

million in 1910 to 6.3 million in 1930. Since 1935, the number of farms has been declining. The 1935 census recorded an all time high of 6.8 million farms. By 1940 the number of farms had decreased to 6.1 million. This downward trend in the number of farms continued at an accelerated rate until 1959, with a decline of nearly 4 percent between 1940 and 1945, slightly more than 8 percent between 1945 and 1950, over 11 percent from 1950 to 1954, and 22.6 percent from 1954 to 1959. The rate of decline slowed somewhat from 1959 to 1964, when there was a decrease of about 15 percent.

During the period since 1930, while the number of farms decreased almost 50 percent, the total population of the United States has increased more than 50 percent. This same relationship is also indicated by the data for average number of persons per farm. There is now about one farm for every 60 persons in the United States. There was one farm for every 20 persons in 1930. Average acres of land in farms and of cropland harvested per capita have also decreased during this 35 year period. In 1930, there were 8 acres of land in farms per person; in 1964 there were less than 6 acres per person. The average acreage of cropland harvested per person in 1964 was about one half the average for 1930.

In the Eastern States, the abandonment of some of the poor agricultural lands, particularly in the more mountainous areas, and the diversion of farm lands to other uses, have resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of farms. The New England States, as a group, lost over one-fourth of their farms and 1.5 million acres of farmland from 1959 to 1964. In the States in the Middle Atlantic Division, the decline in number of farms ranged from 17 percent in Pennsylvania to 31 percent in New Jersey.

The largest decrease in the number of farms from 1959 to 1964 occurred in the South where there was a loss of 270,000 or almost 17 percent of the farms from 1959 to 1964. A large part of the change in the South resulted from the disappearance of share-tenant and cropper farms. In 1964, there were 113,000 fewer farms operated by tenants in the South than in 1959. In five years, the decrease in the number of farms operated by crop-share tenants totaled almost 101,000.

Consolidation of smaller farms into larger operating units has been an important factor contributing to the large net decrease in the number of farms since 1920. In 1920, the average size was 148 acres with 54 acres of cropland harvested. By 1964, the average size

TABLE 6. **Total Population and Average Number of Persons per Farm, with per Capita Data for Land in Farms, Cropland Harvested, and Value of Farm Products Sold, for the United States: 1850 to 1964**

Item and census year	Number of persons <sup>1</sup> (1,000)	Average number of persons per farm	Average per capita		
			Land in farms (acres)	Cropland harvested <sup>2</sup> (acres)	Value of farm products sold (dollars)
<b>Total population:</b>					
1964 .....	191,463	60.63	5.8	1.5	184
1960 .....	179,323	48.33	6.3	1.7	170
1954 <sup>3</sup> .....	161,763	33.82	7.2	2.1	152
1950 .....	151,326	28.08	7.7	2.3	147
1945 <sup>3</sup> .....	139,583	23.82	8.2	2.5	116
1940 .....	132,165	21.66	8.1	2.4	<sup>3</sup> 51
1935 <sup>3</sup> .....	127,057	18.65	8.3	2.3	(NA)
1930 .....	123,203	19.57	8.0	<sup>3</sup> 2.9	<sup>3</sup> 90
1925 <sup>3</sup> .....	115,402	18.11	8.0	3.0	(NA)
1920 .....	106,022	16.43	9.0	<sup>3</sup> 3.3	(NA)
1910 .....	92,228	14.49	9.6	<sup>3</sup> 3.4	(NA)
1900 .....	76,212	13.28	11.0	<sup>3</sup> 3.7	(NA)
1890 <sup>3</sup> .....	62,980	13.79	9.9	3.5	(NA)
1880 <sup>3</sup> .....	50,189	12.51	10.7	3.3	(NA)
1870 <sup>3</sup> .....	39,818	14.97	10.2	(NA)	(NA)
1860 <sup>3</sup> .....	31,443	15.38	13.0	(NA)	(NA)
1850 <sup>3</sup> .....	23,192	16.00	12.7	(NA)	(NA)

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup> Figures for 1910 to 1964 relate to April 1, those for earlier years to June 1. Figures for decennial years are based on the decennial censuses with adjustments to obtain comparability; those for other years are estimates. Figures for 1940 to 1964 include members of Armed Forces overseas, for earlier years the number of persons in the Armed Forces overseas was not available, but the number was probably negligible. Figures for 1870 include adjustments for under enumerations in Southern States.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1924, based on total acreage of crops harvested.

<sup>3</sup> Data for Alaska and Hawaii not included.

had increased to 351.6 acres with 106.2 acres of cropland harvested. Since 1959, the average size of farms has increased almost 50 acres or about 16 percent.

**Effect of definitions and procedures on number of farms**—Changes in the total number of farms from census to census have been affected by changes in definitions and procedures. The definition of a farm was the same in 1964 and 1959.

The definition of a farm in 1964 and in 1959 was as follows: Places of less than 10 acres were counted as farms if the estimated sales of agricultural products for the year amounted to at least \$250. Places of 10 acres or more were counted as farms if the estimated sales of agricultural products for the year amounted to at least \$50. Places having less than the \$50 or \$250 minimum estimated sales were also counted as farms if they could normally be expected to produce agricultural products in sufficient quantity to meet the requirements of the definition.