

COTTON PRODUCERS AND COTTON PRODUCTION

ROBERT B. GLASGOW

INTRODUCTION

SIGNIFICANCE OF COTTON PRODUCTION

Cotton production is one of the most important enterprises found on American farms. It takes place in only 20 of the 48 States, and is of appreciable significance in only 14 States, yet no other single crop in this country accounts for so large a proportion of total farm sales. Moreover, except for dairying, no other single crop or livestock enterprise accounts for half or more of the total farm sales on so many farms.

Cotton is grown to a varying extent in all of the 19 States that have some part of their land south of the 37th parallel of latitude,

and a very small acreage is grown in Kansas just north of this parallel. States in which cotton is not of appreciable significance are those having southern borders at or near the 37th parallel. In addition to Kansas, these are Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, and Nevada. In Florida, cotton does not loom large in the agriculture as a whole.

The 14 remaining States in which cotton production is of considerable significance are shown in tables 1 and 2. These tables also show some data regarding national and State trends, and some indications of the relative importance of the cotton enterprise to the agriculture of the country as a whole, and to the agriculture

TABLE 1.—FARMS REPORTING COTTON AS A PERCENT OF ALL FARMS AND ACRES OF COTTON HARVESTED AS A PERCENT OF CROPLAND HARVESTED, FOR SPECIFIED STATES: 1930 TO 1954

State	1954		1950		1945		1940		1930	
	Percent of farms	Percent of cropland harvested	Percent of farms	Percent of cropland harvested	Percent of farms	Percent of cropland harvested	Percent of farms	Percent of cropland harvested	Percent of farms	Percent of cropland harvested
Alabama.....	60.2	24.0	68.8	32.3	64.6	22.3	86.6	27.1	90.1	50.1
Arizona.....	29.4	40.1	16.0	42.2	7.6	21.5	10.8	34.9	24.3	44.1
Arkansas.....	46.7	30.7	54.9	43.4	57.4	29.5	69.5	31.1	79.3	52.4
California.....	8.0	10.6	6.1	16.8	3.1	3.5	4.0	4.8	3.2	4.6
Florida.....	9.6	1.7	9.9	2.5	7.8	1.4	14.3	3.5	20.7	8.5
Georgia.....	47.7	16.4	55.7	21.9	53.4	16.4	77.4	21.1	80.9	40.9
Louisiana.....	46.2	22.3	51.6	29.1	61.3	23.3	76.2	26.9	79.6	47.8
Mississippi.....	72.4	35.2	75.9	45.1	80.0	35.4	89.2	35.2	90.2	60.8
Missouri.....	6.8	3.4	7.1	4.8	7.0	3.1	6.5	3.1	6.3	2.7
New Mexico.....	15.9	17.4	14.6	15.0	8.4	5.3	8.3	5.7	11.9	9.1
North Carolina.....	28.9	9.5	36.5	14.6	37.1	11.7	37.1	11.6	54.2	28.2
Oklahoma.....	22.5	8.8	26.8	10.3	37.1	10.5	48.4	13.1	60.6	26.7
South Carolina.....	61.3	23.9	67.0	30.2	69.4	24.7	81.1	27.2	83.2	47.7
Tennessee.....	27.7	13.0	28.9	15.9	28.4	11.2	31.3	11.0	36.0	17.1
Texas.....	43.0	30.2	46.2	37.6	45.2	24.0	65.3	31.1	79.7	54.9
Virginia.....	3.3	0.5	4.1	0.9	3.8	0.7	4.0	0.8	8.2	2.2
United States.....	18.1	5.7	20.6	7.7	20.8	5.4	26.1	7.1	31.6	12.0

TABLE 2.—FARM CASH RECEIPTS FROM COTTON AND COTTON-SEED AS PERCENT OF TOTAL FARM CASH RECEIPTS, FOR SPECIFIED STATES: 1924 TO 1954

State	1924	1929	1934	1939	1944	1949	1954
Alabama.....	71.8	74.7	72.4	45.8	47.7	42.3	35.3
Arizona.....	31.5	32.2	28.3	24.1	17.3	36.4	50.4
Arkansas.....	70.1	68.9	67.9	54.4	50.7	56.7	50.9
California.....	2.4	3.0	4.0	5.4	2.8	11.7	11.4
Florida.....	3.0	2.8	2.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.9
Georgia.....	62.0	58.7	58.3	35.2	28.6	23.7	21.3
Louisiana.....	45.8	53.2	48.2	35.6	31.1	34.3	32.3
Mississippi.....	77.5	78.2	76.3	67.2	70.2	67.9	60.6
Missouri.....	8.3	5.6	10.4	9.1	7.2	8.0	8.9
New Mexico.....	13.6	15.3	21.1	10.8	14.1	24.0	38.7
North Carolina.....	40.9	30.6	23.3	10.4	13.9	12.6	8.3
Oklahoma.....	52.0	40.2	30.9	14.6	14.2	12.8	9.9
South Carolina.....	69.8	64.4	62.1	46.8	44.8	34.4	31.1
Tennessee.....	29.0	30.6	32.1	19.6	21.8	24.8	23.7
Texas.....	70.2	52.9	51.2	30.7	23.6	37.8	38.0
Virginia.....	3.7	2.8	3.2	0.6	1.1	0.9	0.5
United States.....	16.2	13.4	13.6	8.0	7.5	9.5	9.0

Source: USDA, AMS Statistical Bulletin No. 186.

of the major cotton-producing States.

The fact that the States that grow cotton constitute a vast contiguous area extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific precludes consideration of cotton as a regional crop in any usual sense of that term (see figs. 1 and 2).

Cotton and the salient economic facts and characteristics of cotton production are of significance to thousands of people who are not on farms but who are engaged in cotton-oriented services and processing industries. Problems associated with cotton production even concern all consumers of fibers, for despite the tremendous increase during the last 15 years in the production and consumption of synthetic fibers, the per capita domestic consumption of cotton has remained relatively stable. In 1954, it accounted for more than two-thirds of all fiber used in the United States.

A further general fact of widely ramifying import is that, although the United States is, and has long been, the largest single consumer of cotton, it is also the world's leading exporter of raw cotton, thus making this commodity a notable factor in the international trade of the United States.