

COSTS OF WORKSTOCK

Workstock were kept on 58 of the 61 farms included in this study. The average number of workstock per farm for all farms was 13, most of which were mules. The typical work animal was fed in a dry lot throughout the year as pasture was not available on most farms. The annual gross cost per head for keeping workstock, excluding shelter and taxes, in 1943 was \$197.87, figure 3.<sup>5/</sup> Feed cost constituted 73 per cent of the annual gross cost of keeping workstock. Corn and peanut hay were the main sources of feed. The average amount fed per mule annually was 60 bushels of corn and three tons of peanut hay.

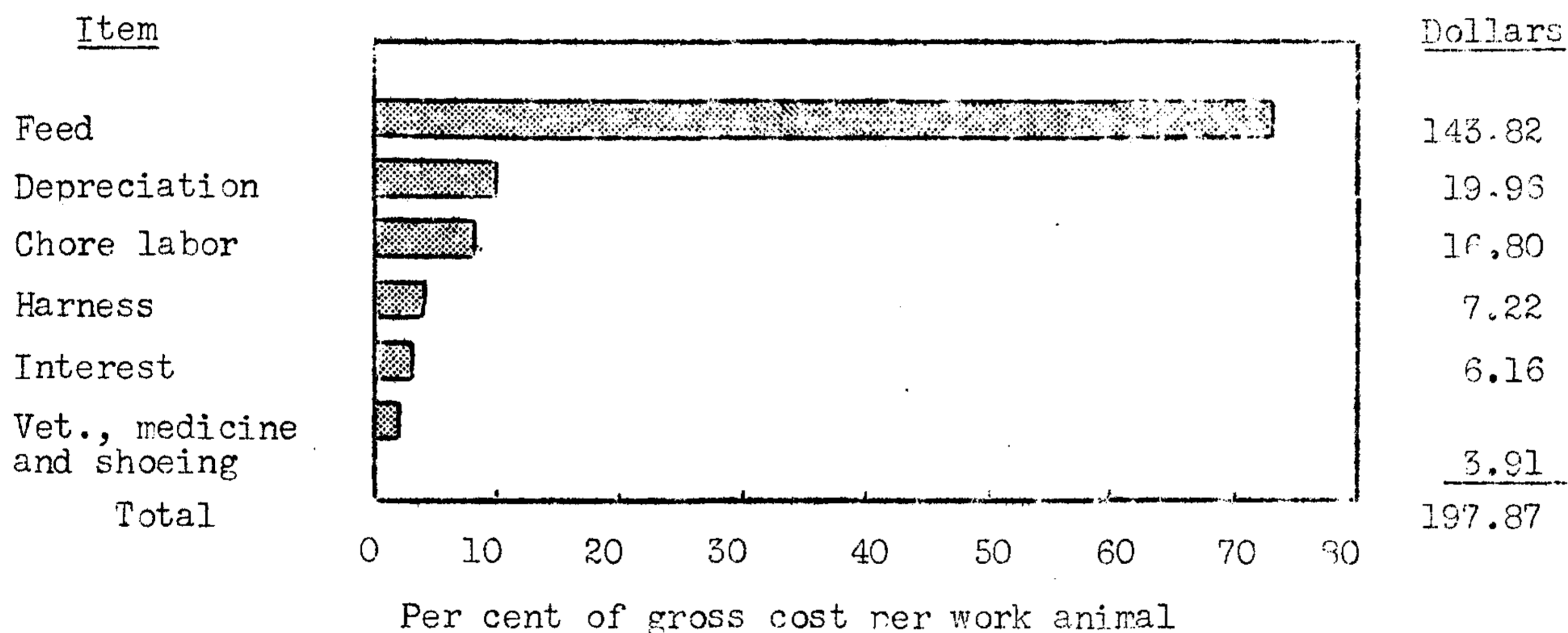


Figure 3. Principal cost items as percentages of gross cost per work animal. The cost of keeping workstock in 1943 was relatively high as a result of high feed prices.

Depreciation amounted to 10 per cent of the annual workstock costs. The average cost of mules when purchased was \$246.38. The estimated years of useful life were 12.34, resulting in depreciation of \$19.96 per mule annually or 8.1 per cent of the average purchase price.

<sup>5/</sup> Gross cost does not include a charge for taxes and shelter. For details see Appendix table 10, page 36.

Chore labor per mule annually was 112 hours. Calculated at 15 cents an hour, the cost was \$16.80 or 8 per cent of the total costs.

The average estimated cost of harness per mule was \$7.22 or 4 per cent of the total annual costs.

Interest was figured at 5 per cent on one-half of the average purchase price of the mules. The interest charged amounted to only \$6.16 or 3 per cent of the total annual costs.

Veterinary fees, medicine and shoeing expenses were small, amounting to only \$3.91 per mule or 2 per cent of the total annual costs. On most farms, the mules' feet were trimmed from two to three times a year. Very few mules were shod as they were not normally used for hauling on the highways.

The annual cost of equipment pulled by workstock for farms operated with four or more mules was \$17.72 per mule. Data collected on 128 mule power farms in Halifax County in 1941 indicated the mules worked an average of 800 hours per year including hauling wood and other odd jobs.

The cost of mule labor per hour based on 800 hours of work per year and on 1943 prices for feed, less the value of manure at \$12.00 per mule, was 23 cents. Workstock equipment costs average 2.2 cents per hour.

#### LABOR REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIED CROPS

The average rates of performing some of the more important field operations with tractors and mules in the Northern Coastal Plains are shown in table 11.

The rate of performance varies with the kind and amount of power and size of implement used. No attempt is made to explore fully the effects of these factors upon labor required to produce specified crops, except that the usual operations and the average rate of performance is compared for tractor power