

The change in irrigated acreage in the 18 States varied considerably by geographic areas. Of the 6.4 million acres net increase from 1949 to 1959, 42.2 percent occurred in the Plains States of Texas and Oklahoma; 29.4 percent in the Northern Plains States of Nebraska, Kansas, North and South Dakota; and 22.8 percent in three Pacific States of California, Washington, and Oregon. In the eight Mountain States, the net increase was only 452,228 acres or 7.1 percent of the total increase in the 18 States. Decreases were reported for Colorado, Nevada, and Utah, and also for Louisiana.

The largest acreage expansion in the 10-year period in any individual State was recorded in Texas with an increase of 2,524,104 acres, or 80.6 percent increase in the irrigated acreage from 1949 to 1959. Nebraska had an increase of 1,201,667 acres, or 137.1 percent, and California an increase of 957,246 acres, or 14.9 percent from 1949 to 1959.

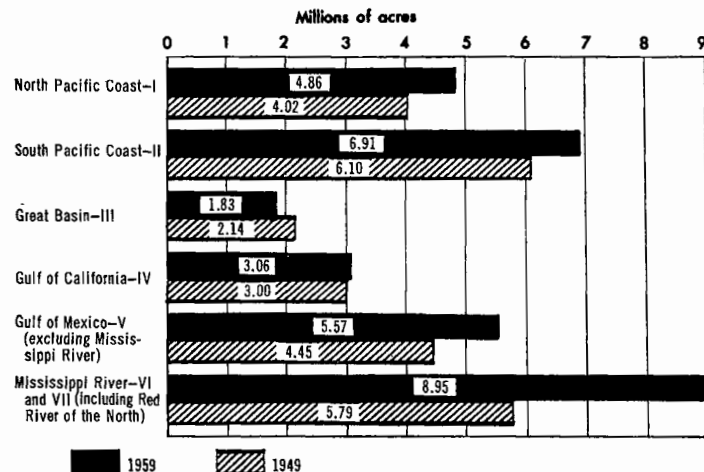
IRRIGATED LAND IN FARMS: 1959, 1954, AND 1949

Area or State	1959 (acres)	1954 (acres)	1949 (acres)
48 conterminous States, total.....	33,021,799	29,552,155	25,787,455
18 specified States, total.....	31,222,967	27,678,507	24,847,341
Northern Plains States.....	3,003,312	1,630,963	1,128,308
North Dakota.....	47,656	37,672	35,294
South Dakota.....	115,629	90,371	78,069
Nebraska.....	2,077,926	1,171,369	876,259
Kansas.....	762,101	331,551	138,686
Southern Plains States.....	5,853,270	4,815,179	3,165,605
Oklahoma.....	197,632	108,151	34,071
Texas.....	5,655,638	4,707,028	3,131,534
Louisiana.....	484,850	707,818	576,775
Mountain States.....	12,094,712	11,207,997	11,642,484
Montana.....	1,874,520	1,890,671	1,716,792
Idaho.....	2,576,580	2,324,571	2,137,237
Wyoming.....	1,469,911	1,262,632	1,431,767
Colorado.....	2,684,757	2,262,921	2,872,348
New Mexico.....	731,835	649,615	655,287
Arizona.....	1,152,450	1,177,407	963,560
Utah.....	1,061,683	1,072,682	1,137,996
Nevada.....	542,976	567,498	727,498
Pacific States (conterminous).....	9,786,823	9,316,550	8,334,169
Washington.....	1,006,969	778,135	589,035
Oregon.....	1,384,284	1,490,366	1,306,810
California.....	7,395,570	7,048,049	6,438,324

For the major drainage basins, the Mississippi River Basin, which includes all the Plains States except for the southern part of Texas, with 8.97 million acres, had the largest irrigated acreage, and its increase of 3.16 million acres over 1950 was the largest in any of the basins. The Great Basin had a small decrease in irrigated acreage from 1949 to 1959.

The different regional trends in the number of acres irrigated have been affected by a number of factors. The increase in

ACREAGE OF IRRIGATED LAND BY MAJOR DRAINAGE BASINS IN THE 17 CONTERMINOUS WESTERN STATES AND LOUISIANA, 1959 AND 1954

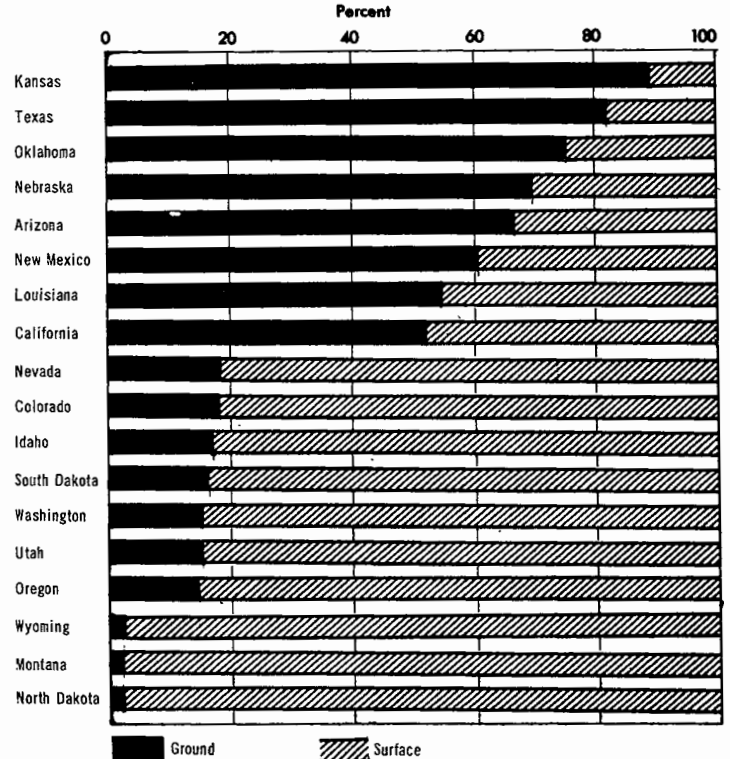


Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas has been largely due to the development of ground-water supplies. In the Northern Plains States, irrigation expansion was in part the result of the development of large-scale public projects. In the Mountain States, ground-water supplies are not as plentiful as in the Plains States and surface-water supplies were more fully developed before 1950. Irrigation growth in the Pacific States has resulted from the availability of both ground- and surface-water supplies and the development of large-scale public irrigation projects. The decrease of irrigated acreage in Louisiana is largely the result of lower rice acreage, while the decrease in irrigated acreage in the Great Basin was largely the result of a water shortage in 1959.

Sources of irrigation water.—According to the 1959 Census of Agriculture, of the total of 31,222,967 acres irrigated in the 18 States, 13,243,912 acres, or 42.4 percent, were irrigated from ground-water sources on the farm; 5,081,250 acres, or 16.3 percent, were irrigated from surface-water sources on the farm; and 12,897,805 acres, or 41.3 percent, were irrigated by water received from irrigation organizations.

The irrigation organizations obtained the major portion of their water from surface-water sources. In the 18 States, the irrigation organizations reported 72,997,259 acre-feet of water were obtained from natural sources. Of this amount, 68,685,789 acre-feet, or 94 percent, was from surface sources.

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ACRES IRRIGATED, BY SOURCE OF WATER, BY STATES: 1959



Arizona, Louisiana, and California are the only States in which the proportion of ground water obtained by irrigation organizations exceeded the average for the 18 States. In Arizona, irrigation organizations obtained 39 percent of the water from ground-water sources; in Louisiana, irrigation organizations obtained 16.4 percent; and in California, irrigation organizations secured 9.6 percent of the total water from ground-water sources.

To determine the total farm acreage irrigated from ground and surface sources, the acreage irrigated by organization water in each drainage basin was divided between ground and surface