

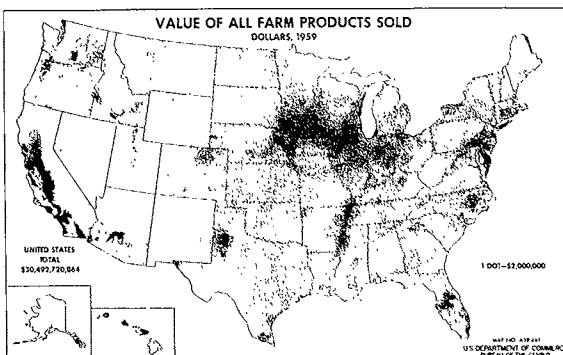
Section 3.—AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Agricultural production involves many types of products. It includes food for human consumption from plants and livestock, fiber for clothing and other uses, forest products, oil crops, products used as inputs for further agricultural production such as hay and feed, grains for livestock, and products used in nonagricultural production. The wide range of climate and agricultural resources in the United States make possible a wide diversity of agricultural products. Rainfall, length of growing season, terrain, kind of soil, distance to market, bulk of product, availability of processing facilities, price, etc., influence the kinds of farm products produced in each area. Some agricultural products are grown widely throughout the United States on all sizes, types, and classes of farms. Other products are grown on specialized farms. Some crops require rather precise soil and climatic conditions. Also, the relative importance of various products in American agriculture has changed over time. This section of the Graphic Summary of Agricultural Resources and Production, 1959, presents briefly the nature and extent of agricultural production in the United States including distribution and trends in production.

In most areas, the small-scale diversified farm is disappearing and agricultural production is being concentrated on a relatively small number of highly specialized farms. A relatively large number of farms producing most farm products discontinued production or ceased operation during the last decade. During the period 1954-59, there were large-scale reductions in the number of farms producing various farm products—cotton, 41 percent; corn for grain, 22 percent; tobacco, 19 percent; vegetables for sale, 35 percent; land in fruit orchards and vineyards, 35 percent; apples, 43 percent; dairy products sold, 31 percent; chicken eggs sold, 37 percent; and hogs sold, 11 percent. On the other hand, in 1959, a large part of the production of many farm products was concentrated on a relatively small proportion of the 3.7 million farms. For example, 20,000 farms produced over 16 percent of all farm products sold, 4,700 farms raised 88 percent of all the turkeys going to market, 34,000 farms produced one-fourth of all the whole milk sold, 12,000 farms produced four-fifths of the Irish potato crop, 29,000 farms produced almost three-fifths of the cotton crop, 5,300 farms produced over three-fifths of all vegetables sold, and 15,000 fruit-and-nut farms produced over three-fifths of all fruits and nuts marketed.

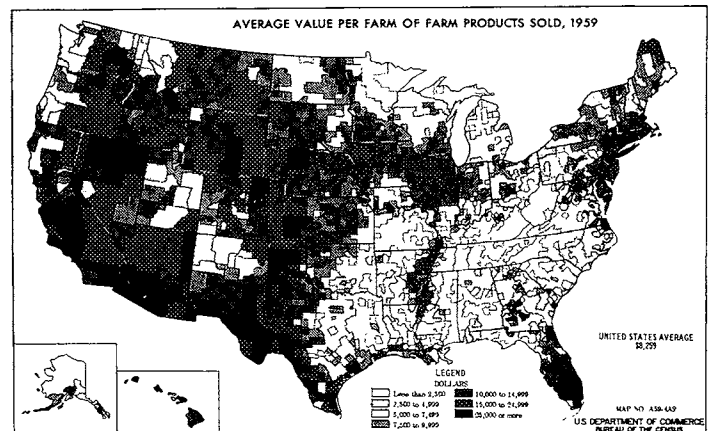
ALL PRODUCTS

The value of all farm products sold for the conterminous United States totaled \$30.3 billion in 1959. This was an increase of \$5.7 billion from 1954. Livestock and livestock products made up 56.1 percent of all farm products sold in 1959 compared with 49.9 percent in 1954.



The value of farm products sold provides an overall measure of total farm production. A large part of the total value of all products sold came generally from the Corn Belt in the North Central divisions although there were other important areas. California accounted for 9.3 percent of the total value of all farm products sold in the United States in 1959 and ranked first among all other States. Iowa ranked second with 7.5 percent.

The average value of all farm products sold per farm in the conterminous United States in 1959 was \$8,191. This is up 58.9 percent from 1954 when it was \$5,153.



The average value of farm products sold per acre of all land in farms is highest in those areas with inherently fertile soils and where a high proportion of the land in farms is used as cropland. Such areas include the Corn Belt and the Lower Mississippi Valley. Other areas with high average values are those in which high-value crops make up an important part of the farm products sold. Areas in which average values of farm products sold per acre are low are most extensive in the West, where large acreages of pasture and grazing land are needed for livestock production. In the eastern States, rough topography and poor soils are commonly associated with a low value of production per acre in numerous areas.

