

CHAPTER XII –TYPE OF FARM

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CHAPTER XII.—TYPE OF FARM

Introduction.—This chapter presents data from the 1954 and 1950 Censuses of Agriculture showing characteristics of farms and farm operators by type of farm for those farms which were classified as "Commercial." No data are presented by type of farm for "Other farms," *i.e.*, part-time, residential, and abnormal.

The purpose of a classification of farms by type is to show (a) the kinds of farms in the various parts of the Nation; (b) the variation in the use of resources, production, sales, and organization among farms of the various types; and (c) the characteristics of the operators for different types of farms. The classification of farms by type places together farms having a high degree of uniformity in the kind and relative amount (proportion) of crops and livestock handled and in the methods and practices followed in production. The degree of agricultural specialization and the pattern of production can thus be shown. Information thus classified provides a basis for the study and analysis of agricultural problems, such as land use, soil conservation, and the production and marketing of agricultural commodities. It, also, is of value to those who provide products and services for farms and farm people.

The data for farms grouped by type supplement the data provided for other farm classifications such as size of farm (as measured by the total area in the farm), given in Chapter V; tenure of farm operator, given in Chapter X; and economic class of farm, given in Chapter XI.

Source of data.—All data presented in this chapter are for the 1954 and 1950 Censuses of Agriculture. Comparable figures are not available for earlier Census years because for Censuses prior to 1950 the classification of farms by type was made on different bases.

The totals in the tables represent estimates for all "Commercial" farms based on tabulations of the data for a sample of approximately 20 percent of the farms. (See the Introduction to this volume for the sample of farms used for this and other tabulations, and for a statement of the reliability of estimates.)

Presentation of statistics.—Statistics for most items included in the 1954 Census of Agriculture are presented for the United States in Table 2. Tables 3 through 6 show data for a selected number of items for the United States, for three major regions, and for each of the States. An outline map showing these geographic areas appears in the Introduction to this volume.

Maps accompanying this text show the geographic distribution of each of the major types of farms. They serve the purpose of giving a quick visual picture of the distribution of farms for each type. The data in this chapter are intended to serve as a general summary and to afford comparisons by areas. Detailed data for farms in each type of farm, classified by economic class, are given in Part 8, "Size of Operation by Type of Farm," Volume III of the reports for the 1954 Census of Agriculture. An analysis of data for the principal types of farms will appear in Volume III, Part 9.

Statistics by type of farm are given for State economic areas in Economic Area Tables 4, 5, and 6, Volume I. Detailed data for "miscellaneous" in the type-of-farm classification are not shown separately in Volume I because the number of such farms was small for areas smaller than States. Detailed data for "miscellaneous" commercial farms are presented in this chapter. Detailed data for miscellaneous farms can be obtained for State economic areas by subtracting the totals for all the types of farms listed in Economic Area Tables 4, 5, and 6 from the corresponding totals shown for all commercial farms in Economic Area Tables 1, 2, and 3 in Volume I.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Definitions having general application such as for "a farm," "a farm operator," "farms reporting," etc., are shown in the Introduction to this volume.

Farms classified by type.—In making the classification by type of farm for the 1954 Census, farms were classified into two groups—commercial farms and other farms. Data are presented by type of farm only for commercial farms.

Commercial farms are those, except abnormal farms, with a total value of farm products sold of \$1,200 or more during one year plus those farms with a value of farm products sold of \$250 to \$1,199, provided the farm operator worked off his farm less than 100 days and the total value of agricultural products sold from the farm was greater than the income received by him and members of his family from other sources. (See Chapter XI, "Economic Class of Farm," for a more complete discussion of the composition of commercial farms.)

Other farms comprise part-time, residential, and abnormal farms. Part-time farms are farms with a value of farm products sold of \$250 to \$1,199, provided that the farm operator reported 100 or more days of work off the farm during the year, or that the income received by him and members of his family from other sources was greater than the total value of agricultural products sold from the farm. Residential farms include all farms, except abnormal farms, with a total value of agricultural products sold of less than \$250. Abnormal farms comprise public and private institutional farms, community enterprises, experiment-station farms, grazing associations, etc.

TABLE 1.—TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMS AND THE PROPORTION CLASSIFIED BY TYPE OF FARM: CENSUSES OF 1954 AND 1950

[Data are based on reports for only a sample of farms]

Item	1954	1950
Total number of farms.....	4,783,021	5,379,250
Commercial farms:		
Number.....	3,327,617	3,706,412
Percent of total.....	69.6	68.9
Other farms		
Number.....	1,455,404	1,672,838
Percent of total.....	30.4	31.1

¹Of this number, 639,230 represented part-time farms; a distribution of these, by type of farm, appears in Volume II of the 1950 Census of Agriculture Reports.

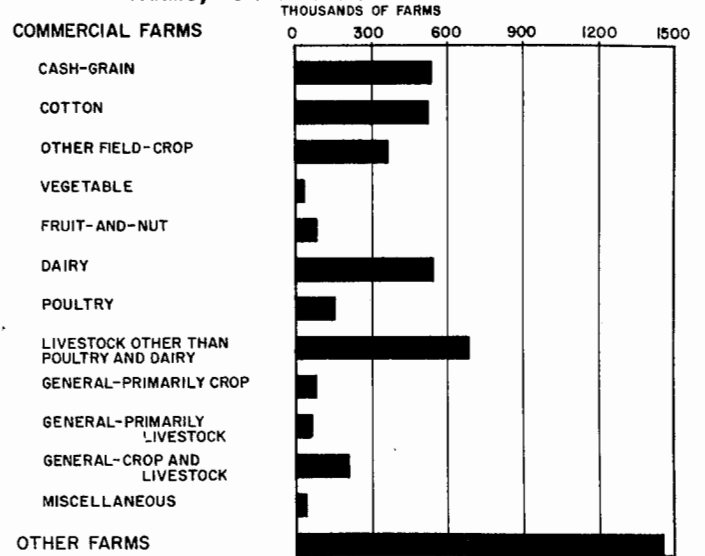
Basis of classification.—The classification of commercial farms by type was made on the basis of the relationship of the value of sales from a particular source, or sources, to the total value of all farm products sold from the farm. In some cases, the type of farm was determined on the basis of the sale of an individual farm product, such as cotton, or on the basis of the sales of closely related products such as dairy products. In other cases, the type of farm was determined on the basis of sales of a broader group of products, such as corn, sorghums, all small grains, field peas, field beans, cowpeas, and soybeans. In order to be classified as a particular type, sales or anticipated sales of a product or group of products had to represent 50 percent or more of the total value of products sold.

The types of commercial farms for which data are shown, together with the product or group of products on which the classification is based are:

<i>Type of farm</i>	<i>Product or group of products amounting to 50 percent or more of the value of all farm products sold</i>
Cash-grain.....	Corn, sorghums, small grains, field peas, field beans, cowpeas, and soybeans.
Cotton.....	Cotton (lint and seed).
Other field-crop.....	Peanuts, Irish potatoes, sweetpotatoes, tobacco, sugarcane, sugar beets for sugar, and other miscellaneous crops.
Vegetable.....	Vegetables.
Fruit-and-nut.....	Berries and other small fruits and tree fruits, nuts, and grapes.
Dairy.....	Milk and other dairy products. The criterion of 50 percent of the total sales was modified in the case of dairy farms. A farm for which the value of sales of dairy products represented less than 50 percent of the total value of farm products sold was classified as a dairy farm if— (a) Milk and other dairy products accounted for 30 percent or more of the total value of products sold; and (b) Milk cows represented 50 percent or more of all cows; and (c) Sales of dairy products, together with the sales of cattle and calves, amounted to 50 percent or more of the total value of farm products sold.
Poultry.....	Chickens, eggs, turkeys, and other poultry products.
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry.....	Cattle, calves, hogs, sheep, goats, wool, and mohair, provided the farm did not qualify as a dairy farm.
General.....	Farms were classified as general when the value of products from one source or group of sources did not represent as much as 50 percent of the total value of all farm products sold. Separate figures are given for three kinds of general farms: (a) Primarily crop (b) Primarily livestock (c) Crop and livestock <i>Primarily crop farms</i> are those for which the sale of one of the following crops or groups of crops—vegetables, fruits and nuts, cotton, cash grains, or other field crops—did not amount to 50 percent or more of the value of all farm products sold, but for which the value of sales for all these groups of crops represented 70 percent or more of the value of all farm products sold. <i>Primarily livestock farms</i> are those which did not qualify as dairy farms, poultry farms, or livestock farms other than dairy and poultry, but for which the sale of livestock and poultry and livestock and poultry products amounted to 70 percent or more of the value of all farm products sold. <i>General crop and livestock farms</i> are those which could not be classified as either crop farms or livestock farms, but for which the sale of all crops amounted to at least 30 percent but less than 70 percent of the total value of all farm products sold.
Miscellaneous.....	This group of farms includes those that had 50 percent or more of the total value of products accounted for by sale of horticultural products, or sale of horses, or sale of forest products. In 1950, this group of farms also included those that had 50 percent or more of the total value of farm products accounted for by the sale of fur animals or the sale of bees, wax, and honey.

The above types provide a classification meaningful to large areas of the United States, both as to number of farms, and as to the kind of farming followed. Relatively unimportant types, such as forest-products farms, horse farms, etc., were grouped as miscellaneous since the main purpose in classifying these was to exclude them from the other types.

COMMERCIAL FARMS CLASSIFIED BY TYPE, AND OTHER FARMS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1954



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Cotton farms were classified separately from "Other field-crop farms" because they constitute such a large proportion of the total farms. The separate classification of cotton farms, also, makes the data more useful in areas where cotton is a competing cash crop with peanuts or tobacco. Usually, it is possible to identify the crop accounting for the "Other field-crop farms" because, in most areas, only one crop provides the source of income for this type.

General farms were separated into three groups in order to provide a more specific description of the farms not obtaining as much as 50 percent of the value of all farm products sold from one source or group of sources.

In the South, the "home farms" of multiple-unit operations were classified on the same basis as all other farms. No attempt was made to consider value of sales of products from the land rented out. The "home farm" may have been classified as residential, and, thus, not have been included with the farms classified by type, even though it was the headquarters of a relatively large agricultural operation.

In a few instances, the number of "crop-type" farms reporting cropland harvested is less than the total number of farms in the type group. This difference occurs because the land-use tabulations did not provide for the counting of farms reporting and acres of cropland harvested when the acreage of cropland harvested was less than one acre. Such differences occurred largely on farms where tobacco, or berries or other fruits was the important crop.

Factors affecting classification by type of farm.—The criteria for classifying farms by type were essentially the same for the 1954 and 1950 Censuses of Agriculture. There were differences, however, in the method of obtaining data on the value of farm products sold which may have influenced, in a relatively few cases, the type for a given farm.

Limitations of the use of value of products sold for classifying farms by type.—The value of farm products sold has been used for several Censuses as the basis for making a classification of farms by type. It provides a common denominator for relating the importance of all enterprises. As a general rule, it reflects the physical resources and productivity of the farm. However, the use of income data has limitations for those farms where crop failure curtailed production during the year, for farms where livestock or other inventories were expanding or contracting at greater than the usual yearly rate for the farm, and for farms on which a considerable part of the products sold is represented by purchased items. The use of gross sales without adjustment for any of the costs of production may give too

great an importance to certain products. For example, any farms purchasing feeder cattle may be classified as livestock farms even though the net income from crops may exceed the net income from livestock and livestock products. Farms may be classified differently in each Census if prices of the several groups of farm products change at different rates. This is particularly true for farms on which more than one product or groups of products provide important sources of income. However, farms on which the production of one product provides a large part of the total sales would be classified the same as to type regardless of the change in price level.

For 1954, for the purpose of classifying farms by type, it was necessary to determine the approximate total value of farm products sold for each farm, and, also, the relationship of the income from the most important source or sources to this total. These determinations were made for each farm during the office processing. For all livestock and livestock products, except wool and mohair, Census enumerators obtained the value of sales during the enumeration. Also, the Census enumerators obtained for each farm, the value of vegetables sold, the value of nursery and greenhouse products sold, the value of forest products sold, and the value of miscellaneous crops sold. For most of the grain crops—corn, sorghums, wheat, oats, barley, and other small grains—for most hay crops, and for berries and other small fruits, the enumerator obtained the quantity sold or to be sold. The value of the sales of the crops for which the quantity sold was obtained by Census enumerators was calculated by multiplying the quantity sold by State average prices.

For other products, for the purpose of determining the total value of farm products sold and the income from the most important source or sources, the value of sales was estimated by multiplying the quantity harvested by State average prices when the value of the quantity sold would be \$100 or more. This procedure was used, for coding purposes only, to determine the value of sales for the following farm products:

Soybeans for beans	Tobacco
Cowpeas for peas	Sugarcane
Peanuts for nuts	Sweet sorghums for sirup
Field and seed	Other field crops
peas	Small fruits
Field seed crops	Tree fruits, nuts, and grapes
Potatoes	Wool
Cotton	Mohair

The estimated value of sales for crops for which the quantity sold was not obtained by Census enumerators and for which it could not be assumed that all the crop was sold, totalled approximately \$2,700 million and comprised approximately 11 percent of all farm products sold in the United States.

For the 1950 Census, the procedure for obtaining the value of livestock and livestock products sold, the value of vegetables sold, nursery and greenhouse products sold, and the value of forest products sold, was the same as that for 1954. For the 1950 Census, enumerators obtained, for each farm, the value as well as the quantity for individual or for groups of field and other crops sold.

Except for cotton and for fruit and nut crops, the change in pro-

cedure from 1950 to 1954 for determining the value of crops sold did not affect the classification of farms by type. For the 1950 Census, the value of the cotton sold was understated because the value of sales reported by farm operators did not always include the value of all cotton seed sold, and the gross value of some fruit and nut crops sold was sometimes underreported largely because of the reporting by farm operators of the value of sales after making deductions for some harvesting and marketing costs. The change in the procedure from 1950 to 1954 for determining the value of the cotton crop, probably resulted in increasing the number of cotton farms, particularly in areas where peanuts or tobacco are also important sources of income on farms producing cotton. Since nearly all production of fruits and nuts for sale occurs on farms where fruits and nuts constitute the only major source of income, the change in procedure for determining the value of fruit and nut crops sold did not have any significant effect upon the number of farms classified as fruit-and-nut farms.

For both 1950 and 1954, the classification of farms by type was made on the basis of sales for a single year. The number and distribution of farms by type of farm may have been affected in areas where abnormal conditions such as drought, disease, etc., existed. Drought conditions in 1954 resulted in an unusual increase of cotton farms and a decrease in the number of other field-crop farms in some areas where cotton and peanuts were important competing crops. Also, in the drought areas in 1954, the low yield of cash crops and the abnormal marketing of livestock because of the shortage of feed and pasture resulted in the decrease of crop-type farms and an increase in livestock other than dairy and poultry farms.

For 1954, the analyses of the value of farm products sold, as determined by Census procedures, indicate that the value of livestock and livestock products were more generally underreported than those for field and other crops. This underreporting of the value of livestock and livestock products results in an understatement of the number and proportion of livestock-type farms, and an overstatement of the number and proportion of cash-grain, other field-crop, and general farms in areas where there are a considerable number of farms on which field crops and livestock and livestock products comprise important sources of income on the same farm. As poultry products comprise by far the most important source of income on poultry farms, and as dairy products generally comprise the major source of income on dairy farms, the relative underreporting of the value of sales of poultry and dairy products did not affect, in most areas, the number of poultry and dairy farms.

Comparisons of value of farm products sold by type of farm.—The gross value of farm products sold does not indicate accurately the relative levels of production and net income for the various types of farms. In the case of some types of farms—for example, cotton and cash-grain farms—the value of farm products sold provides a reasonably accurate measure of farm production. In the case of livestock-type farms, in many areas the value of sales may overstate the level of farm production because of the value of products added by livestock purchased and then sold, and by feed purchased.