

Problems in Reporting Land Use by Farm Operator.—In reporting land in his farm according to the use made of it during the census year, the farm operator was asked to differentiate between some classes of land for which the dividing line was not always clear and could not always be determined on a uniform basis. Although the wording of the questions, the definitions given, and the instructions were aimed toward clarifying the intent of the inquiries, many decisions were left to the judgment of respondents and enumerators.

Land in fruit orchards, for example, was to be reported as cropland harvested, regardless of whether fruit was harvested. Abandoned orchards were to be reported as idle cropland. At what point an unproductive orchard becomes abandoned was left for the respondent or the census enumerator to decide. Land in permanent pasture could be reported as cropland pastured if the decision was made that the land could be used for crops. Pastureland with scattered trees or brush could be reported either as woodland pastured or as other pasture.

Generally, the use of land was accepted as reported by the farm operator and the census enumerator. Changes were made only when there was an obvious error or additional information elsewhere on the questionnaire indicated the report should be corrected.

Land-Use Classification, 1925 to 1959.—Land-use classes similar to those of 1959 have been used for each census from 1925. The principal modifications have been in the classes relating to cropland pasture.

A comparison of the wording of land-use inquiries in 1959 with their counterparts of previous censuses since 1925 is as follows:

Cropland Harvested.—This inquiry was identical for all censuses compared, except for Alaska and Hawaii for 1929. In 1929, for these two States, cropland harvested consisted of total acreage of crops harvested.

Cropland Used Only for Pasture.—This item was identical for the census years 1949 to 1959 for the States of the conterminous United States. It was modified for 1944 to include the qualification, "that was plowed within the last 7 years," and was designated "plowable pasture" in the years 1925 to 1940. For Alaska and Hawaii, data for this class of land were not obtained for censuses prior to 1950.

Summer Fallow.—A separate inquiry was made for this item for the years 1949 to 1959 for the 17 Western States in the conterminous United States. Summer fallow was included with "Cropland idle or fallow" for the years 1924 to 1944.

Cropland in Soil-Improvement Crops.—The agriculture questionnaire contained a separate inquiry for this item for the first time in 1959. In 1954, it was included with "land on which all crops failed" under the heading, "Cropland used only for crops not harvested and not pastured" for the 31 Eastern States and grouped with "Idle land" and "Land on which all crops failed" under the heading "Other cropland," for the 17 Western States in the conterminous United States. It was included with "other cropland" in 1950. For 1924 to 1944, it was included under the heading, "Idle or fallow," or "Other cropland."

