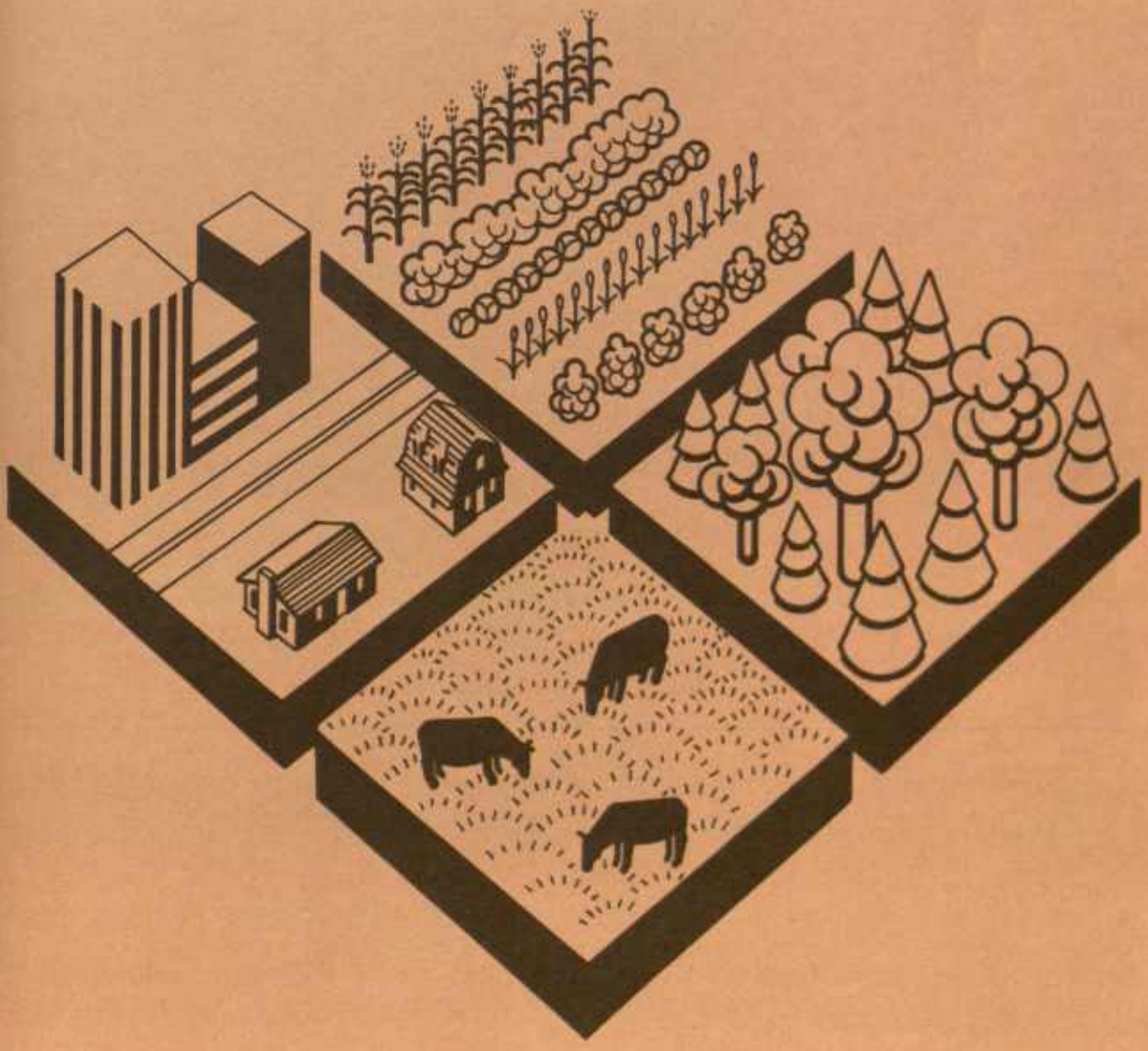
Major Uses of Land in the United States: 1974

H. Thomas Frey



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ABSTRACT

The United States has a land area of 2,264 million acres. The major uses of this acreage in 1974 were: cropland, 465 million acres; grassland pasture and range, 598 million acres; forest land, 718 million acres; urban, recreational, and other special uses, 182 million acres; and miscellaneous land, 301 million acres. From 1969 to 1974 cropland, pasture and range, and forest land each decreased about 1 percent while special uses increased 6 percent.

Keywords: Land use, Land use trends, Cropland, Pasture, Rangeland, Forest land, Agricultural land, Landownership.

PREFACE

This report continues a series on the major uses of land in the United States published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service and its predecessor agencies at 5-year intervals coincident with the periodic census of agriculture. This study, as in earlier ones, presents estimates of the area in various land uses based on a synthesis of data from numerous sources and designed to account for the entire land area of the country. Changes and trends in land use are also identified and measured. Most of the data apply to 1974, the year of the latest census of agriculture, but in a few instances the data depart from that date. More recent data were available for cropland, especially, and were incorporated in the section on cropland.

The principal sources of data used are: reports and records of the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce; Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, Forest Service, and Soil Conservation Service, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior. The Bureau of the Census provided basic data on the use of land in farms (45 percent of total land area). The other principal sources provided supplemental information on the use of land in farms and extended coverage to much of the remaining land area. Data from numerous other Federal and State agencies were used to complete the land use profile of the country.

The estimates of land use in 1974 were developed with the objective of maintaining comparability with published estimates for previous years. This objective was not always attained as comparability was adversely affected by changes in the characteristics of data available over time.

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY

The United States has a land area of approximately 2.3 billion acres. One-fifth of the acreage is classed as cropland, more than one-fourth is used primarily for grazing, nearly one-third is forested, and the final one-fifth comprises a variety of nonagricultural uses and miscellaneous land.

Not all of the cropland is used for crops each year. Cropland used for crops in 1974 totaled 361 million acres, or 78 percent of the land classed as cropland. The remainder was used only for pasture (83 million acres) or was idle (21 million acres).

Cropland used for crops increased sharply after 1972 in response to a strong export demand for farm products. The 334 million acres used for crops that year progressively increased to 361 million acres in 1974 and then to 377 million acres in 1977, only 10 million acres below the record 387 million acres used for crops in 1949.

The increase in cropland used for crops in 1973 and 1974 utilized most of the surplus cropland idled during the previous decade by Federal farm programs.

Pasture and range acreages totaled about 860 million acres in 1974. Land in this category ranges from highly productive cropland used alternately for pasture, to arid brushland and similar types of vegetation with very limited utility for grazing.

The total acreage in pasture and range has declined greatly in recent decades. Most of the decrease, however, is attributable to the removal of marginal forage-producing area, mostly woodland, from grazing use.

Urban and transportation uses accounted for 61 million acres, or about 3 percent of the land area, in 1974. About 900,000 acres shifted to these uses annually during the 1969-74 period. The land involved included not only cropland but grassland, forest land, and some miscellaneous areas.

Areas set aside primarily for recreation and wildlife uses totaled 87 million acres. Areas in these uses increase irregularly, but they collectively increased an average of 1.2 million acres annually between 1969 and 1974.

Three-fifths of the land area of the United States was in private ownership in 1974, and two-fifths was owned by Federal, State, and local governments. Virtually all the cropland was in private ownership, but large acreages of grassland, forest land, and wasteland, plus much of the special use acreage, were publicly owned. These ownership-use proportions normally change only gradually.

Major Uses of Land in the United States: 1974

H. Thomas Frey
Geographer

INTRODUCTION

This publication is intended to provide a summary account and general analysis of the extent and distribution of major land uses in the United States as of 1974, the date of the latest census of agriculture. Essentially, it presents (1) estimates of the area in major agricultural and nonagricultural uses of land based on a synthesis of data from many sources, and (2) an analysis of changes and trends in land use based on these and comparable estimates for earlier periods.

Present Land Use

The United States has a land area of approximately 2,264 million acres (14). 1/ Originally, more than 1 billion acres were forested, more than 700 million acres were natural grasslands, and nearly 500 million acres were desert shrub, tundra, and similar areas (1). Today, the U.S. land area can be grouped into five broad use categories: cropland, permanent grassland pasture and range, forest land (exclusive of reserved areas in parks and other special uses), urban, transportation, recreation and other special uses, and miscellaneous land. The acreage of each is shown in table 1.

Proportionately, one-fifth of the U.S. land area is cropland, more than one-fourth is permanent grassland pasture and range, nearly one-third is forested, and the final one-fifth comprises a variety of special use areas and miscellaneous land. These proportions are significantly affected by Alaska which has very little cropland and pasture, but large acreages of forest and wasteland (fig. 1 and appendix table 1).

1/ The land area consists of all dryland; land temporarily or partly covered with water, such as marshland, swamps, and flood plains; linear water areas less than one-eighth mile wide; and other water with less than 40 acres of surface area. (Underscored numbers in parentheses refer to sources listed at the end of the report.)

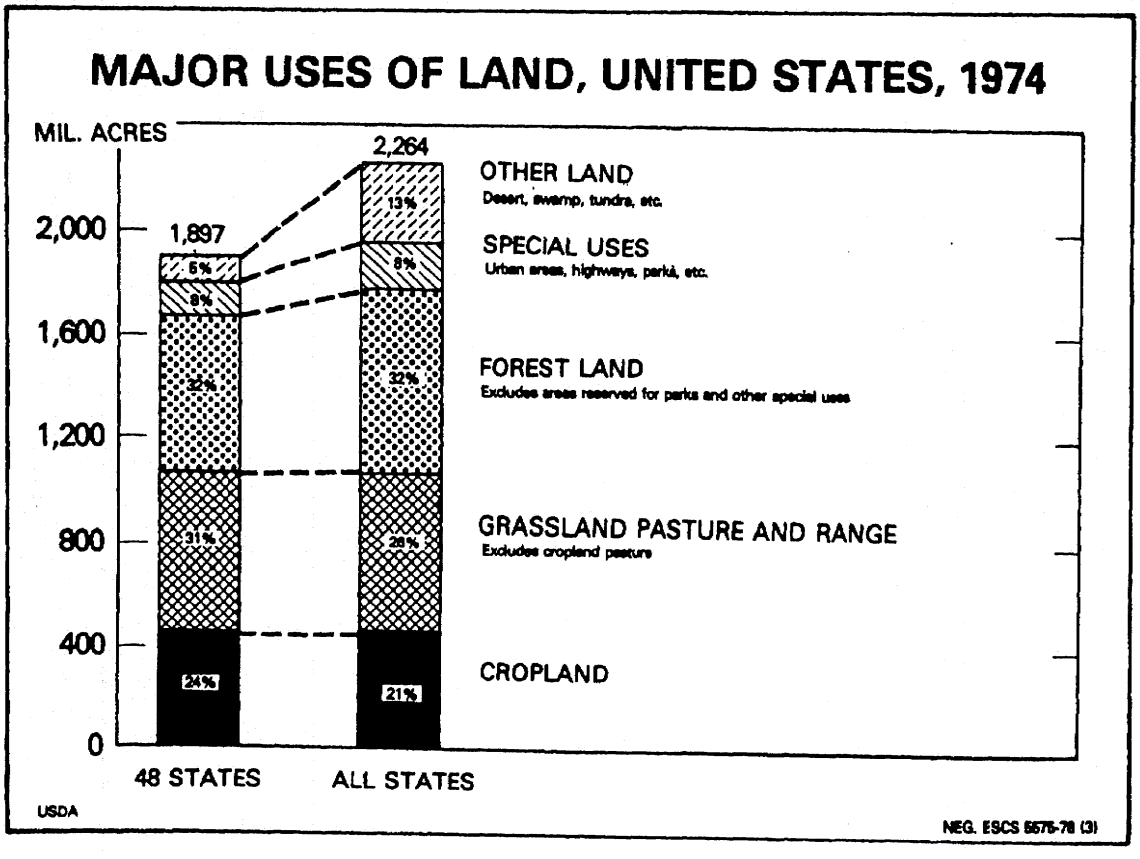
Table 1--Major uses of land, United States, 1974

Major land use	Acreage	Percentage of total
	Million acres	Percent
Cropland 1/	465	20.5
Grassland pasture and range 2/	598	26.4
Forest land 3/	718	31.7
Special uses 4/	182	8.0
Miscellaneous other land 5/	301	13.4
Total land area 6/	2,264	100.0

1/ All land in the crop rotation.
2/ Permanent grassland and other nonforested pasture and range.
3/ Excludes 30 million acres of forest land duplicated in parks and other special uses.
4/ Urban and transportation areas, areas used for recreation and wildlife purposes, various public installations and facilities, farmsteads, and farm roads.
5/ Marshes, open swamps, bare rock areas, deserts, tundra, and other land generally having low value for agricultural purposes.
6/ Includes streams and canals less than one-eighth mile wide and ponds, lakes, and reservoirs covering less than 40 acres.

Estimates are based primarily on reports and records of the Bureau of the Census and of Federal and State land management and conservation agencies.

Figure 1



Land used for agricultural purposes totaled 1,250 million acres, or 55 percent of the land in 1974 (table 2). Of this total, 361 million acres were used for crops, 860 million acres were grazed, and the remaining 29 million acres consisted of idle cropland, farmsteads, farm roads, and farm lanes.

The 860 million acres used for grazing includes cropland used only for pasture, forested grazing land, and grassland and other nonforested areas used primarily for pasture and range. In addition to land classed as pasture and range, a substantial acreage of cropland was grazed to some extent before or after crops were harvested.

Table 2—Agricultural and nonagricultural uses of land, United States, 1974

Land use	Acreage	Percentage of total
	Million acres	Percent
Agricultural:		
Cropland used for crops 1/	361	15.9
Idle cropland	21	.9
Cropland pasture	83	3.7
Grassland pasture and range 2/	598	26.4
Forest land grazed	179	7.9
Farmsteads, farm roads 3/	8	.4
Total agricultural land	1,250	55.2
Nonagricultural:		
Forest land not grazed 4/	539	23.8
Urban and other built-up areas 5/	61	2.7
Recreation and wildlife areas 6/	88	3.9
Public installations and facilities 7/	25	1.1
Miscellaneous land 8/	301	13.3
Total nonagricultural land	1,014	44.8
Total land area	2,264	100.0

1/ Cropland harvested, crop failure, and cultivated summer fallow.
2/ Excludes cropland used only for pasture.
3/ Acreages in farmsteads and farm roads are grouped with special uses of land in table 1 and elsewhere in this report.
4/ Excludes forest land duplicated in parks and other special uses of land.
5/ Urban areas; highway, road, and railroad rights-of way; and airports.
6/ National and State parks and related recreational areas, national and State wildlife refuges, and national forest wilderness and primitive areas.
7/ Federal land administered by the Department of Defense and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
8/ Includes miscellaneous uses not inventoried, and areas of little use such as marshes, open swamps, bare rock areas, deserts, and tundra.

Estimates are based primarily on reports and records of the Bureau of the Census and Federal and State land management and conservation agencies.

Nonagricultural uses of land accounted for 1,014 million acres in 1974, 45 percent of the land area. The largest component was forest land not grazed which totaled 539 million acres or 53 percent of all nonagricultural land.

Various special nonagricultural uses of land collectively totaled 174 million acres in 1974. Urban and transportation areas accounted for a third of this total. Because of the intensive nature of these uses, they exert an impact on agriculture and the environment out of proportion to their size. Areas set aside primarily for recreation and wildlife purposes accounted for half the special-use acreage; however, a very high proportion of land in this category is only lightly used. The remaining 25 million acres comprised national defense and atomic energy lands used with varying intensity.

Miscellaneous land totaled 301 million acres or 13 percent of the land area. The total includes relatively small acreages in special uses not inventoried, but most is characterized by little surface use. Much of the miscellaneous land is tundra, glaciers, and brushland in Alaska, although several other States, particularly in the West, have large amounts of essentially unused land.

Trends in Major Land Uses

Cropland, excluding cropland pasture, has almost stabilized after having declined sharply during the fifties and early sixties (table 3). Historically, the cropland

Table 3--Trends in major uses of land, United States, selected years

Major land use	1900	1920	1940	1950	1959	1969	1974
	Million acres						
Cropland 1/	319	402	400	409	392	384	382
Available grassland pasture and range 2/	832	731	719	701	699	692	681
Forest and woodland 3/	719	721	727	721	728	723	718
Other land 4/	400	416	426	442	452	465	483
Special use areas	--	--	--	134	146	172	182
Unclassified areas	--	--	--	308	306	293	301
Total 5/	2,270	2,270	2,272	2,273	2,271	2,264	2,264

-- = Not available.

1/ Excludes cropland used only for pasture.

2/ Grassland pasture and other nonforested grazing land plus cropland used for pasture.

3/ Exclusive of reserved forest land in parks, wildlife refuges, and other special uses of land.

4/ Includes such special land uses as urban areas, highways, and roads, farmsteads, parks, and military reservations, and also land having little value for surface use (desert, rock, marshes, tundra, etc.).

5/ Changes in total land area are attributable to changes in methods and materials used in occasional remeasurements and to increases in the area of artificial reservoirs.

Estimates for 1900-1959 are based primarily on (16) and assume essentially no change in Alaska and Hawaii prior to 1950. The estimates are only approximately comparable.

acreage increased rapidly until peaking at 413 million acres in the late 1920's, fluctuated near this level until 1950, then declined sharply to 387 million acres in 1964, and declined only slightly thereafter.

Grassland pasture acreage has decreased throughout most of this century. Since the 1920-30 period when conversion of grassland to cropland reached its peak, the rate of decrease has been gradual. The estimates for 1974 indicate a loss of 11 million acres in the combined acreage of cropland pasture and permanent grassland pasture and range since 1969. Several million acres of this decrease is attributable to the reclassification of Federal range.

The total acreage of forest land has been relatively stable throughout this century, although the relationship in table 3 would be somewhat different if acreages of forest land reserved for parks and other special uses were included. Historically, the area of forest land has expanded and contracted irregulary with little net change. Forest land increased during the fifties and early sixties as cropland decreased in regions south and east of the Corn Belt. These gains have since been lost as the rate of cropland abandonment decreased, land cleared for crops and pasture increased, and pressures from urbanization remained strong.

The acreage used for urban, transportation, recreation, and other special uses has increased as population has increased. From 1950 to 1974, special-use area increased 48 million acres, while all other major classes of land use decreased. The impact on other uses was less than this acreage indicates, however. Not more than 20 million acres of the increase were attributable to urban, transportation, and other intensive uses. The majority of the acreage comprised wild lands, mainly in the West and Alaska, that have been officially designated as parks, wilderness, and wildlife areas with little or no change in vegetation and use.

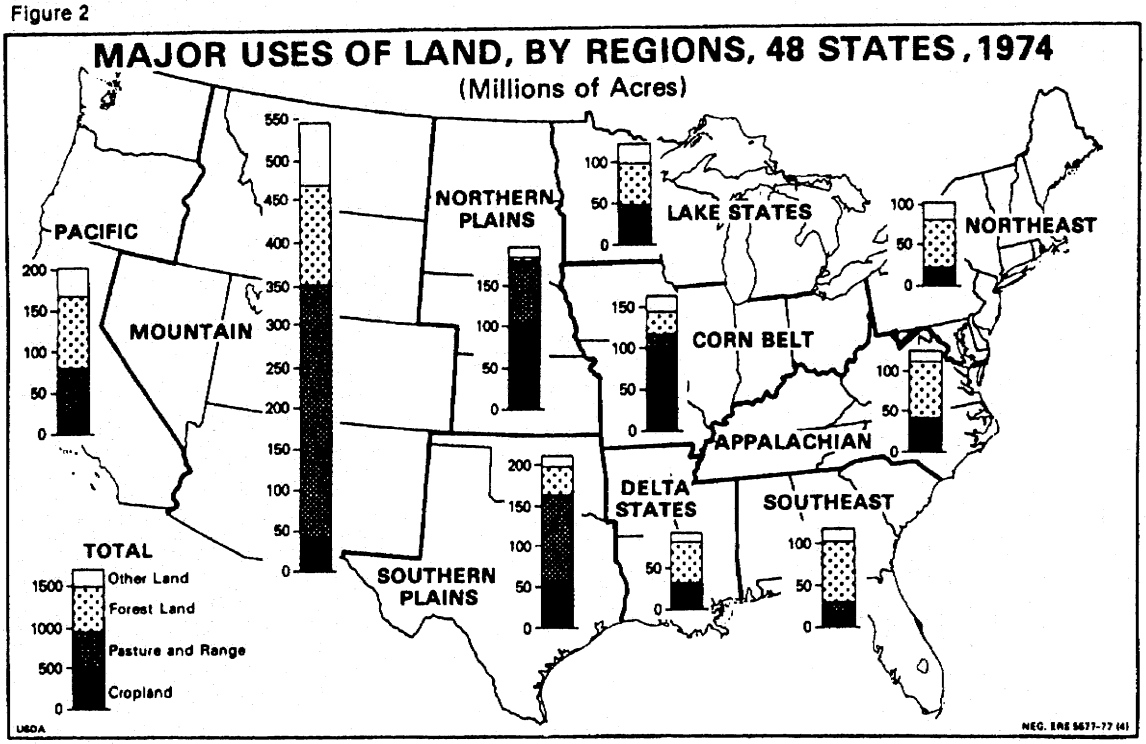
BASIC LAND USE PATTERNS

The proportion of land in crops, pasture, forestry, and other uses varies greatly across the country. Variations in physical conditions account for many of the differences, particularly among agricultural and forestry uses. Physical conditions in some regions permit a choice between crops, pasture, and forestry. At the other extreme, large portions of some regions are suitable only for grazing or other extensive uses. Aggregate regional acreages of the major categories are shown in figure 2 as a framework for considering the variable characteristics and distribution of important land-use components in subsequent sections.

Cropland accounts for 21 percent of the land area nationally (25 percent of the 48 contiguous states), but is concentrated in the Corn Belt, lower Lake States, parts of Northern and Southern Plains, the southern Mississippi Valley, and several smaller areas. Cropland occupies only 15 percent of the Northeast, where forest land predominates, and approximately 10 percent of the Mountain and Pacific regions where aridity is common. Alaska, despite its large land area, has less than 50,000 acres of cropland.

All regions have significant acreages of grassland and other nonforested pasture and range but, the acreages are especially large in areas of the West that are too arid for crops or forest growth. Only 50 million acres, or 8 percent of all grassland pasture and range inventoried in 1974, were in the six farm production regions each of the Great Plains. Virtually all the remainder was in the Northern and Southern Plains (31 percent) and the 11 Western States (61 percent). Alaska and Hawaii together had less than 1 percent.

Figure 2



Forest originally covered most of the land in the Eastern States and higher elevations of the West. Today, forest land acreages are still larger than those of other uses in all farm production regions except in the Corn Belt, Northern Plains, Southern Plains, and Mountain region. The total acreage of forest land in Alaska is large, but it is relatively small in comparison with the total area of the State.

Land in special uses and unclassified areas in 1974, accounted for 13 percent of the land in the 48 contiguous States and, because of tundra and similar areas in Alaska, 21 percent of the land in the United States. Aside from Alaska, regional proportions of special uses and unclassified land are above average in the Northeast, Lake States, Mountain region, Pacific region, and Hawaii. The relatively large proportions in the Northeast and Lake States reflect high degrees of urbanization, while those in the West reflect large acreages in parks, wildlife areas, national defense areas, and wasteland.

CROPLAND

Land classed as cropland in 1974 totaled 465 million acres, or 21 percent of the Nation's land area. This total comprised five major subclasses as follows:

Cropland use	Million acres	Percent
Cropland harvested	322	69
Crop failure	8	2
Cultivated summer fallow	31	7
Total used for crops	361	78
Idle cropland	21	5
Cropland used only for pasture	83	17
Total	465	100

The acreage harvested does not fully identify the total acreage used in crop production because of crop failure and land preparation requirements. Cropland used for crops or the land input to crop production is more adequately measured by aggregating three component acreages--cropland harvested, crop failure, and cultivated summer fallow.

Cropland harvested includes: all intertilled and close-sown crops; tree fruits, small fruits, and planted tree nuts, including some nonbearing acreage; and wild hay. About 2 percent of the cropland harvested yields more than one crop per year.

Crop failure mainly involves the acreage on which crops failed because of weather, insects, and diseases, but this component includes some cropland not harvested because of lack of labor, low market prices, and other factors. Normally, crop failure amounts to only 2 or 3 percent of the harvested acreage, but the proportion varies regionally and annually.

Cultivated summer fallow refers to cropland in regions of low rainfall of the West that is fallowed for a season or more before small grains are planted. The fallowed land is cultivated to control weeds and conserve or accumulate sufficient moisture to produce a crop. Other types of fallow--such as cropland planted to soil improvement crops but not harvested, and cropland left idle all year--are not included in cultivated summer fallow.

Much of the 83 million acres of cropland used only for pasture is routinely rotated between crop and pasture use, although the rotation period varies. Part of this acreage, however, is marginal for crop use and may remain in pasture indefinitely.

Some cropland is idle each year for a variety of reasons, such as adverse weather and soil conditions at planting time, lack of economic incentives, and, in some years, Federal farm programs. The 21 million acres idle in 1974 was due largely to physical conditions.

Cropland Uses by Region

The Northern Plains and Corn Belt far exceed all other regions in their amounts of total cropland, followed by the Lake States, Southern Plains, and Mountain regions. Acreages and proportions of the major subclasses of cropland do not always follow this same pattern. For example, the Northern Plains had 23 percent of all cropland and 25 percent of all cropland used for crops, but only 15 percent of the cropland pasture and 11 percent of the idle acreage in 1974 (table 4). In contrast, the Appalachian region had 7 percent of all cropland, compared with 5 percent of the acreage used for crops, 14 percent of the cropland pasture, and 10 percent of idle cropland.

Cropland used for crops accounted for 80 to 86 percent of all cropland in the Lake States, Corn Belt, Northern Plains, Mountain, and Pacific regions. Collectively, these five regions had about three-fourths of the acreage used for crops and about half the national acreages of cropland used for pasture and idle. In comparison, the proportion of cropland actually used for crops was 75 percent, or near the national average in the Northeast, but only 54 to 67 percent in the remaining four regions, generally constituting the South.

Regional acreages of cropland pasture vary significantly, but for different reasons. The largest acreages are in such agriculturally diverse regions as the Corn Belt, Southern Plains, Northern Plains, and Appalachian regions. In the Corn Belt and Northern Plains, these acreages are in proportion to the total cropland; on many farms in these regions, the only land available for pasture is of cropland quality. In

Table 4--Cropland uses, by region, United States, 1974

Region 1/	Crops 2/	Idle	Pasture only 3/	Total
		Million acres		
Northeast	12.9	1.3	3.1	17.3
Lake States	36.6	2.8	4.7	44.1
Corn Belt	81.9	3.4	15.1	100.4
Northern Plains	90.5	2.3	12.2	105.0
Appalachian	17.1	2.1	11.5	30.7
Southeast	13.3	1.6	5.8	20.7
Delta States	16.8	1.9	6.4	25.1
Southern Plains	35.2	2.7	15.9	53.8
Mountain	35.9	1.8	5.1	42.8
Pacific	21.0	.9	2.9	24.8
48 States	361.2	20.8	82.7	464.7
Alaska	--	--	--	--
Hawaii	.2	.2	--	.4
United States	361.4	21.0	82.7	465.1

-- = Less than 50,000 acres.
1/ See appendix table 2 for data by State.
2/ Includes cultivated summer fallow.
3/ Used only for pasture in 1974.

contrast, cropland pasture accounts for a much higher proportion of cropland in the Appalachian and Southern Plains regions (37 and 30 percent, respectively, in 1974). The high percentage of cropland pasture in those regions is associated with a decrease in planted crops in recent decades.

Idle cropland in 1974 totaled 21 million acres, or 5 percent of all cropland. Idle cropland ranged from 2 percent of all cropland in the Northern Plains to 8 percent in the Northeast, Southeast, and Delta States. Regional acreages of idle cropland ranged between 1 million and 3 million acres.

Trends in Cropland Uses

When cropland pasture that has been inconsistently enumerated in the periodic censuses of agriculture is excluded, total cropland trended downward from 409 million acres in 1949, the peak acreage year for cropland used for crops, to 382 million acres in 1974 (table 5). Most of the decrease occurred in the fifties and early sixties when various Federal farm programs reduced crop acreages and production. From 1964 to 1974, changes in total cropland were almost imperceptible as gains in some regions offset losses in others. Between 1974 and 1977, cropland used for crops increased 16 million acres. At least part of this increase may represent an increase in total cropland.

Table 5--Major uses of cropland, United States, selected years 1/

Cropland use	1949	1959	1969	1972	1974	1977
			Million acres			
Cropland harvested	352	317	286	289	322	338
Crop failure	9	10	6	6	8	9
Cultivated summer fallow	26	31	41	39	31	30
Total used for crops	387	358	333	334	361	377
Idle cropland	22	33	51	--	21	--
Total	409	391	384	--	382	--

-- = Not available.
1/ Excludes cropland used only for pasture.

Changes in the component acreages of cropland generally are larger and occur more rapidly than changes in total cropland. Changes since 1949 were associated with adjustments in surplus crop production capacity for more than two decades following World War II and an abrupt increase in demand for farm products beginning in 1972. Cropland used for crops decreased from a record high of 387 million acres in 1949 to 334 million acres in 1972, and then increased to 377 million acres in 1977. The 1977 acreage was 13 percent above the 1972 acreage and only 3 percent below the peak 1949 acreage.

The changes in cropland used for crops are net changes resulting from generally corresponding changes in cropland harvested, partly offsetting changes in cultivated summer fallow, and irregular but minor changes in crop failure. Cropland harvested decreased 63 million acres from 1949 to 1972, or somewhat more than cropland used for crops, while cultivated summer fallow increased 13 million acres. Thereafter, cropland harvested climbed to 337 million acres in 1977 and cultivated summer fallow declined and then stabilized near 30 million acres. Crop failure ranged between 2 and 3 percent of the harvested acreage, usually increasing slightly as total planted acreage increased.

Acreages of idle cropland vary inversely with those used for crops. Thus, idle cropland, including soil improvement crops not harvested or pastured, increased during the fifties and sixties as large acreages were diverted from crop production, and decreased in the seventies as the same acreage returned to production.

Cropland used only for pasture totaled 83 million acres in 1974, compared with 88 million in 1969, 57 million in 1964, and 69 million in 1949 (13). These acreages are not comparable, however, primarily because of inconsistent enumeration with permanent grassland. For this reason, cropland pasture is excluded from table 6 and discussed in a subsequent section on pasture and range.

Regional Trends in Cropland Used for Crops

Regional trends in acreages of cropland used for crops generally have followed those at the national level (table 6 and fig. 3) Acreages in most regions declined sharply during the fifties and sixties, then stabilized at the lower levels. This

trend reflected the influence of various Federal programs designed to limit crop production. Between 1972 and 1977, acreages increased in all regions as a result of the increase in export demand for farm products and, consequently, the removal or reduction of production controls.

Declines in cropland used for crops during 1949-72 ranged between 5 and 15 million acres in all regions except the Delta States, Mountain, and Pacific regions. As a percentage, however, the declines were large only in the Northeast, Appalachian, Southeast, and Southern Plains regions. In these regions, cropland used for crops declined by 28 to 40 percent, compared with only 7 percent in the Corn Belt and Northern Plains. Acreages used for crops also decreased sharply in upland portions of the Delta States, but these decreases were offset by new cropland in the Mississippi River floodplain. There was relatively little change in the Mountain and Pacific regions due to the stabilizing influences of irrigation and summer fallow requirements.

Figure 3

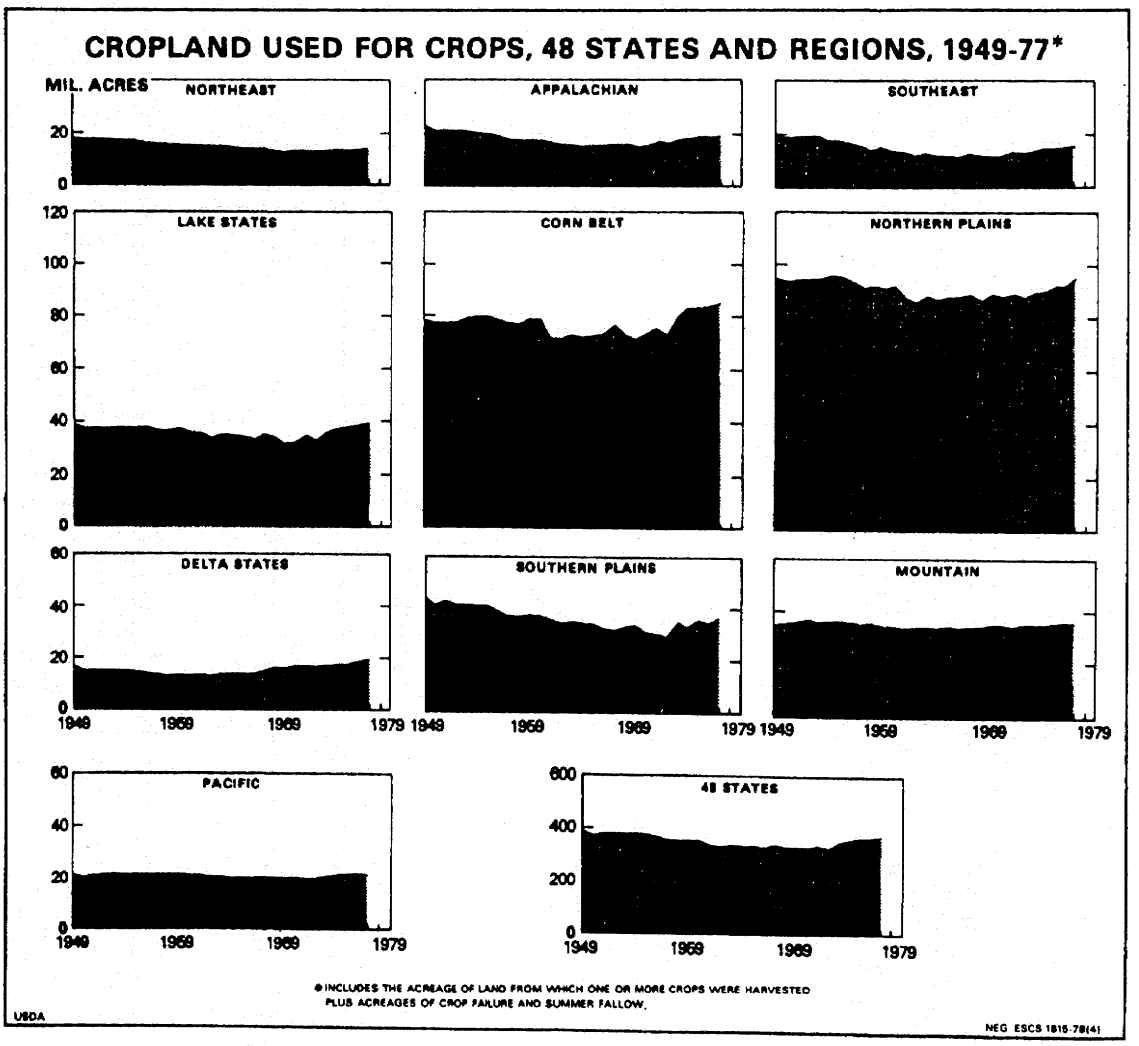


Table 6--Cropland used for crops, by region, 48 States, 1949-77 1/

Year	Northeast	Lake States	Corn Belt	Northern Plains	Appalachian	Southeast	Delta States	Southern Plains	Mountain	Pacific	48 States
					Million acres						
1949	17.2	38.2	78.0	93.9	22.3	20.2	16.6	44.7	34.7	20.8	386.6
1950	17.1	37.5	77.2	93.3	21.1	18.7	15.3	41.7	35.2	20.2	377.3
1951	17.0	37.7	77.4	93.8	21.2	18.7	15.4	43.4	35.9	20.6	381.1
1952	16.9	37.4	77.8	93.8	20.8	19.0	15.1	41.8	36.6	20.8	380.0
1953	16.8	37.6	78.8	94.0	20.6	18.9	14.9	41.3	35.8	20.8	379.5
1954	16.6	37.6	79.4	95.5	20.0	17.6	14.8	41.5	36.2	20.7	379.9
1955	16.4	37.6	79.5	94.6	19.9	17.3	14.3	41.4	36.2	20.5	377.7
1956	15.9	37.4	78.5	92.8	18.9	16.1	13.7	38.9	35.7	20.8	368.7
1957	15.7	36.4	77.2	90.1	17.5	15.1	13.2	37.3	35.2	20.5	358.2
1958	15.5	36.0	76.9	90.4	17.2	13.7	12.5	36.8	35.3	20.5	354.8
1959	15.2	36.7	78.8	90.2	17.4	14.6	13.1	37.6	34.4	20.5	358.5
1960	14.9	35.8	78.4	91.5	17.1	13.3	12.8	37.2	34.1	20.2	355.3
1961	14.4	35.3	71.6	86.9	16.1	12.7	12.8	35.8	33.8	20.1	339.6
1962	14.2	33.3	70.7	85.3	15.4	11.9	12.7	34.4	33.9	19.4	331.2
1963	14.2	34.5	72.5	87.1	15.2	12.1	13.1	34.8	34.0	19.8	337.3
1964	14.0	34.2	72.0	86.2	15.0	11.9	13.5	34.1	33.9	19.9	334.8
1965	13.7	34.1	72.4	87.2	15.1	11.5	13.7	34.0	34.5	19.7	335.9
1966	13.7	33.3	72.7	87.5	15.0	11.0	13.6	32.0	33.8	19.4	332.0
1967	13.4	34.3	76.2	88.2	15.7	12.1	14.9	31.6	34.1	19.7	340.3
1968	12.7	33.7	72.6	86.2	15.5	11.8	16.1	32.5	34.1	19.7	334.9
1969	12.2	31.5	70.7	88.3	14.8	11.5	15.9	33.9	34.9	19.1	332.8
1970	12.5	31.9	71.6	86.9	14.9	11.7	16.4	31.7	34.6	19.5	331.7
1971	12.7	34.2	75.3	88.5	16.2	12.5	16.3	30.7	34.4	19.5	340.3
1972	12.3	32.3	72.8	87.2	15.6	12.1	16.4	29.9	35.0	20.0	333.6
1973	12.6	35.3	79.2	89.9	16.4	12.7	16.5	34.5	34.9	20.0	352.0
1974	12.9	36.6	81.9	90.5	17.1	13.4	16.8	35.1	35.9	21.0	361.2
1975	13.0	37.3	83.0	91.9	17.5	13.8	17.2	35.4	35.9	21.4	366.4
1976	13.1	38.4	84.1	92.2	17.9	14.0	18.4	34.3	36.2	21.5	370.1
1977	13.2	38.9	85.7	94.1	18.5	14.7	19.1	35.4	36.0	20.9	376.5

1/ Cropland used for crops is the sum of the acreage from which one or more crops were harvested plus acreages of crop failure and cultivated summer fallow.

The acreage of cropland used for crops increased in all farm production regions after 1972. The Corn Belt experienced the largest increase, followed by the Lake States, Northern Plains, and Southern Plains. These four regions accounted for three-fourths of the national increase; the Corn Belt alone accounted for 12 million acres, 28 percent of the total increase from 1972 to 1977.

Increases in cropland used for crops in the remaining six regions between 1972 and 1977 totaled 11 million acres, one-fourth of the national increase. Increases in the Northeast, Appalachian, and Southeast regions totaled more than 6 million acres, reversing established trends of declining cropland acreages. In the Delta States, Mountain, and Pacific regions, the increases totaled nearly 5 million acres and occurred where relatively high proportions of total cropland were already being cropped in 1972.

The general but unequal changes in regional acreages of cropland used for crops significantly altered the relative contributions of the regions. During the period of decline from 1949 to 1972, the Corn Belt, Northern Plains, Delta States, Mountain, and Pacific regions collectively increased their proportions of the national acreage from 63 to 69 percent. For the 1949-77 period as a whole, the Lake States, Corn Belt, Delta States, Mountain, and Pacific regions increased their shares of the acreage used for crops at least slightly. Two of these regions--the Corn Belt and Delta States--increased their shares during the period of growth after 1972 as well as in the period of decline prior to 1972.

Principal Crops Harvested

Acreages for 15 of the 21 crops classified as principal crops by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service collectively increased 49 million acres from 1972 to 1977 (table 7). Wheat, corn, and soybeans

Table 7--Principal crops harvested 1/

Item	1972	1977	Change
		Million acres	
Increasing crops:			
Corn	66.4	79.9	13.5
Cotton	13.0	13.3	.3
Flaxseed	1.1	1.4	.3
Hay	59.7	60.5	.8
Rice	1.8	2.2	.4
Soybeans	45.7	57.9	12.2
Sunflower seed	--	2.2	2.2
Wheat	47.3	66.2	18.9
Other 2/	34.2	34.7	.5
Subtotal	269.2	318.3	49.1
Decreasing crop 3/	13.7	13.0	-.7
Total	282.9	331.3	48.4

-- = Not available.
1/ Principal crops harvested as classified in (5) and (12).
2/ Dry edible peas, oats, peanuts, potatoes, sorghums, sugarbeets, and tobacco.
3/ Barley, rye, dry edible beans, popcorn, sugarcane, and sweet potatoes.

accounted for nearly 45 million acres, or 91 percent of the increase. The acreage of sunflower seed also increased sharply, accounting for nearly 5 percent of the total. Acreages of hay, rice, flaxseed, and cotton increased in much smaller amounts, while acreages of oats, sorghums, sugarbeets, peanuts, potatoes, dry edible peas, and tobacco increased negligibly. In contrast, the six crops with smaller acreages in 1977 than in 1972 collectively decreased less than 1 million acres.

PASTURE AND RANGE

Livestock grazed on about 860 million acres in 1974, or 38 percent of the land area (table 8).2/ The total includes acreages in three major categories--cropland used for pasture, grassland and other nonforested land used primarily for grazing, and forest land on which grazing occurs as a secondary or additional use. Most of the land classed as pasture and range is grazed for some period each year, but the acreage varies depending on weather and available forage.

Cropland pasture represents that part of the total cropland base that is used alternately for pasture each year. Most cropland pasture eventually rotates back to crop use and is replaced by land rotating from other cropland components. A small part of the acreage is marginal for crop use and may remain in pasture indefinitely or shift to other uses. Cropland pasture accounted for only 83 million acres in 1974, or 10 percent of all pasture and range. In the 31 Eastern States, however, it accounted for 30 percent of all land grazed and 49 percent of nonforested grazing land. In the Northeast, Corn Belt, and Appalachian regions, cropland pasture is the predominant type of pasture. In contrast, comparable acreages of cropland pasture in the Mountain and Pacific regions are small in proportion to those of permanent grassland and forest land grazed.

Grassland pasture and range includes all open or nonforested land used primarily for pasture or grazing. In addition to grasses and legumes, it includes some scattered mesquite, and similar vegetation in the West. Due to the wide range in vegetation involved, grassland pasture and range is not always clearly distinguishable from other types of pasture and range. At one extreme, grassland may merge with cropland pasture; at the other, grassland often intermingles or forms a transitional area with forested grazing land.

Grassland pasture and range accounted for an estimated 598 million acres, or nearly seven-tenths of all pasture and range inventoried in 1974. More than 90 percent of the total was in the 17 Western States (Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Mountains, and Pacific regions). Grassland pasture and range is the predominant use and Southern Plains regions, the predominant agricultural use in the Pacific region, and the predominant pasture type in the Northern Plains.

Less than 10 percent of the total grassland pasture acreage was in the six farm production regions east of the Great Plains. The total of 49 million acres in the east was distributed in roughly the same proportions as a comparable acreage (47 million of cropland pasture.

2/ Total pasture and range represents the land that contributes to livestock forage production. Thus, where available data permitted, areas producing little forage but intermingled and managed with productive grazing land were omitted in this study. Much of the omitted acreage is in forest land. Total pasture and range, including areas only casually or sporadically grazed, is indicated in a recent Forest Service report on the forest-range environment of the 48 contiguous States (9). That study reports that 835 million acres, or seven-tenths of the forest-range environment, are grazed to some extent. By combining this acreage with cropland pasture, improved grassland pasture, and small acreages of pasture and range in Alaska and Hawaii, the Nation's pasture and range resources would total about 1 billion acres.

Table 8--Pasture and range by type and region, United States, 1974

Region	Cropland pasture 1/	Grassland pasture and range 2/	Forest land pasture and range 3/	Total pasture and range 4/	
				Acreage	Percentage of land area
	Million acres				Percent
Northeast	3.1	3.4	1.9	8.4	7
Lake States	4.7	5.3	3.8	13.8	11
Corn Belt	15.1	13.7	9.9	38.7	23
Northern Plains	12.2	73.3	2.2	87.7	45
Appalachian	11.5	7.5	5.9	24.9	20
Southeast	5.8	11.3	12.0	29.1	24
Delta States	6.4	7.4	17.2	31.0	34
Southern Plains	15.9	112.1	23.3	151.3	71
Mountain	5.1	307.4	75.4	387.9	71
Pacific	2.9	53.8	27.3	84.0	41
48 States	82.7	595.2	178.9	856.8	45
Alaska	--	1.6	.1	1.7	--
Hawaii	--	1.0	.5	1.5	37
United States	82.7	597.8	179.5	860.0	38

-- = Less than 100,000 acres or 0.5 percent.

1/ Mainly cropland in rotation, used some years for cultivated crops and other years for pasture.

2/ Excludes cropland used for pasture.

3/ An approximation of the acreage grazed to some extent during the year.

4/ Excludes about 60 million acres in Federal grazing districts, National Forest system range allotments, and other Federal range areas that have little value for grazing.

Forest pasture and range includes open forest, brush-grown pasture, and woodland and other land within forested areas that have grass or other forage growth. The total acreage of forested grazing land (179 million acres in 1974) includes woodland pasture in farms and a rough approximation of forested grazing land not in farms. Forested grazing land accounts for about one-fourth of all forest land and one-fifth of all land grazed. Acreages of forest land grazed ranged from 2 million acres in the Northeast to 75 million acres in the Mountain region in 1974.

A large majority of pasture and range acreage (860 million acres in 1974) is in farms. All of the cropland pasture, 75 to 80 percent of the grassland pasture and range and more than one-fourth of the forest land, grazed was in farms. The main exceptions were about 200 million acres of Federal range excluded by definition from land in farms and substantial acreages of privately owned forest land grazed, particularly in the South.[3/]

3/ Available data permit only rough approximations of privately owned forest land grazed but not enumerated as land in farms. However, the extent of this practice is indicated by a special Forest Service study of 11 Louisiana parishes (4). The acreage of forest land grazed identified in these parishes was more than seven times larger than the acreage reported by the 1974 Census of Agriculture.

Pasture and Range Productivity

Forage production per acre varies widely between and often within the major types of pasture and range. Cropland pasture is by far the most productive type. An average acre of cropland pasture yields several times as much as an acre of permanent grassland in farms and many times more than the typical acre of nonfarm rangeland in semiarid areas. By definition, cropland pasture is relatively productive land and is generally comparable to other land in the crop rotation.

The inherent productivity of non-Federal grassland pasture and range is indicated by its potential for crop use. According to the 1967 National Inventory of Soil and Water Conservation Needs (CNI) (11), about 37 percent of this land is physically suitable for regular or occasional cultivation. Regionally, the CNI indicates that three-fourths of the non-Federal grassland in the 31 humid Eastern States is suitable or marginal for cultivation, while only 30 percent of a much larger acreage in the 17 Western States is suitable for cultivation.

About one-fourth of all grassland pasture and range is federally owned land administered by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other agencies. Most federally owned grassland range is located in semiarid portions of the Mountain and Pacific regions. In general, this land represents the residual after the better land in the public domain was transferred from Federal ownership. Thus, the average productivity of federally owned grassland is even lower than that of non-federal range in these areas.

The forage-producing capacity of forested grazing land, including the Federal range classified as forest, is strongly influenced by forest species, stand density, and underlying physical factors, such as climate and soils. Productivity is relatively high on open stands of longleaf pine in the South where the growing season is long. Similarly, the ponderosa pine, aspen, pinyon-juniper, and other open-forest types in the West are relatively productive for a limited period each year. In contrast, many upland hardwood areas of the East and thick-growing forest-types like fir and spruce in the West have little utility for grazing.

Changes in Pasture and Range Acreages

Changes in cropland pasture and grassland pasture and range are difficult to measure separately since they were inconsistently interchanged in earlier agricultural surveys. When both types are combined, however, total grassland pasture and range decreased 20 million acres from 1950 to 1974 (table 9). In comparison, the forested component of the grazing acreage decreased from 319 million to 179 million acres during the same period.

Table 9--Total pasture and range, by type, United States, selected years

Type	1950	1959	1969	1974
		Million acres		
Grassland pasture and range	701	699	692	681
Cropland pasture	69	66	88	83
Open permanent pasture	632	633	604	598
Woodland grazed	319	245	198	179
Total	1,020	944	890	860

Much of the decrease in the combined acreage of temporary and permanent grassland pasture during 1950 to 1974 occurred in the Mountain and Pacific regions. During this period, substantial acreages of Federal range were reserved for recreation and wildlife uses and other areas were removed from grazing for environmental reasons. The rest of the country experienced a small net decrease in grassland pasture as losses exceeded gains in most regions.

Grassland pasture and range acreages decreased or remained virtually unchanged from 1969 to 1974 in all but two regions east of the Rocky Mountains. The exceptions were the Northern Plains where some cropland was shifted or reclassified to pasture and the Southeast where significant acreages of forest land were cleared for pasture. Although not always reflected in the regional estimates, perceptible shifts from forest to grassland pasture occurred widely in the area generally extending from the Ozarks to Georgia and Florida (6, 7, 8, and 10). The offsetting decreases elsewhere in the East were attributable to limited shifts of grassland to cropland in the better agricultural areas, reversion of grass to forest in some areas, and urbanization in numerous localities.

Acreages of forest land grazed continued to decline in all farm production regions. Rough approximations of this acreage indicate a national decline exceeding 40 percent from 1950 to 1974 and regional declines equalling or exceeding the national rate except in the Mountain and Northern Plains regions. Among the factors associated with the major decline in forested grazing land are: (1) improvements in livestock feeding and forest management practices, (2) changes in forest species and stand density, (3) clearing and reclassification of woody vegetation to grassland, (4) closing of low-capacity and other areas to grazing, and (5) a general decline in the acreage of land in farms.

FOREST LAND

The Nation's forest resources as of July 1976 totaled 748 million acres, according to the continuing inventory of the U.S. Forest Service.[4/] This includes land at least 10 percent occupied by trees of any size, or formerly having had such tree cover and not currently developed for nonforest use. Two-thirds of the forest land (78 percent in the 48 contiguous States) is commercial (suitable and available for the production of industrial wood). The remainder is classed as noncommercial either because of low timber-producing capacity or, in some cases, because it is legally reserved for recreation and other nontimber uses. The noncommercial component includes such types as chaparral and pinyon-juniper in the West and the scrub forest of interior Alaska.

Forest land, including both commercial and noncommercial but excluding areas legally reserved for parks and related uses, totaled about 718 million acres in 1974, compared with 723 million in 1969 and 728 million in 1959. These estimates are not strictly comparable, but forest land decreased in numerous areas of the East during the decade prior to 1974. In addition to normal pressure from urbanization and other nonagricultural uses, large scale clearing of forest land for crops occurred in the Southern Mississippi Valley (3) and, as noted above, extensive areas of forested uplands were converted to pasture elsewhere in the South. The net decrease in forest land in the South reversed, at least temporarily, the trend prevailing in the fifties, when substantial acreages of cropland reverted to forest.

4/ Based on (10) and related Forest Survey reports (published by the U.S. Forest Service) in 1973-75.

SPECIAL-USE AND MISCELLANEOUS LAND

Special uses of land, including urban and transportation areas, recreational and wildlife areas, national defense areas, farmsteads, farm roads, and farm lanes, occupied approximately 182 million acres in 1974, or 8 percent of the Nation's land area (table 10). Urban and transportation areas accounted for 61 million acres, or one-third of the total. Federal and State parks and related recreational areas occupied 52 million acres; an additional 36 million acres were reserved for wildlife protection and propagation; about 25 million acres were used for defense and other related public facilities; and 8 million acres were used for farmsteads, farm roads, and farm lanes.

Table 10--Special-use areas, United States, 1974

Special-use area 1/	Area	Share of total
	Million acres	Percent
Nonagricultural:		
Intensive uses--		
Urban areas	34.8	19.1
Highways and roads	21.2	11.7
Railroads	3.1	1.7
Airports	2.0	1.1
Total	61.1	33.6
Extensive uses—		
National parks	29.9	16.5
State parks	6.9	3.8
Wilderness and primitive areas	14.8	8.1
Federal wildlife refuges	28.4	15.6
State wildlife refuges	7.5	4.1
National defense areas	22.9	12.6
Federal industrial lands	2.1	1.2
Total	112.5	61.9
Total nonagricultural	173.6	95.5
Agricultural:		
Farmsteads	6.2	3.4
Farm roads and lanes	1.9	1.1
Total agricultural	8.1	4.5
Total special-use areas	181.7	100.0

1/ Definitions and procedures are given in footnotes to appendix table 4, which shows special-use areas by State.

The area in special uses increased approximately 10 million acres, an average of 2 million annually, during the 1969-74 period (table 11). Most individual uses also increased. Among intensive uses, the urban area grew rapidly from 31 million acres to 34.8 million or about 750,000 acres annually. Rural transportation areas increased 25.8 million acres to 26.3 million acres, mainly as a result of the interstate highway system, but partly because of new airports. In contrast, the acreage used for rail transportation declined slightly.

Table 11--Change in special-use areas, United States, 1969-74

Special-use area	1969 1/	1974	Change
	Million acres		
Urban areas	31.0	34.8	3.8
Rural transportation areas	25.8	26.3	.5
Recreation and wildlife areas	81.4	87.5	6.1
Public installations and facilities	25.5	25.0	-.5
Farmsteads and farm roads	8.4	8.1	-.3
Total	172.1	181.7	9.6

1/ Based on (2).

Area of artificial reservoirs are not included, as their acreages already have been deducted from the total land area. However, substantial acreages of land are converted to reservoirs each year. The total fluctuates, but averaged approximately 200,000 acres in the early 1970's. When that total is combined with 850,000 acres taken for urban and transportation uses, nearly 1.1 million acres shifted to intensive special uses annually during the 1969 to 1974 period.

A net increase of 5.6 million acres occurred in other, generally extensive-type, special uses of land between 1969 and 1974. Recreation and wildlife areas increased 6.1 million acres, or 1.2 million annually, but that increase was slightly offset by Federal land held for defense and industrial purposes which decreased 500,000 acres. Most of the increase in recreation and wildlife areas involved nonagricultural land.

Urban Areas

The 34.8 million acres in urban places includes central cities, suburban fringe zones, and all other incorporated and unincorporated places with a population of 2,500 or more. It comprises not only residential areas but commercial, industrial, transportation, and similar areas, including an undetermined amount of vacant land. The urban acreage is very unevenly distributed. To illustrate, the Northeast contains only 5 percent of the U.S. land area, but has about 20 percent of the aggregate urban acreage. In contrast, the Mountain region has one-fourth of the U.S. land area, but less than 1 percent of the urban area.

The growth of the urban area has traditionally been assessed in terms of its effect on agricultural land supplies. From this standpoint, urbanization is not a serious immediate problem except in some specialty crop areas. Probably not more than 35 to 40 percent of the 750,000 acres urbanized each year is cropland.[5/] That rate of loss is cause for long-range concern but should not affect overall food supplies for many years to come.

5/ Interpretation of aerial photographs in a recent study of urbanization in 53 rapidly urbanizing counties showed that 35 percent of the land shifting to urban use was cropland (17).

Attention has increasingly been focused on the total impact of urbanization on humans and their environment since the late 1960's. From this perspective, urbanization is a serious immediate problem due to the large volume of pollutants generated in urban areas.

Transportation Areas

The area of land in rural highways and roads was 21 million acres in 1974. That acreage comprises road systems administered by State and local governments ranging from modern interstate highways to small rural roads. It includes rights-of-way as well as roadbeds.

Except for areas in the interstate system, most highway and road acreage has little adverse impact on either agricultural supplies or the environment. Basically, it is widely distributed in linear instead of concentrated form. Secondly, a high proportion has been in place for many years. Thus, the distributional pattern reflects historical settlement patterns where adjustments have already been made rather than current problem areas. In contrast, the interstate system takes most of the estimated 80,000 acres of all kinds of land annually converted to rural highway uses and significantly disturbs local agricultural activity and the environment.

The total acreage of rural airports, exclusive of military facilities and small private landing strips, in 1974 was about 2 million acres, with an average annual rate of growth of 40,000 acres. These acreages include vegetated areas as well as runways and related structures. Individually, the rural airports vary greatly in size and intensity of use. A few serve as principal air terminals for large metropolitan areas. Although classfied here as rural, airports in this category resemble urban airports. At the other extreme, many rural airports are merely sod runways of the type often associated with farms and ranches. Except for the large urban-oriented facilities, rural airports are not regarded as a significant threat to either agricultural production or the environment.

Recreation and Wildlife Areas

Rural land set aside primarily for Federal and State parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness and primitive areas, monuments, memorials and similar purposes totaled 87 million acres in 1974, 48 percent of the special use acreage. Land reserved for recreation and wildlife uses conflicts only slightly with agricultural uses. A high proportion is located in parts of the West and Alaska where physical conditions limit or preclude agricultural activity. Even in the better agricultural areas of the East, much of the recreation and wildlife acreage is unsuited for other purposes.

Recreation and wildlife areas increased 6.1 million acres between 1969 and 1974. This acreage has limited reliability as an indicator of future growth, since yearly additions fluctuate greatly.

National Defense Areas

About 23 million acres are in national defense areas and 2 million acres are in Federal atomic energy development and test areas. Locally significant acreages of fertile, level land were taken for defense and atomic energy purposes, particularly during the World War II period. The possibility of additional growth also exists.

However, these uses are of little direct concern to agriculture. Basically, the acreage is not increasing and, secondly, only part of the acreage in these uses is irreversibly lost to agriculture. From the environmental standpoint, relatively little of this acreage is used intensively.

Farmsteads and Farm Roads

Farmsteads, farm roads, and farm lanes occupied 8 million acres in 1974. These uses are complementary rather than competitive with agriculture. The total acreage continues to decline as a consequence of the general decline in the number of farms and land in farms.

Miscellaneous Land

Except for relatively minor acreages in special uses that were not inventoried, the remaining 301 million acres of the Nation's land area consisted largely of swamps, marshes, bare rock areas, deserts, tundra, and similar areas. Acreages of miscellaneous land are relatively large in arid portions of the West and in Alaska. These areas have little economic surface use, but generally have utility for wildlife purposes and some have value for minerals. From the standpoint of potential use, inroads will continue to be made for special purposes, while limited areas will be irrigated or otherwise reclaimed for agriculture.

MAJOR USES OF LAND BY TYPE OF OWNERSHIP

About one-third of the U.S. land resources was federally owned in 1974, three-fifths was privately owned, and the remainder was owned by State and local governments (table 12). These proportions normally change only gradually. Most of the Federal land was acquired as part of the original public domain but about 7 percent was acquired by purchase and other means (16). The original public domain lands are concentrated in the Mountain and Pacific regions, and Alaska. They are used mainly for grazing, forestry, and extensive special uses. Federal land acquired by purchase is distributed more evenly among States and used for a greater variety of purposes.

State and local governments have accumulated landholdings of varying size through grants from the Federal Government, tax reversion, purchase, gift, and escheat. These publicly administered areas are distributed somewhat more evenly than Federal land, but are still highly concentrated. The larger acreages are located mainly, but not exclusively, in the West. State and local governments hold land for forests, parks, wildlife areas, watershed protection, highway and road right-of-way, institutional uses, and other specific purposes. Most Western States also own relatively large acreages without specific use designations. Most of the acreage used for grazing is in this category.

The 51 million acres identified as Indian lands in table 12 are privately owned but managed in trust by the Federal Government. Indian land, like Federal and State land, is concentrated in the West. Livestock grazing is the dominant use of Indian land.

The three-fifths of the land area in private ownership includes 99 percent of the Nation's cropland, 62 percent of the grassland pasture, 56 percent of the forest land, and 15 percent of the miscellaneous land. As these percentages indicate, most of the good agricultural land is in private ownership.

Table 12--Major uses of land, by type of ownership, United States, 1974

Ownership 1/	Cropland	Grassland pasture and range	Forest land 2/	Special-use and other land	Total land area
			Million acres		
Federal	1	157	277	326	761
State and other public 3/	2	41	38	55	136
Indian 4/	2	32	13	4	51
Private	460	368	420	68	1,316
Total	465	598	748	453	2,264

1/ Federal, State, local government, and Indian land acreages are approximations based on public records and reports. Private land is the rest of the area in each major category.

2/ Includes reserved forest land in parks and other special uses.

3/ May not fully reflect recent land grants from the public domain to the State of Alaska.

4/ Managed in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

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APPENDIX--

Explanation of the Data

The estimates of the area in major land uses presented herein are the latest from a series of land use inventories conducted by the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service (ESCS) and its predecessor agencies. This series extends back more than 50 years and, since 1945, has been generally comparable in categories and area coverage. These periodic inventories are useful because numerous public agencies develop land-use data, but no single agency accounts for the use of all land in the country. Specifically, the inventories provide a framework within which changes in the supply and demand for land for agricultural and other purposes can be measured and analyzed.

The estimates, with few exceptions, were synthesized or otherwise adapted, modified, or adjusted from available data rather than used exactly as developed by source agencies. This process is necessary because land use data, regardless of origin or utility for specific purposes, have limitations for comprehensive inventory purposes. Typically, the data are obtained in surveys that differ greatly in scope, methods, definitions, timeliness, frequency, and reliability. These individual sources account for only one or a few uses and for only a limited part of the total land area. Collectively, the data contain conflicts and overlap that must be reconciled or removed.

Data from the 1974 Census of Agriculture, for example, accounted for only 45 percent of the Nation's land area. This total included 94 percent of total cropland, 65 percent of the permanent grassland pasture and range, and 13 percent of total forest land. Most of the acreage omitted from the census was excluded by definition, but the 6 percent shortfall in cropland as estimated in this report represents underenumeration by the census.

Among the Department of Agriculture agencies, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Forest Service (FS), and Crop Reporting Board (CRB) of ESCS are major suppliers of data. The Soil Conservation Service irregularly surveys land use by categories similar to those of the censuses of agriculture. However, SCS's surveys cover only non-Federal land (about two-thirds of the total) and, thus, exclude large acreages of pasture and range, forest land, and miscellaneous land. SCS's survey also differ significantly in methods and definitions, both among themselves and with surveys of other agencies. The Forest Service provides data on all forest land by State. These data vary in age by several years because of the continuing rather than periodic nature of the forest survey. This characteristic not only precludes a precise summation of all forest land but affects estimates of other major uses of land. The Crop Reporting Board provides data of exceptional timeliness and quality but these data are limited to acreages of planted and harvested crops.

As a final example, the Bureau of the Census develops area data for urban places in conjunction with the decennial censuses of population. These data have historically provided the basis for adequate estimates of urban area and the rate of urban expansion. However, they are developed and used by the Bureau of the Census solely to calculate and display population densities. For this purpose, they are published in special tables that, due to intricate overlap and duplication, generally discourage their use as measures of urbanization.

The study used different methods to estimate the acreage in various land uses because of differences in data problems and characteristics. Estimates of total cropland and component cropland acreages (except cropland used only for pasture) essentially were made by incorporating the best features of data from both the census of agriculture and the CRB. The census data provide a valuable account of all cropland by several distinctive subclasses. If used as reported, however, they would represent lower acreage levels for several cropland components than CRB data and other evidence

of underenumeration indicate. They would also be misleading as indicators of the rate of change because the extent of underenumeration has varied between censuses. In contrast, the CRB data are limited to acreages of most crops but are considered to be the best and most consistent estimates of actual acreage levels for these crops. Thus, they were compared with census data for the same crops and then used to adjust the several subclasses of cropland. No adjustment was made in the census-reported acreage of cropland used only for pasture as this component had other, possibly offsetting, problems associated with inconsistent enumeration.

Unlike cropland, no single agency attempts to account for all land used primarily for pasture and range. The total of 598 million acres used for permanent grassland pasture and range as classified herein, is a composite or synthesis of data from the Bureau of the Census and various public land management and conservation agencies. The basic acreage, totaling 390 million acres, was from the 1974 Census of Agriculture. By definition, this total included all land used for pasture and range (other than cropland pastured and woodland pastured) that could be identified and assigned to individual farms and ranches with sales of $2,500 and over. Except for underenumeration and the acreage in small farms (sales under $2,500) and abnormal farms (Indian reservations, institutional farms, and research farms), this means all of the non-Federal land used primarily for pasture and range and a small part (less than 10 percent) of Federal land grazed.

For farms with sales under $2,500 and abnormal farms, the 1974 Census of Agriculture did not distinguish between permanent grassland pasture and range and miscellaneous land. However, it did provide controls for an estimate of 56 million acres in this category. Except for adjustments for underenumeration or to make estimates of all uses sum to total land area, the 390 million acres reported by census plus the estimated 56 million acres in small and abnormal farms, essentially accounted for all land used primarily for pasture and range in States where Federal range is not a significant factor.

The situation is more complex where Federal range is involved. Federal agencies administer about 270 million acres for grazing mainly in the western United States. Most of this acreage is in Federal grazing district and National Forest system range allotments, but a few million acres are in National parks, military bases, and other Federal areas. This acreage cannot simply be added to the census-based acreage of 446 million acres. Instead, it includes more than 60 million acres classed as unsuitable for grazing but intermingled and managed with the usable Federal range, and approximately 50 million additional acres classed as forested grazing land. The Federal data also overlap with census-based data due to the inclusion of some Federal land in the census.

The 179 million acres classed as grazed forest land is a rough approximation of the acreage in this category. The 1974 Census of Agriculture and several divisions of the Forest Service were among the sources of data. Historical data from these and other sources also were useful in developing the approximations.

The Forest Service maintains a continuous survey of forest resources in the United States. Acreage of forest land in this report are as developed by the Forest Service except for minor modifications made to reduce duplication in various special uses of land. At any point in time, the forest area data for individual States vary in age by several years. This characteristic adversely affects estimates of other uses, especially pasture and range. On balance, however, these forest-area data are very useful in explaining changes and trends in land use. Forest land is given less emphasis than cropland and pasture in this report because the Forest Service periodically analyzes the Nation's forest resources in considerable detail.

Estimates of the area in urban, transportation, and other special uses were made because some of these uses affect the supply of agricultural land and all help account for total land area. The sources of data and procedures used in developing these estimates are outlined in footnotes to appendix table 4.

Appendix table 1—Major uses of land, by State and region, United States, 1974

State and region	Cropland 1/	Grassland pasture and range 2/	Forest land 3/	Special uses 4/	Other land 5/	Approximate land area 6/
			1,000 acres			
Maine	653	142	17,505	779	710	19,789
New Hampshire	174	34	5,046	304	219	5,777
Vermont	812	234	4,384	263	238	5,931
Massachusetts	264	52	2,848	1,208	637	5,009
Rhode Island	29	5	395	190	52	671
Connecticut	234	46	1,846	661	325	3,112
New York	6,085	1,580	14,897	5,502	2,548	30,612
New Jersey	714	54	1,856	1,598	591	4,813
Pennsylvania	5,930	1,026	17,638	3,714	470	28,778
Delaware	546	8	390	186	138	1,268
Maryland	1,893	209	2,925	1,028	275	6,330
District of Columbia	—	—	—	39	—	39
Northeast	17,334	3,390	69,730	15,472	6,203	112,129
Michigan	8,345	1,241	19,000	3,867	3,910	36,363
Wisconsin	11,866	2,095	14,891	2,664	3,341	34,857
Minnesota	23,906	1,954	18,415	4,004	2,466	50,745
Lake States	44,117	5,290	52,306	10,535	9,717	121,965
Ohio	12,705	1,610	6,422	2,983	2,504	26,224
Indiana	14,079	1,487	3,870	2,041	1,625	23,102
Illinois	25,010	1,834	3,745	3,211	1,879	35,679
Iowa	28,189	2,152	2,430	1,968	1,063	35,802
Missouri	20,481	6,610	12,661	2,321	2,084	44,157
Corn Belt	100,464	13,693	29,128	12,524	9,155	164,964
North Dakota	30,298	10,528	419	1,532	1,562	44,339
South Dakota	19,680	24,670	1,700	1,590	971	48,611
Nebraska	23,410	22,137	1,032	1,618	752	48,949
Kansas	31,625	15,950	1,363	2,210	1,196	52,344
Northern Plains	105,013	73,285	4,514	6,950	4,481	194,243
Virginia	4,690	1,819	16,076	2,127	747	25,459
West Virginia	1,617	717	12,126	568	377	15,405
North Carolina	6,576	1,050	20,223	2,731	651	31,231
Kentucky	9,397	2,013	11,888	1,519	559	25,376
Tennessee	8,376	1,899	12,820	2,193	1,162	26,450
Appalachian	30,656	7,498	73,133	9,138	3,496	123,921
South Carolina	3,565	667	12,402	1,599	1,111	19,344
Georgia	7,148	1,731	24,869	2,766	653	37,167
Florida	4,198	6,026	17,652	5,647	1,095	34,618
Alabama	5,797	2,917	21,333	1,768	637	32,452
Southeast	20,708	11,341	76,256	11,780	3,496	123,581

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued—

Appendix table 1--Major uses of land, by State and region, United States, 1974--Continued

State and region	Cropland 1/	Grassland pasture and range 2/	Forest land 3/	Special uses 4/	Other land 5/	Approximate land area 6/
			1,000 acres			
Mississippi	8,709	2,620	16,892	1,281	767	30,269
Arkansas	10,286	2,559	18,236	1,566	598	33,245
Louisiana	6,059	2,270	15,342	1,731	3,353	28,755
Delta States	25,054	7,449	50,470	4,578	4,718	92,269
Oklahoma	15,831	16,235	9,296	2,029	629	44,020
Texas	37,938	95,803	24,043	6,852	3,130	167,766
Southern Plains	53,769	112,038	33,339	8,881	3,759	211,786
Montana	16,021	49,465	19,899	4,633	3,158	93,176
Idaho	6,395	20,840	18,030	4,078	3,570	52,913
Wyoming	2,730	46,016	5,885	5,375	2,204	62,210
Colorado	10,959	29,274	19,387	3,238	3,552	66,410
New Mexico	2,302	50,525	17,256	5,325	2,295	77,703
Arizona	1,645	40,941	17,420	8,709	3,872	72,587
Utah	1,996	23,711	14,720	5,185	6,929	52,541
Nevada	753	46,673	7,255	7,235	8,412	70,328
Mountain	42,801	307,445	119,852	43,778	33,992	547,868
Washington	8,367	6,679	20,534	5,337	1,688	42,605
Oregon	5,276	23,172	29,387	2,655	1,067	61,557
California	11,143	23,910	39,826	16,292	8,900	100,071
Pacific	24,786	53,761	89,747	24,284	11,655	204,233
48 States	464,702	595,190	598,475	147,920	90,672	1,896,959
Alaska	25	1,625	118,076	32,902	209,888	362,516
Hawaii	357	1,018	1,626	842	269	4,112
United States	465,084	597,833	718,177	181,664	300,829	2,263,587

-- = Not applicable.

1/ Total acreage in the crop rotation.

2/ Grassland and other nonforested pasture, excluding cropland used only for pasture.

3/ Forest land, excluding reserved forest land and some unreserved areas duplicated in parks and other special uses of land. Total forest land as of July, 1976 was approximately 748 million acres according to the continuing inventory of the U.S. Forest Service.

4/ Urban, transportation, recreational, and other special uses of land specified in appendix table 4.

5/ Miscellaneous areas with low agricultural use value, such as marshes, open swamps, bare rock areas, deserts, and tundra.

6/ Approximate land area as developed by the Bureau of the Census in conjunction with the 1970 Census of Population (14), includes: all dryland; land temporarily or partially covered with water such as marshland, swamps, and river flood plains; streams, sloughs, estuaries, and canals less than one-eighth mile wide; and lakes, reservoirs, and ponds less than 40 acres in area.

Appendix table 2--Major uses of cropland, by State and region, United States, 1974

State and region	Crops 1/	Idle 2/	Pasture 3/	Total
		1,000 acres		
Maine	456	96	101	653
New Hampshire	120	11	43	174
Vermont	543	36	233	812
Massachusetts	193	16	55	264
Rhode Island	22	2	5	29
Connecticut	163	15	56	234
New York	4,396	461	1,228	6,085
New Jersey	569	62	83	714
Pennsylvania	4,437	470	1,023	5,930
Delaware	513	12	21	546
Maryland	1,525	110	258	1,893
Northeast	12,937	1,291	3,106	17,334
Michigan	6,567	869	909	8,345
Wisconsin	9,538	566	1,762	11,866
Minnesota	20,519	1,394	1,993	23,906
Lake States	36,624	2,829	4,664	44,117
Ohio	10,457	733	1,515	12,705
Indiana	11,978	678	1,423	14,079
Illinois	22,502	652	1,856	25,010
Iowa	24,134	425	3,630	28,189
Missouri	12,842	947	6,692	20,481
Corn Belt	81,913	3,435	15,116	100,464
North Dakota	27,275	753	2,270	30,298
South Dakota	16,655	255	2,770	19,680
Nebraska	19,724	412	3,274	23,410
Kansas	26,821	909	3,895	31,625
Northern Plains	90,475	2,329	12,209	105,013
Virginia	2,685	315	1,690	4,690
West Virginia	771	107	739	1,617
North Carolina	4,849	628	1,099	6,576
Kentucky	4,339	571	4,487	9,397
Tennessee	4,439	436	3,501	8,376
Appalachian	17,083	2,057	11,516	30,656
South Carolina	2,610	251	704	3,565
Georgia	4,764	556	1,828	7,148
Florida	2,732	380	1,086	4,198
Alabama	3,243	419	2,135	5,797
Southeast	13,349	1,606	5,753	20,708

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued--

Appendix table 2--Major uses of cropland, by State and region, United States, 1974--Continued

State and region	Crops 1/	Idle 2/	Pasture 3/	Total
		1,000 acres		
Mississippi	5,467	764	2,478	8,709
Arkansas	7,296	521	2,469	10,286
Louisiana	4,037	595	1,427	6,059
Delta States	16,800	1,880	6,374	25,054
Oklahoma	10,731	449	4,651	15,831
Texas	24,383	2,275	11,280	37,938
Southern Plains	35,114	2,724	15,931	53,769
Montana	14,504	372	1,145	16,021
Idaho	5,272	249	874	6,395
Wyoming	2,101	69	560	2,730
Colorado	9,159	508	1,292	10,959
New Mexico	1,553	207	542	2,302
Arizona	1,310	218	117	1,645
Utah	1,426	132	438	1,996
Nevada	564	36	153	753
Mountain	35,889	1,791	5,121	42,801
Washington	7,470	209	688	8,367
Oregon	4,242	219	815	5,276
California	9,276	463	1,404	11,143
Pacific	20,988	891	2,907	24,786
48 States	361,172	20,835	82,697	464,704
Alaska	17	6	2	25
Hawaii	151	169	37	357
United States	361,340	21,008	82,736	465,084

1/ Includes cropland harvested, crop failure, and cultivated summer fallow. Estimates are based on (12 and (13).

2/ Estimates are based primarily on (13).

3/ Cropland used only for pasture in 1974 as reported in (13).

Appendix table 3--Total pasture and range, by State and region, United States, 1974

State and region	Grassland pasture and range			Forest land grazed 3/	Total pasture and range
	Cropland used only for pasture 1/	Permanent grassland pasture and range 2/	Total		
	1,000 acres				
Maine	101	142	243	114	357
New Hampshire	43	34	77	74	151
Vermont	233	234	467	242	709
Massachusetts	55	52	107	49	156
Rhode Island	5	5	10	6	16
Connecticut	56	46	102	46	148
New York	1,228	1,580	2,808	720	3,528
New Jersey	83	54	137	34	171
Pennsylvania	1,023	1,026	2,049	489	2,538
Delaware	21	8	29	14	43
Maryland	258	209	467	114	581
District of Columbia	--	--	--	--	--
Northeast	3,106	3,390	6,496	1,902	8,398
Michigan	909	1,241	2,150	463	2,613
Wisconsin	1,762	2,095	3,857	1,844	5,701
Minnesota	1,993	1,954	3,947	1,456	5,403
Lake States	4,664	5,290	9,954	3,763	13,717
Ohio	1,515	1,610	3,125	873	3,998
Indiana	1,423	1,487	2,910	762	3,672
Illinois	1,856	1,834	3,690	1,001	4,691
Iowa	3,630	2,152	5,782	1,395	7,177
Missouri	6,692	6,610	13,302	5,907	19,209
Corn Belt	15,116	13,693	28,809	9,938	38,747
North Dakota	2,270	10,528	12,798	205	13,003
South Dakota	2,770	24,670	27,440	944	28,384
Nebraska	3,274	22,137	25,411	620	26,031
Kansas	3,895	15,950	19,845	459	20,304
Northern Plains	12,209	73,285	85,494	2,228	87,722
Virginia	1,690	1,819	3,509	1,021	4,530
West Virginia	739	717	1,456	696	2,152
North Carolina	1,099	1,050	2,149	1,084	3,233
Kentucky	4,487	2,013	6,500	1,400	7,900
Tennessee	3,501	1,899	5,400	1,642	7,042
Applachian	11,516	7,498	19,014	5,843	24,857
South Carolina	704	667	1,371	832	2,203
Georgia	1,828	1,731	3,559	1,987	5,546
Florida	1,086	6,026	7,112	7,325	14,437
Alabama	2,135	2,917	5,052	1,889	6,941
Southeast	5,753	11,341	17,094	12,033	29,127

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued--

Appendix table 3--Total pasture and range, by State and region, United States, 1974--Continued

State and region	Grassland pasture and range			Forest land grazed 3/	Total pasture and range
	Cropland used only for pasture 1/	Permanent grassland pasture and range 2/	Total		
	1,000 acres				
Mississippi	2,478	2,620	5,098	5,619	10,717
Arkansas	2,469	2,559	5,028	5,222	10,250
Louisiana	1,427	2,270	3,697	6,336	10,033
Delta States	6,374	7,449	13,823	17,177	31,000
Oklahoma	4,651	16,235	20,886	6,519	27,405
Texas	11,280	95,803	107,083	16,783	123,866
Southern Plains	15,931	112,038	127,969	23,302	151,271
Montana	1,145	49,465	50,610	8,520	59,130
Idaho	874	20,840	21,714	5,253	26,967
Wyoming	560	46,016	46,576	2,943	49,519
Colorado	1,292	29,274	30,566	9,745	40,311
New Mexico	542	50,525	51,067	14,461	65,528
Arizona	117	40,941	41,058	13,022	54,080
Utah	438	23,711	24,149	14,333	38,482
Nevada	153	46,673	46,826	7,094	53,920
Mountain	5,121	307,445	312,566	75,371	387,937
Washington	688	6,679	7,367	3,543	10,910
Oregon	815	23,172	23,987	11,302	35,289
California	1,404	23,910	25,314	12,449	37,763
Pacific	2,907	53,761	56,668	27,294	83,962
48 States	82,697	595,190	677,887	178,851	856,738
Alaska	2	1,625	1,627	108	1,735
Hawaii	37	1,018	1,055	460	1,515
United States	82,736	597,833	680,569	179,419	859,988

-- = Not applicable.

1/ From 1974 Census of Agriculture (13).

2/ Estimates based on reports and records of the Bureau of the Census (13) and public land management and conservation agencies.

3/ Estimates of forest land grazed in farms based on data from the Bureau of the Census (13) plus approximations of forested grazing land not in farms.

Appendix 4—Land in special use areas, by State and region, United States, 1974

State and region	Urban areas 1/	Rural transportation areas 2/	Rural parks 3/	Wildlife refuges 4/	Defense and industrial areas 5/	Farmsteads, farm roads, and lanes 6/	Total
			1,000 acres				
Maine	214	189	289	50	19	18	779
New Hampshire	163	83	36	8	7	7	304
Vermont	42	80	33	81	12	15	263
Massachusetts	992	78	79	28	19	12	1,208
Rhode Island	154	9	11	8	7	1	190
Connecticut	548	60	24	19	1	9	661
New York	1,686	430	2,939	163	168	116	5,502
New Jersey	1,224	103	78	109	66	18	1,598
Pennsylvania	1,462	706	322	1,068	30	126	3,714
Delaware	87	36	13	39	3	8	186
Maryland	546	141	90	93	127	31	1,028
District of Columbia	39	—	—	—	—	—	39
Northeast	7,157	1,915	3,914	1,666	459	361	15,472
Michigan	1,355	996	872	388	18	238	3,867
Wisconsin	740	924	100	517	68	315	2,
Minnesota	731	1,150	948	775	5	395	4,004
Lake States	2,826	3,070	1,920	1,680	91	948	10,535
Ohio	1,724	624	125	93	41	376	2,983
Indiana	906	507	60	83	177	308	2,041
Illinois	1,500	1,094	58	108	60	391	3,211
Iowa	477	893	35	131	20	466	1,968
Missouri	855	688	142	154	75	407	2,321
Corn Belt	5,462	3,752	420	569	373	1,948	12,524
North Dakota	78	685	84	423	13	249	1,532
South Dakota	93	734	352	195	45	171	1,590
Nebraska	201	892	29	179	22	295	1,618
Kansas	435	1,138	33	74	168	362	2,210
Northern Plains	807	3,449	498	871	248	1,017	6,950
Virginia	863	387	332	160	271	114	2,127
West Virginia	156	201	92	70	2	47	568
North Carolina	832	648	436	305	268	242	2,731
Kentucky	477	498	104	60	167	213	1,519
Tennessee	805	455	388	167	187	191	2,193
Appalachian	3,133	2,189	1,352	762	895	807	9,138
South Carolina	516	463	60	164	294	102	1,599
Georgia	928	559	103	489	552	135	2,766
Florida	1,891	709	1,945	267	699	136	5,647
Alabama	707	629	62	40	180	150	1,768
Southeast	4,042	2,360	2,170	960	1,725	523	11,780
Mississippi	450	410	93	84	21	223	1,281
Arkansas	420	420	48	380	96	202	1,566
Louisiana	537	372	13	495	144	170	1,731
Delta States	1,407	1,202	154	959	261	595	4,578

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued--

* U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1979 310-947/374

Appendix table 4--Land in special use areas, by State and region, United States, 1974--Continued

State and region	Urban areas 1/	Rural transportation areas 2/	Rural parks 3/	Wildlife refuges 4/	Defense and industrial areas 5/	Farmsteads, farm roads, and lanes 6/	Total
			1,000 acres				
Oklahoma	535	631	74	343	183	263	2,029
Texas	2,609	1,738	1,215	357	456	468	6,852
Southern Plains	3,144	2,369	1,289	700	648	731	8,881
Montana	90	697	3,386	310	16	134	4,633
Idaho	141	288	2,766	96	686	101	4,078
Wyoming	63	387	4,707	143	25	50	5,375
Colorado	430	727	1,435	218	298	130	3,238
New Mexico	279	417	1,417	580	2,573	59	5,325
Arizona	530	376	3,532	638	3,586	47	8,709
Utah	240	292	2,363	362	1,878	50	5,185
Nevada	184	506	884	1,709	3,937	15	7,235
Mountain	1,957	3,690	20,490	4,056	12,999	586	43,778
Washington	689	365	3,071	350	751	111	5,337
Oregon	382	428	1,097	578	66	104	2,655
California	3,550	1,183	7,213	188	3,903	255	16,292
Pacific	4,621	1,976	11,381	1,116	4,720	470	24,284
48 States	34,556	25,972	43,588	13,339	22,419	8,046	147,920
Alaska	83	257	7,786	22,318	2,457	1	32,902
Hawaii	178	35	273	162	174	20	842
United States	34,817	26,264	51,647	35,819	25,050	8,067	181,664

-- = Not applicable.

1/ Urbanized areas and other incorporated and unincorporated places with population of 2,500 or more. Based on provisional population estimates for 1975 by the Bureau of the Census and area per capita data developed in the 1960 and 1970 Censuses of Population.

2/ Includes rural highways and roads, railroads, and airports. Estimates for highways were derived by applying average right-of-way widths to the mileage in different highway systems reported by the Federal Highway Administration. Estimates of acreage in railroad rights-of-way are based on State-by-State changes in mileage reported by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Estimates of acreage in airports based on information on active airports supplied by the Federal Aviation Administration. Excludes airports used strictly for personal or military use.

3/ Areas in National and State parks systems and national forest wilderness and primitive area plus about 2.7 million acres in New York classified as State forest preserves. Generally excludes parks in urban places and large water bodies. Based on data from reports and records of the National Park Service, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and individual State agencies.

4/ Areas administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State wildlife agencies. Does not include Federal areas under the primary jurisdiction of another agency or areas leased for wildlife purposes. Data on Federal areas are from reports and records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. State estimates are mainly acreages compiled by the Public Land Law Review Commission plus acreage acquired from 1968-73 through the Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson programs of Federal assistance.

5/ As reported by the Bureau of Land Management (15). Includes land administered by the Department of Defense for defense purposes (22.9 million acres) and land administered by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (2.1 million acres).

6/ Estimates calculated on the basis of number of farms and acreage of unclassified land in farms.