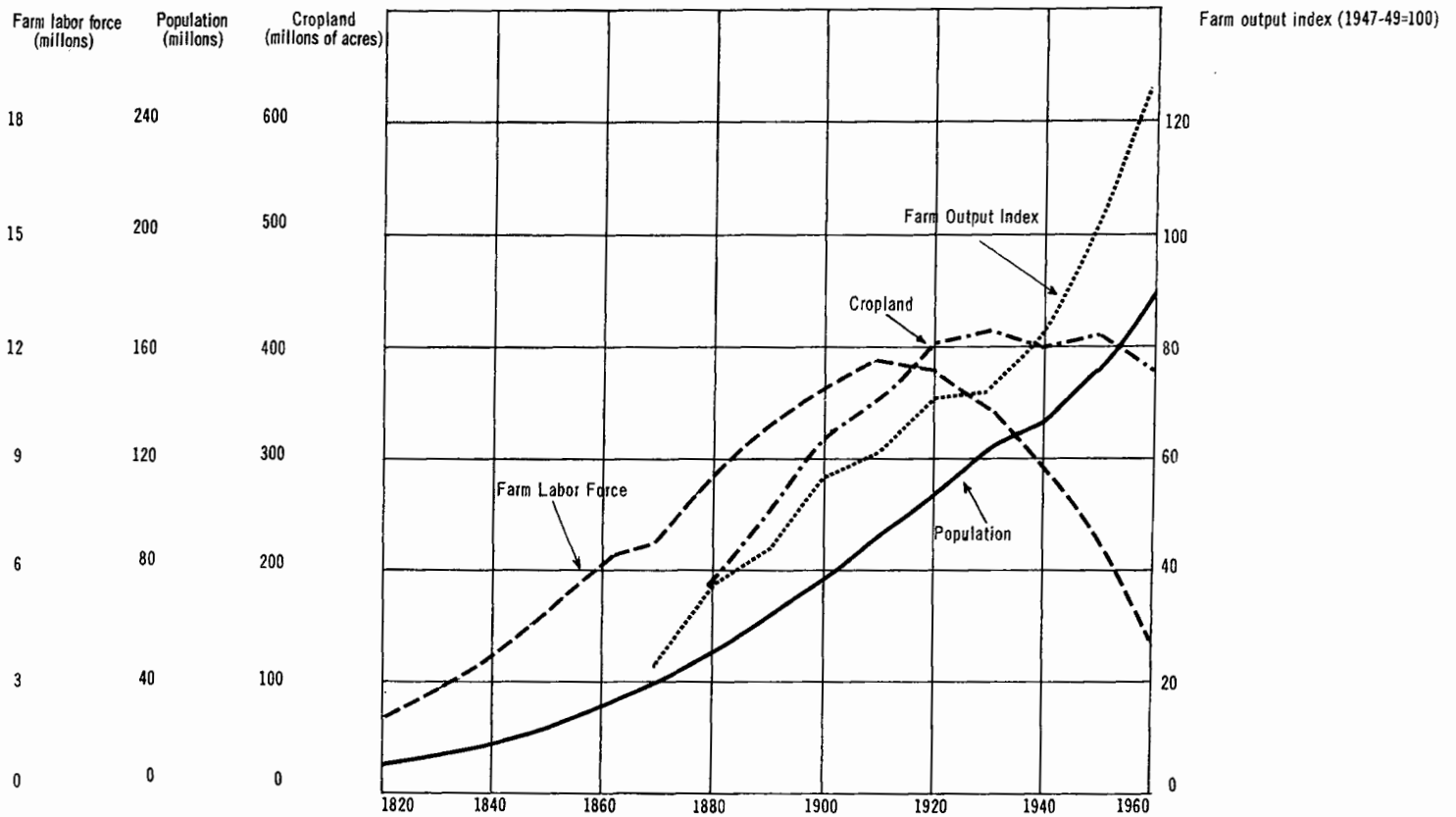


TRENDS IN POPULATION, FARM LABOR FORCE, AND FARM OUTPUT IN THE UNITED STATES: 1820 TO 1959



FARM LABOR FORCE

The declining percentage of the labor force engaged in agricultural pursuits may be an indication of increasing specialization in agricultural production. An indication of this is the shift in the production of farm supplies and equipment and the performance of farm services from farmworkers to nonagricultural workers. Much of the work required in the processing, transportation, and distribution of farm products formerly done by "agricultural" workers is now performed by "nonagricultural" workers. In 1820, the farm labor force represented over 70 percent of persons employed in all occupations. In 1960, only 6 percent of the labor force was engaged in agricultural pursuits. In 1960, the farm labor force represented only 2.3 percent of the total population.

Farm operators and unpaid members of their families comprised 75 percent of the 6.3 million persons working on farms the week preceding the census in 1959. Farm operators working one or more hours totaled 3.0 million, or 48.1 percent of the total; unpaid family workers working 15 hours or more during the week preceding the census numbered 1.7 million, or 26.9 percent of the total; and hired workers amounted to 1.6 million, or 25.0 percent of the total. Farm operators made up the only farm labor on 1.6 million, or 44 percent, of all farms and the operator and/or members of his family comprised the farm labor force the week preceding the census on 2.6 million, or 70.9 percent of all farms. Hired workers were employed on only 547,611 farms. Of these, 62,140 farms with five or more hired workers had over half of all the hired workers on all farms.

Farm operators.—Farm operators comprised the largest of the three major groups of farmworkers in 1959. Of the 3.7 million farm operators, only 3.0 million worked one or more hours on the farm operated during the week preceding the census. A total of 660,612 did not work one or more hours on the farm operated during the week preceding the census. These 660,612 were operators who worked at other jobs; farm operators on part-retire-

ment farms where no farmwork was required during the selected week; and farm operators on certain types of farms such as fruit farms, vegetable farms, wheat farms, etc. where the kinds of agricultural operations did not require farm labor during the specified week.

Unpaid family workers.—The second largest group of farmworkers is the 1.7 million unpaid members of farm operators' families working 15 or more hours on the farm. Most unpaid members of farm operators' families working on farms are wives and older children under 25 years of age. The number of these workers varies greatly by season and is twice as large during the summer as during the winter.

FARM LABOR—NUMBER OF UNPAID FAMILY AND HIRED WORKERS: 1939 TO 1959

