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Black Farmers and Their Farms

Vera J. Banks



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Abstract

Black farmers represented less than 2 percent of the Nation's 2.2 million farmers in 1982, down from 14 percent in 1920; however, they represented 61 percent of all minority farmers. Black-operated farms continue to be heavily concentrated in the South. By 1982, more than 60 percent of all black farmers were full owners of their farms, compared with only 16 percent in 1930. The average black-operated farm has only about 100 acres compared with the national average of 440 acres. Most black farmers in 1982 specialized in livestock and cash grains; however, they were more likely than other farmers to rely on tobacco for their principal source of farm income. Almost a third of all black farmers were 65 or older. Less than a fifth of all farmers nationwide were that old.

Keywords: Black farmers, farm operators, geographic distribution, tenure status, type of farm, value of agricultural products sold, age, employment, income.

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Summary

Black farmers represented less than 2 percent of the Nation's 2.2 million farmers in 1982, down from 14 percent in 1920; however, they still represent 61 percent of all minority farmers. Here is a composite sketch of the 33,000 black farmers in the United States:

- More than 31,000 black-operated farms, better than 90 percent of the national total, are in the South.
- More than 60 percent of all black farmers are full owners of their farms, up from only 16 percent in 1930.
- Almost half of all black-operated farms are smaller than 50 acres and have sales under \$2,500 annually. The average black-operated farm has only about 100 acres, compared with the 440-acre national average.
- About 45 percent of all black farmers specialize in livestock; cash grain is a distant second specialty.
- Black farmers are about 2½ times more likely to specialize in tobacco than are all farmers.
- Black farmers tend to be older and less well educated than other farmers. The average age of black farmers is 57 years, 6 years more than the national average for all farmers; black farmers also are twice as likely as other farmers to be 65 years old or older.
- Only about 36 percent of southern black farmers had debt claims against their farm assets in 1979, compared with 47 percent of southern white farmers.

Because most black farmers do not earn enough from farm income to support their families, they must also seek off-farm work. However, the average age of black farmers makes this difficult because older farmers' age, health, and lack of training tend to limit the work they can do and the places where they can seek work.

Black Farmers and Their Farms

Vera J. Banks*

Introduction

Black farmers have never accounted for more than about 14 percent of all U.S. farmers. The number of black-operated farms dropped from a 1920 peak of 925,710 to only 33,250 by 1982. Average size of a black-operated farm more than doubled from 51 acres in 1900 to 104 acres in 1982, but the national average jumped from 147 acres to 440 acres.

Farm numbers have decreased most “. . . among those farms with the weakest economic base which could not compete with the attraction of the cities, could least afford the conversion to mechanization, could not provide an adequate livelihood for its families from farm earnings and could not, for various reasons, supplement farm earnings with nonfarm sources of income. The majority of black farmers were in this group” (13).¹

This report reviews significant historical trends and examines the recent key characteristics of black farmers and their farms. It also explains the importance of some of those trends and characteristics.

Most of the analysis in this report is based on 1978 data, the most recent, most complete data set available. Some of the data categories were updated in 1982. A section near the end of this report reviews those later data and their possible implications.

Background

Many studies have examined and analyzed the historical role of blacks in agriculture, their characteristics, and the trend in their number and location (2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11). In 1920, the number of black-operated farms peaked at about 926,000, and black farmers owned about 15 million

acres of farmland. In 1978, there were little more than 50,000 black farmers, and owned farmland had declined to 3.2 million acres. It is not possible to account precisely for the net of nearly 12 million acres that have left the ownership of black farmers. Some of that land was owned by blacks who were not farming, and some was still black owned but no longer farmland. But, a large amount unquestionably was bought by whites or others from black farmers or their heirs.²

One must not confuse the land owned by black farmers with all land owned by blacks. Blacks who were not farming owned an additional 3.1 million acres of farmland in 1978, about as much as that owned by black farmers. Blacks also owned approximately 4 million acres of nonfarmland, excluding city lot-sized parcels. The only historical data available are those on farmland owned by farmers; information on other land holdings is derived from one U.S. Department of Agriculture survey in 1978. It is not possible, therefore, to say with certainty whether total black ownership of land has increased or decreased in recent years. Total black ownership of land today (10 million acres) is less than that owned by black farmers alone a half century ago (10, 13).

To some extent, the change in farms is not so drastic as it seems. The definition of a farm is more restrictive today than it was in 1920. If the old definitions were still in use, twice as many black farmers might be counted today as there really are, perhaps even more. Also, black-operated farms are highly concentrated in the South; in 1920, about three-fourths of these farms were tenant-operated parts of larger white-owned operations. The tenants typically lacked equipment of their own or management responsibilities. Except for the fact that they worked for a share of the crops rather than for wages, tenant farmers were more like hired farmworkers. The fate of the tenants was predictable once southern farming felt the effects of mechanization and other modernization. But even after these qualifications are made, the change is dramatic

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¹Italicized numbers in parentheses identify literature cited in the references at the end of this report.

²A detailed discussion on the impact of heir property on declining black landownership is presented in (10).

and much greater than that for southern white farmers, whose numbers dropped from 2.3 million to 955,000 between 1920 and 1978 (13).

Number and Location

Black farmers have always been the leading minority group among U.S. farmers. Nevertheless, even at their peak of 926,000 in 1920 (table 1), blacks were still only 14 percent of all farmers. At midcentury, there were 560,000 black farmers, 10 percent of all farmers. By 1978, there were only 57,000 farms operated by blacks, only 2 percent of the total (table 2).

The latest change in the definition of a farm was adopted for the 1974 *Census of Agriculture* when the definition of a farm was changed to any place where \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold, or normally would have been sold, in the reporting year (22). Under the previous definition in use since 1960, a farm was defined

as a place of 10 or more acres with at least \$50 worth of agricultural products sold in the reporting year, and places of under 10 acres if at least \$250 worth of agricultural products were sold.

The overall impact of this latest change in farm definition was to lower the count of farms. However, the significant effect concerned data on size of farm and race of operator. Farms with annual sales of less than \$2,500 were directly affected by this definitional change, lowering the number of farms in this sales class more than any other class. Because black farmers were disproportionately located on farms with low agricultural sales, the number of farms operated by blacks would have been 15 percent higher under the previous definition than under the definition adopted for the 1974 census. The number of farms operated by whites would only have been about 6 percent higher (22).

Black Farmers in the South

When the heavy geographic concentration of black farmers is taken into account, the decline in their relative importance becomes even more striking. Blacks have historically been concentrated in the Southern States and thus have been a significant proportion of all southern farms. Up until the Great Depression of the thirties, blacks operated more than a fourth of all southern farms. Thereafter, the rate of decline in number of farms and the movement of people from farms accelerated among both whites and blacks, but particularly blacks.

In the forties and fifties, the success of tractors, mechanical harvesters, and chemical weed control displaced thousands of tenant farmers, most of them black (12). By 1950, black representation in the southern total had fallen to 20 percent, and by 1978, blacks operated only 5 percent of all southern farms. Black farmers are 10 percent or more of all farm operators in only two Southern States: South Carolina (19 percent) and Mississippi (16 percent).

The overwhelming concentration of blacks in the South has been well documented. DuBois, in his 1900 census monograph on *The Negro Farmer*, pointed out that "... the Southern States contain more than 98 percent of all farms operated by negroes and more than 97 percent of the total acreage of these farms" (5). Beale, in *The Negro in American Agriculture*, also noted the strong southern concentrations in 1950, but was more specific as to their location.

Table 1—Black farmers by region, 1900-78

Year	United States	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
	<i>Number</i>				
1978	57,271	288	1,720	54,616	647
1969	87,393	254	1,534	85,249	356
1959	272,541	596	4,259	267,008	678
1950	559,980	1,002	6,700	551,469	809
1940	681,790	1,432	7,466	672,214	678
1930	882,852	1,021	10,083	870,936	812
1920	925,710	1,469	7,911	915,595	735
1910	893,377	1,620	10,432	880,836	489
1900	746,717	1,761	12,255	732,362	339

Source: (20, 23).

Table 2—Black-operated farms as a percentage of all farms and southern farms, 1900-78

Year	Black-operated farms as a percentage of—	
	All farms	All southern farms
	<i>Percent</i>	
1978	2.3	5.4
1969	3.2	7.3
1959	7.3	16.2
1950	10.4	20.8
1940	11.2	22.4
1930	14.0	27.0
1920	14.3	28.6
1910	14.0	28.4
1900	13.0	27.9

Source: (20, 23).

“The great majority of Negro farmers are located in a huge sickle-shaped stretch of land that begins on the northeast in southern Maryland, sweeping southward through Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The area curves through Georgia below the southern end of the mountains, across central Alabama, and in a northward direction through Mississippi, with the end in western Tennessee and eastern Arkansas. A handle can be thought of as extending across northern Louisiana, curving down into eastern Texas. There are very few Negro farmers in the mountain and plateau parts of the South, in the Florida peninsula or in the plains portions of Texas” (3).

Of counties with 100 or more black-operated farms in 1978, significant numbers are still found in the flue-cured tobacco production areas of the Southern Virginia Piedmont and the Upper Coastal Plains of the Carolinas (fig. 1 and app. table 1). Substantial numbers are also in the Alabama Black Prairie Area which historically has been known for its large black population: as late as 1950, 72 percent of the area’s total population was black. The high proportion of blacks in this area resulted from and developed during the years when the cotton plantation system was at its peak (4). Clusters of black farmers are also in the Coastal Plain areas of Georgia and in the southwest and Delta Fringe and Bluff Hills areas of Mississippi.

As late as 1964, there were 58 counties in the United States where black farmers were in the majority. According to the *1978 Census of Agriculture*, of southern counties with 25 or more black farmers, there was no county where farms operated by blacks amounted to 50 percent or more of all farms (20). In fact, black farmers constituted at least a third of the county total in only eight counties (app. table 2). Greene County, Alabama, had the highest proportion of black farmers in 1978, 44 percent. There were only 54 counties where black farmers made up a fifth or more of all farmers and 192 counties where they constituted as much as a tenth or more of the total (fig. 1).

Black farmers remain highly concentrated in a few Southern States. In 1900, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia contained over half of all farms operated by blacks. Mississippi alone had 128,000 black-operated farms, nearly a fifth of the national total

(app. table 3). In 1978, half of all black-operated farms were still in four Southern States: Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. Georgia lost about two-fifths of its black-operated farms between 1900 and 1950 while the number of black farmers, mostly tobacco farmers, increased in North Carolina. Alabama, which had remained among the top four States until the mid-seventies, was replaced in 1978 by Texas, where the number of black-operated farms stabilized.

Mississippi has had more black farmers than any other State since the data were first collected; with 9,000 black-operated farms in 1978, it still ranks first. However, the rapid loss of cotton tenants in that State may cost it its top rank. North Carolina, with its continued heavy involvement in tobacco farming and the historic concentration of black farmers in tobacco, may achieve the top rank.

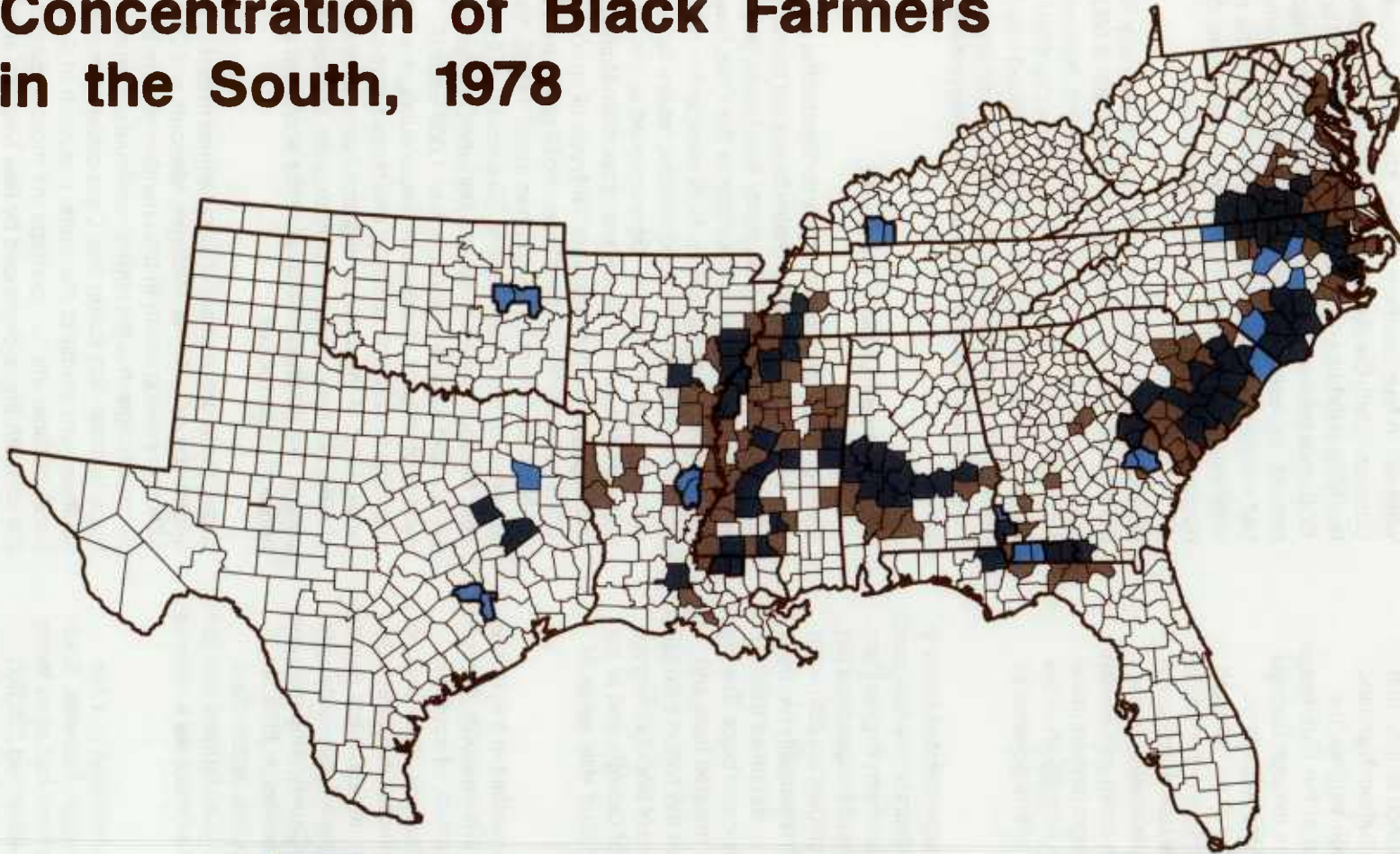
Black Farmers Outside the South



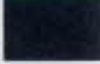
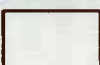
Although black farmers are largely confined to the South, a few Northern and Western States have a fair representation. Prior to the Civil War, many free blacks and escaped slaves fled to areas north of the Ohio River where slavery was forbidden. Most went to the hilly country of southern Ohio and Indiana, where farming was largely small in scale. Others moved to the Corn Belt parts of these two States and of southern Michigan, and engaged in more commercial types of agriculture. Still others were brought as slaves into Missouri. In 1900, the North and West combined had about 14,000 black farmers with the great majority (85 percent) in the Midwest. Missouri alone had about 5,000 and Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas had more than 1,000 each (2). The exodus of millions of southern blacks during the forties and fifties to the North and West was rarely a farm-to-farm move. Most of these black migrants had a farm background, but they usually moved to cities and towns outside the South in search of better economic and personal opportunities.

Today, the largest number of black farmers in the North and West is in California, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio. Although ranking fourth in total number outside the South, Michigan has the largest individual settlement of black farmers. Van Buren and Cass counties in the southwestern corner of the State, just north of South Bend, Indiana, are “. . . perhaps the most persistent of the northern areas developed by free Negroes in the generation before the Civil War. After a period of some

Figure 1

Concentration of Black Farmers in the South, 1978



-  Counties where blacks were 10 percent or more of all farmers
-  Counties with 100 or more black farmers
-  Counties with 100 or more black farmers and where blacks were 10 percent or more of all farmers
-  Selected contiguous 2-county groupings

Source: (20)

Note: Excludes counties with fewer than 25 black farmers.

decline as a commercial farming area, it has begun to grow again as a part-time farming and residential area” (2). According to the *1978 Census of Agriculture*, there were 74 black farmers in these two contiguous Michigan counties (18, 21).

For many years, Missouri had the largest number of black-operated farms outside the South. As late as 1969, this State still ranked first with more than 400 black farmers. The southeastern corner of Missouri is distinctly different from the rest of the State in many ways. It is physiographically, economically, and culturally part of the South, and black farmers have long been concentrated in this Missouri section of the Mississippi Delta, often referred to as the Missouri Bootheel. In 1978, nearly a third of the more than 200 black farmers in Missouri were in this six-county area: Butler, Pemiscot, Mississippi, New Madrid, Stoddard, and Dunklin.

Ohio also has sizable numbers. But, in contrast to Michigan and Missouri, it has no strong geographic concentrations of black farm operators. There were, however, small settlements around Dayton and Cincinnati and in the southeast Ohio hills.

California is now the leading State outside the South in number of black-operated farms. Many years ago, the types of agriculture pursued in this State involved a demand for unskilled farm laborers, and blacks found employment as hired farmworkers. During the thirties and early forties, the number of blacks greatly increased as migrants fled the Great Depression. Later, many sought defense work. Over the years, some of these migrants went into agriculture on their own, and there were 300 black farmers in California in 1978. Their farms were widely scattered throughout the Central Valley that runs between the Coast Range on the west and the Sierra Nevada on the east. However, there were some concentrations of black farmers in the lower San Joaquin part of the Central Valley where arable cropland is intensively farmed and where high-yield, high-quality cotton is a major crop.

Size of Farm

Farms operated by blacks historically have been comparatively small in acreage. In 1900, the average size of a farm operated by blacks in the United States was 51 acres, compared with 147 acres nationally. Blacks had limited capital to buy land, and most operated not as owners but as tenants. As tenants, they were unlikely to

enlarge their operation. DuBois, in his analysis of black farmers, made the following assessment:

“The usual farm of the negro has an area of from 20 to 50 acres—the “one-mule farm”—requiring the labor of a man and his family and one mule. Nearly half of the farms operated by negroes in the country in 1900 were of this size” (5).

When the national trend toward larger farms began in 1935, the average black-operated farm in the South was 44 acres contrasted to the average of 131 for southern white farmers. As the ability and necessity to have larger units grew, all classes of white farmers, including those on tenant operations, began to steadily operate larger land holdings. By 1978, the size of the average white-operated farm in the South had risen to 321 acres. Black farmers did not generally participate in this trend of increasing farm size. Although hundreds of thousands of small tenant farms have disappeared, the 1978 average size of farms operated by blacks was only 83 acres, an increase of just 39 acres since 1935. This low average farm size reflects the fact that in 1978, nearly three of every five black-operated farms had fewer than 50 acres (table 3). By contrast, only a third of southern white farmers had fewer than 50 acres. Thus, black-operated farms are typically small, which greatly limits their capacity to support a family or their suitability for certain types of farming. On more than 70 percent of the farms with fewer than 50 acres, the value of products sold by black farmers amounted to less than \$2,500 in 1978.

Average farm size as a measure derived entirely from total acres in each place brings together, in a single size group, farms representing numerous types of agriculture and intensity of production. This measure is especially useful when the averages are for States or other large geographic areas. The average size of agricultural operations varied widely among the Southern States.

Oklahoma, the only Southern State with more than 10 percent of its black-operated farms having 260 acres or more in 1978, had the largest average farm size (158 acres). Texas, where the average black farm was 118 acres, ranked second (app. table 4). Black farmers in both of these States are heavily engaged in livestock farming which requires sizable acreage. In contrast, some of the smallest average farm sizes are in North Carolina and Maryland where large proportions of black farmers are engaged in highly labor-intensive tobacco production.

Table 3—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the United States and the South, 1978

Characteristic	Unit	United States		South	
		All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
Farms	Number	2,478,642	57,271	1,015,304	54,616
Land in farms	1,000 acres	1,029,695	4,744	312,624	4,220
Average size of farm	Acres	415	83	308	77
Average value of land and buildings per farm	Dollars	262,252	74,524	191,680	69,294
Farms by acres:					
1 to 49	Percent	27.9	58.6	32.3	59.0
50 to 99	do.	15.6	18.7	18.7	18.9
100 to 179	do.	17.3	13.0	17.9	13.1
180 to 259	do.	9.8	4.2	8.6	4.1
260 to 999	do.	23.0	4.9	17.5	4.5
1,000 or more	do.	6.5	.6	5.0	.4
Farms by value of agricultural products sold: ¹					
Less than \$2,500	do.	24.7	58.6	32.7	59.6
\$2,500 to \$4,999	do.	13.4	15.3	17.2	15.2
\$5,000 to \$9,999	do.	13.4	11.2	15.3	11.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999	do.	12.5	7.2	11.5	7.0
\$20,000 to \$39,999	do.	12.4	4.4	8.4	4.2
\$40,000 to \$99,999	do.	14.7	2.4	8.3	2.1
\$100,000 or more	do.	9.0	.9	6.6	.7
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	Dollars	43,618	7,573	32,467	6,965
Farms by type:					
Cash grain	Percent	23.9	16.5	13.3	15.9
Cotton	do.	1.3	2.4	2.7	2.4
Tobacco	do.	5.8	14.3	13.4	15.0
Other field crops	do.	5.6	3.9	4.4	3.9
Vegetable and melon	do.	1.4	2.6	1.4	2.6
Fruit and tree nut	do.	3.6	.8	2.3	.6
Livestock	do.	41.9	52.3	49.8	52.6
Dairy	do.	6.8	.8	2.5	.6
Poultry	do.	2.1	1.5	3.3	1.5
Other	do.	7.7	4.9	6.8	4.9
Tenure of farmer:					
Full owners	do.	58.6	60.3	62.3	59.9
Part owners	do.	28.8	24.0	26.0	24.1
Tenants	do.	12.7	15.8	11.7	16.0
Age of farmer:					
Under 35 years	do.	16.2	7.9	14.2	7.7
35 to 54 years	do.	43.6	35.2	42.5	34.8
55 to 64 years	do.	23.7	27.9	23.9	28.0
65 years and older	do.	16.4	29.0	19.5	29.5
Farmers reporting days of work off farms:					
None	do.	42.3	39.2	37.7	39.3
1 to 99	do.	11.2	10.4	9.5	10.6
100 to 199	do.	8.3	11.6	8.6	11.7
200 or more	do.	38.2	38.7	44.2	38.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

¹"All farms" excludes institutional farms, experimental and research farms, and Indian reservations.

Source: (20, 21).

Tenure

Conditions of tenure—farmers and their rights in the land operated—have much to do with farming practices. Tenure may affect the way the land is used and the quantities of capital and labor used in conjunction with the land. Thus, tenure arrangements affect total agricultural production and the farm income and status of farm families. The three major land tenure forms are (1) full owners—those who own all the land operated, (2) part owners—those who own a part and rent a part, and (3) tenants—those who rent all the land they operate.

The historical image of black farmers has been that of tenant or sharecropper. From World War I until 1950, more than half of all black farmers were landless tenants working for a share of the crops they produced. Even as late as the end of World War II, no more than a fourth of all black farmers were owners. Many white farmers were tenants as well, but not in the same proportion as blacks. Even during the Great Depression years, about half of all southern white farmers were owners. This difference has had a far-reaching effect on the ability of blacks to survive and prosper in agriculture. The landless tenant has no defense against mechanization and is at the mercy of the landlord who decides to mechanize and use less human labor (2).

From 1930 to 1950, the number of black farm owners increased by 14,000 or 8 percent. During this same 20-year period, the number of black tenants declined by about 336,000, or 48 percent (table 4). Since 1950, the number of black farmers has declined in all tenure categories. However, the number of part owners has declined less than other categories, a reflection of the increasing importance of these farms. Part-owner operations consist of both owned and rented or leased land and typically include more than one tract of land. In 1978, about a fourth of all black-operated farms were run by a part owner; at midcentury, just less than a tenth were operated by part owners. The proportion of farms

operated by part owners has been increasing in each national census since the data were first collected. This trend has also been observed among black farmers but to a somewhat lesser extent. The indicated increase in part owners reflects the combination of the security of an owned unit with the economies of size provided by rental units to obtain a viable operation. Land resources are limited, and as the purchase of land requires increasing amounts of capital, farm operators have enlarged their operations through leasing or renting additional land. Thus, a sizable number of operators who were classified as full owners in the prior census have become part owners by the next.

In 1978, part owners operated 42 percent of all land farmed by blacks, contrasted to only 14 percent in 1950 (21, 24). The part-owner farm is generally much larger than farms in the other tenure categories. The average size of black part-owner farms was 144 acres in 1978, compared with 64 acres for full owners and 57 acres for tenant farms. Of the 2 million acres farmed by black part owners, only 800,000 acres, or two-fifths, were owned by the operator (21). The remainder of the farmland was either rented or leased. Thus, without this additional acreage, black-operated farms would be much smaller operations.

The dramatic decline in tenancy among black farmers has been well documented (2, 8, 9, 11, 12). However, in 1978 when the tenancy rate for blacks was down to 16 percent, there were still four States (Maryland, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Georgia) where tenants made up a fifth or more of all black farmers (app. table 4). With one exception, these higher tenancy rates were in States with a fairly large number of black farmers. However, Maryland with only 953 black farmers—two-thirds of whom were principally engaged in tobacco production—had the highest tenancy rate of 29 percent. Again, this situation reflects the historically strong relationship between tenancy and tobacco farming.

Table 4—Black farmers by tenure, 1930-78

Tenure of farmer	1978		1969		1950		1930	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Total	57,271	100.0	87,393	100.0	559,980	100.0	882,852	100.0
Full owners	34,512	60.3	54,083	61.9	142,919	25.5	139,114	15.8
Part owners	13,735	24.0	15,762	18.0	52,021	9.3	41,902	4.7
Tenants	9,024	15.7	17,548	20.1	365,040 ¹	65.2	701,836 ¹	79.5

¹Includes 245 managers in 1950 and 923 managers in 1930.

Source: (21, 23, 24).

Type of Farm

American agriculture is exceedingly heterogeneous, but the general farm that produces a wide variety of farm products has largely disappeared. Advances in production technology and changes in marketing demands are some of the major forces that have led to increased farm specialization. The classification of farms by type provides a description of the major sources of income from farm sales and groups together farms which are relatively uniform in the kinds and amounts of crops and livestock products sold. Black farmers have a strong concentration in a very few farm types.

Blacks have been linked in both historical image and reality to cotton, not only in the Cotton Belt, but throughout the South. After cotton came tobacco culture; third was the general farm on which no one product accounted for half or more of all agricultural sales.

In 1900, before the boll weevil struck, 70 percent of all black farmers indicated that cotton was their principal source of income. While tobacco was not the principal crop on many black farms, it was “. . . a subsidiary crop of considerable importance on a great many” (5). The black farmer was well suited for tobacco farming, which was grown strictly by hand and animal labor, thus making good use of the plentiful labor of the traditionally large black families. Tobacco was also a good crop for black farmers in that it did not require much land (3).

As late as 1964, cotton and tobacco farms accounted for one-half of all southern black-operated farms. Sales from these two products accounted for two-fifths of the total sales from black farmers. Although important to black-operated farms, sales of cotton and tobacco from these farms represented only 7 percent and 6 percent, respectively, of the total sales of these products in the South.

Few black farmers are now principally involved in cotton. “The triple triumph of tractors, pickers, and weed control released thousands of tenants—the majority of them black . . .” from cotton farming (2). Mechanical picking is now the standard method of harvesting cotton in the Southeast. Also, much of the present cotton acreage is in the irrigated areas of the Plains and the West where, except for California, few black farmers are located (15).

In 1978, only 4 percent of all black farmers produced cotton and only 2 percent operated cotton farms. The decline in cotton production contributed significantly to

the decline in the number of black farmers as they became hard-pressed to find another product that would provide enough income per acre to make a small farm viable.

In contrast, black farmers have been more successful in retaining their place in tobacco farming. Although their numbers dropped, the continued demand for tobacco, the relatively small land requirements, the high value per acre, the lack of competition from other farming areas, and the comparative protections of tobacco support programs have kept more black farmers in tobacco than in cotton. Tobacco was the leading source of income on only 2 percent of black-operated farms in 1900, compared with 14 percent of them in 1978 (table 3) (13).

The present distribution of southern black farmers by type of farm closely resembles that for southern farmers generally (table 3). In the early fifties, while white southern farmers converted lands to hay crops and improved pastures and raised more livestock, black farmers were slow to adapt. As late as 1959, relatively few blacks were involved in the South’s expanding sectors of agriculture (2). Today, roughly half of all southern black farmers operate livestock farms. However, many are small operations with only a few head of stock. In 1978, three-fourths of the livestock farms operated by black farmers had less than \$2,500 in agricultural sales.

Value of Agricultural Products Sold

The value of agricultural products sold is the gross market value before taxes and production expenses of all agricultural products sold from the farm in the reporting year. That figure represents the sum of all crops, including nursery products sold, and livestock and poultry and their products sold; it does not include income from farm-related sources such as custom-work or agricultural services or income from nonfarm sources (20).

Sales data are useful in evaluating the relative importance of a specific crop or livestock item. These data may also be used as a basis for separating farms into meaningful sales categories for analytical purposes. Examining sales data reveals that both black and white farmers are clustered in the lower sales categories. However, white farmers are relatively better represented in the higher sales intervals.

In 1978, 33 percent of all southern farm operators and 60 percent of all southern black farm operators sold less

than \$2,500 in farm products (table 3). A total of 77 percent of all southern farms and 93 percent of southern black-operated farms produced less than \$20,000 in sales. Thus, if the criterion that annual sales under \$20,000 is characteristic of small farms were used, southern farms, and especially southern black-operated farms, are excessively small.

Many of these small farms are basically part-time or retirement enterprises, but a sizable proportion report farming as their principal occupation. The high proportion of black farms in this small farms category holds true in most of the South. Only in North Carolina and Virginia did more than 10 percent of the black-operated farms have farm products sales of \$20,000 or more in 1978 (app. table 4).

However, value of agricultural sales only measures farm output in terms of gross receipts from farming. A low value of sales reflects only low farm production and is not indicative of total income. At the same time, higher value of sales does not necessarily indicate a better overall economic situation of a farm family.

Very few employed persons have a sole income source, and farmers are no exception. Data on income sources of farm operators reveal that in 1979 less than 10 percent reported farming as their only income source (18). The value of farm products sold and the level of nonfarm income are strongly related. Lower sales values generally indicate higher contributions from nonfarm sources. In 1979, the average farm with less than \$20,000 in agricultural sales received 94 percent of total income from nonfarm sources. For the United States and the South, farm income exceeded that received from nonfarm sources only when the farm produced at least \$40,000 or more in sales (table 5). However, among blacks, farm income was generally greater than that from nonfarm sources when sales from agricultural products were as low as \$20,000. In 1979, off-farm income made up 37 percent of total net income from black-operated farms with sales from \$20,000 to \$39,999 and 20 percent of the income when sales were \$40,000 or more. Although the degree of dependence varies, there is little doubt that this supplemental nonfarm income allows many farmers to stay in business.

In 1978, about 30,000 black-operated farms, or somewhat more than half, were classified as livestock operations (table 6). However, the likelihood that livestock was the major speciality decreases as sales increase. Sixty-

eight percent of all black-operated farms with sales of less than \$2,500 annually were classified as livestock (cattle and hogs) operations. For black farms with annual sales of \$20,000 or more, livestock specialties were only 11 percent of the total. Conversely, the likelihood that a black-operated farm would be classed as a tobacco farm increases as sales increase. The proportion of all black tobacco farms rises from 4 percent in the lower sales category to 35 percent at the upper end.

Table 5—Average income per farming family by major source and value of agricultural products sold, 1979

Value of agricultural products sold	Total net cash income	Net cash farm income	Off-farm income
	<i>Dollars</i>		
All farms	25,479	11,566	13,913
Less than \$20,000	17,351	969	16,382
Less than \$5,000	16,776	-285	17,061
\$5,000 to \$9,999	17,998	1,863	16,135
\$10,000 to \$19,999	18,484	4,014	14,470
\$20,000 to \$39,999	19,436	8,642	10,794
\$40,000 or more	45,960	36,304	9,656
\$40,000 to \$99,999	26,199	17,367	8,832
\$100,000 or more	72,683	61,912	10,771
Southern farms	23,367	8,326	15,041
Less than \$20,000	16,997	1,187	15,810
\$20,000 to \$39,999	21,790	9,134	12,656
\$40,000 or more	51,275	38,490	12,785
Black-operated farms	12,232	1,988	10,244
Less than \$20,000	10,792	284	10,508
\$20,000 to \$39,999	14,383	9,101	5,283
\$40,000 or more	43,432	34,638	8,794

Source: (18, 19).

Table 6—Black-operated farms by type of farm and value of agricultural products sold, 1978

Type of farm	Total	Value of agricultural products sold		
		\$1,000-\$2,499	\$2,500-\$19,999	\$20,000 or more
		<i>Number</i>		
Total	57,271	33,584	19,285	4,402
Cash grain	9,470	4,708	3,837	925
Cotton	1,367	345	766	256
Tobacco	8,216	1,439	5,260	1,517
Other field crops	2,257	734	1,146	377
Vegetable and melon	1,512	786	607	119
Fruit and tree nut	440	238	139	63
Livestock	29,926	22,887	6,570	469
Dairy	437	73	168	196
Poultry	840	623	43	174
Other	2,806	1,751	749	306

Source: (21).

The average value of agricultural products sold by all black farm operators was \$7,600 in 1978, compared with \$32,000 for southern farmers generally. The figure for blacks is very low, but there is a very wide disparity within the black group in their scale of production. In 1978, the total market value of agricultural products sold from black-operated farms was \$434 billion. Although 59 percent of the black-operated farms sold less than \$2,500 of products, the 8 percent of farms with sales of \$20,000 or more accounted for 62 percent of total sales by black farmers. These farms in the higher sales classes account for only 30 percent of the black-operated land in farms but 52 percent of all cropland harvested from black-operated farms.

Black-operated farms in the North and West tend to be larger than those in the South, more commercial in nature, and tend to produce about three times as much value of products per farm. In 1978, 20 percent of all black-operated farms outside the South sold agricultural products worth \$20,000 or more; the comparable proportion in the South was 7 percent. The average market value of agricultural products sold by all black farmers in the Northern and Western States was \$20,100 compared with \$7,000 for southern black farmers.

The average output per acre is not as high for black-operated farms as for other farms. The yields of corn, tobacco, soybeans, and cotton per acre and the total value of products sold per acre are all significantly lower for black farmers. Some of this probably reflects poorer quality of land. With their limited savings, blacks probably could not compete well for the best land in the years when they were acquiring farms. Some of the lower output may result from less intensive or poorer management of the land.

Black farmers also have a higher percentage of cropland that is neither harvested nor grazed. Most of this land is idle, although the category also includes crop failure and land in cover crops. Nearly a fifth of all cropland on black-operated farms with less than \$2,500 in sales was neither harvested nor grazed in 1978. In effect, low output per acre and low intensity of use of existing land resources contribute to the poor economic condition of black farmers.

Age

Nothing is more critical to the future of black farmers than the age composition of those now farming. In

pre-World War II days, black farmers were typically somewhat younger in average age than white farmers. Since that time, the average age of black farmers has risen as many young blacks have chosen not to enter the business. Given the poor level of opportunities available to younger blacks in farming compared with the prospects in urban or other nonfarm jobs, the trend is not surprising. But it has led to a very high proportion of older farmers among blacks; it is now impossible to prevent substantial further decline in the number of black farmers unless there is a major increase in the number of young blacks who decide to go into farming.

In 1978, 30 percent of all black farm operators were 65 years old or over (table 3). There were 37 black farmers who were 65 years old or older for each 10 who were under 35 years old. By contrast, the number of white farmers under 35 years fully equalled the number 65 years old and over. The older average age of black farmers makes them about 7 years older than the average white farmer. In 1978, the median age of black and white farmers was 58 years and 51 years, respectively.

Older farmers are much more likely to operate farms that are low in total output. Farmers 65 years old and older made up 32 percent of all black farmers with less than \$2,500 in agricultural sales in 1978. On farms with annual sales of \$20,000 or more, older black farmers represent only 11 percent of the total. In essence, many of these older farmers are already semiretired and constrained in their ability to farm on a larger commercial scale.

Black farmers have generally had large families; there is no shortage of heirs. However, only a very small fraction of their children have been attracted to or felt able to enter farming in the last generation. Outsiders who have accumulated capital from other sources occasionally decide to farm. But the vast majority of farmers in the United States are the sons and daughters of farmers. A national survey taken in 1973 showed that 81 percent of American male farmers 21 to 64 years old were sons of farmers (6). Therefore, we can safely assume that unless conditions arise, or are created, that persuade more black farm children to enter agriculture, the ranks of black farmers will not stabilize and will almost surely continue to decline.

Off-Farm Work and Income

Less than half of all black farmers are principally engaged in farming in terms of the number of hours devoted to

farm work. Only about 44 percent of black farmers reported they spent 50 percent or more of their worktime in 1978 at farm-related jobs. However, the proportion of black farmers who reported farming as their principal occupation ranged from 31 percent for those with annual sales of less than \$2,500 to 86 percent for those with annual sales of \$20,000 or more. For all southern farmers, the comparable range was from 24 percent to 78 percent, respectively (20). Thus black farmers regardless of sales category were more likely than southern farmers generally to spend half or more of their worktime at farm-related jobs.

Another measure of a farmer's involvement in the farming operation is days of work off the farm. In 1978, roughly 60 percent of black farmers, as well as all southern farmers, reported at least 1 day of off-farm work (table 3). Black farmers, however, were somewhat less likely than southern farmers as a whole to work 200 days or more off the farm. The heavy involvement in off-farm work decreases as value of sales increases, but racial differences still exist. The proportion of black farmers reporting 200 or more days of off-farm work ranged from 68 percent for those with agricultural sales of less than \$2,500 annually, to 40 percent for those with annual sales of \$20,000 or more. The comparable proportions were higher for all southern farm operators, ranging from 78 percent to 50 percent, respectively. The trend among black farmers to report fewer days of work off the farm apparently was not affected by the volume of agricultural sales.

The 1979 Farm Finance Survey, a supplement to the 1978 *Census of Agriculture*, provides additional information on nonfarm income and off-farm work of farmers and their spouses (18, 19). Regardless of race or region of residence of a farmer, a high proportion of farming families report receipt of some off-farm income. More than 90 percent of both black and white southern farmers reported that their families received some nonfarm income in 1979. There were, however, differences in the amounts of nonfarm income received based on race of a farmer. Black farming families were more likely than whites to report smaller amounts of nonfarm income. About 60 percent of southern black farming families reported off-farm income of less than \$10,000 in 1979 (app. table 5). Among southern families reporting \$20,000 or more in nonfarm income, the white proportion was about twice that for blacks.

The ratio of net cash farm income to total cash income may be used as an indicator of the importance of the income received from off-farm work. According to this dependency ratio, cash farm income in 1979 contributed less than 20 percent of total cash income for about half of all U.S. farmers. The proportion of all southern farmers, in general, and southern black farmers, in particular, reporting this low dependency on cash farm income is even higher: 58 percent of all southern farmers and 75 percent of this region's black farmers reported that less than 20 percent of their total cash income was cash farm income. Such low dependency reflects the fact that most families have more than one income source. These other income sources also often pay better than farming. A 1976 study of farm income recipients found that only 5 percent of all persons in families with some farm self-employment income had total dependence on income derived from farming (1). The proportion of U.S. farmers reporting a high dependency on farm income is correspondingly low: in 1979, only about 16 percent of all southern farmers reported 80 percent or more dependency, a proportion roughly twice that for southern black farmers.

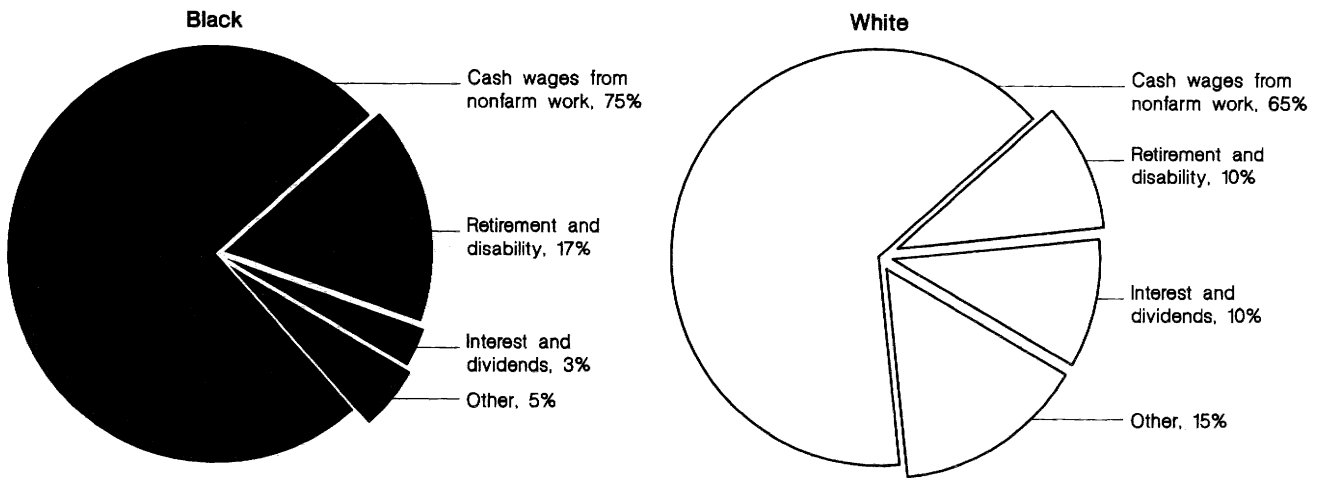
Although there were differences in the total amounts, both black and white farming families most frequently reported nonfarm income from cash wages, retirement and disability, and interest and dividends (app. table 5). Cash wages contribute the most to total nonfarm income; however, this nonfarm income source is more important to blacks than whites (fig. 2). In 1979, cash wages were 75 percent of the total off-farm income received by southern black farming families compared with 65 percent for white families. The remaining leading contributors to nonfarm income (retirement and investments) combined accounted for 20 percent of the total for both blacks and whites (table 7 and fig. 2). However, the

Table 7—Sources of southern farmers' off-farm income by race, 1979

Source	White farmers	Black farmers
	<i>1,000 dollars</i>	
Total off-farm income	13,893	489
Income from:		
Cash wages from nonfarm work	9,056	367
Retirement and disability	1,344	83
Interest and dividends	1,395	16
All other	2,098	23

Source: (19).

Figure 2
Nonfarm Contributions to Southern Farming Family Income by Source, 1979



Source: (19)

contribution from these two sources individually differed significantly by race: retirement income, mainly Social Security payments, was the more important contributor to black farming families whereas these two nonfarm income sources were about equally important among white farming families.

As the value of agricultural products increases so does the importance of investment income. For southern black farming families with sales of \$20,000 or more, income from interest and dividends was 22 percent of total nonfarm income.

Although there were variations in the amounts and sources of off-farm income by race, the likelihood of the operator or spouse, or both, working off the farm did not differ. About 47 percent of southern farmers with off-farm work reported that they were the only worker involved, and about 40 percent responded that both they and their spouse worked. There were also no significant differences in the dominant types of off-farm work. In 1979, about three-fourths of the farmers and nine-tenths of the spouses indicated they worked for nonfarm wages as an employee of a private company or the government (app. table 5).

The amount of cash wages received for nonfarm work is directly related to the occupation of the employed. Thus, the relatively smaller amounts of nonfarm income

reported by black farming families reflect the concentration of workers in low-skilled and low-paying jobs. About 31 percent of the black farmers and 58 percent of their spouses reported service work as their principal occupation in 1979. The high representation in this traditionally lower paying work also reflects the older age structure and the generally lower educational levels of black farmers.

White workers, on the other hand, were more likely to report a higher paying white-collar job as their principal nonfarm occupation. In 1979, 43 percent of the white farmers and 65 percent of their spouses reported they were principally employed as professional, managerial, sales, or clerical workers. The comparable proportions for black farmers and their spouses were 20 percent and 32 percent, respectively. Regardless of race, spouses were more likely than farmers to work in white-collar jobs. About a fifth of the spouses of both racial groups reported professional or technical work as their principal occupation. There was no significant difference by race in the likelihood of farmers' reporting blue-collar work as their principal nonfarm occupation. About 40 percent of the farmers reported they worked mainly as craftsmen or machine and transport operators.

Farm Assets and Debts

Assets and debts should certainly be considered when assessing the economic situation of farmers. Farm

assets include the physical resources used in operating a farm and the financial resources resulting from or related to the farm business. These assets are a very important component of farm wealth, and changes in them, particularly in farm real estate, strongly influence the income of the owners. Farm debts are the unpaid principal of the loans, sales contracts, and other bills owed by the farm operator and spouse (18).³

In 1979, southern white farmers reported about \$181 billion in farm assets and the average white southern farmer's net worth (farm assets minus farm debts) was \$171,000. In contrast, southern black farmers' assets totaled about \$4 billion and the average black-operated farm had a net worth of \$71,000 (table 8). Farm real estate is the major component of assets for all farm operators but the proportion is somewhat higher for blacks than whites. The value of land and buildings accounted for 75 percent of the farm assets for southern black farmers in 1979. Among southern white farm operators, farm real estate represented 68 percent of the total. Conversely, financial assets comprised a larger share of white than black southern farmers' assets.

Over 40 percent of all farmers in the United States with annual sales of less than \$20,000 in 1979 reported some indebtedness. The average amount of debt claims for these farmers was \$24,000. In contrast, 74 percent of all farmers with higher sales reported indebtedness averaging about \$129,000. Thus, farmers with lower sales are less likely to be in debt, and claims against those with debts tend to be smaller than those for farmers with higher agricultural sales.

In 1979, only 36 percent of all southern black farmers compared with 47 percent of southern white farmers reported debt claims against their assets. The average indebtedness for these black southern farmers was approximately a third that for whites (\$23,000 vs. \$62,000). Such low debt for blacks is expected because they generally operate smaller scale farms that usually have lower credit needs, and thus have less debt (7).

Black farmers are much like female farmers in that they tend to obligate a smaller share of their assets to obtain credit. The debt/asset ratio is often used as a measure of the financial position of farmers and may imply some financial security. At the national level, the debt/asset

³This discussion is limited to farm assets and debts only; complete data on nonfarm assets and debts by race of farmers are not available.

Table 8—Farm assets and debts of southern farmers by race, 1979

Item	White farmers	Black farmers
	<i>Number</i>	
Farms	906,316	48,670
	<i>Million dollars</i>	
Farm assets	180,837	3,832
Farm, physical	158,149	3,463
Land and buildings	123,063	2,876
Other	35,086	587
Farm, financial	22,688	369
Farm debt	26,272	396
Farm net worth	154,566	3,436
	<i>Percent</i>	
Debts as percentage of assets	14.5	10.3
Percentage of farms with debt	47.0	35.7

Source: (19).

ratios for black farmers and female farmers in 1979 were 11.3 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively. Thus, both groups of farmers would seem to be good credit risks, yet both “. . . use fewer financial resources to expand or upgrade their farming operations” (7). This fiscal conservatism probably reflects the older age structure characteristic of both black and female farmers. Older farmers tend to reduce, not expand, their operations.

The 1979 data discussed in this section are the most recent available by race of farmer. Generally, the financial condition of many farmers deteriorated in the early eighties (14).

Black Farmers in 1982: A Partial Update

The *1982 Census of Agriculture* presents the most recent statistical profile of U.S. agriculture at the county, State, and national levels (16, 17). However, 1982 data are not comparable with the earlier data because budget reductions led to procedural changes in methodology and enumeration. However, the estimates for 1978 presented in this section have been adjusted to be comparable to those for 1982 (and thus they differ from those shown in previous sections).⁴

Some national and State data on farms and farmer characteristics by race are published in 1982 census

⁴For a detailed discussion on methods of enumeration and data comparability for the *1982 Census of Agriculture* see (16).

reports (16, 17).⁵ According to this latest census, 2.4 percent of the Nation's 2.2 million farms were operated by members of a minority race. Black farmers were, as in the past, the largest minority race group at 61 percent of the total:

Minority farmers, 1982

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total	54,367	100.0
Black	33,250	61.2
American Indian	7,211	13.3
Asian and Pacific Islander	8,000	14.7
Other	5,906	10.8

Source: (16).

Despite these procedural changes, many of the major trends and racial differences in farm characteristics discussed earlier were still clearly evident in 1982. For example, the number of farms operated by blacks continued to drop more rapidly than other farms. Between 1978 and 1982, black-operated farms decreased by about 10 percent compared with less than a 1-percent decline of all farms (table 9). This more rapid decline among black farmers occurred almost entirely in the South; the total number of black-operated farms outside the South (2,100) hardly changed during this 4-year period.

Black farmers also continued to have smaller operations. In 1982, about half of all black farmers had fewer than 50 acres, and the average size of black-operated farms (104 acres) was less than a fourth the U.S. average (table 9). However, the national trend toward larger farms reversed between 1978 and 1982. In contrast to the gradual increases reported for earlier periods, the average size of U.S. farms declined during this 4-year period. The average farm size declined for all farmers except those who were Asian or Pacific Islander. The national average size of black-operated farms declined by 5.5 percent, a loss about twice that for white-operated farms. In the South, the average size of black-operated farms as well as all southern farms generally declined about 4 percent.

As in earlier years, black farmers were very concentrated, with about 94 percent being in the South in 1982. There were also continued heavy concentrations within a few

Southern States (fig. 3). Half of all southern black-operated farms were in four States. Mississippi and North Carolina, with 4,800 and 4,400 black farmers, respectively, continue in the top two ranks (app. table 6). Texas, the only Southern State where the number of black-operated farms increased substantially between 1978 and 1982, ranked third with 3,300. Despite a 17-percent decline during 1978-82, South Carolina had 3,100 black-operated farms in 1982 and ranked fourth. Outside the South, the leading States in number of black farmers were California (357), Missouri (238), and Ohio (230). Nearly 40 percent of all black farmers outside the South in 1982 were in these three States.

Black-operated farms remained comparatively small in terms of value of agricultural sales. In 1982, 47 percent of all black farmers reported less than \$2,500 in sales and only 21 percent reported \$10,000 or more (table 9). For the South as a whole, where the vast majority of black-operated farms are located, the comparable proportions in these two sales groups were 32 percent and 37 percent, respectively. The average value per southern farm of all agricultural products sold in 1982 was \$12,200 for black farmers, barely one-fifth that of \$59,400 for white farmers.

Livestock and cash grain remain the major farm types regardless of race of operator. However, black farmers are still more likely than other farmers to grow some tobacco and to produce tobacco as their main source of income. In 1982, 15 percent of all black farmers were tobacco farmers; the comparable proportion among farmers generally was 6 percent. Tobacco is particularly important among large-scale black farms. Nearly a third of all black farmers with annual sales of \$20,000 or more in 1982 relied principally on tobacco.

In 1982, the average age of black farmers was 57 years, while the national average was 51 years of age. Black farmers were twice as likely as other operators to be 65 years old or over, thus many are farming basically in retirement (table 10). This age difference almost surely partly explains why a majority of black farmers operate at a rather low level of activity.

Females comprise a higher proportion of black and other minority race farmers than white farmers. In 1982, 9 percent of all black farmers were female compared with 5 percent among whites. This disparity may reflect differences in marital status: black and other minority women are less likely than white women to be married

⁵Special tabulations are planned for detailed racial statistics from the 1982 *Census of Agriculture*, but these tabulations are not yet available.

Table 9—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the United States and the South, 1982 and 1978

Characteristic	United States		South	
	All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
	<i>Number</i>			
Farms, 1982	2,240,976	33,250	896,591	31,121
Farms, 1978 ¹	2,257,775	37,351	897,085	35,207
	<i>1,000 acres</i>			
Land in farms, 1982	986,797	3,475	293,794	3,091
Land in farms, 1978 ¹	1,014,777	4,112	305,123	3,647
	<i>Acres</i>			
Average size of farm, 1982	440	104	328	99
Average size of farm, 1978 ¹	449	110	340	104
	<i>Percent</i>			
Farms by acres, 1982:				
1 to 49	28.4	49.2	31.9	49.4
50 to 139	24.0	31.8	28.8	32.4
140 to 219	12.8	9.1	12.2	9.1
220 to 499	18.4	7.3	14.5	6.9
500 or more	16.3	2.6	12.5	2.3
Farm by value of agricultural products sold, 1982: ²				
Less than \$2,500	24.0	47.3	31.8	48.3
\$2,500 to \$9,999	25.0	31.7	31.3	31.7
\$10,000 to \$19,999	11.6	9.4	11.3	9.2
\$20,000 or more	39.5	11.6	25.6	10.8
Farms by type, 1982:				
Cash grain	25.7	21.1	14.8	20.7
Cotton	.9	2.5	2.0	2.6
Tobacco	5.9	14.9	13.9	15.9
Other field crops	4.5	4.6	3.9	4.5
Vegetable and melon	1.4	3.2	1.4	3.1
Fruit and tree nut	3.8	.9	2.2	.6
Livestock	40.5	44.9	48.3	45.1
Dairy	7.3	1.0	2.6	.8
Poultry	1.9	1.0	3.1	1.0
Other	8.1	5.9	7.9	5.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

¹The 1978 estimates shown in this table are adjusted to be comparable with 1982 estimates. Thus, they differ from the 1978 estimates shown in other tables.

²Excludes institutional farms, experimental and research farms, and Indian reservations.

Source: (16, 17).

with husbands present. Because fewer are living with their husbands, minority women are more likely to be officially designated as farmers (7).

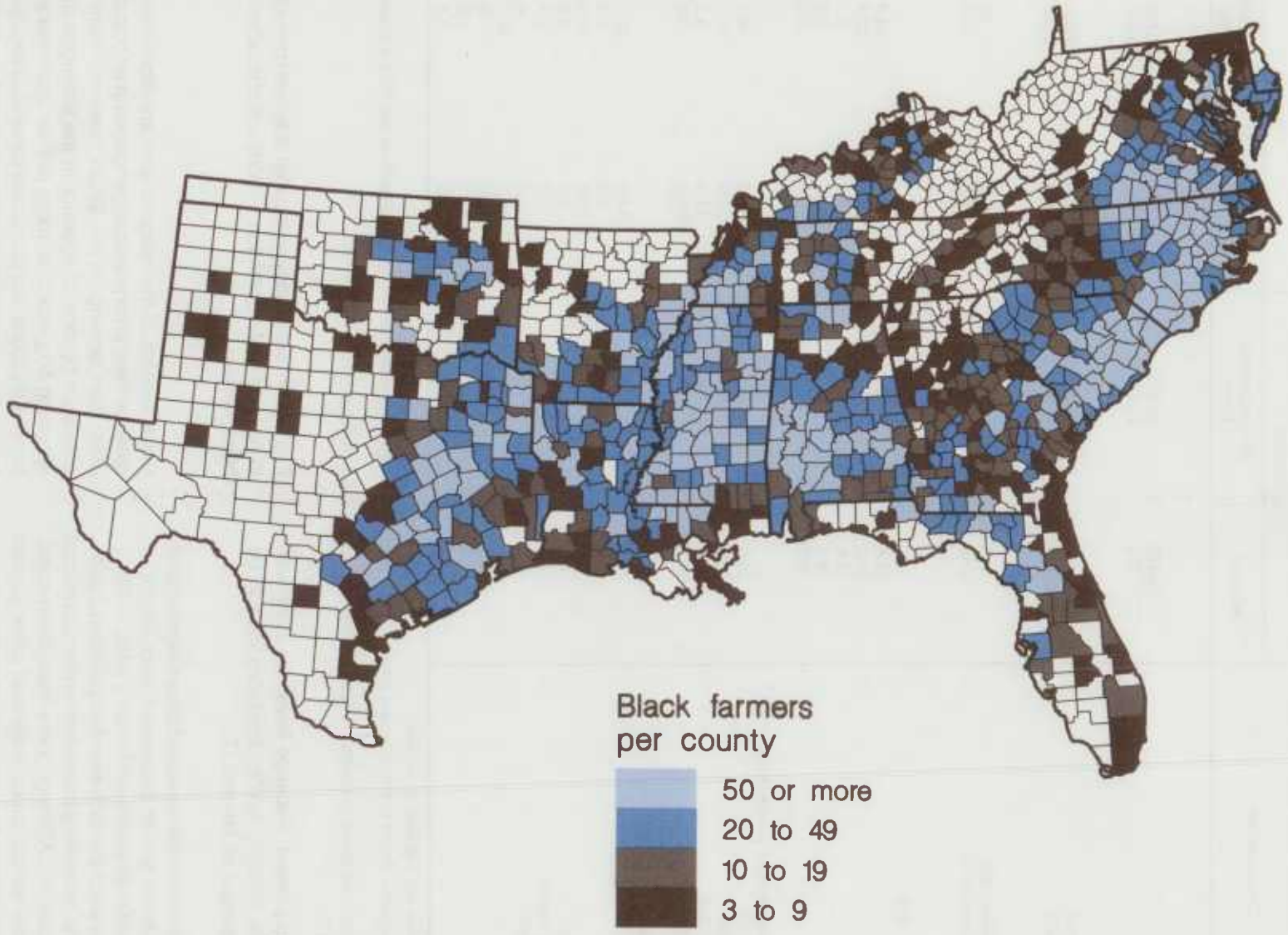
The national trend toward increased tenant farming and the long-term trend toward decreased black tenant farming have led to similarities in tenancy rates. In 1982, for the first time since the data were first collected, black farmers were no more likely than other farmers to operate as tenants (table 10). Although there have been some changes, blacks are still more likely than other farmers to operate as full owners and less likely as part owners.

Full owners are usually somewhat older and more likely to run a smaller operation — both are characteristic of black farmers.

Black farmers at the national level are more likely than other farmers to be principally engaged in an occupation other than farming. In the South, however, there is no difference by race of operator in the likelihood of their spending 50 percent or more of their worktime at non-farm-related jobs, but blacks are somewhat less likely to be heavily involved in such employment. In 1982, 60

Figure 3

Southern Black Farmers, 1982



Source: (17)

Table 10—Selected farmer characteristics for all farms and black-operated farms for the United States and the South, 1982

Characteristic	United States		South	
	All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
All farmers	2,240,976	33,250	896,591	31,121
			<i>Number</i>	
			<i>Percent</i>	
Age:				
Under 35 years	15.9	7.8	13.0	7.5
35 to 44 years	19.8	13.8	19.2	13.5
45 to 54 years	22.6	19.7	22.6	19.5
55 to 64 years	23.9	26.1	24.2	26.2
65 years and older	17.8	32.5	21.0	33.3
Sex:				
Male	94.6	90.6	93.3	90.6
Female	5.4	9.4	6.7	9.4
Tenure:				
Full owners	59.2	62.2	65.8	61.9
Part owners	29.3	26.4	24.4	26.8
Tenants	11.6	11.3	9.9	11.3
Principal occupation:				
Farming	55.1	45.7	45.4	45.7
Other	44.9	54.2	54.6	54.3
Farmers reporting days of work off farm:				
None	42.1	39.9	36.3	40.1
Any	57.9	60.1	63.7	59.9
1 to 99	10.9	11.8	9.5	11.9
100 to 199	9.2	12.0	9.7	12.1
200 or more	37.8	36.3	44.5	35.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: (16, 17).

percent of the black farmers reporting off-farm work were employed 200 days or more; the comparable proportion for southern farmers overall was 70 percent.

Conclusion

One of every seven U.S. farmers was black in 1920 when black farmers were at their peak and numbered 926,000. Since then, the rates of farm loss have been much heavier among blacks than among other racial groups. By 1982, only 1 farmer in 67 was black. There were only 33,000 black farmers in 1982, and they comprised less than 2 percent of the Nation's 2.2 million farmers. Although there is no foreseeable reversal of the long-term downward trend, the bulk of the displacement of black farmers from agriculture has taken place.

The rapid and continuing technological advancements of the previous decades have probably not affected black farmers any differently than other small farmers of limited resources. The unique problem facing blacks was their

concentration in those types of farming and tenure most affected by technology, such as cotton and, to a somewhat lesser extent, tobacco and tenant status. Further decline in the number of black farmers will result primarily from the pace of retirement and death of older operators and the extent to which younger operators enter the industry. There are no current indications of a significant offsetting replacement of young black farmers. Despite these drastic declines in their number, black farmers remain the leading minority group among U.S. farmers.

Black-operated farms have always been, and still are, heavily concentrated in the Southern States. In 1982, more than 90 percent of all black farmers were in this region. Thus, the black farmer's future, whatever it is, is still closely tied to the future of southern agriculture.

Since the beginning of the century, American agriculture has changed in many ways, but black-operated farms still remain, on average, abnormally small in terms of acreage and value of agricultural products sold. The

average black-operated farm has only about 100 acres; the national average is about 440 acres. The vast majority of black farmers do not have sufficient sales of farm products to survive on farm income alone; in 1982, half had sales of less than \$2,500. Thus, black farmers, like operators of other small farms, have a strong need for supplemental nonfarm income. As a result, the availability of off-farm jobs and possession of marketable job skills become of prime importance.

Black farmers, however, are generally older and less well educated. Hence, they are often ineligible for nonfarm employment because of age or lack of skills. Older farmers, generally, are occupationally and geographically immobile because of age, health, and lack of training, regardless of race. Strategies developed to improve the plight of small farmers generally, and black farmers in particular, should take into account the difference between the needs of younger and older farmers.

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Appendix table 1—Southern counties with the most black farmers, 1978

Rank	County and State	Number of black-operated farms
1	Williamsburg, SC	478
2	Halifax, VA	419
3	Orangeburg, SC	381
4	Bladen, NC	320
5	Duplin, NC	317
6	Florence, SC	289
7	St. Landry, LA	243
8	Sumter, SC	241
9	Columbus, NC	238
10	Sampson, NC	237
11	Granville, NC	234
12	Bertie, NC	224
	Caswell, NC	224
14	Pittsylvania, VA	216
15	Clarendon, SC	212
16	Marshall, MS	209
17	Hinds, MS	207
18	Halifax, NC	206
19	Warren, NC	203
20	Mecklenburg, VA	202
21	Holmes, MS	192
22	Dallas, AL	191
23	Sumter, AL	189
24	Greene, AL	183
25	Phillips, AR	182
26	Madison, MS	178
27	Brunswick, VA	176
28	Lee, AR	172
29	Wilcox, AL	168
	Franklin, NC	168
31	Marengo, AL	167
32	Person, NC	165
33	Berkeley, SC	164
34	Haywood, TN	159
35	Jackson, FL	151
36	Northampton, NC	144
37	Robeson, NC	142
38	Lowndes, AL	140
39	Houston, TX	136
40	Macon, AL	135
41	Horry, SC	134
42	Colleton, SC	133
43	Hale, AL	132
	Fayette, TN	132
45	Kemper, MS	131
46	Lunenburg, VA	129
47	Panola, MS	127
	Marion, SC	127
49	Dinwiddie, VA	125
50	Brunswick, NC	123
	Wake, NC	123

Source: (20).

Appendix table 2—Southern counties where black farmers represented 20 percent or more of all farmers, 1978

Rank	County and State	Percent
1	Greene, AL	43.57
2	Wilcox, AL	38.36
3	Williamsburg, SC	37.72
4	Sumter, SC	35.34
5	Claiborne, MS	34.39
6	Warren, NC	34.35
7	Sumter, AL	33.57
8	Jasper, SC	33.01
9	Clarendon, SC	32.71
10	Macon, AL	32.14
11	Beaufort, SC	31.48
12	Berkeley, SC	31.42
13	Surry, VA	30.09
14	Holmes, MS	29.95
15	Dallas, AL	29.84
16	Georgetown, SC	29.45
17	Halifax, NC	28.53
18	Lowndes, AL	28.46
19	Phillips, AR	28.39
20	Greensville, VA	28.32
21	Allendale, SC	28.02
22	Perry, AL	27.71
23	Marshall, MS	27.68
24	Lee, AR	27.09
25	Marion, SC	26.96
26	Brunswick, VA	26.75
27	Madison, MS	26.41
28	Hale, AL	25.98
29	Orangeburg, SC	25.52
30	Bladen, NC	25.12
31	Wilkinson, MS	24.40
32	Burke, GA	24.38
33	Adams, MS	24.04
34	Halifax, VA	23.94
35	Marengo, AL	23.86
36	Bertie, NC	23.58
37	Haywood, TN	23.38
38	Caswell, NC	22.86
39	Humphreys, MS	22.66
40	Jefferson, MS	22.43
42	Hertford, NC	22.43
43	Dinwiddie, VA	21.97
	Choctaw, AL	21.73
	Bullock, AL	21.73
45	Kemper, MS	21.69
46	Issaquena, MS	21.68
47	Northampton, NC	21.65
48	Lunenburg, VA	21.36
49	Clay, MS	21.27
50	Dorchester, SC	21.24
51	Westmoreland, VA	20.93
52	King and Queen, VA	20.74
53	Jefferson Davis, MS	20.53
54	Hinds, MS	20.41

Note: Excludes counties with fewer than 25 black farmers.

Source: (20).

Appendix table 3—Black farmers in selected States, 1900-78

State	1978	1969	1959	1950	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900
	<i>Number</i>								
Alabama	4,791	9,873	29,206	57,205	73,338	93,795	95,200	110,387	94,069
Arkansas	2,067	3,775	14,654	40,810	57,011	79,556	72,275	63,578	46,978
Florida	2,307	1,365	3,664	7,473	9,731	11,010	12,954	14,698	13,521
Georgia	4,485	5,571	20,163	50,352	59,127	86,787	130,176	122,554	82,822
Kentucky	1,092	1,753	3,327	4,882	5,546	9,104	12,624	11,709	11,227
Louisiana	3,296	5,518	17,686	40,599	59,556	73,734	62,036	54,819	58,096
Maryland	953	682	2,132	3,595	4,052	5,275	6,228	6,382	5,859
Mississippi	8,817	17,184	55,174	122,709	159,256	182,578	161,001	164,488	128,351
Missouri	279	426	1,684	3,214	3,686	5,844	2,824	3,656	4,950
North Carolina	7,680	13,111	41,023	69,029	57,428	74,636	74,849	64,456	53,996
Oklahoma	851	1,026	2,633	5,910	8,987	15,172	13,403	13,209	6,353
South Carolina	6,451	9,535	30,953	61,255	61,204	77,331	109,005	96,772	85,381
Tennessee	2,405	4,930	15,018	24,044	27,972	35,123	38,181	38,300	33,883
Texas	5,420	5,375	15,432	34,389	52,648	85,940	78,597	69,816	65,472
Virginia	3,895	5,453	15,629	28,527	35,062	39,598	47,690	48,039	44,795

Source: (20, 23).

Appendix table 4—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the South by State, 1978

Characteristic	Unit	Southern States with 100 or more black farmers					
		Alabama		Arkansas		Florida	
		All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
Farms	Number	57,503	4,791	58,766	2,067	44,068	2,307
Land in farms	1,000 acres	11,548	413	15,577	194	13,306	150
Average size of farm	Acres	201	86	265	94	302	65
Average value of land and buildings per farm	Dollars	128,260	65,177	203,014	75,303	351,646	75,858
Farms by acres:							
1 to 49	Percent	36.0	54.7	25.5	51.8	56.6	75.0
50 to 99	do.	21.0	22.0	19.6	21.2	13.0	10.0
100 to 179	do.	17.4	12.6	19.3	14.7	10.3	8.3
180 to 259	do.	7.9	3.8	9.8	5.4	4.9	2.9
260 to 999	do.	14.6	6.4	20.7	6.1	11.0	3.3
1,000 or more	do.	3.2	.6	5.2	.8	4.2	.5
Farms by value of agricultural products sold: ¹							
Less than \$2,500	do.	39.8	73.2	30.8	49.7	36.2	66.5
\$2,500 to \$4,999	do.	16.5	10.9	16.9	20.6	14.4	9.4
\$5,000 to \$9,999	do.	13.4	8.7	13.7	13.9	12.4	10.8
\$10,000 to \$19,999	do.	8.9	3.3	9.0	7.5	10.6	5.9
\$20,000 to \$39,999	do.	6.4	2.3	6.8	5.4	8.6	4.2
\$40,000 to \$99,999	do.	7.8	1.0	10.7	1.9	8.2	2.0
\$100,000 or more	do.	7.1	.6	12.1	.9	9.6	1.3
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	Dollars	27,398	4,914	42,799	7,598	69,148	9,755
Farms by type:							
Cash grain	Percent	16.2	13.1	20.3	39.7	5.5	8.2
Cotton	do.	2.4	2.7	3.0	12.2	²	0
Tobacco	do.	.1	.1	²	0	1.4	5.4
Livestock, except dairy, poultry, and animal specialties	do.	55.2	65.2	55.9	38.8	40.5	65.1
Others	do.	26.2	18.8	20.9	9.4	52.6	21.2
Tenure of farmer:							
Full owners	do.	65.0	61.6	64.9	56.6	75.5	70.3
Part owners	do.	26.5	22.5	24.1	23.9	16.3	20.2
Tenants	do.	8.5	15.9	11.0	19.5	8.2	9.6
Age of farmer:							
Under 35 years	do.	13.5	6.7	14.7	7.9	13.7	8.1
35 to 54 years	do.	44.6	32.4	45.2	35.8	45.1	31.3
55 to 64 years	do.	24.1	26.9	23.5	22.6	23.7	38.6
65 years and older	do.	17.8	33.9	16.6	33.6	17.5	22.0
Farmers reporting days of work off farm:							
None	do.	33.5	36.5	41.3	47.8	37.1	32.5
1 to 99	do.	8.5	12.0	8.9	9.9	7.3	6.9
100 to 199	do.	8.1	10.9	9.1	8.6	8.1	16.9
200 or more	do.	49.9	40.6	40.8	33.7	47.5	43.7

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued—

Appendix table 4—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the South by State, 1978—Continued

Characteristic	Unit	Southern States with 100 or more black farmers					
		Georgia		Kentucky		Louisiana	
		All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
Farms	Number	58,648	4,485	109,980	1,092	38,923	3,296
Land in farms	1,000 acres	13,742	383	15,040	83	9,605	226
Average size of farm	Acres	234	85	137	76	247	69
Average value of land and buildings per farm	Dollars	181,876	64,667	118,905	86,167	246,753	87,016
Farms by acres:							
1 to 49	Percent	31.9	57.0	34.9	57.1	40.3	65.0
50 to 99	do.	18.8	15.5	21.6	20.1	16.3	17.4
100 to 179	do.	18.1	15.6	20.9	13.7	14.8	9.9
180 to 259	do.	9.1	5.0	9.5	3.6	7.1	3.1
260 to 999	do.	18.0	6.3	12.2	4.9	16.5	4.0
1,000 or more	do.	4.1	.6	.9	.5	5.1	.6
Farms by value of agricultural products sold: ¹							
Less than \$2,500	do.	33.7	62.7	24.2	32.0	41.9	67.1
\$2,500 to \$4,999	do.	14.1	13.4	19.6	26.6	14.1	10.6
\$5,000 to \$9,999	do.	11.9	8.1	20.3	21.1	11.2	9.6
\$10,000 to \$19,999	do.	9.8	7.6	16.3	10.6	8.2	6.9
\$20,000 to \$39,999	do.	8.1	4.4	10.7	6.0	6.9	2.9
\$40,000 to \$99,999	do.	11.1	2.6	6.6	2.6	9.1	2.0
\$100,000 or more	do.	11.3	1.2	2.4	1.1	8.7	.8
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	Dollars	40,807	7,617	16,858	9,319	31,611	6,170
Farms by type:							
Cash grain	Percent	14.2	16.9	9.6	7.1	23.9	20.1
Cotton	do.	.5	.3	0	0	4.6	6.4
Tobacco	do.	4.5	4.6	46.1	50.4	²	0
Livestock, except dairy, poultry, and animal specialties	do.	46.8	56.9	30.1	32.4	51.3	52.1
Others	do.	34.0	21.2	14.3	10.1	20.2	21.5
Tenure of farmer:							
Full owners	do.	64.0	59.0	68.2	76.1	57.3	54.1
Part owners	do.	26.2	20.9	19.3	15.8	28.2	20.5
Tenants	do.	9.8	20.1	12.5	8.2	14.5	25.4
Age of farmer:							
Under 35 years	do.	13.5	7.3	17.3	6.3	15.1	9.1
35 to 54 years	do.	43.5	43.5	42.3	37.0	42.1	35.5
55 to 64 years	do.	24.3	27.2	21.7	24.6	24.4	29.0
65 years and older	do.	18.7	22.0	18.8	32.1	18.4	26.4
Farmers reporting days of work off farm:							
None	do.	41.2	38.8	38.2	41.0	40.0	38.0
1 to 99	do.	8.0	8.5	11.3	12.6	9.6	13.2
100 to 199	do.	7.5	7.8	8.4	7.4	10.1	13.7
200 or more	do.	43.3	44.9	42.1	39.0	40.3	35.1

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued—

Appendix table 4—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the South by State, 1978—Continued

Characteristic	Unit	Southern States with 100 or more black farmers					
		Maryland		Mississippi		North Carolina	
		All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
Farms	Number	18,727	953	54,182	8,817	89,367	7,680
Land in farms	1,000 acres	2,714	49	13,865	677	11,353	423
Average size of farm	Acres	145	51	256	77	127	55
Average value of land and buildings per farm	Dollars	269,193	129,223	173,475	57,277	135,072	59,564
Farms by acres:							
1 to 49	Percent	44.5	69.5	27.9	52.2	43.5	66.7
50 to 99	do.	16.5	19.5	21.5	23.4	22.3	18.3
100 to 179	do.	15.3	4.5	19.5	15.9	16.1	9.1
180 to 259	do.	8.4	2.7	9.1	4.5	7.1	3.1
260 to 999	do.	13.8	3.5	16.9	3.7	9.8	2.8
1,000 or more	do.	1.5	.2	5.1	.2	1.2	.1
Farms by value of agricultural products sold: ¹							
Less than \$2,500	do.	26.9	35.9	44.1	75.0	27.4	39.2
\$2,500 to \$4,999	do.	14.4	24.2	15.8	12.4	14.1	15.1
\$5,000 to \$9,999	do.	13.6	15.1	12.1	6.4	14.5	17.2
\$10,000 to \$19,999	do.	11.6	17.2	8.2	3.5	12.9	12.0
\$20,000 to \$39,999	do.	9.1	3.3	5.7	1.7	11.3	10.2
\$40,000 to \$99,999	do.	12.6	2.9	6.2	.7	12.0	5.1
\$100,000 or more	do.	11.8	1.4	8.0	.2	7.8	1.2
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	Dollars	43,040	10,657	31,341	3,514	33,941	12,131
Farms by type:							
Cash grain	Percent	22.3	12.5	19.3	15.7	16.0	13.0
Cotton	do.	0	0	6.1	5.8	.1	.1
Tobacco	do.	15.2	68.3	0	0	38.9	44.3
Livestock, except dairy, poultry, and animal specialties	do.	22.9	9.8	57.5	64.1	25.9	31.5
Others	do.	39.7	9.4	17.2	14.4	19.1	11.0
Tenure of farmer:							
Full owners	do.	60.7	50.3	65.0	68.7	54.4	53.9
Part owners	do.	24.5	20.6	25.5	19.1	31.1	29.6
Tenants	do.	14.8	29.2	9.6	12.3	14.5	16.5
Age of farmer:							
Under 35 years	do.	13.8	8.6	13.1	7.5	14.8	7.7
35 to 54 years	do.	44.0	36.8	43.2	33.8	41.8	37.7
55 to 64 years	do.	24.1	23.2	23.3	25.9	25.2	29.4
65 years and older	do.	18.1	31.4	20.5	32.8	18.2	25.2
Farmers reporting days of work off farm:							
None	do.	40.9	37.5	35.5	38.9	43.8	42.3
1 to 99	do.	9.4	6.9	8.6	11.1	11.4	11.3
100 to 199	do.	8.9	15.1	10.2	13.2	7.9	10.9
200 or more	do.	40.8	40.5	45.7	36.8	36.8	35.4

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued—

Appendix table 4—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the South by State, 1978—Continued

Characteristic	Unit	Southern States with 100 or more black farmers					
		Oklahoma		South Carolina		Tennessee	
		All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
Farms	Number	79,388	851	33,430	6,451	97,036	2,405
Land in farms	1,000 acres	34,344	134	6,319	325	13,150	178
Average size of farm	Acres	433	158	189	50	136	74
Average value of land and buildings per farm	Dollars	222,624	93,347	146,244	50,101	116,883	72,689
Farms by acres:							
1 to 49	Percent	18.8	32.5	40.7	73.4	38.9	60.2
50 to 99	do.	13.7	24.2	19.3	14.6	22.6	19.7
100 to 179	do.	18.6	18.3	15.6	6.7	18.4	10.8
180 to 259	do.	9.2	8.9	7.7	2.5	7.8	4.0
260 to 999	do.	30.1	14.3	13.5	2.5	11.0	4.9
1,000 or more	do.	9.6	1.6	3.2	.2	1.3	.5
Farms by value of agricultural products sold: ¹							
Less than \$2,500	do.	26.1	59.1	43.3	67.3	34.5	51.2
\$2,500 to \$4,999	do.	17.0	18.2	14.8	11.5	22.1	21.4
\$5,000 to \$9,999	do.	17.0	12.8	12.4	9.8	18.3	13.8
\$10,000 to \$19,999	do.	14.5	6.0	9.0	6.1	11.3	7.3
\$20,000 to \$39,999	do.	11.2	1.9	7.3	3.3	6.4	4.2
\$40,000 to \$99,999	do.	9.5	1.4	7.0	1.5	4.7	1.6
\$100,000 or more	do.	4.7	.6	6.1	.6	2.7	.6
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	Dollars	29,824	6,637	25,959	5,719	14,694	6,670
Farms by type:							
Cash grain	Percent	14.0	6.8	26.8	25.8	12.0	18.4
Cotton	do.	1.9	.2	.6	.2	1.1	4.8
Tobacco	do.	0	0	13.7	18.8	26.0	15.0
Livestock, except dairy, poultry, and animal specialties	do.	69.5	84.7	42.2	43.1	46.5	54.0
Others	do.	14.5	8.4	16.7	12.0	14.4	7.9
Tenure of farmer:							
Full owners	do.	55.0	53.2	57.9	51.7	70.1	67.6
Part owners	do.	32.4	32.9	30.4	26.9	21.3	20.9
Tenants	do.	12.6	13.9	11.7	21.4	8.7	11.5
Age of farmer:							
Under 35 years	do.	15.0	7.2	13.5	11.5	14.4	8.0
35 to 54 years	do.	43.6	27.6	41.0	36.7	41.0	30.4
55 to 64 years	do.	22.4	24.0	24.0	26.9	23.8	29.1
65 years and older	do.	18.9	41.2	21.4	24.8	20.8	32.4
Farmers reporting days of work off farm:							
None	do.	35.3	40.9	36.2	36.4	35.2	47.2
1 to 99	do.	9.3	8.7	11.0	11.3	9.5	8.7
100 to 199	do.	9.2	10.1	8.7	13.8	8.0	7.7
200 or more	do.	46.3	40.3	44.1	38.5	47.4	36.4

See footnotes at end of table.

Continued—

Appendix table 4—Selected characteristics of all farms and black-operated farms for the South by State, 1978—Continued

Characteristic	Unit	Southern States with 100 or more black farmers			
		Texas		Virginia	
		All farms	Black-operated farms	All farms	Black-operated farms
Farms	Number	194,253	5,420	56,869	3,895
Land in farms	1,000 acres	137,547	640	9,965	332
Average size of farm	Acres	708	118	175	85
Average value of land and buildings per farm	Dollars	275,047	89,111	163,918	78,743
Farms by acres:					
1 to 49	Percent	21.2	48.2	33.9	50.5
50 to 99	do.	15.0	19.0	19.8	20.2
100 to 179	do.	17.2	21.0	19.1	18.4
180 to 259	do.	9.3	5.3	9.3	5.7
260 to 999	do.	25.2	5.6	15.9	5.0
1,000 or more	do.	12.0	.9	2.1	.2
Farms by value of agricultural products sold: ¹					
Less than \$2,500	do.	30.9	65.4	32.4	37.8
\$2,500 to \$4,999	do.	18.0	21.4	18.9	21.1
\$5,000 to \$9,999	do.	15.6	6.2	16.3	19.4
\$10,000 to \$19,999	do.	11.5	4.2	12.0	11.1
\$20,000 to \$39,999	do.	8.7	1.4	8.4	6.6
\$40,000 to \$99,999	do.	8.6	1.1	7.1	2.9
\$100,000 or more	do.	6.7	.3	5.0	1.0
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	Dollars	42,829	4,190	22,933	9,550
Farms by type:					
Cash grain	Percent	8.1	4.7	9.2	15.4
Cotton	do.	8.5	1.5	0	0
Tobacco	do.	0	0	23.7	43.0
Livestock, except dairy, poultry, and animal specialties	do.	66.8	83.7	44.3	29.4
Others	do.	16.7	10.0	22.9	12.1
Tenure of farmer:					
Full owners	do.	56.5	63.9	61.9	53.7
Part owners	do.	29.3	25.3	27.3	32.7
Tenants	do.	14.2	10.8	10.8	13.6
Age of farmer:					
Under 35 years	do.	12.6	4.2	13.4	6.9
35 to 54 years	do.	41.5	28.2	40.4	34.7
55 to 64 years	do.	25.1	29.6	24.5	29.8
65 years and older	do.	20.8	38.0	21.7	28.6
Farmers reporting days of work off farm:					
None	do.	35.9	33.1	40.1	47.7
1 to 99	do.	9.4	9.5	9.9	9.9
100 to 199	do.	8.8	13.2	7.8	10.2
200 or more	do.	45.9	44.2	42.2	32.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

¹"All farms" excludes institutional farms, experimental and research farms, and Indian reservations.

²Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: (20, 21).

Appendix table 5—Selected off-farm work characteristics of southern farms by race of farmer, 1979

Item	South			Item	South		
	Total	White	Black		Total	White	Black
Total farms	961,045	906,316	48,670				
Farms reporting family off-farm income	899,506	847,532	45,948	Self-employed operating a nonfarm-related business or professional practice	16.9	17.0	16.0
	<i>Number</i>				<i>Percent</i>		
	<i>Percent</i>			Farms reporting principal type of off-farm employment for spouse	248,897	240,248	7,112
Less than \$5,000	26.2	25.5	38.6		<i>Percent</i>		
\$5,000-\$9,999	16.1	15.8	21.4	Employee of another farm or ranch	1.6	1.7	1.1
\$10,000-\$19,999	28.0	28.2	24.8	Employee of a private business	63.2	63.4	58.5
\$20,000-\$29,999	16.8	17.1	10.0	Government employee	25.9	25.6	32.3
\$30,000-\$49,999	9.5	9.8	3.5	Self-employed operating a farm-related business	1.3	1.3	1.3
\$50,000 or more	3.5	3.6	1.7	Self-employed operating a nonfarm-related business or professional practice	8.0	8.1	6.8
Percentage of farms reporting off-farm income from:					<i>Number</i>		
Cash wages from farm jobs or professions	5.5	5.6	3.9	Farms reporting principal off-farm occupation for operator	406,340	388,767	15,541
Cash wages from nonfarm work	61.5	62.0	52.7		<i>Percent</i>		
Nonfarm business or professional practice	6.7	7.0	2.0	Professional, technical, and kindred workers	12.3	12.5	6.5
Retirement and disability	33.2	32.4	49.5	Managers and administrators, except farm	17.5	17.7	9.9
Social Security	28.2	27.4	46.0	Sales workers	6.6	6.9	.8
Other public payments	7.9	8.0	6.4	Clerical and kindred workers	5.4	5.6	2.3
Private pensions	3.3	3.2	4.4	Craftsmen and kindred workers	23.4	23.6	20.9
Public assistance and unemployment compensation	2.3	2.0	7.5	Operatives, except transport	11.1	10.9	14.6
Interest and dividends	76.3	77.0	60.1	Transport equipment operatives	5.5	5.6	4.4
Rent from nonfarm property	9.1	9.5	2.3	Farm laborers and supervisors	7.4	7.3	10.0
All other sources	1.8	1.8	2.3	Service workers	10.8	9.9	30.5
Farms reporting off-farm work	543,776	518,886	21,867		<i>Number</i>		
	<i>Percent</i>			Farms reporting principal off-farm occupation for spouse	257,277	246,656	9,021
By operator only	46.8	46.9	46.4		<i>Percent</i>		
By spouse only	13.3	13.3	12.4	Professional, technical, and kindred workers	22.1	22.1	20.5
By operator and spouse	39.9	39.7	41.2	Managers and administrators, except farm	8.0	8.2	4.4
Farms reporting principal type of off-farm employment for operator	400,270	382,979	15,206	Sales workers	6.4	6.7	0
	<i>Number</i>			Clerical and kindred workers	26.8	27.7	6.6
	<i>Percent</i>			Craftsmen and kindred workers	2.0	2.0	0
Employee of another farm or ranch	3.7	3.3	13.2	Operatives, except transport	11.9	11.9	9.1
Employee of a private business	55.3	55.6	48.0	Transport equipment operatives	1.5	1.5	1.4
Government employee	20.9	20.7	21.1	Farm laborers and supervisors	2.0	2.0	0
Self-employed operating a farm-related business	3.2	3.3	1.7	Service workers	19.3	17.9	58.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: (18, 19).

Appendix table 6—All farms and black-operated farms, 1982 and 1978¹

Area	All farms		Black-operated farms		Area	All farms		Black-operated farms	
	1982	1978	1982	1978		1982	1978	1982	1978
United States	2,240,976	2,257,775	33,250	37,351	Virginia	51,859	49,936	2,728	3,075
	<i>Number</i>					<i>Number</i>			
Northeast	131,977	131,535	231	229	West Virginia	18,742	17,475	29	33
Maine	7,003	6,775	4	6	North Carolina	72,792	81,706	4,413	5,820
New Hampshire	2,757	2,508	2	1	South Carolina	24,929	26,706	3,147	3,773
Vermont	6,315	5,852	1	3	Georgia	49,630	51,405	2,068	2,648
Massachusetts	5,401	4,946	17	13	Florida	36,352	36,109	835	999
Rhode Island	728	674	0	0	Kentucky	101,642	102,263	935	1,028
Connecticut	3,754	3,519	8	10	Tennessee	90,565	86,910	1,598	1,754
New York	42,207	43,075	72	75	Alabama	48,448	50,780	2,759	3,143
New Jersey	8,277	7,984	59	51	Mississippi	42,415	44,104	4,802	4,996
Pennsylvania	55,535	56,202	68	70	Arkansas	50,525	51,751	1,249	1,559
Midwest	932,836	975,245	1,344	1,451	Louisiana	31,628	31,370	1,888	1,934
Ohio	86,934	89,131	230	223	Oklahoma	72,523	72,237	795	773
Indiana	77,180	82,483	108	107	Texas	185,020	175,395	3,292	3,066
Illinois	98,483	104,690	141	169	West	279,572	253,910	554	464
Michigan	58,661	60,426	185	188	Montana	23,570	23,565	7	8
Wisconsin	82,199	86,505	54	59	Idaho	24,714	24,249	9	16
Minnesota	94,382	98,671	70	69	Wyoming	8,861	8,040	3	3
Iowa	115,413	121,339	93	95	Colorado	27,111	26,907	41	35
Missouri	112,447	114,963	238	279	New Mexico	13,484	12,311	15	7
North Dakota	36,431	40,357	16	19	Arizona	7,334	6,298	31	15
South Dakota	37,148	38,741	24	30	Utah	13,984	12,764	3	3
Nebraska	60,243	63,768	48	74	Nevada	2,719	2,399	4	6
Kansas	73,315	74,171	137	139	Washington	36,080	30,987	51	42
South	896,591	897,085	31,121	35,207	Oregon	34,087	28,503	31	21
Delaware	3,338	3,398	32	42	California	82,463	73,194	357	308
Maryland	16,183	15,540	551	564	Alaska	570	383	0	0
					Hawaii	4,595	4,310	2	0

¹The 1978 estimates shown in this table are adjusted to be comparable with 1982 estimates. Thus, they differ from the 1978 estimates shown in other tables.

Source: (16).

Other Reports of Interest on Rural Issues

Characteristics of Poverty in Nonmetro Counties identifies the unique characteristics of nonmetro counties with large proportions of persons living in poverty. Knowing these characteristics can help public officials develop successful antipoverty programs. In counties with high poverty rates, families headed by women are almost three times as likely to be living at or below the poverty level as they are in counties with low poverty rates. On the other hand, property is a source of personal income at similar rates in both groups of counties. RDRR-52. July 1985. 16 pp. \$1.00. Order SN: 001-019-00400-2.

Natural Resource Dependence, Rural Development, and Rural Poverty examines the influence of natural resource dependence on rural income levels and recent population growth. Rural poverty and population decline are now only weakly connected with a rural county's economic dependence on agriculture, mining, or Federal landownership. Thus, natural resource-dependent counties are not the principal targets of programs designed to relieve population decline and low-income problems in rural America. RDRR-48. July 1985. 24 pp. \$1.00. Order SN: 001-019-00395-2.

Rural Governments: Raising Revenues and Feeling the Pressure assesses fiscal pressures on local governments by looking at locally raised taxes and user fees as a percentage of local income. Some local governments in nonmetro areas—especially those in the rural West and in highly rural areas—experienced severe fiscal stress during the 1970's associated with high and rising local taxes. These local governments may be forced to cut back their rural development activities in the 1980's. RDRR-51. July 1985. 40 pp. \$1.50. Order SN: 001-019-00399-5.

Physicians in Nonmetro Areas During the Seventies shows that the gap between the number of physicians in nonmetro and metro areas widened during the seventies, with nonmetro areas lagging by almost 100 physicians per 100,000 population. Describes availability of physicians in

nonmetro areas in light of population changes and demand for medical care. RDRR-46. March 1985. 28 pp. \$1.50. Order SN: 001-019-00380-4.

Do Bank Size and Metro-Nonmetro Location Affect Bank Behavior? finds that a bank's lending policies and aggressiveness in attracting large deposits depend more on the size of the bank's assets than on its location. Many rural banks do take fewer risks than urban banks, but that's because of the small sizes (values of assets) of many rural banks, not their locations. The kinds of deposits (6-month money market certificates and large time deposits) and investments (government securities and Federal funds) a bank uses, the rate of loan losses, and its profitability indicate a bank's aggressiveness and lending policies. RDRR-47. April 1985. 20 pp. \$1.00. Order SN: 001-019-00392-8.

Distribution of Employment Growth in Nine Kentucky Counties: A Case Study shows that people moving to a nonmetro area held a disproportionate share of jobs in growing business establishments and of better paying executive jobs. Manufacturing was the study area's major economic driving force, but the private service sector (which provided services to the manufacturing sector and to the area's growing population) was an important contributor to job growth between 1974 and 1979. RDRR-41. August 1984. 44 pp. \$2.25. Order SN: 001-019-00337-5.

Counting Hired Farmworkers: Some Points To Consider concludes that as many as two-thirds of the Nation's hired farmworkers may not have been counted in the 1980 Decennial Census farm labor categories because they were not working on farms in March when the data were collected. Data from USDA's 1981 Hired Farm Working Force Survey suggest that the farm labor census data are more likely to describe workers employed in hired farm-work year round. AER-524. December 1984. 16 pp. \$1.00. Order SN: 001-019-00367-7.

Patterns of Change in the Metro and Nonmetro Labor Force, 1976-82 reveals that nonmetro areas, particularly farm areas, lagged behind metro areas in employment growth during the 1976-82 period. This reversed a pattern of faster nonmetro growth occurring in the late sixties and early seventies. RDRR-44. December 1984. 28 pp. \$2.00. Order SN: 001-019-00358-8.

Chartbook of Nonmetro-Metro Trends is a quick check on metro and nonmetro socioeconomic trends. It presents colorful charts, tables, maps, and text tracing differences in population, employment, income, poverty, housing, and government between nonmetro and metro America.

RDRR-43. September 1984. 48 pp. \$2.50. Order SN: 001-019-00351-1.

Housing of the Rural Elderly finds that the number of rural elderly households rose 16 percent between 1974 and 1979 compared with a 10-percent increase for all U.S. households, according to this study based on the 1979 Annual Housing Survey. Most of the U.S. elderly live in adequate housing, but 27 percent of the elderly renters and 18 percent of all the elderly living in the South have inadequate housing. In 1979, 15 percent of the rural elderly lived in adequate housing compared with 8 percent of the urban elderly. RDRR-42. July 1984. 20 pp. \$1.50. Order SN: 001-019-00335-9.

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