

Chapter VI.—LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS

Introduction.—A periodic counting of the principal classes of domestic animals and poultry is essential to provide information on the status and changes in the livestock industry. Likewise, the recording of the number of animals and the quantity of livestock and poultry products sold is important in measuring the relative importance of various producing areas and types and sizes of farms. The national censuses of agriculture, taken at 5-year intervals, are the sources of totals by geographic areas for both inventory numbers and production or sales and for indicating changes.

Age and sex distributions, as obtained by the census, furnish basic data in animal productivity and for the making of projections of anticipated inventories or marketings. This chapter presents information on livestock and livestock products gathered in the 1959 Census of Agriculture. Data from earlier censuses are also given to indicate the situation in earlier years and as a basis for indicating changes when such figures are reasonably comparable with those for 1959. Because of the cyclical nature of livestock inventories, data gathered at 5-year intervals may not, by themselves, indicate the direction of future changes or the full extent of change between various censuses.

Source of Data.—The data represent, in most cases, totals obtained by adding the reports for all farms. However, some data are estimates obtained by tabulating data for reports for only a sample of farms. Headnotes or footnotes to the tables indicate when the figures are estimates based on sample data. (See pages XVIII–XXIII of the Introduction to this volume for a description of the sample and for tables giving the reliability of the estimates based on reports for a sample of farms.) All data for dairy products sold and animals sold alive in 1959, except for Alaska and Hawaii, are based on reports for only a sample of farms.

All data were obtained by means of an agriculture questionnaire filled out for each farm. The inquiries regarding livestock and livestock products were generally the same for all States. The inquiries for each State are shown by the copies of the Composite Agriculture Questionnaire in the appendix of this volume. Inquiries regarding goats, mohair production, and butter churned were the only inquiries not made in all States. In case the table or a total does not include figures for all States, a footnote or headnote for the table so indicates.

Presentation of Statistics.—Statistics are presented for the United States, conterminous United States, three major regions, nine geographic divisions, and for each of the 50 States. Statistics from the 1959 census are presented along with comparable statistics from the censuses of 1954 and 1950. For items of major importance, comparable statistics from all prior censuses are given.

Both inventory and sales data are presented for each major group of animals and poultry to facilitate comparisons. Averages, percentages, and other derived data are provided as aids in using and analyzing the statistics.

Other Published Data.—Generally, all available data for totals for livestock and livestock products are presented in this chapter. Data for selected items of livestock and livestock products for farms classified by color and tenure of farm operator, by economic class of farm, and by type of farm are presented in chapters X, XI, and XII of this volume. The value of sales of livestock and livestock products, as presented in this chapter, is also shown,

together with the value of sales of other farm products, in chapter IX.

Data by county, by economic class of farm, by type of farm, by size of farm, and by tenure of farm operator, for the individual States, may be found in volume I, parts 1 to 50.

Comparability of Statistics.—Many factors affect the comparability, particularly for livestock inventories, from census to census. A major factor is the time of year at which the census is taken. Therefore, the date of enumeration needs to be considered when comparing totals for the various censuses. Data for both the 1959 and 1954 censuses represent inventories made in the fall. These censuses came at or just after considerable movement of flocks and herds from one range to another, from ranch to feedlot, and from farm or ranch to market.

Increases in livestock numbers arising from births are highly seasonal. Likewise, decreases arising from marketing and from slaughter are also highly seasonal. Large numbers of livestock are marketed or slaughtered on farms during the last part of the calendar year. Thus, livestock numbers at the time of the enumeration for the 1959 Census of Agriculture were changing rapidly. The differences in livestock numbers for a census taken in the fall and one taken in January or April are considerable because of the difference in the date of the enumeration. These differences arising because of the changing of the time of the enumeration affect significantly the comparison of the numbers of most kinds of livestock and poultry not only for the same area but also for different areas.

Comparisons of livestock numbers from census to census have also been affected by change in age and sex characteristics, by wording of inquiries, by instructions, and by the order in which the inquiries appeared on the agriculture questionnaire. For example, for the 1940 census, the total for cattle and calves does not include those less than 3 months of age because of the age specification on the questionnaire for the census. A change in definition of a farm since 1954 has affected the comparability. Places reporting and number of livestock not included in the 1959 totals because of the change in farm definition are shown in table 1. The effect of the change in definition of a farm on the number of livestock is less than one percent, but the effect on the number of farms reporting is more significant.

Table 1.—SPECIFIED LIVESTOCK ON PLACES NOT COUNTED AS FARMS BECAUSE OF CHANGE IN DEFINITION OF FARM: 1959

Item	Total	Percent of total for farms
Places excluded as farms by change in definition, 1954-1959.....number...	232,059	6.3
Cattle and calves of all ages.....places reporting... number...	159,550 294,055	6.0 0.3
Cows, including heifers that have calved.....places reporting... number...	136,687 154,546	5.6 0.4
Hogs and pigs.....places reporting... number...	89,148 261,262	4.8 0.4
Chickens 4 months old and over.....places reporting... number...	142,906 4,600,475	6.6 1.3