

■ Major Uses of U.S. Land

The major uses of U.S. cropland include cropland harvested, summer fallow, land idled in Federal programs and crop failure. Cropland harvested peaked in 1991 at about 351 million acres. Harvested cropland declined to 287 million acres in 1988 and is expected to have reached 314 million acres in 1996. Summer fallow acreage ranges between 22 million and 34 million acres per year. Cropland idled in Federal

commodity and conservation programs has ranged from none in 1980 and 1981 to 78 million acres in 1983 and 1988. Crop failure generally varies within a range of 5-11 million acres per year. The noticeable differences are often the result of weather conditions such as the drought in 1988, or the flood and wet weather at planting time in 1993.

In 1983, the sharp decline in cropland harvested was the result of “PIK” (payment-in-kind), a USDA land retirement program that paid for the land retirement with surplus commodities. The idle acreage in 1993 included nearly 49 million acres in the PIK program and more than 29 million acres in the Acreage Conservation Reserve and Paid Land Diversion programs.