

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

1982

EC82-874 Changes in the Structure of Nebraska Agriculture 1969-1978

A. L. Frederick

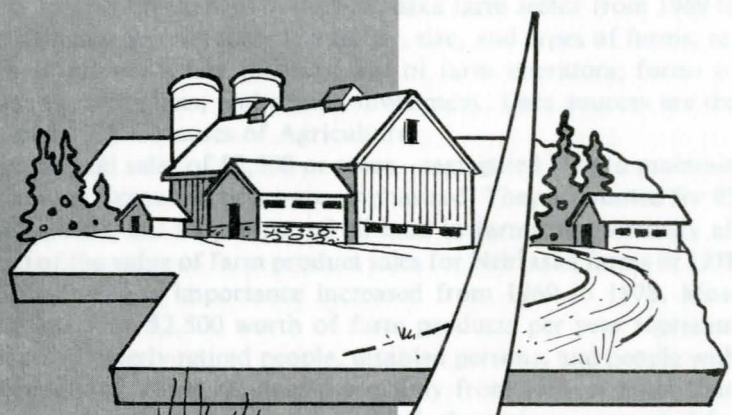
Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Frederick, A. L., "EC82-874 Changes in the Structure of Nebraska Agriculture 1969-1978" (1982). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 4384.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/4384>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Changes in the Structure of Nebraska Agriculture

1969



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leo E. Lucas, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



Changes in the Structure of Nebraska Agriculture

1969



1978

The Cooperative Extension Service provides information and educational programs to all people without regard to race, color or national origin.

Changes in the Structure of Nebraska Agriculture 1969 - 1978

A. L. (Roy) Frederick
Extension Economist—Public Policy

INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on changes in the Nebraska farm sector from 1969 to 1978. Items of major interest include number, size, and types of farms; resource use and output; tenure patterns; age of farm operators; forms of farm business organizations; and capital investment. Data sources are the 1969, 1974, and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture.

Farms with annual sales of \$2,500 or more—segregated here to maintain consistency among Census reports—are emphasized. They accounted for 93 percent of all farms, but 99 percent of all land in farms and virtually all (99.7 percent) of the value of farm product sales for Nebraska farms in 1978 (Table 1). Their relative importance increased from 1969 to 1978. Most farms selling less than \$2,500 worth of farm products per year represent rural residences of elderly retired people, disabled persons, and people with off-farm occupations whose incomes are mainly from sources other than farming. By any of the measures used in Table 1, these places accounted for a smaller proportion of total farm activity in 1978 than in 1969.

NUMBER AND SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF NEBRASKA COMMERCIAL FARMS, 1969-78

Sales Classes

In 1978 there were 61,461 Nebraska farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over—a reduction of about 1,100 from 1974 and nearly 2,000 less than in 1969. Dramatic changes occurred in the distribution of farms among sales classes between 1969 and 1978 (Table 2). In general, smaller farms declined in number while large farm numbers increased. For example, in sales classes of \$2,500-19,999, farm numbers declined by more than 45 percent. However, the number of farms with sales of \$100,000 or more increased more than three times during the same period.

Results are much the same if analyzed by the proportion of total sales accounted for by each sales class (Table 3). In 1978, about two-thirds of all agricultural product sales were made from farms with total sales of \$100,000 or more. In 1969, only two-fifths of all sales came from farms in the top sales category. Sales from farms with less than \$40,000 in gross sales declined on both an absolute and relative basis.

Some data from Tables 2 and 3 can be combined to give additional insights into the size of Nebraska's farming operations. For example, in 1978, only 16.8 percent of all farms had sales of \$100,000 or more, but these same farms accounted for 66.2 percent of all sales. Farms in the \$2,500-4,999 sales category accounted for 6.2 percent of all farms and only .3 percent of all sales. In short, Nebraska farms parallel the national trend where relatively few farms sell a lot and lots of farms sell relatively little.

Comparisons of farm numbers and distributions by sales classes among time periods are affected by various factors. Price levels received and quantities sold ultimately determine sales value, but these are in turn influenced by other factors. For example, weather conditions obviously affect annual crop production on individual farms. Production of both crops and livestock also changes because of shifts in resource commitments to individual farm enterprises. Prices received by farmers for grains and livestock are determined primarily by competitive supply-demand forces, but supply and demand are in turn affected by inflation throughout the economy. Between 1969 and 1978, the general price level increased 92 percent, as measured by the Gross National Product deflator. This pushed many Nebraska farms into higher sales categories even though purchasing power may have changed little.

Acreage Categories

Farm acreage, another frequently used measure of farm size, gives an additional perspective of changes in the Nebraska farm sector from 1969-1978. Overall, the average acreage of Nebraska farms increased slightly. But this overview does not tell the entire story of changes among acreage categories.

The number and percentage distribution of Nebraska farms by acreage categories for 1969, 1974, and 1978 are shown in Table 4. These data indicate that in 1978 compared to 1969: 1. the number of small farms (less than 140 acres) had increased, with the largest increases coming in the smallest size categories; 2. there were fewer medium-sized (140-499 acres) farms; and 3. the number of large farms (500 acres or more) had increased modestly.

These trends have likely been influenced by several factors. In some cases, higher product prices in 1974 and 1978 increased the value of products sold from farms with small acreages, thereby shifting them up into a sales classification of at least \$2,500. In other cases, the increase in small

farm numbers probably reflects the nationwide desire by many persons to return to country living. Some of the intermediate-size units acquired more land which shifted them up into the larger acreage category. In some cases all of a former unit went to an expanding operator. But in other cases only part of a unit may have been sold, thus contributing to an increase in the number of smaller tracts, many being part-time farms and rural residences.

The increase in number of farms in the large acreage categories has been facilitated by continued advances in technology, especially in farm machinery and irrigation equipment. Tax incentives also probably played a role in the expansion of many farm units.

FARM CHARACTERISTICS AND ADJUSTMENTS

In addition to farm number and size distributions, there are other farm characteristics relevant to assessing changes in the Nebraska farm sector.

Type of Tenure

The predominant farm tenure group in Nebraska is the part owner. Such a farmer both owns some and rents from others part of the land he farms. Part owners accounted for 40.1 percent of all Nebraska farmers in 1978—a figure that changed little between 1969 and 1978 (Table 5). The number of farms operated by full owners increased slightly during this same period (from 34.5 to 38.0 percent of the total) while full tenant operators declined from 25.3 to 21.9 percent.

Part owners have larger operations than either full owners or tenants. More than three out of every five acres is now farmed by part owners, a slight increase from 1969. This increase came at the expense of tenants who in 1978 farmed only 14.7 percent of the land, down from 18.4 percent in 1969.

The decline in the farm tenancy rate is related to the desire of most operators to own at least part of the land they farm and the availability of credit that enabled them to make farmland purchases. Also, technological changes have made it possible for fewer operators (tenants and part owners) to farm the land available for rent.

Type of Farm Business Organization

Individual or family-owned units continue to be the dominant type of farm business organization. In 1978, they accounted for 85.9 percent of all farms (Table 6). The last three Censuses of Agriculture show no strong trends for individual or family-owned units. Nor has there been any notable trend for partnerships, which in 1978 accounted for 10.1 percent of all farms. Farms organized as corporations (including family-owned) increased in number, especially between 1974 and 1978, but still accounted for only 3.9 percent of all Nebraska farms in 1978.

Data indicate that farms organized as partnerships or corporations (including family-owned) tend to be larger operations. In 1978, corporation farms accounted for 13.4 percent of all land in farms, an increase from 7.0 percent in 1969. In both years these figures were considerably higher than the percentage of farms identified as being corporations. But while the percentage of farmland controlled by corporations had nearly reached that controlled by partnerships in 1978, both were substantially less than that controlled by individual or family-owned units.

Farm Types

For many years the Census has classified farms by types, based on sales values of products sold. Nebraska farms were split almost evenly between cash grain and livestock farms in 1978 (Table 7). The number of cash grain farms increased abruptly between 1969 and 1974, probably because higher grain prices in 1974 raised the value of grain sales, thereby contributing to the increase in the number of farms categorized as cash grain operations. By 1978, the number of cash grain farms had dropped back again and livestock farms had increased, but neither had returned to 1969 levels when there were substantially more livestock farms than cash grain farms. The number of dairy and poultry farms have declined, as have those in an "all other" category. The pattern is mixed in the general farm category.

Crop Production

Nebraska is primarily a corn production state as measured by the number of farms growing corn, the acreage harvested, and the total bushels produced (Table 8). Although the number of farms producing corn was somewhat smaller in 1978 than in 1969, total acreage and average acreage harvested per farm were larger. Poor growing conditions in 1974 show up both in total production and average yield per acre.

Wheat ranked second to corn in number of Nebraska farms producing it and acres harvested. Except for 1974, however, total production of wheat ranked behind both corn and grain sorghum.

Soybeans have been consistently ranked fourth in the number of farms producing the crop, total acres in production, bushels produced, and average number of acres per farm.

Livestock Production

The number of farms engaged in livestock production trended downward from 1969 to 1978 (Table 9). In fact, with the exception of broilers, the number of farms selling each species of livestock declined significantly. However, the average number of cattle and hogs per farm increased as did the total number of animals in these major livestock enterprises. For dairy

and poultry products the average value of sales per farm was much higher in 1978 than in 1969, reflecting larger-sized units and higher prices received.

Farms with breeding animals and laying flocks declined in number during the 1969-1978 period (Table 10). However, the number of beef cows and hogs kept for breeding purposes increased during the period.

The long-term downtrend in milk cows, breeding ewes, and laying hens continued between 1969 and 1978. Not only did the number of farms with these enterprises decline, but the actual number of milk cows, ewes, and laying hens in the state dropped. There were modest increases in the average number of milk cows and ewes per farm while the number of laying hens per farm doubled to the still modest level of 419 birds per farm.

Farm Production Expenses

Farm production expenses for Nebraska farms increased substantially between 1969 and 1978 (Table 11). The largest single expenditure in each of the Census years (1969, 1974 and 1978) was for livestock and poultry, which is not surprising in view of the state's prominence in cattle feeding. The second largest item, which ties in closely with the first, was for feed purchases.

The largest percentage increases in expenses were for agricultural chemicals, seeds and commercial fertilizer. Expenditures for each of these items was at least three times as high in 1978 as in 1969. In each case, a portion of the increased expenditure was due to a larger acreage under production in 1978. A more significant element, however, was the higher price paid for each unit of these input items.

With the exception of commercially mixed feeds, cost of each of the input items listed in Table 11 at least doubled during the period of this study.

Farm Product Sales and Other Income Sources

The total value of products sold and average value per farm increased greatly from 1969 to 1978 (Table 12). The largest percentage increase occurred between 1969 and 1974, but gains between 1974 and 1978 were also sizable. The value of products sold per farm in Nebraska averaged \$33,680 in 1969, \$59,497 in 1974, and \$83,824 in 1978.

In each of the three Census years in this study, livestock and poultry (including their products) accounted for a larger proportion of farm product sales than crops. However, crops made a relative gain during the 1969-78 period, especially between 1969 and 1974. In 1978, however, livestock still accounted for two-thirds of the total value of Nebraska farm products sold, down from three-fourths of the total in 1969. The leading commodities for Nebraska cash farm receipts in 1978 were cattle and calves, grain (especially corn), hogs and dairy products.

Farm Asset Values

The values of major farm assets have increased greatly in recent years, largely because of inflation. The total value of farm land and buildings nearly doubled between 1969 and 1974 and then nearly doubled again between 1974 and 1978 (Table 13). This large increase in value also shows up when comparisons are made on a per farm or a per acre basis.

The value of machinery and equipment on farms also increased greatly—more than doubling from 1969 to 1974 and then increasing further to \$55,875 per farm in 1978.

The potential effects of the sharply higher farm real estate values vary widely among individual farm operators. For many who owned land that had been inherited or purchased earlier at lower prices, the land price jump meant a large increase in net worth, borrowing power, and for those who sold, capital gains. But for those who purchased the higher-priced land and financed it at high interest rates, severe economic consequences have sometimes resulted because of production shortfalls and lower commodity prices. In many cases, however, these recent farmland purchases were tracts for farm enlargement rather than for whole, new farm units.

Operator Age

There was no discernable trend in the average age of farmers between 1969 and 1978 (Table 14). However, the number of farmers in the youngest age brackets (less than 35 years of age) increased as a percentage of the total. Middle-age farmers (35-54 years), in contrast, made up relatively less of the total in 1978 than in 1969.

Part of the shift by age group no doubt reflects changes occurring in the general population. During the 1970s, farmers in their 20s and early 30s came from that part of the population which was part of the post-World War II baby boom.

But perhaps the most important contributing factor to a changing age structure was that 1973 and 1974 were extremely good years for farm income. This encouraged young people who were making career decisions to go into farming. The absolute and relative increase in the number of farmers in the under 35 age group between 1974 and 1978 is particularly noteworthy because the number of farmers in all other age categories was falling during the same period.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Dramatic changes occurred in the structure of Nebraska agriculture between 1969 and 1978. Price inflation was probably the dominant factor in large changes which occurred in farm product sales, increased production expenses, and larger farm asset values. During the nine-year period, the

general price level nearly doubled. Farm asset values, especially real estate, may have increased not only in response to inflation but also in anticipation of even more of it.

The average number of acres per farm in Nebraska increased between 1969 and 1978. However, at the two extremes—less than 100 acres and more than 500 acres—farm numbers increased, while only “middle-size” farms between 100 and 500 acres decreased in number. Similar trends have been underway nationally. Future policy initiatives may have to focus more on these size-distribution patterns than past policies have.

A large proportion of farm product sales now come from larger farms, and this seems likely to continue. The predominant form of farm business organization remains individual or family-operated units, even though corporation farms (including family-owned corporations) were the fastest growing segment during the nine-year period.

Nebraska is primarily a cattle and corn state, although several other enterprises add significantly to the total value of farm production in the state. In fact, the diversity of Nebraska agriculture may be one of its major strengths.

Table 1. Number of farms, value of sales, and land in farms for farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over, and under \$2,500, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.

Item	Unit	1978		1974		1969	
		\$2,500 & over	Under \$2,500	\$2,500 & over	Under \$2,500	\$2,500 & over	Under \$2,500
Number of farms	---	61,461	4,455	62,570	5,027	63,385	8,872
Percent of farms	Percent	93.2	6.8	92.6	7.4	87.7	12.3
Value of sales ^{a/}	Mil. Dol.	5,152	13	3,723	10	2,135	13
Percent of sales	Percent	99.7	.3	99.7	.3	99.4	.6
Land in farms	1,000 acres	45,604	700	45,413	759	44,659	1,175
Percent of land	Percent	98.5	1.5	98.4	1.6	97.0	3.0

^{a/} 1974 and 1969 data include sales of forest products.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974, and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

The structure of agriculture will probably change in the future—as it has in the past. But neither causal forces nor resulting changes will be exactly like those that have occurred previously.

During the 1980s, weather conditions will continue to cause considerable year-to-year variability in prices and incomes, especially for crop farmers, with resulting impacts on farm assets.

Beyond that, agriculture's close tie-in with general economic and monetary conditions will become an increasingly important factor in the financial well-being of individual farmers. The better conditions are in the general economy, the better farmers will do and vice-versa. Those with the largest volume will have the most at stake—good or bad.

Technological gains in both production and marketing of agricultural products will probably be slow, but steady. As in the past, larger farmers are likely to be best able to effectively use these technological advancements.

Finally, exports of agricultural products will grow but the relative gains are not likely to approach the very rapid growth during the 1972-78 period. This will likely moderate price increases for both commodities and farm assets, especially real estate.

Table 2. Number and percentage distribution of farms by value of product sales class, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Sales class	1978		1974		1969		Change 1969-1978 (percent)
	No. of farms	Pct. of farms ^{b/}	No. of farms	Pct. of farms ^{b/}	No. of farms	Pct. of farms ^{b/}	
\$ 2,500-4,999	3,826	6.2	4,545 ^{c/}	7.3	7,108 ^{c/}	11.2	- 46.2
5,000-9,999	6,242	10.2	7,531	12.0	12,114	19.1	- 48.5
10,000-19,999	9,801	16.0	11,482	18.4	17,691	27.9	- 44.6
20,000-39,999	13,097	21.3	15,424	24.7	15,902	25.1	- 17.6
40,000-99,999	18,171	29.6	16,546	26.4	8,056	12.7	125.6
100,000 & over	10,324	16.8	7,042	11.3	2,514	4.0	310.7
100,000-199,999	6,855	11.2	4,899	7.8	1,647	2.6	316.2
200,000-499,999	2,700	4.4	1,690	2.7	624	1.0	332.7
500,000 & over	769	1.3	453	.7	243	.4	216.5
Total	61,461	100.0	62,570	100.0	63,385	100.0	- 3.0

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Figures rounded to nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

^{c/} Includes farms reporting sales less than \$2,500 but having potential for sales of \$2,500 or over.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974, and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 3. Value and percentage distribution of agricultural products sold by sales class, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Sales class	1978		1974		1969		Change 1969-1978 (Percent)
	Sales (\$1000)	Pct. of total sales ^{b/}	Sales (\$1000)	Pct. of total sales ^{b/}	Sales (\$1000)	Pct. of total sales ^{b/}	
\$ 2,500-4,999	14,128	.3	15,892 ^{c/}	.4	25,506 ^{c/}	1.2	- 44.6
5,000-9,999	45,361	.9	55,843	1.5	90,103	4.2	- 49.7
10,000-19,999	143,062	2.8	168,458	4.5	257,855	12.0	- 44.5
20,000-39,999	382,446	7.4	447,408	12.0	445,432	20.7	- 14.1
40,000-99,999	1,154,518	22.4	1,025,203	27.5	476,387	22.1	142.3
100,000 & over	3,412,385	66.2	2,010,025	54.0	856,657	39.8	298.3
Total	5,151,900	100.0	3,722,829	100.0	2,151,940 ^{d/}	100.0	139.4

a/ Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

b/ Figures rounded to nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

c/ Includes sales of farms reporting sales less than \$2,500 but having potential for sales of \$2,500 or over.

d/ This value agrees with 1969 Census findings, but 1974 and 1978 Censuses give value of \$2,134,909 for 1969.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 4. Number and percentage distribution of farms by acreage categories, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Farm size (acres) ^{b/}	1978		1974		1969		Change 1969-1978 (Percent)
	Number	Percent ^{c/}	Number	Percent ^{c/}	Number	Percent ^{c/}	
Under 10 acres	3,038	4.9	2,197	3.5	1,464	2.3	107.5
10-49	2,841	4.6	1,852	3.0	1,022	1.6	178.0
50-69	796	1.3	715	1.1	472	.8	68.6
70-99	2,602	4.2	2,633	4.2	2,008	3.2	29.6
100-139	2,159	3.5	2,238	3.6	1,998	3.2	8.1
140-179	5,779	9.4	6,460	10.3	6,925	10.9	- 16.5
180-219	2,324	3.8	2,562	4.1	2,988	4.7	- 22.2
220-259	3,702	6.0	4,192	6.7	5,129	8.1	- 27.8
260-499	16,052	26.1	17,843	28.5	20,328	32.1	- 21.0
500-999	12,304	20.0	12,504	20.0	12,151	19.2	1.3
1,000-1,999	6,023	9.8	5,675	9.1	5,440	8.6	10.7
2,000 & over	3,841	6.3	3,699	5.9	3,460	5.5	11.0
Total	61,461	100.0	62,570	100.0	63,385	100.0	- 3.0

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Overall these farms averaged 742 acres in 1978, 726 acres in 1974, and 705 acres in 1969.

^{c/} Figures rounded to nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 5. Distribution of farms and land acreage by tenure of operator, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Tenure of operator	1978			1974			1969		
	Number of farms	Percent of farms ^{c/}	Percent of land ^{c/}	Number of farms	Percent of farms ^{c/}	Percent of land ^{c/}	Number of farms	Percent of farms ^{c/}	Percent of land ^{c/}
Full owner	23,370	38.0	23.3	24,661	39.4	25.7	21,872	34.5	22.0
Part owner ^{b/}	24,655	40.1	62.0	24,773	39.6	59.3	25,472	40.2	59.7
Tenant	13,436	21.9	14.7	13,136	21.0	15.1	16,041	25.3	18.4
Total	61,461	100.0	100.0	62,570	100.0	100.0	63,385	100.0	100.0

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Operators who own some and rent from others some of the land they farm.

^{c/} Figures rounded to nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 6. Distribution of farms and land acreage by type of organization, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Type of organization	1978			1974			1969		
	Number of farms	Percent of farms ^{d/}	Percent of land ^{d/}	Number of farms	Percent of farms ^{d/}	Percent of land ^{d/}	Number of farms	Percent of farms ^{d/}	Percent of land ^{d/}
Individual or family	52,762	85.9	72.3	56,406	90.2	78.5	54,897	86.6	76.0
Partnership	6,191	10.1	13.9	4,860	7.8	11.4	7,476	11.8	16.3
Corporation ^{b/}	2,375	3.9	13.4	1,192	1.9	9.8	659	1.0	7.0
Other ^{c/}	133	.2	.3	112	.2	.4	353	.6	.7
Total	61,461	100.0	100.0	62,570	100.0	100.0	63,385	100.0	100.0

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Including family owned.

^{c/} Cooperative, estate or trust, prison farm, etc.

^{d/} Figures rounded to nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 7. Number and percentage distribution of farms by major type, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Type of farm ^{b/}	1978		1974		1969	
	Number	Percent ^{d/}	Number	Percent ^{d/}	Number	Percent ^{d/}
Cash grain	28,623	46.6	30,039	48.0	21,329	33.7
Livestock ^{c/}	27,889	45.4	25,891	41.4	32,170	50.8
Dairy	1,288	2.1	2,121	3.4	2,459	3.9
General					4,067	6.4
Primarily crop	1,119	1.8	1,372	2.2	N/A	
Primarily livestock	837	1.4	669	1.1	N/A	
Poultry	110	.2	131	.2	166	.3
All other	1,595	2.6	2,347	3.8	3,194	5.0
Total	61,461	100.0	62,570	100.0	63,385	100.0

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Based on kinds and values of products sold.

^{c/} Excluding dairy, poultry, and animal specialty.

^{d/} Figures rounded to nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974, and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 8. Production of major crops, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Crop harvested	Unit	1978	1974	1969
Corn				
Farms	Number	39,162	40,121	42,711
Acres	1000 acres	6,670	5,578	4,353
Production	Million bu.	708.5	387.7	400.6
Yield	Bushel/acre	106.2	69.5	92.0
Size (avg.)	Acres/farm	170.3	139.0	101.9
Soybeans				
Farms	Number	16,650	17,517	16,684
Acres	1000 acres	1,210	1,046	646
Production	Million bu.	37.7	25.5	20.4
Yield	Bushel/acre	31.1	24.4	31.6
Size (avg.)	Acres/farm	72.7	59.7	38.7
Wheat				
Farms	Number	21,739	27,616	29,178
Acres	1000 acres	2,408	2,817	2,410
Production	Million bu.	73.4	90.4	70.7
Yield	Bushel/acre	30.5	32.1	29.3
Size (avg.)	Acres/farm	110.8	102.0	82.6
Grain Sorghum				
Farms	Number	17,998	18,280	21,213
Acres	1000 acres	1,806	1,759	1,438
Production	Million bu.	127.6	59.7	104.5
Yield	Bushel/acre	70.7	33.9	72.7
Size (avg.)	Acres/farm	100.4	96.2	67.8

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974, and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 9. Livestock and livestock product sales by farms, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Sales Items	1978	1974	1969
Cattle and calves			
Farms	42,724	47,308	51,981
Head (1000)	5,978	5,177	5,389
Head per farm	140	109	104
Hogs and pigs			
Farms	21,656	23,183	29,740
Head (1000)	6,176	4,969	4,747
Head per farm	285	214	160
Sheep and lambs			
Farms	2,224	2,541	3,572
Head (1000)	180	228	430
Head per farm	81	90	120
Broilers			
Farms	546	589	350
Head (1000)	116	108	94
Head per farm	212	183	268
Dairy products			
Farms	3,499	5,038	9,899
Value (Million dol.)	101	81	53
Sales per farm (\$)	28,804	15,984	5,353
Poultry and poultry prod.			
Farms	3,864	6,136	11,827
Value (Million dol.)	31	32	19
Sales per farm (\$)	8,145	5,153	1,638

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 10. Livestock inventories of farms, Nebraska, December 31, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Inventory items	1978	1974	1969
Beef cows			
Farms	31,711	35,823	36,792
Head (1000)	1,979	2,169	1,838
Head per farm	62	61	50
Hogs and pigs (for breeding)			
Farms	15,496	15,409	21,887
Head (1000)	528	381	469
Head per farm	34	25	21
Milk cows			
Farms	5,625	7,864	12,879
Head (1000)	118	144	155
Head per farm	21	18	12
Ewes			
Farms	1,917	2,296	3,162
Head (1000)	107	100	171
Head per farm	56	44	54
Laying hens			
Farms	7,248	10,313	17,024
Head (1000)	3,040	3,305	3,479
Head per farm	419	321	204

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 11. Farm production expenses, by items, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Item	1978 ^{d/}		1974		1969		Percent increase, 1969-1978
	Million dollars	Percent of total	Million dollars	Percent of total	Million dollars	Percent of total	
1. Livestock and poultry purchased	1,503	N/A	866	30.5	705	40.4	113.2
2. Feed purchased	655	N/A	595	21.0	306	17.5	114.0
a. Commercially mixed feeds	177	N/A	214		117		
3. Seeds, bulbs, plants, and trees	111	N/A	67	2.3	30	1.7	269.4
4. Hired farm labor	128	N/A	76	2.7	50	2.9	153.8
5. Contract labor, machine hire, and custom work	81	N/A	62	2.2	39	2.2	105.6
6. Commercial fertilizer ^{b/}	267	N/A	207	7.3	74	4.2	258.0
7. Gasoline and other petroleum fuel and oil	222	N/A	143	5.5	75	4.3	195.1
8. Agricultural chemicals ^{c/}	88	N/A	52	1.8	21	1.2	323.6
9. Other prod. expenses	N/A	N/A	748	27.0	443	25.0	N/A
Total	N/A	N/A	2,834	100.0	1,744	100.0	N/A

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Excludes lime.

^{c/} Includes lime.

^{d/} 1978 expenses are based on a sample of farms. Since no estimate is given of "other production expenses," the percentage of total expenses accounted for by each category cannot be determined.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 12. Value of products sold by farms, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978^{a/}

Product sold	1978		1974		1969	
	Million dollars	Percent of total ^{b/}	Million dollars	Percent of total ^{b/}	Million dollars	Percent of total ^{b/}
Crops						
Grains	1,599	31.0	1,388	37.3	466	21.9
Fieldseeds, hay						
forage and silage	77	1.5	93	2.5	41	1.9
Other field crops	37	.7	78	2.1	21	1.0
Vegetables, 'sweet						
corn, and melons	.6	.01	.5	.01	.4	.02
Fruits, nuts, and						
berries	.2	.005	.2	.006	.3	.01
Nursery and green-						
house products	8	.2	4	.1	3	.1
Subtotal—crops, etc.	1,722	33.4	1,563	42.0	532	24.9
Livestock, poultry						
and their products						
Cattle and calves	2,733	53.1	1,680	45.1	1,297	60.8
Poultry and products	31	.6	32	.9	19	.9
Dairy products	101	2.0	81	2.2	53	2.5
Hogs and pigs	544	10.6	353	9.5		
Sheep, lambs, and						
wool	12	.2	8	.2		
Other livestock and					234	10.9
livestock products	9	.2	7	.2		
Subtotal—livestock,						
etc.	3,430	66.6	2,160	58.0	1,603	75.1
Total products sold	5,152	100.0	3,723	100.0	2,135	100.0
Average per farm	\$83,824		\$59,497		\$33,680	

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} Details may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 13. Value of selected farm investment items, Nebraska farms, 1969, 1974, and 1978^{a/}.

Item	Unit	1978 ^{b/}	1974	1969
Value of land and buildings	Mil. dollars	24,202	12,769	6,814
Average per farm	Dollars	393,571	204,070	107,502
Average per acre	Dollars	524	281	153
Value of machinery and equipment	Mil. dollars	3,434	1,976	900
Average per farm	Dollars	55,875	32,656	14,416

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} 1978 data are based on a sample of farms.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Table 14. Farm operators by age group, all farms, Nebraska, 1969, 1974, and 1978.

Age	1978		1974 ^{a/}		1969	
	Number	Percent ^{b/}	Number	Percent ^{b/}	Number	Percent ^{b/}
Under 25 years	3,591	5.5	2,656	4.0	2,143	3.0
25-34 years	10,208	15.5	7,751	11.7	8,806	12.2
35-44 years	11,291	17.1	11,604	17.5	15,357	21.3
45-54 years	15,856	24.1	17,086	25.8	18,814	26.0
55-64 years	15,956	24.2	16,578	25.0	17,909	24.8
65 years and over	9,014	13.7	10,589	16.0	9,228	12.8
Total	65,916	100.0	66,264	100.0	72,257	100.0
Average age	48.6		50.3		49.3	

^{a/} 1974 data apply only to individual or family operations (sole proprietorships) and partnerships.

^{b/} Figures rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent; details may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture for Nebraska.

Appendix Table 1. Selected data items for farms in Nebraska and surrounding states, 1969, 1974, and 1978.^{a/}

Item	Nebraska	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	So. Dakota	Wyoming
Number of farms						
1969	63,385	123,495	68,394	86,503	40,470	7,179
1974	62,570	117,075	69,088	82,385	39,818	6,885
1978	61,461	117,717	67,401	97,809	36,890	7,024
Acres per farm (avg.)						
1969	705	263	692	313	978	4,302
1974	726	277	680	319	1,010	4,412
1978	742	283	695	294	1,053	4,207
Value of sales (avg.) ^{b/}						
1969	33,682	29,424	26,059	16,261	23,485	34,285
1974	59,499	53,835	53,063	27,451	41,544	52,030
1978	83,824	69,597	74,117	34,028	51,464	75,606
Value of land & buildings (avg. per farm) ^{c/}						
1969	107,502	102,774	108,166	71,027	87,281	184,711
1974	204,070	199,393	199,725	126,881	157,160	364,542
1978	393,572	439,538	347,045	213,778	292,006	631,468

^{a/} Includes farms with product sales of \$2,500 and over.

^{b/} 1974 and 1969 data include sales of forest products.

^{c/} 1978 data are based on a sample of farms.

Source: Based on data from the 1969, 1974 and 1978 Censuses of Agriculture, selected states.