

The information on farm sales was only for the year specified. Many farms get a major part of their income from sales of two or more of the commodities used in the criteria for determining type. For these farms, classification by type in the particular year may be influenced to some extent by chance factors, such as the price relationships between commodities in the particular year and abnormalities in crop yield or changes in livestock inventories.

In the classification by type of farm, no recognition is given to products produced but not sold from the farm.

A measure of commodity specialization.—The separation of commercial farms by type of farm identifies the major producers of commodities or commodity groups. The criteria for determining type required that 50 percent or more of the farm income be derived from a particular source. Most types represent a fairly high degree of specialization among the producers classified. In consideration of problems in the production of specific commodities, this permits analysis of the farm organizations, efficiency and income of the producers involved, as well as identification of the areas of the country most affected. It makes possible a more meaningful appraisal of public policies and of the probable effects of alternative programs of assistance.

The number and proportions of the commercial farms by type of farm are shown in the table below.

Type of farm	Number of farms	Percent distribution
Cash-grain farms.....	537,974	16.2
Cotton farms.....	525,463	15.8
Other field-crop farms.....	367,733	11.1
Vegetable farms.....	32,581	1.0
Fruit-and-nut farms.....	82,096	2.5
Dairy farms.....	548,767	16.5
Poultry farms.....	154,251	4.6
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry.....	694,888	20.9
General farms.....	347,079	10.4
Miscellaneous farms.....	37,057	1.1
Total.....	3,327,880	100.0

Geographic Distribution of Types of Farms

Cash-grain farms.—Out of 3.3 million commercial farms, more than a half-million are cash-grain farms. Cash-grain farms are those on which the value of farm sales from corn, sorghums, small grains, soybeans, cowpeas, and dry field beans and peas was equal to 50 percent or more of the total value of all farm products sold.

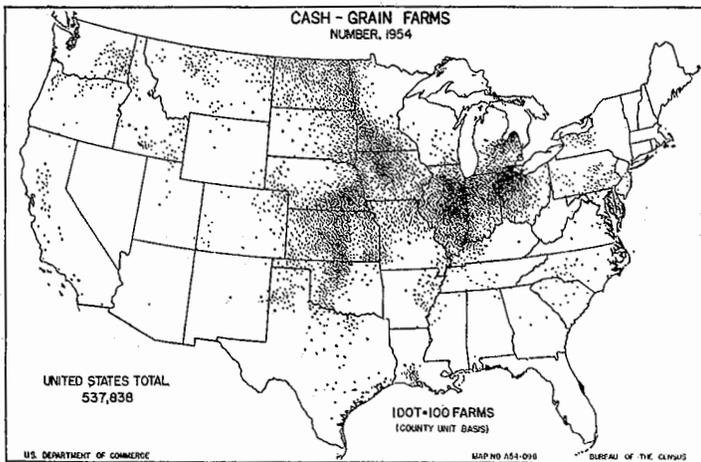


FIGURE 15.

The geographic distribution of cash-grain farms is shown on the map below. Concentrations of these farms are noticeable in areas where one or more of the cash grains are a predominate crop. In the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho, and Oregon, cash-grain farms are primarily spring wheat farms. Farther south, in Nebraska, Kansas, western Oklahoma, and the northern Panhandle of Texas, winter wheat was the grain crop that determined the type. In the Corn Belt States of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, cash-grain farms represent largely corn and soybean farms. Cash-grain farms in the Gulf Coast of Louisiana and Texas, the Arkansas Prairies, and the Sacramento Valley of California, include many rice farms. In scattered localities the major source of income on cash-grain farms is from sorghum, dry field beans and peas, and small grains other than wheat and rice, but these farms are relatively unimportant numerically.

Cotton farms.—Cotton farms are those on which 50 percent or more of the sales of all farm products was from sales of cotton. The one crop, cotton, was the major source of farm sales on slightly more than one-half million farms, or about 16 percent of the commercial farms in 1954. Cotton farms are located almost entirely in the South and in selected irrigated areas of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. (See map below.) The northern extent of cotton production is limited sharply by temperature and length of growing season. In general, rainfall is insufficient in the Southwest so cotton can be grown only if irrigated.

The heaviest centers of concentration appear in the Mississippi and Arkansas deltas, in the Upper Piedmont and Coastal Plains of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, and the Black Prairie of east central Texas. Other concentrations are found in southwestern Oklahoma and the high plains and lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

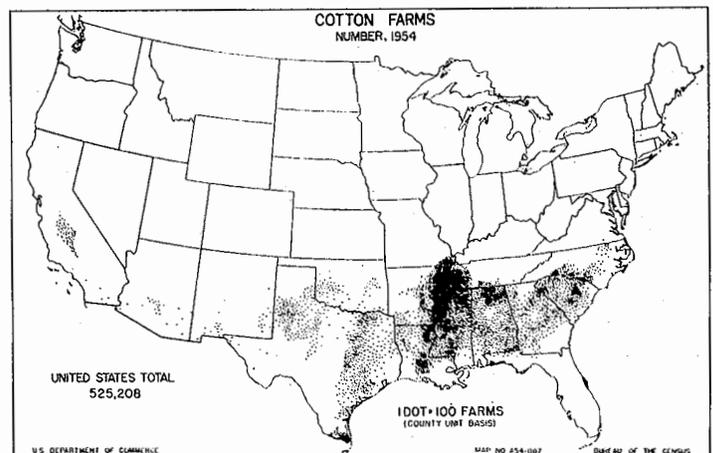


FIGURE 16.

Other field-crop farms.—Farms were classified in this category whenever the value of sales of a variety of major and minor crops accounted for 50 percent or more of the total value of all farm products sold. These crops include tobacco, peanuts, potatoes, sugar beets, sugarcane, and other specialty field crops except cotton. No one area has all these crops. In areas where one or more of them are grown, usually one tends to predominate. This makes it possible to identify the "other field-crop" farms in most areas as a more specific type, such as tobacco farms or peanut farms.