

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Hr: \_\_\_\_\_

## Percent Change: Oklahoma Agriculture

When the land runs opened Oklahoma lands for settlement in 1889, it didn't take very long before the lands were crawling with farmers searching for the perfect plot of land. By 1890, 8,826 farms had been established. Despite drought conditions and the difficulty of settling a new land, the next census recorded a total of 108,000 farms. Though these farmers produced everything from wheat to peanuts, cotton quickly became the most valuable crop in Oklahoma territory.

Statehood came in 1907, and with it came even more farms. The census of 1910 shows that over 80,000 more farms had been established since the last count. Farms over the next twenty years of Oklahoma history held steady between 190,000 and 210,000, but those years were among some of the most difficult in agricultural history.

In 1920, the country suffered an agricultural depression. Farms were producing more than the public demanded, and prices dropped sharply. In 1919, cotton prices were thirty-five cents a pound; just one year later, cotton was only twelve cents a pound. Other non-agricultural goods did not experience a decline in prices, so farmers were now earning far less than previously while maintaining the same expenses. Between 1923 and 1925, prices rose to nineteen cents a pound. Farmers were beginning to get back on their feet, but a massive cotton crop in 1926 brought prices even lower than before, at nine cents for a pound of cotton. Other crops suffered similar plights.

The entire nation was soon under the grips of the Great Depression. Agricultural commodity prices kept falling; cotton prices reached their lowest at a mere five cents per pound in 1931. Roosevelt's New Deal introduced the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which attempted to balance supply and demand by paying farmers to use less acreage, thus producing less. But those that benefited the most from this were those



with more land; smaller farms continued to struggle.

The next blow to Oklahoma farm's came in the form of drought and wind: the Dust Bowl wrecked the western portion of the state from 1933 and 1937. Interestingly, the highest number of farms in Oklahoma state history was recorded in 1935: 213,325. Many city dwellers had moved to the country after losing their jobs in the depression. But the dust bowl was the last straw for many farmers, and a great migration to California began in 1935. Over the next five years, the number of farms decreased by almost 34,000.

Despite the better economic and agricultural climate during World War II, the number of farms in Oklahoma continued to decline. In 1950, there were only 142,000 farms as they became larger and more commercial. This trend continued over the next thirty years until only 72,000 farms were reported in 1980.

A recent trend in agriculture is hobby farmers. These are farmers that maintain a farm as well as another full-time position. Of the 74,000 reported farmers in Oklahoma in 1997, only 33,000 listed farming as their principal occupation.

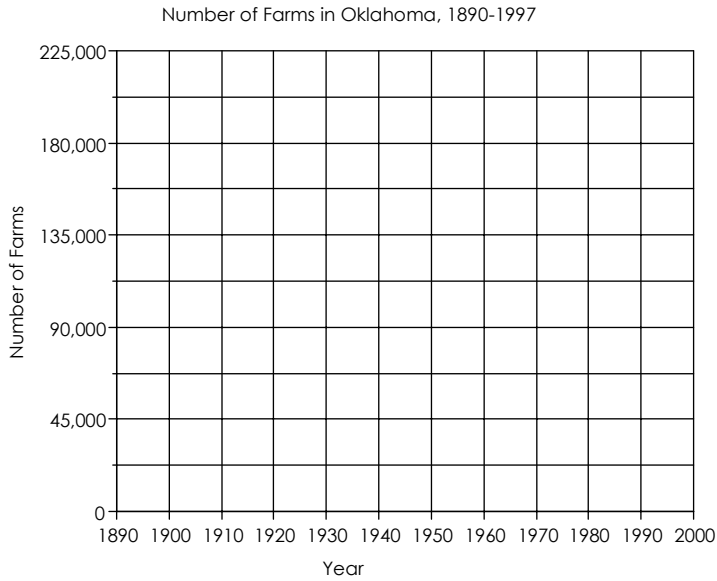
All facts and figures are from the Oklahoma Historical Society's *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* article entitled "Farming," written by Gilbert C. Fite, located at [http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/F/F\\_A019.html](http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/F/F_A019.html). Last accessed on 1/4/2012.

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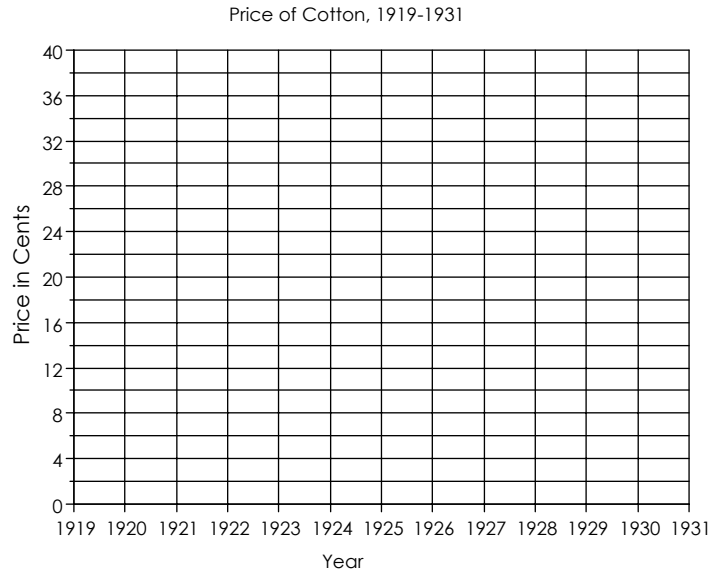
### Percent Change: Oklahoma Agriculture

Directions: Graph the changes in number of farms and price of cotton on the following charts. Then find the percent change.

Graph 1



Graph 2



Graph 1 Percent Change:

1. 1890 to 1900:

2. 1900 to 1910:

3. 1920 to 1935:

4. 1935 to 1940:

5. 1950 to 1980:

6. 1890 to 1997:

Graph 2 Percent Change:

7. 1919 to 1920:

8. 1920 to 1925:

9. 1925 to 1926:

10. 1926 to 1931:

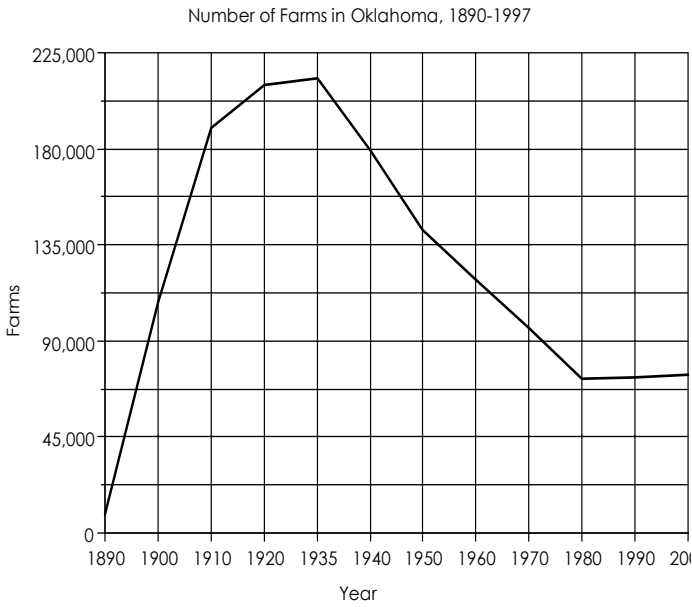
11. 1919 to 1931:

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**Answer Key:** Use your discretion on what kind of graph to use.

Graph 1



Graph 1 Percent Change:

1. 1890 to 1900:

1124%

2. 1900 to 1910:

74%

3. 1920 to 1935:

2%

4. 1935 to 1940:

-16%

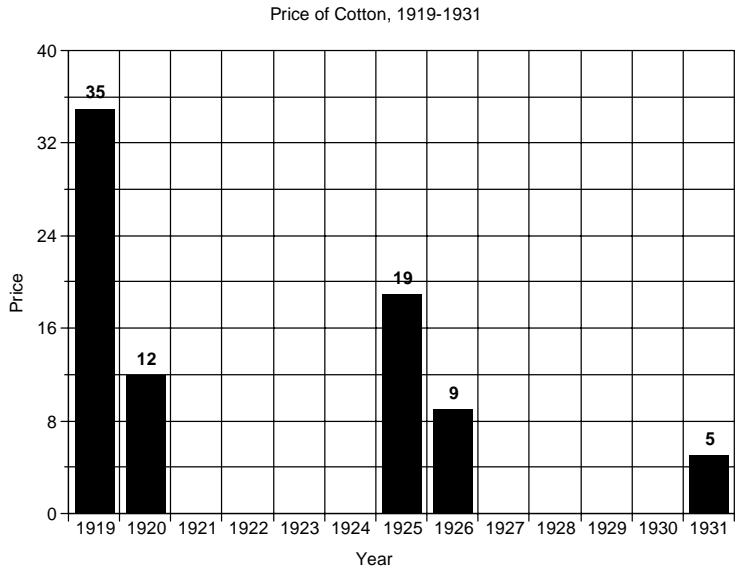
5. 1950 to 1980:

-49%

6. 1890 to 1997:

738%

Graph 2



Graph 2 Percent Change:

7. 1919 to 1920:

-66%

8. 1920 to 1925:

58%

9. 1925 to 1926:

-53%

10. 1926 to 1931:

-44%

11. 1919 to 1931:

-86%