the Western States is given in Figure 5. This map is somewhat influenced in its areal pattern by the areas of irrigation development in the Western States, but the stock ranch is the dominant factor, so far as acreage of land use is concerned, throughout all of the West from the transitional zone westward. There are areas of the Plains States where the development of nonirrigated cash-crop farming has been, and is, such that the number of these farms overshadow the number of stock ranches. This is especially true in northern Montana and western North Dakota.

In its development over the last several decades, western stock ranching has become not only an important factor in the agriculture of the West, but also in the agricultural economy of the United States. Though the parts of the 17 Western States that hold most of the stock ranches do not have a major part of the cattle numbers of the United States, the western stock-ranching

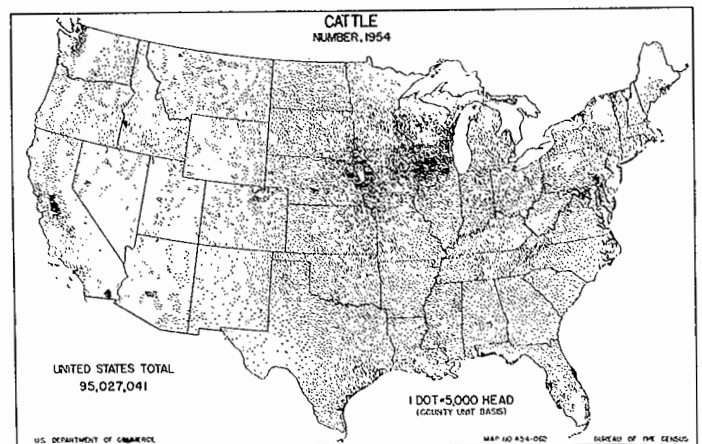


FIGURE 6.

States do have a considerable share of the total beef cattle numbers. The density of cattle numbers shown in Figure 6 (for southern Minnesota, for northern Illinois, and for Wisconsin) is due mainly to the concentration of dairy cattle in these locations. In the western locations a concentration of dairy cattle is due to the development of irrigation. Examples are found in the Fort Collins and Greeley areas of Colorado, in the Salt River Valley of Arizona, in the Central Valley district of California, in the area around Boise, Idaho, in the Snake River Valley, and a few other places.