

PART VI

Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Although Spokane County is an area specializing primarily in commercial grain farming it is important also in livestock. In 1956 an estimated 50,900 head or about 4 percent of Washington cattle were located on Spokane farms, the county ranking seventh in the state. It was third in numbers of hogs and 17th in sheep. The estimated value of all livestock on farms was \$6,640,407 in 1950, seventh highest in the state according to the Census of Agriculture. The rich grasslands of early Spokane County and the large production of feed grains and alfalfa in more recent times have made livestock farming a popular secondary activity.

Total Value of all Livestock on Farms, 1950 - \$6,640,407

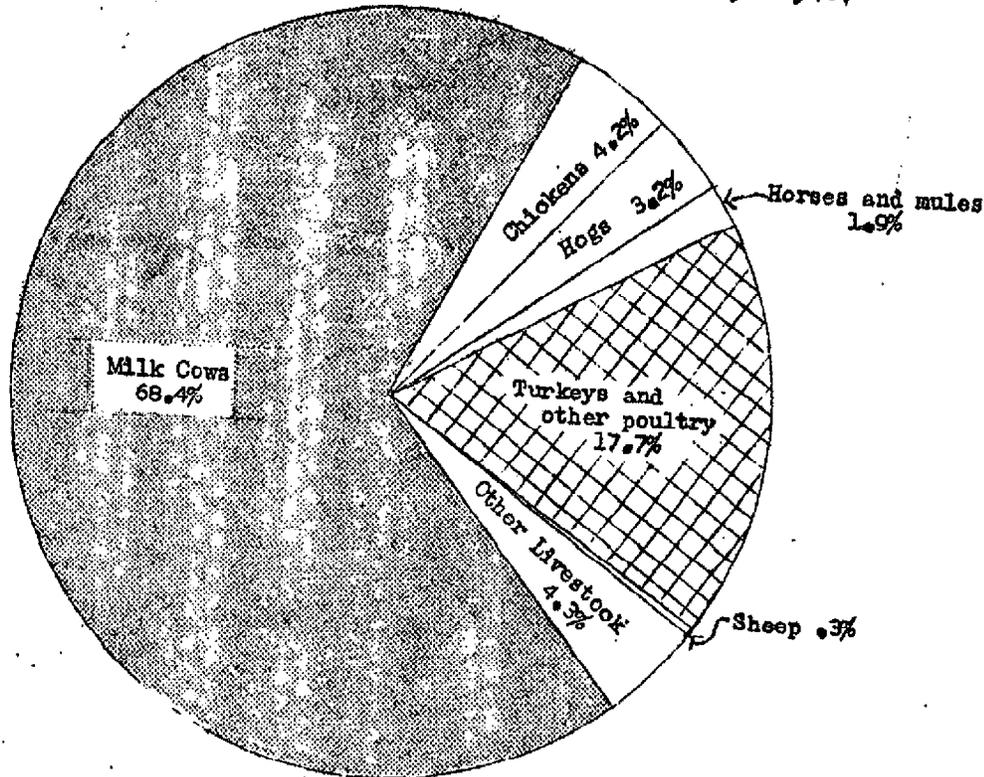


Figure 11. Value of Livestock and Poultry on Farms
Spokane County, 1950
(Based on U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1950)

Cattle and Calves

On the basis of value and number, cattle and calves are of primary importance. All cattle and calves numbered 34,300 in 1939 and expanded to 50,900 in 1956. Since there were only 23,800 head of dairy cattle estimated in 1956, beef breeds make up over half of the cattle. About two-thirds of the cattle are in the northern half of the county. The upper Little Spokane Valley in the Deer Park, Elk, Milan and Mead districts contain the largest concentrations of cattle. Milk cattle are in largest numbers to the north of Spokane city. In 1954 the Deer Park district had the largest number of milk cows, about 5,400 head distributed on 274 farms, an average of about 20 head per farm. Beef cattle raising is a more common practice in drier southern Spokane County. About 9,500 head are in the Cheney, Spangle area. Around Cheney cattle herds average 40 to 50 head.

Table 23.- Cattle on Farms
Spokane County, 1939-1956.

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	34,300	7,600	26,700
1940	35,300	9,200	26,100
1941	38,000	12,200	25,800
1942	41,000	12,400	28,600
1943	45,900	13,600	32,300
1944	49,200	17,300	31,900
1945	44,100	14,400	29,700
1946	40,000	12,500	27,500
1947	40,500	15,000	25,500
1948	38,500	13,900	24,600
1949	37,400	15,100	22,300
1950	37,200	14,600	22,600
1951	36,500	16,000	20,500
1952	38,800	17,800	21,000
1953	43,000	21,900	21,100
1954	46,500	24,500	22,000
1955	49,500	26,900	22,600
1956	50,900	27,100	23,800

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

Sheep

In 1954 there were 2,082 head of sheep and lambs located on 159 farms in Spokane County, ranking 17th in the state's sheep industry. Small farm flocks are characteristic, being a sideline activity. A lamb crop of about 1,300 head is sold per year. In 1954 about 11,570 pounds of wool were shorn in Spokane County. The trend in sheep raising has been downward. There were only 2,082 head on farms in 1954 compared to 4,090 in 1940.

Most of the sheep are located in the highland valleys of northern Spokane County and in the Palouse Hills of the southeast. Small farm flocks of 10 to 30

head is the general practice. The largest concentrations of sheep are in the Latah Valley where about 590 head are kept on 35 different farms, and in the Deer Park and Elk districts of the upper Little Spokane Valley where 425 head are kept on a total of 25 farms.

Hogs

Spokane ranked third among Washington counties in 1954 in number of hogs on farms. The Census of Agriculture enumerated 11,476 head on 900 farms-- about one-fourth of all in the county. Census data show that the raising of hogs and pigs is most common in the north central portion of the county in combination with general livestock farming.

Largest number of farms raising hogs commercially are found to the immediate southeast limits of Spokane city. Here, 2,325 head were enumerated on 200 farms in 1954, indicating an average of 11 head per farm. In the suburban zone, a common practice in hog raising is the feeding of waste from institutions and food processing plants. However, the raising of hogs has declined since 1945 when there were 17,557 head.

Horses

Horses are rather evenly distributed but are most common in the northern forested area around Deer Park and Elk. They are also more frequent on farms of the Palouse Hills region in the districts around Rockford, Waverley, Fairfield and Spangle. The distribution is mainly one to two horses on the farms keeping them, indicating that they are kept principally for riding. Horses have declined steadily with each Census since 1940 as mechanized agriculture displaces them.

Table 24.- Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules on Farms
Spokane County, 1940-1954.

Census Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1940	14,046	4,090	8,698
1945	17,557	2,498	5,961
1950	9,926	1,019	3,059
1954	11,476	2,082	2,215

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Poultry, Eggs and Turkeys

Spokane County ranked eighth in Washington poultry farming in 1954, and was the foremost poultry area in eastern Washington. Poultry farming has increased considerably in recent years. Chickens and turkeys are minor sidelines on grain and livestock farms, for home use and local marketing. The raising of turkeys has also increased and the number of farms specializing in commercial turkey raising during the 1950-1954 period ranged from 74 to 136. Heavy breeds are more popular than the light breeds. One specialty which shows a gain in recent years is the raising and selling of broilers or fryer chickens. Fourteen

farms specializing in this product for the fresh meat and frozen meat trade in Spokane marketed a total of 341,400 birds during 1954.

Chicken eggs are by far the most important cash sales item in the poultry industry. Eggs were sold from 1,238 farms in 1954 and 1,458 in 1949. These farmers received a total of \$1,069,404 for eggs in 1954 and \$986,575 in 1949.

Table 25.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys
Spokane County, 1940-1954.

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1940	269,727	2,467,967	9,396
1945	303,468	2,714,293	6,447
1950	215,279	1,934,519 1/	15,566
1954	281,103	2,497,201 1/	20,468

1/ Eggs sold.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Goats, Rabbits, Fur Animals

Spokane County is one of the most important areas in eastern Washington for specialty or small-animal livestock raising. Since 1950 there has been an increasing interest in raising goats and rabbits. In 1954 there were 104 farms keeping goats compared with only 67 in 1950. Goats on farms had reached a county total of 667, third highest in the state. Domesticated rabbits were kept on over 300 farms, ranking sixth in the state. The last Census enumeration of fur farming showed that there were 16 such operations. In small animal products such as goat milk, mohair, rabbits and fur animals and their pelts, Spokane County producers market over \$60,000 annually, holding fourth place in the state.

Bees and Honey

In Spokane County about 171 farms have beehives and about 35,600 pounds of honey are produced per year. There were 1,062 hives reported in the Census of Agriculture, 1950. Census figures indicate a growing interest in beekeeping. Honey production in 1950 was 21,417 pounds greater than in 1920; in 1939, production was 15,586 pounds from 600 hives, widely distributed on about 160 farms.