

products sold. Commercial farms in 1954 included 763,348 farms with sales of \$1,200 to \$2,499, and 462,427 farms with sales of farm products of \$250 to \$1,199. Other farms included 878,136 farms with value of farm products of less than \$250, and 574,575 farms with the sales of farm products of \$250 to \$1,199, and the farm operator working off the farm 100 days or more or with the farm operator reporting that the income of his family from off-the-farm sources exceeded the value of farm products sold.

Table 2.—SPECIFIED FARM AND FARM-OPERATOR CHARACTERISTICS, BY ECONOMIC CLASS AND TYPE, FOR COMMERCIAL AND OTHER¹ FARMS FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1959

[Data for conterminous United States are based on reports for only a sample of farms. See text.]

Economic class and type of farm ²	Percent distribution of all farms	Percent distribution of value of agricultural products sold	Average age of operator (years)	Percent of farm operators residing on farm operated ³	Percent of farm operators working off-farm 100 days or more	Percent of farm operators reporting other income exceeding value of agricultural products sold
Total farms.....	100.0	100.0	50.5	92.8	29.9	35.8
Total commercial farms...	65.2	96.2	48.6	92.6	14.5	12.5
Class I.....	2.8	31.5	46.5	82.1	9.5	5.7
Class II.....	5.7	18.4	46.1	90.7	9.0	5.9
Class III.....	13.0	21.9	46.3	93.5	10.4	6.9
Class IV.....	17.6	15.4	48.4	93.5	16.2	12.6
Class V.....	16.7	7.4	50.9	92.4	26.7	27.3
Class VI.....	9.4	1.5	50.3	94.3
All other farms ²	34.8	3.8	54.2	93.3	58.6	79.4
Commercial farms by type.....	100.0	100.0	48.6	92.6	14.5	12.5
Cash-grain.....	16.5	15.0	47.6	87.8	15.1	10.8
Tobacco.....	7.9	3.0	47.0	94.8	8.3	7.0
Cotton.....	10.0	8.3	47.7	92.0	9.0	6.8
Other field-crop.....	1.6	2.7	46.9	90.1	11.7	8.7
Vegetable.....	0.9	2.2	49.0	86.1	15.1	12.7
Fruit-and-nut.....	2.5	4.5	52.9	83.6	27.2	26.1
Poultry.....	4.3	6.8	49.9	96.3	28.8	29.9
Dairy.....	17.7	15.7	47.9	97.6	12.8	8.7
Livestock farms other than poultry and dairy farms and livestock ranches....	25.5	27.4	49.4	93.5	15.4	15.0
Livestock ranches.....	2.8	4.8	52.5	78.4	24.6	23.7
General.....	8.8	7.0	48.6	95.5	11.4	10.1
Miscellaneous.....	1.5	2.5	51.9	84.1	22.0	24.8

¹Part-time, part-retirement, and abnormal.

²See text and Chapters XI and XII for definitions.

³Percent calculated on the basis of farm operators reporting as to residence.

The data for commercial and other farms for 1959 and 1954 are not comparable because of differences in the classification of farms with sales of farm products of less than \$2,500 and the change in the definition of a farm. If the 1959 classification of farms by economic class had been used for 1954, the number of commercial farms would have been reduced by approximately 400,000 and the number of other farms increased by a corresponding amount. Approximately three-fourths of these 400,000 farms were farms with sales of farm products of \$1,200 to \$2,499.

The change in definition of a farm for 1959 also affected the comparability of data for 1959 and 1954. Of the 232,000 places not qualifying as farms in 1959 but qualifying as farms in accordance with the 1954 definition, more than 200,000 would have been classified as other farms in both 1959 and 1954, and, therefore, 200,000 or more of the change in the number of other farms from 1954 to 1959 was the result of a change in definition.

Data presented in tables 8, 11, 12, and 18 for farms classified as commercial and other farms, should not be used for making comparisons between 1959 and 1954. The data for commercial and other farms are useful only for analyzing the characteristics of all farms classified by age of operator, days of off-farm work, years on farm, residence, etc., for each census.

Croppers.—Croppers are tenants whose landlords furnished all the workpower. The landlords either furnished all of the work animals or furnished tractor power in lieu of work animals. Traditionally, a cropper provides his own labor and sometimes that of his family, shares in the risk of production, and receives a share of the crop in return for his labor. Croppers generally work under close supervision of the landowners or their agents and the land assigned to them is often a part of a larger enterprise operated as a single unit. As the cropper system is most prevalent in the South, data for croppers in this chapter relate only to the 16 Southern States.

Age of Operator.—Farm operators were distributed by age into one of six groups: Under 25, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 or more years. The average age of operators in 1959 was calculated by dividing the sum of the years of age for operators reporting age by the total number of operators reporting age. All data for age for 1959, except for Alaska and Hawaii, are estimates based on a sample of farms.

A distribution of farm operators by age by color and tenure has been made for each decennial census, beginning with 1910, and for the mid-decennial censuses of 1945 and 1954. No data on age of operator were obtained in the censuses of 1925 and 1935. The censuses of population for 1890 and 1900 included a classification of heads of families occupying farm homes, by age groups. Although the data for 1890 and 1900 are on a slightly different basis, the data on age distribution by tenure of operator are reasonably comparable with those for other censuses. The inquiry in 1959 was, "How old were you on your last birthday?" Although the number of farm operators in each age group has decreased since 1954, the data show important changes in the average age of operator and in the proportions of operators reporting in the different age groups.

In 1959, the average age of farm operator for the States of the conterminous United States was 50.5 years as compared to 49.6 years in 1954, and 48.3 years in 1950. For the 3 regions, farm operators in the South had the highest average age, 51.5 years, in 1959.

For the United States, the proportion of farm operators in the age group 65 years or more, increased from 16.6 percent in 1954, to 16.8 percent in 1959. During the same period the proportion of farm operators under 35 years of age decreased from 15.1 percent to 12.7 percent. Two of every three farm operators are now 45 years of age or older. Changes in the definition of a farm in 1959 account for some of the changes in the distribution of farm operators by age, particularly in the older age groups, as the operators of places not counted as farms in 1959 because of the change of definition of a farm included a large proportion of older operators.

The proportion of tenants under 45 years of age and those 65 years or older has decreased since 1954. Fewer young people are moving into farming through the tenant system and it appears that many tenant operators 65 years of age or older have discontinued farming. Operators of farms with higher total sales of farm products are younger than the operators of farms in the groups having lower total value of farm products sold.