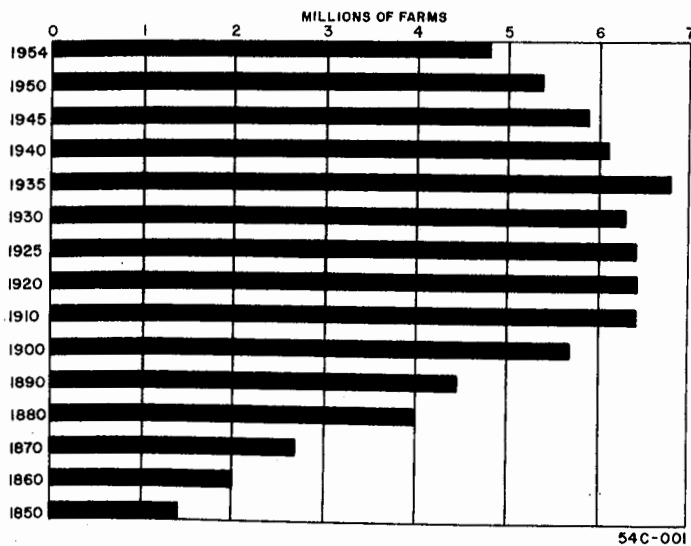


NUMBER OF FARMS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1850-1954



acres of land not being used for agricultural purposes, and less than 10 percent of the total acreage in the place was used for agricultural purposes, the nonagricultural land in excess of the number of acres used for agricultural purposes was excluded from the farm area. In applying this rule, land used for crops, for pasture or grazing, and land rented to others was considered to be land used for agricultural purposes. On the other hand, in these large tracts, land was considered to be nonagricultural when it was woodland not pastured or wasteland.

Except for open range and grazing land used under Government permit, all grazing land was to be included as land in farms. Land used rent free was to be included as land rented from others. Grazing lands operated by grazing associations were to be reported in the name of the manager in charge.

All land in Indian reservations used for growing crops, or for grazing livestock, was to be included as farm land. Land in Indian reservations, not reported by individual Indians or not rented to non-Indians, was to be reported in the name of the cooperative group using the land. Thus, in some instances, the entire reservation was reported as one farm.

Land in farms for earlier Censuses.—For earlier Censuses, the land included in each farm should have been, in accordance with the instructions, nearly identical to that included in the 1954 Census. The procedure followed in the 1950 Census for obtaining the land in farms was closely parallel to that followed in 1954. In 1950, adjustments were made in places of 1,000 acres or more (5,000 acres or more in the 17 Western States), if less than 10 percent of the total acreage was used for agricultural purposes. For Censuses prior to 1950, the land included in each farm was essentially the same as that included for the 1954 and 1950 Censuses. The plan for exclusion of nonagricultural lands was not spelled out in quite the same detail as for 1954 and 1950.

In Censuses prior to 1950, the inquiries to determine the land in each farm were of this nature: "How many acres in this farm do you own?" and "How many acres in this farm do you rent from others?" The assumption was that the enumerator would instruct the respondent as to what land should be included in his farm. With these two inquiries, space was provided for the enumerator to record the number of acres in the farm.

Value of land and buildings.—The value to be reported was the approximate amount for which the land and the buildings on it would sell. For 1954, this item was obtained for only a sample of the farms; however, the value was not reported for all the farms comprising the sample. (See the Introduction to this volume for a description of the sample.)

¹ See Introduction to this volume for definition of "Specified farms."

The respondent was asked to report separately the value for land owned, land rented from others (or land managed in the case of managed farms), and land rented to others. For each category, he could report either the value per acre or the total value. In the office processing all average values, without a corresponding total value, were converted to a total. For institutional farms and for places on which there were both farming and nonfarm activities, the value of the institutional buildings and other nonfarm structures was not to be included. Examples specifically mentioned in the instructions to enumerators for exclusion were hospitals, dormitories, administrative offices, filling stations, stores, restaurants, tourist cabins, mills, and factories. The value of processing plants used primarily for the disposal of raw materials produced on the farm where the plant was located, or for putting the raw materials into a marketable form was to be included.

Many problems, not encountered in enumerating most agricultural items, are involved in obtaining farm real-estate values. Most enumerated items require the respondent to make a statement based upon fact, such as upon actual transactions or existing conditions. But the estimation of the value of land and buildings is based largely upon opinion. In the event a farm had been recently purchased, answers could be based upon that experience. But many farms have not changed hands for many years, nor are they currently for sale. In such cases, farm operators may have no accurate basis for estimating the value. In many cases, a farm operator who would not sell his place under any circumstances may be inclined to give a "market value" that is unreasonably high. Some operators who had purchased their real estate during periods of relatively low prices may give an estimate that is unduly influenced by that experience. Furthermore, the extent of variation known to exist in real-estate values makes it difficult to establish checking procedures that will disclose inaccurate estimates.

The value of land and buildings was not reported for all farms in the sample and the farms for which values were reported were not fully representative of all farms. The sample farms for which values were reported comprised only 81 percent of the farms and 78 percent of land in the farms included in the sample.

The values of land and buildings at the county level and for farms classified by tenure, class, and type were shown only as average values per farm and per acre. These averages were calculated on the basis of those farms in the sample for which values were reported. Estimates of a total value of land and buildings for each county, or for each tenure, class, and type within economic areas, have not been published.

The need for total values of farm lands and buildings has been recognized. Therefore, in this chapter such totals are given for the United States and for each State.

To obtain the total value of farm land and buildings for each State, values were first estimated for each county. For each county, total values were estimated separately for "specified farms"¹ and for all other farms. Specified farms were intended to include all farms of 1,000 acres or more, and for some States, those meeting certain additional criteria. To estimate the value of the specified farms, the average value per acre, for those for which value was reported, was multiplied by the total land in all specified farms in the county. The value of the other farms in each county was obtained by multiplying the average value per acre for those farms in the sample for which value was reported by the total land in all farms in the county which were not segregated as specified farms. This procedure for calculation of total value of farm lands and buildings was essentially a stratification of the sample into two strata on the basis of size, viz, farms under 1,000 acres and those of 1,000 or more acres. This stratification helped to reduce biases introduced by the failure to obtain reports of value for all farms in the sample. The estimation by counties provided a geographic stratification which helped further in reducing biases. Thus, the figures for total value of land and buildings shown in this chapter