

PART VI

Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Livestock, dairying and poultry farming are secondary activities in Asotin County when compared with the production of commercial crops. Only about one-fourth of all farm sales have included livestock and livestock products during recent years. Sales of livestock and livestock products have become less important compared with earlier periods. As recently as 1949 over two-fifths of all farm sales were credited to the animal industries. In 1954 the animal industries returned \$794,000 to Asotin County farmers.

The total value of livestock and poultry kept on farms in 1954 approximated \$2,000,000. Cattle and calves accounted for 80 percent of the inventory value. Sheep were second to cattle with 15 percent of the total. Hogs were third followed by horses and poultry. The total value of livestock on farms increased by over one-half between 1945 and 1954.

Total Value of Asotin County Livestock: \$1,993,000

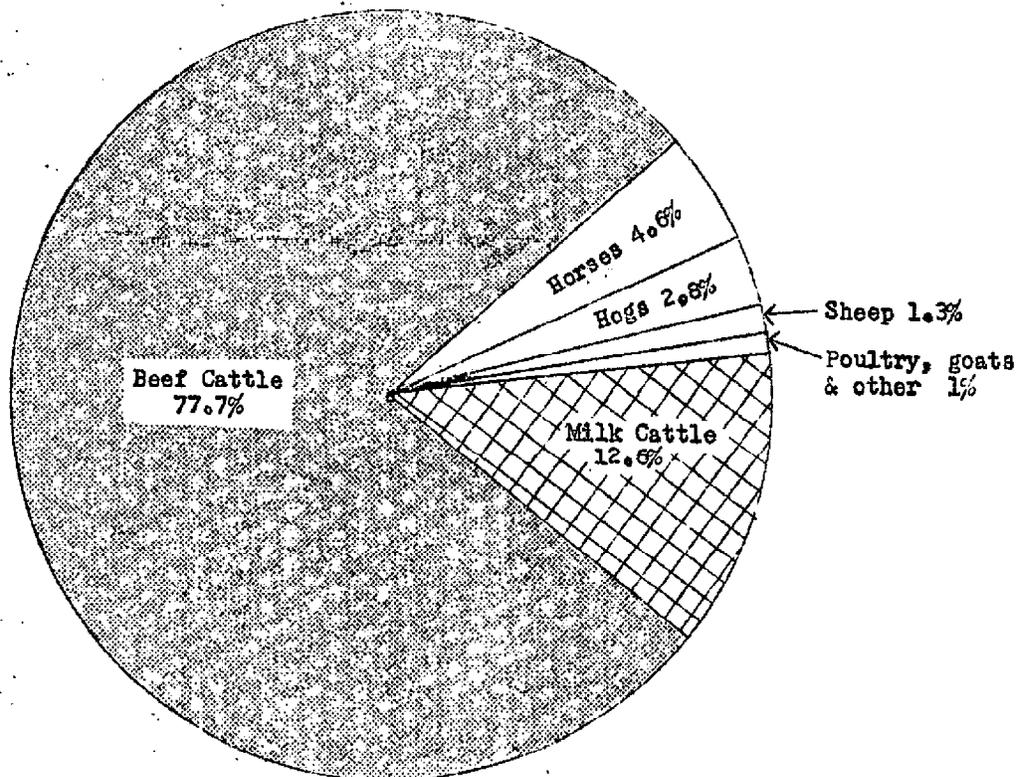


Figure 12.- Value of Livestock on Farms
Asotin County, 1954
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

Livestock Trends

Several major trends have occurred in the livestock enterprise of Asotin County since 1939. Beef cattle numbers have increased slightly, reaching a peak of 13,900 head in 1956. Because of a sharp downward trend in dairy cattle numbers the total number of cattle in 1956 was below the 1943-44 level. Sheep increased between 1939 and 1949, then dropped off sharply to a low of only 1,733 head in 1954. By 1954 sheep numbers had been reduced to about one-tenth of the 1949 level. The number of hogs kept on Asotin County farms increased slightly during World War II, but still was less than in 1954. Poultry numbers have followed a trend similar to that of hogs.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

Raising beef cattle is the leading type of livestock farming in Asotin County. Over 350 farms kept cattle and calves during 1954 and this represented a slight increase over 1949. Beef cattle numbers increased rapidly during World War II. About 13,500 head were reported in 1944 but the number of beef cattle kept on Asotin County farms declined between 1944 and 1951. After 1951 a new upward cycle began and by 1956 about 13,900 were on farms. In 1954 about 250 farms sold 6,600 head of cattle and calves alive for a gross return of about \$556,000. Above seven out of every ten dollars worth of sales of livestock and their products were accounted for by cattle and calves. This was a small drop from the 1949 level representing partly the fact that more calves and fewer mature cattle were sold in 1954.

Table 21.- Livestock Numbers on Farms
Asotin County, 1939-1956

Year	January 1 Numbers on Farms		
	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	13,400	10,800	2,600
1940	12,200	9,400	2,800
1941	14,000	11,300	2,700
1942	14,300	11,600	2,700
1943	16,300	13,400	2,900
1944	16,300	13,500	2,800
1945	13,500	11,200	2,300
1946	12,000	10,100	1,900
1947	12,000	10,500	1,500
1948	11,900	10,300	1,600
1949	12,600	11,000	1,600
1950	11,600	10,200	1,400
1951	11,000	9,800	1,200
1952	13,000	11,700	1,300
1953	14,000	12,800	1,200
1954	14,000	12,600	1,400
1955	14,300	12,900	1,400
1956	15,200	13,900	1,300

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Divn.
State of Washington

Dairying is a minor activity. Beef cattle outnumbered dairy cattle by over ten to one in 1956. Almost 260 farms kept at least one dairy cow in 1954, but only 16 farms sold whole milk. In recent years the production of whole milk has become more specialized and concentrated in larger herds. Whole milk sales increased over two and one-half times between 1949 and 1954. Farms selling whole milk declined by over one-half and the production of cream and the number of farms selling cream declined by about one-third in the same period. Dairy cattle have decreased steadily since the peak of 2,900 in 1943. The sharpest declines occurred between 1944 and 1946 when the total number of dairy cattle dropped about 900 head. The number of cows and heifers two years old and older kept for milk has remained nearly steady since 1950. In 1956 about 1,300 head of dairy cattle were reported on Asotin County farms.

Hogs

The raising of hogs has declined greatly in Asotin County since 1939. Hog raising generally has been reduced to a sideline in recent years. Besides the decline in commercial hog production, there also has been a decline in the number of farms feeding hogs for home or custom butchering for household use. About 135 farms reported a total of 1,400 hogs in 1954 which compares with about 370 farms and 3,400 head in 1939. Peak hog production was reached about 1945 when almost 3,700 head of hogs were reported on Asotin County farms. In 1954 a total of 1,500 head were sold from 80 farms for a gross return of \$42,000.

Sheep

Until recent years sheep were the second most important class of livestock in Asotin County. Numbers increased steadily between 1939 and 1949, reaching a peak of 15,400 head in 1949 but the Census of 1954 found only 1,700 sheep on Asotin County farms. Most of the decline can be attributed to the large range bands which have left the county. About 45 farms kept sheep in 1949 and, despite the large drop in numbers, there were still 28 farm places keeping sheep in 1954. Over 1,600 head of sheep were sold from 29 farms during 1954 and sales totaled \$18,600 compared with \$126,500 in 1949. Most sheep are now kept in small farm flocks rather than the large range bands of former years.

Table 22.- Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules
Asotin County, 1939-1954

Census Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	3,365	10,955	2,014
1944	3,660	11,962	1,530
1949	2,471	15,369	990
1954	1,400	1,733	615

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Horses and Mules

The horse and mule population dropped rapidly between 1939 and 1954 as mechanized vehicles took over the work on farms. The 615 head reported in 1954

represented only 30 percent of the 1939 total. Most horses are now kept for riding. Only 40 farms reported having only horses and/or mules for work power in 1954 but about 190 farms kept horses and mules during 1954. Despite the large decrease in numbers between 1949 and 1954 the number of farms keeping horses did not decrease.

Poultry Farming

Poultry farming, although declining in importance, has become the third ranking source of income in the animal industries of Asotin County. Almost 300 farms kept poultry during 1954 while 160 sold poultry or poultry products and 5 farms were classified as poultry farms. Chicken numbers increased during World War II with a peak of about 28,000 birds reached around 1945 but the number of chickens kept declined rapidly between 1945 and 1949. Although the number of farms keeping chickens has declined since 1949 the number of chickens kept has remained fairly steady.

Table 23.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys
Asotin County, 1939-1954

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	25,752	183,430	303
1944	27,766	251,578	7,645
1949	16,478	69,002 $\frac{1}{2}$	3,502
1954	15,578	104,509 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,344

$\frac{1}{2}$ Eggs sold only; does not include eggs consumed on farms.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Egg production is the most important poultry activity. The number of farms selling eggs declined between 1949 and 1954 but egg sales increased by 50 percent with 104,500 dozen eggs being sold in 1954. Egg layer flocks were expanded during the period. The production of chickens for meat is of minor importance. About 6,100 birds were sold in 1954 for almost \$6,600. The total number of chickens sold declined from 13,600 in 1949. Broiler production amounted to about 2,000 birds in 1954.

Turkey raising has become less important in recent years. About 1,340 turkeys were kept in 1954 compared with 3,500 in 1949. However, the number of farms keeping turkeys increased from 5 to 14 during the period. Sales of turkeys amounted to \$5,500 in 1954. Heavy breeds are by far the more popular, outnumbering light breeds about 15 to 1.

Small Animal Industry

Small animal industry is relatively minor in importance. Beekeeping and goat raising are farm sidelines with little commercial value. In the last Census of beekeeping made in 1949 there were 21 farms reporting 100 hives. About 2,700 pounds of honey were produced in 1949. Bales of bees, wax and honey totaled \$320. Raising of goats, rabbits and fur bearing animals is not wide spread. About 31 farms kept rabbits, goats and fur bearing animals.