

Concentration of Farmland Ownership

Related to the concentration of production is the concentration of farmland. About 42 percent of the farmland was operated by farms having at least 2,000 acres in 1974. That meant that 35 percent of the farmland was operated by the largest 50,000 farms (2 percent of total), and 58 percent of the farmland was operated by the largest 200,000 farms (7 percent of total). The projections show continued concentration of land resources among the big farms. About 57 percent of farmland is projected to be operated by farms with 2,000 or more acres in 2000; less than 10 percent of the farmland will be in farms with less than 220 acres (table 8). Thus, half of the land will be farmed by the largest 50,000 farms (3 percent of total) and almost all farmland will be operated by the largest 1 million farms (57 percent of total).

Form of Business Organization

The number of corporations in farming is expected to continue to increase while the number of partnerships will decline slightly. Overall, the sales of multiownership farms (corporations and partnerships) could account for half of the farm sales before the end of the century. The number of corporations is projected to nearly triple, but still account for less than 4 percent of the farms.

Most of these multiownership farms will likely continue to be multifamily farms. Most new corporations will likely represent the incorporation of existing farms rather than the entry of corporations not now farming. In fact, the number of corporations could well exceed the present trends because of changes in income tax laws, more rapid rise in asset values, and new technology. Few nonfarm corporations are likely to be attracted to farming unless the profitability of farming improves greatly.

Table 8--Comparison of historical and projected concentration of U.S. farmland, by size of farm

Year	Size of farm				Farmland operated by the largest --		
	2,000 acres and over	1,000 to 1,999 acres	220 to 999 acres	Less than 220 acres	50,000 farms	200,000 farms	1 million farms
	<u>Percent</u>						
1969	42.8	11.6	31.1	14.5	30	50	80
1974	45.7	12.4	29.4	12.5	35	58	88
1985	47.7	13.6	27.0	11.7	40	65	93
2000	56.6	14.1	20.8	8.5	50	74	98