tion of feeder pigs for sale has become an important factor, accounting for 16 percent of the total number of hogs and pigs sold in 1974. Farms with sales of $2,500 and over on which no pigs were farrowed sold 14 million hogs, or 23 percent of the hogs and pigs sold from such farms (table 22).

Sheep

For the past three decades, there has been a decline in the number of farms with sheep and lambs and in the number of sheep and lambs on farms. This decline has resulted from less demand for lambs in consumer markets, declining demand for wool, management and herder problems, and low return on investments.

The production, feeding and slaughtering of sheep and lambs is concentrated in the Mountain, West South Central, and West North Central States. Texas is the leading State; over 96 percent of the sheep and lambs produced in the West South Central States were produced there. South Dakota accounted for about 36 percent of the production in the West North Central States. Wyoming and Colorado accounted for over two-fifths of the production in the Mountain States. The Mountain States, with Texas, California, and South Dakota, accounted for 74 percent of the total sheep and lamb production in the country (table 24).

The production of both sheep and wool is concentrated on a relatively small number of farms. Wool production relates only so that shorn on farms and does not include wool obtained in slaughtering plants or elsewhere. The production of wool in 1974 is given in tables 25 and 95.

Poultry Production

Through technological advancements in genetics and feed in recent years significant changes came about in the production and organization of the poultry industry in the United States. From the mid6ties to the mid70s, the cost of producing poultry trended downward due to superior feeding, genetic improvements, diseases control, management, mechanization, and larger unit sizes. Production costs leveled off in the sixties, as gains in production efficiency offset increases in input cost. However, in recent years, input cost has been rising far faster than production efficiency increases.