



### PRINCIPAL CROPLAND AREAS

Cropland is the major source of America's food and fiber production. The distribution of the major crop-producing areas of the country is therefore of considerable importance in understanding the Nation's agricultural economy.

In order that the distribution of cropland acreage shown in the map of "Principal Cropland Areas" may be better understood, a brief tabulation of acreages of cropland and the percentages of total land area occupied by all cropland is given here by farm production regions used by the Economic Research Service in studies of American agriculture.

THE MAJOR USES OF CROPLAND, AND ALL CROPLAND AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LAND AREA, BY FARM PRODUCTION REGIONS, 1959<sup>1</sup>

Region	Cropland used for crops	Cropland used for soil improvement, crops and idle	Cropland used only for pasture	Total cropland	Total cropland as percentage of total land area
	1,000 acres	1,000 acres	1,000 acres	1,000 acres	Percent
Northeast.....	15, 189	2, 567	3, 217	20, 973	19
Lake States.....	36, 668	4, 170	4, 657	45, 495	37
Corn Belt.....	78, 814	3, 454	12, 822	95, 090	58
Northern Plains.....	90, 199	6, 160	4, 695	101, 054	52
Appalachian.....	17, 431	3, 061	9, 498	29, 990	24
Southeast.....	14, 566	2, 208	4, 297	21, 071	17
Delta States.....	13, 070	1, 806	5, 932	20, 808	22
Southern Plains.....	37, 651	5, 479	10, 786	53, 916	26
Mountain.....	34, 404	3, 710	4, 838	42, 952	8
Pacific.....	20, 464	971	4, 699	26, 134	13
48 conterminous States.....	358, 456	33, 586	65, 441	457, 483	24
Alaska.....	16	4	4	24	(?)
Hawaii.....	320	13	167	500	12
United States (50 States).....	358, 792	33, 603	65, 612	458, 007	20

<sup>1</sup> The cropland acreage reported by the Bureau of the Census was revised upward slightly by the Economic Research Service to compensate for some under-enumeration.  
<sup>2</sup> Less than 0.05 percent.

From this tabulation it may be seen that the Corn Belt and Northern Plains States have the highest proportion of the total land areas in crops of any of the farm production regions. The acreage of cropland in these two regions accounts for 43 percent of the total cropland of the country (50 States), yet the nine States which comprise these two regions have only 16 percent of the total land area. In contrast, the 13 Western States (Mountain and Pacific regions, Alaska, and Hawaii) have 50 percent of the total land area but only 15 percent of the cropland.

In addition to this major concentration of cropland in the north central part of the United States, in other smaller but highly significant areas a high proportion of the total land area is used as cropland. In the Northeast, the Aroostook area in Maine, the southern shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, and the rolling lands of southeastern Pennsylvania are worthy of note. In the Southern States, parts of the lower Mississippi Valley and the Blacklands of east Texas, the High Plains of west Texas, and western Oklahoma have a heavy concentration of cropland. In the Western States, the nonirrigated wheat-producing areas of north-central Montana and of the Columbia Plateau, the Willamette Valley of Oregon, the Central Valley of California, and many smaller irrigated areas have important concentrations of productive cropland.

On the other hand, there are large parts of the United States that have practically no cropland. This is particularly evident in the Western States where the availability of water is vital to the use of land for crop production. In Alaska very little development of agriculture has taken place yet, and cropland for the whole State totals 24,000 acres of the 365 million acres of land in that State. Coldness will be a major limiting condition in using much of northern and central Alaska in the near future for crop production. In Hawaii, topography is a major limitation to the expansion of the cropland acreage.