The higher nonresponse rate in 1969 probably has very little effect on comparability of residence data with that from previous censuses. It is likely, however, that an agriculture census taken by mail would result in a higher proportion of report forms being completed by farm owners and their representatives (accountants, bookkeepers, lawyers, etc.) than if the census had been taken by enumerators, as was done prior to 1969.

By value of sales, farms with sales of $20,000 to $39,000 had the highest proportion of resident operators, 90.4 percent in 1969. For part-time farmers (those grossing less than $2,500 from the sales of farm products, less than 65 years old, and working off the farm 100 days or more), only 71.8 percent reported that they lived on the farm they operated.

A number of counties with substantial numbers of farms and amounts of agricultural production had 20 percent or more nonresident operators in 1969. Such counties, with at least 30 nonresident operators are presented in table 5.

Nonresident operators tended to be somewhat younger than resident operators. About 61 percent of the nonresident operators reporting the year they began operations of their place had been on their present farm less than 10 years versus only 30 percent for farm operators as a whole. Over 20 percent of the cash-grain, cotton, other field crop, fruit and nut, and miscellaneous type farms had nonresident operators.

Years on Present Farm (Year Began Operation of Present Farm)

In 1969, 78.6 percent of all operators reported the year they had begun operating their farm. Of those reporting, 35.4 percent reported 10 years or less on the present farm, 20.0 percent reported 10 years or more declined from 1964 years or less. The comparable percentages for 1964 were 36.2, 20.5, and 8.1 respectively. Because of the high rate of nonresponse in 1969, it is advisable to use only data for farms reporting when comparing 1969 data with previous censuses.

The distribution of operators by years began operation is provided in tables 7 and 8 for the United States and the four regions.

Farm operators in the Northeast and North Central regions tended to report a longer period on their present farms. Also, operators of class 1-5 farms had generally operated their places somewhat longer than had operators of other farms.

The distribution by tenure on farms indicates that part owners had operated their farms for the longest period of time and tenants the shortest. For all farms, the percentage of full owners operating their place for 10 years or more declined from 69.2 percent in 1964 to 64.8 percent in 1969, possibly due to operators who were full owners in 1964 increasing the size of their operations by renting additional acreage in 1969. (See tables 9 and 10.)