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United States Census of Agriculture: 1954

Volume III

SPECIAL REPORTS

Part 2

Ranking Agricultural Counties

Prepared under the supervision of

RAY HURLEY

Chief, Agriculture Division

LEADING COUNTIES •

LIVESTOCK and PRODUCTS • CROPS • FRUITS • VALUES •



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PREFACE

Volume III, Special Reports, comprises one of the volumes presenting final summaries and results for the 1954 Census of Agriculture. Part 2, Ranking Agricultural Counties, presents statistics for selected items of inventory and agricultural production for the leading counties of the United States.

The 1954 Census of Agriculture was taken in conformity with the Act of Congress (Title 13, United States Code), approved August 31, 1954, which includes provisions for the mid-decade censuses of agriculture.

The computation of statistics and the preparation of this special report were under the supervision of Ray Hurley, Chief, Agriculture Division, and Warder B. Jenkins, Assistant Chief. They were assisted by Snider W. Skinner, Charles Frazier, Dorothy Richardson, Evelyn Gray, and Henry A. Tucker. The maps were prepared under the supervision of Mr. Clarence E. Batschelet, Chief, Geography Division.

August 1956.

III

UNITED STATES CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: 1954

REPORTS

Volume I.—Counties and State Economic Areas. Statistics for counties include number of farms, acreage, value, and farm operators; farms by color and tenure of operator; facilities and equipment; use of commercial fertilizer; farm labor; farm expenditures; livestock and livestock products; specified crops harvested; farms classified by type of farm and by economic class; and value of products sold by source.

Data for State economic areas include farms and farm characteristics by tenure of operator, by type of farm, and by economic class.

Volume I is published in 33 parts as follows:

Part	State or States	Part	State or States	Part	State or States
1	New England States: Maine. New Hampshire. Vermont. Massachusetts. Rhode Island. Connecticut.	8	West North Central: Minnesota.	21	East South Central—Continued Alabama.
		9	Iowa.	22	Mississippi.
		10	Missouri.	23	West South Central: Arkansas.
		11	North Dakota and South Dakota.	24	Louisiana.
		12	Nebraska.	25	Oklahoma.
2	Middle Atlantic States: New York. New Jersey. Pennsylvania.	13	Kansas.	26	Texas.
		14	South Atlantic: Delaware and Maryland.	27	Mountain: Montana.
		15	Virginia and West Virginia.	28	Idaho.
		16	North Carolina and South Carolina.	29	Wyoming and Colorado.
3	East North Central: Ohio.	17	Georgia.	30	New Mexico and Arizona.
4	Indiana.	18	Florida.	31	Utah and Nevada.
5	Illinois.		East South Central: Kentucky.	32	Pacific: Washington and Oregon.
6	Michigan.	19	Tennessee.	33	California.
7	Wisconsin.	20			

Volume II.—General Report. Statistics by Subjects, United States Census of Agriculture, 1954. Summary data and analyses of the data for States, for Geographic Divisions, and for the United States by subjects as illustrated by the chapter titles listed below:

Chapter	Title	Chapter	Title
I	Farms and Land in Farms.	VII	Field Crops and Vegetables.
II	Age, Residence, Years on Farm, Work Off Farm.	VIII	Fruits and Nuts, Horticultural Specialties, Forest Products.
III	Farm Facilities, Farm Equipment.	IX	Value of Farm Products.
IV	Farm Labor, Use of Fertilizer, Farm Expenditures, and Cash Rent.	X	Color, Race, and Tenure of Farm Operator.
V	Size of Farm.	XI	Economic Class of Farm.
VI	Livestock and Livestock Products.	XII	Type of Farm.

Volume III.—Special Reports

Part 1.—Multiple-unit Operations. This report will be similar to Part 2 of Volume V of the reports for the 1950 Census of Agriculture. It will present statistics for approximately 900 counties and State economic areas in 12 Southern States and Missouri for the number and characteristics of multiple-unit operations and farms in multiple units.

Part 2.—Ranking Agricultural Counties. This special report will present statistics for selected items of inventory and agricultural production for the leading counties in the United States.

Part 3.—Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, District of Columbia, and U. S. Possessions. These areas were not included in the 1954 Census of Agriculture. The available current data from various Government sources will be compiled and published in this report.

Part 4.—Agriculture, 1954, a Graphic Summary. This report will present graphically some of the significant facts regarding agriculture and agricultural production as revealed by the 1954 Census of Agriculture.

Part 5.—Farm-mortgage Debt. This will be a cooperative study by the Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Census. It will present, by States, data based on the 1954 Census of Agriculture and a special mail survey to be conducted in January 1956, on the number of mortgaged farms, the amount of mortgage debt, and the amount of debt held by principal lending agencies.

Part 6.—Irrigation in Humid Areas. This cooperative report by the Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Census will present data obtained by a mail survey of operators of irrigated farms in 28 States on the source of water, method of applying water, number of pumps used, acres of crops irrigated in 1954 and 1955, the number of times each crop was irrigated, and the cost of irrigation equipment and the irrigation system.

Part 7.—Popular Report of the 1954 Census of Agriculture. This report is planned to be a general, easy-to-read publication for the general public on the status and broad characteristics of United States agriculture. It will seek to delineate such aspects of agriculture as the geographic distribution and differences by size of farm for such items as farm acreage, principal crops, and important kinds of livestock, farm facilities, farm equipment, use of fertilizer, soil conservation practices, farm tenure, and farm income.

Part 8.—Size of Operation by Type of Farm. This will be a cooperative special report to be prepared in cooperation with the Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This report will contain data for 119 economic subregions, (essentially general type-of-farming areas) showing the general characteristics for each type of farm by economic class. It will provide data for a current analysis of the differences that exist among groups of farms of the same type. It will furnish statistical basis for a realistic examination of production of such commodities as wheat, cotton, and dairy products in connection with actual or proposed governmental policies and programs.

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RANKING AGRICULTURAL COUNTIES

Introduction.—This report presents statistics for the leading counties in the United States for selected items. The ranking of counties has been made on the basis of data for the 1954 Census of Agriculture, although comparative data for the leading counties are also shown for the 1950 Census.

The leading counties have been determined on the basis of size of the agricultural resource or production item selected as a basis for making the ranking of the counties.

For most items, data are given for the 100 leading counties. For items for which the commercial importance is centered in a relatively few areas, the ranking has been limited to the 50 leading counties.

Method of ranking the counties.—The leading counties were selected on the basis of the size of the selected inventory, acreage, and production item for the county. The county with the largest total for the selected item of inventory, acreage, or production was ranked first; the county with the next largest total, second; et cetera.

Some tables present the ranking of counties according to two related items. In such cases, the 100 leading counties for one item seldom coincide with the 100 leading counties for the other related item and, in fact, the difference in the rank of counties on the basis of the two items may be considerable. For example, McLean County, North Dakota, ranks 12th on the basis of the acreage of wheat harvested, but ranks 84th on the basis of the production of wheat.

Definitions and explanations.—The definitions given here are limited to a few items. Detailed definitions and explanations for other items will be found in Volume I, Statistics for Counties and State Economic Areas, of the reports for the 1954 Census of Agriculture.

A farm.—For the 1954 and the 1950 Censuses of Agriculture, places of 3 or more acres were counted as farms if the annual value of agricultural products, exclusive of home-garden products, amounted to \$150 or more. The agricultural products could have been either for home use or for sale. Places of less than 3 acres were counted as farms only if the annual value of sales of agricultural products amounted to \$150 or more. Places for which the value of agricultural products for 1954 was less than these minima because of crop failure or other unusual conditions, and places operated at the time of the census for the first time, were counted as farms if normally they could be expected to produce these minimum quantities of agricultural products.

The Census date.—The enumeration for the 1954 Census was made in October, November, and December, 1954; while that for the 1950 Census was made in April and May of 1950. Information on inventory items relates to the situation at the time of the enumeration. Data on acreages and production of crops usually relate to the crop harvested for 1954 or 1949. Data on the sales of crops relate to the crop harvested for 1954 or 1949, regardless of when the crop was sold. Data on livestock production and sales re-

late to the production or sales in 1954 or 1949.

Qualifications of data and rankings.—Data for leading agricultural counties usually indicate agricultural areas of commercial significance and special importance and interest. The group of 100 or 50 leading counties accounts for a significant part of the United States total. The data on leading counties are of special interest to the residents and farmers of the leading counties and indicate some of the salient features of the geographic distribution of agricultural resources and production.

The production of some agricultural products is concentrated in a few areas while that of other products is scattered over large areas. The dot maps for the item presented in connection with the table of leading counties will help show the extent of concentration and distribution of the item. The characteristics of the land, the soil conditions, and temperature, as well as mechanization and improved farming practices such as disease control, seed selection, and use of fertilizer, have been important factors affecting the concentration, intensity, and distribution of production of most agricultural products.

It is important to note that the relative rank of counties is determined on the basis of data for a single year. Special weather and economic conditions existing in 1954 may have had a significant effect upon the relative ranking of a county. Drought, freezing affecting fruit or other production, storms, etc., may have abnormally influenced agricultural conditions and production in some counties. Significant changes in rank of an individual county would result if data for several years were used as a basis for establishing rank.

The ranking of counties is influenced considerably by the size (total land area or total farm area) of the counties. The county may be a leading county because of its size, and not because of the intensity of the production of the selected item in the county.

The ranking of counties on the basis of the best available over-all measure of farm production is shown in Table 2. This ranking of counties is on the basis of the gross value of all farm products sold.

In the case of the production of livestock and livestock products, the arranging of counties was usually on the basis of the quantity sold because adequate data were not available for the quantity produced. However, the ranking of counties would not have been altered greatly if the ranking had been made on the basis of production. For crops, the ranking was usually made on the basis of the acreage harvested. The quantity harvested, for the counties ranked on the basis of acreage harvested, is usually given in the same table, and the relative ranking of the county on the basis of production is shown, provided that the county ranked on the basis of production among the first 100 counties. For crops such as most fruits, for which acreage harvested data were not available, the ranking was determined on the basis of the number of trees of all ages.