

## ■ Farms and Land in Farms

The United States had 2.06 million farms in 1996, down less than 1 percent from 1995. A farm is defined as any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products was sold or would normally be sold during the year. The number of farms declined annually about 1 percent from 1986 through 1996 except for an increase in 1995 of less than half a percent which was due in part to a change in definition; the overall decline for the period was 8 percent.

Land in farms continues to decline slowly; the total of 968 million acres in 1996 is down 0.4 percent from a year earlier and down 3.7 percent from 1986. Land in farms has declined every year since reaching its peak at 1.206 billion acres in 1954.

The number of farms has declined at a faster rate than land in farms; the average size of farms increased from 447 acres in 1986 to 469 acres in 1996.

Table 2-1.

Number of farms, land in farms, average farm size:  
United States, June 1, 1986-96<sup>1</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Farms In 1,000</i>	<i>Land in Farms In 1,000 of acres</i>	<i>Average Farm Size In acres</i>
1986	2,250	1,005,333	447
1987	2,213	998,923	451
1988	2,201	994,423	452
1989	2,175	990,723	456
1990	2,146	986,850	460
1991	2,117	981,736	464
1992	2,108	978,503	464
1993	2,083	976,463	469
1994	2,065	973,403	471
1995	2,072	972,253	469
1996	2,063	968,048	469

<sup>1</sup>A farm is any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold or would normally be sold during the year.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, *Farms and Land in Farms*