**Survey of Current Business**

**The 1930s**

**The Depression and Recovery Efforts**

### DUST BOWL
Farm real estate values decline 31.4 percent from 1930 to 1935. In 1931, farm product prices drop below 1913 levels. The drought is “the worst in our history” and by 1936 becomes “more widespread and severe.”


### PROHIBITION ENDS
Vinous liquors’ product value increases 2,437.8 percent from 1931 to 1933. Whisky distilled in 1936 reaches an unprecedented 245.5 million total tax gallons. Five percent of retail-trade employment is at liquor establishments.


### NEW DEAL
The federal government’s Public Works Administration finances work-relief construction projects like highways, sewer systems, electrical grids, and dams. Federal construction is valued at $2.43 billion in 1938, compared to $503 million in 1932.


### GREAT DEPRESSION
Brokers’ loans decline as liquidations continue in 1931. Dollar sales volume for chain stores and mail-order houses reaches a new low in 1932. A year later, national income is still dropping.

*Photo. A long line for 5-cent meals. Brown Brothers, FSA/OWIPC, LOC, between 1930 and 1940.*

Find more Survey history at [www.bea.gov/scb/centennial/decades/1930s.htm](http://www.bea.gov/scb/centennial/decades/1930s.htm)