

PART V

Crops

Major Crops

Because of the importance of livestock farming, dairying and poultry raising, a major part of the cropland is used for feed crops. Nearly 93 percent of the cropland in 1954 was used to grow hay and grass silage. Most of this is used directly on the farms and in the immediate locality to support dairy and beef cattle. In 1954, the 4,660 acres of harvested cropland within Jefferson County were planted to the following crops listed in order of acreage importance: clover and timothy hay, wild and other hay, grass silage, alfalfa hay, small grains and tree fruits and nuts.

Crop Trends

The crop history of any farming region reflects to a large degree the economic changes occurring during the period. A number of changes are apparent in the emphasis and acreage Jefferson County farmers have given to leading crops.

Total Acres of Land Harvested, 1954: 4,659 Acres

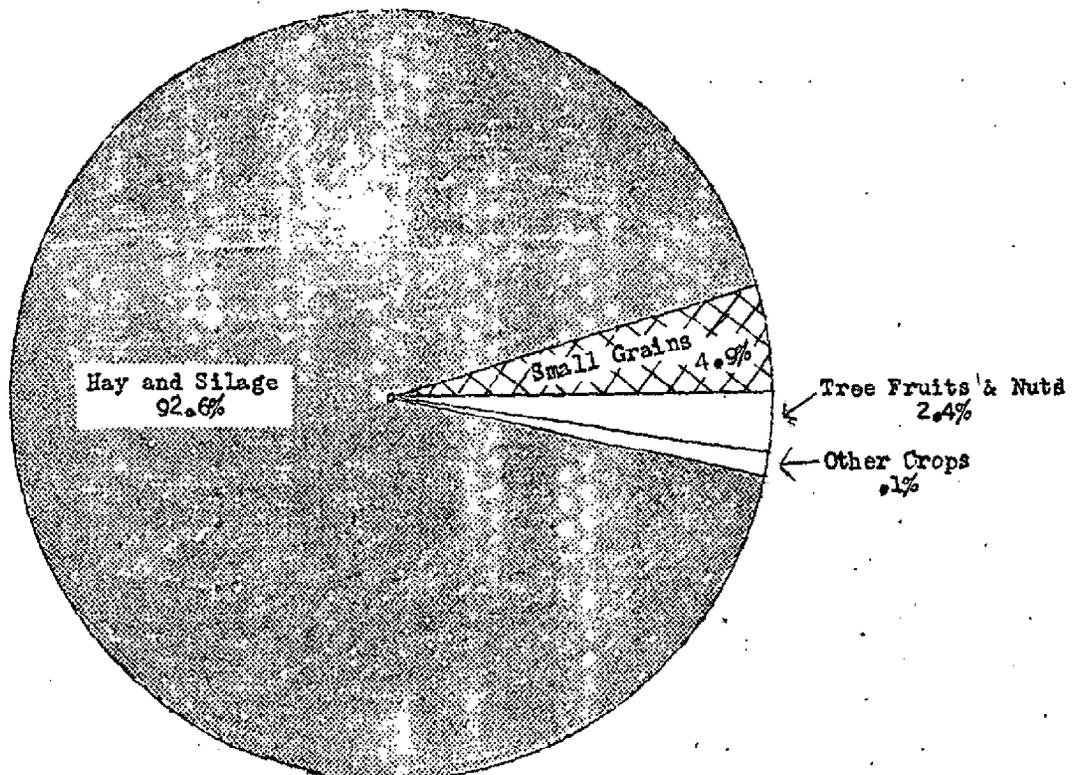


Figure 10.- Percent of Total Cropland in Leading Crops
Jefferson County, 1954
(Based on U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954)

Since 1939 there have been several changes in the crop program of Jefferson County farmers. The acreage in hay crops has fluctuated between 4,025 and 4,700 acres. The 1954 hay acreage is about 14 percent below the amount in 1945 which is less than the decline of the total land in farms. The acreage in commercial vegetables, tree fruits and grapes, and berries has been reduced since 1939. All land in crops has decreased since 1939, according to Census data. In 1939 there were 6,010 acres harvested for crops compared with 4,660 in 1954. This indicates the manner in which harvested cropland has been diverted into permanent pasture, woodlots and residential uses which do not produce a harvested crop.

Hay and Silage Crops

For many years the most important crop in Jefferson County from the acreage standpoint has been hay. All types of hay and silage have ranged between 4,000 and 4,750 acres. Clover and timothy is the most common hay type, generally grown in mixture. Clover and timothy hay fluctuated both in number of acres and in production. Acreage planted to this crop has ranged from 1,100 to 2,000 acres during the last 15 years. Wild and other hay (830) comprise the next largest portion of hay land. Land planted to alfalfa has shown a steady increase, with 720 acres in 1955, compared with 540 acres in 1939. Small grains cut green for hay have declined since 1939. Acreage of grain hay was at a peak of 1,050 acres in 1939 compared with only 170 acres in 1954.

Table 16.- Clover-Timothy Hay and Alfalfa Hay
Acreage, Yield and Production
Jefferson County, 1939-1955

Year	Clover and Timothy Hay			Alfalfa Hay		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)
1939	1,200	2.1	2,500	540	2.0	1,090
1940	1,100	1.8	2,020	600	2.2	1,320
1941	1,100	1.7	1,880	630	2.0	1,260
1942	1,400	2.0	2,740	610	4.0	2,460
1943	1,600	2.2	3,600	660	2.4	1,600
1944	1,790	2.1	3,740	580	2.6	1,500
1945	1,780	1.8	3,250	570	2.1	1,200
1946	1,700	2.0	3,330	590	2.0	1,200
1947	1,600	2.0	3,140	570	2.1	1,200
1948	1,700	2.2	3,740	610	2.0	1,200
1949	1,540	1.7	2,620	640	1.7	1,100
1950	1,500	1.2	1,800	640	2.1	1,340
1951	1,600	2.1	3,330	620	1.5	950
1952	1,400	2.2	3,100	620	2.6	1,600
1953	1,500	1.1	1,650	710	2.1	1,500
1954	1,850	2.0	3,650	670	1.9	1,300
1955	2,000	1.5	3,070	720	1.5	1,080

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

Silage making is a rapidly growing farm practice to utilize green forage crops more efficiently and to lessen losses in hay quality due to damp weather during harvest time. Acreage reported harvested as grass silage increased from 420 acres in 1949 to 806 acres in 1954. Numerous farms have added silage cutters and installed silage pits and silos in recent years. Nearly all of the hay produced is consumed on the same farm. In 1954 only one farm reported having sold hay. Most of the hay used which is not produced locally, is imported from surplus alfalfa hay acres in eastern Washington.

Oats, Barley and Wheat

The production of oats, barley and other small grains on a commercial basis in Jefferson County has been limited by several factors. Probably most important has been the tendency of dairy and livestock farms to divert cropland into permanent pasture and hay. Another has been the size of farm and size of fields.

Table 17.- Oats and Barley: Acreage, Yield and Production
Jefferson County, 1939-1955

Year	Oats (grain)			Barley (grain)		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	170	54.0	9,180	80	28.0	2,240
1940	140	48.0	6,720	50	28.0	1,400
1941	100	45.0	4,500	20	29.0	580
1942	80	44.0	3,520	30	32.0	960
1943	90	44.0	3,960	30	32.0	960
1944	80	36.0	2,880	20	34.0	680
1945	90	33.0	2,970	20	31.0	620
1946	80	42.0	3,360	20	38.0	760
1947	120	50.0	6,000	30	32.0	960
1948	130	42.5	5,530	30	31.0	930
1949	130	56.0	7,280	40	27.0	1,080
1950	100	42.0	4,200	40	36.0	1,440
1951	110	37.5	4,120	40	35.0	1,400
1952	120	36.0	4,320	40	36.0	1,440
1953	80	31.0	2,480	40	35.0	1,400
1954	90	25.0	2,250	40	37.0	1,480
1955	60	44.0	2,640	40	41.0	1,640
1956	40	42.0	1,680	125	50.0	6,250

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

Acreage in oats declined from 170 acres in 1939 to 60 acres in 1955. During a six year period from 1947 to 1952 the acreage planted to oats averaged about 118 acres and production averaged 5,240 bushels. Since 1955 the acreage has been decreasing. Cropland planted to barley decreased one-half since 1939 and in 1955 amounted to only 40 acres. With better seed, more fertilizer and better farm practices, the total production has been increasing since 1945.

Wheat has been fluctuating since 1939, with a peak of 200 acres and a low of 50 acres. Because of unfavorable climate and limited acreage suitable for the production of wheat, cropland planted to wheat was only 70 acres in 1955, a decrease of 130 acres since 1939.

Vegetables

Jefferson County is not self-sufficient in the production of vegetable crops. Much of this is due to the terrain and lack of fertile bottom soil needed in the production of commercial vegetables. Also, much of the land suited for vegetables is used for pasture and hay. In 1939, 346 acres were planted to vegetables of which 336 acres were in peas. Acreage in 1954 constituted only two acres, that being planted to sweet corn. Potatoes were grown on only five acres in 1956, compared with 60 acres in 1948. Production decreased from 325 tons to only 40 tons, a decline of 285 tons, during the same period. Although over 226 farms reported raising vegetables in gardens for home use in 1954, a large part of the vegetables consumed in the fresh markets are imported from neighboring Puget Sound counties and from eastern Washington.

Berries

Jefferson is not an important berry producing county. In 1939, 44 acres of berries were grown, of which over 70 percent of the acres were planted to youngberries, boysenberries and loganberries. Acreage has decreased during the last 15 years and in 1954 only two acres of strawberries were planted on seven farms. Much of the fresh market berries are imported from other Puget Sound counties.

Tree Fruits, Nuts and Grapes

Jefferson County had a total of 112 acres of fruit trees, nuts and grapes in 1954. This was a decrease of nearly two-thirds from the 322 acres in 1939. The number of fruit and nut trees of all ages on all Jefferson County farms in 1954 was: apples (2,215), pears (270), cherries (225), plums and prunes (225). Grapes were grown on 15 farms having 78 vines, a decrease from 1939 when 20 farms had a total of 306 vines. Since 1950 there has been a 51 percent decrease in the total number of fruit and nut trees. Freezing weather in 1950 and again in 1955 killed numerous fruit trees which have not been replaced. In general, western Washington tree fruits are unable to compete in the market with Yakima, Okanogan and the other eastern Washington orchard areas.

Table 18.- Vegetable Crops: Potatoes
Jefferson County, 1948-1956 ^{1/}

Year	Potatoes	
	Acres	Prod. (tons)
1948	60	325
1949	25	175
1950	25	125
1951	25	125
1952	20	100
1953	10	50
1954	10	50
1955	5	40
1956	5	40

^{1/} Not available prior to 1948.

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