

OZARK SPRINGFIELD-AREA

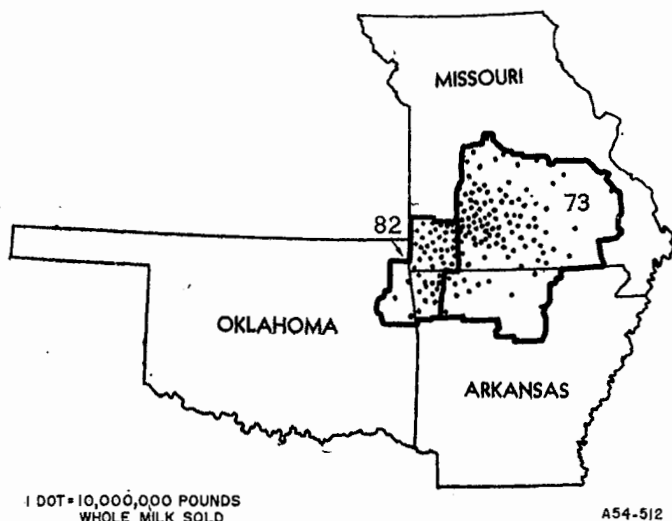


Figure 20.

THE OZARK-SPRINGFIELD AREA  
(Economic Subregions 73 and 82)

The soils here are among the most infertile of the State of Missouri. Many of them have been "characterized in a number of studies as marginal or submarginal for crops."<sup>5</sup> The soils in the eastern part are stony and the topography almost always hilly, so very little of the land is under the plow. The 1950 Census showed less than half of the land of this part in farms and the harvested cropland occupied a smaller portion of the total land than in any other area of the State.

The topography of the central part is not so hilly or rough as in the eastern part. Some of the land here is fairly smooth but the soil has a hardpan that makes poor underdrainage. Late spring plantings are frequently the result and any prolonged period without rainfall brings the threat of crop loss. The soils in the western part are better adapted to crops than those of the middle or eastern parts. They are fairly deep and friable and seem well adapted to fruit production.

Normal monthly precipitation records show plentiful moisture for growing most crops, 40 to 44 inches. With regular rainfall, temperatures during the growing season are favorable for good crop production. But the rainfall is seldom normal or regular. Periods of excessive precipitation are followed by hot dry weather which makes crops a gamble both on the hardpan soils and on the stony or sandy soils with highly porous subsoils. In these circumstances small grains, which mature before the hottest and driest summer weather, are grown in preference to corn. Sorghums or other hot-weather crops also do well.

The area has about equal acreages of corn and hay. Approximately one-sixth of the harvested cropland is used for each. More than a fourth of the cropland is used for small grains, while other crops than these staples use the remaining 40 percent.

There is little difference in the percentage distribution of the harvested cropland in the economic classes. All had relatively small acreages of corn and hay. The land seems better suited to pastures than to most crops and farmers have depended on livestock to utilize it. The gradual development of dairying over other forms of livestock production appears to be based upon the following considerations.<sup>6</sup>

1. Water supply is adequate and easily accessible. There are many running streams and springs throughout the area.
2. Gravel deposits, as well as a plentiful supply of stone, have made possible well-constructed all-weather roads at relatively small cost.
3. Dairy farming offers greater income than beef raising and provides a greater yearly return for family labor.

Not only are crop productions low but real estate values are among the lowest in the State. The highest values center in Green County where the city of Springfield is located. The high land values are the result of location and not of better crop productions.

The varied and adverse conditions under which production takes place shows up in the farm-income figures (Table 65). Figures for both total and per crop acres are low in comparison with other special dairy areas. The average total income of \$2,595, or \$37 per acre of total cropland, suggests the adverse conditions under which these farmers work. The income, both total and per acre, is less on the smaller farms. Even though there is considerable diversification in crop and livestock production within the area, the dairy farms are rather highly specialized. From two-thirds to three-fourths of all income is from the sales of milk and cream, while the sale of livestock, mostly dairy stock, adds another one-fifth to the income of the dairy farms.

Table 65.—SOURCES OF FARM INCOME ON DAIRY FARMS, BY ECONOMIC CLASS OF FARM, FOR THE OZARK-SPRINGFIELD AREA: 1954

Item	Economic class of farm						
	Total	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Number of farms.....	23,017	39	516	1,962	5,182	8,988	6,330
Gross sales—							
Per farm.....dollars..	2,595	34,233	12,600	6,773	3,414	1,771	787
Per crop acre.....do....	37	83	63	50	39	31	19
Percent of gross sales from dairy products.....	70	75	74	71	69	68	68
Sales per farm:							
Milk.....dollars.....	1,813	25,832	9,382	4,825	2,340	1,212	537
Cattle and calves.....do....	366	3,422	1,252	799	482	304	133
Hogs.....do.....	110	2,175	488	295	161	68	27
Poultry products except eggs.....dollars..	32	26	228	88	29	16	23
Eggs.....do.....	69	54	167	144	106	56	27
Sheep.....do.....	10	831	41	14	12	8	2
Other livestock and livestock products.....dollars..	7	35	14	10	8	8	3
Total, livestock and livestock products.....dollars..	2,407	32,375	11,572	6,175	3,138	1,672	762
Field crops.....do.....	161	1,784	983	553	244	76	18
Other crops.....do.....	27	74	45	45	32	23	17
Total crops.....do.....	188	1,858	1,028	598	276	99	35

<sup>1</sup> Includes horticultural and forest products.

<sup>5</sup> Types of Farming in Missouri, Hammar, Roth, Johnson, Research Bulletin 284, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Columbia, Missouri. Those parts of the area that extend into Northern Arkansas and Northeast Oklahoma are similar to the bordering areas in Missouri.

<sup>6</sup> Marketing Dairy Products in Southwestern Missouri. M. B. Kirtley and C. C. Erwin, Bulletin 567, Agricultural Experiment Station, Columbia, Missouri.