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Sinclair Weeks, *Secretary*

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Robert W. Burgess, *Director*

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

CONSUMER INCOME

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FAMILY INCOME UP 8 PERCENT SINCE 1955

(Advance data, March 1957 sample survey)

Average (median) family income in the United States was estimated at $4,800 in 1956, or about 8 percent higher than in 1955, according to estimates released today by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce.

Increases in average income were recorded among both farm and nonfarm residents. The average income of nonfarm families increased by about 8 percent over the year, largely because of increases in wage rates. The average income of rural-farm families also rose in 1956. Other evidence indicates that the rise in the income of farm families is due partly to their increased earnings from nonfarm work. A large proportion of the farm population derives at least part of its income from employment off the farm.

Of the Nation's 43 million families, 3½ million, or about 8 percent, received incomes of $10,000 or more, while an additional 17 million, or about two-fifths, had incomes ranging between $5,000 and $10,000. At the other end of the income scale, about 7 million, or one-fifth, had incomes under $2,000. The remaining 16 million families were in the $2,000-$5,000 bracket. The distribution of families (groups of two or more related persons) by their income in 1956 is shown in table A.

Table A.--NUMBER OF FAMILIES BY FAMILY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1956

(Figures derived from data in table B and rounded to the nearest 100,000)

Family income	Number of families
Total	43,400,000
Under $1,000	2,900,000
$1,000 to $1,999	3,900,000
$2,000 to $2,999	4,400,000
$3,000 to $3,999	5,400,000
$4,000 to $4,999	6,400,000
$5,000 to $5,999	6,000,000
$6,000 to $6,999	4,200,000
$7,000 to $9,999	6,700,000
$10,000 to $14,999	2,600,000
$15,000 and over	900,000

The 1956 income data presented in this report were obtained from information collected in the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey of March 1957. The survey covered the civilian noninstitutional population and members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post in continental United States. Additional family income data from this survey will appear in a more detailed report to be issued later this year.

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Income as defined in this report represents the combined total money income of the family, or the sum of money wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, and income other than earnings received by all family members during the calendar year. The median income is the amount which divides the distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median and the other having incomes below the median.

Since the estimates in this report are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability. Particular care should be exercised in the interpretation of figures based on relatively small numbers of cases as well as small differences between figures. Moreover, as in all field surveys of income, the figures are subject to errors of response and nonreporting.

Other data relating to the income received by the population are available from the Personal Income Series of the Department of Commerce, the Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances, Federal income tax data, and Old-Age and Survivors Insurance wage record data. These data are collected for different purposes and, therefore, differ from the Current Population Survey income data in several important respects. A discussion of the comparability of these data may be found in Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 23, "Income of Persons in the United States: 1955."

Table B.--DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES AND UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES, URBAN AND RURAL: 1952 TO 1956

Total money income	Families					Unrelated individuals				
	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952
UNITED STATES										
Number....thousands..	43,445	42,843	41,934	41,202	41,020	9,658	9,766	9,623	9,514	9,774
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under $500.....	3.2	3.4	4.6	4.7	4.1	17.7	20.2	21.7	21.1	20.0
$500 to $999.....	3.3	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.4	22.5	21.9	23.5	21.1	20.2
$1,000 to $1,499.....	4.4	4.9	5.6	4.9	5.3	11.5	12.5	10.7	9.9	12.0
$1,500 to $1,999.....	4.5	4.9	5.4	5.0	5.5	9.4	8.4	8.6	7.8	9.4
$2,000 to $2,499.....	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.7	6.7	7.6	7.8	7.4	9.8	9.6
$2,500 to $2,999.....	5.1	5.5	6.4	6.0	7.4	5.2	5.8	6.9	8.1	6.7
$3,000 to $3,499.....	6.2	7.4	7.5	7.6	9.7	5.8	7.1	5.8	7.2	6.9
$3,500 to $3,999.....	6.3	7.2	7.9	8.2	8.8	5.4	4.1	4.9	4.3	5.5
$4,000 to $4,499.....	8.0	8.2	8.4	8.6	8.2	4.4	4.1	2.9	2.9	2.6
$4,500 to $4,999.....	6.9	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.2	3.3	2.1	1.9	2.6	2.2
$5,000 to $5,999.....	13.7	12.7	11.9	13.2	11.9	3.7	2.5	2.9	2.2	2.4
$6,000 to $6,999.....	9.8	9.5	8.5	8.1	7.5	1.6	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.0
$7,000 to $9,999.....	15.6	12.9	11.1	11.6	9.1	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.0
$10,000 to $14,999.....	5.9	4.8	4.4	4.1	2.8	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
$15,000 to $24,999.....	1.5	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	...
$25,000 and over.....	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2
Median income.....	$4,783	$4,421	$4,173	$4,233	$3,890	$1,426	$1,316	$1,224	$1,394	$1,409
URBAN										
Number.....thousands..	27,496	27,612	27,530	26,959	26,786	7,455	7,545	7,604	7,555	7,670
Median income.....	$5,221	$4,840	$4,591	$4,663	$4,249	$1,643	$1,476	$1,421	$1,649	$1,605
RURAL NONFARM										
Number.....thousands..	11,041	9,920	9,178	9,034	8,782	1,652	1,655	1,405	1,452	1,434
Median income.....	$4,619	$4,328	$3,891	$3,951	$3,720	$939	$934	$850	$905	$937
RURAL FARM										
Number.....thousands..	4,908	5,311	5,226	5,209	5,452	551	566	614	507	670
Median income.....	$2,371	$2,111	$1,973	$2,131	$2,226	$808	$628	$635	$623	$665