

2 Million Acres Lost Since 1964

# Only 32% of Northeast Land Is Farmed

The impact of farmland and farm production on the economy of the Northeast Region is small according to the USDA. After all, farmland represents only 32 per cent of the land area of the region which con-

tains some of the Nation's largest cities.

Yet a lot of what's currently happening to farmland in the Northeast parallels trends in other areas.

The 12-State Northeast Re-

gion includes West Virginia and all Atlantic Coast States to the North, plus Vermont. It covers per cent pasture, 19 per cent forest and 12 per cent other lands.)

Total land area devoted to agriculture in the Northeast averages about 32 per cent of the total land area, or around 39 million acres. The proportion of about 128 million acres, of which around 16 per cent is cropland, 6 per cent pasture, 60 per cent forest, and the remaining 18 per cent roads, airports, urban areas, housing lots, swamps, and wildlife preserves.

(By contrast, in the five Corn Belt States about 57 per cent of the land area is cropland, 12 per cent ranges from 13 per cent in Maine to about 52 per cent in Delaware.

Since 1964 almost two mil-

lion acres of Northeast land have dropped out of agriculture.

In general, the better and often choice, Northeast farmland has remained in agriculture while the marginal land has shifted to non-farm use — though there are, of course, many exceptions.

Northeastern farm real estate was valued at \$10.6 billion on March 1, 1969. Of this, \$3.8 billion, or 36 per cent, represented the value of service buildings and dwellings.

The average value per acre ranged from \$130 in Maine to \$916 in New Jersey.

Over the last decade, land value increases averaged about

86 per cent, 9 per cent since March 1968 alone.

Strongest influences on Northeast farmland values have been nonfarm demand for farm real estate, changes in farming incomes, and the cost of real estate credit.

But farm real estate is generally less affected by the current tight money market than the urban real estate market. The reason: a high percentage of those who sell farms finance their sales themselves.

A group of Northeast farm real estate brokers surveyed in March 1969 indicated they felt land prices in the region would continue to increase, but probably at a slower rate.

## 1970 State Potato Crop Projected to Drop 5%

Pennsylvania's potato growers intend to plant 34,000 acres of potatoes in 1970, six per cent less than a year ago and the smallest acreage of record.

During the past 10 years Pennsylvania's potato acreage has ranged from 36,000 to 41,000 acres. Twenty years ago, 84,000 acres were planted. The 1965-69 average acreage planted was 37,800 acres, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

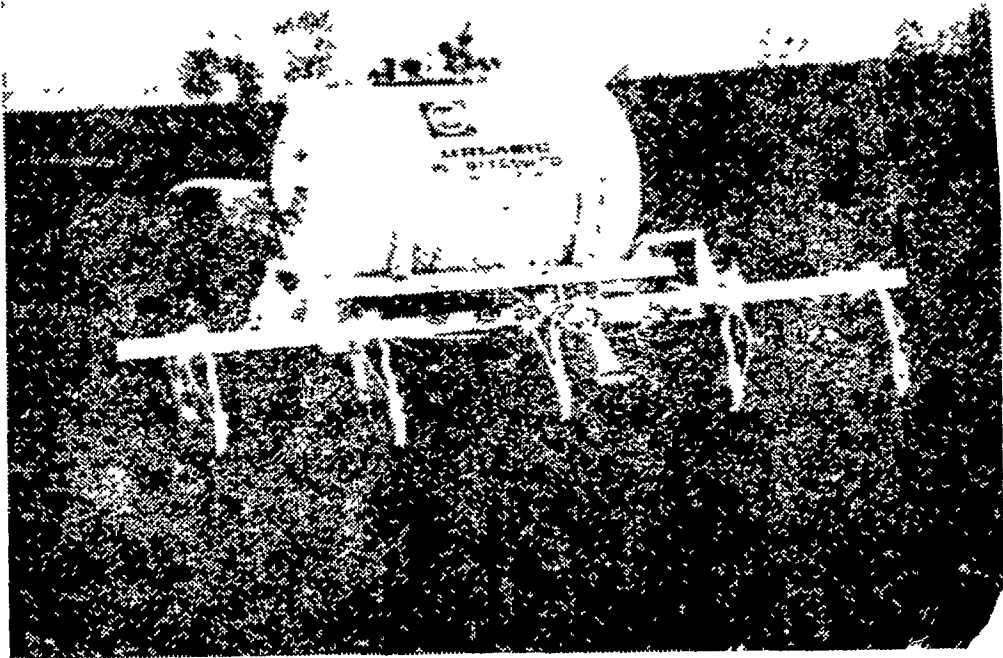
The March 1 intentions may or may not materialize depending on weather conditions at planting time, current price and stocks situation and growers' re-

actions to this intentions report. The purpose of this report is to assist growers in making such changes in their acreage plans as may appear desirable.

Intended nationwide plantings for late summer and fall potatoes are estimated at 1,242,700 acres, two per cent more than the 1,216,200 acres planted in 1969 and five per cent above the 1,181,600 acres in 1968.

A 4 per cent increase from 1969 plantings in both the central and western regions more than offset a 3 per cent reduction in the eastern region.

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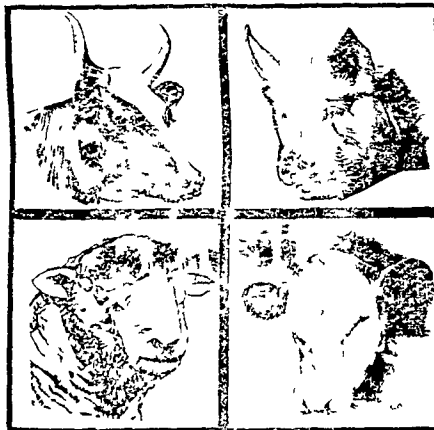
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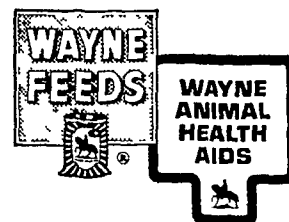
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