Comparison of Test and Control Counties

Because the results (see p. 48) compare characteristics of the data-collection methods in the test and control counties, table 8 presents some of the important agricultural characteristics of the two areas for 1959 and 1964. The ratios in the last two columns of the table indicate that farms in the test and control counties differ to varying extents on the characteristics shown. However, a major factor in the "per farm" differences between the two areas is the difference in average size of farm; that is, the "per acre" ratios are in general closer to unity than the "per farm" ratios. Regardless of differences between the areas for a given year, it seems from comparison of the two sets of ratios that the 1959 to 1964 trends in the two areas were generally similar as measured by the two enumerative methods.

Interpretation of Results

The following point should be kept in view during interpretation of the results: Almost every characteristic of the followup stage of the AFPS was dependent on the editing rules by which incoming questionnaires were examined for completeness and consistency. A different set of editing rules might have produced changes in the proportion of questionnaires returned for followup, in the time required to complete the enumeration, in the average cost of obtaining a complete questionnaire, and in other characteristics of the enumeration.

Cost Analysis

Table 9 shows cost data for the AFPS test counties and comparable figures for the control counties. The most striking difference between the two sets of figures is in the piece-rate earnings per hour: piece-rate enumerators in the test counties earned $1.40 an hour on the average while those in the control counties earned an average of $1.68 an hour. This difference is reflected in the figures for cost per A1. It was thought that piece-rate enumerators would average $1.75 an hour, but evidently the pay rates were not set high enough. The source of data on hours worked is the enumerators' reports of the time they spent on the job.