

Comparability Affected by Changes in Definition of a Farm

The tenure distributions have been affected, to a minor extent, by changes in the definition of a farm in the various censuses. The last change in definition was made in 1959 where the definition was more restrictive than that for 1954 and 1950, which in turn was more restrictive than the definition used for prior censuses. A count of the places eliminated in the 1959 census, that would have been included under the 1954 and 1950 definitions, and their distribution by tenure are available in the introduction to volume II of the 1959 Census of Agriculture.

The places eliminated by both the 1959 and 1950 changes in definitions were places with limited or marginal agricultural activities. The 1959 data indicated that such places were predominantly owner-operated.

FARM TENURE—ALL FARMS

Farm and Operator Characteristics

Number of Farms—Of the 2.7 million farms in 1969, 1.7 million were operated by full owners, 0.7 million were operated by part-owners, and 0.4 million by tenants. Part owners, accounting for only 25 percent of the farms, reported 52 percent of all land in farms, and 52 percent of the cropland harvested. In comparison, full owners representing 63 percent of the farms accounted for only 35 percent of the land in farms and 30 percent of the cropland harvested. Tenant farms which have been decreasing in importance over the years accounted for 13 percent of all farms, 13 percent of the land in farms, and 18 percent of the cropland harvested.

Table 4. Land in Farms, Value, and Ownership for All Farms, by Tenure, for the United States: 1969

	All farms	Full owners	Part owners	Tenants
Farms.....number..	2,730,250	1,705,720	671,607	352,923
percent..	100.0	62.4	24.5	12.9
Land in farms.acres..	1,063,346,489	375,091,955	550,649,494	137,605,040
Per farm..acres..	389.5	219.9	819.8	389.9
Value of land and buildings..dollars..	206,750,634,464	81,155,668,478	92,417,445,298	33,177,520,688
Per farm..dollars..	75,725	47,578	137,606	94,007
Per acre..dollars..	194.43	216.36	167.83	241.10
Owned land....farms..	2,390,205	1,705,720	671,607	12,878
acres..	722,361,902	413,793,869	304,057,765	4,510,268
Rented land...farms..	1,032,530	8,000	671,607	352,923
acres..	404,146,768	1,512,807	262,214,216	140,419,745
Land rented out				
farms..	361,982	282,120	57,801	22,061
acres..	63,162,181	40,214,721	15,622,487	7,324,973
Owned land..farms..	339,066	278,975	47,213	12,878
acres..	55,908,575	38,701,914	12,696,393	4,510,268
Subrented land				
farms..	37,280	8,000	15,758	13,522
acres..	7,253,606	1,512,807	2,926,094	2,814,705

In terms of size of farms and total productivity, part-owner farms have continued to be the most important of the tenure groups. For 1969, part owners operated 551 million acres of land which was more than the sum of 513 million acres operated by full owners and tenants. The proportion of the land in farm operated by part owners varies substantially by region. In the West, almost 63 percent of the land was operated by part

owners. Leased Federal and State land account for a sizable portion of this acreage in the West. The table below shows the distribution of farms and land in farms for the tenure groups by region.

	U.S.	Percent distribution by tenure			
		North-east	North Central	South	West
Full owners:					
Number ...	62.5	70.2	57.1	67.1	61.0
Land	35.3	57.7	34.3	42.7	27.2
Part owners:					
Number ...	24.6	23.4	27.7	21.1	27.2
Land	51.8	37.0	50.2	43.7	62.9
Tenants:					
Number ...	12.9	6.4	15.2	11.7	11.8
Land	12.9	5.3	15.6	13.5	10.0

Size of farm—In terms of average size of farms, part-owner farms were almost four times as large as full-owner farms and twice the size of tenant farms. More than half of the full-owner operated farms were of less than 100 acres in size as compared to about one-eighth of the part-owner farms and one-third of the tenant farms. Over 30 percent of the part-owner farms were 500 acres and over in size, compared to 6 percent for full owners and 14 percent for tenants. The percentage distribution by size of farm for the three tenure groups is shown below.

	Percent distribution by size of farm			
	All farms	Full owners	Part owners	Tenants
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1 to 9 acres	5.9	7.5	1.0	8.0
10 to 49 acres	17.3	22.3	6.4	14.1
50 to 69 acres	6.5	8.2	3.2	4.4
70 to 99 acres	10.4	13.2	5.0	7.1
100 to 139 acres	10.2	12.1	6.8	7.8
140 to 179 acres	9.6	10.4	7.1	10.6
180 to 219 acres	6.1	5.8	6.6	6.4
220 to 259 acres	5.2	4.4	6.6	6.5
260 to 499 acres	15.4	10.2	25.8	20.8
500 to 999 acres	7.9	3.9	17.2	9.4
1,000 to 1,999 acres ..	3.3	1.4	8.4	3.2
2,000 acres and over ..	2.2	0.8	6.0	1.8

Class of farm—Data by class of farm show the importance of leased lands for the farms in the larger sales groups. Two-thirds of the farms with sales of \$40,000 and over (class 1) have some leased land. On the other extreme, full-owner operators account for over four-fifths of the farms with sales of under \$2,500. A significant portion of the full-owner classification is comprised of part-time operators and retired persons or those in partial retirement. The percent distribution of the tenure group is shown for each class in the following table.