

one-third, and tenants for one-fifth. Managers reported the remaining 7 percent, though they represented only 0.7 percent of all commercial farms.

The value of hog products sold was about evenly divided among tenure groups with the exception of manager farms, which reported less than 1 percent.

Full owners reported over two-thirds of the value of chickens and eggs sold. Manager farms accounted for 4.4 percent of the chicken sales and 2.6 percent of the egg sales.

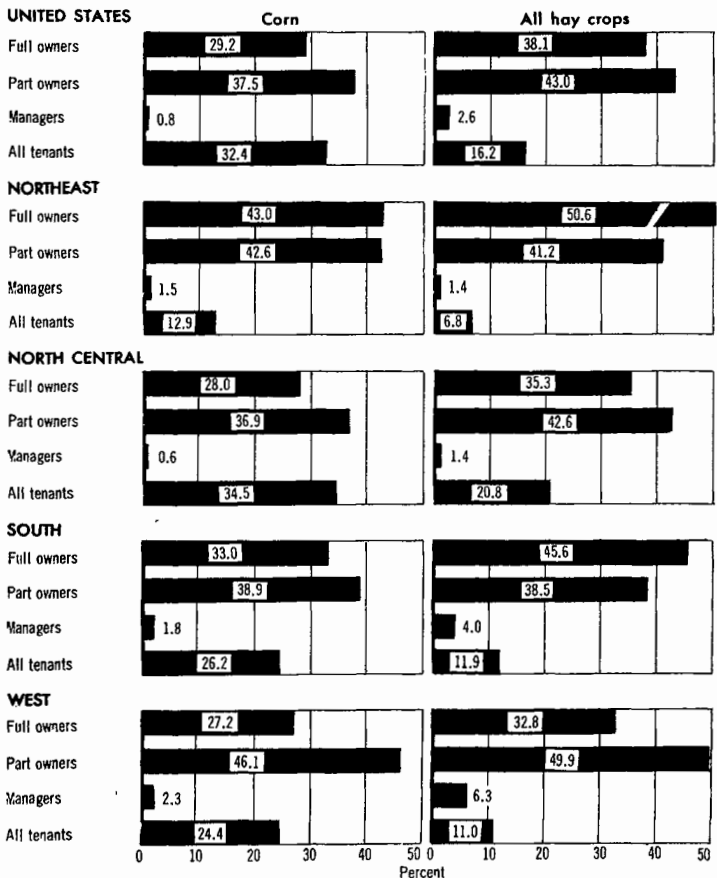
Full owners also reported the highest proportion—44.4 percent—of the value of milk sold, followed by part owners with 36.8 percent and tenants with 17.0 percent.

Tenants accounted for 39.6 percent of the value of corn sold, part owners followed closely with 36.5 percent, and full owners accounted for only 23.2 percent. These percentages, however, should not be confused with the value of corn produced. The greater livestock operations on full-owner and part-owner farms in comparison with tenant farms means that a greater proportion of the corn produced on the owner farms actually was marketed through livestock, whereas more of the corn crop was sold for cash on tenant-operated farms.

Part owners greatly increased their proportion of the value of cotton sold between 1950 and 1959. In 1959 they reported 43.2 percent of the sales, contrasted with 27.5 percent in 1950. On the other hand, tenants reported 44.9 percent of the cotton sales in 1950, but only 32.7 percent in 1959. With the reduction of small cotton farms in the South and the shift of cotton production to irrigated lands of the Southwest and the West, the number of tenant farmers (mainly sharecroppers) has declined sharply and the number of part-owner operators has increased.

Tobacco production is a labor-intensive crop that has traditionally been associated with sharecropper units. In 1959 tenants

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF ACRES OF CORN AND ALL HAY CROPS HARVESTED, FOR COMMERCIAL FARMS, BY TENURE OF OPERATOR, FOR THE UNITED STATES AND REGIONS: 1959



accounted for 39.6 percent of the value of tobacco sold, and full owners and part owners each reported 29.3 percent.

SIZE OF FARM

Changes in farm size.—One of the most dramatic changes in agriculture during the past 30 years has been the rapid increase in farm size. In 1959 the average farm size in the United States was 303 acres, or nearly twice as large as the average size in 1930. The growth in farm size was especially rapid in the fifties. Between 1950 and 1959 average farm acreage increased by 40.5 percent, only slightly less than the increase during the previous 50 years.

Tenant farms have undergone the largest increase in average size between 1950 and 1959, increasing by nearly one-half, to 219.5 acres. This was due largely to the large reduction of small sharecropper farms in the South. Full-owner, part-owner, and manager farms each increased in size by approximately 20 percent during the decade. In 1959 the average full-owner farm contained 163.7 acres, the average part-owner farm contained 603.6 acres, and the average manager farm contained 5,223 acres.

The principal reason for growth in average farm size is the mechanization of agriculture that permits a farm operator to operate larger acreages of land. This farm expansion can only take place if some farmers leave agriculture. Often it is the small farmer who retires or migrates out of agriculture and the large farmer who consolidates the land vacated by the small farmer with his existing larger unit. Thus the average farm size increases because of the large reduction in number of small farms and the growth of farms above average size.

Greatest percentage increases in average farm size between 1950 and 1959 occurred in the South and West. In both of these regions the tenant farms showed a larger percentage increase in average size than farms of other tenure groups.

Farm size and tenure.—For the United States as a whole, about two-thirds of the farms of 99 acres or less were operated by full owners in 1959, this proportion decreased as size of farm increased. Only one-fifth of the farms of 2,000 acres or more were full-owner farms. This relationship between size of farm and tenure of operator is a reflection of three important factors. First, many small farms were operated as part-time or part-retirement farms. Second, fewer of the large farms were operated by full owners because of the difficulty of amassing the capital necessary to own and operate a very large farm. And, third, many full owners were nearing retirement age and had begun to reduce the size of their operations.

The proportion of farms operated by part owners increases with increasing size. In 1959 part owners operated three out of five of the farms of 2,000 acres or more. The proportion operated by managers was not significant among farms of less than 500 acres.

Tenants operated nearly one-fourth of the farms of less than 50 acres, but only one-eighth of the farms with 70 to 99 acres. The proportion of tenant farms in size-of-farm groups with over 100 acres was greatest—24 percent—on farms with 260 to 499 acres. The large proportion of tenant operators on farms of less than 50 acres is largely due to the large number of sharecropper farms in the South, and the relatively large proportion of tenant-operated farms in the size range between 140 to 499 acres is due to the importance of tenant farms in the high land value areas of the Corn Belt.