

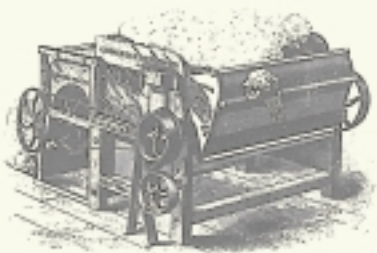
A Condensed History of American Agriculture 1776–1999



1776–99

1785
The Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture and other agricultural groups organized

1793
Invention of cotton gin



1800

1802
George Washington Parke Custis instituted agricultural fair in Arlington, VA



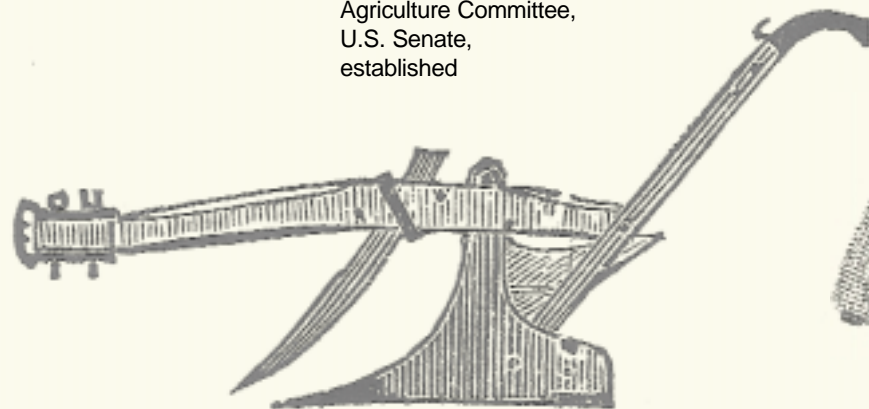
1810

1810
First American agricultural periodical, the Agricultural Museum, began publication

1820

1820
Agriculture Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, established

1825
Agriculture Committee, U.S. Senate, established



1830

1834
McCormick reaper patented

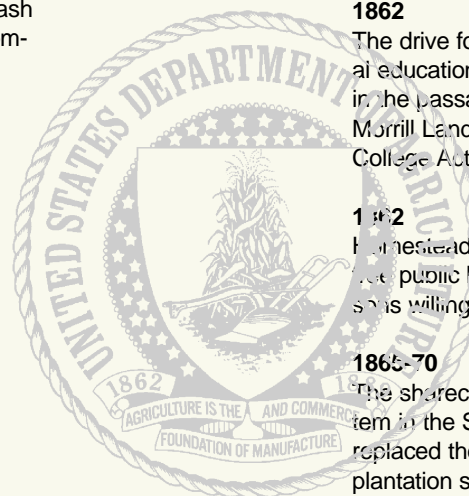
1840

1840's
The growing use of factory-made agricultural machinery increased farmer's need for cash and encouraged commercial farming



1850

1850's
Commercial corn and wheat belts began to develop



1860

1862
U.S. Department of Agriculture established

1862
The drive for agricultural education culminated in the passage of the Morrill Land Grant College Act

1862
Homestead Act gave free public land to persons willing to farm it

1865-70
The sharecropping system in the South replaced the old slave plantation system

1870

1874
Availability of barbed wire allowed fencing of rangeland, ending era of unrestricted, open-range grazing



1880

1887
Hatch Experiment Station Act set up Federal-State cooperation in agricultural research



1890

1890
Second Morrill Act broadened land-grant program and set up funding for black land-grant schools

1890
Census showed that the frontier settlement era was over

1890
First Federal Meat Inspection Act

1896
Rural Free Delivery (RFD) started

1900

1900-1910
George Washington Carver, director of agricultural research at Tuskegee Institute, pioneered in finding new uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans, thus helping to diversify southern agriculture.

1902
Reclamation Act facilitated irrigation

1906
Food and Drug Act, a landmark in food safety

1908
President Roosevelt's Country Life Commission was established and focused attention on rural problems



1910

1914
Smith-Lever Extension Act passed setting up a national extension service

1920

1922
Capper-Volstead Act gave cooperatives legal standing



1930

1932-36
Drought and dust-bowl conditions developed

1933
Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) initiated crop and marketing controls

1936
Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act linked farm programs with conservation

1936
Rural Electrification Act (REA) greatly improved quality of rural life

1940

1945-70
Revolution in agricultural technology brought greatly increased yields and more specialized, capital-intensive farms

1946
National School Lunch Act

1947
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) established working procedures that substantially reduced tariffs between member nations

1950

1954
Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (P.L. 480) facilitated agricultural exports and foreign aid

1954-55
Rural development program begins

1956
Soil Bank Program authorized



1960

1964
Food Stamp Act and War on Poverty

1970

1970
Environmental Quality Improvement Act



1980

1980's
Biotechnology became a viable technique for improving crop and livestock products

1985
Food Security Act lowered government farm supports, promoted exports, and set up the Conservation Reserve Program



1990–99

1990
Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act and Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act increased farmers' flexibility in planting under government programs

1993
Revised General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) lowered trade barriers

1996
Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act revised farm programs to increase reliance on market signals

1997
USDA issues Civil Rights Action Team report, offering 92 recommendations for overcoming past injustices

1998
HACCP is implemented to target and reduce the presence of pathogens in meat and poultry

1999
Drop in many commodities prices, combined with disastrous weather in many parts of the country, caused increased demand for USDA farm programs

1999
The "Roadless Initiative" is implemented to preserve roadless tracts in National Forests, securing fish and wildlife habitat and protecting natural resources