

NUMBER OF FARMS AND LAND IN FARMS
 United States 1959-65
 By States 1963-65

January 13, 1965

TREND TO FEWER AND LARGER FARMS CONTINUES

The number of farms in the Nation operated in 1964 decreased 3 percent from the previous year to a total of 3,479,000 farms, according to the Crop Reporting Board. Total land in farms at about 1,159 million acres decreased less than 1 percent, yielding slowly to encroachments of urban and suburban extensions, widening highways, and other non-farm uses.

Preliminary estimates for 1965 farm numbers and land in farms are shown by States on page 2. The total of 3,383,000 farms in prospect for 1965 operation continues the downtrend with little change in rate. Data for some States, however, indicate some slackening in the decline in farm numbers. A reduction of less than 1 percent in farm land acreage is estimated.

The table below shows how important the changes in farm numbers and average size have been in the short time of 7 years. Farm numbers during this period from 1959 to 1965 have decreased 18 percent while land in farms decreased 2 percent. The "average farm operator" for 1965 runs a farm unit averaging 341 acres--nearly a fifth larger than six years earlier. Average farm sizes shown in the table are derived by dividing estimated total acreage in farms by the number of farms. Discontinuance of small farming enterprises and merging of larger units with existing farms continue important influences in the change in farm numbers.

This report includes data for Alaska and Hawaii in national totals for all years presented. State data for farm numbers for 48 States, 1910-1959, are published in Statistical Bul. 316, June 1962.

Number of Farms and Land in Farms, U. S. 1959-65

Year	Farms (Thousands)	Land in Farms (Thousand Acres)	Average Size of Farm (Acres)
1959	4,105	1,182,658	288
1960	3,956	1,177,565	298
1961	3,818	1,172,910	307
1962	3,695	1,168,115	316
1963	3,580	1,163,180	325
1964	3,479	1,158,505	333
1965 ^{1/}	3,383	1,154,545	341

^{1/} Preliminary.

Number of Farms and Land in Farms, by States, 1963-65

State	Number of Farms			Land in Farms		
	1963	1964	1965 1/	1963 1,000 acres	1964 1,000 acres	1965 1/ 1,000 acres
Maine	17,000	16,300	15,700	3,250	3,180	3,100
N.H.	5,800	5,500	5,200	1,150	1,120	1,070
Vt.	12,000	11,600	11,200	3,100	3,020	2,910
Mass.	11,000	10,400	9,800	1,170	1,130	1,080
R.I.	1,300	1,200	1,200	130	125	125
Conn.	8,100	7,700	7,400	1,020	990	960
N.Y.	76,000	72,000	68,000	13,700	13,500	13,200
N.J.	13,800	13,000	12,000	1,370	1,330	1,250
Pa.	92,000	88,000	85,000	11,700	11,500	11,300
Ohio	134,000	130,000	126,000	18,600	18,400	18,200
Ind.	124,000	122,000	119,000	19,100	19,000	18,900
Ill.	148,000	144,000	141,000	30,400	30,300	30,100
Mich.	108,000	105,000	102,000	14,500	14,300	14,100
Wis.	130,000	127,000	124,000	21,800	21,600	21,400
Minn.	149,000	146,000	144,000	32,400	32,400	32,400
Iowa	174,000	170,000	165,000	34,700	34,600	34,600
Mo.	165,000	162,000	160,000	34,400	34,400	34,400
N.Dak.	51,500	50,500	49,000	42,100	42,100	42,000
S.Dak.	55,100	53,500	52,000	45,100	45,000	44,900
Nebr.	86,000	84,000	82,000	48,100	48,100	48,100
Kans.	103,000	101,000	99,000	50,000	49,900	49,900
Del.	5,200	5,000	4,900	770	760	750
Md.	24,600	23,600	23,000	3,600	3,550	3,500
Va.	92,000	88,000	85,000	13,200	13,100	13,000
W.Va.	40,000	38,000	37,000	6,400	6,200	6,100
N.C.	198,000	195,000	190,000	17,400	17,300	17,200
S.C.	72,000	68,000	65,000	9,300	9,100	9,000
Ga.	95,000	91,000	88,000	20,400	20,000	19,800
Fla.	43,000	41,000	39,000	16,200	15,900	15,900
Ky.	147,000	144,000	142,000	17,700	17,600	17,500
Tenn.	156,000	154,000	152,000	16,200	16,200	16,100
Ala.	103,000	101,000	100,000	16,300	16,100	16,000
Miss.	119,000	114,000	109,000	18,900	18,600	18,300
Ark.	86,000	82,000	78,000	17,400	17,200	17,000
La.	71,000	68,000	65,000	10,400	10,200	10,000
Okla.	91,000	88,000	85,000	37,400	37,300	37,300
Texas	216,000	210,000	202,000	154,000	154,000	154,000
Mont.	30,800	30,400	30,000	66,700	66,700	66,600
Idaho	36,300	36,000	35,800	15,300	15,300	15,300
Wyo.	9,800	9,600	9,500	35,900	35,800	35,800
Colo.	34,000	33,000	32,000	41,000	41,000	41,000
N.Mex.	16,100	15,400	14,900	51,700	51,700	51,600
Ariz.	7,300	7,000	6,700	45,000	45,000	45,000
Utah	16,700	15,800	15,000	13,600	13,500	13,500
Nev.	2,300	2,200	2,100	8,900	8,800	8,800
Wash.	53,000	52,000	51,000	18,200	18,200	18,200
Oreg.	45,000	44,500	43,500	21,200	21,200	21,200
Calif.	98,000	95,000	92,000	38,800	38,700	38,600
48 States:	3,572,700	3,472,200	3,375,900	1,159,660	1,155,005	1,151,045
Alaska 2/ :	400	380	380	920	900	900
Hawaii ... :	6,700	6,600	6,500	2,600	2,600	2,600
U. S. :	3,579,800	3,479,180	3,382,780	1,163,180	1,158,505	1,154,545

1/ Preliminary. 2/ Exclusive of grazing land leased from U.S. Government, Alaska farmland totals about 80,000 acres.

Basis for Estimates of Number of Farms

The estimates of the number of farms by years published by the Crop Reporting Board are benchmarked on the quinquennial Census of Agriculture with adjustments for incompleteness. The annual estimates between Census years are based upon expansions and projections from the Statistical Reporting Service enumerative and mailed surveys, data from State farm censuses in a limited number of States, indications derived from other various inquiries, and extension of trends.

Post-Census analyses by the Bureau of the Census indicated that the count of the number of farms was short by about 8 percent in both 1954 and 1959. Additional analysis indicated that some places covered by Whole Farm Soil Bank contracts were not considered farms in the 1959 enumeration. An explanation of these special studies is shown in the General Report of the Bureau of the Census for 1959, and allowance for such incompleteness or difference in definition is included in the estimates.

Annual State farm censuses supply data on numbers of farms in 12 States, 10 of which are in the North Central Region. Changes shown by these surveys are the principal basis for the annual estimates in these States. Some of these censuses may be less inclusive than the U.S. Census with respect to farms that are marginal either in size or in sales of farm products. Annual appraisals of the data are made for each State.

The annual enumerative surveys provide indications of the number of farms in operation at the time the surveys are conducted. Beginning with small samples in 1957 these surveys are being expanded with resulting gains in dependability of indications. In 1963 the number of area segments enumerated in 28 States was about 10,500. Enumeration also was expanded to represent 48 States with some area segments in each State and a national total of 12,350 segments. In 1964 the sample again represented 48 States with a total of 14,015 segments, 12,435 in 32 States. Variability in the enumerative data is of course greater for individual States than for all States combined, and the data are necessarily interpreted with regard to sample size, consistency, procedural changes and trends in individual States, as well as geographic regions.

In addition to data from the Census and enumerative surveys, various collateral data aid in estimating the direction and extent of change in number of farms. The regular mail surveys conducted by the Statistical Reporting Service in estimating crop and livestock numbers provide comparisons of size of reporting farms. In some States, data are available on the number of farms selling milk, or the number of producers of other commodities produced commercially.

Estimates of land in farms represent the places defined as farms in the number of farms estimates. As in the Census of Agriculture, these estimates of farm land exclude Government owned land grazed on a permit or fee basis but include land leased from the Government for grazing purposes. In Alaska this type of land represents about 840,000 acres of the total, leaving about 80,000 acres of other land, averaging about 200 acres per farm.

Estimates of number of farms and land in farms for 1965 are to a large extent based on extension of previous trends. They are published by States on a preliminary basis and are subject to revision as results of enumerative surveys, State farm censuses, and the U.S. Federal Census of 1964 become available. With each Federal Census, the annual estimates published by the Crop Reporting Board are revised to bring the series in line with the results of the Census, with appropriate adjustments for under-enumeration.

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