

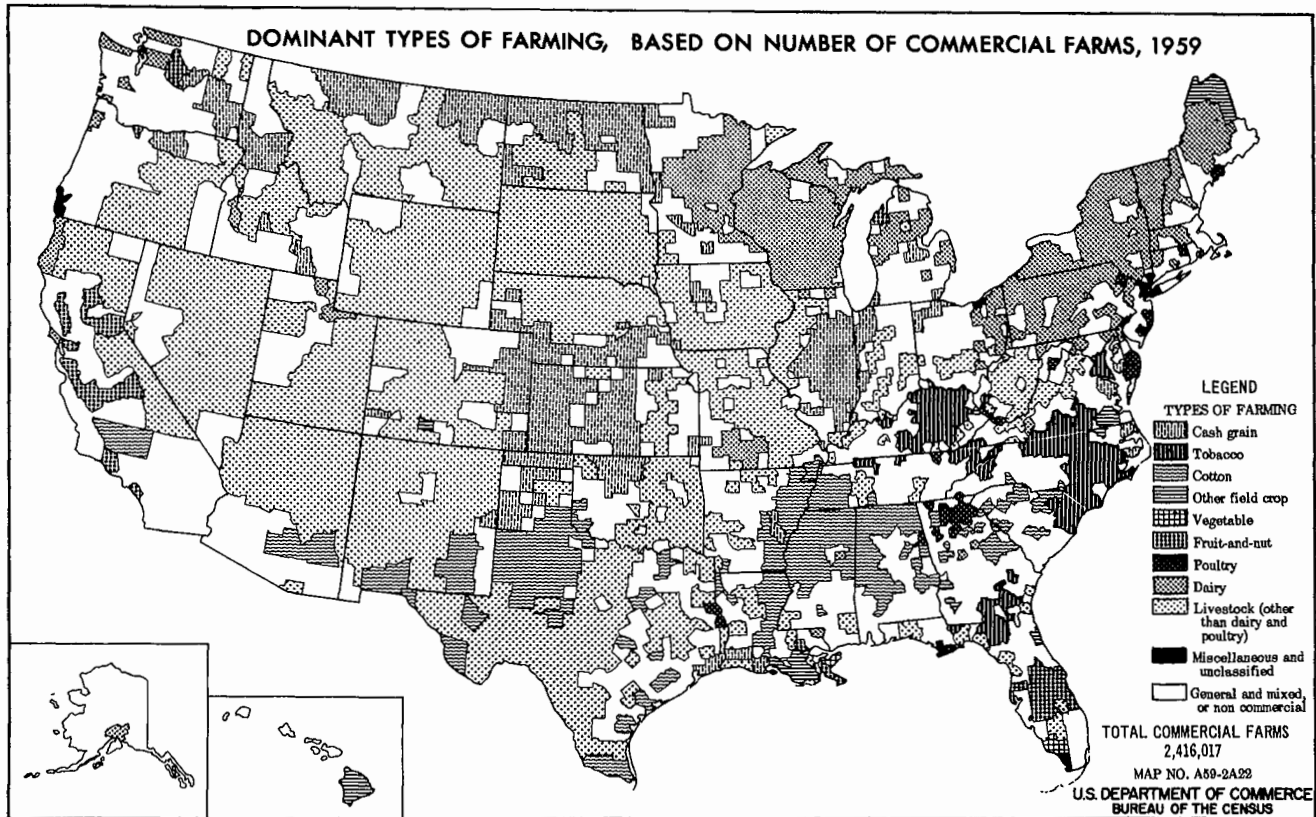
A GRAPHIC SUMMARY

TYPE OF FARMING

The type of agricultural production that develops in particular areas is influenced by such physical factors as rainfall, availability of irrigation water, temperature, soil, and topography. The low rainfall and lack of widespread irrigation facilities in the Rocky Mountain States and Great Plains are largely responsible for the dominance of wheat production on the arable land and grazing on land less suited to crop production. Wide variations in temperatures from north to south have caused short-season vegetable crops to be grown in Alaska and citrus fruits to be

grown in the subtropical areas of the southern United States. Soils differ widely across the United States from the relatively infertile sandy soils of the Southwest to the rich alluvial soils of the Mississippi Delta.

Economic factors such as population migration, transportation facilities, consumer preference for commodities, and costs of production also influence type of farming. Changes in these economic factors help to explain changes over time in the type of production in particular areas.



Types of farms.—In the 1959 census, farms were classified by type on the basis of the sales of a particular farm product or group of farm products that accounted for 50 percent or more of the total value of all farm products sold. If the sales from one farm product group did not represent 50 percent of the total farm sales, the farm was classified as “general.”

Cash-grain farms were located in east-central Illinois, the northern and south-central area of the Great Plains, west-central Idaho, and southeast Washington. The 398,047 commercial grain farms were about evenly divided among tenure groups—full owners operated 30.3 percent, part owners 37.6 percent, and tenants 31.9 percent.

Tobacco farms have traditionally been associated with share-cropper operations, but in recent years full owners have become more important. Of the 190,057 commercial tobacco farms, tenants operated 40.8 percent, full owners 35.3 percent, and part owners 28.8 percent.

Cotton farms have become greatly mechanized in the past decade. As a result, the number of small cotton farms in the South has been greatly reduced and much of the production of cotton has been shifted to the irrigated areas of the Southwest. In spite of a decline in the number of commercial cotton farms from 1950 to 1959, the proportion of tenant-operated cotton farms remained quite high. In 1959, 52.5 percent of the cotton farms were tenant-operated, 23.2 percent were operated by full owners, and 23.9 percent by part owners.

Other field-crop farms such as potato, peanut, coffee, sugarcane, and sugar beet farms, predominate in relatively small localized areas. Potato farms predominate in northern Maine, peanut farms in southeast Virginia and southwest Georgia, and sugarcane farms in the lower delta area of Louisiana and in Hawaii. Peanut farms are associated with a higher proportion of tenancy, while potato, sugarcane, and sugar beet farms are operated to a greater extent by owners. The variety of these crops creates a mixed tenure pattern. In 1959 full owners and part owners each operated about 35 percent of these farms, and tenants operated nearly 30 percent.

Vegetable farms generally involve intensively operated low-acreage farms that require a high degree of supervision and management. Therefore, most of these farms are operated by owners. Of the 21,912 commercial vegetable farms reported in 1959, full owners operated 44.9 percent, part owners operated 36.0 percent, and tenants operated only 17.6 percent.

Fruit-and-nut farms are another group of specialty farms that require a large amount of close supervision. In addition, a long waiting period is involved between tree planting and the first harvest. For these reasons fruit-and-nut farms are not well adapted to tenant operation. In 1959 only 5.3 percent of these farms were operated by tenants compared with 76.1 percent operated by full owners and 14.9 percent by part owners. Manager-