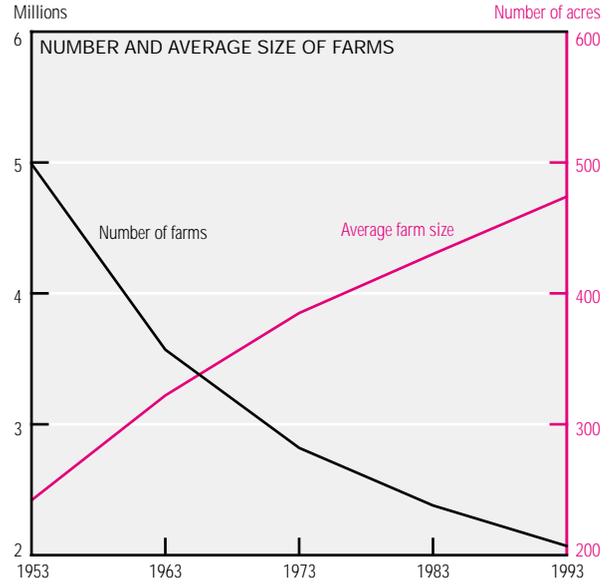
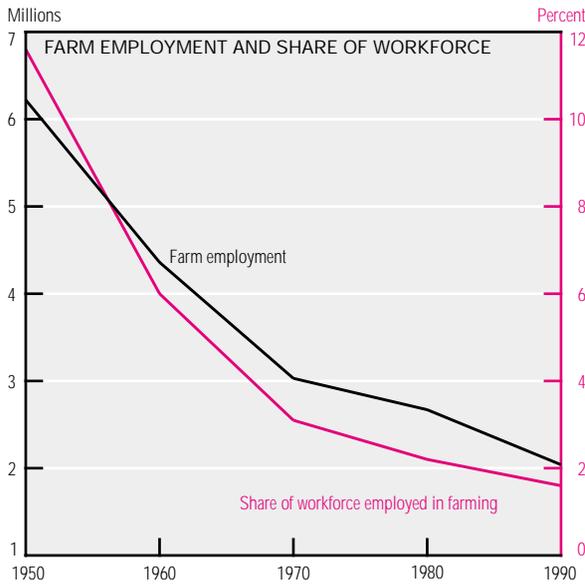


Farm Employment



	Men	Whites	African Americans	Hispanics ^a
1963 total	81.3	84.5	15.5	—
Farmers and managers	94.5	93.0	7.0	—
Laborers	65.3	74.3	25.7	—
1973 total	83.0	91.6	7.2	6.2
Farmers and managers	93.8	96.3	3.1	0.5
Laborers	69.8	85.8	12.3	13.2
1983 total	82.3	92.4	5.9	7.7
Farmers and managers	87.9	97.9	1.3	0.8
Laborers	75.6	85.9	11.3	16.0
1993 total	83.0	95.1	3.4	13.9
Farmers and managers	85.7	98.6	0.9	2.4
Laborers	79.4	90.6	6.8	29.4
	Less than 4 years of high school	4 years of high school	1 to 3 years of college	4 years of college or more
1976 total	43.6	37.7	10.4	8.3
1983 total	28.8	44.4	15.1	11.7
1993 total	17.8	46.9	21.3	14.1

a. Census data classify Hispanics as a subset of whites.
 SOURCES: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*; and U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

As the U.S. economy industrialized, farm employment's share of the workforce plummeted. In the post-World War II period, its share continued to fall from roughly 12% of the workforce in 1950 to 1.5% by 1990. (Farm employment includes farm operators, managers, and laborers working directly to produce food and fiber products. It is part of a larger category, agricultural employment.)

The primary cause of farm employment's precipitous drop has been the dramatic technological progress in areas such as cultivation

equipment, fertilization, and irrigation, which have made farming less labor intensive. These advances also increased yields significantly (50% between 1963 and 1993), even as employment was halved.

Many small farmers, however, found these capital-intensive advances prohibitively expensive. They also discovered that their operations were too small to exploit economies of scale. Thus, throughout the postwar period, the number of farms was cut in half, while the average size more than doubled.

Farm workers' demographics have also shifted dramatically. In the early 1960s, African Americans made up more than a quarter of all farm laborers and more than 15% of total farm employment; by 1993, these figures had fallen to roughly 7% and 3%. Currently, Hispanics account for almost 30% of laborers and roughly 14% of total employment. Another trend is farm workers' rising educational attainment. The percent with some college more than doubled between 1976 and 1993, and the share with at least a college degree almost doubled.