

A STATISTICAL APPROACH TO THE DIFFERENTIATION OF GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

ALLEN BELDEN, Norman

ABSTRACT

This study consisted of an attempt to delimit quantitatively geographic regions and sub-regions in the belt of states extending from Louisiana and Texas northward to North Dakota and Michigan.

A map was presented to show the distributions of three major landscape types, namely (1) cropland, (2) woodland, and (3) grassland (including cleared pasture) and xerophytic scrub. The Census of Agriculture¹ provided adequate data on the distributions of these types where the percentage of land in farms was high, but where the percentage of land in farms was low this source was supplemented by the map of natural vegetation in the Atlas of American Agriculture.² County units were used, and the map showed a particular type for a county only if 30% or more of its area exhibited the type in 1930. By the use of this percentage as a minimum it was possible for a county to show a combination of two types, but the possibility of all three types being shown for a given county was virtually eliminated.

Some of the principal features of the distributions of these three major landscape types were: (1) a triangular area where cropland predominated to the exclusion of woodland and grassland extending from North Dakota and Texas, on the west, to Ohio; (2) two dominant woodland areas: (a) an upper Great Lakes region in the northern parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan and (b) an area occupying adjoining parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana; (3) a grassland belt in the western and southern parts of the area mapped; (4) transition zones having a combination of two types separating areas in which one type was dominant; and (5) a greater complexity of pattern in the southern than in the northern part of the area mapped.

Subdivisions of the above regions were delimited on the basis of degree of urbanization and of population density.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, Agriculture, Vol. 2, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932.
- ² Department of Agriculture, Atlas of American Agriculture, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924.