

PART VII.

FARM MARKETING AND EXPENDITURES

Location and Transportation for Marketing

Most Whatcom County farms are favorably located to market products within the most densely populated area in the Pacific Northwest--the Puget Sound metropolitan area. With Bellingham as the pivotal point, a 100 mile radius encompasses a marketing area which includes greater Seattle, Everett, and Tacoma. Vancouver, British Columbia is about 58 miles to the northwest.

Transport facilities for moving farm products are good in Whatcom County except in the eastern section where the rugged Cascade Mountains have prevented the building of an easy cross-state route. A network of primary and secondary highways and county roads permits year around movement of farm goods in the agricultural areas of western Whatcom County. U. S. Highway 99, the primary route through the area, connects Whatcom County points with the cities to the north and south. One road, State Highway 542, provides good access to the Mount Baker recreation area in the central part of the county. State Highway 20 ties points in southeastern Whatcom County with those in western Skagit County. A highway over Rainy and Washington Passes is under construction which will extend Highway 20 into eastern Washington.

Whatcom County enjoys good railroad facilities. Three railroad companies serve the county. The Northern Pacific runs through the west-central portion of the county to connect with the British Columbia Electric Railway at Sumas. There is a branch line to Bellingham. The Great Northern mainline runs along Puget Sound from Seattle through Bellingham, Ferndale, and Blaine to Vancouver, British Columbia. Lynden, Bellingham, Sumas and Glacier are united by branch lines of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad.

The Port of Bellingham provides a deep water harbor for large ocean-going vessels. Waterborne transportation plays an important part in the marketing of Whatcom County goods.

Income: Value of Products Sold

Census of Agriculture data on the value of farm products sold show that the trend of gross farm income in Whatcom County has been upward in recent years. All Whatcom County farms marketed agricultural products worth \$21,650,255 in 1959 compared with \$16,973,748 in 1954 and \$15,341,909 in 1949. Whatcom ranked eighth among Washington counties in value of all farm products sold in 1959.

The total farm sales value of livestock and livestock products for 1959 in Whatcom County amounted to \$17,706,625, an increase of 32 percent over the 1954 Census figure of \$13,461,081. The 1959 total represents 82 percent of the value of all farm products sold in the county during that year.

All crops (i.e., field crops, vegetables, fruits, nuts, forest products, and horticultural specialty products) sold off Whatcom County farms in 1959 were valued at \$3,943,630. This total was 12 percent above the corresponding figure for 1954 and represented 18 percent of the total value of all agricultural products sold in 1959.

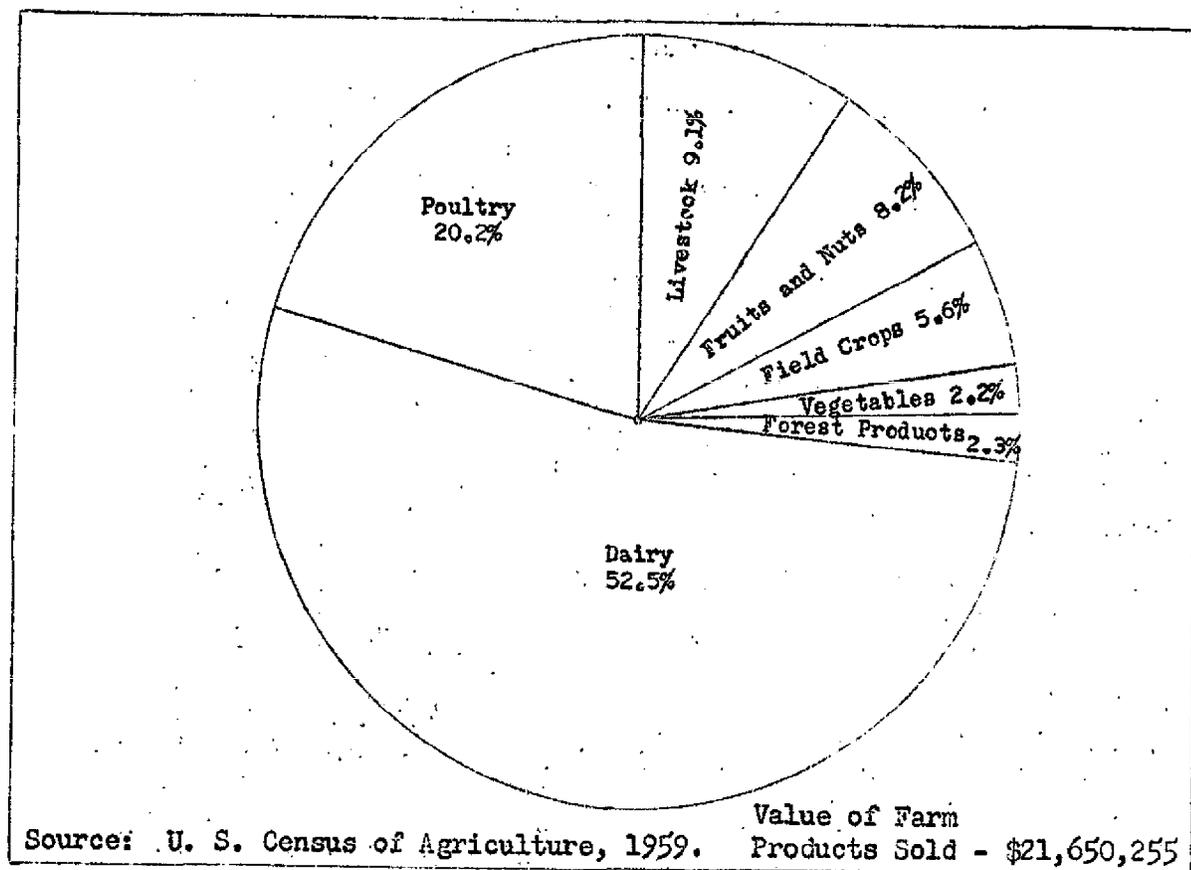


Figure 12. Sources of Cash Income, Whatcom County, 1959

Table 31. Crops Marketed From Whatcom County Farms, 1959.

Crops Marketed	Amount Received By Farmers (Dollars)	Percent All Crops Sold
Fruits and nuts sold	\$1,772,877	45.0
Field Crops other than vegetables, fruits, and nuts sold	1,203,995	30.5
Vegetables sold	478,071	12.1
Forest Products and Horticultural Specialties sold	488,717	12.4
Total amount received by farmers for cash crops	\$3,943,630	100.0

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

Sales of farm products and farm incomes vary considerably by type and size of farm. In 1956, about 57 percent of the farms in Whatcom County were considered commercial operations by the Census of Agriculture. The largest percentage (34 percent) of Whatcom County farms was Class VII, defined as noncommercial, part-time operations. The commercial Class III category, with agricultural sales per unit ranging between \$10,000 to \$19,999, ranked second in percentage (21 percent) of total county farms for the same year. During 1959, less than one percent of the county farms made total sales of over \$40,000 each, while over 46 percent marketed less than \$2,500 worth of products per unit.

Table 32. Farms by Economic Class
Whatcom County, 1959

Economic Class	Value of Farm Products Sold	Number of Farms <u>1/</u>	Percent of Total Estimated Farms in the County
Class I	\$40,000 and over	24	.76
Class II	\$20,000 to \$39,999	175	5.59
Class III	\$10,000 to \$19,999	645	20.60
Class IV	\$ 5,000 to \$ 9,999	470	15.01
Class V	\$ 2,500 to \$ 4,999	371	11.85
Class VI <u>2/</u>	\$ 50 to \$ 2,499	110	3.51
Total Commercial Farms		1,795	57.34
Class VII (Part-time)	\$ 50 to \$ 2,499	1,060	33.86
Class VIII (Part-Retirement)	\$ 50 to \$ 2,499	275	8.78
Total Non-commercial Farms		1,335	42.65

1/ The totals for farms by economic class are estimates for all farms made on the basis of data reported only for the sample farms.

2/ Farms with a value of sales of \$50 to \$2,499 were classified as commercial if the farm operator was under 65 years of age and (1) he did not work off the farm 100 or more days during the year and (2) the income received by the operator and members of his family from nonfarm sources was less than the value of all farm products sold.

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

Marketing Dairy Products

The sale of dairy products is the major farm marketing activity in Whatcom County. Sales of dairy products off Whatcom County farms amounted to \$11,373,495 in 1959, or 34 percent above the 1954 figure of \$8,497,727. The 1959 figure represented over 52 percent of the total value of all farm products sold in the county during the year. Also in 1959, Whatcom County ranked first among Washington counties in the value of dairy products sold. The 1959 county sales figure represented about 16 percent of the state total value of dairy products marketed off the farm.

Dairy products sold in 1959 in the county included 286,697,670 pounds of whole milk from 1,647 farms and 33,320 pounds of butterfat from 20 farms. Whole milk is hauled by tank trucks to dairy plants located in Bellingham and Lynden. Among the dairy products manufactured at the local plants are ice cream, ice cream mix, cottage cheese, evaporated milk, powdered milk, butter and cheese. Western Whatcom County is under the Federal Puget Sound Milk Market Order, which establishes minimum prices paid to the area's producers.

Marketing Poultry Products

The poultry industry in Whatcom County provides, for many farmers, all or a substantial part of their income each year. Whatcom County farmers marketed poultry products worth almost \$4,365,000 in 1959, nearly 21 percent above the corresponding figure for 1954. Sales of poultry products in 1959 represented about 25 percent of the total value for all livestock and their products sold, and over 20 percent of the value of all farm products sold in the county. The number of farms active in poultry and poultry products has been declining, but production has increased in recent years in terms of both sales of birds and eggs. Over 600 poultry producers in the area sold chickens, eggs, and turkeys during 1959.

The marketing of fresh eggs is the major activity within the poultry industry of Whatcom County. In 1959, about 10,508,089 dozen eggs were sold, 68 percent above the 6,273,370 dozen reported for 1954. Most of the eggs are marketed through a cooperative association. The cooperative operates a fleet of trucks for picking up crated eggs and delivering feed and other poultry supplies to the farms. Over 530 Whatcom County farms reported selling chicken eggs in 1959.

The marketing of live chickens and broilers was an important poultry activity in 1959. Chickens sold in 1959 totaled 774,935, or about 40 percent more than the 551,818 reported for 1954. Broilers comprised 63 percent of the number of all chickens sold in 1959 compared with over 75 percent in 1954. Private and cooperative processing plants equipped to handle large numbers of birds constitute the major sales outlet for broiler growers.

Income derived from the sale of turkeys, ducks, geese, other miscellaneous poultry, and their products is insignificant among the farmers of Whatcom County. Annual sales of these items dropped drastically between 1954 and 1959; from \$243,678 down to a mere \$896.

Marketing Livestock: Cattle, Hogs, Horses, and Sheep

Whatcom County's third major agricultural marketing item, after dairy products and poultry products, has been the sale of livestock and their products involving auction yards, meat packers, feed yards, breeders and shippers. In 1959, the value of livestock sold alive (including horses) in Whatcom County amounted to \$1,968,182, which represented about 9 percent of the total value of all farm products sold during the year. Value of farm sales of livestock and livestock products in the county in 1959 was 46 percent above the 1954 figure.

Cattle and calves are the major animals sold within the livestock marketing activities of Whatcom County. In 1959, a total of 2,348 farms reported selling 27,406 head of cattle and calves worth \$1,896,005, or about 96 percent of the county's total livestock sales during the year. Calves made up about 67 percent of the number sold. In recent years, the marketing of dairy beef cattle has been an expanding enterprise in the county. Cattle are sold directly to local packers or those located in Seattle, to feeders, or at local auction yards. Many of the county's dairy beef cattle are shipped to Snohomish County, where one of the Pacific Northwest's largest dairy beef auctions is located.

Sales of hogs, horses, sheep, and lambs are relatively minor in Whatcom County. In 1959, 105 farms marketed 1,445 hogs valued at \$47,685. In the same year, horses worth \$13,500 and numbering 85 head were sold off 65 Whatcom County farms. Also, 300 sheep and lambs valued at \$7,800 were sold alive off 45 farms.

About 7,786 pounds of wool were shorn from 876 sheep on 53 farms in 1959. Hogs, sheep, and lambs are sold directly to local packers or at auction yards. Some also go to slaughter houses in Seattle.

Table 33. Livestock and Livestock Products Marketed
Whatcom County, 1959

Class of Livestock and Products Sold	Amount Received By Farmers (dollars)	Percent of the Total Value
Livestock Sold Alive (cattle and calves, horses and mules, hogs, sheep)	\$ 1,968,182	11.1
Dairy Products (whole milk, butterfat)	11,373,495	64.2
Poultry and Poultry Products (chickens, eggs, turkeys, ducks, etc.)	<u>4,364,948</u>	<u>24.7</u>
Total amount received for Livestock and Livestock Products	\$17,706,625	100.0

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Marketing Berries and Fruit

Whatcom County's berry crop is mainly sold locally to processors. Market outlets are located in Bellingham, Lynden, Everson, and Sumas. Most of the strawberries go to processors for freezing. Some of the berries are then sold for the commercial manufacture of preserves, jams, and toppings. The bulk are sold as frozen berries for the consumer trade and to restaurants, bakeries, and ice cream plants.

Most of the red raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries are also sold to local processors for freezing. Fresh market sales of raspberries are concentrated in the nearby urban areas because this berry cannot tolerate long distance shipping.

Most of Whatcom County's tree fruit and grape production is in small plantings and production is largely for home consumption. Filbert nuts harvested from the area find market outlets through Portland, Oregon.

In 1959, fruits, nuts, grapes, and berries sold by Whatcom County farmers were valued at \$1,772,877. This amounted to about 45 percent of the total value of crops sold, and 8 percent of all farm products marketed in the county for that year.

Marketing Field Crops

In 1959, Whatcom County farms sold field crops amounting to \$1,203,995, or about 30 percent of the value of all crops sold off the farms. Field crop sales accounted for over 5 percent of the total value of all farm products sold in the county.

More acreage is devoted to hay than any other field crop grown in Whatcom County. The county's production of clover-timothy and alfalfa hay is consumed locally on dairy and livestock farms as late fall, winter, and early spring feed. Silage cut from clover, alfalfa, and grass mixtures grown in the county is used almost exclusively for feeding dairy cattle, especially during the winter months. The county's production of field corn also is used for silage.

Most small grains harvested in the county are used by the local dairy, livestock, and poultry industry as feed. Oats represent the main grain crop in the area, followed by barley, wheat, and rye.

In 1963, about 24,100 tons of potatoes were harvested for sale on 2,060 acres in Whatcom County. A large portion of the county's potato crop is sold as seed potatoes to seed dealers and to farmers (particularly those in eastern Washington). Whatcom County potatoes are also marketed to local produce houses and to retail outlets throughout the Puget Sound area or put into storage.

Marketing Vegetables

Many Whatcom County farmers derive part or all of their income from sale of vegetables. Vegetable growers, in general, receive relatively high returns per acre for their crops. The county's annual production of vegetables is primarily for processing with only small quantities for fresh market consumption. Most of the vegetables grown are contracted by processors for freezing, either on an acreage or tonnage basis. In 1959, the value of vegetables sold off Whatcom County farms amounted to \$478,041, making up 2 percent of the value of all farm products sold and accounting for 12 percent of all crops marketed.

Whatcom County's green peas, sweet corn, snap beans, and carrots are shipped to processors in Lynden and in adjoining Skagit County. Minor amounts are marketed for fresh market consumption through produce buyers. Cucumbers grown in the county are shipped to Tacoma for the production of pickles.

Marketing Forest Products and Horticultural Specialties

Numerous farms in the foothills and upper valleys of Whatcom County have woodlots of young Douglas fir, hemlock, cedar, maple and alder. These are generally second-growth stands which have reached commercial size since the area was first logged over. Location close to pulp, paper, and other mills utilizing small logs has created a good cash market for farm forest products. Woodlot owners haul pulpwood, small logs, bolts, and poles to small inland mills and larger ones on Puget Sound. Farmers owning large acreages of woodlands generally sell timber stumpage to small logging operators. Others log their own timber.

The Census of Agriculture enumerated sales of forest products from 151 Whatcom County farms for \$140,426 in 1959. Standing timber valued at \$64,245 was sold off 75 farms. Firewood, pulpwood, fence posts, sawlogs, Christmas trees, and other miscellaneous products were sold from 75 farms for \$76,181.

Total value of sales for all horticultural specialties in Whatcom County for 1959 was \$348,291 as reported by 41 farms. Nursery products (trees, shrubs, vines, ornamentals, etc.) sold from 22 farms amounted to \$138,487 while 20 farms reported sales of cut flowers, potted plants, florist greens and bedding plants which grossed \$182,019. Also, 8 farms reported the sale of vegetables grown under glass, flower seeds, vegetable seeds, vegetable plants, bulbs, and mushrooms worth \$27,785.

Specified Farm Expenditures

Specified farm expenditures estimated on a basis of reports obtained from sample farms in Whatcom County by the Census of Agriculture amounted to \$10,915,233 in 1959, which represented over 50 percent of the value of all farm products sold during the year. The largest expenditure for the year was for feed for livestock and poultry which added up to \$7,240,479, showing the importance of livestock farming in the county. Feed expense also includes the cost of grinding and mixing of the feed. Purchases of livestock feed were reported by 2,765 farms in the 1959 Census.

Purchase of livestock and poultry ranked second as a major cost to Whatcom County farmers in 1959. Livestock and poultry worth about \$1,291,725 were purchased by 1,289 farms during 1959. Expense for hired labor was the third major item, amounting to \$1,199,345. Some 1,540 farms used hired help during 1959. Gasoline and other petroleum fuel and oil related only to the products used in the farm business cost 2,885 county farmers an estimated \$633,367 in the 1959 period. Outlay for machine hire totaled \$388,918 on 1,838 Whatcom County farms. Machine hire expenditures relate to custom machine work, such as tractor hire, baling, plowing, vegetable harvesting, spraying, and dusting. The amount spent for the labor included in machine hire was considered part of total expenditure. The sixth major cost, which amounted to \$161,399, represents the total amount spent during the year for seeds, bulbs, plants and trees which were used on 863 farms.

Table 34. Specified Farm Expenditures in 1959 ^{1/}
Whatcom County

Type of Expenditure	Number of Farms Reporting	Expenditure of All Farms	Average Per Farm
Feed for Livestock and Poultry	2,765	\$ 7,240,479	\$2,619
Purchase of Livestock and Poultry	1,289	1,291,725	1,002
Machine hire	1,838	388,918	212
Hired labor	1,540	1,199,345	779
Gasoline, petroleum fuel and oil	2,885	633,367	220
Seeds, bulbs, plants and trees	863	161,399	187
Total expended	3,085	\$10,915,233	\$3,538

^{1/} Data for farm expenditures are estimates based on reports obtained from the sample farms.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Fertilizer and Lime

Over 44 percent of the farms in Whatcom County used commercial fertilizer in 1959. About 6,481 tons of dry fertilizer were used by 1,322 farms, while 165 farms applied 755 tons of the liquid type during the year. Also in 1959, about 785 tons of lime and liming material were used by 45 farms on a total of 740 acres.

Table 35. Use of Commercial Fertilizer
On Crops and Pasture, for Whatcom County, 1959

Crops and Pasture Fertilized	Farms Reporting Use of Fertilizer	Acres Fertilized		Amount Used	
		Total (Acres)	Percent of Acreage Fertilized	Total (Tons)	Percent of Total Amount Used
Total Commercial Fertilizer Used	1,402	44,737	100.0	7,236	100.0
Hay and Cropland Pasture	1,066	31,150	69.6	4,522	62.5
Other Pasture	240	4,620	10.3	607	8.4
Wheat	35	440	1.0	93	1.3
Barley	46	751	1.7	95	1.3
All Other Crops	502	7,776	17.4	1,919	26.5

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

More fertilizer was used on hay and cropland pasture than any other crop in the county during the 1959 season. Hay and cropland pasture accounted for 62 percent of all fertilizer used and for about 70 percent of the acreage fertilized in the county. About 8 percent of all fertilizer was applied to other pastures, which represented about 10 percent of the total fertilized acreage.