

PART VI

LIVESTOCK, DAIRYING, AND POULTRY

General

Livestock and livestock products earned \$3,547,300 for Adams County farmers in 1959. This value was 19th highest among all Washington counties and represented 14 percent of the value of all farm products sold in Adams County that year. Raising and feeding beef cattle constitutes a majority of livestock enterprises, with hogs being the second most important livestock industry. The number of cattle and calves on Adams County farms in 1959 ranked 16th statewide, hogs ranked 8th, and sheep and lambs 16th. Other classes of livestock, including poultry, dairy cattle, and horses and mules, are minor.

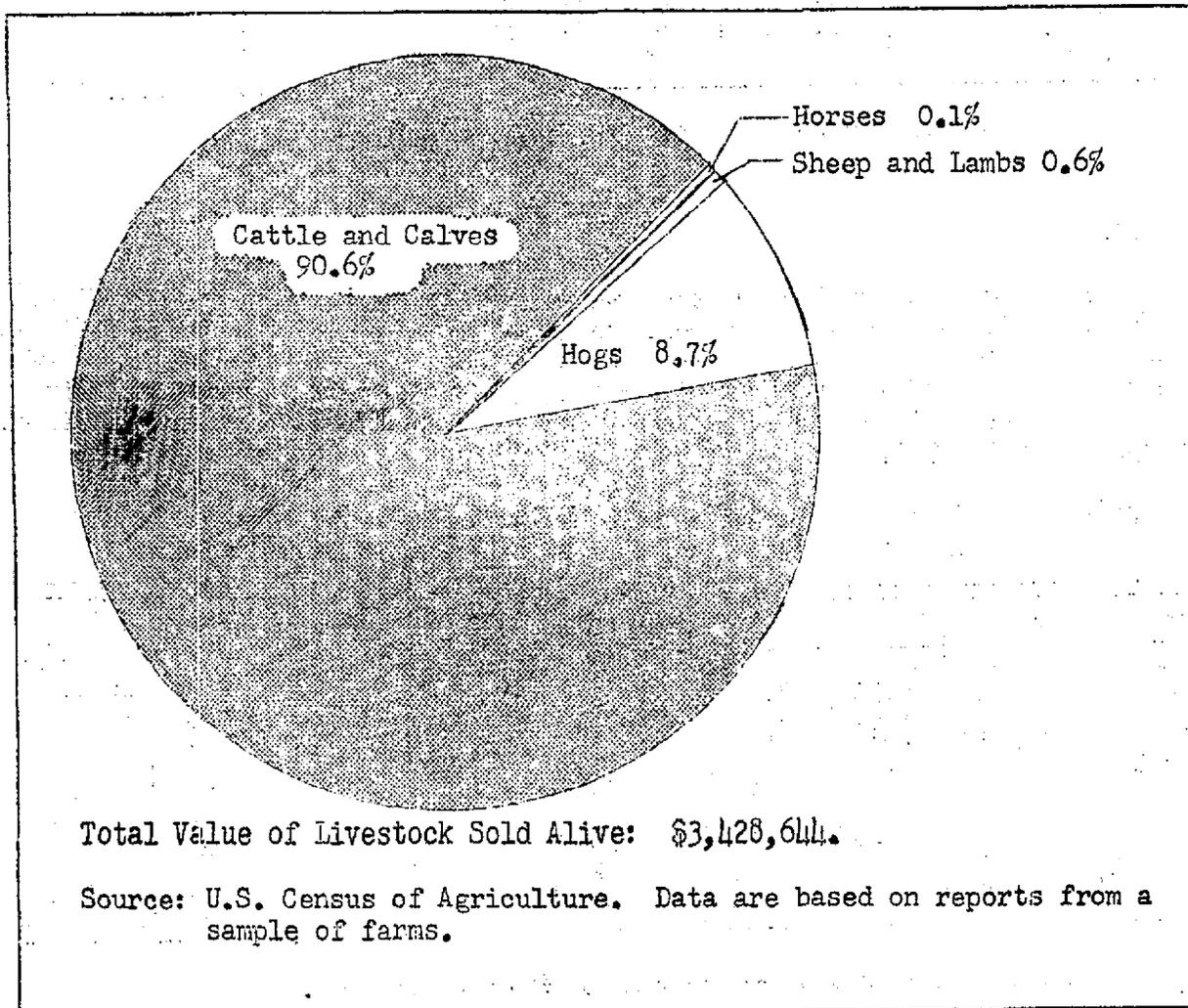


Figure 11. Value of Livestock Sold Alive in Adams County, 1959.

Beef Cattle and Dairying

Beef cattle numbers have doubled during the period of irrigation development in Adams County, going from 17,500 head in 1950 to 34,800 in 1963. Most of the gain has been caused by an increase in cattle feeding operations, developed to take advantage of increased alfalfa, corn, sugar beet tops, and other feeds produced on irrigated farms. About half the farms in the county keep at least a few head of beef or milk animals to better utilize crop residues. Large feedlots having over a thousand head capacity each have been established at Othello and Cunningham.

Of the 378 farms reporting cattle on hand in 1959, 56 percent had fewer than 20 head, 31 percent had from 20 to 99 head, and the remaining 13 percent had 100 or more. Cow-calf beef operations, now in the minority compared to feedlots, are largely confined to ranches in the eastern drylands. Some of these cow-calf operators now do their own finishing. Sales of live beef and dairy animals in 1959 earned \$3,106,495 for Adams County farmers.

Table 29. Cattle Numbers on Farms in Adams County, 1949-1963.

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1949	19,700	17,800	1,900
1950	19,300	17,500	1,800
1951	20,000	18,600	1,400
1952	22,100	21,000	1,100
1953	23,000	22,100	900
1954	23,900	23,100	800
1955	24,200	23,400	800
1956	24,500	23,600	900
1957	22,200	21,300	900
1958	23,000	22,300	700
1959	26,500	25,600	900
1960	29,500	28,600	900
1961	30,000	29,100	900
1962	32,500	31,600	900
1963	35,500	34,800	700

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Dairy cow numbers have decreased from 1,900 in 1949 to 700 in 1963, partly because of greater emphasis now on feeding beef cattle. Despite this reduction, however, income from sale of dairy products more than doubled between 1949 and 1959. The reason for this is that farmers are now selling much more of their milk as whole milk rather than selling only cream as they did previously.

Hogs, Sheep and Horses

Increased local supplies of corn, barley, and chopped alfalfa have favored expansion of commercial hog raising, and numbers increased from 1,343 in 1950 to 6,509 in 1959. Hog raising is generally a sideline business--of the 179 farms having hogs in 1959, 131 had under 25 head. Feeder herds of 100 or more hogs were reported by 15 farms. Hog sales from 107 farms earned \$296,769 in 1959.

Table 30. Dairy Products Sold From Farms in Adams County, 1949-1959

Year	All Milk or Cream Sold	Whole Milk Sold	Butterfat Sold
	dollars	pounds	pounds
1949	28,037	230,173	28,872
1954	13,938	236,769	11,374
1959	67,325	1,570,743	14,468

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture. Data are based on reports for a sample of farms.

Sheep and lambs numbered 15,715 on county farms in 1945, then decreased to 697 in 1954. By 1959 they were back up to 5,082. The trend has been from large range bands to small flocks on irrigated farms; average number of sheep per farm went from about 1,000 in 1939 to 78 in 1959. Of 65 farms reporting sheep on hand in 1959 only 7 had 300 head or more. The few remaining large range operations are on drylands in the eastern part of the county. Sheep and lambs were sold alive from 37 farms in 1959 for \$20,826, and 52 farms sheared 41,786 pounds of wool.

Tractors have nearly eliminated the need for horses and mules as work animals in Adams County as in the rest of the United States. A few are still used for working cattle, riding fences, etc., but the majority are now kept for pleasure. Numbers declined steadily between 1940 and 1954, going from 2,398 to 437, then increased slightly to 490 in 1959.

Table 31. Hogs, Sheep, Wool Shorn and Horses and Mules on Adams County Farms, 1940-1959.

Year	Hogs and Pigs (head)	Sheep and Lambs		Horses and Mules (head)
		(head)	Wool Shorn (pounds)	
1940	1,383 ^{1/}	36,188 ^{2/}	303,332	2,398 ^{3/}
1945	2,497	15,715	192,563	1,203
1950	1,343	6,940	68,780	720
1954	1,506	697	5,826	437
1959	6,509	5,082	41,786	490

^{1/} Animals over 4 months old—1940 only.

^{2/} Animals over 6 months old—1940 only.

^{3/} Animals over 3 months old—1940 only.

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Poultry

The poultry business has been on a slight downward trend in recent years. The number of chickens four months old and over on farms decreased from 25,960 in 1949 to 17,433 in 1959, and egg sales went from 95,743 to 87,343 dozen during the same period. Only 71 turkeys were raised in the county in 1959 as compared to 2,600 in 1954. Newly settled families on irrigation tracts often turn initially to poultry as

a quick cash source, then change their operations to field crops.

Table 32. Chickens, Eggs, and Turkeys
in Adams County, 1939-1959.

Year	Chickens on farms	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys raised
1939	40,702	328,834	2,368
1944	44,569	349,932	641
1949	25,960 ^{1/}	95,743 ^{2/}	685
1954	22,806 ^{1/}	96,676 ^{2/}	2,600
1959	17,433 ^{1/}	87,343 ^{2/}	71

^{1/} Birds four months old and over.

^{2/} Eggs sold; figures for years before 1949 represent total production.

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.