

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: