

Agricultural Statistics

The Agriculture Section of the Patent Office began to collect statistics almost at once. By 1842 a total of \$105.75 was spent in compiling these statistics. By the next year this had increased to \$444.67.

However, in 1846 Congress failed to appropriate any money so no agricultural report was prepared. Edmund Burke, now commissioner, wrote that these reports "have produced in the mind even of the humbler agriculturist a conviction of the true dignity of his noble avocation, and of its first and transcendent importance among the interests of his country." He continued: It [money for the Patent Office] is the only expenditure which has been made by Congress for the especial benefit of the agricultural classes."

In a circular issued by the Patent Office in July, 1849, it was stated that "a repository of agricultural statistics, founded upon official and other reliable data" was being developed. Later in 1849 Joseph T. Fales, auditor for Iowa, submitted two tabulations which were published by the Patent Office.

First, he reported that Iowa property had an assessed value of \$18,496,151 in 1849, an increase

of \$3,181,786 over the previous year. The state tax levied on this property in 1848 was \$37,884.33 and \$47,249.42 in 1849.

Fales also reported the various types of property in Iowa and its value, as assessed in 1849. His list was as follows:

Acres of land	3,150,394
Value of land with improvements	\$10,349,624
Value of town lots and improvements	\$2,945,299
Capital employed in merchandise	\$819,637
Mills, manufactories, carding machines	\$319,211
Horses over two years old	34,741
Value of horses	\$1,272,005
Neat cattle over two years old	91,222
Value of neat cattle [oxen]	\$953,513
Mules and asses over one year old	231
Value of mules and asses	\$12,609
Sheep over six months old	140,787
Value of sheep	\$156,168
Hogs over six months old	226,861
Value of hogs	\$258,189
Number of pleasure carriages	4,756
Value of pleasure carriages	\$167,200
Number of watches	1,311
Value of watches	\$45,427
Number of piano-fortes	47
Value of piano-fortes	\$6,810
All other personal property over \$100	\$237,265
Stock and profits in companies	\$12,293
Right or interest in boats or vessels	\$19,194
Gold or silver coin or bank notes	\$213,782
Claims for money or other consideration	\$510,577
Annuities	\$3,918

Money invested and secured by deed or mortgage	\$108,692
Miscellaneous property	\$46,774
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Total value	\$18,496,151

On March 31, 1856, Charles Mason wrote that the means used for gathering agricultural statistics "have been far short of what was desired." He added that "much of the information obtained has been exceedingly loose and desultory." He had a circular prepared and sent to the governors urging them "to use your influence to cause your local legislature to act efficiently in the matter."

As an illustration of the importance of reliable information, Mason wrote:

If all the producers and dealers in pork could learn, with reasonable certainty, how much was slaughtered last year, and how many hogs were on hand, so as to be able to institute a comparison, in relation to similar facts, for previous years, the utility of such information would be evident. The same is true in regard to any other agricultural . . . product.

James W. Grimes wrote Mason that "there is no record in this state tending to show many of the facts you desire to draw out." He was apprehensive the census marshals gathering the information might be "utterly incompetent." He thought also that many people might withhold information, fearing it was sought for assessment and taxation.

Four days later, George W. McCleary, Secretary of State for Iowa, sent Mason data gathered on a schedule prepared by the Iowa Census Board. The information supplied to, and printed by the Patent Office was as follows:

Owners of land	67,111
Acres of improved land	2,043,958
Acres of unimproved land	6,515,479
Acres of meadow	140,656
Tons of hay	225,346
Bushels of grass seed	20,815
Acres of spring wheat	346,966
Bushels of spring wheat harvested	4,072,639
Acres of winter wheat	41,114
Bushels of winter wheat harvested	496,877
Acres of oats	190,922
Bushels of oats harvested	6,127,329
Acres of corn	737,213
Bushels of corn harvested	31,163,362
Acres of potatoes	18,124
Bushels of potatoes harvested	2,014,388
Number of hogs sold	403,584
Value of hogs sold	\$3,127,531
Number of cattle sold	125,799
Value of cattle sold	\$2,923,253
Pounds of butter made	6,099,208
Pounds of cheese	732,323
Pounds of wool	517,441

IOWA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS
1840-45---1847-48*

Year	Bushels of Wheat	Bushels of Barley	Bushels of Rye	Bushels of Buckwheat	Bushels of Indian Corn	Bushels of Potatoes	Bushels of Oats	Tons of Hay	Tons of Flax and Hemp	Tons of Tobacco	Pounds of Sugar
1840	154,737	729	3,787	6,217	1,326,241	234,063	216,385	17,953	313	12,674	41,450
1841	234,115	1,342	4,675	7,873	1,547,215	261,306	301,498	19,745	459	9,616	51,425
1842	341,801	1,368	5,889	9,525	1,788,580	315,134	379,885	23,028	531	11,153	59,152
1843	495,611	1,505	7,360	11,906	2,128,416	390,765	479,856	28,599	654	13,271	55,899
1844	595,000	2,000	7,000	13,000	1,695,000	469,000	568,000	34,000	-	-	74,000
1845	793,000	2,500	8,000	14,000	2,028,000	516,000	681,000	26,000	-	-	150,000
1847	1,000,000	3,500	12,000	20,000	2,900,000	850,000	1,000,000	40,000	-	-	175,000
1848	1,300,000	4,000	15,000	25,000	3,500,000	1,000,000	1,500,000	60,000	-	-	-

*No statistics were compiled for 1846.