

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARM POPULATION - ESTIMATES FOR 1963

Farm Population Branch
Economic and Statistical Analysis Division
Economic Research Service

The national farm population dropped from 14,313,000 in 1962 to 13,367,000 in 1963 (table 1), in a continuation of the downward trend that has prevailed since 1947. The decrease affected all nine major geographic divisions of the Nation. 1/ In 1963 each of three divisions (East North Central, West North Central, and South Atlantic) had about 2.5 million farm residents; the others less.

An estimated 1,438,000 persons of all ages moved from farms during the preceding year or lived on places that ceased to be farms and consequently were removed from the farm category in 1963. This loss was countered in part by the movement to farms of about 352,000 people, leaving an estimated net loss to the farm population through outmovement and reclassification of 1,086,000 persons for the year. The net loss from migration and cessation of farming was partly offset by a natural increase of 140,000 persons, resulting from the excess of births over deaths among farm people.

Because farm population changes from one year to another fluctuate in part from sampling variation, averages of the data on change for a period of several years are deemed more reliable than those from one year to the next. For the 3-year period 1960-63, the average annual amount of net outmovement from the farm population (including reclassification of residence) was about 910,000 persons, or at an annual rate of 6.3 percent of the base population (table 2). This

is a somewhat higher rate than that of 5.3 percent that characterized the years of the 1950's, although the absolute amount of decrease is somewhat smaller. The rate of loss appears to have been highest in the New England and Mountain Divisions, and lowest in the East North Central Division.

Definitions.--The estimates presented in this report relate to the rural civilian population living on farms, regardless of occupation. The farm population is defined according to the definition adopted for the 1960 Census of Population. This defines farm residents as persons residing on places of 10 acres or more in size from which at least \$50 worth of farm products were sold in the preceding year. Persons are also included if they are on places of less than 10 acres from which at least \$250 worth of products were sold. Persons living on what might be considered farmland are classed as non-farm if they rent for cash a house and yard only. Likewise, persons in institutions, summer camps, motels, and tourist camps located in the open country are also classed as nonfarm. Unmarried persons attending college away from home, and whose usual place of residence is a farm, are treated as farm residents in the surveys, although this procedure is different from that used in the decennial census.

Sources and limitations.--Annual estimates of the number of people living on farms in the United States as a whole are obtained from the Current Population Survey of the Bureau of the Census. As these estimates are based on sample data they are subject to sampling variability.

1/ Geographic divisions are explained at bottom of table 2.

Table 1.--Farm population and components of farm population change for the United States, regions, and divisions, April 1962-63 ^{1/}

Area	Farm popula- tion, April 1963	Natural increase			Change through migration and reclassi- fication of residence <u>2/</u>					Farm popula- tion, April 1962
		Total	Births	Deaths	Net change	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces <u>2/</u>			Farm to farm <u>3/</u>	
						Net	To farms	From farms		
Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	
United States	13,367	140	274	-134	-1,086	-1,086	352	-1,438	0	14,313
Regions: <u>4/</u>										
Northeast	955	9	20	-11	-84	-88	27	-115	4	1,029
North Central	5,018	51	102	-51	-400	-401	115	-516	1	5,365
South	6,121	63	124	-61	-480	-466	153	-619	-14	6,538
West	1,273	15	27	-12	-123	-132	57	-189	9	1,381
Divisions: <u>4/</u>										
New England	182	2	4	-2	-27	-30	7	-37	3	207
Middle Atlantic	773	7	16	-9	-57	-58	20	-78	1	822
East North Central	2,497	22	47	-25	-165	-163	50	-213	-2	2,639
West North Central	2,521	29	55	-26	-235	-238	65	-303	3	2,726
South Atlantic	2,446	27	51	-24	-188	-188	54	-242	0	2,607
East South Central	2,161	20	43	-23	-166	-149	52	-201	-17	2,307
West South Central	1,514	16	30	-14	-126	-129	47	-176	3	1,624
Mountain	556	8	13	-5	-58	-62	24	-86	4	605
Pacific	717	7	14	-7	-65	-70	33	-103	5	776

^{1/} Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand without being adjusted to group totals.

^{2/} Includes persons who have not moved but who were in or out of the farm population because, on the places where they were living, agricultural operations either ceased or were begun.

^{3/} Net change in farm population of regions or divisions due to farm-to-farm movement.

^{4/} Similar estimates for States are not available. For States included in each region and division see table 2.

Table 2.--Annual averages of components of farm population change and rate of net migration, for the United States, regions, and divisions, April 1960-63 ^{1/}

Area	Natural increase			Change through migration and reclassification of residence 2/					Annual rate of net migration 4/
	Total	Births	Deaths	Net change	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces 2/			Farm to farm 3/	
					Net	To farms	From farms		
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.
United States	154	293	-139	-910	-910	316	-1,226	0	-6.3
Regions: 5/									
Northeast	10	21	-11	-64	-66	26	-92	2	-6.2
North Central	58	110	-53	-330	-330	101	-431	0	-6.1
South	71	133	-63	-417	-405	140	-545	-11	-6.3
West	17	29	-12	-99	-108	50	-158	10	-7.0
Divisions: 5/									
New England	2	4	-2	-18	-20	8	-27	1	-8.8
Middle Atlantic	8	17	-9	-46	-46	19	-65	0	-5.5
East North Central	25	51	-25	-133	-134	48	-183	1	-5.0
West North Central	32	60	-27	-197	-196	52	-248	-1	-7.1
South Atlantic	30	55	-25	-160	-147	48	-195	-14	-6.0
East South Central	23	46	-23	-134	-127	46	-172	-7	-5.7
West South Central	18	33	-15	-123	-132	46	-178	10	-7.4
Mountain	9	14	-5	-50	-53	21	-74	3	-8.1
Pacific	7	15	-7	-49	-56	28	-84	7	-6.2

For footnotes ^{1/}, ^{2/}, and ^{3/} see table 1. ^{4/} Based on annual average net change in population through migration per 100 persons in the average April farm population for the period indicated. ^{5/} Similar estimates for States are not available.

States in the geographic areas are : NORTHEAST: New England: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut; Middle Atlantic: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; NORTH CENTRAL: East North Central: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin; West North Central: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas; SOUTH: South Atlantic: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida; East South Central: Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas; WEST: Mountain: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada; Pacific: Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii.

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The relative degree of sampling error of the estimated farm population of the United States is about 3 percent. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate of the total farm population from the sample would differ from a complete census by less than 3 percent. The chances are about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice this percentage and about 99 out of 100 that it would be less than 2 1/2 times the percentage.

Data for geographic areas and for components of farm population change are based on a mail-questionnaire survey. This survey is conducted for the Economic Research Service by the Statistical Reporting Service. Area estimates are tied to benchmark figures for decennial census years and adjusted to conform to the total

farm population estimate obtained annually by the Bureau of the Census.

The reliability of any geographic area estimate is dependent upon the reliability of the United States estimate discussed above and upon the reliability of the mail survey data. The reliability of data from the mail survey alone cannot be assessed in sampling error terms. It depends in part upon State-to-State variations in the size and representativeness of the mailing list, as well as upon variations in rate, representativeness, and accuracy of returns. The mail survey was conducted in every State except Hawaii. Information was obtained from 24,405 respondents in 1963, reporting on 95,997 farms.

Earlier Comparable Reports

The cooperative annual reports of the Bureau of the Census and the Economic Research Service in Farm Population, Series Census-ERS (P-27), contain a variety of data on the age, sex, color, and employment status characteristics of the farm population. The latest of these is Estimates of the Farm Population of the United States: April 1963, Series Census-

ERS P-27, No. 34, May 15, 1964.

Estimates for earlier years on number, migration, and natural increase of farm people were published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in October 1963; Banks, V. J., Beale, C. L., and Bowles, G. K. Farm Population Estimates for 1910-62. ERS-130, 49 pp.