

CHANGES IN TYPE OF FARM

Between 1950 and 1954 there was a decrease in number of each type of farm except cash-grain farms. (See table 7.) Cash-grain farms increased by more than 100,000, or about a fourth. The greatest reduction in absolute number occurred among dairy farms and general farms, which decreased by about 150,000 each. Among general farms, those classified as primarily livestock decreased by nearly half. Other livestock farms and cotton farms, among the most numerous types nationally, decreased by 111,000 and 84,000, respectively. Fruit-and-nut farms and vegetable farms are specialized types that are not numerous nationally. Fruit-and-nut farms remained about the same in number while vegetable farms decreased by nearly a third.

TABLE 7.—CHANGES IN NUMBER AND PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF COMMERCIAL FARMS, BY TYPE OF FARM, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1950 to 1954

Type of farm	Number		Increase or decrease (-) from 1950 to 1954		Percent of farms	
	1950	1954	Number	Percent	1950	1954
Commercial farms	3,706,412	3,327,889	-378,523	-10.2	100.0	100.0
Cash-grain.....	430,389	537,074	107,585	24.8	11.6	16.2
Cotton.....	609,307	525,463	-83,844	-13.8	16.4	15.8
Other field-crop.....	400,421	367,733	-41,688	-10.2	11.0	11.1
Vegetable.....	46,415	32,581	-13,834	-29.8	1.3	1.0
Fruit-and-nut	82,178	82,006	-82	-0.1	2.2	2.5
Dairy.....	602,093	548,767	-153,326	-25.5	16.2	16.5
Poultry.....	175,876	154,251	-21,625	-12.3	4.7	4.6
Livestock other than dairy and poultry.....	806,080	694,888	-111,192	-13.8	21.7	20.9
General	494,285	347,079	-147,206	-29.8	13.3	10.4
Primarily crop.....	84,569	80,039	-4,530	-5.4	2.3	2.4
Primarily livestock.....	134,666	63,197	-71,469	-53.1	3.6	1.9
Crop and livestock.....	275,050	203,843	-71,207	-25.9	7.4	6.1
Miscellaneous.....	50,368	37,057	-13,311	-26.4	1.4	1.1

Changes in types of farms by economic class.—Cash-grain farms were the only type that increased numerically between 1950 and 1954. Fruit-and-nut farms remained about the same. There were decreases in the number of all other types. Decreases also occurred among farms in each of the smaller economic classes—Classes III through VI. The larger farms, Classes I and II, increased substantially.

These changes in number have brought about noticeable differences in the size structure of the individual type of farm (see table 8). There was an increase in the number of Class I farms for each type. Numerically, this increase was greatest on cash-grain farms, an increase of 8,000 Class I farms. This type accounted for more than a fourth of the total increase in Class I farms.

The next largest increase in Class I farms occurred among fruit-and-nut farms. The increase of 5,000 Class I farms represented an increase to twice the number of these farms in 1950. Sizeable increases in the number of Class I farms also occurred for cotton, poultry, and other livestock farms.

The number of Class II farms increased for most types. Over half of the increase was for cash-grain farms and a fourth of the increase was for dairy farms. The decreases in Class II farms were of relatively minor proportions where they occurred.

The changes in the number of Class III farms occurred only for a few types. The decreases were virtually all for other livestock, general livestock, and general crop and livestock farms; a total decrease of 60,000 farms. This was partially offset by substantial increases for cash-grain and other field-crop farms. Changes in the number of Class III farms were slight for the remaining types.

TABLE 8.—CHANGES IN NUMBER OF FARMS, FOR EACH TYPE OF COMMERCIAL FARM, BY ECONOMIC CLASS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1950 to 1954

[A minus sign (-) indicates a decrease]

Type of farm	Total	Economic class of farm					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Increase or decrease, 1950 to 1954:							
Commercial farms.....	-378,523	30,833	67,696	-14,359	-70,194	-137,801	-254,698
Cash-grain.....	107,585	8,232	30,495	32,593	19,227	14,748	-3,710
Cotton.....	-83,844	3,993	-1,657	2,041	24,786	-8,693	-104,314
Other field-crop.....	-41,688	740	2,341	10,390	-95	-26,132	-28,932
Vegetable.....	-13,834	677	-378	-1,649	-2,864	-4,329	-5,291
Fruit-and-nut	-82	5,426	4,308	876	-2,053	-4,071	-4,568
Dairy.....	-53,326	1,716	14,851	2,526	-26,245	-30,581	-15,593
Poultry.....	-21,625	4,489	6,023	155	-6,425	-14,110	-11,767
Livestock other than dairy and poultry.....	-111,192	2,082	-1,618	-36,674	-33,508	-15,218	-27,156
General:							
Primarily crop.....	-4,530	1,455	3,015	2,053	1,184	-2,673	-9,564
Primarily livestock.....	-71,469	41	-715	-15,037	-23,244	-18,932	-13,582
Crop and livestock.....	-71,207	968	5,005	-10,569	-18,948	-23,462	-24,201
Miscellaneous.....	-13,311	114	26	-1,064	-2,000	-4,348	-6,030
1954 as percent of 1950:							
Commercial farms.....	90	130	118	98	92	85	64
Cash-grain.....	125	160	149	126	118	122	90
Cotton.....	86	136	94	105	127	96	56
Other field-crop.....	90	115	118	128	100	82	70
Vegetable.....	70	122	92	76	69	60	55
Fruit-and-nut	100	203	139	106	89	80	60
Dairy.....	91	117	124	102	85	77	75
Poultry.....	88	152	127	101	81	67	70
Livestock other than dairy and poultry.....	86	108	99	81	81	90	79
General:							
Primarily crop.....	95	162	143	117	106	80	52
Primarily livestock.....	47	107	91	52	45	42	33
Crop and livestock.....	74	142	121	84	76	64	38
Miscellaneous.....	74	103	100	84	78	66	49

Decreases in the number of Class IV farms took place for all types except cash-grain and cotton farms. The bulk of the decrease was for dairy farms and the livestock types listed in the preceding paragraph. Class IV cash-grain and cotton farms increased by a fifth and a fourth, respectively.

With the exception of cash-grain farms, the number of Class V farms decreased substantially for each type. The net decrease of 132,000 was a decrease of 15 percent from the number in 1950. The greatest proportionate decrease was for general livestock farms, a decrease of 60 percent.

There was a decrease of 246,000 in Class VI farms. The number of these small farms declined for each type of farm. The greatest numerical decrease was for cotton farms, a decrease of 104,000. The greatest proportionate decrease was for general livestock and general crop and livestock farms. On these types the number of Class VI farms declined to only a third their number in 1950.

Increases and decreases in some types of farms are closely related to changes in relative prices received by farmers for different commodities, and changes in cost-price relationships that affect alternative enterprises on the farm. Type of farm was based upon sales of farm products in the particular year. Farms having substantial sales from two or more commodities (or commodity groups) may have been classified in some cases as one type in 1950 and another type in 1954. This shifting between types probably accounts for a considerable part of the increase in cash-grain farms and the decrease in livestock farms and general farms between 1950 and 1954.

Along with the decrease in total commercial farm numbers, farms of most types have declined in number. But within the overall decrease there have been differences in the changes geographically.