

DESCRIPTION OF THE CENSUS Continued

During review of the final data, however, a final check was made of detailed data not previously reviewed in depth, and all remaining known data changes were carried to the computer record prior to the final tabulations.

**Disclosure Analysis**

Section 9 of title 13, United States Code, prohibits the publication of statistical data that reveal information furnished by individual respondents. In keeping with the provisions of this law, a thorough review is made of all statistical tables prior to publication to locate and prevent any potential disclosure of confidential information. Some of this review, referred to as disclosure analysis, was accomplished by computer programs and the remainder by statisticians following guidelines regarding what constitutes a disclosure.

**Change in Farm Definition**

For each of the 20 censuses of agriculture except the first, taken in 1840, the federal organization responsible for conducting the census has established minimum criteria to define a farm for the purpose of the census. As the Nation has developed and grown, agriculture also has changed and grown, and from time to time the minimum criteria for the definition of a farm have been changed. The criteria for minimum size of agricultural operations to be counted as census farms have included measures of land area and agricultural output or sales. Some criteria for census farms have been different for places of less than 3 acres than for places of 3 acres or more. The various size criteria for agricultural operations used for the censuses of agriculture from 1850 to 1974 are shown in tables 1 and 2.

For most censuses prior to 1950, census enumerators were given a definition of a farm and were instructed to obtain data only for places which met the criteria. However, application of the definition was not always uniform, and part of the change in the number of farms from census to census may have resulted from this lack of uniform application. As the data in table 2 indicates, the mini-

**Table 1. Minimum Criteria for Census Farms of 3 Acres and Over: Censuses for 1850 to 1974**

	Minimum value of agricultural products produced for home use or sale (dollars)	Minimum value of agricultural products sold <sup>1</sup> (dollars)	Other criteria	Reduction in number of farms because of change in definition <sup>2</sup>
1974.....	Not applied	1,000	None	-152,000
1969 <sup>3</sup> .....	Not applied	50	None	
1964 <sup>3</sup> .....	Not applied	50	None	
1959 <sup>3</sup> .....	Not applied	50	None	-232,000
1954.....	150	Not applied	None	
1950.....	150	Not applied	None	-160,000
1945.....	4150	Not applied	Agricultural operations comprising 3 acres and over of cropland or pastureland	
1940.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1935.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1930.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1925.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1920.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1910.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1900.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations and continuous services of at least 1 person	
1890.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1880.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1870.....	Not applied	Not applied	Agricultural operations	
1860.....	100	Not applied	None	
1850.....	100	Not applied	None	

<sup>1</sup>Includes farms which normally have sales above minimum value; see text.  
<sup>2</sup>Includes change for farms under 3 acres.  
<sup>3</sup>Minimum size criteria applied to places of 10 acres and over.  
<sup>4</sup>Applied only if farm had under 3 acres of cropland and pasture.

**Table 2. Minimum Criteria for Census Farms of Under 3 Acres: Censuses of 1850 to 1974**

	Minimum value of agricultural products produced for home use or sale (dollars)	Minimum value of agricultural products sold <sup>1</sup> (dollars)	Other criteria	Index number of prices received by farmers (1910-1914=100)	Farms of under 3 acres (number)
1974.....	Not applied	1,000	None	481	(NA) <sup>3</sup>
1969 <sup>2</sup> .....	Not applied	250	None	268	79,000
1964 <sup>2</sup> .....	Not applied	250	None	237	60,000
1959 <sup>2</sup> .....	Not applied	250	None	240	79,000
1954.....	Not applied	150	None	249	100,000
1950.....	Not applied	150	None	250	77,000
1945.....	250	Not applied	None	197	99,000
1940.....	250	Not applied	None	95	36,000
1935.....	250	Not applied	None	90	36,000
1930.....	250	Not applied	None	148	43,000
1925.....	250	Not applied	None	143	15,000
1920.....	3250	Not applied	None	217	20,000
1910.....	3250	Not applied	None	104	18,000
1900.....	Not applied	Not applied	Constant services of at least 1 person	(NA)	41,000
1890.....	Not applied	500	None	(NA)	(NA)
1880.....	Not applied	500	None	(NA)	4,000
1870.....	Not applied	500	None	(NA)	(NA)
1860.....	100	Not applied	None	(NA)	(NA)
1850.....	100	Not applied	None	(NA)	(NA)

<sup>1</sup>Includes farms which normally have sales above the minimum value; see text.  
<sup>2</sup>Minimum size criteria for 1969-1959 applied to places of under 10 acres.  
<sup>3</sup>Not applicable when farm required services of at least 1 person.

num criteria for value of agricultural products produced or the value of agricultural products sold has not changed from census to census in the same proportion as changes in price level of farm products. The definition used for the final publication of the 1974 census marked the ninth change. The eighth was for the 1959 Census of Agriculture, when the definition of a farm was based primarily on a combination of acres in the place and value of agricultural products sold. The word "place" was defined to

include all land on which agricultural operations were conducted at any time in the census year under the day-to-day control or supervision of one person or partnership. Control may have been exercised through ownership or management or through a lease, rental, or cropping arrangement.

For the censuses of 1959, 1964, and 1969, places of less than 10 acres in the census year were counted as farms if the estimated sales of agricultural products for the year amounted to at least \$250.