

All three trends are documented in even short-term comparisons with 1964 data.

1. Farms are fewer by some 428 thousand.
2. They are larger by an average of 38 acres.
3. Their agricultural production is worth more, with a gain of some \$10.3 billion in value of products sold.

And this gain comes from an increase of almost 151 thousand farms with 1969 sales of \$20,000 or more, accompanied by a decrease of 578 thousand farms with sales of under \$20,000.

### Number of Farms

In 1969, the number of farms counted in the census was 428,000 less than in 1964 and 980,000 less than in 1959. The 2.7 million farms, in 1969, represent the smallest number of farms recorded for any census since 1870. In 1850, the first census for which a count of farms was made, there were 1,449,000 farms, or one farm for each 16 persons living in the United States. With the growth of population and westward migration, the number of farms increased at a rate faster than the growth of the total population until 1880 when there were more than 4 million farms or one farm for each 12.5 persons. By 1910, the number of farms had increased to over 6.3 million but the ratio of farms to population decreased to one farm for every 14.5 persons.

From 1910 to 1930, the number of farms remained relatively unchanged, ranging from 6.4 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. The decline from 1964 to 1969 was 14 percent. It should be noted that the decline from 1954 to 1959 was influenced by the change in definition. For a more comprehensive discussion, see the introduction to volume II, 1959 Census of Agriculture.

During the period since 1935, while the number of farms decreased almost 60 percent, the total population of the United States has increased more than 59 percent. There is now about one farm for every 74 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 1969 there were less than 6 acres per person. The average acreage of cropland harvested per person in 1969 was about one-half that for 1935.

In the Eastern States, the abandonment of some of the poorer agricultural lands, particularly in the more mountainous areas, the abandonment of units not large enough to support a family, and the diversion of farm lands to other uses, have resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of farms. The New England

**Table 6. Population and Per Capita Data, United States: 1850 to 1969**

Census year	Total population <sup>1</sup> (1,000)	Number of persons per farm	Amount per capita		Value of farm products sold (dollars)
			Land in farms (acres)	Cropland Harvested <sup>2</sup> (acres)	
1969.....	202,711	74.25	5.2	1.3	225
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	51
1935 <sup>3</sup> .....	127,057	18.65	8.3	2.3	(NA)
1930.....	132,203	19.57	8.0	2.9	90
1925 <sup>3</sup> .....	115,402	18.11	8.0	3.0	(NA)
1920.....	106,022	16.43	9.0	3.3	(NA)
1910.....	92,228	14.49	9.6	3.4	(NA)
1900.....	76,212	13.28	11.0	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)

<sup>1</sup>Figures of 1910 to 1969 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 1969 include members of the 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.

States, as a group, lost over 32 percent of their farms and 2 million acres of farmland from 1964 to 1969. In the States in the Middle Atlantic Division, the decline in number of farms ranged from 20 percent in New Jersey to 24 percent in Pennsylvania. A small portion of this decline can be attributed to the poorer coverage in the census for farms with less than \$2,500 worth of farm products sold accompanying the change in enumeration procedure. See chapter 1.

Consolidation of smaller farms into larger operating units has been an important factor contributing to the decrease in number of farms since 1935. In 1935, the average size of farm was 155 acres with 46 acres of cropland harvested. By 1969, the average size had increased to 389 acres with 123 acres of cropland harvested. Since 1964, the average size of farms has increased 38 acres, or about 11 percent.

## LAND USE

### All Land Used for Agriculture

This included all land in farms plus estimates of land not in farms that was used for grazing. All land used for pasture or grazing includes the estimate of land not in farms used for grazing plus total land pastured on farms with sales of \$2,500 and over plus estimates for all other farms. The land area of the 50 States totals 2,264 million acres, of which 1,063 million acres, or 47 percent, were included in farms in 1969. Of the remaining 1,201 million acres not included in farms, an estimated additional 288 million acres were grazed by livestock in 1969. If the uses of land in farms and the uses of land not in