

Corn Belt. In the Central and Northern Corn Belt approximately a half of the farms are in the range of 140 to 260 acres, with nearly a fourth of the farms larger than 260 acres and the remaining approximate one-fourth of the farms smaller than 140 acres.

For the Corn Belt, in 1954, the average size of cash-grain farms was 226 acres and the average size of livestock farms was 231 acres. For the United States as a whole the average acreages for these types were 380 acres and 731 acres, respectively. The considerably larger average sizes of these types for the United States results from the inclusion of large wheat farms of the Great Plains and the Northwest in the cash-grain group and the inclusion of the large western ranches in the livestock group. The relatively moderate average sizes of these two types of farms in the Corn Belt are rather striking in comparison with the averages for the United States. Of interest also is the close similarity in average size of cash-grain farms and livestock farms in the Corn Belt.

The similarity in size of these two types of farms in terms of acreage is portrayed by the data in table 13. The similarity in distribution of acreage size groups in the two types is strongly consistent in all the regions of the Corn Belt. The only minor difference apparent is that a slightly larger proportion of the livestock farms than of the cash-grain farms is composed of farms under 30 acres in size, but the actual number of farms of either type in this small size group is relatively few (table 14).

The distribution of farms in each economic class among the specified acreage size groups is shown for cash-grain farms and livestock farms in tables 14 and 15. The acreage size groupings are the same as those of the foregoing tables. The 140 to 179 acre group is centered around and includes all the quarter-section (160 acres) farms, which were the typical homestead size. The gradual trend to larger acreages per farm is reflected in the fact that 46.5 percent of the commercial farms are larger than the quarter-section unit, while only 33.8 percent of the farms are smaller than 140 acres. It also reflects the fact that forces inducing farmers to enlarge their farms have been greater or more prevalent than the forces tending toward dividing the farmland among the heirs of successive generations as has been the case in many of the older countries of the world.

The progress of mechanization which has brought about the possibility of one operator handling an increasing acreage of cropland with less labor is the most influential factor making for farm enlargement, but it is significant also that there has been no great increase in the number of farms of 500 acres and over. This group is still a small percentage of the total. The typical farm in the Corn Belt is the family-size farm, although its acreage is now generally larger than it was in homestead years or even only a generation ago.

TABLE 14.—NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL FARMS IN EACH ACREAGE SIZE GROUP, IN THE CORN BELT: 1954

Type and economic class of farm	Number of farms by acreage size group								
	All sizes	Under 30 acres	30 to 69 acres	70 to 139 acres	140 to 179 acres	180 to 259 acres	260 to 499 acres	500 to 999 acres	1,000 acres and over
All commercial farms.....	797,259	35,301	55,000	179,264	157,208	170,717	161,925	31,654	6,100
Cash-grain farms:									
Total.....	264,546	3,550	16,815	56,164	50,961	50,800	63,550	11,940	1,766
Class I.....	6,496			20	45	125	2,966	2,687	653
II.....	62,004		15	825	6,445	19,475	29,110	5,385	749
III.....	90,110	10	305	14,472	24,466	25,620	22,071	2,886	280
IV.....	62,045	115	4,470	23,877	13,970	11,105	7,611	837	60
V.....	33,944	1,350	9,015	13,785	5,125	2,995	1,527	130	17
VI.....	9,947	2,075	3,010	3,185	910	480	265	15	7
Livestock farms: ¹									
Total.....	326,662	13,068	19,424	68,762	66,260	71,261	68,320	15,670	3,497
Class I.....	22,708	123	78	603	1,793	4,309	10,563	4,078	1,261
II.....	83,555	295	355	7,183	17,951	25,556	25,489	5,373	1,353
III.....	94,538	820	1,756	20,421	24,242	23,594	19,067	3,775	873
IV.....	66,978	2,590	5,320	21,110	14,491	11,824	9,527	1,828	288
V.....	40,000	4,880	7,370	13,670	5,942	4,557	2,961	531	89
VI.....	18,883	4,360	4,645	5,875	1,841	1,421	723	85	33

¹ Livestock other than dairy and poultry farms.

TABLE 15.—PERCENTAGE OF COMMERCIAL FARMS IN EACH ACREAGE SIZE GROUP, IN THE CORN BELT: 1954

Type and economic class of farm	Acreage size group								
	All sizes	Under 30 acres	30 to 69 acres	70 to 139 acres	140 to 179 acres	180 to 259 acres	260 to 499 acres	500 to 999 acres	1,000 acres and over
All commercial farms.....	Percent 100.0	Percent 4.4	Percent 6.9	Percent 22.5	Percent 19.7	Percent 21.4	Percent 20.3	Percent 4.0	Percent 0.8
Cash-grain farms:									
Total.....	100.0	1.3	6.4	21.2	19.3	22.6	24.0	4.5	0.7
Class I.....	100.0			0.3	0.7	1.9	45.7	41.4	10.1
II.....	100.0		(Z)	1.3	10.4	31.4	46.9	8.7	1.2
III.....	100.0	(Z)	0.3	16.1	27.1	28.4	24.5	3.2	0.3
IV.....	100.0	0.2	7.2	38.5	22.5	17.0	12.3	1.3	0.1
V.....	100.0	4.0	26.6	40.6	15.1	8.8	4.5	0.4	0.1
VI.....	100.0	20.9	30.3	32.0	9.1	4.8	2.7	0.2	0.1
Livestock farms: ¹									
Total.....	100.0	4.0	5.9	21.0	20.3	21.8	20.9	4.8	1.2
Class I.....	100.0	0.5	0.3	2.2	7.9	19.0	46.5	18.0	5.6
II.....	100.0	0.4	0.4	8.6	21.5	30.6	30.5	6.4	1.6
III.....	100.0	0.9	1.9	21.6	25.6	25.0	20.2	4.0	0.9
IV.....	100.0	3.9	7.0	31.5	21.6	17.7	14.2	2.7	0.4
V.....	100.0	12.2	18.4	34.2	14.9	11.4	7.4	1.3	0.2
VI.....	100.0	23.1	24.1	31.1	9.7	7.5	3.8	0.5	0.2

Z Less than 0.05 percent.

¹ Livestock other than dairy and poultry farms.