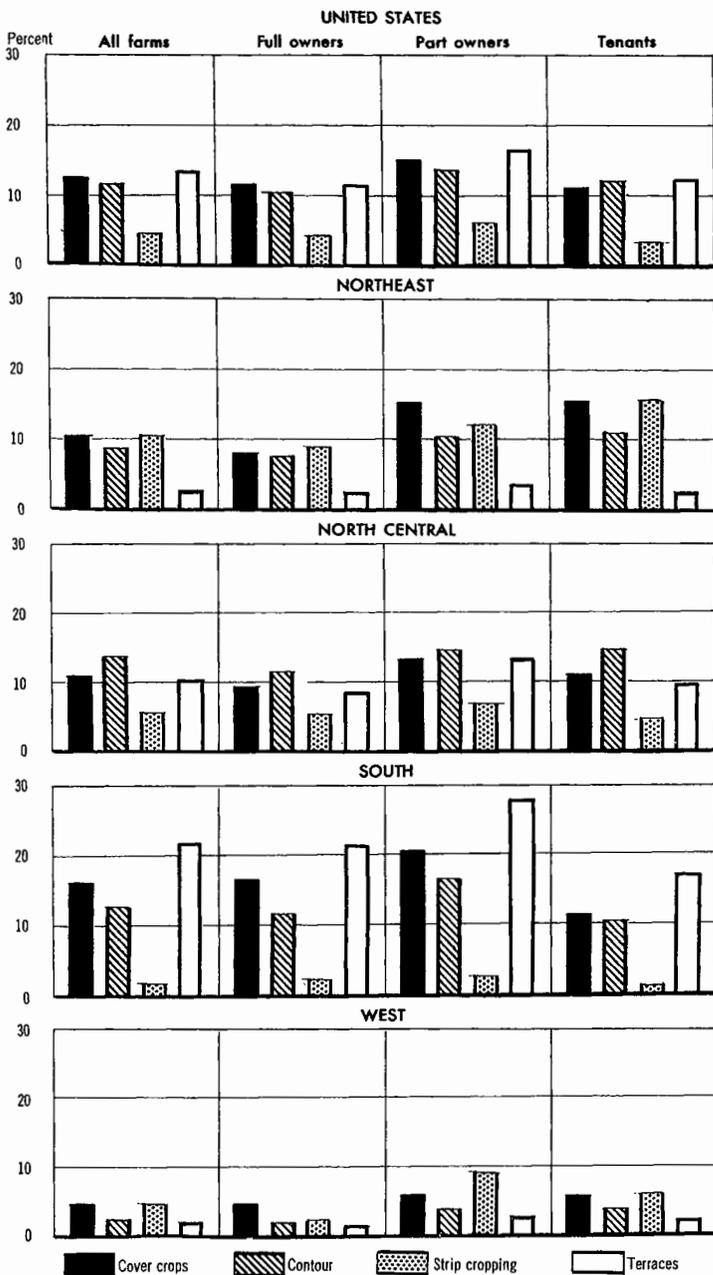


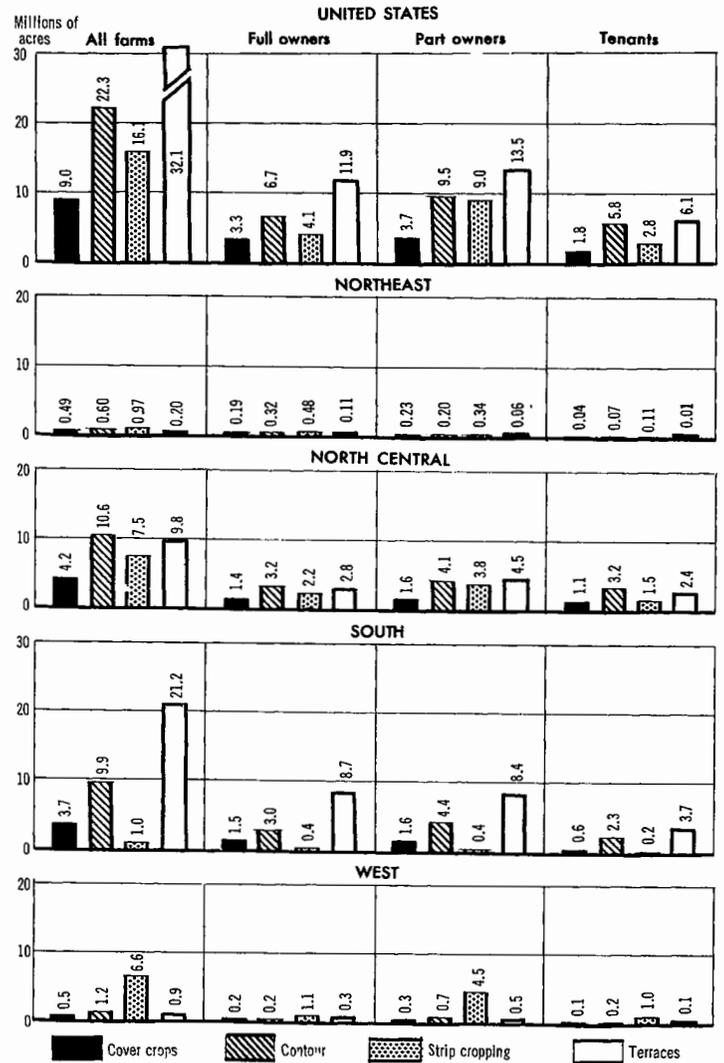
PERCENT OF COMMERCIAL FARMS REPORTING SPECIFIED LAND-USE PRACTICES, BY TENURE OF OPERATOR, FOR THE UNITED STATES AND REGIONS: 1959



Conservation and land-use practices.—Much of the productivity of farmland in the future depends in part on the soil conservation measures applied to the land today. Protection of the inherent soil productivity is generally accomplished through four different land-use practices. These practices are used in varying degrees throughout the United States according to the hazards of soil erosion in different areas. For example, contour farming is most prevalent in rolling areas of the Corn Belt and in the southern portion of the Great Plains. Stripcropping is found primarily in northern Montana and western North Dakota and to a lesser extent in western Nebraska, southwestern Wisconsin, and southern Pennsylvania. Terracing is found largely in the Southeast and also in an area extending from central Texas to Nebraska.

In the United States as a whole, the tenure groups differed very little in 1959 in the proportion of operators who reported specified land-use practices. Approximately one-eighth of the commercial farms reported using cover crops, one-eighth reported contour cultivation, and one-eighth reported terraces. About 5 percent

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of the commercial farms reported stripcropping. The relationship between tenure and land-use practices is shown in the following discussion of acreages in specified uses.

Regional comparisons indicate that more operators in the South than in any other region make use of soil-conservation practices. In this region a higher proportion of part owners than of other tenure groups reported using cover crops, contouring, and terracing.

Land in soil-conservation practices.—Nearly 9 million acres of farmland in 1959 were devoted to cover crops. Approximately 50 percent of this acreage was reported in the North Central region, and 40 percent was reported in the South. Part owners reported 3.7 million acres, compared with 3.3 million acres reported by full owners and 1.8 million acres reported by tenants. Full owners reported a greater proportion of their cropland in cover crops than did any other tenure group.

Contour cultivation of grain and row crops is a relatively easy operation and is used widely where soil erosion is a problem on moderately rolling land. Approximately 22.3 million acres were farmed on the contour in 1959. Part owners reported 42.5 percent of the contoured acreage followed by full owners and tenants with 30.2 percent and 26.1 percent, respectively. The nominal expense of contour cultivation is generally compensated by higher yields and greater returns in the first year.

Stripcropping was practiced on 16.1 million acres in 1959. Much of this acreage was reported by wheat farmers in North Dakota and Montana. Part-owner operations are the dominant