

PART VI

Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Dairying and poultry farming are the second most important activities in Kitsap County agriculture. In the 1954 Census there were 80 farms specializing in dairying and an additional 86 sold milk as a major or sideline product. There were 12 farms specializing in poultry and over a hundred more produced poultry and eggs on a part-time basis. The entire livestock farming industry accounted for about \$1,378,000 in sales and was next to farm forest products, such as Christmas trees and logs, as a dollar-earner for farmers.

The value of livestock approximated \$1,026,000 when last enumerated by the Census of 1950. Cattle are the most valuable domestic animals raised, valued at over \$656,000. Chickens are second, valued at \$148,000, on all the poultry-raising farms.

Total Value of Kitsap County Livestock: \$1,026,011

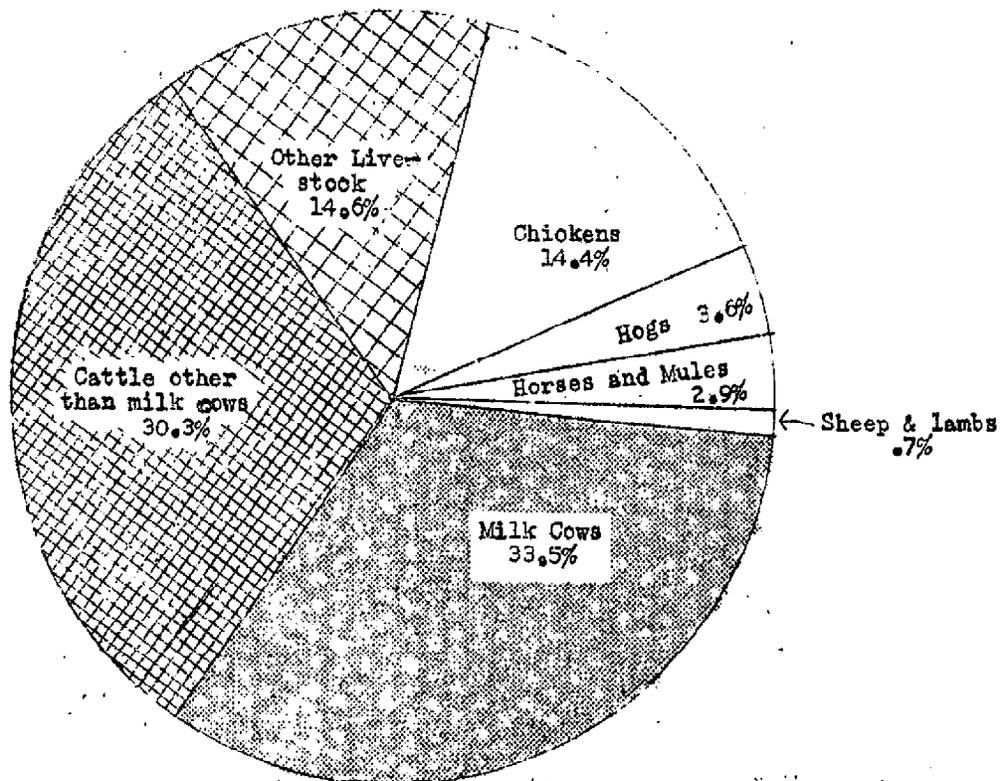


Figure 11.- Value of Livestock on Farms
Kitsap County, 1950
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

Livestock Trends

Livestock raising has changed considerably since 1920. The over-all value of herds and flocks has increased. The number of head of beef cattle has tended to increase since 1939. Dairy herds, however, have trended downward and there were fewer but more productive milk cows in Kitsap County in 1956 than there were in 1939. There have been distinct downward trends in the numbers of horses, mules and hogs compared with 1920. On the other hand, small-scale livestock farmers have been raising more hogs and sheep since 1940. Poultry raising has been decreasing in number of farms and in numbers of layer chickens since peak years in 1940-1945. The livestock farming changes have gone up and down with changes in employment conditions off the farms and in sales opportunities which change as new areas of competition enter the Puget Sound market area.

Cattle: Dairy and Beef Farming

Dairy and beef cattle combined totaled a new high of 7,000 head in 1956. They are kept on 1,360 farms or on about three-fourths of all the farm places on the Kitsap Peninsula. The breeds of dairy cattle outnumber beef breeds about 4 to 3. Many farms have dual purpose cattle or both milk and beef breeds.

Table 20.- Cattle on Farms
Kitsap County, 1939-1956

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	6,000	300	5,700
1940	6,100	300	5,800
1941	6,100	300	5,800
1942	6,300	300	6,000
1943	6,200	200	6,000
1944	5,900	200	5,700
1945	5,800	200	5,600
1946	5,900	300	5,600
1947	4,900	400	4,500
1948	5,000	500	4,500
1949	5,700	600	5,100
1950	5,900	1,100	4,800
1951	5,800	1,400	4,400
1952	5,800	1,500	4,300
1953	6,900	2,500	4,400
1954	6,900	2,500	4,400
1955	6,900	3,000	3,900
1956	7,000	2,900	4,100

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, AMS, Agric.
Estimates, State of Washington, 1939-1956.

Several conditions have caused a change-over from dairy to beef livestock raising since 1939. During World War II and after 1950 off-farm employment was good, leading many small-scale part-time farmers to abandon dairying and take up beef raising which required fewer hours of labor. New state regulations and

sanitation laws for the manner in which grade A or fluid milk for household consumption is handled on farms caused many small producers to abandon dairying because the costs in equipment could not be borne. Feeding and labor costs also caused some to give up dairy farming.

The major part of the cattle population is in northern Kitsap County. About 4,000 head are in the areas surrounding Poulsbo, Kingston, Port Gamble and Lofall. Some dairy herds are large but in the Poulsbo area they average about 24 head per farm. About 250 head are kept on Bainbridge Island by 40 farms averaging about 6 head per place. The Port Orchard district has about 2,000 head kept on 200 farms averaging 10 head per farm.

The Kitsap dairy farmers, through their cooperative marketing association and other outlets, sell over 900,000 gallons of whole milk and 50,000 pounds of cream annually. Some is factory milk used for cheese. Commercial milk production and cream and butter sales, however, are below the volumes of the 1940's. Grade A milk from other Puget Sound counties is brought in for the Bremerton fluid milk market because dairies within the county do not produce enough for the local demand. Commercial sales of farm-churned butter has dropped off greatly since 1940. The Census of 1940 found that about 180 farms were selling butter. By 1945, however, only 19 were found to be churning and selling butter. The Census of 1954 did not record commercial farm butter sales, but it found that 286 farm households were churning butter for their own use. The data on home butter churning indicated that about 44,500 pounds were produced per year for on-farm consumption.

Table 21.- Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Kitsap County, 1940-1954.

Year	Whole Milk Sold From Farms		Cream Sold From Farms		Butter Sold From Farms	
	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)
1940	1,197,210	\$360,000	148,900	\$43,800	31,980	\$10,000
1945	1,158,635	405,520	62,040	24,800	3,300	1,650
1949	1,054,556	445,000	141,280	70,000	no data	no data
1954	912,500	371,600	54,940	29,495	no data	no data

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Poultry Farming: Chickens, Eggs, Turkeys.

Kitsap is the thirteenth ranking poultry county in Washington. In dollar value of products sold from farms, poultry raising is the third major type of farming. Sales of eggs, fryers, other meat chickens, turkeys and other poultry returned an estimated \$799,000 to Kitsap farmers in 1954.

Commercial egg production is the leading part of the poultry industry. About 1,326,000 dozen were produced in 1954 on a total of 412 poultry farms. The number of chickens kept on hand for egg production has ranged from 118,000 to 196,000 birds. There are fewer chickens and fewer poultry farms in Kitsap County than there were before World War II. While egg production has trended downward, the raising of fryer chickens has increased. Sixteen farms were

specializing in broilers (fryer chickens) in 1954, selling about 162,000 birds worth a total of \$114,310. Fryer chickens were in second position in the poultry products industry.

Turkeys raised for market in the 1950's are fewer than in 1939. About 11,000 turkeys are raised per year and over a hundred farms keep turkeys in small flocks. About nine farms specialize in breeding and hatchery production of turkeys.

Total Value of Poultry and Poultry Products Sold
in 1954 - \$799,000

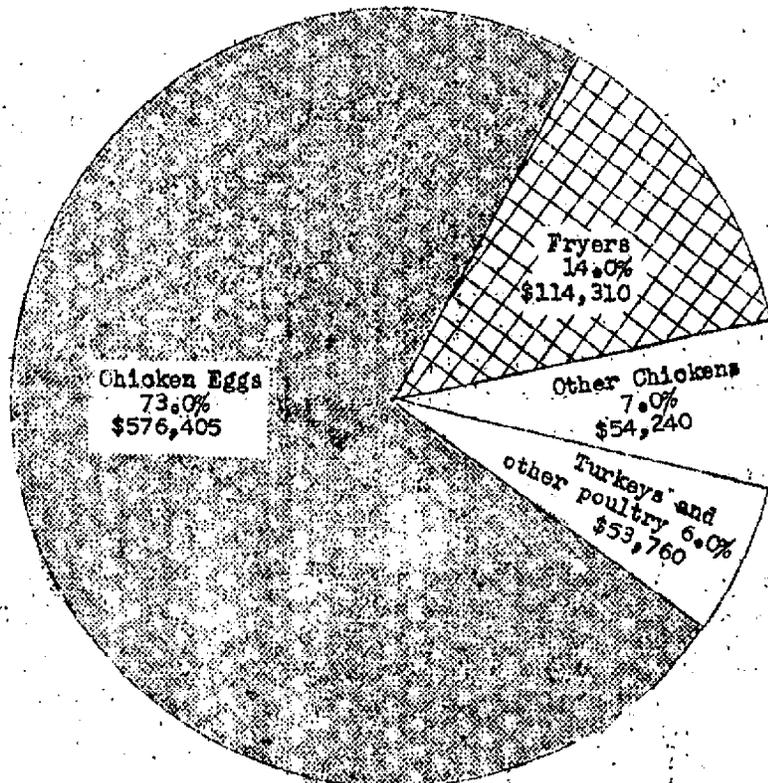


Figure 12.- Divisions of Kitsap County Poultry Industry
By Products Sold off Farms in 1954.
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

Hogs

Hogs are a minor type of livestock raised in Kitsap County. They reached their greatest number in recent years in 1944 when over 2,000 head were kept on 358 farms, the average being less than 4 head per farm. Interest in raising swine fell off by 1954 to about 1,730 head kept on about 310 farms. Hogs are mainly kept as a sideline on dairy and poultry farms in the Port Orchard and Poulsbo districts. A few commercial hog-feeding farms near Bremerton utilize food wastes from institutions and naval installations. A considerable number of farms keep one or two feeder hogs for slaughter and farm household use. This practice, common before 1940, is less in recent years as more farm places buy meat from stores. This trend has caused a reduction in feeder hogs kept on farms.

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

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	1,204	301	642
1944	2,061	195	590
1949	1,536	400	607
1954	1,731	426	433

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Horses and Mules

Horses and mules for farm work, logging and transportation have decreased in the last 30 years, being replaced by tractors, trucks and other machines. There were about 1,300 horses in Kitsap County in 1920. By 1954 there were only 433 head enumerated by the Census. Most of the present horses are used for riding. Only 45 farms were using horses for farm work power in the last Census. Horses are most common in northern Kitsap County in the Poulsbo, Kingston, Lofall and Seabeck districts and near resort centers on Hood Canal.

Sheep

In contrast to many areas in western Washington, sheep raising has increased on the Kitsap Peninsula in recent years. Since a low number of 195 head in 1944, sheep were increased to 426 head by 1954. There were 53 farms keeping sheep and lambs in 1954 compared with only 30 to 40 between 1945 and 1950. More lambs were being sold and more wool was being shorn. Sheep have been adopted as a sideline on general farms and on specialized farms as well to produce a lamb crop. Sheep are good utilizers of woodland pastures, bracken fern patches and sloping bush land common in the area. Most of the animals are in small farm flocks of 4 to 16 head. Most of the sheep are raised on farms in the northern part of the peninsula in the drier climatic zone about Port Gamble and Kingston.

Goats, Rabbits and Fur Animals

Kitsap County with its numerous small farms is an important area in specialized animal industries. Over 80 farms keep goats and in 1954 the area ranked twelfth in the state with 345 head. Nearly all the goats are of the dairy type and their products are used mainly on the farms or marketed in local neighborhoods. Some goats are kept to keep down brush, grass and weeds surrounding orchards and farmsteads. Rabbits are kept on about 280 farms with a few commercial rabbitries selling to the commercial market. Fur farming has been on the increase particularly in ranch mink. There were ten fur farming operations enumerated in the 1950 Census. Commercial and part-time farms which sell small animals and their products number about 80 and their total gross sales amounted to over \$16,000 per year when last enumerated in 1949.

Bees and Honey

The last agricultural Census of bee-keeping in Washington in 1950 showed that Kitsap County ranked twenty-first in the state in production of honey. About 70 farms were keeping bees and there were 180 hives. This indicates that bee-keeping is for farm-household use mainly and for some neighborhood sales. Those farms keeping bees generally have one to three hives.

Bee-keeping is not as common as it was in the earlier years of settlement. In the 1920 Census there were 811 hives enumerated on the Kitsap Peninsula. This was over four times greater than the number of hives found in the 1950 Census.

The main value of bees today is to provide good pollination of fruit, seed and flower crops. The sale of only a few hundred dollars worth of honey in local trade is of secondary importance. Honey produced in this area is mainly of the clover, big leaf maple and fireweed flavors.