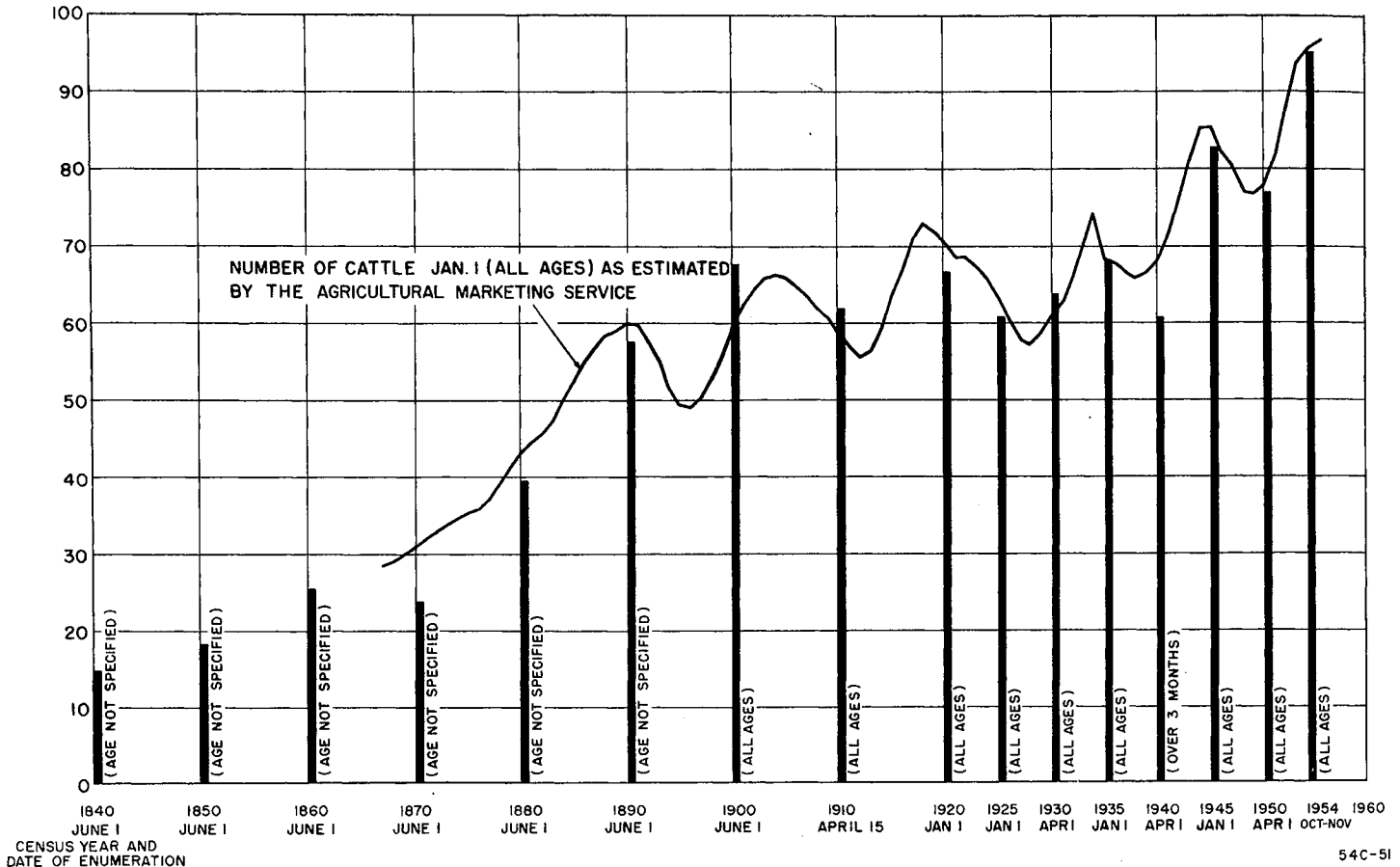


CATTLE - NUMBER SHOWN BY THE CENSUS ON SPECIFIED DATES OF ENUMERATION IN RELATION TO CYCLICAL CHANGES INDICATED BY ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF JANUARY 1 INVENTORIES BY AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE, FOR THE UNITED STATES

MILLIONS OF HEAD



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the comparison of livestock numbers for most kinds and classes and for areas.

Comparisons of livestock numbers from Census to Census have also been affected by change in age and sex characteristics, by wording of inquiries, by instructions, and by the order in which the inquiries appeared on the Agriculture Questionnaire. For example, for the 1930 Census, the classification of cattle by age was made on the basis of the year in which the cattle were born. For the 1950 and 1954 Censuses, the age was not specified as a basis for classifying cows. For these two Censuses, the definition of a cow depended upon the respondent and enumerator, except that the inquiry specified that heifers that had calved were to be included.

At the time of the Census, the movement of animals from farms or ranches to feedlots also affected considerably the number in an area, and even in the United States, as the number of animals in transit at the time of the enumeration was larger in 1954 than at most other periods during the year. The 1954 Census was taken in the fall. Many calves and cattle that were still on farms and ranches in the range area at the time of the enumeration moved later to feedlots and farms in the Corn Belt and elsewhere.

For Censuses prior to 1954, the inquiries and instructions on the questionnaires indicated that the inventory numbers of livestock were to be reported as of the Census date. It was evident, however, that many farm operators reported the number of livestock on the farm at the time of actual enumeration. Inquiries on the questionnaires for 1954 asked for the numbers of livestock and poultry on the place at the time the Agriculture Questionnaire was filled. The general heading for

livestock also stressed, "Now on this place." Because the number of livestock relates to the date the enumeration was made, the average date of enumeration should be considered in making comparisons between Censuses. The average date of enumeration for the three most recent Censuses is shown by States in Table 24.

For some kinds of livestock there are cyclic fluctuations in numbers even though the trend over a long period may be definitely in one direction. A Census may be taken at a time when the cycle is at the peak or at any intervening point in the cycle.

Thus, the count for an item for two given periods of time does not necessarily give a true indication of either the short-time or the long-time trend in numbers. Three charts in this chapter indicate the numbers for cattle, hogs, and sheep for several Censuses in relation to long-time trends in livestock numbers.

Problems in the enumeration of livestock and livestock products.—Several problems were anticipated in connection with the enumeration of livestock and their products. Some of these problems were taken care of by special instructions and some by questionnaire organization and general instructions.

Some livestock operations cover large areas extending into more than one county and occasionally across State lines. Some farms or ranches consist of separated holdings. Some places enumerated as farms, such as feedlots, dry-lot dairies, and broiler-producing establishments, are of such nature that they may not be locally considered as farms. Prior to the enumeration in 1954, lists were prepared of many of the large livestock farms and ranches as well as of unusual farms such