

The capacity of farm workers to produce has been directly related to the development and use of new and improved items of farm equipment and facilities. The productive capacity of the farm worker apparently changed very little between 1820 and 1850 during which time he produced farm products, on the average, for fewer than 5 persons at home and abroad (see table 1). New inventions and resultant new equipment began to appear on the farm after 1850 and the farm worker was able to produce farm products for an increasing number of persons. By the turn of the twentieth century, he was producing for almost 7 persons. More than 8 persons were being provided food and other farm products by a farm worker in 1920; by 1930, the number had increased to almost 10. The productive capacity of the farm worker increased moderately to 1940 when there were almost 11 persons supported, and with a rapid increase occurring during and immediately following World War II, there were nearly 15 persons at home and abroad supplied in 1950 by a farm worker. Further phenomenal increases occurred between 1950 and 1959. In 1954 a farm worker produced enough for 18 persons while in 1959 one farm worker was producing for 24 persons at home and abroad.¹ More than 46 percent of the increase in productivity of farm workers over the 140-year period came during the last decade. In connection with this recognition of the improved technology and increased specialization which have enabled farmers to provide increasing quantities of farm products with a decreasing number of farm workers it should be noted that the decrease in the number of workers on the farm has been accompanied by an almost equal increase in the off-the-farm employment in the farm equipment and supplies industry. Approximately 23 million employed workers are involved in some

way with agriculture on and off the farm and include the 7 million workers on farms as well as over 6 million who develop, manufacture, and sell farm supplies, and provide services in connection therewith; and another 10 million who serve to assemble, transport, process, and distribute farm products.

Table 1.—TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT, TOTAL POPULATION, AND PERSONS SUPPLIED WITH FARM PRODUCTS PER FARM WORKER, FOR THE CONTERMINOUS UNITED STATES: 1820 TO 1959

Year	Total farm employment (millions)	Total United States population July 1 (millions)	Persons supplied with farm products per farm worker ¹			
			Total		At home	Abroad
			Persons	Percent change from previous period		
1959 ²	7.4	177.1	23.69	28	21.06	2.63
1954.....	8.6	162.4	18.50	27	16.61	1.89
1950.....	9.9	151.7	14.56	35	12.87	1.69
1940.....	11.0	132.1	10.81	11	10.45	0.36
1930.....	12.5	123.1	9.75	18	8.77	0.98
1920.....	13.4	106.5	8.27	17	6.84	1.43
1910.....	13.6	92.4	7.07	2	6.05	1.02
1900.....	12.8	76.1	6.95	20	5.23	1.72
1890.....	11.7	63.1	5.77	4	4.69	1.08
1880.....	10.1	50.3	5.57	8	4.48	1.09
1870.....	8.0	39.9	5.14	13	4.64	0.50
1860.....	7.3	31.5	4.53	8	4.06	0.47
1850.....	5.7	23.3	4.18	6	3.97	0.21
1840.....	4.4	17.1	3.95	-1	3.72	0.23
1830.....	3.3	12.9	4.00	-3	3.76	0.24
1820.....	2.4	9.6	4.12	...	3.84	0.28

¹ 1820 to 1940: *Agricultural Statistics 1954*; Table 646, p. 460. 1950 to 1959: *Agricultural Statistics 1960*; Table 669, p. 466.

²Total persons supplied with agricultural products from United States farm production divided by farm employment.
³Preliminary.

TRENDS IN POPULATION, FARM LABOR FORCE, AND FARM OUTPUT IN THE UNITED STATES: 1820 TO 1959

