

or more. For census year 1971 a sales figure of \$50 was used. Census data for 1971 given here correspond with the 1976 definition of a census-farm. The total number of census-farms in Canada in 1976, at 300,118, was almost the same as in 1971 when there were 299,868 (Table 11.27).

Farm areas. Total area of census-farms in 1976 was 67.2 million hectares, a 3.4% increase from the 64.9 million hectares recorded in 1971 (Table 11.28). Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec reported decreases in farm areas. All other provinces reported increases. For Canada as a whole, the 43.7 million hectares of improved land for 1976 increased 4.1% from that recorded in 1971. The area of unimproved land increased 2.2% to 23.5 million hectares from 23.0 million hectares. The area under crops, increasing by 4.8%, accounted for the majority of this increase.

Economic classification. All census-farms in 1976, except institutional farms, such as experimental farms, community pastures and Indian reserves (but including Hutterite colonies), were divided into 10 economic classes (Table 11.29) presenting a measure of the productive size of the holdings. In previous censuses sales were reported by commodity. In 1976, the operator was asked to indicate the range which corresponded to total sales of agricultural products during 1975.

Type of farm. Since the sales information collected in 1976 was not detailed by commodity, the farm typing scheme was based on potential value of sales by commodities. This value was imputed from the 1976 physical inventories reported for the census-farm. With the exception of farms classified as institutional, all census-farms in 1976 with \$2,500 or more of agricultural sales were classified as one of 10 major product types if 51.0% or more of the potential sales were obtained from this class of products.

Size of census-farms. In 1976, 43% of census-farms in Canada contained less than 97.1 hectares compared with 42% in 1971. This relatively small change suggests that the trend toward consolidation into larger holdings may have moderated. However, wide variation among provinces continues. The proportion of farms under 97.1 hectares in the Atlantic provinces ranged from 50.2% in New Brunswick to 88.4% in Newfoundland; in Quebec 69.0%, Ontario 74.1%, Manitoba 20.7%, Saskatchewan 10.0%, Alberta 21.7% and British Columbia 70.6%.

Age of census-farm operators. About 19% of census-farm operators were under 35 in 1976, 50% were in the 35-54 age group and 31% were over 55. Corresponding percentages for 1971, at 15%, 53% and 32%, show a trend to younger operators.

Farm machinery. Table 11.35 indicates that between 1971 and 1976 forage crop harvesters increased by 25.9%, farm trucks by 25.5%, swathers by 13.1%, tractors by 12.0%, pick-up balers by 7.5%, automobiles by 5.4% and grain combines by 4.7%.

Product and marketing controls

11.6

Both federal and provincial governments have always been concerned with encouraging and assisting a productive and efficient agricultural sector. Numerous measures have been enacted over the years. Originally, emphasis was on production increases and control of pests and diseases. Gradually, with rising production and increasing farm specialization, problems in marketing began to emerge.

To ensure quality, grading procedures and standards were established. Periodic price collapses caused by bumper crops and intensified by the general inability of producers to bargain on an equitable basis with far fewer buyers became a much more difficult part of the marketing problem.

The first attempt to provide bargaining power to producers was the organization of voluntary marketing co-operatives. All provinces eventually passed legislation for incorporation of co-operatives, and most of them also provided various forms of assistance. Federally, the Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act provided financial guarantees to producers willing to market their crops on a pooling-of-returns basis. More information on co-operative organizations is given in Chapter 19.