

Tenants operated approximately one-seventh of all the land in farms in the United States in 1959. Approximately 70 percent of the tenant-operated land was rented under a share arrangement—crop-share, share-cash, cropper, and livestock-share. The proportion of tenant-operated land rented under share arrangements in 1959 was approximately the same as in 1950.

From 1900 to 1940, farms operated by part owners comprised about one-tenth of all farms. By 1959, the proportion of farms operated by part owners had increased to 22.5 percent. The proportion of farms operated by part owners is highest in the Great Plains.

Croppers operated only 5 million acres in 1959, and land in cropper-operated farms comprised only 3 percent of all land in tenant farms. Land in cropper farms declined more than 9 million acres from 1950 to 1959.

Notwithstanding the decrease in tenancy throughout the Nation there was relatively little change in the proportion of farm operators operating leased lands or in the acres of land operated under some form of lease arrangement. Increases in owner-operators who also operated land rented from others largely offset decreases in the land operated by tenants. From 1945 to 1959, the proportion of farm operators operating some leased lands remained at approximately 42 percent, and the proportion of all land under lease at about 35 percent. These percentages represent declines from a high of 53 percent in 1930 for farm operators operating land under lease and a high of 45 percent in 1935 for the proportion of all land operated under lease.

Tenure Changes Associated With Changes in Farm Definition.—The 232,059 places omitted from the 1959 census that would have qualified for inclusion under the 1954 and 1950 definition, accounted for about one-fifth of the decrease (4.9 of a 22.5 percent

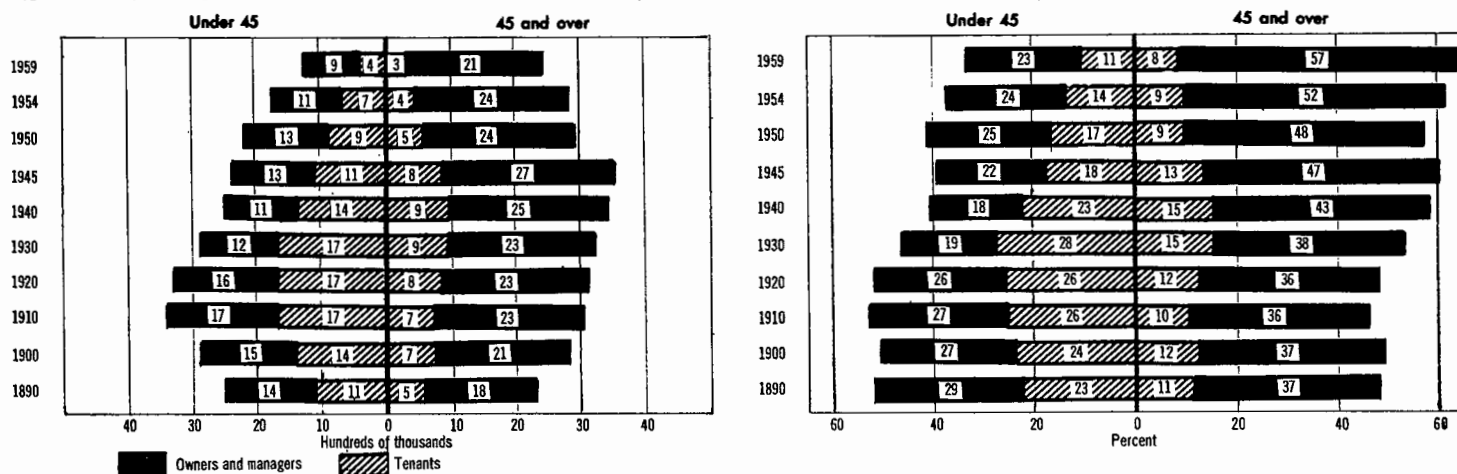
decrease) in the total number of farms between 1954 and 1959. Of the places eliminated by change in definition, 83.1 percent were occupied by full owners, 3.7 percent by part owners and managers, and 13.2 percent by tenants. Change in definition accounted for nearly one-third (30.7 percent) of the decrease in number of full owners between 1954 and 1959 but only one-fourteenth (7.4 percent) of the decrease in number of tenants.

The change in definition for 1954 and 1950 resulted in an estimated 150,000 to 170,000 fewer farms in 1950 than would have been included had the 1945 definition been continued. These places eliminated by the change in definition in 1950 likewise would have been predominantly owner-operated.

Thus, somewhat greater relative decreases in tenancy would have been expected had there been no changes in definition for 1950 or for 1959.

Tenure Changes Associated With Off-Farm Migration.—New and improved farm machines and equipment and improved techniques in agriculture have made possible the maintenance of a high level of agricultural production with a decreasing number of farm workers. With fewer persons needed in agriculture the number of farm operators has been decreasing at a rapid rate. For every 11 farms in 1935 there were only 6 in 1959. Of the five farms that disappeared, less than one can be attributed to change in definition. Persons have been leaving the farm in increasingly large numbers. The population census shows, that for many areas, especially in the South, employed persons with major industry represented by agriculture in 1960 were less than half as numerous as in 1950. Nearly three of the loss of five farm operators since 1935 was within this 10-year span with the major part of the decrease occurring during the latter half of the decade.

NUMBER AND PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF FARM OPERATORS, BY AGE AND TENURE OF OPERATOR, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1890 TO 1959



Tenure changes reflect the decreasing proportions of farm operators in the younger age groups. Comparisons from census to census of farm operators born within specified periods indicate that persons who become farm operators generally do so before age 45. Up to and including the age group 35 to 44, the number of farm operators increases in each age classification. Beyond this age grouping, the number of farm operators tends to decrease. For the past 50 years each census has shown fewer and fewer farm operators under 45 years of age. The decrease in

the number of farm operators under 45 has been very rapid since 1945. Approximately half of the decrease in number of farms between 1954 and 1959 represented a decrease in farms with operators under 45 years. In 1959 the number of farm operators under 45 was 40.7 percent less than in 1950, while those over 45 decreased by only 17.4 percent. In the South the number of farm operators under 45 were less than half (down 52.1 percent) the number in 1950 while those over 45 decreased by less than one-fifth.