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THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARM POPULATION - ESTIMATES FOR 1964

Farm Population Branch Economic and Statistical Analysis Division Economic Research Service

The population living on farms numbered about 12,954,000 in April 1964 (table 1). Although the farm population has been declining for many years, the decrease from 1963 to 1964 of 413,000 was not statistically significant. The chances are about one out of five that a decline of this magnitude would have been obtained from the sample on which the annual estimates are based even if no actual change had occurred in the farm population between 1963 and 1964. From the Annual Farm Population Survey of the Economic Research Service a decline was estimated for all of the nine major geographic divisions of the Nation. 1/

Between April 1963 and April 1964 an estimated 816,000 persons of all ages either moved away from farms or lived on places that were removed from the farm category during the year because agricultural production ceased. Actual migration is the larger of the two components, although the exact proportion is not known. This movement of people from farms to nonfarm areas was offset in part by 283,000 persons who moved to farms or were on places that became farms during the year. Thus, the farm population had a net loss of 533,000 persons through outmigration and reclassification of residence. Natural increase--that is the excess of births over deaths--partly countered the net loss from migration and cessation of farming by 121,000.

Because the estimates of farm population change 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. During the 4-year period, 1960 to 1964, the annual average loss to the farm population through net outmigration was 816,000 persons (table 2).

The annual rate of net outmigration--which is the average amount of net migration expressed as a percentage of the average farm population--was 5.7 percent. This is a slightly higher rate than that of 5.3 percent for the years of the 1950-60 decade. However, the absolute annual amount of outmigration from 1960 to 1964 was somewhat smaller than in the 1950's, reflecting the lowered size of the farm population from which the migrants are drawn. Among the geographic divisions, the average annual amount of migration loss from 1960 to 1964 was highest in the West North Central Division (173,000 persons). The amount of loss was least in New England, which has by far the smallest divisional farm population, but the rate of loss was highest there (8.0 percent). The lowest estimated annual rate of migration loss for the 4 years was 4.6 percent in the East North Central States.

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

1/ States in geographic divisions are listed at bottom of table 2.

Table 1.--Farm population and components of farm population change for the United States, regions, and divisions, April 1963-64 ^{1/}

Area	Farm population, April 1964		Natural increase		Change through migration and reclassification of residence ^{2/}		Farm to farm ^{3/}		Farm population, April 1963
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	
United States	12,954	121	248	-127	-533	283	-816	0	13,367
Regions: ^{4/}									
Northwest	925	8	18	-10	-35	23	-63	5	955
North Central	4,873	44	92	-48	-190	98	-292	4	5,018
South	5,923	57	114	-57	-254	119	-363	-10	6,121
West	1,233	13	24	-11	-52	42	-97	3	1,273
Divisions: ^{4/}									
New England	173	1	3	-2	-9	9	-19	1	182
Middle Atlantic	752	7	15	-8	-26	14	-44	4	773
East North Central	2,430	19	43	-24	-87	48	-135	0	2,497
West North Central	2,443	25	49	-24	-103	50	-157	4	2,521
South Atlantic	2,364	24	47	-23	-105	41	-137	9	2,446
East South Central	2,096	19	40	-21	-83	36	-115	-4	2,161
West South Central	1,463	14	27	-13	-66	42	-111	3	1,514
Mountain	537	7	12	-5	-26	20	-47	1	556
Pacific	696	6	12	-6	-26	22	-50	2	717

^{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 1960-64 ^{1/}

Area	Natural increase			Change through migration and reclassification of residence ^{2/}			Annual rate of net migration ^{4/}		
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Net change	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces ^{2/}	Farm to farm ^{3/}			
United States	146	282	-136	-816	-816	308	-1,124	0	-5.7
Regions: ^{5/}									
Northeast	9	20	-11	-57	-60	25	-85	2	-5.6
North Central	54	106	-51	-295	-296	100	-396	1	-5.5
South	67	128	-62	-376	-365	135	-500	-11	-5.8
West	16	28	-12	-88	-95	48	-143	8	-6.4
Divisions: ^{5/}									
New England	1	4	-2	-16	-17	8	-25	1	-8.0
Middle Atlantic	8	16	-9	-41	-42	18	-60	1	-5.1
East North Central	24	49	-25	-122	-122	48	-171	1	-4.6
West North Central	31	57	-26	-173	-174	52	-225	0	-6.4
South Atlantic	28	53	-24	-147	-134	47	-181	-13	-5.7
East South Central	22	44	-23	-121	-115	43	-158	-7	-5.3
West South Central	17	31	-14	-108	-116	45	-161	8	-6.7
Mountain	9	14	-5	-44	-46	21	-67	2	-7.3
Pacific	7	14	-7	-44	-49	26	-76	6	-5.7

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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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. 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 24,916 respondents in 1964, reporting on 98,755 farms.

Earlier comparable reports.--Estimates for earlier years on number, migration, and natural increase of farm people were published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Farm Population Estimates for 1910-62, ERS-130, October 1963, and Farm Population Estimates for 1963, ERS-177, July 1964.

