



Geographic distribution of tenure groups.—Full-owner farms, which constitute 57.1 percent of all farms in the United States, are quite uniformly distributed across the Nation. There is some concentration, however, in the southern Appalachian area and in the eastern portion of the North Central region. Farm operators working off their farms 100 or more days are also concentrated in these areas. This indicates that many of the full-owner farms in these areas may also be classified as part-time farms. The operators of some of these farms may view their farms primarily as residences and rely on nonfarm jobs for the major source of their income.

Part-owner farms are also uniformly distributed. Farm units containing both owned and rented land are generally larger than either full-owner or tenant farms. They are generally created in either of two ways: (1) Full owners become part owners by renting additional land, or (2) tenants become part owners by purchasing a portion of the land they operate.

The South and the North Central region account for 92 percent of all tenant farms—50 percent of them in the South and 42 percent in the North Central region. In the South, tenancy is most common on the small cotton- and tobacco-growing farms, where the amount of hand labor required per acre is high. Tenants are also numerous in areas of high land productivity and high land value, as in northern Illinois, northern Iowa, and the eastern edge of the Great Plains.

FARM TENANCY

The proportion of farms operated by tenants in the United States climbed steadily from 25.6 percent in 1880 to a high of 42.4 percent in 1930. After 1930 the percentage of tenant farms declined rapidly, especially in the forties and the fifties. By 1959 only 19.8 percent of all farms were operated by tenants.

Tenant farms have always been most heavily concentrated in the cotton- and tobacco-producing areas of the South, primarily as a result of the large number of small sharecropper farms associated with the production of these two crops. But as the production of cotton and tobacco has become more mechanized and less labor-intensive, farms have grown in size and decreased in number. With the disappearance of many small sharecropper farms, tenancy in the South has dropped sharply since 1935.

The North Central region also has had a relatively high proportion of tenancy over the years. The highly productive cash-grain areas of east-central Illinois and northwest Iowa represent areas of high tenancy in this region. Tenancy rates have not declined as much in the North Central region as in the South since 1935. If the present trends continue, the North Central region will soon surpass the South as the region with the highest proportion of tenancy.

Tenancy has been lower and relatively more stable in the Northeast and in the West over the years than in the South and the North Central region. In 1959 only one out of 16 farms in