

Of the total cash wages paid in commercial agriculture, cotton farms accounted for slightly more than a fifth—a larger proportion than any other type (see table 46). The next highest users of hired labor were livestock farms other than dairy and poultry which accounted for slightly less than a fifth of the cash wages paid.

Machine hire.—The expenditure for machine hire was relatively small for each type and size of farm. It amounted to \$165 for commercial farms as a group and accounted for only 2 percent of the total expenses. By type of farm there was small variation. For each type of farm, however, machine hire was a higher proportion of total expenses on the smaller economic classes of farms. Operators of the smaller farms frequently have insufficient acreage to utilize certain items of farm machinery efficiently. This indicates a tendency on the part of many to hire machine work done on a custom basis.

Purchase of livestock and poultry.—About three-fifths of the total expenditures for livestock and poultry purchases by commercial farmers in 1955 was accounted for by livestock farms other than dairy and poultry—an average of nearly \$2,000 per farm. On farms of this type the purchase of livestock and poultry was the largest single expense item and it amounted to more than a fifth of the total farm expenses. On other types of farms the proportion of this expense to total expenses ranged from 13 percent for poultry farms to only 1 percent for vegetable and fruit-and-nut farms.

Among types of farms having a major source of income from crops, the expense for purchase of livestock and poultry was largest on cash-grain farms. This is an indication of the importance of livestock feeding as a secondary farm enterprise for farmers who raise and sell grains, especially feed grains.

For most types of farms there are no appreciable differences between the larger and smaller farms in the proportion of total farm expenses comprised by the purchase of livestock and poultry. The exception is found among livestock farms other than dairy and poultry. On the larger economic classes for this type 29 percent of the total farm expense was for purchase of livestock and poultry compared with only 12 percent on the smaller economic classes.

Many more of the larger livestock farms purchase cattle and hogs and feed them for resale. In fact, this causes some of them to be classified in the larger economic classes even though the net income is no more than that of some farmers in the smaller economic classes who raise a larger part of their livestock.

Feed for livestock and poultry.—This is the largest single expense item for commercial farmers. Their feed bill amounted to about \$1,200 per commercial farm in 1955 and made up 17 percent of the total expenses. The heaviest users of purchased feed were dairy, poultry, and other livestock farms. The three types taken together accounted for four-fifths of the feed purchased by commercial farmers.

Feed purchased was by far the most important expense for poultry farmers, comprising 58 percent of their total expenses. A fourth of the total expenses of dairy and general livestock farmers and a fifth of the total expenses of other livestock farmers went for feed.

For poultry, dairy, and other livestock farms the expenditure for feed comprised a greater proportion of the total expenses on the larger economic classes of farms. For other types (on which feed was not an important expense item) the smaller economic classes had greater proportionate expenses for feed.

Seeds, plants, and trees.—The expenditure for seed, plants, and trees made up only 3 percent of the total farm expenses. This ranged from less than 1 percent on poultry farms to about 6 percent on vegetable farms. There was small variation between the larger and smaller economic classes of farms in this respect.

Commercial fertilizer and liming materials.—The average commercial farmer spent \$385 for fertilizer and lime in 1955. This represents less than 6 percent of the total expenses. The largest expenditure was made by vegetable farmers who averaged \$1,500 each, followed by fruit-and-nut farmers who spent \$750 each. As a proportion of total expenses, however, the largest share (11 percent) was spent on fertilizer and lime by other field-crop farmers.

Of the total commercial fertilizers and liming material purchased, about a fifth each was used on cash-grain farms and livestock farms other than dairy and poultry. Between 10 and 15 percent each was used on cotton, other field-crop, and dairy farms. These 5 types accounted for about four-fifths of the fertilizers and liming material used.

TABLE 46.—PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF EACH EXPENDITURE BY TYPE OF FARM, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1955

Expenditure by economic class of farm	All commercial farms	Type of farm											
		Cash-grain	Cotton	Other field-crop	Vegetable	Fruit-and-nut	Dairy	Poultry	Livestock other than dairy and poultry	General—			Miscellaneous
										Primarily crop	Primarily livestock	Crop and livestock	
Total expenditures.....	100.0	16.4	9.5	5.5	2.0	3.7	15.7	7.7	28.7	2.3	1.7	5.1	1.6
Cash wages.....	100.0	10.4	20.5	10.0	5.0	10.2	10.6	2.8	17.1	3.8	0.7	3.4	5.4
Machine hire and customwork.....	100.0	22.0	11.7	6.6	1.0	1.0	16.7	2.0	24.6	3.6	2.2	7.3	0.4
Livestock and poultry purchased.....	100.0	12.5	3.1	1.6	0.2	0.5	7.7	9.1	58.6	1.0	1.2	4.4	0.1
Feed for livestock and poultry.....	100.0	6.8	1.7	1.4	0.2	0.6	22.8	26.0	33.3	0.5	2.4	4.1	0.2
Seeds, plants, and trees.....	100.0	21.7	9.5	8.9	3.6	2.1	12.8	1.6	21.7	3.4	1.7	6.4	6.7
Commercial fertilizer and liming materials.....	100.0	20.3	12.3	11.4	3.6	4.7	12.1	1.7	20.8	3.9	1.5	6.4	1.2
Petroleum products, farm business share.....	100.0	23.6	10.7	6.4	1.4	2.5	15.5	3.4	24.1	2.7	2.0	6.4	1.2
Repair and other operating costs for motor vehicles and farm machinery.....	100.0	25.4	10.8	6.0	1.6	2.7	14.8	2.6	24.7	2.4	1.8	6.3	0.8
Marketing costs.....	100.0	0.6	16.5	6.8	7.5	11.8	16.4	2.9	16.7	3.0	1.4	4.6	2.6
Miscellaneous current operating expense, not included elsewhere.....	100.0	15.7	10.4	6.2	2.5	6.2	16.8	4.5	25.7	3.1	1.7	5.2	1.0
Property taxes, farm business share.....	100.0	20.7	4.3	4.0	1.9	4.2	18.4	3.3	32.5	1.8	2.1	5.6	1.3
Interest, farm business share.....	100.0	18.2	9.8	5.3	1.3	2.6	17.8	4.4	30.8	1.9	1.7	5.4	0.9
Construction and land improvement.....	100.0	16.2	8.5	6.4	2.1	3.4	16.6	5.6	28.5	2.5	1.9	6.3	1.9
Purchase of motor vehicles and farm machinery and equipment.....	100.0	25.5	11.4	5.6	0.8	3.0	17.4	2.6	22.6	2.5	2.1	5.5	0.9