

Table 5.—MAJOR USES OF LAND IN THE UNITED STATES: 1890 TO 1959

[Figures for regions, divisions, and States in Table 13]

Item	1959	1954 ¹	1950	1945 ¹	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900	1890 ¹
Approximate land area ²acres...	2,271,343,360	1,903,824,640	2,273,406,080	1,905,361,920	2,274,943,360	2,272,798,720	2,272,824,320	2,272,898,560	2,273,070,720	1,903,337,600
Land in farms.....acres...	1,123,507,574	1,158,191,511	1,161,419,720	1,141,615,364	1,065,113,774	990,111,984	958,676,612	881,431,469	841,201,546	623,218,619
Land not in farms.....acres...	1,147,835,786	745,633,129	1,111,986,360	763,746,556	1,209,829,586	1,282,686,736	1,314,147,708	1,391,467,091	1,431,869,174	1,280,118,981
Proportion of total land area.....percent...	50.5	39.2	48.9	40.1	53.2	56.4	57.8	61.2	63.0	67.3
Grazing land ³acres...	327,803,000	4352,639,000	3402,150,000	6428,129,000	1504,000,000	1578,000,000	1661,000,000	1739,000,000	1768,000,000	NA
Woodland and forest land not grazed ⁴acres...	428,893,000	238,310,000	334,804,000	185,733,000	1219,000,000	1208,000,000	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other land ⁵acres...	391,140,000	154,684,000	375,033,000	149,885,000	1121,000,000	1132,000,000	NA	NA	NA	NA
Land used for agriculture, total ⁷acres...	1,451,310,574	1,510,830,511	1,563,569,720	1,569,744,000	1,565,000,000	1,565,000,000	1,617,000,000	1,618,000,000	1,607,000,000	NA
Proportion of total land area.....percent...	63.9	79.4	68.8	82.4	82.1	82.2	85.0	85.0	84.4	NA
Cropland other than used only for pasture.....acres...	382,570,743	393,579,123	408,827,289	403,245,042	1398,751,103	1415,334,931	1402,000,000	1347,000,000	1319,000,000	248,000,000
Proportion of total land area.....percent...	16.8	20.7	18.0	21.2	20.9	21.8	21.1	18.2	16.8	13.0
Land used for pasture and grazing.....acres...	952,112,623	999,740,000	1,023,573,813	1,051,670,000	1,065,000,000	1,042,000,000	1,066,000,000	1,121,000,000	1,131,000,000	NA
Proportion of total land area.....percent...	41.9	52.5	45.0	55.2	55.9	54.7	56.0	58.9	59.4	NA
Land used for agriculture and forestry ⁸acres...	1,880,203,574	1,749,140,511	1,898,373,720	1,755,477,000	1,784,000,000	1,773,000,000	1,777,000,000	1,780,000,000	1,782,000,000	NA
Proportion of total land area.....percent...	82.8	91.9	83.5	92.1	93.6	93.2	93.4	93.5	93.6	NA

NA Not available.
¹Data for Alaska and Hawaii not included.
²Changes in land area represent changes in boundaries, changes due to the construction of reservoirs, to drainage of lakes and swamps, etc., except for 1940 when a complete remeasurement of the United States was made.
³Estimates of Economic Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Grazing land not in farms consists of land used chiefly for grazing and includes open or nonforested grazing land, idle grassland in first decades, forest and woodland and shrub and brush grazing land in all years.
⁴Includes some public and private land usable for grazing which is not necessarily grazed every year, but excludes areas of grass and other forage of value for grazing in military reservations, national parks, natural wild life areas, etc., for which permits were not issued for grazing livestock.
⁵In addition to the estimated nonfarm acreage grazed, there were probably 15 to 20 million acres of nonfarm land having some forage value not used for grazing for various reasons.
⁶Includes areas containing forage suitable for grazing (not legally closed to grazing), whether actually grazed or not in 1944.
⁷Land in farms and grazing land not in farms.
⁸Land in farms, grazing land not in farms, and woodland and forests not in farms.

In the period since 1920, there have not been large changes in major land uses. Cropland other than that used for pasture has fluctuated from about 380 to 410 million acres. Land development and improvement through drainage, irrigation, and clearing of forests have counterbalanced reversion of cropland to woodland and the conversion to such nonagricultural uses as cities, highways, parks, airports, etc. Land used for pasture and grazing has declined about 114 million acres. Grazing lands not in farms have become part of the pastureland in farms, as more public lands have been included in farms. (If grazing lands are leased by farm operators, they are included as land in farms; if they are used under permit, they are not included in the Census land in farms.)

Since 1890 all land in farms has increased 500 million acres. Most of this increase resulted from the transfer of grazing lands not in farms to farms. Most of the increase in land in farms since 1890 has occurred in the 17 Western States of the conterminous United States, except for an appreciable increase in Florida during recent censuses. New settlements which continued until about 1920 account for a part of the increase. Since 1920, a half or more of the increase has resulted from the adding of approximately 100 million acres of Federal, State, and Indian reservation land to the area reported as census farms. Most of the remaining net increase occurred in privately owned lands. Changes in method of controlling grazing rights and modifications of census definitions and procedures rather than the expansion of undeveloped lands account for most of the increase of privately owned land in farms.

The decrease of approximately 12 million acres in total cropland between 1954 and 1959, resulted, in part, from the placing of entire farms in the Soil Bank, the conversion of cropland to pastureland, the conversion and reversion of some cropland to woodland and other noncropland uses, and in the abandonment or nonoperation of some farms with their included cropland, and in

the conversion of some cropland to such nonfarm uses as highways, cities, parks, suburban homesites, etc. Much of the decrease occurred in the Great Plains States in the areas where there was a significant reduction in the acreage of wheat and in the Southern and Eastern States, where there were large decreases in the number of farms.

Land in farms in 1959 was 38 million acres or 3.3 percent less than in 1954. About two-thirds of the decrease occurred in the South and resulted largely from the transfer of land in farms to forest land or to lands to be used for forest purposes, the placing of entire farms in the Soil Bank, and the discontinuance of farm operations. About one-third of the decrease in land in farms from 1954 to 1959 was in the North. This decrease resulted largely from the discontinuance of farm operations, the placing of entire farms in the Soil Bank, and the transfer of land in farms to nonfarm uses.

CROPLAND HARVESTED FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1879 TO 1959

