

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Definitions and explanations which have particular significance to this part of the chapter have been included in part 1 of this chapter. Definitions and explanations of a more general application are included in chapter 1.

HISTORY OF CLASSIFICATION OF FARMS BY SIZE

The first classification of farms by size based on total acres in the farm was made in 1880. For the censuses of 1860 and 1870, acres of improved land rather than total acres in the farm were used as the basis of classification. The classification has been changed several times to make improvements and to make adjustments because of increases in farm size. Table 2 shows the most frequently used size-of-farm groups from 1880 to 1969.

Table 2. Size of Farm Groups: 1880 to 1969

	1969	1964	1959	1954	1935, 1940, 1945, 1950	1920, 1925, 1930	1880 to 1910
Under 3 acres.....					X	X	X
3 to 9 acres.....					X	X	X
Under 10 acres.....	X	X	X	X			
10 to 19 acres.....					X	X	X
10 to 29 acres.....				X			
20 to 29 acres.....					X		
10 to 49 acres.....	X	X	X				
20 to 49 acres.....						X	X
30 to 49 acres.....				X	X		
50 to 69 acres.....	X	X	X	X	X		
50 to 99 acres.....						X	X
70 to 99 acres.....	X	X	X	X	X		
100 to 139 acres.....	X	X	X	X	X		
100 to 174 acres.....						X	X
140 to 174 acres.....					X		
140 to 179 acres.....	X	X	X	X	X		
175 to 179 acres.....						X	X
175 to 259 acres.....							
180 to 219 acres.....	X	X	X	X	X		
220 to 259 acres.....	X	X	X	X	X		
260 to 379 acres.....		X			X		
260 to 499 acres.....	X		X	X		X	X
380 to 499 acres.....		X			X		
500 to 699 acres.....		X			X		
500 to 999 acres.....	X		X	X		X	X
700 to 999 acres.....		X			X		
1,000 acres and over...				X	X		X
1,000 to 1,999 acres...	X	X	X				
1,000 to 4,999 acres...						X	
2,000 acres and over...	X	X	X				
5,000 acres and over...						X	

Other size groups have been used separately or in combination with those shown.

The size groupings remained unchanged from 1880 to 1930, except for changes in the size group, 1,000 acres and over. For 1920 and 1925 the grouping of farms 1,000 acres and over was divided into two size groups—1,000 to 4,999 acres and 5,000 acres and over. For 1930 the grouping 5,000 acres and over was further divided into two groups—5,000 to 9,999 acres and 10,000 acres and over.

A revised size-of-farm grouping was established in 1935. These 17 groups were continued in 1940 and 1945 to provide comparative data for earlier censuses. In both the 1945 and 1950 censuses, these 17 groups were reduced to form 12 size groups for use in classifying most of the major items covered by the census. Since 1950, there have been minor changes in the size groups used from census to census. In order to provide historical data, brackets or footnotes have been used to indicate comparable data.

For the 1959, 1964, and 1969 censuses, special tabulations provided data for farms of 2,000 acres or more, by size of farm groups. In 1959 and 1964, the largest size group was limited to 10,000 acres and over; in 1969, this was extended to 30,000 acres and over.

Prior to 1900, the number of farms was the only statistic available by size of farm. From 1900 to 1935, the size of farm data published included not only a count of farms, but also data for all land in farms and the more important classes of land according to use. For the 1945 to the 1969 censuses, published data by size of farm included farms; land in farms classified according to use; the number of livestock and poultry; farm equipment; the production or sale of livestock, poultry, livestock products, and poultry products; the acreage and production of crops; farm expenditures, etc. Table 3 presents the number of farms for the size of farm groups used from 1880 to 1969.

Table 3. Farms by Size, 1880 to 1969; by Acres of Improved Land: 1860 and 1870

	Total	Under 3 acres	3 to 9 acres	10 to 29 acres	30 to 49 acres	50 to 99 acres	100 to 499 acres	500 to 999 acres	1,000 or more acres
Total land in farms									
1969.....	2,730,250	78,868	83,243	(473,465)		459,942	1,268,127	215,659	150,946
1964.....	3,157,857	59,686	122,895	(637,434)		542,430	1,439,683	210,437	145,292
1959.....	3,710,503	79,083	165,245	(813,216)		657,990	1,658,530	200,012	136,427
1954 ¹	4,782,416	99,896	384,395	713,335	499,496	864,063	1,899,053	191,697	130,481
1950.....	5,388,437	78,110	410,420	855,000	624,596	1,048,075	² 2,068,466	182,297	121,473
1945 ¹	5,859,169	98,966	495,595	945,608	708,796	1,157,320	2,166,208	173,777	112,899
1940.....	6,102,417	37,022	472,325	(1,782,061)		1,291,328	² 2,255,396	163,711	100,574
1935 ¹	6,812,350	35,573	535,258	1,241,431	882,164	1,444,007	2,417,803	167,452	88,662
1930.....	6,295,103	44,244	317,755	(2,002,115)		1,375,198	² 2,315,403	159,723	80,665
1925 ¹	6,371,640	15,151	363,384	(2,038,692)		1,421,078	2,326,155	143,852	63,328
1920.....	6,453,991	³ 21,158	³ 270,348	⁴ (2,013,516)		1,475,005	² 2,456,729	149,826	67,409
1910 ¹	6,361,502	18,033	317,010	(1,918,499)		1,438,069	2,494,461	125,295	50,135
1900.....	5,739,657	41,882	226,564	(1,664,797)		1,366,167	2,290,561	102,526	47,160
1890.....	4,564,641	(150,194)		(1,168,327)		1,121,485	2,008,694	84,395	31,546
1880.....	4,008,907	4,352	134,889	(1,036,323)		1,032,810	1,695,983	75,972	28,578
Improved land									
1870.....	2,659,985	6,875	172,021	294,607	847,614	754,221	565,054	15,873	3,720
1860 ⁵	2,044,077	(NA)	54,676	162,178	616,558	608,878	487,041	20,319	5,364

¹Data for Alaska and Hawaii not included.

²Included farms of 100 acres or more for Hawaii.

³Data for Alaska not available.

⁴Included 62 farms for Alaska, in the under 50 acres size group.

⁵For 1860, the classification is for "farms containing 3 acres or more". The number of farms in the various classes adds to 1,955,014, which is 89,063 less than the total number of farms.