

PART VI

Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Livestock raising is the major specialty of Kittitas County agriculture. Over one-half of the farms are mainly dependent on the sale of animals or animal products. Nearly 60 percent of the gross farm income comes from sales of livestock and livestock products, amounting to over \$5,600,000 annually. The livestock industry is dominated by the production of beef cattle. Dairy stock and sheep are secondary. Kittitas ranks second in the state in the production and sales of live beef animals, marketing over \$3,400,000 worth annually to the regional meat slaughtering and processing industry. The sheep and lamb industry with annual sales of over 18,000 head worth \$240,000, ranks fifth in the state.

Livestock Trends

Measured in numbers and types of animals, livestock raising has changed considerably since 1920. The cattle industry has expanded but numbers of hogs,

Total Value of Kittitas County Livestock: \$4,950,000

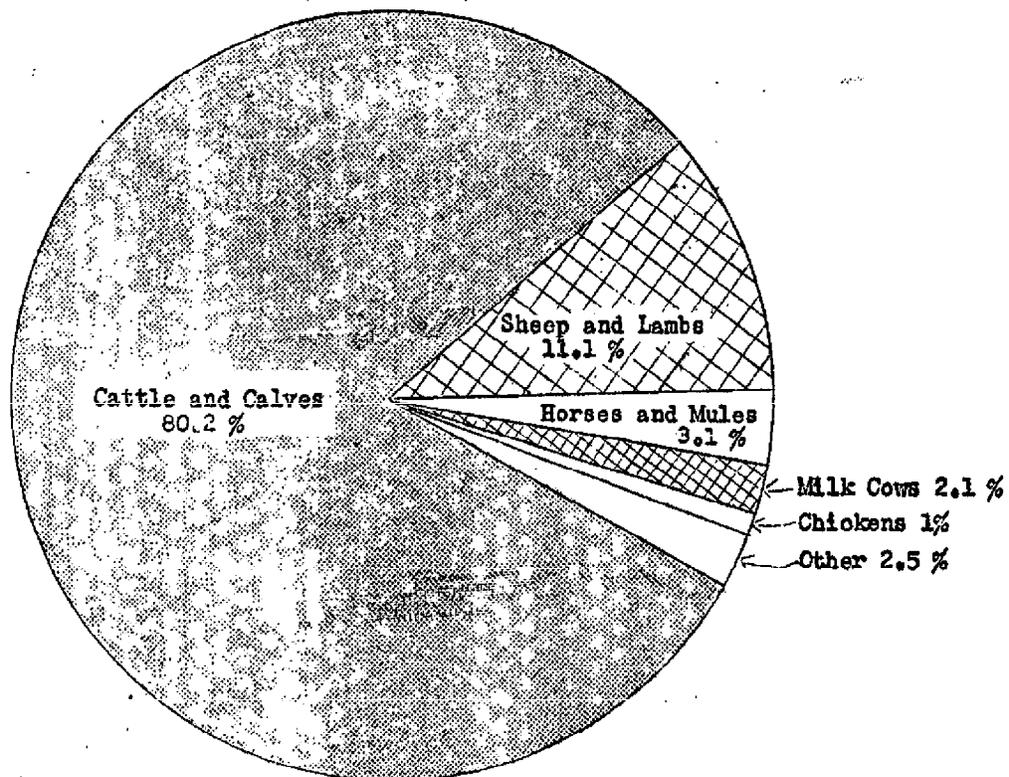


Figure 11.—Value of Livestock on Farms
Kittitas County, 1950.
(Based on U. S. Census, Agriculture)

sheep and horses have declined. The value of livestock on farms in 1950 was much greater than in 1920, being \$1,981,000 in 1920 and an estimated \$4,950,000 in 1950 according to the Census. All cattle on farms have increased from 29,000 head in 1939 to 71,000 in 1956. The number of beef cattle has increased almost five-fold since 1939 and dairy cattle have decreased by nearly thirty percent.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

Beef and dairy cattle are the mainstay of Kittitas County farming and are kept on over four-fifths of all the farms in the county. In most recent census enumerations cattle have accounted for about 80 percent of the value of all livestock. Cattle numbers have been gradually increasing, reaching a peak of 71,000 head in 1956. Kittitas is second to Yakima County in production and sales of live beef cattle.

Since 1939 there has been an increasing interest in raising beef cattle. Higher prices and demand for beef created by World War II and continued by the Korean conflict have been chiefly responsible. Another factor has been the smaller amount of labor and equipment needed to raise beef in comparison with dairying. Part-time farmers have favored beef cattle as a sideline. Livestock men have been able to handle more stock by using more hay harvesting machinery, by using trucks for hauling feed or stock and by improving and expanding their ranges in the uplands. Since 1939, beef cattle have increased from 12,500 head to an estimated 59,100 head in 1956.

Table 28:- Cattle on Farms
Kittitas County, 1939-1956

Year	January 1 Numbers on Farms		
	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	29,000	12,500	16,500
1940	30,800	14,000	16,800
1941	33,500	15,800	17,700
1942	35,200	16,800	18,400
1943	37,200	19,100	18,100
1944	37,400	20,100	17,300
1945	34,500	18,000	16,500
1946	35,200	18,800	16,400
1947	35,100	22,000	13,100
1948	34,000	21,100	12,900
1949	34,600	22,300	12,300
1950	35,700	23,000	12,700
1951	40,700	28,300	12,400
1952	50,200	38,500	11,700
1953	55,300	43,500	11,800
1954	59,200	47,500	11,700
1955	65,400	53,300	12,100
1956	71,000	59,100	11,900

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

Dairying in terms of operators and cattle was on a downward trend before 1954, but commercial production is slightly increasing. The Census of 1954 showed that 364 farms were selling wholemilk, about 10 percent less than in 1949, when 420 farms sold milk. Dairy cattle have gone down to about 12,000 head compared with a peak number of 18,400 in 1942. Even though dairy cattle are fewer, production has been increased slightly since 1950 by improved dairy herd management. According to Census figures Kittitas dairymen increased milk production from 26,622,000 pounds in 1949 to 30,949,000 pounds in 1954. Whole milk sales for the Kittitas dairy industry amounted to \$1,151,000 in 1954, slightly higher than the \$1,137,000 worth sold in 1949.

Kittitas dairymen became part of the Puget Sound, Washington, Milk Marketing Area in 1953 and began selling more Grade A milk in the Seattle urban area. By 1956 it was producing over 2 percent of the Puget Sound Area supply. The Grade A milk is delivered to a Grade A milk plant at Ellensburg for transportation to Puget Sound. One major change since 1940 in Kittitas dairying has been the decrease of butter making and a change-over to the handling of fluid milk and cream. In 1954 Kittitas was sixth in the state in cream sold and fifteenth in wholemilk.

Table 29.- Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Kittitas County, 1939-1954.

Year	Whole Milk Sold By Farms		Cream Sold off Farms		Farm Made Butter Sold	
	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)
1939	8,527,700	no data	773	no data	2,740	no data
1944	24,980,000	no data	436	no data	150	no data
1949	26,622,357	\$1,037,500	224,971	\$137,200	--	--
1954	30,949,095	1,151,250	194,476	102,500	--	--

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Table 30.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys
Kittitas County, 1939-1954.

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	52,600	463,328 1/	1,800
1944	57,925	511,205 1/	28,235
1949	39,575	296,941 1/	14,400
1954	45,400	418,879 1/	960

1/ Eggs produced, consumed and sold off farms.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Poultry and Eggs

Poultry farming has been declining in Kittitas County. Raising chickens and turkeys is less popular than during peak years of World War II. In 1954 there were only 168 farms selling chickens compared with 235 in 1949. Fewer farms were selling eggs but egg production and sales had increased. Census

figures indicate that some small scale poultry operations have been abandoned in recent years. Large scale turkey production for the seasonal holiday market also has dropped off since 1944 when 28,235 turkeys were raised. Poultry sales from farms were down to \$175,000 in 1954 compared with a sum of \$280,000 in 1949. Chicken eggs are the most valuable product of the poultry industry, making up about 54 percent of all sales.

One noticeable minor trend is an increase in the raising of ducks. In 1954 there were 115 farms raising ducks compared with only 40 in 1949. A total of 1,260 ducks were raised for market in 1954, eighth highest in the state.

Hogs

There has been a gradual decline of interest in raising hogs and pigs. Both market and home-use raising of pork has dropped off since 1920 when there were 3,984 head. By 1954, swine kept for breeding purposes were down to only 1,698 head and were kept on only 258 farms. Sales amounted to 7,250 hogs and pigs marketed by a total of 108 farms. Most hogs in Kittitas County are raised by feeders and livestockmen in the irrigated area. In common with most other Washington farming regions, the pioneer custom of home butchering and curing of pork has been almost abandoned. Farms with two to five head raised for home use are no longer common.

Horses and Mules

Horses and mules have decreased considerable since 1940. A large number of horses were used formerly in livestock farming, hay and grain harvesting, mountain packing and logging. Their numbers have dropped over fifty percent in the last 15 years. The horse population in 1954 was only 2,084 compared with 5,704 in 1940. Horses of draft and working type have been replaced by mechanical devices in line with a general statewide trend which started 35 years ago. In 1920, there were 5,872 horses and 85 mules kept on the farms of Kittitas County. In 1954 there were 564 farms keeping horses mainly of the saddle type, and as a rule there were only to four horses per farm. Trade in horses has become quite small. In 1954, only 84 head were sold and only 36 farms reported sales of horses.

Table 31.- Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules
Kittitas County, 1939-1954.

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses & Mules (head)
1939	4,755	36,773	5,704
1944	3,051	49,567	4,741
1949	1,722	32,063	3,504
1954	1,698	21,064	2,084

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Sheep

Kittitas County has been one of the major sheep raising areas of Washington over the last 75 years. Although the number of sheep kept on farms has

decreased to about 21,000 head, the county area ranked fourth in the state in 1954 in this type of livestock industry. Sizes and numbers of large range flocks moved each summer to national forest ranges in the Cascade Mountains and to Montana have decreased. Fewer head are raised but there are more small flocks kept on farms. In 1954 there were 154 farms keeping sheep, about 50 more than were enumerated in 1949. Many keep sheep as a sideline. The lamb crop, raised mainly in the foothills of the Kittitas Valley and on irrigated places, amounted to 16,600 head in 1954. The annual wool clip from Kittitas flocks ranges from 170,000 to 185,000 pounds per year, being the fourth largest in the state. The Kittitas County Woolgrowers Association reportedly has over 50 members.

Bees and Honey

According to Census enumerations of beekeeping in 1919 and 1949 in Kittitas County, the size of this industry has changed but little since 1919. The number of hives were 2,400 in 1949 slightly less than the 2,860 reported in 1919. Honey production was 153,700 pounds in 1949 considerably more than the production of 93,600 pounds in 1919. Keeping in recent years has tended to be on a larger scale with more hives managed per farm. There is more commercial production and less honey produced for use in farm households.

Fur and Specialty Animals

With the exception of ranch mink fur farming, specialty animal raising is not important in Kittitas County. There is no commercial goat raising and keeping of rabbits is quite minor. A 1950 Census enumeration shows that mink ranching in Kittitas County an important part of the state's fur farming industry. About 12 farms are located in the higher, cooler valley lands on the eastern Cascade Mountain slope mainly in the Cle Elum area. Fur and breeding stock sales were over \$26,000 annually when last enumerated in 1949. The county ranked eighth in the state in value of fur farming. According to a recent report by an agricultural journalist ^{1/}, fur farmers of Kittitas County sold \$250,000 worth of ranch mink in 1956. Fur farmers belong to the Central Washington Fur Breeder's Association at Ellensburg. Although several color-hybrids of mink are raised, dark and topaz-colored mink are the most numerous type of pelts produced for the fur auction markets in Seattle.

^{1/} Harold A. Scales. Washington Farmer. Spokane, Washington, August 1, 1957. "Mink Business Is In The Doldrums".