

Section 4.—THE LAND RESOURCE AND ITS UTILIZATION

Land accounts for the major part of total investment on all sizes of cotton farms and, for a given region, the quantity of land controlled by an operator of a cotton farm is, generally, positively associated with the level of return to him for his labor and management.

The present distribution of the land resource among the economic classes of cotton farms for the ten regions is therefore a useful statistic. Some summary information of this type is given in table 13.

TABLE 13.—ALL LAND IN FARMS, TOTAL CROPLAND, AND IRRIGATED LAND, BY ECONOMIC CLASS OF COTTON FARM, TOTAL OF TEN REGIONS: 1954

Item	Economic class of farm						
	All classes	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
All land in farms.....million acres..	62.5	15.4	9.4	8.9	10.9	11.2	6.7
Percent distribution.....percent..	100.0	24.7	15.0	14.2	17.4	18.0	10.7
Total cropland.....million acres..	38.9	10.0	6.4	5.9	7.0	6.5	3.1
Percent distribution.....percent..	100.0	25.7	16.5	15.1	18.0	16.6	8.1
Irrigated land.....million acres..	5.5	4.2	1.0	0.2	0.1	(Z)	(Z)
Percent distribution.....percent..	100.0	75.5	18.3	4.1	1.5	0.5	0.1

Z 0.05 million or less.

DISTRIBUTION OF LAND, BY MAJOR USES

In 1954, there were approximately 62.5 million acres of land in cotton farms in the 10 regions with which this report is concerned. In these 10 regions as a whole, a little more than half of this land (54 percent) was on farms in the three largest size-of-business groups (Classes I to III). Twenty-nine percent was in farms with gross sales of less than \$2,500 and the remaining 17 percent was in farms having sales of \$2,500 to \$4,999.

Cropland is generally of considerable significance to cotton farms. The distribution of cropland by economic class of farm, for our 10 regions in the aggregate, is given in table 13. The percentage of cropland found on cotton farms in the first 3 economic classes is slightly larger than the proportion of all land; conversely, the 2 smallest size-of-business groups account for one-fourth of the cropland and 29 percent of all land.

Table 13 shows also the distribution of irrigated land among economic classes of farms. In our 10 regions there were 5.5 million acres of irrigated land. This is equivalent to about 14 percent of all cropland on cotton farms. About 98 percent of this irrigated land was on the three largest size-of-business groups of farms, and more than three-fourths of it was on farms in Economic Class I. Many farms have attained a volume of sales that placed them in the larger size-of-business groups because of the use of irrigation.

The distribution of land resources among economic classes for the total of our 10 regions, should be considered along with the distribution of farm numbers for the same aggregates. Table 8 shows that 61 percent of all cotton farms fall in Classes V and VI; 17 percent in Classes I, II, and III; and 22 percent in Class IV.

Data on land distribution for all 10 regions as a whole are useful but, averages for large nonhomogeneous areas may be

somewhat misleading. There are some striking differences among the regions with respect to distribution of the land resources among economic classes of cotton farms. Table 14 gives data for individual regions on the distribution of land by major-use classes for each economic class of farm. First, let us examine the individual regions with respect to the distribution of cropland among economic classes.

The 4 regions where the highest proportions of cropland are on farms in Classes V and VI are Regions I, II, III, and V. In Region I, 39 percent of all the cropland is on Classes V and VI farms. Comparable percentages for other regions in this group are: Region II, 69 percent; Region III, 52 percent; and Region V, 44 percent.

In Region IV ("the Mississippi Delta"), Region VI (the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Prairie), and Region VII (the Black Prairie and Rio Grande Plains of Texas and the Rolling Plains of Texas and Oklahoma) the proportions of total cropland on Classes V and VI farms are, respectively, 18, 14, and 15 percent.

The 3 remaining regions in which very small proportions of total cropland are found on the two smallest size-of-business groups of farms are Region VIII (the lower Rio Grande Valley), Region IX (the High Plains of Texas), and Region X (the arid irrigated areas of far western Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and the San Joaquin Valley of California).

Regions with low percentages of cropland in Classes V and VI farms have relatively high proportions in Classes I, II, and III. Similarly those with high percentages on Classes V and VI farms have low percentages on the larger farms. In Regions I, II, III, and VI the percentage of total cropland on Classes I through III farms ranges from 12 to 37 percent, well below the 10-region average of 57 percent. Regions IV, VI, and VII have, respectively, 63, 65, and 61 percent of their cropland on farms in Classes I through III. In Regions VIII, IX, and X the proportions of cropland on the three larger groups of farms range from 92 to 98 percent.

An interesting aspect of the distribution of land by major-use categories among economic classes for the several regions is the variation by regions of the proportion that cropland is of total land in farms. In Regions II, III, and V cropland accounts for only about 50 percent of all land in farms for most economic classes. Generally, the proportion rises slightly from Class I to Class IV; tends to drop for Class V and shows a marked drop for Class VI. Region I exhibits a similar pattern, but the ratio of cropland to all land is somewhat higher. In all of these regions most of the noncropland is accounted for by woodland.

As would be expected, farms in "the Mississippi Delta," Region IV, have a higher ratio of cropland to total land in farms than farms in the 4 regions mentioned above. In Region IV, generally, cropland accounts for from 70 to 75 percent of all land in farms, but on Class VI farms the average is about 60 percent. Again, most noncropland here is woodland.

The general ratio of cropland to all land in Regions VI and VII is about 62 and 71 percent, respectively. In Region VI, however, cropland accounts for only a little more than 50 percent of total land in the 2 smallest size-of-business groups, and in Region VII cropland is less than 60 percent of all land for Class VI farms. In these areas noncropland is likely to be open pasture.