

PART IV

THE PATTERN OF AGRICULTURE

Number and Size of Farms

The average size of Grant County farms increased steadily in the days of dry-land farming, from 403 acres in 1910 to a maximum of 1,859 acres in 1945. Drought and depression made small farms impractical, and many farms were abandoned or sold and combined with others. Average farm size then began shrinking with the advent of irrigation, as farms were subdivided and sold. The size of farm units bought by the government for resale to veterans was fixed by Federal laws. Depending on the class of land, family-sized units ranged from 50 to 160 acres. Average farm size decreased from 1,751 acres in 1950 to 718 acres in 1959--this trend is expected to continue as more land is put under irrigation.

The number of farms in the county has changed inversely with average size, decreasing from 1,607 in 1910 to 538 in 1950, then increasing to 1,497 in 1959 as new irrigated farm units were created. Total acreage in farmland decreased slightly from a high of 1,084,038 acres in 1945 to 942,237 acres in 1950, due mainly to wheat lands being taken out of production and to a reduction in the amount of leased public domain grazing land. Total acreage was back up to 1,075,642 acres in 1959, as former dryland wheat areas were put under irrigation and planted to other crops.

Table 8. Number, Size, and Total Acreage of Grant County Farms, 1910-1959

Year	Total Farms in the County	Average size of farms in the County (acres)	Total County Area in Farms (acres)	Percent of County area in Farms
1910	1,607	403	647,999	37.2
1920	1,110	670	743,518	42.7
1925	903	735	663,800	38.1
1930	787	971	764,407	43.9
1940	600	1,225	735,134	41.4
1945	583	1,859	1,084,038	61.0
1950	538	1,751	942,237	54.7
1954	1,090	875	953,892	55.4
1959	1,497	718	1,075,642	62.5

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Although the trend is toward more and smaller farms in irrigated areas, the majority of Grant County's agricultural land is still in large holdings. There were 203 farms of over 1,000 acres in 1959, and 115 of these contained over 2,000 acres. Of 1,075,642 total acres in farms, 76 percent was in large farms of over 1,000 acres, and 65 percent was in farms of over 2,000 acres. Only two farms reported irrigating over 1,000 acres in 1959; most of the county's large farms are in dryland wheat areas.

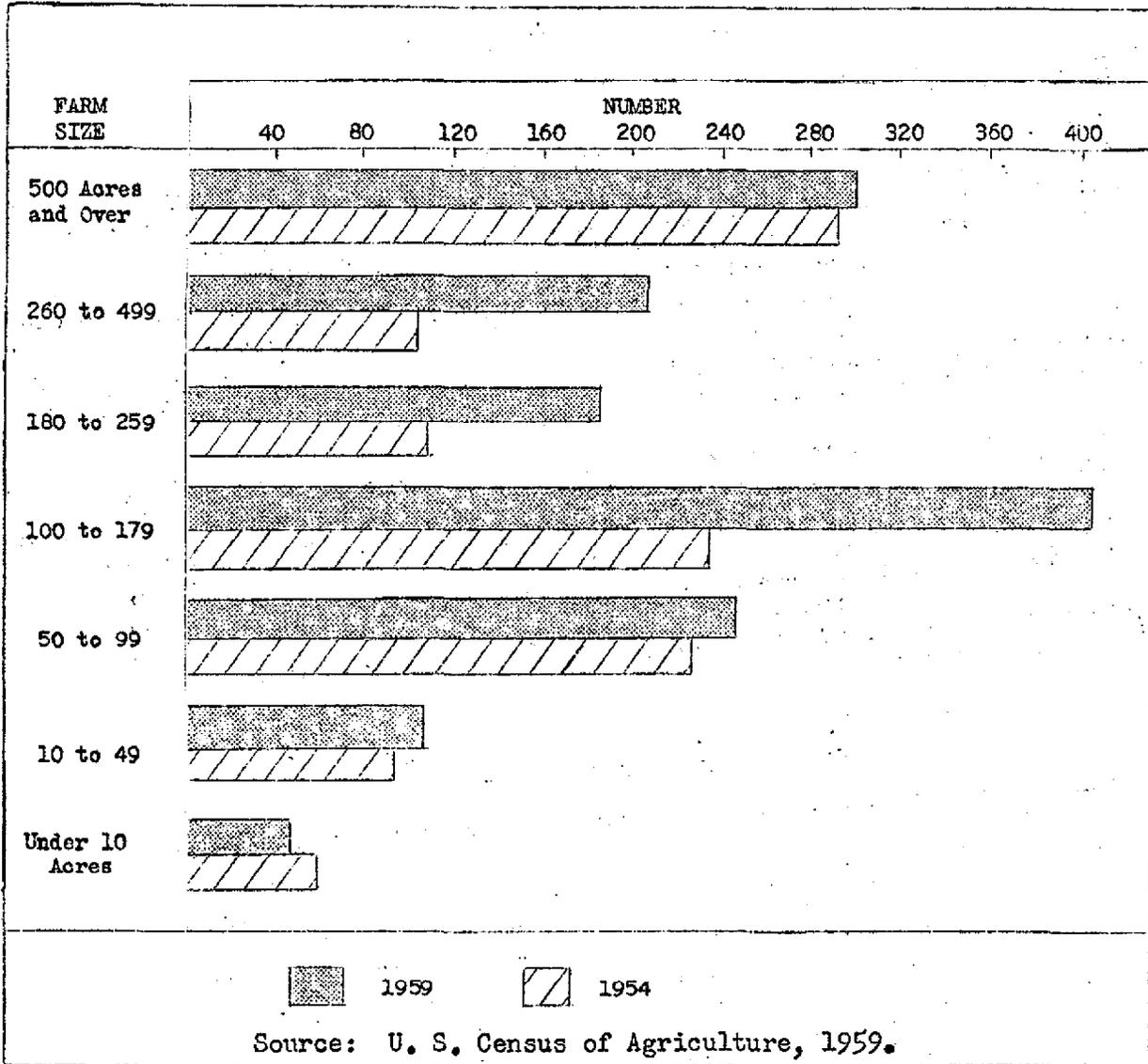


Figure 7. Number and Size of Grant County Farms, 1954 and 1959.

Types of Farms

Farms growing grain were still the most numerous type in 1959; although they increased in number during that period they showed a decrease percentagewise. The number of general farms jumped from 5 to 309 in the same nine years. The trend in farm numbers indicated in the table does not necessarily indicate trend in acreages, however, due to subdivision of farms and creation of new farm units in the irrigation project. Crop acreage trends are discussed in Part V.

Utilization of Farmland

Of the county's 1,721,600 acres, 62 percent (1,075,642 acres) was in farmland in 1959. Crops were harvested from 29 percent of the farmland, and 46 percent was in pasture other than woodland pasture. Summerfallow and idle cropland accounted for 17 percent, mostly in dryland wheat areas.

Table 9. Types of Farms, Grant County, 1959

Type of Farm <u>1/</u>	Number of Farms		Percent of all farms in the County	
	1950	1959	1950	1959
Total farms in county <u>2/</u>	538	1,497	100.0	100.0
Field crop farms	317	703	58.9	47.0
Cash-grain	243	547	45.2	36.5
Other field-crop	74	156	13.7	10.4
Vegetable farms	3	5	0.6	0.3
Fruit-and-nut farms	21	20	3.9	1.3
Poultry farms	5	11	0.9	0.7
Dairy farms	11	70	2.0	4.7
Livestock farms other than poultry and dairy	84	160	15.6	10.7
General farms	5	309	0.9	20.6
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms	92	150	17.1	10.0

1/ The data are estimates made for all farms upon the basis of tabulation of data for a sample of approximately one-fifth of all farms.

2/ The definition used for a farm in 1959 is more restrictive than that used for 1950 and part of the changes in the number of farms from 1950 to 1959 resulted from the change in definition. Reduction in number of farms due to change for Grant County between 1950 and 1959 is 27.

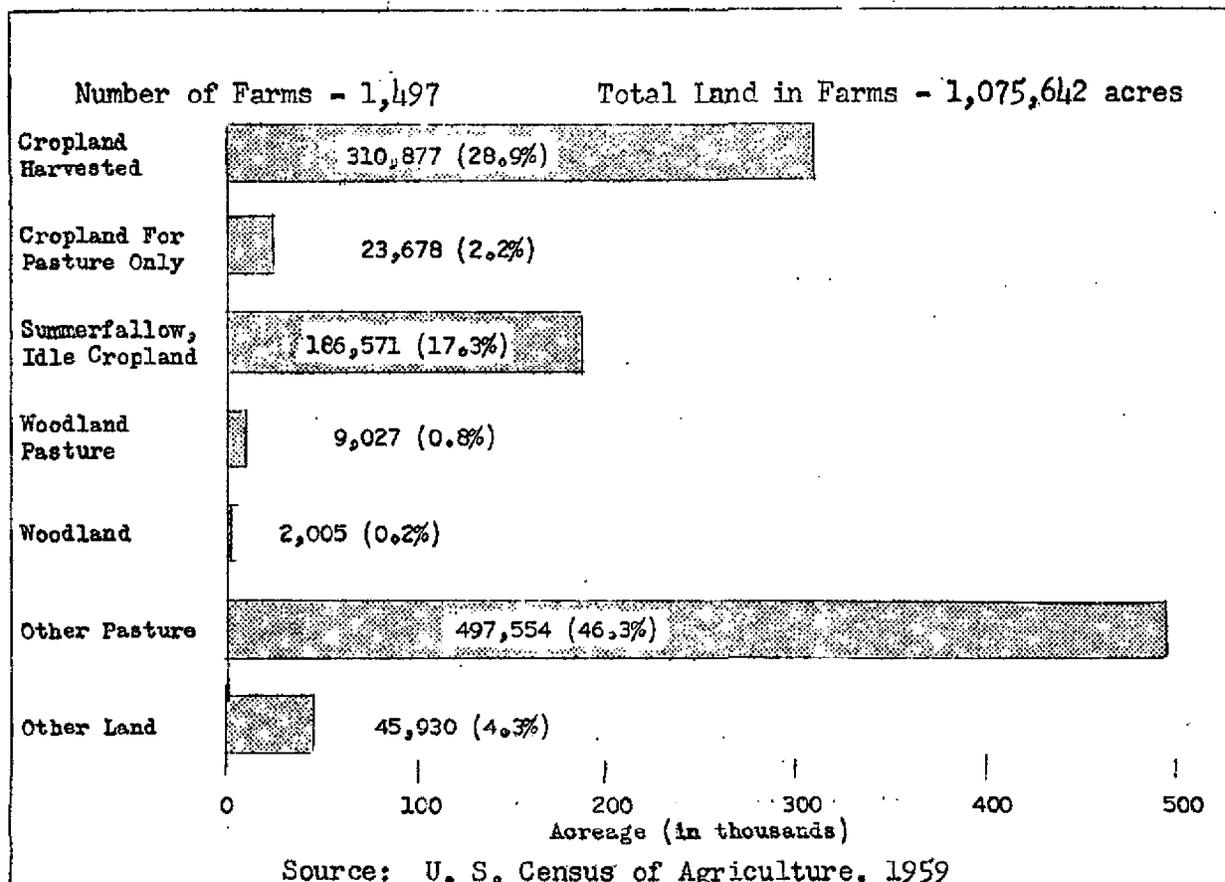


Figure 8. Utilization of Farmland in Grant County, 1959.

Farm Values

Average and total farm values increased from 1910 to 1920, then dropped considerably by 1930 with the beginning of the depression. Drought and continued depression in the 1930's saw a further reduction in total and per acre farm values by 1940, although the average value per farm held its own during that period. Dam construction and the prospect of irrigation helped bring about a three-fold increase in farm values between 1940 and 1950, and the increase has continued rapidly since then. The average value per farm in 1959 was \$64,698, which was \$20,623 above the state average. Farmland was worth \$99.21 per acre, \$49.54 less than the state average; this is due to the large acreages in dryland farms and masks the presence of high priced land in irrigated sections. The calculated total value of all county farmland and buildings in 1959 was \$96,852,906.

Table 10. Value of Farm Land and Buildings in Grant County, 1910-1959 ^{1/}

Year	County Average Values		Value of all Farm Land and Buildings in County (dollars)
	Per Farm (Dollars)	Per Acre (Dollars)	
1910	10,323	24.37	16,588,947
1920	19,008	25.69	21,098,880
1930	13,319	13.71	10,482,412
1940	15,863	12.95	9,517,678
1950	54,597	34.74	29,373,186
1954	59,560	75.44	64,920,400
1959	64,698	99.21	96,852,906

^{1/} Data are based on reports from a sample of farms.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Irrigation

The number of irrigated farms rose from 214 in 1950 to 799 in 1954. By 1959, they totaled 1,283, or 86 percent of all county farms. There were 633,486 acres in irrigated farms in 1959, of which 171,365 acres were actually under irrigation. Of the 188,516 acres of cropland harvested from irrigated farms, 158,104 acres were actually irrigated. When compared with the 12,937 acres of irrigated harvested cropland in 1949, this figure illustrates the impact made by the Columbia Basin Project. The great majority of farms contained between 50 and 500 irrigated acres, with the average size of irrigated farms at 494 acres.

Table 11. Cropland on Irrigated Farms, Grant County, 1959, 1954, 1950

Item	1959	1954	1950
Number of irrigated farms	1,283	799	214
Cropland harvested from irrigated farms farms (acres)	188,516	101,991	19,174
Land irrigated (acres)	171,365	83,239	14,286
Irrigated cropland harvested (acres)	158,104	77,125	12,937
Pastured cropland on irrigated farms (acres)	22,311	24,044	2,453

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Most of the water is made available through the Columbia Basin Project, which provided irrigation for 154,496 acres in 1959. Local ground water sources provided water for 14,498 acres, and 24 farms reported having surface water available for irrigation.

Farm Tenure and Residence

The relative percentages of farms operated by full owners, part owners, managers, and tenants fluctuated only slightly since 1925. The 1959 Census of Agriculture listed 639 farms, or 43 percent of all farms, under full ownership where the owner operated only the land he owned. Another 531 farms (35 percent) were under part owners who operated the land they owned and also land rented from others. A fairly high proportion of farms, compared to other Washington counties, is run by tenants who rent from the owners or work on shares. Twenty-one percent of farms were under tenancy agreements in 1959, while the average for the state was 10 percent. Farms run by managers, who operate land for others for a wage, are a small minority and accounted for only 1 percent of the county's farms in 1959.

Table 12. Number and Percent of Farms by Tenure of Operator, Grant County, 1925-1959

Year	Number of Farms	Full Owners		Part Owners		Managers		Tenants	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1925	903	411	45.5	246	27.2	26	2.9	220	24.4
1930	787	311	39.5	225	28.6	43	5.5	208	26.4
1935	724	263	36.3	205	28.3	19	2.6	237	32.7
1940	600	218	36.3	209	34.8	13	2.2	160	26.7
1945	583	220	37.7	241	41.3	9	1.5	113	19.4
1950	538	202	37.5	235	43.7	4	0.7	97	18.0
1954	1,090	425	39.0	383	35.1	12	1.1	270	24.8
1959	1,497	639	42.7	531	35.5	18	1.2	309	20.6

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

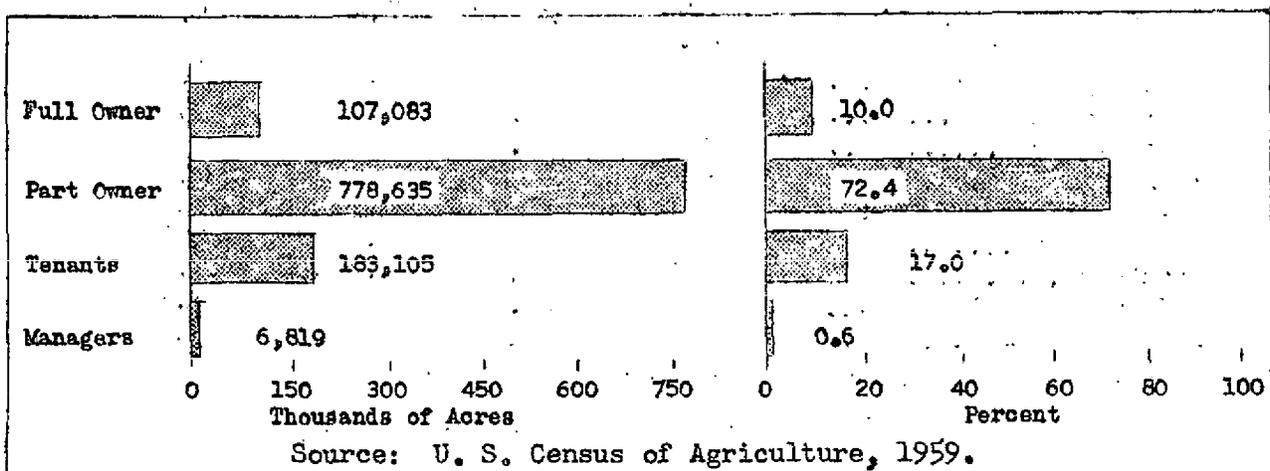


Figure 9. Land in Farms, By Tenure of Operator, Grant County, 1959.

Analysis of the land in farms by tenure of operator gives quite a different picture. The 1959 Census showed 778,635 acres, or 72 percent of all county farmland, being operated by part owners. This indicates that even though only 35 percent of the farms are under part ownership, these farms tend to be the larger ones. Full owners operated only 10 percent of the land in farms, and tenants 17 percent.

Eighty-two percent of farm operators lived on their farms in 1959 while the other 18 percent lived either in other rural residences or in town. Operators who worked off their farms at least part-time numbered 730, with 430 of these spending 100 days or more at off-farm work. Other income exceeded that from sale of farm products for 334 operators.

Facilities and Equipment

As farming becomes more and more mechanized, a farmer's production capability and standard of living become more and more reflected in the facilities and equipment at his disposal. Comparison of the number of Grant County and all Washington farms with respect to nonspecialized items in 1959 shows 12 percent fewer Grant County farms with telephones, 8 percent more with home freezers, 14 percent more with motortrucks, 7 percent more with tractors, and 3 percent fewer having automobiles. This shows that Grant County farmers are generally on a par with the rest of the state.

Table 13. Specified Facilities and Equipment on Farms in Grant County, 1959 ^{1/}

Facility or Equipment Item	Number of Farms Using, 1959	Percent of All Farms in County Equipped		Percent of All Farms in State Equipped, 1959
		1954	1959	
Telephone	1,101	55.7	73.5	85.4
Home freezer	1,036	43.2	69.2	61.1
Milking machine	117	3.6	7.8	19.9
Electric milk cooler ...	58	Uncounted	3.9	11.7
Crop drier (for grain, forage or other crops)	16	Uncounted	1.1	0.8
Power operated elevator, conveyor or blower ...	538	Uncounted	35.9	18.4
Grain combines	651	46.1	43.5	16.4
Corn pickers	111	2.8	7.4	0.8
Pick-up baler	468	10.8	31.3	15.4
Field forage harvester .	117	2.7	7.8	6.6
Motortrucks	1,287	85.0	86.0	72.2
Tractors	1,337	88.2	89.3	82.6
Crawler tractors	315	29.0	21.0	21.3
Automobiles	1,297	87.3	86.6	89.7

^{1/} Data based on reports for only a sample of farms.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.

A look at more specialized equipment shows a greater percentage of Grant County farms having combines, power operated elevators, conveyors, or blowers, pick-up balers, and corn pickers. This reflects the greater emphasis on grain.

hay, and other field crops as compared with the state as a whole. Fewer farms in the county have milking equipment, percentagewise, than in the state.

The percentage of farms having the listed items increased from 1954 to 1959 for all items except automobiles, which decreased slightly, and grain combines and crawler tractors, which showed a definite decrease. The reduced usage of grain equipment reflects the slight de-emphasis on grain crops accompanying the increase in irrigated field crops.

Table 14. Grant County's Rank Compared With Other Washington Counties

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity
<u>General</u>		
Land area	4	1,721,600 acres
Number of farms	14	1,497 farms
Land in farms--percent	13	62.5 percent
Average size of farms	13	718.5 acres
Cropland harvested	4	310,877 acres
Irrigated land in farms	2	171,365 acres
Rural farm population	10	5,732 persons ^{1/}
Total county population	14	46,477 persons ^{1/}
<u>Cash farm income</u>		
Value of all farm products sold	3	38,638,732 dollars ^{2/}
Value of livestock sold	5	12,555,694 dollars ^{2/}
Value of crops sold	3	26,083,038 dollars ^{2/}
<u>Livestock on farms</u>		
All cattle and calves	7	48,586 head
Milk cows	18	2,804 head
Hogs	4	11,508 head
Chickens (4 mos. old and over) .	19	43,843 birds
Horses and mules	9	12,000 head
Sheep and lambs	2	41,076 head
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>		
Value of dairy products sold ...	14	1,406,268 dollars ^{2/}
Whole milk sold	14	31,991,795 pounds ^{2/}
Value of poultry products sold .	18	192,899 dollars ^{2/}
Chickens sold	19	31,157 birds ^{2/}
Eggs sold	19	436,133 dozen ^{2/}
<u>Important crops harvested</u>		
Winter wheat	7	95,646 acres
Hay	9	38,162 acres
Spring wheat	2	36,063 acres
Barley	7	30,432 acres
Dry field and seed beans	1	30,286 acres
Corn	2	22,388 acres
Rye	4	13,339 acres
Irish potatoes	1	11,248 acres
Dry field and seed peas	3	10,854 acres
Sugar beets for sugar	2	8,574 acres
Alfalfa seed	3	1,639 acres
Mint for oil	3	789 acres
Red clover seed	2	611 acres
Dry onions	2	365 acres

^{1/} From 1960 Census of Population.

^{2/} Based on reports from only a sample of farms.

Source: 1959 Census of Agriculture.