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# APPENDIX . General Explanation

## 1. Definitions and Explanations

Only a few definitions and explanations are given here. For more complete and detailed definitions and explanations, including a description of how the census was taken, see appendix A of Volume I, **State and County Data**, or part 1 of Volume II, **Statistics by Subject**, of the 1974 Census of Agriculture.

**1974 all farms**—All places regardless of size with sales of agricultural products amounting, or which normally would amount, to at least \$1,000.

**1969 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.

**1974 and 1969 farms with sales of \$2,500 and over**—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 agricultural products sold**—The gross value of all crops, forest products, and poultry and livestock and their products sold from the farm any time in the census year.

**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 the census year.

**Land in farms**—Primarily "agricultural" land, i.e., land used for crops and pasture or grazing. It includes areas of woodland and wasteland and some cropland not actually under cultivation nor used for pasture or grazing in the census year.

**Cropland harvested**—All land from which crops were harvested, including hay cut, and all lands 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 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 used for livestock and poultry. Expenditures for purchase of lime and fertilizer are excluded.

**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 of the census year.

**Livestock and poultry on farms**—The inventory of livestock and poultry on the farm as of December 31 of the census year.

## 2. Ranking the Counties and States

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

However, several tables were designed to show counties and States ranked by measures of agricultural intensity rather than 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 agricultural products sold, Suffolk County, N.Y., is the leading county based on the value of agricultural products sold per acre of land in farms.

Tables on fruits and field crops harvested present one or more related items (e.g., quantity harvested or number of trees) along with the primary acreage item which determines a county's rank. The 100 leading counties for the primary item are often not the same for the related items. For example, while Hill County, Mont., ranks 3d in acres of wheat harvested, it ranks 10th in quantity of wheat harvested.

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Comparative data and rank for the 1969 census are shown for the leading 1974 counties in most of the tables presented. Depending on the specified item ranked, the 1969 data and rank may be very similar to 1974, as for land in orchards, or very dissimilar, as for value of forest products sold.

Total lines for the 10 leading States and the 100 leading counties show the sums of the data items for the States and counties listed. The crop tables show rank for both acres harvested and quantity harvested. In these tables the primary ranking of the States and counties are by acres harvested; the related ranking of quantity harvested is also shown. Since the ranking of the related item (quantity harvested) may not coincide with the ranking of the primary item (acres harvested), the total lines for the related item may not be the actual total for the 10 leading States or 100 leading counties.

### 3. Qualifications of the Data and Rankings

Data for leading agricultural counties usually indicate agricultural areas of commercial importance. The 100 or 50 leading counties usually account 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 grown in few areas, the 100 or 50 counties account for nearly all 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 only on data for the census year. Unusual weather or economic conditions during 1974 may have had a significant effect upon the ranking of counties for certain items in certain areas. A ranking of counties based on the average of data for 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 because a large

portion of the land in the county was cropland from which predominantly one crop was harvested.

Ranking of a county may be influenced occasionally by the assignment of all land, agricultural operations, and sales of farms with land in two or more counties to the county with the largest value of agricultural products raised or produced (1974) or to the principal county designated by the respondent (1969).

Following are additional qualifications or explanations relating to specific tables.

**Table 1. Value of agricultural products sold**—The value of all agricultural products sold doubled for many counties in 1974 from the previous census and, for some counties, tripled. However, not all segments of agriculture enjoyed the increase in value of sale equally. While crop sales for the United States increased 24 billion dollars or 144 percent from 1969, sales of livestock, poultry, and their products increased only 10.5 billion dollars or 37 percent. Counties deriving the majority of their farm sales from commodities such as corn, wheat, soybeans, dry beans, sugar crops, and cotton rose in relative ranking over counties deriving the majority of their farm sales from livestock and poultry.

**Table 2. Value of agricultural products sold per acre**—Large county changes between censuses for land in farms may significantly alter the county ranking for value of agricultural products sold per acre of land in farms. Significant changes of county totals for "land in farms" sometimes occur when multicounty farming operators shift their principal activity to a different county between censuses or when large tracts of owned or rented land change hands to operators in different counties. Also, large tracts of essentially nonagricultural land occasionally move in and out of county totals for "land in farms" depending on the judgement of the person filling out the report.

**Table 4. Value of crops sold per acre of cropland harvested**—Many of the ranking counties in this table produce predomi-

nantly specialty crops, and county rank may vary considerably from census to census depending on unusual weather conditions in the census year or on large price fluctuations.

**Table 8. Value of forest products sold**—There is much variation between the leading counties for 1974 and 1969 for this item. The fact that forest products are harvested at different intervals than most crops, acreage of woodland included in the census of agriculture differs, county allocation of woodland differs, and economic factors relating to harvesting forest products differ, all contribute to a wide variation in the rank of counties between the censuses.

**Table 9. Value of livestock, poultry, and their products sold**—See the explanation for tables 1 and 35.

**Table 16. Number of farms**—The number of farms for 1974 is based on the farm definition used for 1974 while the number of farms for 1969 is based on the definition used for 1959, 1964, and 1969. For a more detailed explanation of the change in definition and measure of the effect of the change, see appendix A of Volume I, *State and County Data*, and part 1 of Volume II, *Statistics by Subject*, of the 1974 Census of Agriculture.

**Table 17. 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 Navajo County, Ariz., is 7.2 million acres, "land in farms" for farms with sales of \$2,500 and over (excluding abnormal farms) is only 1.1 million acres. Correspondingly, the average value of land and buildings per farm for all farms in Navajo County is \$2,005,297 but only \$504,466 per farm for farms with sales of \$2,500 and over (excluding abnormal farms).

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**Table 35. Cattle fattened on grain concentrates and sold for slaughter**—Unusually poor economic conditions affecting the cattle industry in 1974 undoubtedly influenced the rankings shown in the tables on cattle sold and value of cattle sold. Many feedlot operators suffered staggering financial losses from a combination of high prices paid for feeder stock and feed, and low prices received for finished beef. To minimize their losses, many feedlot operators severely curtailed the scale of their feeding operations during the last half of 1974. At the end of the 1974 census year, some feedlots were empty while many others had drastically reduced their inventory to a fraction of their normal capacity. Had it not been for the reduced scale of operations at the close of 1974, the figures for fattened cattle sold would have shown more of an increase in 1974.

**Table 45. Horses and ponies on farms**—The data are only for the number of horses and ponies on farms, not for the total horse and pony population of the United States. Many (perhaps the majority of) horses and ponies are not kept on farms.

**Table 62. Land from which hay was cut**—Acreage from which hay was cut was obtained by summarizing the acreage harvested of each of the dry hay crops, grass silage, haylage, and hay crops cut and fed green. If two or more cuttings of hay, grass silage, haylage, or green chop were made from the same acres, the acres were counted once, but the total tons harvested from all cuttings were reported. The rankings for tons harvested is based on a "dry ton" equivalent. Harvested amounts of grass silage, haylage, and green chop reported in "tons, green"

were converted to "dry tons" equivalent by dividing by three.

**Tables 70-77. 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 78-88. Fruits, pecans, and strawberries**—County rankings for fruit production for a particular year are influenced largely by weather conditions. A late killing spring frost, 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.