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CANADA'S FARM POPULATION

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1986 Census of Canada

CANADA'S FARM POPULATION



by Monique Beyroul and Marcelle Dion

Published under the authority of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.

◆ Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1989

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March 1990

Price: Canada, \$10.00
Other Countries, \$11.00

Catalogue 98-133

ISBN 0-660-54025-8

Ottawa

CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Beyrouti, Monique
Canada's farm population

(1986 Census of Canada) (Focus on Canada)
Title on added t.p.: Population agricole du Canada.
Text in English and French with French text on inverted pages.
ISBN 0-660-54025-8
CS98-133

1. Canada -- Population, Rural -- Statistics. 2. Farmers --
Canada -- Statistics. 3. Family farms -- Canada -- Statistics.
4. Women farmers -- Canada -- Statistics. 5. Canada --
Census, 1986. I. Dion, Marcelle. II. Statistics Canada. III.
Title. IV. Title: Population agricole du Canada. V. Series:
Census Canada, 1986. VI. Series: Focus on Canada (Ottawa,
Ont.).

HD8039.F3 B49 1990 305.5'55'0971 C90-098011-7E

PREFACE

The 1986 Census of Canada provided, as did all the previous censuses, a rich source of information on individual, family and household characteristics of Canadians. The census data allow individual researchers as well as academic, business, cultural, social and governmental organizations to undertake in-depth enquiries and analyses on those social issues which interest and concern them.

This study is part of the 1986 Focus on Canada Series. The series is a modest effort by Statistics Canada to provide overviews of a wide variety of subjects on which the 1986 Census collected information. The studies have been written by experts, both inside and outside Statistics Canada, in non-technical language supported by simple tables and attractive charts. The topics include demographic characteristics (population, families, farmers, youth, seniors, the disabled), socio-cultural characteristics (ethnicity, language, education), and economic characteristics (women in the labour force, affordability of housing, occupational trends, employment income, family income).

The present study on "Canada's Farm Population" was authored by Monique Beyrouti and Marcelle Dion of Agriculture Division in Statistics Canada.

I would like to express my appreciation to the authors, to the reviewers and to the staff of the Bureau involved in managing and producing this series.

We hope that the studies in the Focus on Canada Series will not only provide Canadians with very useful information on various facets of Canadian society, but will also be an inducement for them to undertake further research on the topics.

Ivan P. Fellegi
Chief Statistician of Canada



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HIGHLIGHTS

- The farm population has steadily declined during the last decades to the point that it represented only 3% of Canada's total population according to the 1986 Census. This drop can be attributed in a large part to the disappearance of several small farms which were being replaced by larger agricultural holdings.
- In both the farm and non-farm populations, women have more schooling than men. Moreover, 48% of women in the farm population hold at least a secondary (high) school diploma compared with 40% of men.
- The incidence of agriculture-related occupations is not limited to persons belonging to the farm population. Forty-five per cent of persons with an agriculture-related occupation were in the non-farm population.
- Unpaid family workers represent 11% of the farm labour force, with slightly more than 75% being women.
- The average size of farm families decreased slightly between 1981 and 1986, dropping from 3.8 persons to 3.6.
- Sixty-nine per cent of Canadian farm families are made up of two parents with at least one child.
- In 1985, the average family income of farm families was \$33,563 compared with \$37,975 for non-farm families.

INTRODUCTION

The farm sector in Canada has evolved a great deal since 1931 (the year in which the data on the rural farm population were published for the first time) from subsistence farms to more mechanized farms of post-war years and then to agricultural holdings as we know them today.

One of the important changes has been the drop in small farms which are giving way to larger agricultural holdings. Thus, between 1931 and 1986, the number of farms dropped from 728,623 to 293,090, and the average area of farms went from 224 acres to 572 acres.

The drop in the number of farms has resulted in a drop in the number of persons in the farm population. In fact, while the farm population represented 31% of the total population in 1931, it only represented 3%¹ in 1986.

During those decades, the characteristics of the population have also evolved. In this study, we intend to compare certain characteristics of the farm population with those of the population at large, in order to highlight certain similarities as well as differences. This study does not show all the characteristics, but only some of those we have considered to be the most interesting.

¹ In this publication, data for the farm population do not include the Yukon and the Northwest Territories because of their relatively small number.

STATUS OF CANADA'S FARM POPULATION

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Farm Population Definition

Farm population can be defined in four different ways, the last three definitions being components of the first:

1. All persons who are members of a farm operator's household, whether or not they live on a farm in a rural or urban area (1,013,495).
2. All persons who are members of a farm operator's household but whose dwelling is not located on a farm; the dwelling may be located in either a rural or an urban area (82,770).
3. All persons who are members of a farm operator's household and living on a farm in an urban area (40,235).

4. All persons who are members of a farm operator's household and living on a farm in a rural area (890,490).

In Census of Population publications which make a distinction between farm and non-farm populations, only the last definition is used to identify the farm population. Moreover, since 1931 the Bureau has been publishing data based on this definition which will also be used for the purposes of this study.

As shown in Table 1, the farm population in 1931 (the first year in which these data were published) was 3,223,422 or 31% of Canada's total population at the time.

Table 1. Total Population, Farm and Non-farm, and Percentage of Persons in the Farm Population, Canada, 1931 to 1986

Year	Population			Farm population as a percentage of total population %
	Total	Farm	Non-farm	
1931 ¹	10,376,786	3,223,422	7,153,364	31.1
1941 ¹	11,506,855	3,116,922	8,389,733	27.1
1951	14,009,429	2,827,732	11,181,697	20.2
1961	18,238,247	2,072,785	16,165,462	11.4
1971	21,568,310	1,419,795	20,148,515	6.6
1981	24,343,180	1,039,851	23,303,329	4.3
1986	25,309,330	890,490	24,418,840	3.5

¹ Does not include data for Newfoundland

Source:

Census of Canada, data published in various publications, 1931 to 1981.

1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

By 1986, this figure had shrunk to 890,490, with only one in 28 Canadians being members of the farm population.

Prince Edward Island and 7% in Alberta. In all other provinces, this percentage was less than 3%.

Geographic Concentration of the Farm Population, 1986

In absolute figures, the largest number of persons belonging to the farm population (232,790) lived in Ontario. As shown on Chart 1, however, the proportion of the farm population in comparison to the total population was highest in Saskatchewan (16%), compared with 8% in Manitoba and

Decrease in the Farm Population

Table 2 shows that, between 1931 and 1986, the rural farm population declined considerably in all provinces. The largest decreases were recorded in the Eastern provinces. In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, respective declines of 93% and 92% were recorded, compared with 48% in British Columbia.

Table 2. Percentage Change in the Farm Population Between 1931 and 1986, Canada and Provinces

Province	Farm population		% change
	1931	1986	
Newfoundland ¹	-	1,685	-
Prince Edward Island	54,963	10,270	-81.3
Nova Scotia	173,965	14,170	-91.8
New Brunswick	178,494	12,110	-93.2
Quebec	743,598	143,385	-80.7
Ontario	785,550	232,790	-70.4
Manitoba	254,302	84,690	-66.7
Saskatchewan	561,407	161,495	-71.2
Alberta	370,899	178,115	-52.0
British Columbia	100,244	51,775	-48.3
Canada	3,223,422	890,490	-72.4

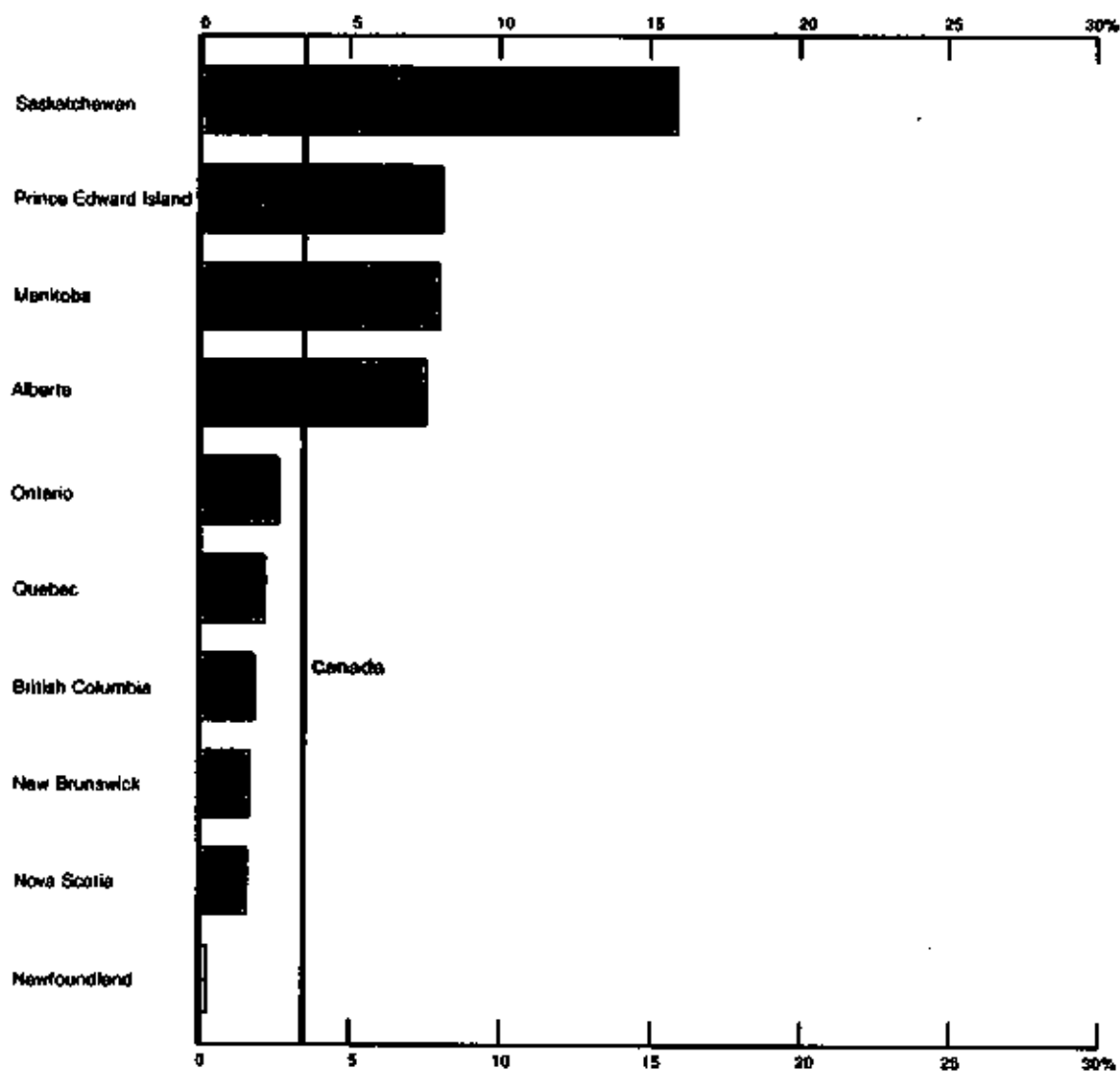
¹ Data for Newfoundland are available only from 1951.

Source:

1931 Census of Canada, Volume XIII, page 482.

1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

Chart 1. Farm Population as a Percentage of Total Population, Canada and Provinces, 1986



Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS OF FARM POPULATION AND NON-FARM POPULATION

This chapter focuses on the characteristics of persons who are members of farm and non-farm populations by age group, sex, marital status, level of schooling, participation in the labour force and income.

The non-farm population includes the rural non-farm population and the urban population. These two groups are defined as follows:

The rural non-farm population includes all persons living in a rural area who were not members of a farm operator household.

The urban population includes all persons living in a continuously built-up area with a demographic concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square kilometre, based on the preceding census data.¹

General Characteristics

The distribution by sex and age group shows a certain structural difference between the farm population and the non-farm population. In the non-farm population, the number of men and women is generally equal for each age group, other than the group 60 years and over, where the number of women is greater. The higher life expectancy of women accounts, in part, for the larger proportion of women in that age group.

On the other hand, the distribution of the farm population indicates a few important deviations. How does the farm population differ from the non-farm population? In 1986, there were 17% less women than men in the farm population while in the non-farm population 3% more women than men were accounted for.

The female farm population is distributed as follows: Table 3 indicates that there are proportionately less women in the age group 15 to 19. This situation worsens in the following age group (20 to 24 years). Also, the number of women aged 50 and over is smaller and that phenomenon is amplified in the following age groups, reaching 41% for the 65 years and over.

The anomaly noted at the level of the female farm population is due to the criterion of the definition of the farm population. In fact, a person is a member of the farm population when she lives in the dwelling of a farm operator located on a farm in a rural area. According to this definition, in most cases, a woman will not be part of the farm population unless she is married to a farm operator or unless she is very young, these being the most common cases where women reside in the dwelling of a farm operator.

Therefore, one can expect that most women in the farm population are married or very young (under 15 years).

¹ Definitions taken from the 1986 Census Dictionary (Catalogue No. 99-101), pages 53 and 64.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Farm and Non-farm Populations by Sex Within Age Groups, Canada, 1986

Age groups	Farm population		Non-farm population	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	%		%	
15 - 19 years	53.4	46.6	51.0	49.0
20 - 24 years	60.9	39.1	49.8	50.2
25 - 29 years	54.9	45.1	49.5	50.5
30 - 34 years	52.0	48.0	49.4	50.6
35 - 39 years	50.0	50.0	49.8	50.2
40 - 44 years	50.4	49.6	50.2	49.8
45 - 49 years	51.2	48.8	50.0	50.0
50 - 54 years	53.9	46.1	50.0	50.0
55 - 59 years	56.7	43.3	49.0	51.0
60 - 64 years	59.0	41.0	46.6	53.4
65 years and over	59.3	40.7	42.6	57.4
Total	53.8	46.2	49.3	50.7

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

After examining Table 4, one notices that the proportion of married women is much higher among the farm population (72%).

On the other hand, 60% of all women in the farm population were under 15 years of age in 1986.

Level of Schooling

Traditionally,² women have more schooling than men. An analysis of the 1986 data shows that this trend continues in the 15 years and over age group of the farm population.

A larger proportion of men did not complete Grade 9. In fact, men in the farm population remain the group with the least schooling, with 1986 data showing that one-quarter of them had less than Grade 9.

A larger proportion of women have at least a secondary (high) school graduation certificate or a trades certificate, that is, 48% as compared with 40% for men.

This difference between men and women is found in all age groups, although it is less noticeable in the lower age groups.

Overall, the level of schooling rose considerably between 1971 and 1986 among both men and women. According to 1986 Census data, 44% of persons who are members of the farm population had earned at least a secondary (high) school graduation certificate or diploma, compared with 14% in 1971.³ In addition, the proportion of persons not having completed Grade 9 decreased between 1971 and 1986, dropping from 43% to 22%.

This increase in the level of schooling can be attributed in part to more accessible education and the population's perception of a greater need for more school training. In the farm sector, changes affecting farming have surely contributed to a need for men and women to obtain better schooling. Farm management and farm work today are very different from what they were in the past. Modern farms are increasing in size and require ever larger investments. Operators are therefore forced to look to new management methods to increase crop yields and livestock performance, make better use of all resources available on their holdings and learn to deal with such problems as financing and soil degradation. Farm work requiring the use

² 1981 Census of Canada, Volume XII, and Porter, John, *The Vertical Mosaic*.
³ 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-720.

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Farm and Non-farm Populations 15 Years and Over by Sex and Marital Status, Canada, 1986

Marital status	Women		Men	
	Farm population	Non-farm population	Farm population	Non-farm population
	%			
Married	72.5	59.3	60.7	62.5
Single (never married)	23.2	24.0	35.6	30.3
Separated	0.3	3.0	1.0	2.3
Divorced	0.5	4.2	1.3	2.9
Widowed	3.5	9.5	1.4	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

Major Field of Study

of machinery, livestock care, etc. has also changed, and agricultural workers feel the need for more adequate training.

What about the **non-farm** population? The level of schooling is higher in general, and those belonging to this population had a higher level of schooling than persons in the farm population. Only 17% of the non-farm population had not completed Grade 9, compared with 22% of the farm population. In addition, 56% of the non-farm population had at least a secondary (high) school graduation certificate or a trades certificate.

Among graduates, that is, those who had obtained a specialized diploma or certificate, 33% of men and 27% of women in the non-farm population had earned a university degree, compared with 19% of men and 17% of women in the farm population.

Moreover, in the farm sector, an increasing number of women have diplomas. Data for the female farm population in the age group 15 - 19 years show that 29% of these women held a diploma of some sort. This percentage compares very favourably with the non-farm population, where 32% of women were graduates.

The major field of study refers to the predominant discipline or area of learning or training of a person's highest postsecondary degree, certificate or diploma.

In the farm and non-farm populations, 25% and 30% of women obtained specialized training, respectively. A slightly higher proportion of women in the farm population than in the non-farm population specialized in fields of study traditionally reserved for women. For example, 72% of women in the farm population who graduated did so in the following fields: education, commerce and secretarial science or health-related professions. Among women in the non-farm population, this proportion was 65%.

On the other hand, technical trades, engineering and applied sciences were very popular among men of both the non-farm and farm populations, whose specialization rates were 42% and 46% respectively. The second most popular field of study among men in the non-farm population was commerce and administration, while in the farm sector, 27% of men opted for training in agriculture-related fields such as agricultural and biological sciences and technologies.

For both the total farm and non-farm populations, the percentage of persons having obtained a specialized certificate varies between provinces as shown in Table 5. In 1986, the non-farm population in the Yukon (39%) and Alberta (36%) had the highest rate, while Newfoundland had the lowest (26%). In comparison, figures for the farm population showed Nova Scotia as having the highest rate (32%), while Saskatchewan (21%) and Manitoba (19%) showed the lowest rates. Moreover, analysis of farm population data for all provinces revealed that, of all persons with a specialization in Prince Edward Island, only one in eight specialized in the field of agricultural and biological sciences and technologies. In New Brunswick and Ontario, the number of persons specializing in these fields was one in five.

Labour Force Participation

Among the farm population, 92% of men belonged to the labour force. As the majority of men in this population were farm operators, this high participation rate is not surprising. Among men of the same age group from the non-farm population, the participation rate was 77%.

Chart 2 shows that in 1951,⁴ women in the farm population made up only 9% of the farm labour force. By 1986, however, this percentage had risen to 36%. Over the same period, the number of women who were part of the farm labour force rose 129%, while the female farm population 15 years and over dropped 62%. Among men in the farm population, the participation rate corresponded to the change in the male farm population for the age group 15 years and over, showing a drop of 62% from 1951 to 1986.

There has therefore been a substantial rise in the female participation rate during the post-war period. Between 1951 and

1986, the participation rate of women in the farm population rose from 9% to 36%. Over the same period, the participation rate of women in the non-farm population rose from 25% to 43%. The larger increase in the participation rate of women in the farm population partly reflects their growing awareness that their contribution to farm management and work does indeed constitute an occupation.

Occupations

What are the occupations of persons in the labour force?

In the farm population, most women were employed in agriculture-related work (40%), office jobs (20%) (a number of the women working in these jobs were in charge of the accounting or other tasks related to the management of the agricultural holding), or in services (11%). Among men, 66% were employed in farm work, with the remainder working in various other areas.

In the non-farm population, approximately half of the women had office or service-related jobs, while men were distributed among various job categories.

Occupation: Farm Work

In 1986, 548,215 persons were enumerated as having agriculture-related occupations; 45% of them were from the non-farm population.

How can it be that so many people working in agriculture are, in fact, members of the non-farm population? This is due to the definition of farm population itself, which is based on the criterion of residence on a farm rather than on the person's occupation. This also explains the large number of people in the farm population whose occupation is unrelated to agriculture.

⁴ 1951 Census of Canada, Volume IV.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Farm and Non-farm Populations 15 Years and Over by Major Field of Study, Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1986

Province /territory	Population					
	Farm			Non-farm		
	No special-ization	Agricul-ture special-ization	Other special-ization	No special-ization	Agricul-ture special-ization	Other special-ization
	%					
Newfoundland	78.2	3.3	20.4	74.3	1.0	24.6
Prince Edward Island	74.9	3.3	21.7	69.3	1.7	28.9
Nova Scotia	67.8	6.1	26.0	67.1	1.6	31.2
New Brunswick	74.5	5.4	20.0	72.5	1.2	26.2
Quebec	76.3	4.6	19.0	68.8	1.4	29.7
Ontario	75.3	5.1	19.5	67.3	1.3	31.3
Manitoba	81.5	3.6	14.8	70.5	1.4	28.0
Saskatchewan	78.7	2.9	18.3	70.2	1.4	28.3
Alberta	77.3	3.6	19.0	63.6	1.8	34.5
British Columbia	71.2	4.5	24.2	65.9	1.7	32.3
Yukon	-	-	-	61.2	2.0	36.8
Northwest Territories	-	-	-	70.7	1.6	27.7
Canada	76.6	4.2	19.1	67.7	1.5	30.7

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

The majority of farm operators (81%) belonged to the farm population while 64% of agricultural workers belonged to the non-farm population.

Unpaid Work

Unpaid family work has long been associated with agriculture and rightly so as 87% of all unpaid persons in the farm population had an agriculture-related occupation. Unpaid family workers represent 11% of the farm labour force, with slightly more than three-quarters being women.

Women are therefore more likely to do unpaid work. In 1986, of the 63% of women 15 years and over in the farm population who were in the labour force, 22% were unpaid. Many of these women were wives of operators. However, these data do not reveal all unpaid farm work done by women.

In the non-farm population, unpaid family workers account for only 0.3% of the labour force of which 23% were

agricultural workers. As in the farm population, this phenomenon was associated mainly with women.

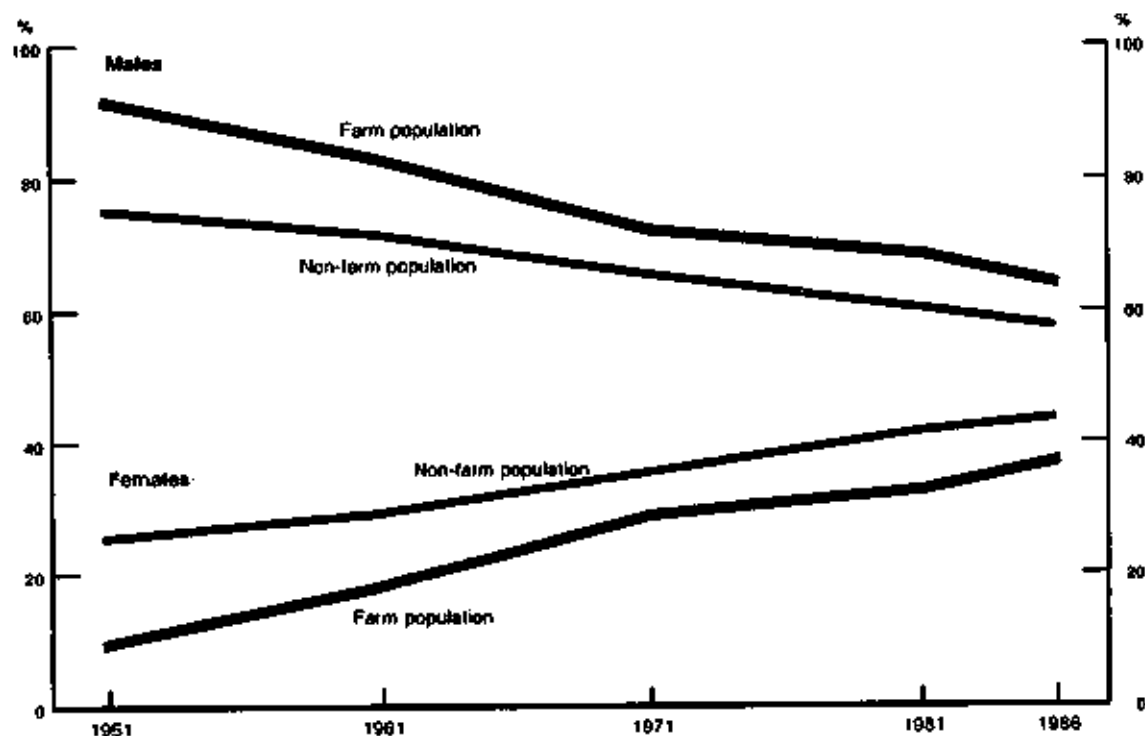
Regional Differences

The percentage of persons in the farm population working in the farm sector, that is operators, managers and agricultural workers, varies considerably between provinces. Figures reach 70% in Saskatchewan, only 26% in Newfoundland, about 40% in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and British Columbia and about 50% in the remaining provinces.

Income Groups

In 1985, nearly 3% of the farm population indicated a negative income and their average loss totalled \$12,278. Moreover, 17% and 12% respectively of persons in the farm population and the non-farm population had a zero income. The proportion of women whose income was equal to zero was much higher than that for men, in both the farm and non-farm populations. However, this situation

Chart 2. Distribution of Women and Men in the Labour Force, Farm and Non-farm Populations, Canada, 1951 to 1986



Source:
 1951 to 1981 Censuses of Canada, data published in various publications.
 1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

was worse among women in the farm population (29%) than among those of the non-farm population (18%). This difference can be explained in part by the fact that many women in the farm population were classified as unpaid family workers.

The last group includes persons whose total income was positive. For that group, the distribution by income groups indicates that the percentage of persons in the income groups below \$25,000 was 81% in the farm population compared to 73% in the non-farm population.

Thirty-nine percent of the non-farm population and 48% of the farm population were within the \$1 to \$9,999 income group.

Moreover, 48% of the farm population had a total income between \$10,000 and \$49,999.

Finally, 4% of persons from both populations had indicated a total income of over \$50,000 in 1985. In the farm population, 44% of these persons indicated the farm net income as the major source of their total income.

Major Source of Income

The major source of income is, in fact, the highest value in absolute terms among the following incomes:

- (1) net farm income;

- (2) wages, salaries and net non-farm income; and
- (3) income from other sources.

In examining the distribution of persons in both populations, one notices that a large proportion (42%) of the farm population indicated wages or a self-employment non-farm income as their major source of income compared to 61% of the non-farm population.

On the other hand, for 22% of the farm population, the major source of income came from farm self-employment.

Finally, for the farm and non-farm populations, 18% and 26% indicated "Other" as their major source of income, respectively.

Average Total Income

Average total income was lower among those in the farm population (\$12,429) than those in the non-farm population (\$15,980).

Average total income was very similar for both populations for two of the three major sources of income: income from farm self-employment and income from other sources. However, average income from wages or non-farm self-employment was lower among persons from the farm population (\$15,748) than the non-farm population (\$21,469).



CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM FAMILIES

Having examined a number of variables related to farm and non-farm populations, this chapter of the study will focus on analysing such farm family characteristics as size, number of children, type of family and family income.

A census family is made up of a husband and a wife (with or without children who have never married, regardless of age), or a lone parent of any marital status, with one or more children who have never married, regardless of age, living in the same dwelling.⁵

Number of Families

In 1986, the total number of families in Canada was 6,733,845, with farm families accounting for 3% of this total.

Saskatchewan had the highest proportion of farm population. As shown in Table 6, it was also the province with the highest proportion of farm families (16%). In Prince Edward Island, Manitoba and Alberta, farm families accounted for

approximately 7% of all families. This proportion was less than 3% in all other provinces.

Family Size

In 1986, the average number of persons in a farm family was 3.61 compared with 3.80 in 1981. In non-farm families, the average was 3.23 persons in 1981 and 3.13 in 1986.

Table 7 shows that the highest average number of persons per farm family was recorded in Newfoundland (3.98) and Quebec (3.95) while the lowest average was in British Columbia (3.34).

Distribution of families by size shows that two-person families accounted for 40% of non-farm families compared with 29% of farm families. The second greatest difference between the two populations was for five-person families, which accounted for 9% of non-farm families compared with 16% of farm families. Finally, 3% of non-farm families and 9% of farm families were made up of six or more persons.

⁵ Definition taken from the 1986 Census Dictionary, Catalogue No. 98-101, page 73.

Table 6. Distribution of Census Families in Farm and Non-farm Populations, Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1986

Province/territory	Farm population		Non-farm population	
	No.	%	No.	%
Newfoundland	335	0.2	141,790	99.8
Prince Edward Island	2,440	7.6	29,625	92.4
Nova Scotia	3,585	1.6	226,895	98.4
New Brunswick	3,005	1.8	183,900	98.4
Quebec	34,275	2.0	1,716,945	98.0
Ontario	60,715	2.5	2,384,470	97.5
Manitoba	20,590	7.5	255,675	92.5
Saskatchewan	41,770	16.0	218,775	84.0
Alberta	45,470	7.4	570,735	92.6
British Columbia	14,375	1.9	761,445	98.1
Yukon	-	-	5,830	100.0
Northwest Territories	-	-	11,205	100.0
Canada	226,550	3.4	6,507,290	96.6

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

Table 7. Average Number of Persons Per Family in Farm and Non-farm Populations, Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1986

Province/territory	Farm population	Non-farm population
	Average number of persons	
Newfoundland	3.96	3.56
Prince Edward Island	3.83	3.34
Nova Scotia	3.59	3.19
New Brunswick	3.69	3.26
Quebec	3.95	3.11
Ontario	3.59	3.12
Manitoba	3.54	3.13
Saskatchewan	3.55	3.16
Alberta	3.53	3.16
British Columbia	3.34	3.03
Yukon	-	3.22
Northwest Territories	-	3.86
Canada	3.61	3.13

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data

Distribution of Families by Number of Children at Home

In 1986, 33% of Canadian non-farm families had no children compared with 26% of farm families. Size of families continued to be higher on farms although families of both populations are approaching the same size over the years.

Among families with children, 35% of those in the farm population had more than two compared with 20% in the non-farm population.

One notes that the greater the number of children in a family, the higher the proportion of families in the farm sector compared with the non-farm sector. In addition, 16% of all families with eight or more children belonged to the farm population. When one considers that farm families account for only 3% of the total number of families in Canada, this percentage takes on more significance.

Table 8 compares farm and non-farm families by the number of children at home.

The table reveals a significant drop in the number of families in the farm population between 1981 and 1986 in all categories. This decrease reached a percentage change of -56% among families with six children.

Within the farm population, the number of families with children declined, but the increase in the number of one-child and two-children families in the non-farm population was sufficient to bring about a net increase of 5% in the total number of families with children.

Furthermore, the total number of families in the non-farm population rose 7% between 1981 and 1986, while this number dropped 10% in families in the farm population. This decline can be attributed in large part to the 8% decrease in the number of farms over this period.

Table 8. Percentage Change in the Number of Farm and Non-farm Families by Number of Children, Canada, 1981 and 1986

Number of children at home	Total	Farm families	Non-farm families
		Percentage change	
1 child	12.0	-6.9	12.6
2 children	10.3	-9.6	11.1
3 children	-4.2	-17.4	-3.3
4 children	-25.1	-27.3	-24.9
5 children	-40.7	-39.5	-40.9
6 children	-50.8	-55.6	-50.0
7 children or more	-52.7	-49.8	-53.1
Families with children	5.1	-14.7	6.0
Families without children	9.4	4.0	9.5
Total	6.5	-10.5	7.2

Sources:
1981 and 1986 Censuses of Canada, unpublished data.

In Newfoundland, about nine of every ten farm families had children, as did eight of every ten in Quebec. This was also the case for two-thirds of all farm families in British Columbia. In other provinces, the proportion of farm families with children varied between 72% and 76%. British Columbia had the lowest proportion of families with more than two children (28%), while the highest proportions were recorded in Prince Edward Island and Quebec (45% and 42% respectively). In the other provinces, proportions varied between 33% and 39%.

Census Family Structure

Sixty-nine per cent of all farm families were made up of two spouses and at least one child. In non-farm families, this type of family accounted for 54%.

One-parent families accounted for 13% of all non-farm families, compared with 5% of farm families. In non-farm families, 83% of household maintainers of single-parent families were women compared with only 60% in farm families.

Between 1981 and 1986, increases were recorded in all types of non-farm families including a 20% increase in the number of one-parent families, a 9% increase in the number of husband-wife families without children and a 3% increase in the number of husband-wife families with children.

In farm families, the number of husband-wife families without children increased 4% between 1981 and 1986. In comparison, the number of husband-wife families with children decreased 15% and the number of one-parent families dropped 10%.

Family Income

Table 9 shows the distribution of farm and non-farm families by total family income categories.

In both populations, an equal proportion of families (7%) was recorded in the "\$75,000 and over" income category. The percentage of non-farm families was higher in the "\$25,000 to \$75,000" income category, that is, 59% as compared with 48% for farm families. Conversely, the proportion of farm families in income categories below \$25,000 was higher, with 45% as compared with 34% for non-farm families.

In 1985, 3% of farm families had a negative total family income. Losses recorded by farm families averaged around \$18,000.

The average family income of farm families (\$33,563) was lower than that of non-farm families (\$37,975).

In the farm population, the ratio of family net farm income to total family

Table 9. Distribution of Farm and Non-farm Families by Total Family Income Categories, Canada, 1985

Family income	Farm families		Non-farm families	
	No.	%	No.	%
Less than \$ 5,000	14,485	6.4	233,975	3.6
\$ 5,000 to \$ 9,999	13,240	5.8	304,300	4.7
10,000 to 24,999	75,285	33.2	1,670,620	25.7
25,000 to 49,999	80,375	35.5	2,745,060	42.2
50,000 to 74,999	27,815	12.3	1,118,785	17.2
75,000 and over	15,345	6.8	434,545	6.7
Total	226,550	100.0	6,507,290	100.0

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

income for families varied greatly between provinces. As shown in Chart 3, the 1985 ratio was 40% for Saskatchewan, a province in which farm families accounted for 16% of all families, while the ratio was 7% in British Columbia where farm families accounted for only 2%.

The total family income includes: (1) income from farm self-employment; (2) income from wages or non-farm self-employment; and (3) other income.

In 1985, income from wages and non-farm self-employment were the major source of income for 76% of non-farm families. For most farm families, two

major sources of income were recorded: income from farm self-employment (37% of families) and income from wages or non-farm self-employment (46% of families).

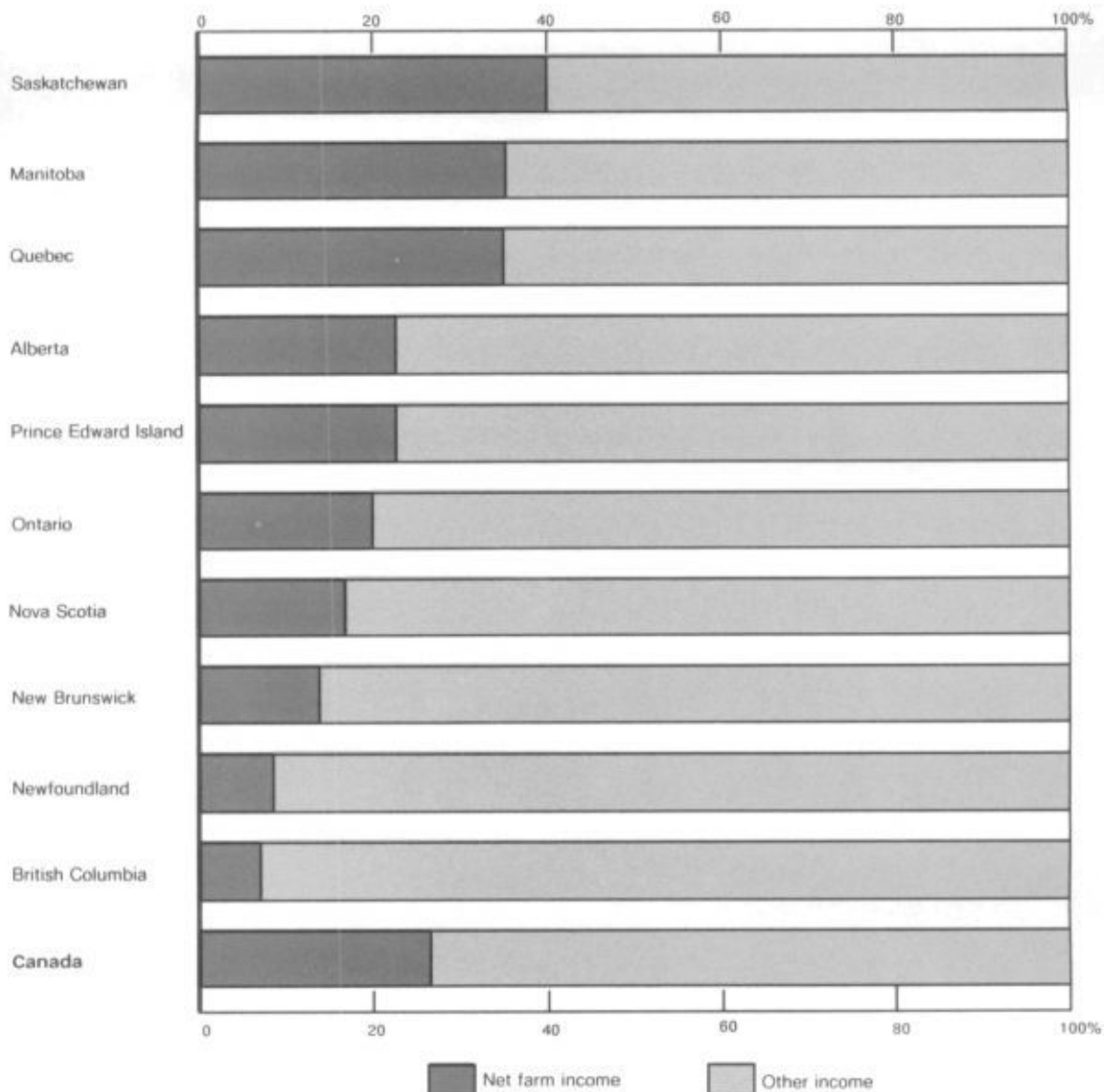
Table 10 shows that the distribution of the three major sources of family income vary throughout the country. Saskatchewan was the only province in which over half of all farm families listed their major source of income as farm self-employment. Proportions were 16% in British Columbia and 15% in Newfoundland. In both of these provinces, most farm families listed their major source of income as wages or non-farm self-employment.

Table 10. Percentage Distribution of Farm Families by Major Source of Income, Canada and Provinces, 1985

Province	Major source of income		
	Farm self-employment	Wages or non-farm self-employment	Other income
	%		
Newfoundland	14.9	65.7	19.4
Prince Edward Island	27.7	48.8	23.6
Nova Scotia	20.2	58.7	21.2
New Brunswick	19.6	56.5	23.9
Quebec	43.2	41.6	15.1
Ontario	29.4	52.7	17.9
Manitoba	43.5	40.5	15.9
Saskatchewan	51.1	33.5	15.3
Alberta	36.3	48.7	14.9
British Columbia	15.7	63.2	21.0
Canada	37.0	46.4	16.6

Source:
1986 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

Chart 3. Composition of the Farm Population Total Family Income, Canada and Provinces, 1985



Source:
1985 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it appears that in some respects the characteristics of the farm and non-farm populations are becoming more similar. This is true of level of schooling, for example, and participation by women in the labour force.

In other respects, the characteristics of the farm population are still different from those of the non-farm population. The distribution of men and women by age group and total average and family income are a few examples.

Throughout this publication, we have endeavoured to present certain variables of interest derived from the Census of Population.

Given the size of the census data base, this study is only one of a large number of other analyses of characteristics of the farm population which could be carried out.

In addition, cross-tabulating the characteristics of farm families and persons with those of the farms they operate would add an additional dimension to these analyses.

Readers interested in the characteristics of farm operators should refer to the publication entitled Socio-economic Characteristics of the Farm Population.

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