

FARMERS AND FARM PRODUCTION

The breakdown of these groups by economic class gives the following tabulation for 1950:⁶

Table 3.—CLASSIFICATION OF FARM OPERATORS BY ECONOMIC CLASS AND DEGREE OF DEPENDENCE ON AGRICULTURE: 1950

Economic class	Total	Wholly dependent on agriculture	Partly dependent on agriculture		Unclassified
			Agriculture major source	Nonagriculture major source	
All farms.....	Percent 100.0	Percent 38.0	Percent 27.1	Percent 30.2	Percent 4.7
Commercial farms.....	100.0	50.5	34.7	9.6	5.2
Classes I and II.....	100.0	55.4	34.0	3.6	7.0
Class III.....	100.0	53.4	30.7	4.7	5.2
Class IV.....	100.0	40.1	36.2	10.6	4.1
Class V.....	100.0	41.7	32.5	21.0	4.8
Class VI.....	100.0	57.3	34.2	3.0	5.5
Other farms.....	100.0	8.0	8.6	79.8	3.6
Part-time and abnormal.....	100.0	1.2	7.4	90.0	1.4
Residential.....	100.0	12.5	0.3	73.1	5.1

The relative proportion in the Census classes did not change greatly between 1950 and 1954. Although data indicating degree of dependence on agriculture among the partly dependent groups are not available, the inference is that the most significant change is a general increase in income from nonagricultural sources.

Implications to agriculture and to the general economy.—The total number of farms listed by the Census has declined at each enumeration since 1929 (excluding 1935 when a different definition was used). Meanwhile the number of part-time (Class VII) and

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

residential (Class VIII) farms almost doubled in 20 years from 1929 to 1949. Between 1949 and 1954 the number of part-time farms declined, whereas the percentage of operators working off their farms 100 days or more increased and the percentage of farm families with income from off-farm sources exceeding income from farm sales also increased. The trend toward more off-farm income and employment is particularly marked in the case of the commercial farms of higher income. Suggested inferences or hypotheses are (1) that in all major regions of the United States opportunities of farm families for off-farm work and income have improved over the last 25 years, especially since 1949, (2) that a progressively smaller percentage of the "farm population" is wholly dependent, or largely dependent, on agriculture as a source of income, and (3) that further opportunities in off-farm employment and income will mean a smaller number and proportion of farm families who depend wholly on agriculture.

Table 4.—DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS BY ECONOMIC CLASS AND PERCENT CHANGE, FOR THE UNITED STATES: CENSUSES OF 1950 AND 1954

Economic class	Number of farms (000)		Percent distribution		Percent change
	1950	1954	1950	1954	
United States.....	5,379	4,783	100.0	100.0	-10.2
Class I.....	103	134	1.9	2.8	+30.1
Class II.....	381	449	7.1	9.4	+17.8
Class III.....	721	707	13.4	14.8	-2.0
Class IV.....	882	812	16.4	17.0	-8.0
Class V.....	901	768	16.8	16.0	-15.4
Class VI.....	717	402	13.3	9.7	-35.6
Part-time (Class VII).....	639	575	11.9	12.0	-10.9
Residential (Class VIII).....	1,029	878	19.1	18.4	-14.8
Abnormal.....	4	3	.1	.1	-25.0