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SPECIAL REPORTS

**ECONOMIC CLASS AND
TYPE OF FARM**

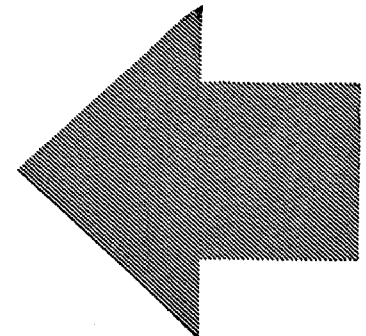
A GRAPHIC SUMMARY

Cooperative Report

VOLUME V PART 9

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1952

**COMMERCIAL FARMS • OTHER FARMS •
RELATIONSHIPS • CHARACTERISTICS •
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PREFACE

Part 9, "Economic Class and Type of Farm—A Graphic Summary," of Volume V of the reports of the 1950 Census of Agriculture, is one of the graphic summaries based largely on the reports of the 1950 Census. This report presents graphically some of the significant facts regarding the characteristics and relationships of the economic classes of farms and the types of farms in the United States.

This report was prepared cooperatively by the Bureau of the Census, United States Department of Commerce, and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

This report was prepared principally by Alvin T. M. Lee and Warder B. Jenkins of the Bureau of the Census, and Kenneth L. Bachman, Robert B. Glasgow, and Ronald L. Mighell of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Charles F. Frazier, James M. Lindsey, Ralph G. Altman, John C. Volentine, and Helen C. Leahy assisted in the preparation and review of the statistical and graphic materials. Most of the maps and some of the charts were prepared under the supervision of Clarence E. Batschelet, Chief of the Geography Division of the Bureau of the Census.

DECEMBER 1952.

III

UNITED STATES CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: 1950

REPORTS

Volume I.—Counties and State Economic Areas.—Statistics for counties include number of farms, acreage, value, and farm operators; farms by size, by color and tenure of operator; facilities and equipment, farm labor, and farm expenditures; livestock and livestock products; specified crops harvested; farms and farm characteristics for commercial farms; farms classified by value of farm products sold, by type of farm, and by economic class; and value of products sold by source.

Data for State economic areas include farms and farm characteristics by size of farm, by tenure of operator, by type of farm, and by economic class.

Volume I will be published in 34 parts as follows:

Part	State or States	Part	State or States
1	New England States: Maine. New Hampshire. Vermont. Massachusetts. Rhode Island. Connecticut.	15	South Atlantic—Continued Virginia and West Virginia.
2	Middle Atlantic States: New York. New Jersey. Pennsylvania.	16	North Carolina and South Carolina.
3	East North Central: Ohio.	17	Georgia.
4	Indiana.	18	Florida.
5	Illinois.	19	East South Central: Kentucky.
6	Michigan.	20	Tennessee.
7	Wisconsin.	21	Alabama.
8	West North Central: Minnesota.	22	Mississippi.
9	Iowa.	23	West South Central: Arkansas.
10	Missouri.	24	Louisiana.
11	North Dakota and South Dakota.	25	Oklahoma.
12	Nebraska.	26	Texas.
13	Kansas.	27	Mountain: Montana.
14	South Atlantic: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia.	28	Idaho.
		29	Wyoming and Colorado.
		30	New Mexico and Arizona.
		31	Utah and Nevada.
		32	Pacific: Washington and Oregon.
		33	California.
		34	Territories and possessions.

Volume II.—General Report.—Statistics by Subjects, United States Census of Agriculture, 1950.—Summary data and analyses of the data for States, for Geographic Divisions, and for the United States by subjects as illustrated by the chapter titles listed below:

Chapter	Title	Chapter	Title
I	Farms and Land in Farms.	VII	Field Crops and Vegetables.
II	Age, Residence, Years on Farm, Work off Farm.	VIII	Fruits and Nuts, Horticultural Specialties, Forest Products.
III	Farm Facilities, Roads, Trading Center, Farm Equipment.	IX	Value of Farm Products.
IV	Farm Labor and Farm Expenditures.	X	Size of Farm.
V	Farm Taxes and Cash Rent.	XI	Color, Race, and Tenure of Farm Operator.
VI	Livestock and Livestock Products.	XII	Economic Class of Farm.
		XIII	Type of Farm.

Volume III.—Irrigation of Agricultural Lands.—State reports with data for counties and drainage basins and a summary for the United States, including number of enterprises, irrigation works and equipment, source of water, new capital investment since 1940, cost of irrigation water, number of farms and acreage irrigated, and quantity of water used for irrigation purposes.

The State reports will be issued as separate parts of Volume III as follows:

Part	State	Part	State
1	Arizona.	10	Nebraska.
2	Arkansas and Oklahoma.	11	Nevada.
3	California.	12	New Mexico.
4	Colorado.	13	North Dakota and South Dakota.
5	Florida.	14	Oregon.
6	Idaho.	15	Texas.
7	Kansas.	16	Utah.
8	Louisiana.	17	Washington.
9	Montana.	18	Wyoming.

Volume IV.—Drainage of Agricultural Lands.—State reports with statistics for counties and a summary for the United States. One part only. Data on land in drainage enterprises, number and types of enterprises, cost of drainage, indebtedness, assessments, and drainage works.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

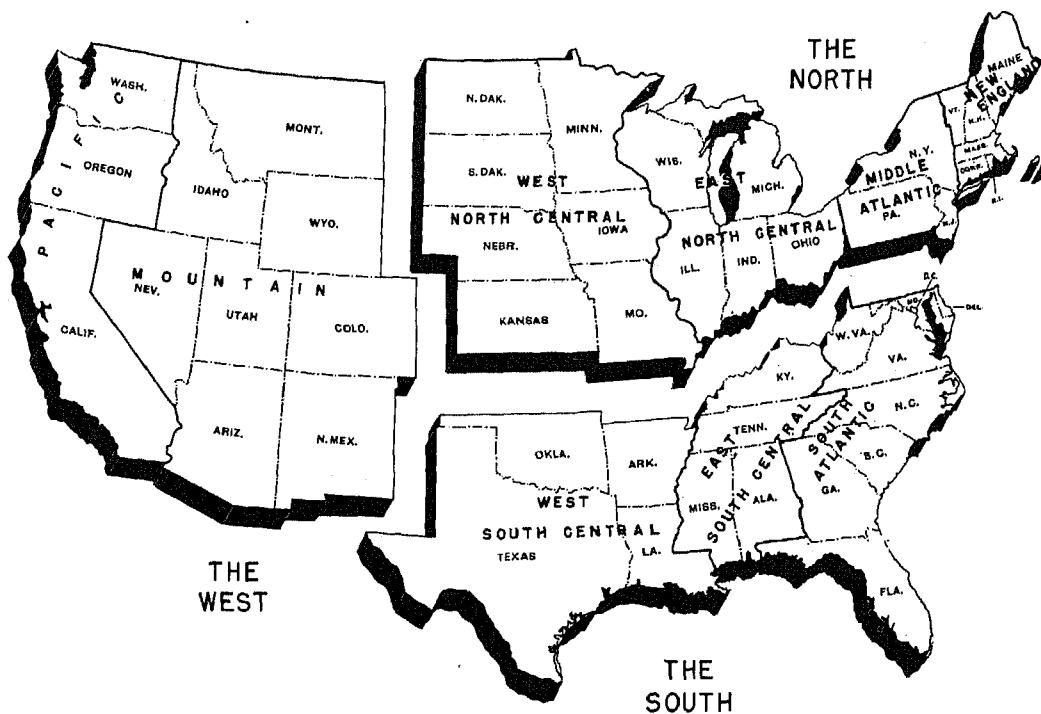
	Page
Introduction.....	1
General view of the Nation's farms.....	2
Economic classes of commercial farms.....	12
Type of commercial farms.....	28
Other farms (part-time, residential, and abnormal).....	52

CHARTS AND MAPS WITH ACCOMPANYING DISCUSSION

	Page		Page
Map of the United States, showing geographic regions and divisions.....	VII	Commercial farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
State economic areas for agriculture: Census of 1950.....	VII	Economic class I farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
Number of farms, April 1, 1950.....	2	Economic class II farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
Commercial farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	2	Economic class III farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
Other farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	2	Economic class IV farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
Commercial farms as a percent of all farms, April 1, 1950.....	3	Economic class V farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
Percent of all farm products sold represented by commercial farms, 1949.....	3	Economic class VI farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	13
Cropland harvested as a percent of the total land area, Census of 1950.....	4	Percent distribution of commercial farms by economic class, by States: Census of 1950.....	14
Average value of all crops harvested per acre of cropland harvested, 1949.....	4	Percent distribution of total value of all farm products sold, by economic class of farm, for commercial farms, by States: Census of 1950.....	15
Distribution of selected resources for the United States by regions and by commercial and other farms within regions: Census of 1950.....	5	Number of multiple units: Census of 1950.....	16
Total value of all crops harvested, 1949.....	6	Farms in multiple units as a percent of all farms: Census of 1950.....	16
Value of all crops sold, dollars, 1949.....	6	Level of income areas—based on specified combination of economic classes accounting for 70 percent or more of commercial farms: Census of 1950.....	17
Value of all livestock and livestock products sold, dollars, 1949.....	7	Percent distribution of the number of farms, land in farms, number of cows, value of all farm products sold, and number of farm workers, by economic class of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	18
Value of all farm products sold, 1949.....	7	Land in farms, value of land and buildings, number of cows, and number of farm workers—Averages per farm in each economic class of farms, for commercial farms, the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	19
Percent of totals for all farms, represented by commercial and other farms for selected characteristics, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	8	Percent distribution of the major uses of land by economic class of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	20
Number of commercial and other farms, with total cropland and value of farm products sold, by States: Census of 1950.....	9	Number of farms reporting irrigation and acreage of land irrigated, by economic class of farm, for the United States and the West: Census of 1950.....	21
Percent distribution of the number of farms and land in farms, by size of farm, for the United States and regions: Censuses of 1950 and 1920.....	10	Yield per acre of specified crops, by economic class of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States: Census of 1950.....	22
Farms of less than 10 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11	Specified expenditures per dollar of farm products sold, by economic class of farm for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	23
Farms of 10–29 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11	Percent of farms reporting telephone, electricity, electric hot-water heater, home freezer, electric washing machine, and average of last monthly electric bill, by economic class of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	24
Farms of 30–49 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11	Percent of farms reporting tractors, motortrucks, and automobiles, by age of newest model, by economic class of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	25
Farms of 50–99 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11		
Farms of 100–179 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11		
Farms of 180–259 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11		
Farms of 260–499 acres—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11		
Farms of 500 acres and over—Increase and decrease in number, April 1, 1940–April 1, 1950.....	11		
Number of farms, April 1, 1950.....	13		

	Page		Page
Percent distribution of commercial farms by size and economic class of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	26	Percent distribution of major uses of land in farms by type of farm for commercial farms, for the United States and regions, 1950.....	44
Percent distribution of commercial farms by tenure of operator and by economic class of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	27	Acreage of irrigated land by type of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States and the West: Census of 1950.....	45
Percent distribution of commercial farms by type, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	29	Percent of farms reporting telephones, automobiles, motor-trucks, and tractors, by type of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	46
Percent of all commercial farms represented by the four most important types of farms in each State: Census of 1950.....	30	Percent of farms reporting electricity and average of last monthly electric bill, by type of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	47
Counties classified by major source of income: Census of 1950.....	31	Years on farm—Percent of operators reporting, by type of farm for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	48
Type-of-farming areas, based on type accounting for 50 percent or more of commercial farms: Census of 1950.....	32	Percent distribution of commercial farms by tenure of operator and type of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	49
Cash-grain farms, number: Census of 1950.....	34	Percent distribution of commercial farms by size and type of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	50
All wheat threshed, acreage, 1949.....	34	Percent distribution of commercial farms by economic class and type of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	51
Corn harvested for grain, acreage, 1949.....	34	Number of other farms per square mile of land area, 1950.....	52
Soybeans harvested for beans, acreage, 1949.....	34	Part-time farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	53
Rice threshed, acreage, 1949.....	34	Residential farms, number, April 1, 1950.....	53
Cotton farms, number: Census of 1950.....	35	Age of operator—Percent under 25 years of age and percent 65 years of age and over, by economic class of farm for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	54
Cotton harvested, acreage, 1949.....	35	Percent of totals for all farms represented by totals for part-time, residential, and abnormal farms, for selected resources, for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	55
Other field-crop farms, number: Census of 1950.....	35	Part-time farms—Averages per farm reporting, and percent of farms reporting, for selected resources, for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	56
Tobacco harvested, acreage, 1949.....	35	Residential farms—Averages per farm reporting and percent of farms reporting, for selected resources, for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	57
Irish potatoes, acreage, 1949.....	35	Percent of part-time and residential farms reporting specified work power, equipment and facilities, for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	58
Sugar beets harvested for sugar, acreage, 1949.....	35	Percent distribution of full owners, part owners, managers and tenants, by economic class of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	59
Sugarcane cut for sugar or for sale to mills, acreage, 1949.....	35	Percent of farm operators reporting that other income of family exceeded value of agricultural products sold, by economic class of farm, for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	60
Peanuts grown for all purposes, acreage, 1949.....	35	Comparison of the percent distribution of commercial farms and part-time farms, by type of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	61
Vegetable farms, number: Census of 1950.....	36	Off-farm work—Percent of operators reporting specified number of days off-farm work, by economic class of farm, for the United States and divisions: Census of 1950.....	62
Value of vegetables harvested for sale, dollars, 1949.....	36		
Fruit-and-nut farms, number: Census of 1950.....	36		
Value of fruits and nuts sold, dollars, 1949.....	36		
Dairy farms, number: Census of 1950.....	36		
Value of dairy products sold, dollars, 1949.....	36		
Poultry farms, number: Census of 1950.....	37		
Chicken eggs sold, dozens, 1949.....	37		
Chickens sold, number, 1949.....	37		
Turkeys raised, number, 1949.....	37		
Livestock farms, number: Census of 1950.....	38		
Cattle sold, number of cattle and calves sold alive, 1949.....	38		
Hogs sold, number of hogs and pigs sold alive, 1949.....	38		
Sheep sold, number of sheep and lambs sold alive, 1949.....	38		
Percent distribution of the value of farm products sold, and the relative importance of the product or group of products determining type, by type of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States: Census of 1950.....	39		
General farms, number: Census of 1950.....	39		
Value of farm products sold, by source, for the United States and regions, 1949.....	40		
Specified expenditures per dollar of farm products sold, by type of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States: Census of 1950.....	41		
Land in farms, value of farm products sold and number of farm workers, by type of farm, for commercial farms, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	42		
Land in farms, value of land and buildings, value of farm products sold, and number of farm workers—Average for each type of farm, for the United States and regions: Census of 1950.....	43		

GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS AND DIVISIONS



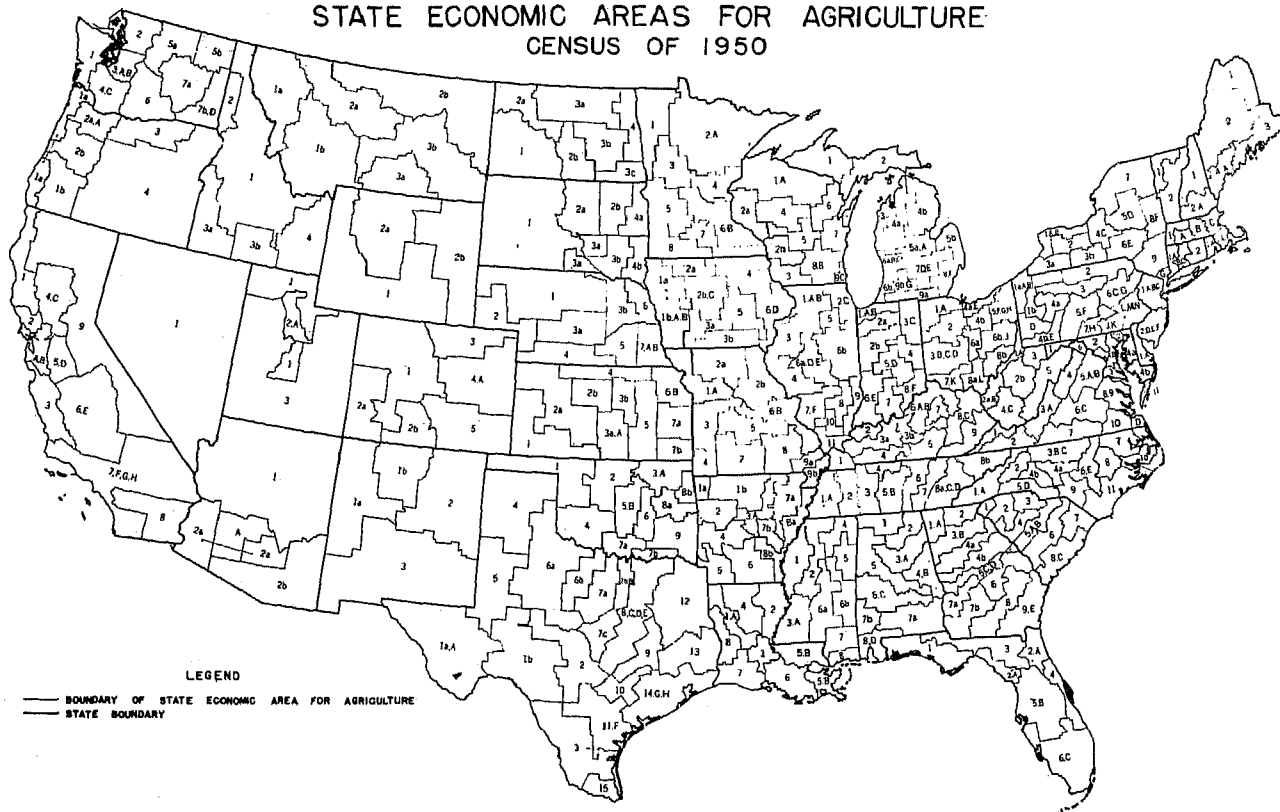
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This map shows the States comprising each of the three major regions—the North, the South, and the West. It also shows the divisions within each region. This geographical grouping of the

States serves as the basis for presenting most of the data in this report.

STATE ECONOMIC AREAS FOR AGRICULTURE CENSUS OF 1950



State economic areas represent groupings of counties within a State. The counties comprising a State economic area have

closely similar agricultural, demographic, climatic, physiographic, and cultural characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

This publication is one of a series of special reports based on the 1950 Census of Agriculture. For the first time, it has been possible to present a graphic summary of agriculture in the United States showing how the Nation's farm resources are distributed by different economic classes of farms as well as by types of farms. Commercial farms are divided into separate economic classes in accordance with value of products sold. Through this division, the characteristics of large-scale, family-scale, and small-scale farms can be more accurately described.

This report is designed to convey the broad relationships of economic class of farm and of type of farm to agricultural resources and output characteristics. In this report, the Nation as a whole and the broad regions are the centers of interest. For most items for commercial farms, comparisons in the graphic material are shown for the three broad regions, the North, the South, and the West. For part-time and residential farms, comparisons are shown for the nine geographic divisions because of the influence of more localized nonfarm employment opportunities. Occasionally, data are shown for individual States.

This report is divided into five sections: (1) Introduction; (2) general view of the Nation's farms; (3) economic classes of commercial farms; (4) types of commercial farms; and (5) other farms (part-time, residential, and abnormal).

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

The terms and definitions are those used in the basic publications of the 1950 Census of Agriculture. The details of the classification of farms by economic class and by type are given in the appropriate parts of this report. Some of the more general definitions follow.

A farm.—For the 1950 Census of Agriculture, places of 3 or more acres were counted as farms if the value of agricultural products in 1949, exclusive of home gardens, amounted to \$150 or more. The agricultural products could have been either for home use or for sale. Places of less than 3 acres were counted as farms only if the value of sales of agricultural products in 1949 amounted to \$150 or more. Places operated in 1949 for which the value of agricultural products in 1949 was less than these minima because of crop failure or other unusual situation, and places operated in 1950 for the first time were counted as farms if normally they could be expected to produce these minimum quantities of farm products.

All land under the control of one person or partnership was included as one farm. Control may have been through ownership, or through lease, rental, or cropping arrangement.

Farm operator.—A "farm operator" is a person who operates a farm either performing the labor himself or directly supervising it. He may be an owner, a hired manager, or a tenant, renter, or share cropper. If he rents land to others or has land cropped for him by others, he is listed as the operator of only that land which he retains. In the case of a partnership, one member was included as the operator. The number of farm operators is considered the same as the number of farms.

Most of the 1950 data in this summary are estimates based on reports for only a sample of farms. For a description of the sample, reference may be made to the Introduction to Volume II, "General Report, Statistics by Subjects," of the reports of the 1950 Census of Agriculture.

Economic class of farm.—All farms were classified into two major groups, namely, commercial farms and other farms. The estimated totals, based on the sample, were about 3.7 million commercial farms and nearly 1.7 million other farms.

Commercial farms are divided into six groups on the basis of total value of farm products sold. In general, the six classes include those farms which reported a total value of sales of farm products in 1949 amounting to \$1,200 or more, and also those farms which reported a value of sales of farm products of \$250 to \$1,199, provided the farm operator worked off his farm less than 100 days in 1949, and provided further that the income of the farm operator and members of his family received from non-farm sources was less than the total value of all farm products sold. Abnormal farms were not included with the commercial group although a few of them had large gross incomes. A detailed description of the economic classes of commercial farms appears on page 12 of this report.

Other farms, as classified in the 1950 Census, include part-time, residential, and abnormal farms. A detailed description of these appears on page 52 of this report.

Type of farm.—Only the data for commercial farms are included in the section of this report relating to type of farm. More meaningful and useful data are provided when the part-time, residential, and abnormal farms are excluded from statistics showing characteristics of the commercial segment of farms. Moreover, averages and percentages based on the commercial farms and other farms separately are more useful for planning agricultural programs and for analyzing agricultural problems.

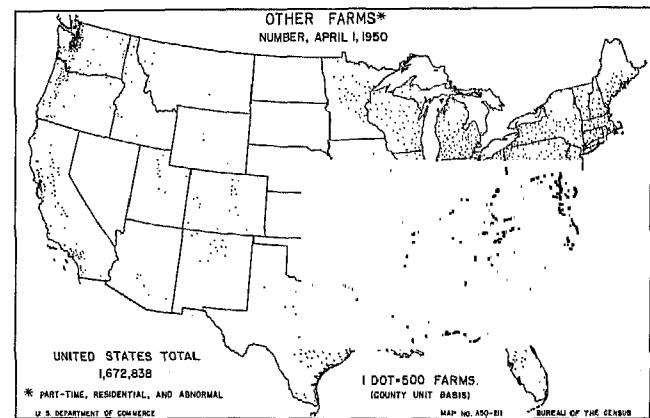
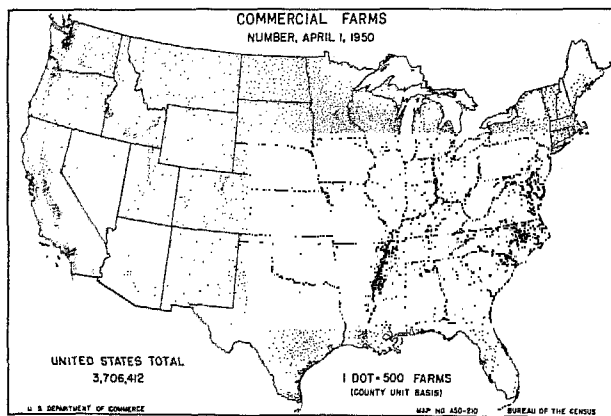
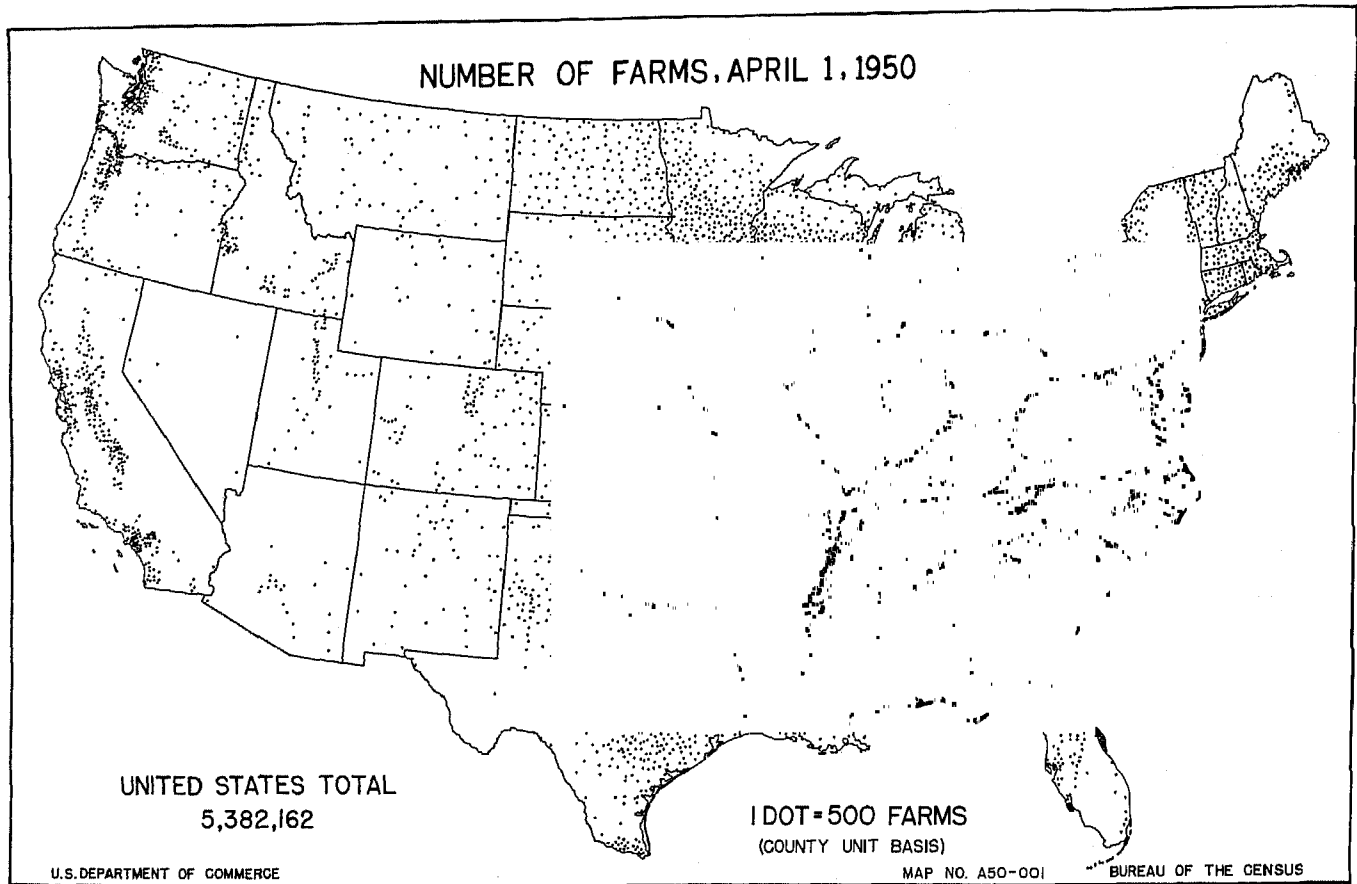
Part-time farms were classified by type only to the extent of getting a count of the number of each type. No other data are available for the different types of part-time farms.

Residential farms were not classified by type because the agricultural production on such places is relatively insignificant. For a farm to be classified as residential, the total value of farm products sold in 1949 had to be less than \$250. The term "residential" is descriptive of the principal economic purpose of most of these places.

Abnormal farms were not classified by type because the economic purpose of many of them is principally nonagricultural and the purpose and the characteristics of others are far different from those for the usual types of commercial farms.

Source of data.—The data for the charts showing the characteristics of farms by type are based on data from Economic Area Tables 7 and 11 of Volume I, "Counties and State Economic Areas," of the 1950 Census of Agriculture reports. Those relating to economic class of farm are based on data from Economic Area Tables 8 and 12 of the same volume. The data for the maps came largely from the county tables.

A GRAPHIC SUMMARY GENERAL VIEW OF THE NATION'S FARMS

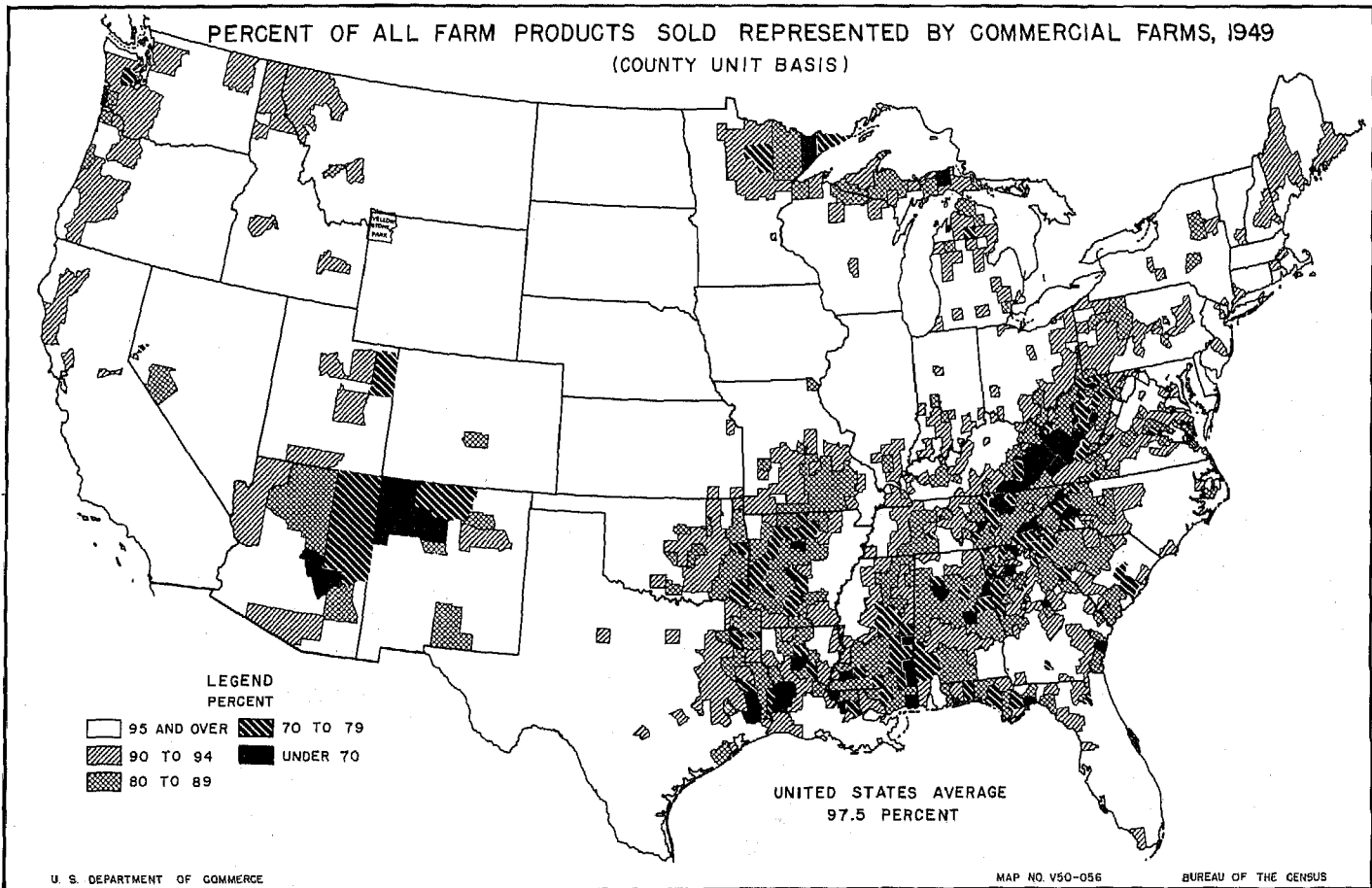
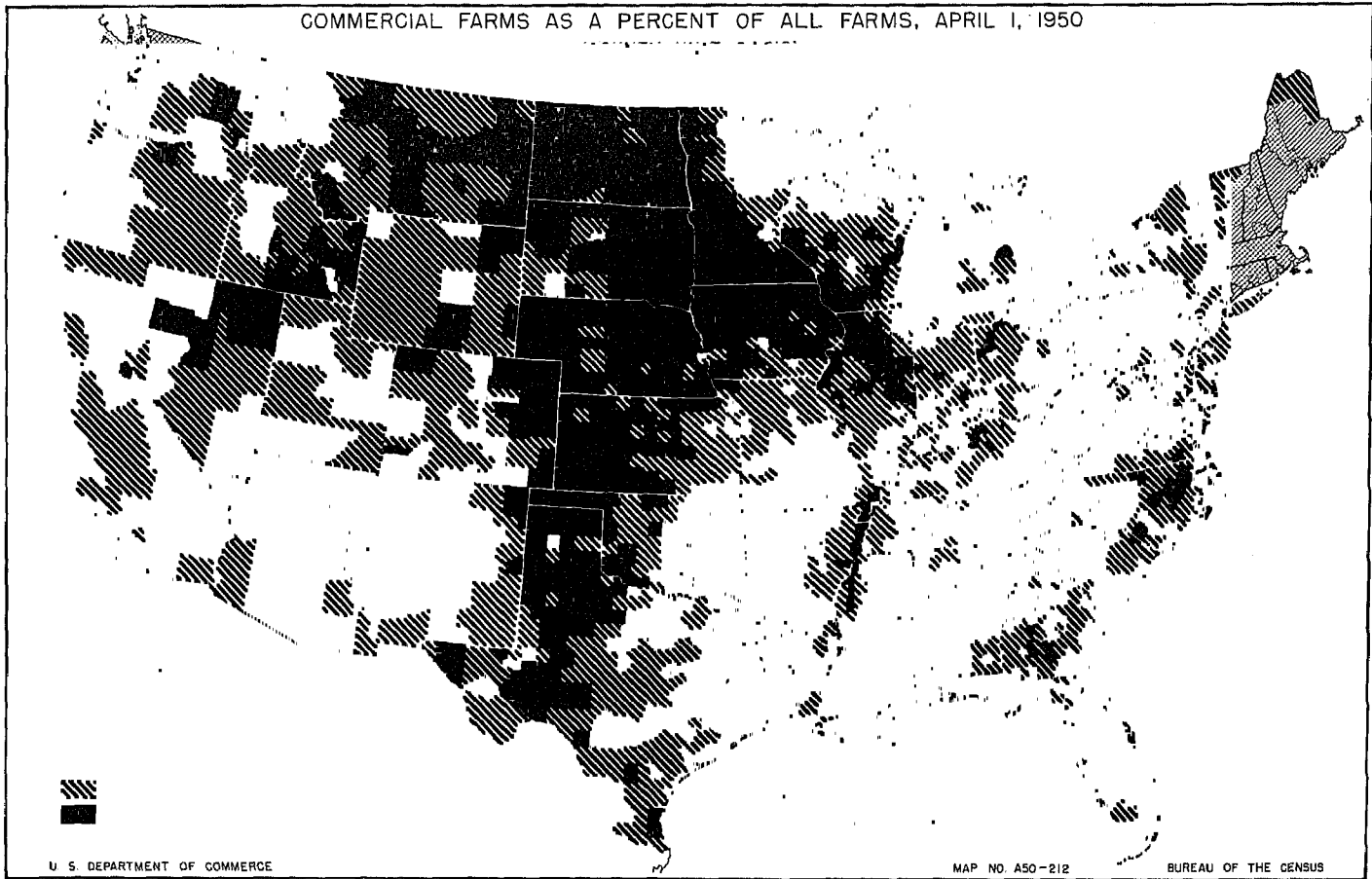


The small number of farms in most of the western half of the United States reflects the low average productivity of a region with rough terrain and limited rainfall. The farms are large on the average except in those areas where irrigation has been developed. The areas in the West in which large numbers of farms are clustered indicate the presence of irrigation. Exceptions to this are the Willamette Valley of Oregon and the Puget Sound area of Washington. In the latter areas, rainfall is sufficient to grow a variety of crops without irrigation.

In most areas east of the 100th meridian, there is a uniform and fairly heavy concentration of farms. The Mississippi River Flood Plains of Arkansas and Mississippi, the tobacco areas of North Carolina and South Carolina, and other scattered locations reflect large numbers of small farms. Fewer farms are found in other areas in the East in which the proportion of land adapted to agriculture is limited.

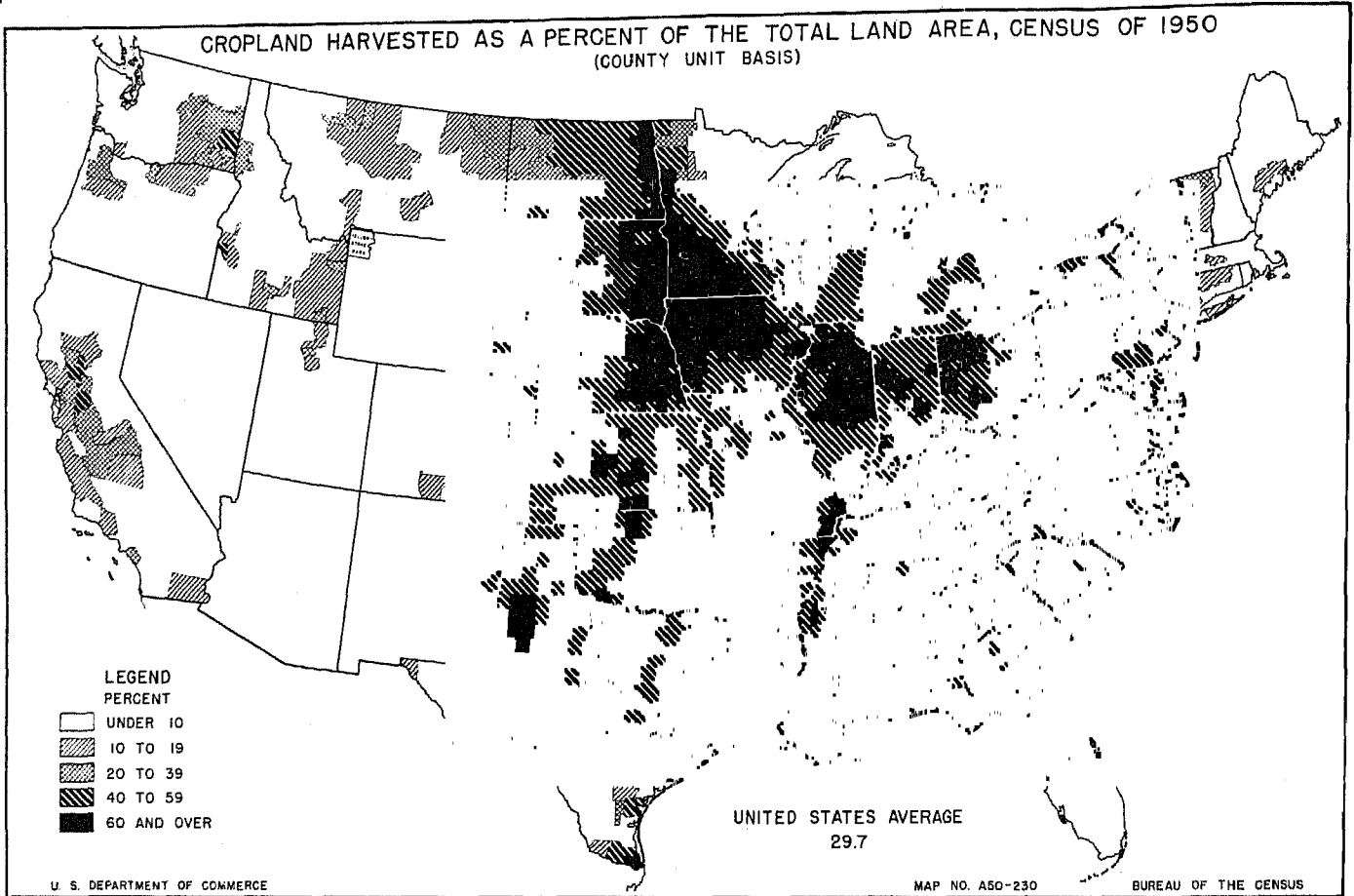
The upper map on the opposite page shows the commercial farms as a percent of all farms. In many parts of the United States, 75 percent or more of the farms are commercial farms. In the coal mining areas of Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia, and in other small areas of the South, less than 25 percent of the farms are commercial farms. Many families of the mining and industrial workers live on tracts of land of 3 or more acres and produce enough products to have their places considered as farms. In many other areas of the Southern States, only 25 to 49 percent of the farms are commercial farms. The large number of part-time and residential farms in the South is related to the widely dispersed textile and forest-products industries.

The lower map on the opposite page showing the percentage of all farm products sold represented by commercial farms gives a measure of the relative importance of commercial and other farms.

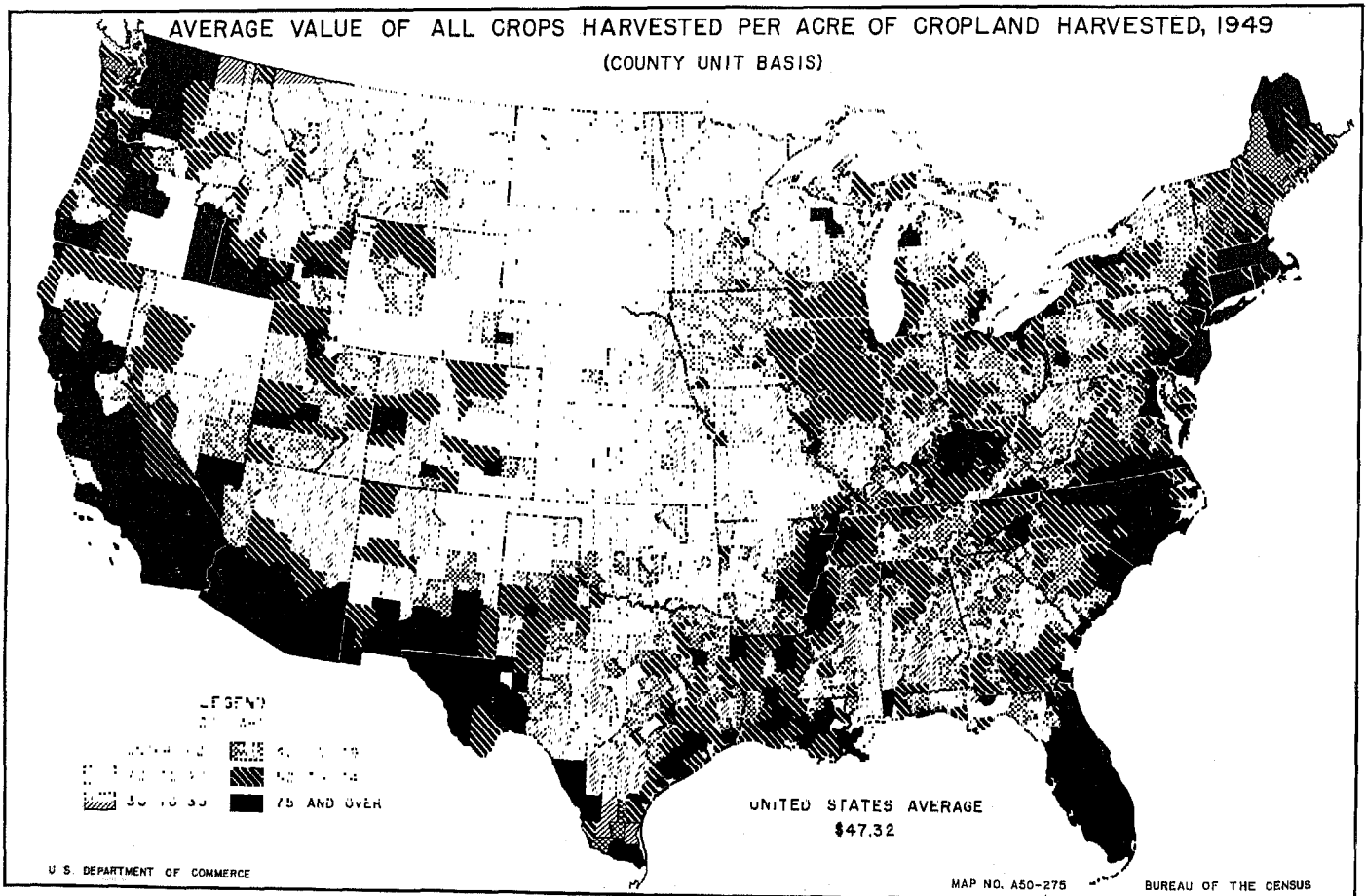


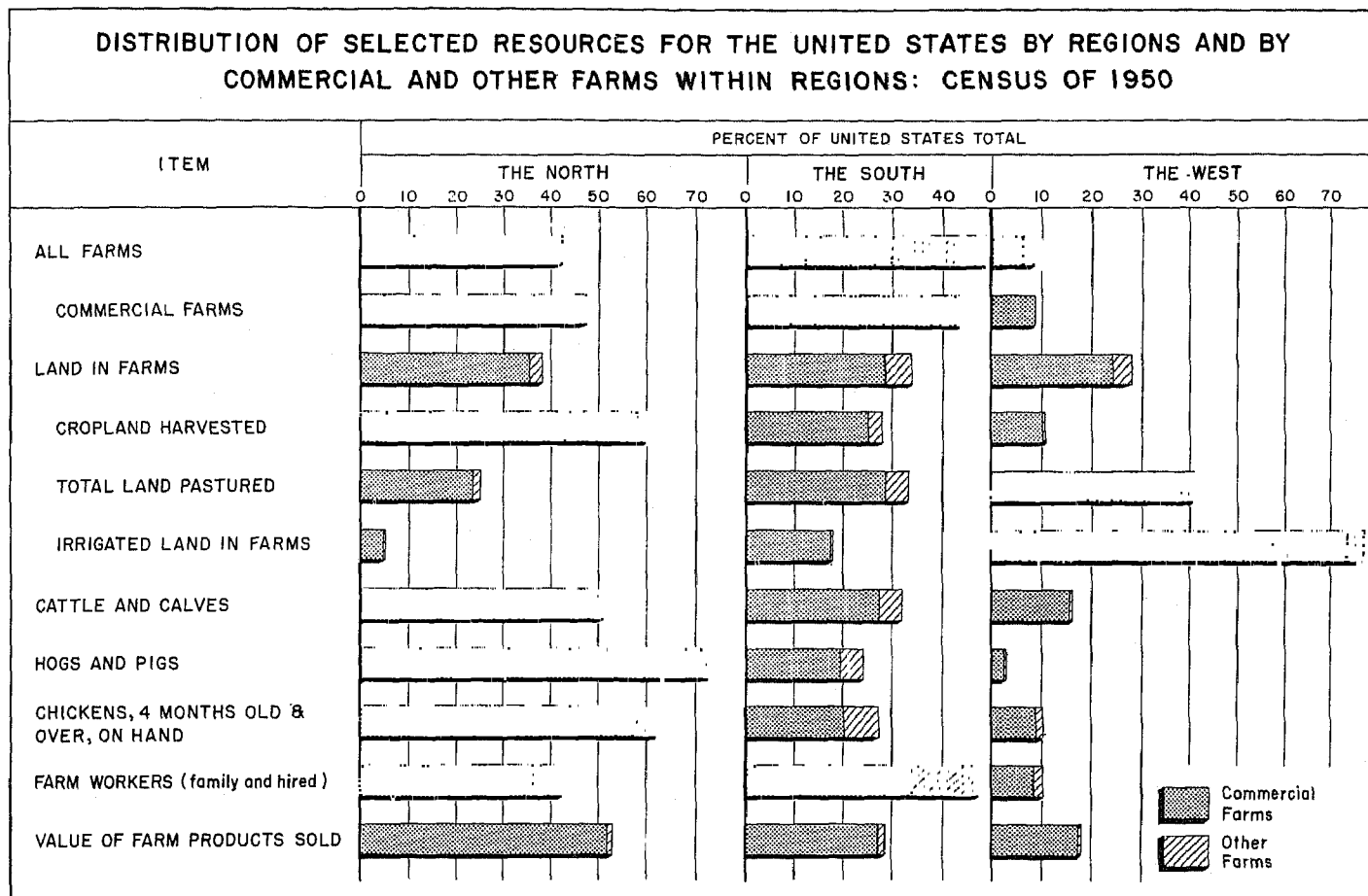
A GRAPHIC SUMMARY

CROPLAND HARVESTED AS A PERCENT OF THE TOTAL LAND AREA, CENSUS OF 1950 (COUNTY UNIT BASIS)



AVERAGE VALUE OF ALL CROPS HARVESTED PER ACRE OF GROPLAND HARVESTED, 1949 (COUNTY UNIT BASIS)





The top map on the opposite page shows the proportion of the total land area (land in farms and land not in farms) represented by the acreage of cropland harvested. Areas of greatest concentration are in the Corn Belt States, the Great Plains States, and the Mississippi River alluvial areas. In the eastern half of the United States much of the land is woodland, while in large areas of the West most of the land is nonforested grazing land.

The areas with a high average value per acre of all crops harvested are those in which truck crops, fruits, cotton, tobacco, and other crops with high labor requirements are produced and also those in which the crops are grown under irrigation. Thus, much of the South shows a high value per acre of crops harvested. However, in many parts of this region, less than 20 percent of the total land area is in cropland harvested. A large part of the region has less than 40 percent of the land in crops. Cotton and tobacco yield a high gross value per acre but the acreages per farm are small. The South, therefore, has many areas of high income per acre but low income per farm. In the West, the high value per acre of crops harvested is due to irrigation. Irrigation generally yields high per-acre returns but the water available is usually limited and irrigated cropland is restricted to small areas. In most of the counties in the West, less than 10 percent of the land area is represented by cropland harvested. The most extensive area of high-income land is the general area comprising northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin, and adjoining parts of Michigan, Indiana, and Iowa.

The contribution made by each of the three regions—the North, the South, and the West—to the United States total for each of the major farm resources varies greatly.

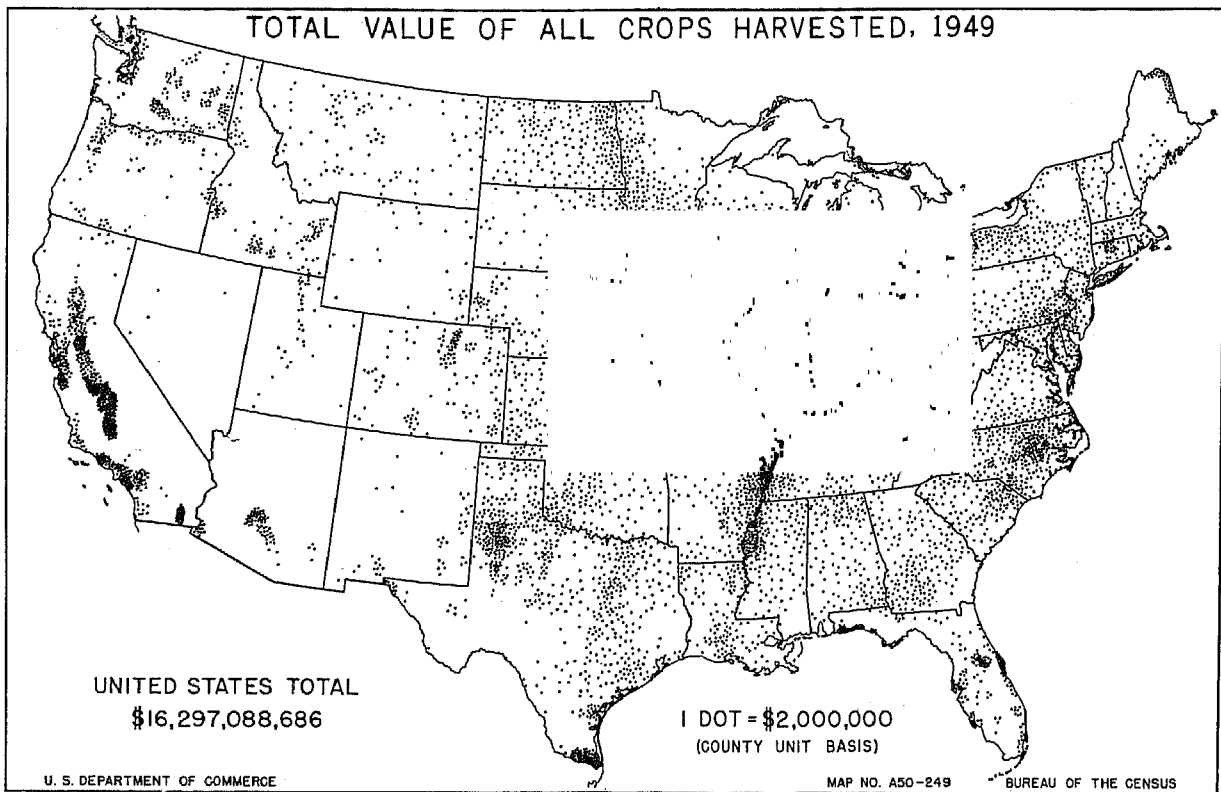
The North has about 31 percent of the total land area of the United States and about 38 percent of the land in farms. The percentage of most of the other farm resources found in the North is even greater because of the high proportion of productive land in that region. In 1950, the North had about 42 percent of the farms (48 percent of the commercial farms), 42 percent of the farm workers, 60 percent of the cropland harvested, 51 percent of the cattle, 73 percent of the hogs, and 62 percent of the chickens. This region accounted for 53 percent of the gross sales of farm products. Compared with the other regions, the North had a lower percentage of its land area in pasture and irrigated land.

The South, with about 30 percent of the total land area of the United States, contributed relatively more to the total number of farms, to the number of commercial farms, and to the number of farm workers than it did to any of the other items of farm resources. Important reasons are the large amount of hand labor used in the production of tobacco and cotton and the prevalence of the share-cropper tenure system where these crops are grown.

The West, with low annual precipitation and with a wide expanse of grazing lands and more restricted areas of productive agricultural lands in the irrigated valleys, had about 40 percent of the total pasture land and 77 percent of the irrigated land in the United States.

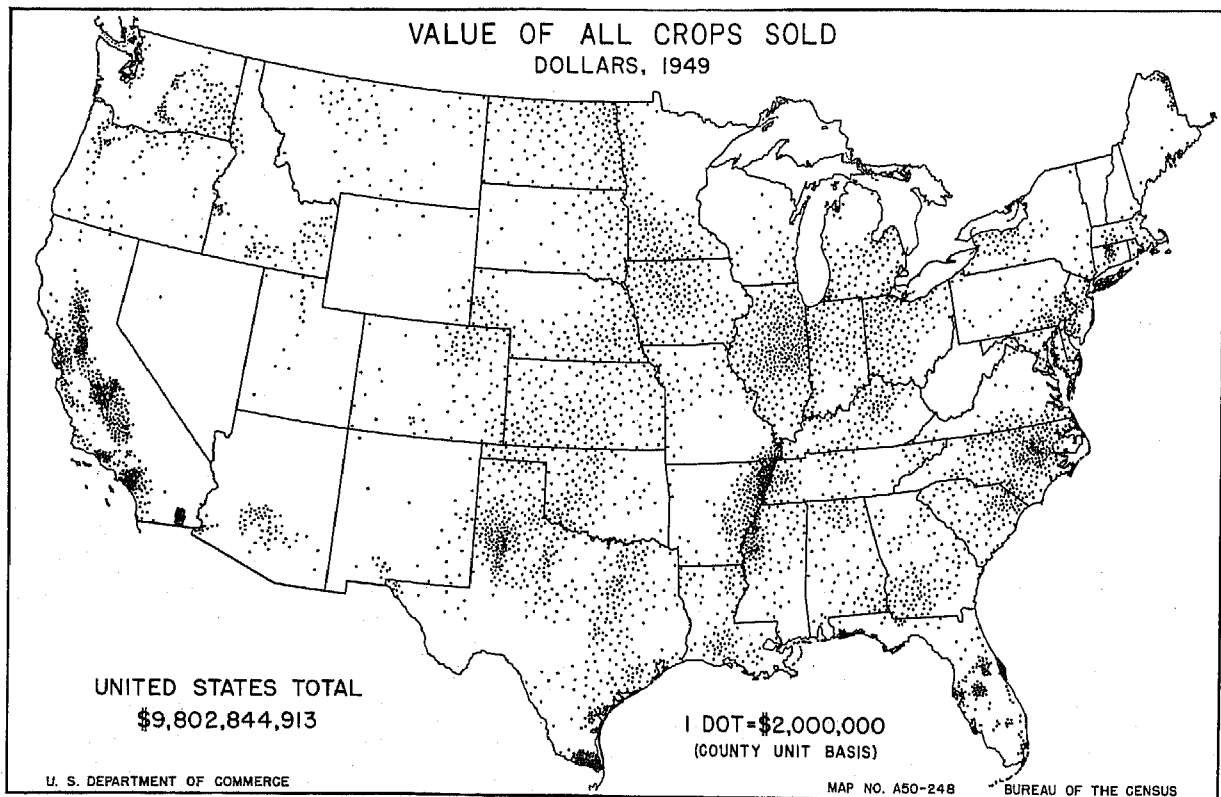
Some lands are used in the same year for both crop production and for pasture or grazing. Since any such land was counted as cropland, the acreages of land used for pasture will be understated.

A GRAPHIC SUMMARY



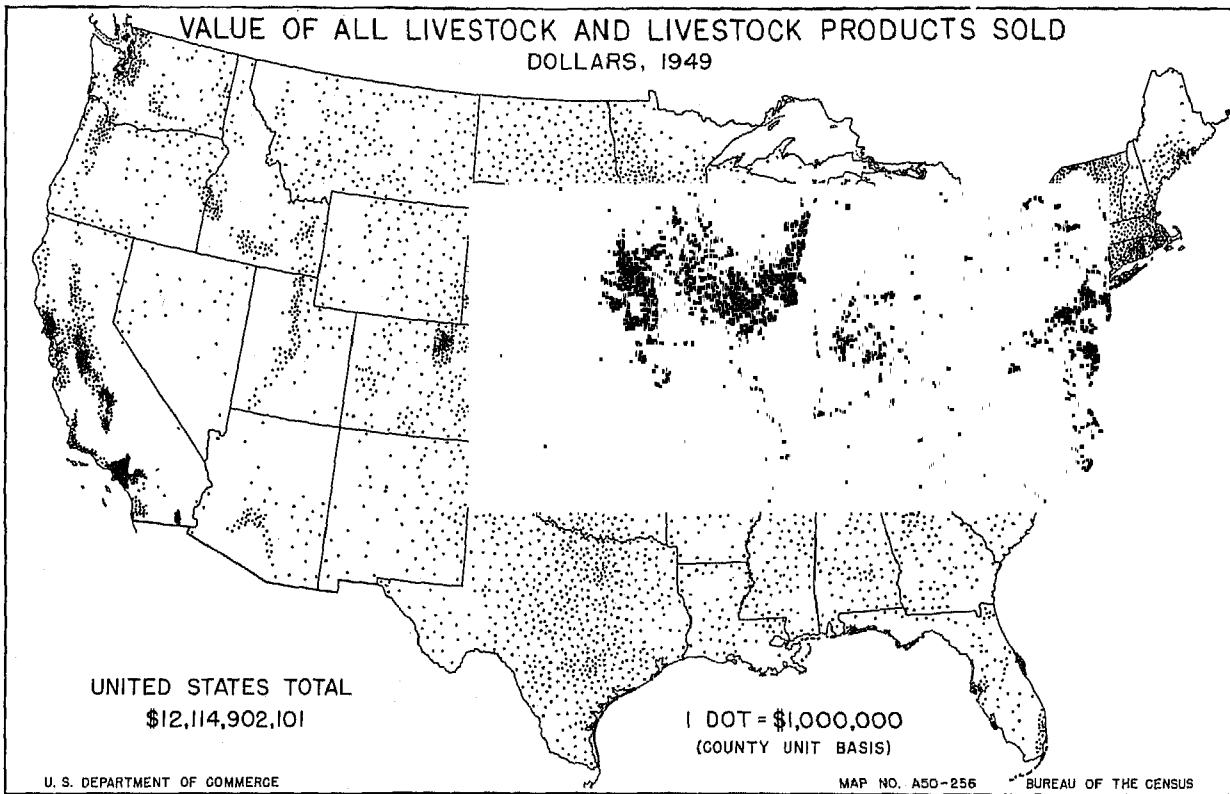
The value of all crops harvested indicates roughly the relative productivity of the land. This value, however, does not include

the contribution made by forage from lands used for pasture or grazing.



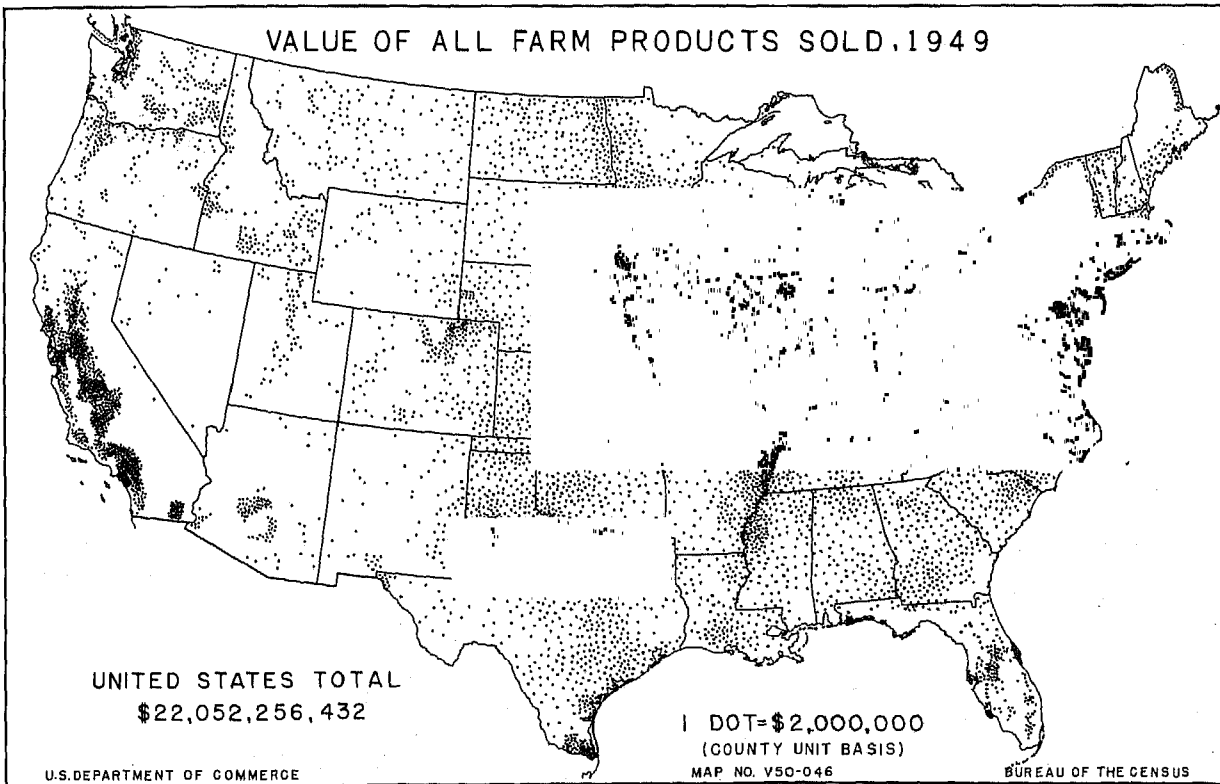
For the country as a whole, about 60 percent of the value of crops harvested is represented by the value of crops sold. Areas of heaviest concentration of value of crops sold are those in which most of the land is adapted to crop production and in which the crops grown are primarily cash crops. A comparison of the above maps indicates the areas in which most of the crops are sold and

also those in which a considerable part of the crops is fed to livestock. For example, note the similarity in pattern indicated in the two maps for the Mississippi River Flood Plains of Arkansas and Mississippi and the great difference in the pattern for Iowa. A large part of the crops produced in Iowa are fed to livestock and are not sold directly.



The pattern of distribution for the value of all livestock and livestock products sold is influenced partly by the quantity of feed crops produced. Northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin and Minnesota, and Iowa show high concentrations because a large part of the feed grains produced is fed locally. Much of the corn

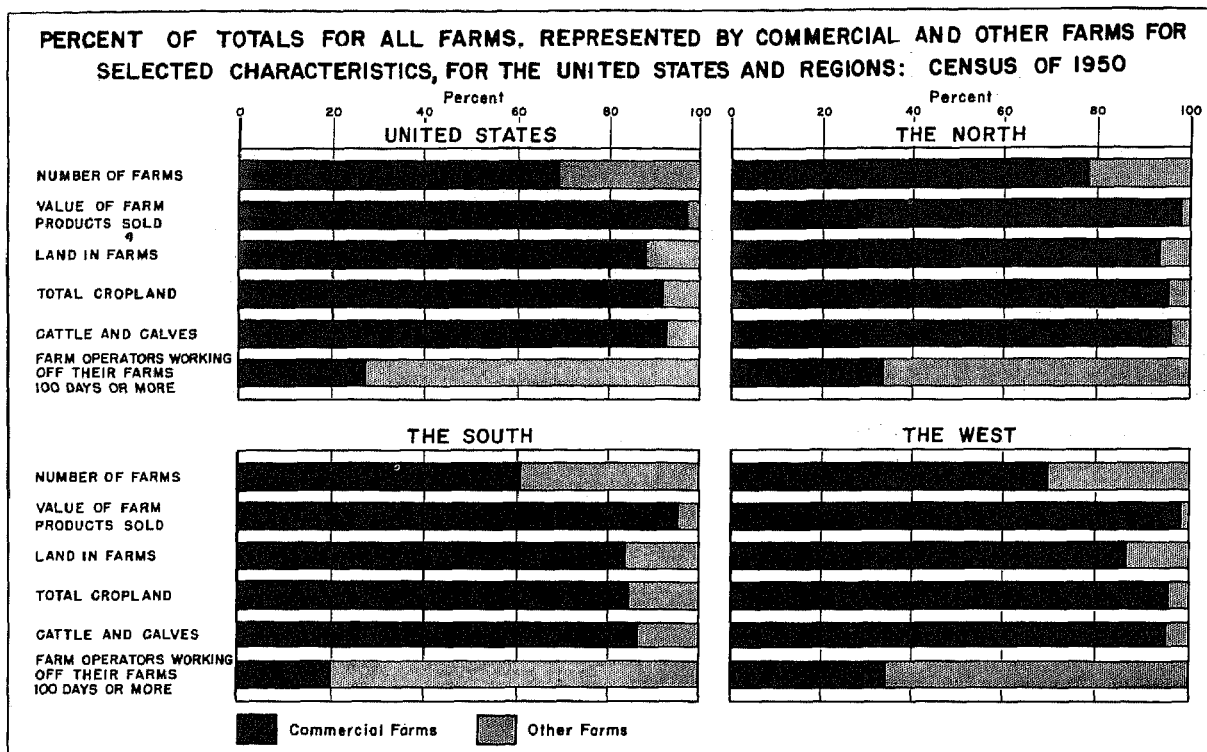
is used for the production of pork. Throughout most of the Corn Belt, many farmers buy and fatten feeder cattle. However, in certain areas of the Corn Belt, high proportions of the feed grains are sold for industrial use or for livestock in other areas. Other areas of concentration for value of livestock and livestock



products sold are the Middle Atlantic States and California. In these States, poultry and dairy products are important sources of farm income.

The distribution of the value of all farm products sold indicates the areas in which the productive agricultural resources are most heavily concentrated.

A GRAPHIC SUMMARY



For the United States, commercial farms made up only about two-thirds of the total number of all farms in 1950. However, commercial farms had 85 percent or more of the primary agricultural resources, i. e., land in farms, total cropland, and number of cattle and calves. In terms of the proportion of the supply of food and fiber entering the market, commercial farms are even more significant. They contributed 97.5 percent of the total value of farm products sold.

"Other farms" represented a larger proportion of the agricultural resources than that which they represented of sales because much of the production on such farms was for home use. Operators of "other farms" account for most of the farm operators who worked off their farms 100 days or more in 1949.

About 78 percent of the farms in the North were classified as commercial. This compares with 61 percent in the South and 69 percent in the West. The chart on the opposite page shows the relative importance of commercial farms and other farms in each State with regard to total number of farms, total acres of cropland, and the value of farm products sold.

Texas, North Carolina, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Minnesota, and Mississippi each had more than 150,000 commercial farms. Ten other States each had 100,000 or more commercial farms.

The New England States, New Jersey, and Delaware have relatively few commercial farms partly because these States are small in land area. The Western States have a low number of commercial farms because of the large average size of farms in these States and the large proportion of land not in farms.

Many of the States having a large number of other farms are in the South; 12 States in this region each had 50,000 or more of such farms. In the other regions, only Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Missouri had 50,000 or more of the farms not classified as commercial.

In the North, the States with the highest proportions of farms classified as commercial were North Dakota with 96 percent and South Dakota with 95 percent. The States with the lowest pro-

portions of commercial farms were New Hampshire with 48 percent and Maine with 52 percent. For the South, the leading States in proportion of farms classified as commercial were Delaware with 75 percent and Texas with 68 percent. At the other extreme in this region were West Virginia with 29 percent and Virginia with 52 percent. Western States having the largest proportion of commercial farms were Montana with 86 percent and Wyoming with 83 percent. States with the lowest percentages in the West were Washington with 56 percent and Oregon with 58 percent.

The Nation's cropland is highly concentrated in the North Central States. Outside of these, only five States—Oklahoma, Texas, Montana, Colorado, and California—have as much as 10 million acres of cropland each. The States in the South have the largest acreages of cropland in "other farms."

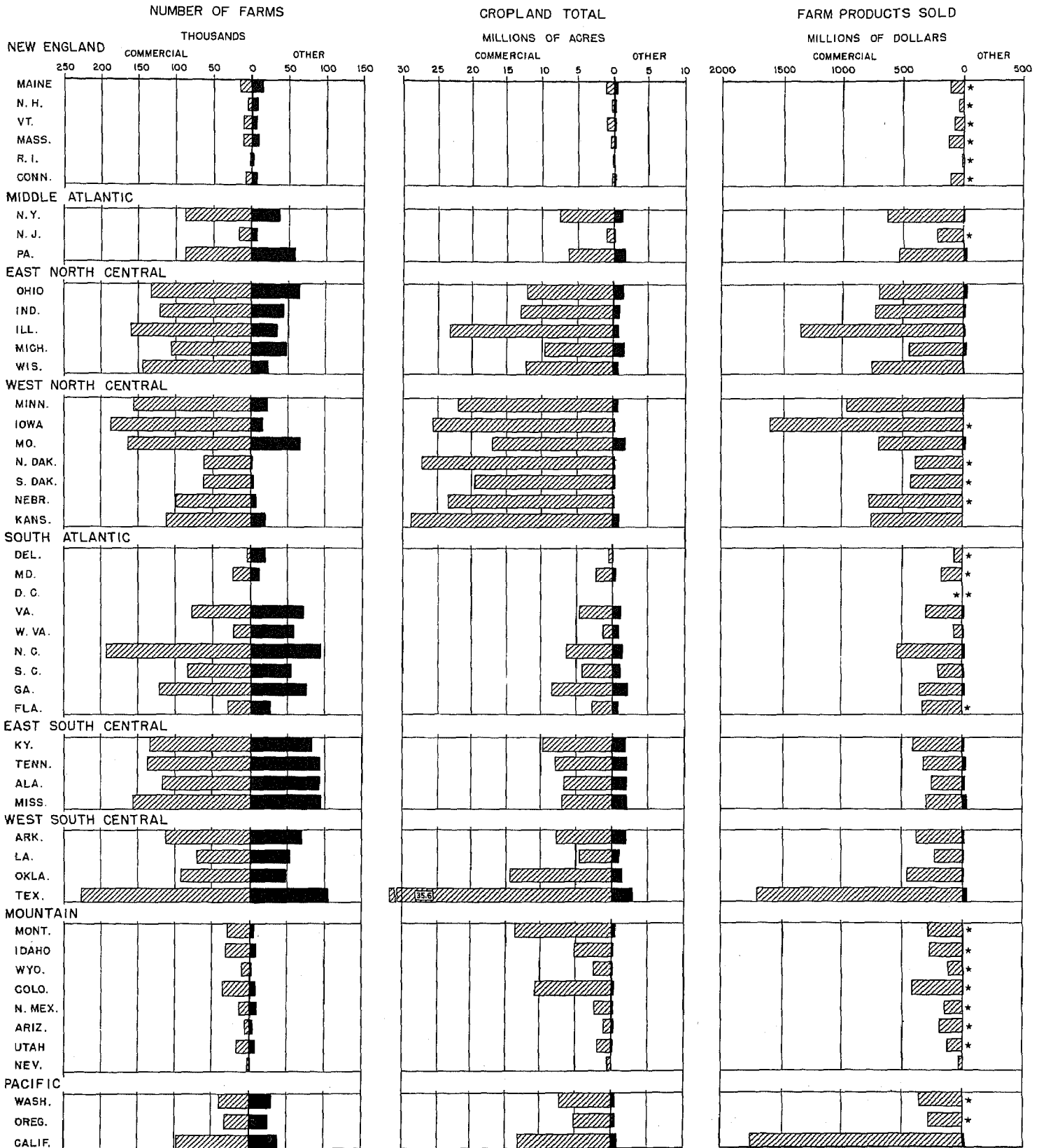
The quantity and quality of agricultural resources are ultimately reflected in the value of farm products sold. Texas, California, Iowa, and Illinois, in the order named, were the leading States in the value of farm products sold in 1949, and were far ahead of any of the other States. Ten other States, seven of them in the North Central divisions, each had \$500 million or more of farm products sold.

Texas, with about \$1.8 billion value of farm products sold was the leading State largely because of the expanse of its land area. The high value per acre of the irrigated cotton grown in the High Plains, and of the cotton, vegetables, and fruits grown in the irrigated Rio Grande Valley were also contributing factors. California was second, with nearly the same total value of farm products sold, primarily because of the extensive irrigation development and the high value per acre of the crops grown. Iowa and Illinois ranked high because of the high proportion of the land area in productive cropland.

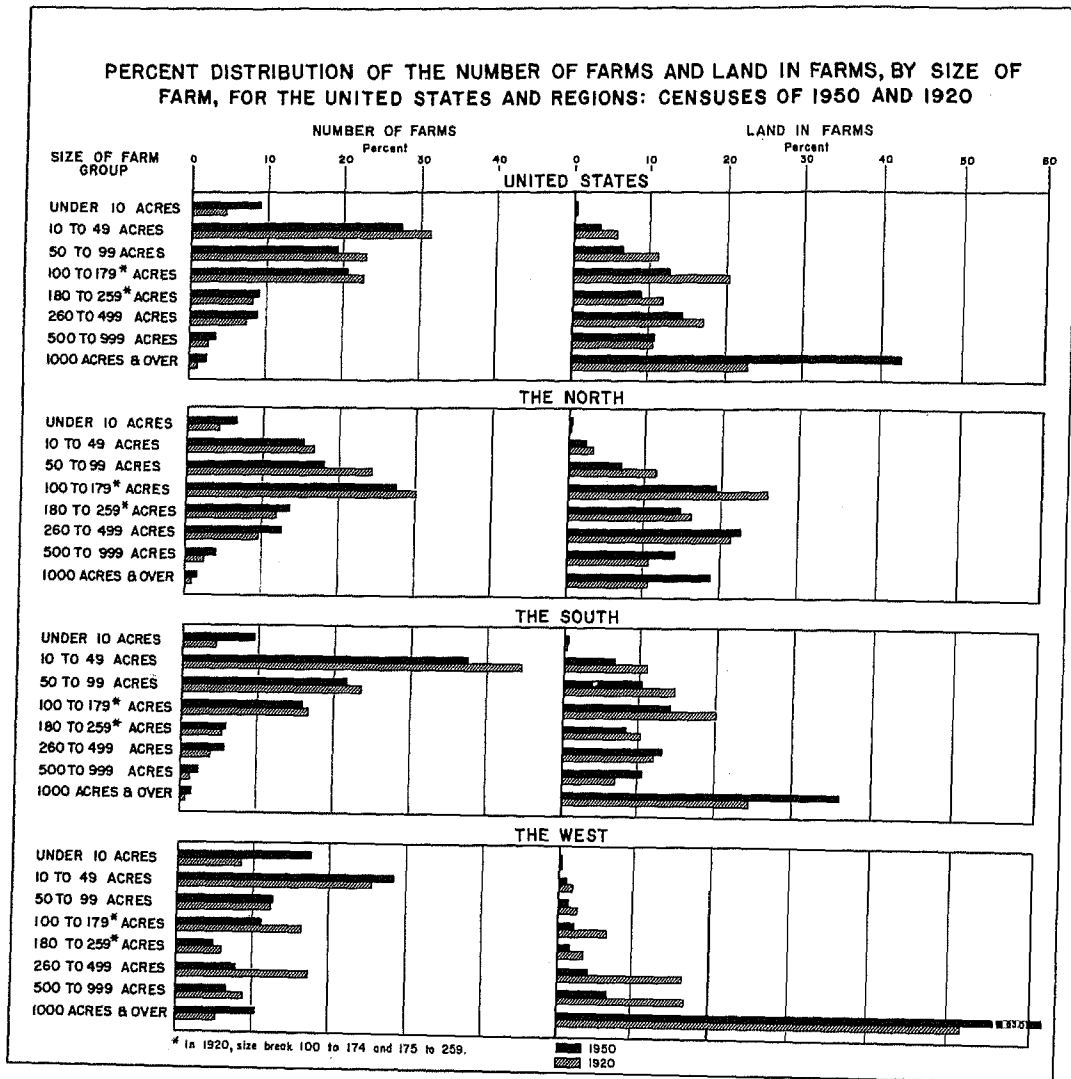
In only nine States did the percentage of total value of farm products sold represented by commercial farms fall below 95 percent. The four lowest were West Virginia with 86 percent, Alabama with 90 percent, Mississippi with 91 percent, and Tennessee with 92 percent.

ECONOMIC CLASS AND TYPE OF FARM

NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL AND OTHER FARMS, WITH TOTAL CROPLAND AND VALUE OF FARM PRODUCTS SOLD, BY STATES: CENSUS OF 1950



A GRAPHIC SUMMARY



Over the 30-year period, 1920 to 1950, there has been a general decrease in the percentage of all farms represented by small farms. An exception to this general statement is the percentage of farms of under 10 acres, most of which are part-time or residential farms. In the West, however, the percentage of all farms in the two size groups, 10 to 49 acres and 50 to 99 acres, also increased. This increase was due to the continued expansion of irrigation and the development of new farms. Most irrigated farms are relatively small in acreage because large investments of capital require that they be operated on an intensive basis.

In both the North and the South, there has been an increase in the percentage of farms in all the size groups of 180 acres or more per farm. In the West, the percentage of farms in these larger size groups—those not greatly influenced by irrigation development—showed decreases, except the group having 1,000 acres or more per farm.

The shift of land to larger farms has been more pronounced than the change in number of farms. In both the North and the South, there is a more even distribution of land between the different size groups than in the West. In the North, most of the larger farms are in the States on the western fringe of the West North Central Division, and in the South, most of them are in Oklahoma and Texas. In the West, 83 percent of the land

in farms is in farms of 1,000 acres and over. In many areas of the West, a farm or ranch of 1,000 acres is a comparatively small unit. Livestock ranches throughout the Mountain States must, of necessity, have considerably more than 1,000 acres each to be economic units. Many of the wheat farms in the Pacific Northwest and in Montana are more than 1,000 acres in size.

The maps on the opposite page show the change in number of farms in each size group from 1940 to 1950. There has been a general enlargement of farms during recent years. The trend toward larger farms may be attributed in part to the adjustment of farm size to new levels of farm mechanization. The increases and decreases in number of farms within size groups show such great geographic variations because of the adaptation of size of farm to the type of farm within an area.

A factor contributing to the decrease in the number of farms in 1950, particularly in the smaller size groups, was the change in the definition of a farm in the 1950 Census. The more rigid standard in 1950 caused a drop of about 150,000 to 170,000 places that would have been included as farms under the 1940 definition. Part of the decrease of farms in the smaller size groups was due to the discontinuance of agricultural operations on many residential farms during the period 1940 to 1950.

