

FARMERS AND FARM PRODUCTION

Home Facilities

The measures of value added, discussed previously, are useful primarily in showing efficiency differentials in agriculture. They are not measures of farm income. However, due to the small volume of sales (and lesser amounts of value added) on the smaller economic classes of farms, it is probable that incomes from farming are fairly low.

An indirect measure of income is found in the levels of living of farm-operator families as indicated by home facilities. The data and discussion which follow relate some of these to types and economic classes of farms.

Electricity.—Most of rural America had electricity in the homes in 1954—nearly 94 percent of all commercial farms. (See table 54.) More than 90 percent of each type of farm except cotton reported electricity. Among farms of each type the proportion reporting electricity decreased with decreasing size of farm (measured by gross sales of farm products). Even on Class VI farms, however, more than four-fifths of each type reported electricity, except cotton farms, of which about three-fourths had electricity in the homes.

TABLE 54.—PERCENT OF FARMS REPORTING ELECTRICITY BY TYPE OF FARM BY ECONOMIC CLASS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1954

Type of farm	Total	Economic class of farm					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
All commercial farms.....	93.8	97.5	97.9	97.4	95.6	91.2	84.2
Cash-grain.....	94.2	97.3	97.6	96.1	94.1	89.5	84.4
Cotton.....	86.8	97.1	97.1	96.2	92.0	86.4	76.3
Other field-crop.....	91.8	97.5	98.1	97.5	95.3	90.4	82.2
Vegetable.....	94.1	92.7	96.9	96.9	95.8	94.1	89.3
Fruit-and-nut.....	93.6	96.5	94.2	94.0	92.5	92.8	91.6
Dairy.....	97.3	99.3	98.6	99.1	98.3	95.7	89.0
Poultry.....	97.6	98.9	99.3	98.3	97.8	97.5	94.3
Livestock other than dairy and poultry.....	95.0	97.3	98.0	97.2	95.6	93.2	88.8
General:							
Primarily crop.....	93.4	98.1	97.8	96.9	95.0	91.5	83.7
Primarily livestock.....	95.3	100.0	99.9	98.2	96.5	95.8	86.5
Crop and livestock.....	97.0	98.4	98.8	98.4	99.2	93.1	89.9
Miscellaneous.....	94.5	98.1	96.7	96.9	95.1	93.5	87.7

Index of home facilities.—The 1954 Census of Agriculture obtained information relating to whether certain facilities and conveniences were in the farm home. The existence of these facilities in farm homes provides a general indication of levels of household living. As a means of comparing the relative extent to which operator families on different types and economic classes of farms have been able to have these home conveniences, they have been summarized into an index of home facilities. (See table 55.)

The index is based on the following items: Telephone, television, piped running water, home freezer, and automobile. Electricity in the home was not included since several of the other items are directly related to the availability of electricity there and it is known that electricity is now available in most of the farm-operator homes. The automobile is not thought of as a household

facility in the same sense as the other items. As a means of transportation, however, it represents a convenience that is important in indicating relative levels of living.

In computing the index, the sum of the farms reporting each item for each type and class of farm was divided by the total number of farms in the group. On this basis the highest possible score (if each farm in the group reported each item) was 5. The score obtained for each type and economic class of farm was then divided by the score for all commercial farms; thus, the index is constructed to show each type and economic class of farm as a percentage of the average for all commercial farms.

TABLE 55.—INDEX OF SPECIFIED HOME FACILITIES, COMMERCIAL FARMS BY ECONOMIC CLASS AND TYPE, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1954

[Total commercial farms=100¹]

Type of farm	Total	Economic class of farm					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
All commercial farms.....	100	153	145	124	96	75	52
Cash-grain.....	117	153	143	123	106	98	74
Cotton.....	48	147	122	83	51	36	24
Other field-crop.....	60	152	132	89	62	50	32
Vegetable.....	116	145	150	134	119	104	107
Fruit-and-nut.....	125	150	140	130	120	113	87
Dairy.....	121	166	157	140	117	94	65
Poultry.....	120	152	135	125	119	115	92
Livestock other than dairy and poultry.....	116	155	147	129	113	101	71
General:							
Primarily crop.....	97	154	137	111	90	81	63
Primarily livestock.....	115	165	152	133	112	96	73
Crops and livestock.....	111	160	149	127	105	87	63
Miscellaneous.....	114	147	139	128	113	101	71

¹ Index based on farms reporting 1 or more of the following items of specified facilities and equipment: Telephone, television set, piped running water, home freezer, and automobile.

With the exception of cotton and other field-crop farms, each type of farm was above or approximately equal to the average for all commercial farms. The indexes of 48 on cotton farms and 60 on other field-crop farms indicate that these farms reported only about half as many of the specified facilities as most other types.

Within each type of farm the level of home conveniences was related to economic class of farm. This is to be expected since the economic classification based upon gross sales may indicate roughly relative levels of income. Home facilities and conveniences depend largely upon the incomes the families on these farms have at their disposal. For most types of farms the operators on Class V and Class VI farms reported only one-fourth to one-third as many of the specified items.

The fact of fewer home facilities on cotton and other field-crop farms is due chiefly to the much larger proportion of these types that fall in the smaller economic classes. Classes I and II cotton and other field-crop farms have an index that is fairly similar to the commercial farm average for these classes. For Classes III through VI, however, the indexes for cotton and other field-crop farms were substantially below the indexes for these classes among other types.