

NEWS LETTER

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FARM LAND AND BUILDINGS

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Iowa continues to lead the states in value of farm land and buildings on a per farm basis, according to the 1925 census of agriculture. The table which appears elsewhere shows how the states rank in average value of farm land and buildings per farm in 1925. The parallel column shows the per acre value of all land classed as farm land, both cultivated and uncultivated.

North Carolina and Kentucky jointly share fortieth position in the average value of farm land and buildings per farm, the average value in each state being \$3,282. Only seven states rank below North Carolina in this particular, all of them being Southern states with large tenant and negro ratios.

The rank of North Carolina in the average value of lands and buildings per farm may appear rather low at first sight. We have a large and dense population; we rank high in the production of crop wealth; we have a fairly high white farm population ratio; and rank below the average for the South in farm tenancy; all of which would seem to be conducive to higher farm values.

Small Farms

The main explanation for the small value of the average farm in this state is the extremely small size of the average farm. The average farm in the state contains only 65.6 acres of land, only 24 acres of which are classified as crop land. One-fifth of our crop land is not actually in crops but lies fallow. The average farm in the state in 1925 had only twenty acres planted in crops, and in this respect we rank last of all the states, last by several acres in fact.

The average value of an acre of farm land in the state is fairly high, being \$50.02 cultivated and uncultivated, but the fact that our farms are so small, especially the cultivated area, largely explains why the average farm does not have a high value.

North Carolina contains a land area of approximately 31,200,000 acres. Of this area only 6,832,000 acres are classed as crop land, and only 5,549,000 acres were actually harvested in 1925.

In other words we are cropping only one-fifth of the land area of the state. We rank second in number of farms, but we rank twenty-fourth in crop land area. Which means that we are intensive farmers in North Carolina, the most intensive in the United States, and especially so in the cotton and tobacco belt.

Our farms are small, too small we believe for most effective agriculture. We concentrate on too few acres for a large per man yield. We cultivate only a fifth of our land area when certainly half of it is capable of being cultivated, even under present conditions. But it would require an altogether different system of farming to bring into use a larger acreage of land. Our hand-made crops of cotton and tobacco require very little land. A diversified system with a fair amount of consumptive livestock would enable us to use more acres. The result might not be as large per acre yields, but likely it would be a larger per man yield, which is far more important. We believe that the full significance of an intensive system of farming years ahead of the necessity for it has never been fully analyzed in this state. One-fifth of North Carolina's land area in crops is too little. We use too much labor and too little land and capital in our farming. The result is a high per acre yield, but a small per man yield. Standards of living are determined by net income per man, not gross yield per acre.

Getting Smaller

Although we are rapidly increasing our number of farms, we are actually experiencing a decrease in farm land area and in crop-land area. The average farm in North Carolina in 1920 contained a total area of 74.2 acres, while in 1925 it was only 65.6 acres. In 1900 we were cultivating about 37 acres to the farm. In 1910 the average was 34.7 cultivated acres per farm; 1920 it was 30.5, and in 1925 it had dropped to 25 acres of crop land per farm, while only 20 acres per farm were actually planted in crops. In a few more years we will be cultivating pocket-handkerchief farms as the Europeans are now

doing. But in Europe the explanation lies in a dense farm population; in North Carolina in the nature of our crops mainly.

Value Holds Up

The per acre value of farm land has not decreased much in North Carolina since 1920. The value per farm has decreased approximately 18 percent, but the value per acre of farm land has decreased only about five percent. The farmer's speculative price in 1920 was considerably above the Census estimate of the true value of farm land. In very few states has the average value of farm land per acre held up as well as in North Carolina. As a rule the states have experienced large decreases in land value. But not so in North Carolina. Our farms are steadily increasing in number, in every section of the state. The demand for farms is not great, but the steady growth in farm population exerts a wholesome influence on the price of farm land. The western half of the state especially seems to be holding its own, tending to offset decreased values in the eastern counties.

In the aggregate North Carolina is a fairly rich agricultural state. On a per farm basis she ranks very low. Larger farms better cultivated would, we believe, result in larger farm wealth per farm and in higher standards of family living. We need to use more than one-fifth of our land area for agricultural purposes. Too much land lies idle in North Carolina. Not more cotton and tobacco, but more pasture land, more grasses, grain crops, hay and forage; more dairy cows and more of all forms of consumptive livestock, in all of which North Carolina ranks ridiculously low.

The small farm well tilled is the proper slogan in a state where the population presses on the land supply. But in a frontier state the large farm well tilled is the proper slogan. And certainly a state with the land and climatic resources of North Carolina, with only one-fifth of her land area being cropped, is a frontier agricultural state.

FARM LABOR CHEAP

Hired farm labor, one of the main costs items in agriculture, is relatively cheap in North Carolina, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Hired farm labor with board costs upon average \$1.50 per day, or \$29.00 per month, against the average for all the states of \$1.78 per day, or \$34.38 per month, for April 1925. Hired farm labor without board is reported at \$1.90 per day and \$40.00 per month for North Carolina, against the U. S. average of \$2.35 per day, and \$48.40 per month. In many states farm labor is scarce. In North Carolina farm labor is relatively plentiful due to the fact that seventy-one percent of our population is rural, and only one state has a larger total farm population. This makes it possible to engage in forms of agriculture, such as trucking, which call for a great surplus of workers during a limited part of the year. Groups of two or three hundred people picking strawberries, all recruited from the neighborhood, are not an uncommon sight in North Carolina.

LAND RELATIVELY CHEAP

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, reporting on the value of plow lands by states, shows that good plow or crop land is fairly cheap in North Carolina. This ought to be of interest to would-be farmers in other states who are looking about for an attractive state in which to locate. North Carolina ranks high in per acre production of crop values, yet our land is valued below the average for all the states.

The average value of all plow land in the state is put at fifty-five dollars per acre.

The average for all the states is \$67.20. Good plow land is valued at \$74.00 per acre in North Carolina, against the U. S. average of \$79.47, and poor plow land at \$38.00 per acre against the U. S. average of \$41.95.

Iowa plow land is reported at \$131.00 per acre, yet North Carolina ranks far ahead of Iowa in per acre value of crops. In Illinois and California land is more than twice as expensive as in North Carolina.

That North Carolina's agriculture is

KNOW NORTH CAROLINA

OUR LAND AND ITS USES

The following are the main facts concerning land in North Carolina and how it is being used at the present time.

Item	Acres
Land area	31,190,000
Land in farms	18,597,795
Crop land	6,832,320
Harvested 1925	5,548,808
Crop failures	146,038
Fallow or idle	1,187,474
Pasture land	2,818,748
Plowable	881,895
Woods and other	1,936,853
Woodland not pastured	7,090,679
Other farm land	1,856,048
Land other than farmland, owned by lumber cos., federal, state, waste land, etc.	12,592,205
Average acres per farm	65.6
Crop land per farm	24.0
Crop land per farm harvested in 1925	19.6

whole there are in the service areas of all libraries 9,706 persons per library, while in the service area of libraries in the state there are 10,615 persons per library.

North Carolina has only 69 libraries operated by the public and associations, while the nation has 6,516. Of the North Carolina libraries, 32 are tax-supported and 37 are supported by associations. In the service areas of the libraries in the country there are 63, 24,970, while in the same areas in the state there are 732,442 persons.

Out of the total 3,065 counties last year, 222 counties spent public funds for library service as compared with 12 of the 100 counties in this state.

North Carolina's poorest showing however, is made by the fact that 70 percent of the total population is without local public library service while the percentage for the United States and Canada without library service is 45. North Carolina's rural population is as well taken care of as the rural population in the United States. However, the dearth of libraries in North Carolina seems to be in the smaller towns. There are 47 counties, or nearly one-half of the State's 100, which do not have a public library within their borders, the bulletin states. Library service for negroes in North Carolina is also inadequate, 735,139 of the 7,718,300 negroes residing in the South without public library facilities making their home in this state.—News and Observer.

PRAISES THE STATE

It is not news that North Carolina today is the outstanding state of the South, but it is a fact. It has made greater industrial strides than any other in the past 10 years, has gone farther and faster in educational and political development, has shown a greater community spirit and a stronger sense of solidarity.

It would be mere repetition to cite the facts of the state's growth in population, in manufacturing, in agriculture; of the amazing expansion in the piedmont district; of the development of the state's resources. The figures can be got from the almanacs, the chamber of commerce boosting pamphlets, and the publicity experts who infest the various administration departments. One way of summing it up is with the broad, general, but incontrovertible statement that North Carolina now pays more internal revenue taxes to the federal government than any other state save New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Another way is by contrasting the \$150,000,000 bonded debt of North Carolina with the

\$5,000,000 owed by Georgia and the relatively small debt of the other Southern states.

In the matter of state debt, North Carolina is so far in the lead of the rest that she can hardly be seen. By those whose debt is small this is regarded as a foolish eminence. By North Carolinians it is held to be the mark of wisdom and progress. It is all in the point of view. In North Carolina the people have reached a state of mind where they will adopt almost any sort of bond issue with a whoop. The difficulty is to hold the legislature down. In Alabama the trouble is to get it up. It is hard work in that state to get through a bond issue for good roads, new schools, or anything else. There is a popular and political reaction toward running into debt and increasing taxes.

In North Carolina in the last four years they have spent \$100,000,000 on roads, taking care of interest, sinking funds, and amortization out of a four-cent gasoline tax and automobile licenses, the burden of which is scarcely felt and arouses no complaint. By the end of this year the state will have three modern trunk roads running east and west from the Atlantic coast to the Tennessee mountains, and three running north and south from the Virginia line down into Georgia and South Carolina. The \$100,000,000 has been spent without a whisper of graft, a tinge of politics, or a well-based charge of waste, inefficiency, or unfaithfulness.

That is an almost incredible thing. Certainly no one in Pennsylvania will believe it, but it is so. At the close of the war, when the big industrial impetus came to North Carolina, Governor Bickett sent for Frank Page, born in the state, and a brother of the late Walter Hines Page, also born there. He was placed at the head of the system, given a free hand and real control. He used both and got real results. Nor have they stopped in North Carolina. They are crazy about good roads down there. They want more of them and the idea of going into debt, from which they seem to shrink in Alabama and Georgia, is enthusiastically embraced in North Carolina.

In Georgia and elsewhere in the South there is noticed a disposition to criticize the plunge of North Carolina into the public debt pool. They point out that the pay-as-you-go plan in Georgia and Virginia is the sounder and saner way; that the North Carolina plan borders on economic recklessness.

One answer to this in North Carolina is that they have the roads and that other states have conspicuous gaps in their systems. As to the economic unsoundness, it does not show either in the tax rate or in the financial statements of the state, or in the continued cordiality with which it treats corporate and individual wealth. Nor is the idea of economic recklessness easy to associate with the capable, hard-headed, rich, handsome and successful business man type of governor the state now has—Angus McLean. Also, it is equally hard to associate any policy of wild expenditure and reckless extravagance with that name. He holds them down all right.—Frank R. Kent, in Baltimore Sun.

VALUE OF FARM LAND AND BUILDINGS

Per Farm and Per Acre, 1925 Census

In the following table, based on the 1925 Census of Agriculture, the states are ranked according to the census value of farm land and buildings on a per farm basis. The parallel column gives the census value of all farm land, cultivated and uncultivated, per acre.

Iowa ranks first in value of farm land and buildings per farm, with \$23,245, and also first in value of farm land per acre. Alabama is last in value of farm land and buildings per farm, with \$1,748.

North Carolina and Kentucky together are fortieth in rank, the per farm value of land and buildings in both states being \$3,282. North Carolina ranks twenty-third in the per acre value of farm land, cultivated and uncultivated, the amount being \$50.02. In farm land per farm we rank low, and in cultivated land per farm we rank last, thus largely accounting for our low rank in value on a per farm basis.

United States average value of farm land and buildings \$7,776, per farm. S. H. Hobbs, Jr.

Department of Rural Social-Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	State	Land and buildings per farm	Value per acre	Rank	State	Land and buildings per farm	Value per acre
1	Iowa	\$23,245	\$149.06	25	Massachusetts	\$7,611	\$107.53
2	California	23,179	114.70	26	Utah	7,403	38.52
3	Nebraska	19,755	60.04	27	New York	7,250	71.01
4	Illinois	18,636	136.79	28	Maryland	7,047	77.78
5	South Dakota	18,066	44.89	29	Michigan	6,696	71.41
6	Nevada	17,571	16.03	30	Texas	6,563	27.83
7	North Dakota	13,407	29.67	31	Pennsylvania	6,871	72.20
8	Arizona	13,344	13.02	32	Delaware	5,861	66.83
9	Kansas	13,252	50.27	33	New Mexico	5,473	6.21
10	Minnesota	12,730	79.76	34	Oklahoma	5,324	38.34
11	Wyoming	11,113	9.25	35	Vermont	4,940	34.98
12	Oregon	11,039	43.71	36	Virginia	4,587	51.63
13	Colorado	10,208	24.51	37	New Hampshire	4,147	38.62
14	Washington	9,921	57.65	38	West Virginia	3,957	39.80
15	Wisconsin	9,835	86.94	39	Maine	3,943	38.20
16	Montana	9,666	13.85	40	Kentucky	3,282	42.60
17	Idaho	9,213	45.93	41	North Carolina	3,282	50.02
18	New Jersey	8,837	136.23	42	Tennessee	3,016	42.54
19	Connecticut	8,726	110.69	43	South Carolina	2,654	43.07
20	Indiana	8,667	85.20	44	Louisiana	2,467	36.97
21	Florida	8,111	80.86	45	Arkansas	2,442	34.56
22	Rhode Island	8,110	103.25	46	Georgia	2,366	26.83
23	Ohio	7,941	87.44	47	Mississippi	1,788	28.64
24	Missouri	7,780	61.70	48	Alabama	1,748	21.32

Not only that, but in the nation as a