

Appendix: Explanatory Materials

1. DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

The definitions and explanations given here are limited to a few items. For more complete and detailed definitions and explanations, including a description of how the census was taken, see Chapter 1, *Volume II, U.S. Summary*, and Appendix A, *Explanatory Materials, Volume I, Area Reports*, 1969 Census of Agriculture.

All farms—All places of less than 10 acres with sales of agricultural products amounting, or which normally would amount, to at least \$250 and all places of 10 acres or more with sales of agricultural products amounting, or which normally would amount, to at least \$50.

Class 1-5 farms—Farms with sales of agricultural products of \$2,500 or more excluding abnormal farms such as prison farms, hospital farms, church farms, school farms, experimental farms, Indian reservations, and grazing associations.

Value of farm products sold—The gross value of all crops, forest products, poultry, livestock, and their products sold from the farm any time in 1969.

Value of nursery and greenhouse products sold—The gross value of all nursery products, sod, bulbs, cut flowers, flower and vegetable seeds, mushrooms, and vegetables grown under protection sold from the farm in 1969.

Land in farms—Land in farms consists primarily of "agricultural" land, that is, land used for crops and pasture or grazing. It includes areas of forest and waste land and some cropland not actually under cultivation nor used for pasture or grazing.

Cropland harvested—All land from which crops were harvested, including hay cut, and all land in orchards, citrus groves, vineyards, and nursery and greenhouse products.

Total cropland—The sum of acreages for cropland harvested, cropland used for pasture or grazing, cropland used for cover crops, cropland on which all crops failed, cropland in cultivated summer fallow, and cropland idle.

Value of land and buildings—Estimated current market value of the land in farms and the buildings on the land.

Irrigated farmland—Land in farms watered for agricultural purposes by artificial means.

Farm production expenses—Expenses paid by the farm operator or by anyone else for the production of crops, poultry, livestock, and other agricultural products on the farm.

Expenditures for agricultural chemicals purchased—Includes expenses for all herbicides, fungicides, other pesticides, growth-control chemicals and defoliant used for crops, and insecticides for livestock and poultry.

Estimated market value of all machinery and equipment on place—Estimated current market value of all equipment and machinery used for the farm business in its present condition on farms as of December 31, 1969.

Livestock and poultry on farms—For 1969, operators were instructed to report inventory numbers of livestock and poultry as of December 31, 1969. The 1964 census was taken by enumerators between November and December of 1964 and the livestock and poultry inventories were as of the time of enumeration.

2. METHOD OF RANKING THE COUNTIES

The leading counties for most of the tables presented were determined by the size of the item of agricultural resource, inventory, or production. The county with the largest total for the selected item was ranked first, the next largest total, second, etc.

Several tables, however, were designed to show counties ranked by measures of agricultural intensity as opposed to rank based solely according to size, which for many items is directly influenced by the size of the county. For example, while Fresno County, Calif., is the leading county based on the total value of all farm products sold, Suffolk County, N.Y., is the leading county based on the value of farm products sold per acre of land in farms.

Tables on fruits and field crops harvested present one or more related items (quantity harvested; number of trees) along with the primary acreage item which determines the published county ranking order. The 100 leading counties for the primary item are often not the same for the related items. For example, while Hill County, Mont., ranks second for *acres* of wheat harvested, the county ranks 15th in the *quantity* of wheat harvested. Comparative data and rank for the 1964 census are shown for the leading 1969 counties in a majority of the tables presented. Depending on the specified item ranked, the 1964 data and rank may be very similar to 1969 as for "land in orchards" or very dissimilar as for "value of forest products sold." The 100 leading county total line shows the sums of the data items for the counties listed. Thus the total line is the sum of 100 leading counties for the specified item but does not necessarily represent the 100 leading counties for any of the related items including the comparable 1964 data.

3. QUALIFICATIONS OF DATA AND RANKINGS

Data for leading agricultural counties usually indicate agricultural areas of commercial importance. The group of 100 or 50 leading counties usually accounts for a significant part of the U.S. total as indicated by the summary table for the leading counties. For certain specialty crops and fruits which are grown in few areas, the group of 100 or 50 counties account for nearly all of the production. For other more widespread items such as alfalfa hay and cattle and calves on farms, the leading counties account for a far lesser proportion of the U.S. totals.

It is important to note that the rank of counties is based on data for only the census year. Unusual weather or economic conditions during 1969 may have had a significant effect upon the ranking of counties for certain items in certain areas. A ranking of counties based on average data from several years would undoubtedly show a number of differences in the rankings.

Ranking of a county is often influenced by the size of the county in total farm area. It may be a leading county only because of its size and due to the fact that a large portion of the land in the county was cropland from which predominantly one crop was harvested.

Following are a number of additional qualifications or explanations relating to specific tables.

Table 1

Value of all farm products sold. In recent years there has been a growing trend to feed-lot fatten a greater proportion of cattle to be slaughtered. Also, the cattle are being fattened in the western States where they are produced. The new, large-scale, commercial feeding operations in western States particularly Nebraska, Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona have moved many of the counties in those States into the leading 100, for this item and several other items related to feed-lot operations. Many of the counties involved will show a marked change from their 1964 ranking. For example, the value of all farm products sold in Sherman County, Tex., increased from \$12,025,500 in 1964 to \$67,818,077 in 1969 moving the county from a rank of 952 in 1964 to a rank of 53 in 1969.

Table 2

Value of farm products sold per acre of land in farms. Due to differences in enumeration and processing procedures, the county allocation of land in farms may be different from past censuses. Large county changes between censuses for land in farms may significantly alter the county ranking for value of farm products sold per acre of land in farms. For example, Hillsborough County, Fla., moved up from a 1964 ranking of 1,606 to 91 in 1969 due chiefly to a decrease of the county's land in farms from 769,245 acres to 374,767 acres. Nearly all of the eliminated land was noncropland.

Table 4

Value of crops sold per acre of cropland harvested. Many of the ranking counties in this table produce predominantly specialty crops and county rank may vary considerably from census to census due to unusual weather conditions in the census year or due to large price fluctuations.

Table 8

Value of forest products sold. There is much variation between the leading counties for 1969 and 1964 for this item. The fact that forest products are harvested at different intervals than most crops, changes in the acreage of woodland included in the census of agriculture, changes in county allocation of woodland, and changes in economic factors relating to harvesting forest products all contribute to a wide variation between the censuses of the counties ranked.

Table 9

Value of livestock, poultry and their products sold. See explanation for table 1.

Table 16

Average value of land and buildings per farm. Several counties in this table appear in the upper ranks because of the influence of abnormal farms such as Indian reservations and grazing associations. The extremely large acreage of a few abnormal farms often accounts for a large part of the land in farms for the entire county. For example, while "land in farms" for all farms in Gila County, Ariz., is 1,221,940 acres, "land in farms" for class 1-5 farms (excluding abnormal farms) is only 160,412 acres. Correspondingly, the average value of land and buildings per farm for all farms in Gila County is \$824,764 but only \$219,541 per farm for class 1-5 farms, excluding abnormal farms.

Large changes in rank from the previous census for some counties may be explained by the disappearance of many small farms. For example, the extremely large increase in average value of farms in Tunica County, Miss. (from \$56,013 to \$269,131) is due in a large part to the drop in number of farms from 853 to 303 from 1964 to 1969. The average value per acre of land in farms increased from \$231 to \$319 for Tunica County.

Table 22

Expenditures for feed for livestock and poultry. See explanation for table 1.

Table 28

Cattle and calves on farms. See explanation for table 1.

Table 33

Cattle fattened on grain concentrates and sold for slaughter. See explanation for table 1.

Table 41

Horses and ponies on farms. Data users are cautioned to understand that the data for this table represent only the number of horses and ponies on class 1-5 farms. Since many horses are on farms with less than \$2,500 sales of farm products and on places which do not meet the census farm definition, the data cannot be used to represent or estimate the actual horse and pony population.

Tables 63 to 70

Vegetables harvested for sale. Since a large proportion of vegetables are grown under contract and processed in canning plants the county rankings are influenced by the economics of the vegetable processing industry. Certain areas may be expanding while other areas may be declining.

Tables 71 to 81

Fruits, pecans, and strawberries. County rankings for fruit production for a particular year are influenced largely by weather conditions. A late killing spring frost, a severe winter freeze, or severe wind storms may not only reduce production for one year but for several years. County rankings for acreage of fruits and total number of trees show more stability.