

TABLE 31.—LAND IN FARMS, CROPLAND HARVESTED, AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT, COMMERCIAL FAMILY-OPERATED, FLUE-CURED AND BURLEY TOBACCO FARMS: 1940, 1945, 1950, AND 1955¹

Item	1940	1945	1950	1955
Flue-cured tobacco-cotton farms ¹				
Land in farms.....acres.....	100	100	100	100
Cropland harvested.....do.....	40	41	40	40
Farm capital, January 1 (dollars):				
Land and buildings.....	5,500	8,800	14,000	17,700
Machinery and equipment.....	450	820	1,830	2,580
Livestock.....	630	960	890	580
Crops for sale, feed, and seed.....	190	460	600	580
Total.....	6,770	11,040	17,320	21,440
Burley tobacco-livestock farms ²				
Land in farms.....acres.....	110	113	113	116
Cropland harvested.....do.....	25	20	31	31
Farm capital, January 1 (dollars):				
Land and buildings.....	8,574	11,311	16,900	19,090
Machinery and equipment.....	470	723	1,170	2,040
Livestock.....	866	1,222	1,950	1,610
Crops for sale, feed, and seed.....	263	783	800	850
Total.....	10,173	14,039	20,820	23,590

¹ Data for 1940, 1945, and 1950 from Costs and Returns Tobacco-Cotton and Tobacco Farms, 1940-54, A.E. Information Series No. 47, Department of Agricultural Economics, North Carolina Agriculture Experiment Station, December 1955; data for 1955 from Farm Costs and Returns Commercial Family-Operated Farms, Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 158, ARS, USDA, 1956.

² Data for 1940 and 1945 from Farming in the Bluegrass Area of Kentucky, Kentucky Agriculture Experiment Station Bulletin 544, December 1949; data for 1950 from Farm Costs and Returns, 1953, with comparison Commercially Family-Operated Tobacco Livestock Farms, Bluegrass area of Kentucky, PERB 2 Production Economic Research Branch USDA; data for 1955 from Farm Costs and Returns—Commercial Family-Operated Farms, Agricultural Information Bulletin 158, ARS, USDA, 1956.

Conservation and improvement of the soil is a very important problem on most tobacco farms. The intensive cultivation of the land and the continued high percent of the cropland in row crops has caused serious depletion of soil fertility and serious erosion of a large proportion of the farmland in areas especially where the slope of the land is rolling to steep. Measures for conservation and improvement of all farmland need to be emphasized. Special attention should be given to the development of a cropping system

that will improve soil fertility and also help hold soil erosion to a minimum.

Making production adjustments, due to changes in economic conditions, advances in technology, and other factors, is a difficult problem for operators of tobacco farms.

For most types of tobacco, the acres that can be grown on an individual farm in a given year depend on the amount of the tobacco base for the farm and size of the national allotment. With a continued increase in yield per acre for tobacco, it has been necessary to reduce the acres that each individual farmer could grow, especially in recent years.

The average tobacco farmer faces a number of problems when he attempts to adjust farm enterprises. The size of the farm is small and this makes it difficult to increase the production of livestock. Tobacco is also a crop that has a high labor requirement per acre. The labor load is distributed over most of the months of the year with peak requirements at the time of setting and harvesting. The tobacco farmer must be careful to not add enterprises that compete too much with tobacco for labor, especially at peak periods. The failure to perform such operations as harvesting at the right time would result in the loss of the crop or one with a greatly reduced value.

Much of the tobacco is produced in areas where little outside employment is available. This means, as acres of tobacco are reduced, farmers do not have the opportunity of turning to outside employment as a means of supplementing farm income. Moreover, the nature of the requirements and distribution of labor on tobacco also limits the amount of outside work that a person can do.

The problem of adjusting to modern technology is a continuing one. Modern machines enable one man to operate a larger acreage of land. However, increases in mechanization raise the question as to the adequacy of size of the farm-operating unit. Ultimately, more acreage is likely to be required for many farmers to obtain efficient production. Adjustments in size of farm are often difficult because of the problem of acquiring additional land. Many of the operations in tobacco production do not lend themselves to mechanization, or only to partial mechanization. As a result, many farm operators have not shifted to the use of tractors or other mechanical equipment to save labor.