



- *Management Intent of*
- *Small Timberland Owners*
- *in East Texas*

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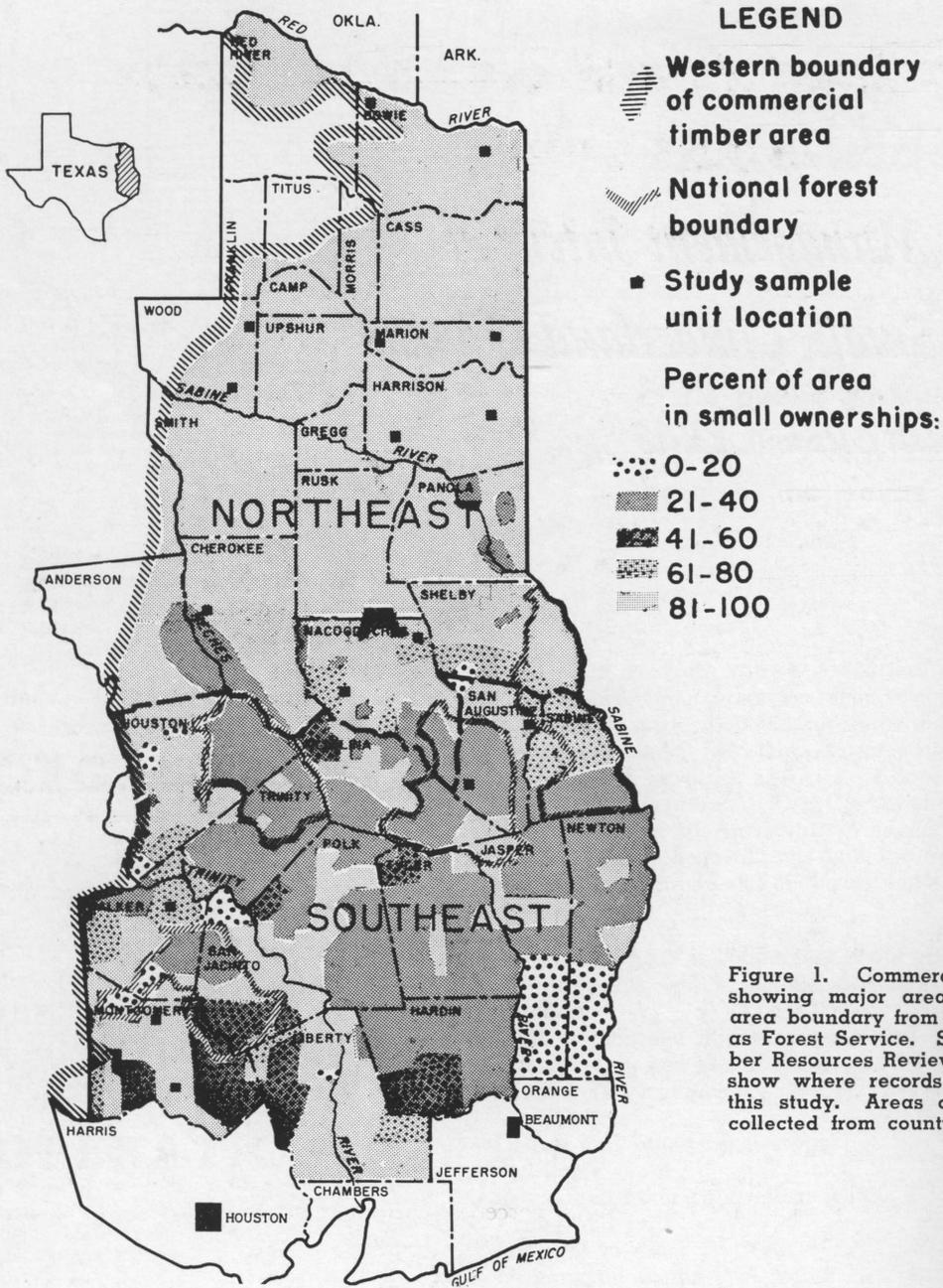


Figure 1. Commercial timber area of East Texas showing major areas of small ownerships. Source: area boundary from the U. S. Forest Service and Texas Forest Service. Sample areas were used in "Timber Resources Review" of the U. S. Forest Service and show where records were taken from landowners in this study. Areas of ownership mapped from data collected from county tax records.

The ownership pattern of Texas commercial forestlands shows two distinct areas. Northeast Texas is an area of predominantly small ownerships. More than 80 percent of the land is in ownerships of less than 5,000 acres. Much of this area was cleared for farming at one time. Although much has reverted to forests during the past 20 years, the ownership tracts continue to be small. Most of the Southeast Texas area was never broken up into small tracts for farming, and less than half the total area of many counties is in farmland. While small tracts may be numerous, the total area represented is small with only some 21 to 40 percent in small ownerships. Large, heavily timbered ownerships, usually more than 5,000 acres, account for most of the land area.

Management Intent of Small Timberland Owners in East Texas

Robert L. Miller and John H. Southern*

In forestry production management, objectives and decisions of landowners are projected over many years. Land ownership patterns and the intent of management of landowners become crucial in this situation. A large proportion of the timberland and the production of commercial timber in East Texas is associated closely with small land holdings since this is a chief feature of the private land ownership pattern of the area. Much of the timber holding also is associated with some farming use of the land.

This report presents graphically some of the characteristics of private land ownership and the intent of management of these private owners. Emphasis is placed on small ownerships, those with 21 to 5,000 acres. The questions of who are the owners and what is the intent of their management are answered specifically.

The pattern of ownership of all privately owned land, both farmland and timberland, in the East Texas commercial timber area is one of contrast. Thousands of small ownerships are concentrated in tracts of less than 320 acres. These include 96 percent of all private owners who have some 45 percent of the privately held land. The remaining 4 percent of the owners, those with tracts of 320

TABLE 1. PRIVATE LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE COMMERCIAL TIMBER AREA OF EAST TEXAS, 1955

Size class, acres	Number of acres	Percent of owners	Acres	Percent of acres
1-20	64,976	47.5	504,700	3.6
21-120	52,319	38.2	3,077,200	22.0
121-320	14,537	10.6	2,759,100	19.7
321-640	3,014	2.2	1,368,200	9.8
641-1000	909	0.7	717,900	5.1
1001-2500	759	0.6	1,139,900	8.1
2501-5000	148	0.1	498,900	3.6
5001 & over	153	0.1	3,940,000	28.1
Total	136,815	100.0	14,005,900	100.0

acres and over, hold 55 percent of the total acreage (Table 1). Over one-fourth of the private lands is owned in tracts of more than 5,000 acres.

Small ownerships are defined as those tracts of 21 to 5,000 acres. Holdings of 20 acres or less usually have no commercial timber and tracts with more than 5,000 acres generally meet their timber management problems in a satisfactory manner, according to the "Timber Resources Review" of the U. S. Forest Service. Problems of management are more acute on small holdings, or on those of 21 to 5,000 acres. Sixty-eight percent of the privately held land in the

area is accounted for in these small holdings (Table 2). Additional details on ownership of timberlands and associated management problems are given in Station Progress Reports 1853 and 1903.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special acknowledgment is given the Southern Forest Experiment Station, United States Forest Service, New Orleans, Louisiana, for furnishing sample study areas of the "Timber Resources Review", and for consultation in various aspects of this research. Foresters of the Texas Forest Service also assisted and advised on various phases of this study.

TABLE 2. PRIVATE LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE COMMERCIAL TIMBER AREA OF EAST TEXAS, INCLUDING ONLY SMALL OWNERS, 1955

Size class, ¹ acres	Number of acres	Percent of owners	Acres	Percent of acres
21-120	52,319	73.0	3,077,200	32.2
121-320	14,537	20.3	2,759,100	28.9
321-640	3,014	4.2	1,368,200	14.3
641-1000	909	1.3	717,900	7.5
1001-2500	759	1.0	1,139,900	11.9
2501-5000	148	0.2	498,900	5.2
Total	71,686	100.0	9,561,200	100.0

¹Tracts of less than 20 acres not included since they usually have little or no commercial timber.

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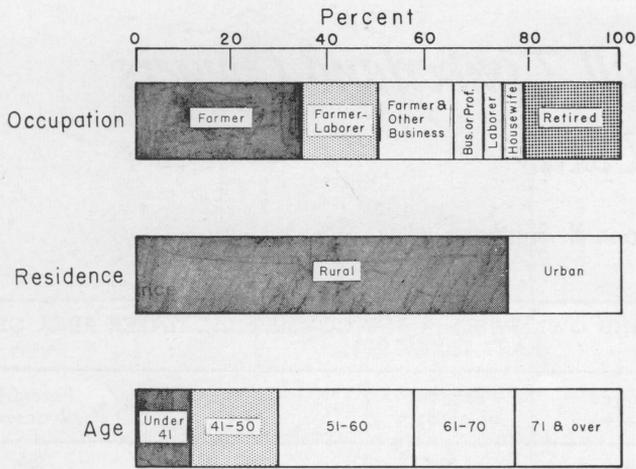


Figure 2. Personal characteristics of small landowners.

A classification of small landowners in the commercial timber area of East Texas reflects the character of the pattern of land holding. About 42 percent of the owners are associated with farming, either in a full-time or part-time capacity. However, less than 40 percent of the owners are full-time farmers. Generally, the primary interest of a part-time farmer is his off-farm job or business. Retired persons include more than 20 percent of all owners. About 25 percent of the owners live on their land with only about 25 percent living in towns or cities.

Most owners are more than 50 years of age, with over 40 percent being more than 60 years of age. Older owners, 70 and over, are about twice as numerous as those 40 years of age or less.

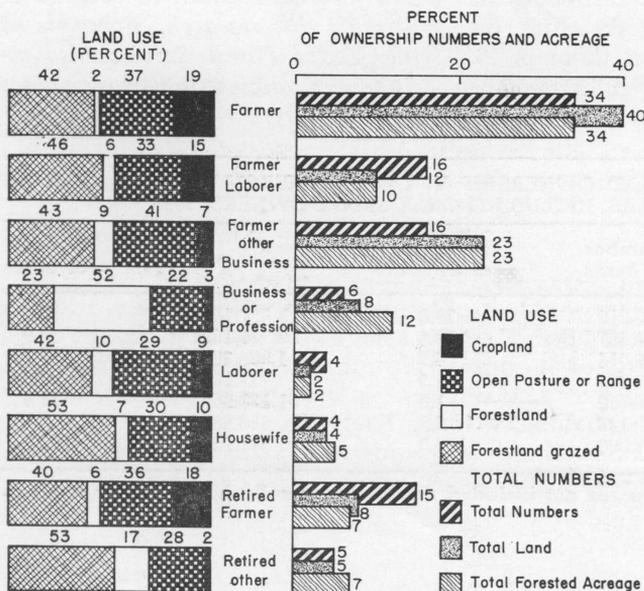


Figure 3. Land use and ownership of small private holdings by occupational groups.

Land use varies considerably among the various occupational groups holding land. Generally, the farmers or part-time farmers have more of their acreage in cropland and pasture than in timber. Business and professional occupations, along with retired individuals and others, have most of their holdings in timber, either grazed or ungrazed.

The farmer is the most important owner, making up about one-third of all owners and holding 40 percent of the total land area. He also owns about one-third of all timberland, followed in importance by part-time farmers and by business and professional occupations. Laborers, housewives and retired persons do not own a very large proportion of either the total land area or the forested acreage.

Poor productivity of timber on small holdings long has been one of the problems associated with this pattern of land ownership. According to an examination by foresters of the ownerships studied, East Texas is no exception to this problem. Timber productivity rates only poor to very poor on most tracts with less than 320 acres in forests. As the acreage in timber increases, productivity rating increases some. However, a large proportion of the small ownerships with more than 320 acres in timber still rates only poor to very poor in productivity.

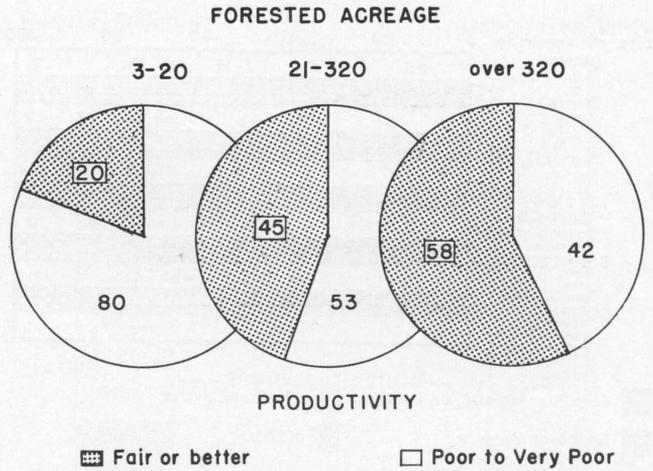


Figure 4. Productivity rating by size of forested acreage.

The management objective or the intent of use of their holdings is some measure of the interest in forestry of these small owners. Sixteen percent of them have the major management objective of timber production. This proportion who expect to use their land for forestry purposes is a reflection of the ownership pattern and characteristics of the area. Many holdings have little or no timber of real commercial value and others have only a small acreage of growing stock. Since much of the area is associated with farm holdings, most owners have the major management objective of crop farming or range and pasture use. However, most of the owners who indicate range as a major management objective have a secondary intent of timber production. Thus, 40 to 50 percent of all owners have a definite interest in timber production either as their primary or secondary enterprise.

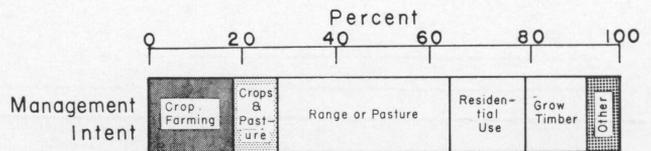


Figure 5. Management intent of small landowners.

It is to be expected that the owners who intend to manage their land for timber production will be those who already have considerable acreages of timber. Thus, the owners who intend to manage their land for timber production had about 68 percent of their land in timber. They included 16 percent of the small owners and held 33 percent of the total land area and 25 percent of the total forested acreage. The largest group of owners, 33 percent, have the primary management intent of range or pasture. However, this group is important in any consideration of forestry since they hold some 35 percent of the total forested acreage. In most instances, while their primary objective is using woodland for range or pasture, they do have a secondary objective of timber production. Important management problems of this group are associated with this multiple use of land.

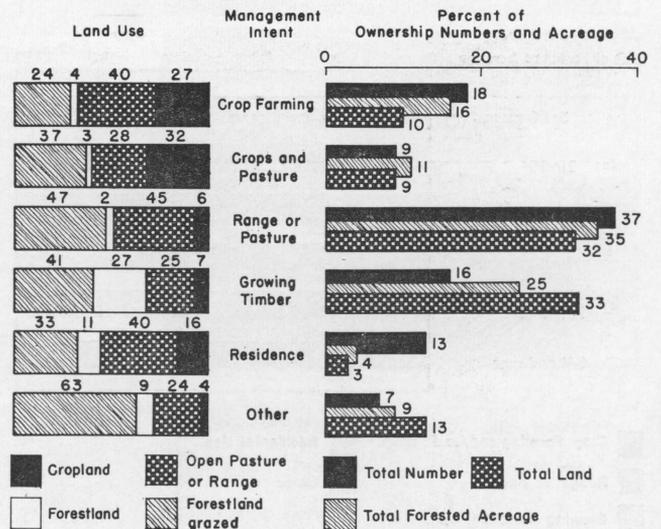


Figure 6. Land use and ownership of small landowners by management intent.

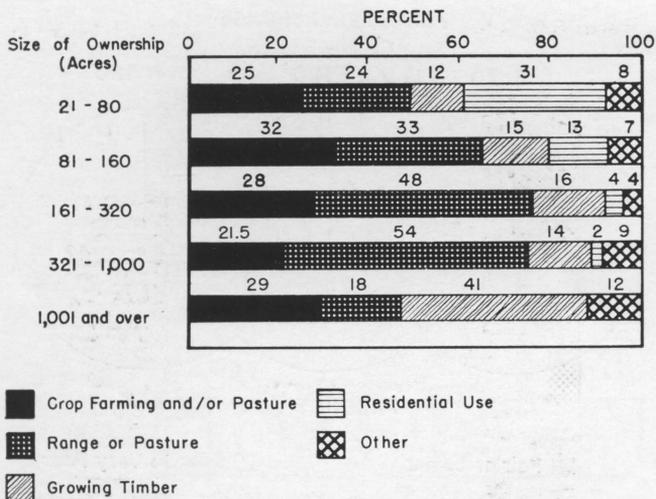


Figure 7. Intent of management of small private landowners by size of ownership.

What owners intend to do with their land is related closely to the size of their holdings. On small tracts, residential and other uses are important. The "other" uses refer to management intents, such as holding for investment purposes, for mineral speculation, for recreation and the like. With an increase in size of holding, the intent to manage for timber production becomes apparent, particularly in the larger acreages, or above 1,000. Range and pasture use is a major objective in the intermediate size holdings, or from 161 to about 1,000 acres.

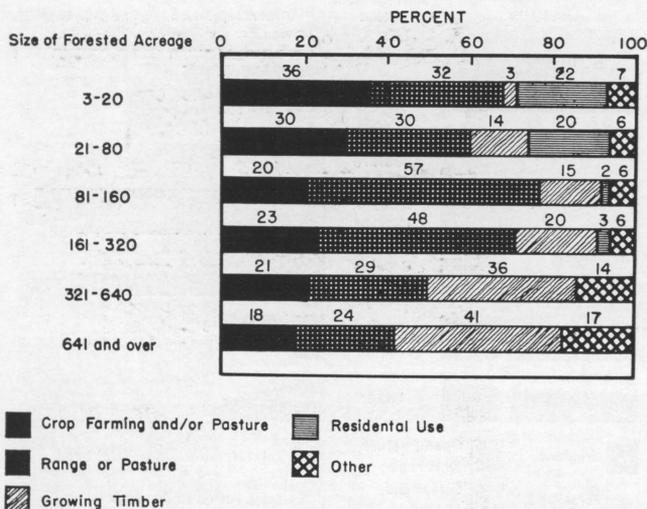


Figure 8. Intent of management of small landowners by size of forested acreage.

Owners who have only small acreages in timber have little desire or incentive to manage this timber as an enterprise. Small acreages in timber do not lend themselves to profitable management, and it is only when the timber resource becomes fairly important that owners have an objective of growing timber as a management part of their activity. Among owners with less than 160 acres in timber, only 3 to 15 percent intend to manage their land for timber production. In contrast, 41 percent of the owners with 641 acres or more in woodland intend to manage their holdings for timber production.

In management intent there is considerable contrast between small owners who reside in the open country and those who are urban residents. Crop farming is held to a minimum by the urban resident and greater emphasis is placed on growing timber. Only 12 percent of the rural residents had timber production as their major management objective, while 28 percent of the urban residents had this as their land use objective. Most of the rural residents have the major objective of using timberland for range, with forestry recognized but as a secondary objective.

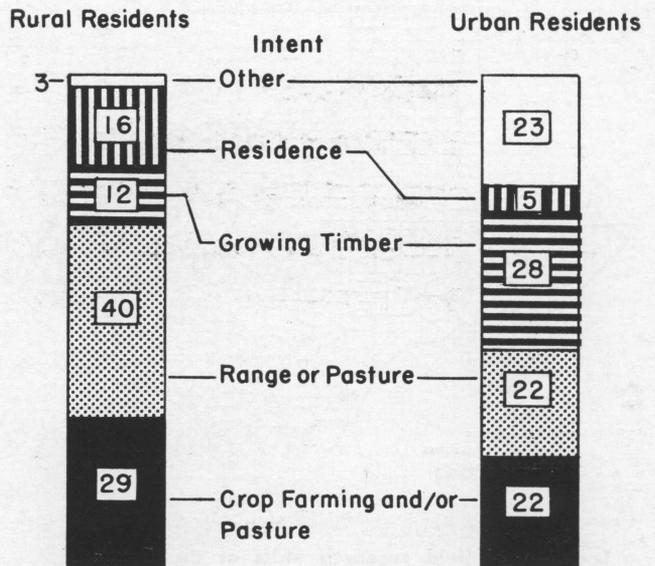


Figure 9. Intent of management of small landowners by place of residence.

Generally, only a small proportion of bona-fide farmers intend to manage their holdings for timber production. Only 8 percent had the major objective of forestry. At the same time, many farmers, especially those with larger holdings, have a secondary objective of timber management with the primary one being the use of timbered acreage for grazing. The major group of owners who have the primary objective of growing timber is the business or professional men who usually reside in towns or cities. Management of their holdings for timber production can be performed satisfactorily by this group since in most instances they do not wish to give close supervision and take care of management details that might be associated with crop farming and other land use objectives. The services of professional foresters in both public and private agencies are available to any of these groups who wish to initiate or to carry on recommended timber management practices.

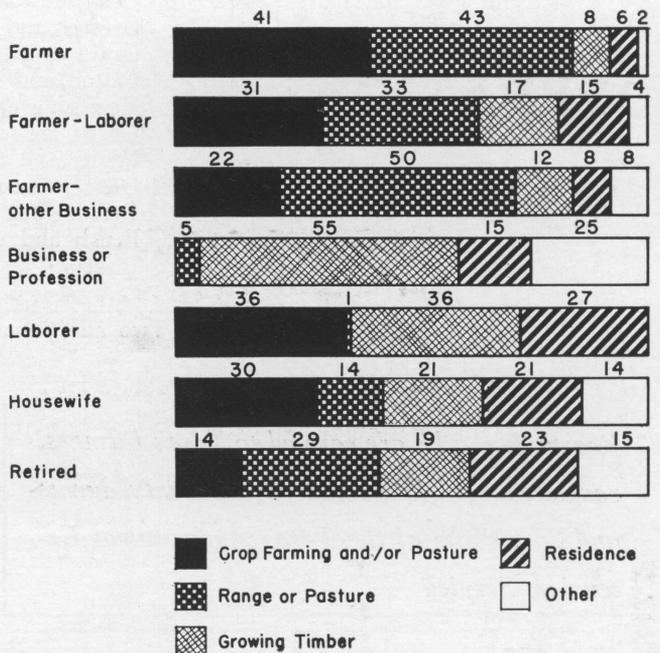


Figure 10. Intent of management of small landowners by occupation.



Location of field research units of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and cooperating agencies

State-wide Research



The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station is the public agricultural research agency of the State of Texas, and is one of ten parts of the Texas A&M College System

ORGANIZATION

IN THE MAIN STATION, with headquarters at College Station, are 16 subject matter departments, 2 service departments, 3 regulatory services and 1 administrative staff. Located out in the major agricultural areas of Texas are 21 substations and 9 field laboratories. In addition, there are 14 cooperating stations owned by other agencies. Cooperating agencies include the Texas Forest Service, Game and Fish Commission of Texas, Texas Prison System, U. S. Department of Agriculture, University of Texas, Texas Technological College, Texas College of Arts and Industries and the King Ranch. Some experiments are conducted on farms and ranches and in rural homes.

OPERATION

THE TEXAS STATION is conducting about 400 active research projects, grouped in 25 programs, which include all phases of agriculture in Texas. Among these are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Conservation and improvement of soil | Beef cattle |
| Conservation and use of water | Dairy cattle |
| Grasses and legumes | Sheep and goats |
| Grain crops | Swine |
| Cotton and other fiber crops | Chickens and turkeys |
| Vegetable crops | Animal diseases and parasites |
| Citrus and other subtropical fruits | Fish and game |
| Fruits and nuts | Farm and ranch engineering |
| Oil seed crops | Farm and ranch business |
| Ornamental plants | Marketing agricultural products |
| Brush and weeds | Rural home economics |
| Insects | Rural agricultural economics |
| | Plant diseases |

Two additional programs are maintenance and upkeep, and central services

Research results are carried to Texas farmers, ranchmen and homemakers by county agents and specialists of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH seeks the WHATS, the WHYS, the WHENs, the WHEREs and the HOWs of hundreds of problems which confront operators of farms and ranches, and the many industries depending on or serving agriculture. Workers of the Main Station and the field units of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station seek diligently to find solutions to these problems.

Today's Research Is Tomorrow's Progress