

FARM ORGANIZATIONS AND INCOMES IN 1945

Acreage of Land

In the Piedmont area the farm economy is centered around crops. This means that crop acreage is of major importance. On farms in the sample, acreages used for crops ranged from 6.5 to 772.¹⁰ The distribution of farms, when classified according to acres used for crops, indicate three rather broad size groups—small, 10 to 44 acres; medium, 45 to 74 acres; and large, 75 or more acres (Figure 11).

Of the same farms, 47 per cent were small; 30 per cent, medium; and 23 per cent, large. Though wide extremes in crop acreages were found among the large farms, two-thirds of them ranged between 75 and 150 acres. Large farms accounted for only 23 per cent of the number of farms, but they comprised 48 per cent of the land

¹⁰ Beyond this point in the analysis three farms were not included because of their extreme size and organization. These farms included one with 772 acres used for crops, and two with 6.5 and 23.0 acres, respectively, where unusual circumstances limited production to reseeded lespedeza.

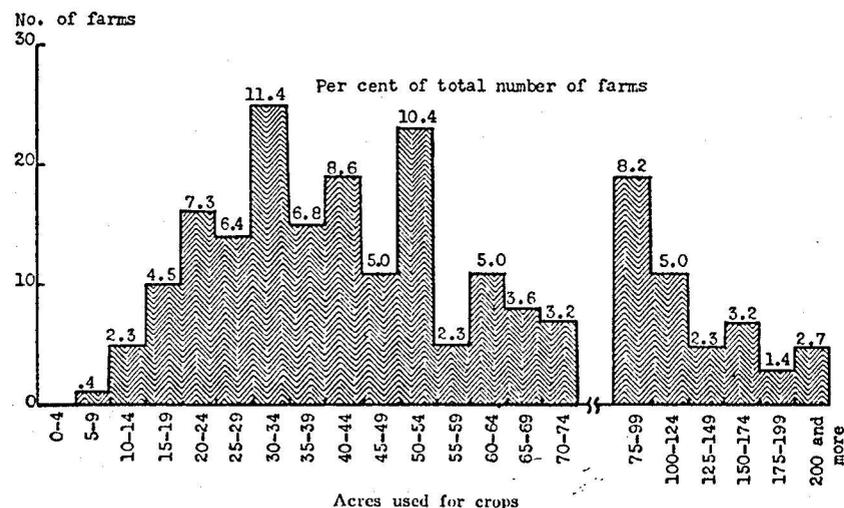


Figure 11. Distribution of Numbers of Farms by Acres Used for Crops, 220 Farms, Southern Piedmont, North Carolina, 1945.¹

¹ Range 6.5 — 772.0 acres.

used for crops. Small farms accounted for only 24 per cent of the total cropland in use.

Power and Equipment

Workstock was the principal source of power on the small and medium farms, but two-thirds of the large farms had a tractor in addition to two or more head of workstock. Small and medium-size farms were predominantly "two-mule" units. Sixty-four per cent of the small farms and 54 per cent of the medium farms operated with two head of workstock each. On the "one-mule" units there were many cases when an additional mule was borrowed or hired. Tractors on the small and medium-size farms often were used to do custom work on neighboring farms in addition to work at home.

Equipment on farms using mules or horses as power usually consisted of two-horse implements for seed-bed preparation and one-horse equipment for planting and cultivating.

One or more wagons, turning plows, smoothing harrows, cultivators, middle busters, and plow stocks, a combination corn-cotton planter, fertilizer distributor, mowing machine, dump rake, and the usual small tools, were the more common equipment found on farms. There were some differences according to size of farms. A mowing machine was reported on half of the small, on three-fourths of the medium, and on almost all of the large farms.

On farms with tractors, a breaking plow and tandem disk were the principal tractor equipment. On most of the tractor farms, planting and cultivating was done with workstock. On the large farms, the percentage of tractor farmers reporting other tractor equipment were: planter, 21 per cent; cultivator, 24 per cent; grain drill, 36 per cent; mowing machine, 36 per cent; and combine, 45 per cent. On the medium-size farms, only about a third of the farmers with tractors reported combines.

Buildings

Many of the farms have only a few buildings other than dwellings for the operator's family, and for sharecroppers or hired labor families. The small farms usually have a general barn and one or two small structures such as poultry house, corn crib, and smokehouse. Medium and large farms usually have a general-purpose barn, a poultry house, corn crib, smokehouse, granary, and one or two other small buildings for tools, storage, and shop work. On farms with dairy herds (more than 6

cows) a dairy barn or milking shed is common. In the main, farm buildings were in poor to fair condition.

Two-thirds of the dwellings on small farms were equipped with electricity, while 94 per cent of the large farms were so equipped (Table 6). A running water system was found in less than a third of the dwellings on small and medium-size farms, but in 71 per cent of the dwellings on large farms.

Population and Labor Supply

The size of the operator's family was about the same regardless of size of the farm. The number of sharecropper families increased as the size of the farm increased (Table 7).

On 79 per cent of the small farms, labor was furnished almost entirely by the operator and his family. Occasionally an extra person was hired to help harvest hay and to pick cotton. Of the 103 small farms, 22 (usually those with the larger acreages of cotton) employed sharecropper labor. On the medium-size farms, sharecroppers were found on 29 of the 59 farms that grew cotton. On three-fourths of the farms where sharecropper labor was used, the operator's family had only one man.

About three-fourths of the large farms employed sharecropper labor, ranging from one family for 25 per cent of the group to six to eight families for 7 per cent of the group. On farms where only one sharecropper family was employed, the average acreage of cotton per family, including the operator's family, was 7.7 acres. The aver-

Table 6.—Proportion of operators' dwellings equipped with specified facilities, by size of farm, 217 farms, Southern Piedmont, North Carolina, 1945

Item	Percentage of farms reporting			
	Small	Medium	Large	All farms
Electricity	67	75	94	76
Radios	84	94	94	89
Running water	26	29	71	37
Refrigerators	47	50	82	55