

When classified by gross sales, the Class I farmers depended on hired help equaling about as much as the operator's labor. Farmers in the other size groups hired very little help, depending largely on the members of the operator's family. The sources of farm labor and the age of operators for the three subregions, and by economic class for subregion 93, are shown in table 19. Because of the similarity of distribution by economic class of farm among the subregions this detail is not shown for subregions 94 and 103.

Table 19.—LABOR FORCE ON CASH-GRAIN FARMS IN THE HARD RED WINTER WHEAT REGION, AND FOR SUBREGION 93 BY ECONOMIC CLASS OF FARM: 1954

Item	Subregion			Economic class of farm for subregion 93					
	93	94	103	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Total man-equivalent.....	1.2	1.2	1.3	2.1	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8
Operator.....	.9	.8	.8	.9	.9	.9	.8	.7	.7
Unpaid family help.....	.2	.2	.3	.3	.3	.2	.2	.2	.1
Hired.....	.1	.1	.2	.9	.2	.1	(%)	(%)	(%)
Operators by age:									
All operators...percent..	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 25 years...do.....	3	2	3	2	1	3	4	4	5
25-34 years...do.....	19	16	18	19	22	22	16	13	6
35-64 years...do.....	69	70	69	73	74	69	68	63	61
65 years & over...do.....	9	12	10	6	3	6	12	20	28

% Less than 0.05.

Figures on the age of operators show that more of the beginning farmers and more of the farmers over 65 years were in Class VI than in any other income size group in 1954. If this is a typical situation, some of the young men in the lowest income group have been able to improve their situation, for in the 25-to-34-year group, the percentage in Class VI is the smallest.

FARM MECHANIZATION AND HOME CONVENIENCES

The degree of mechanization on the farm and the number of home conveniences reflect the financial situation of the farm family and the progressiveness of the farm operator. In a few localities it is impossible to obtain such modern conveniences as television or electricity, although electric lines are now available to most farmers in the wheat country.

The degree of mechanization and use of home conveniences are indicated in table 20. Class I and II farms are more highly mechanized than the smaller groups of lower income. As their operators have a large acreage, they can use modern machinery efficiently. They also have enough income to allow the purchase of modern equipment which most Class I and II farmers now have. Many of the operators of smaller farms have neither the capital to buy modern machinery nor the acreage to use it efficiently. It is characteristic that many of the operators of Class V and VI farms hire the use of highly specialized, expensive machinery. For example, the number of farms reporting combines varies considerably by size of farm in the three subregions:

Item	Economic class of farm					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Percent of farmers reporting combines:						
Subregion 93.....	91	85	76	64	45	25
Subregion 94.....	89	86	80	65	48	33
Subregion 103.....	80	84	79	67	55	47
Number of combines per farm:						
Subregion 93.....	1.2	.9	.8	.7	.5	.2
Subregion 94.....	1.4	1.0	.8	.7	.5	.3
Subregion 103.....	1.4	1.1	.9	.8	.6	.6

Table 20.—FARM MECHANIZATION AND HOME CONVENIENCES ON CASH-GRAIN FARMS IN THE HARD RED WINTER WHEAT REGION, AND FOR SUBREGION 94 BY ECONOMIC CLASS OF FARM: 1954

Item	Subregion			Economic class of farm for subregion 94					
	93	94	103	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Number of farms.....	19,859	23,140	32,545	413	5,179	8,630	6,294	2,233	301
Number per farm:									
Automobiles.....	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.8
Motortrucks.....	.8	1.2	1.5	2.3	1.6	1.2	.9	.7	.5
Tractors.....	1.6	1.7	1.9	3.3	2.3	1.7	1.4	1.2	.9
Combines.....	.7	.8	.9	1.4	1.0	.8	.7	.5	.3
Percent of farms reporting—									
Automobiles.....	93	92	91	97	97	93	88	85	73
Motortrucks.....	69	86	91	99	98	92	79	64	44
Tractors.....	95	96	95	100	99	98	95	91	76
Combines.....	71	74	75	89	86	80	65	48	33
Corn pickers.....	64	5	3	6	6	6	4	3	1
Field forage harvesters..	7	10	10	28	19	9	4	2	1
Telephones.....	73	81	64	91	80	82	79	66	54
Electricity.....	93	95	89	99	98	96	94	90	74
Television sets.....	30	45	23	66	61	45	36	33	17
Piped water in home.....	57	71	74	90	87	75	61	53	37
Home freezer.....	30	33	42	62	49	33	25	20	12

In subregions 93 and 94 the number of combines decreases with the size of farm. In subregion 103 the same general relationship is found, although a higher percentage of operators for Class II farms owned combines than for Class I farms, and Class III farmers averaged more combines per farm than the Class I farmers. In this area a number of the large farm operators depend entirely on custom combining. Notwithstanding their large acreages some believe that they can hire the work done more economically than they can do it with their own equipment. This hiring helps to solve their labor problem at harvest time for usually the custom operator furnishes operators for the machines.

Most farmers own at least one automobile. The exceptions are usually farmers who use their trucks for family transportation. Not all farmers in any economic class own tractors as a few depend on having all of their work performed on a custom basis. Custom work is more common among those in the lowest income group than among those in the higher income groups. Cornpickers are more common in subregion 93 because much more corn is produced here than in the other subregions.

Differences in farm income are reflected more in the conveniences in the home than in the degree of farm mechanization. Farm families on the lowest income farms usually do not have enough capital to buy such items as home freezers, television sets, and a water system for the house.

GROSS FARM INCOME

Average gross income per farm was considerably higher in subregion 103, in 1954, where the farms are larger than in subregions 93 and 94.

The important sources of income vary among the three subregions. Subregion 94 specializes in wheat to a higher degree than the other areas as indicated in the following data:

Item	Economic class of farm					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Percent of gross sales from wheat:						
Subregion 93.....	44	39	40	41	37	41
Subregion 94.....	74	75	75	74	73	74
Subregion 103.....	38	57	63	61	61	55