

## PART VI

## Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Dairying, livestock and poultry farming are the major agricultural activities in Cowlitz County. In the 1954 Census of Agriculture, dairy farms numbered 130, livestock farms 87 and poultry 35. A total of 242, or about 18 percent of all the farms, depended almost entirely on livestock and poultry for their income. The value of all animals and animal products marketed by farmers in 1954 was \$1,991,800 compared with \$489,000 received for all crops. Over two-thirds of the total value of Cowlitz County agricultural production is usually derived from animals and animal products. Dairy products and live cattle comprised 60 percent of farm commercial sales in 1954. Cowlitz ranked fifteenth in the state in total value of whole milk and butterfat sold, and poultry sales ranked eighteenth.

Total Value of Cowlitz County Livestock: \$1,806,602

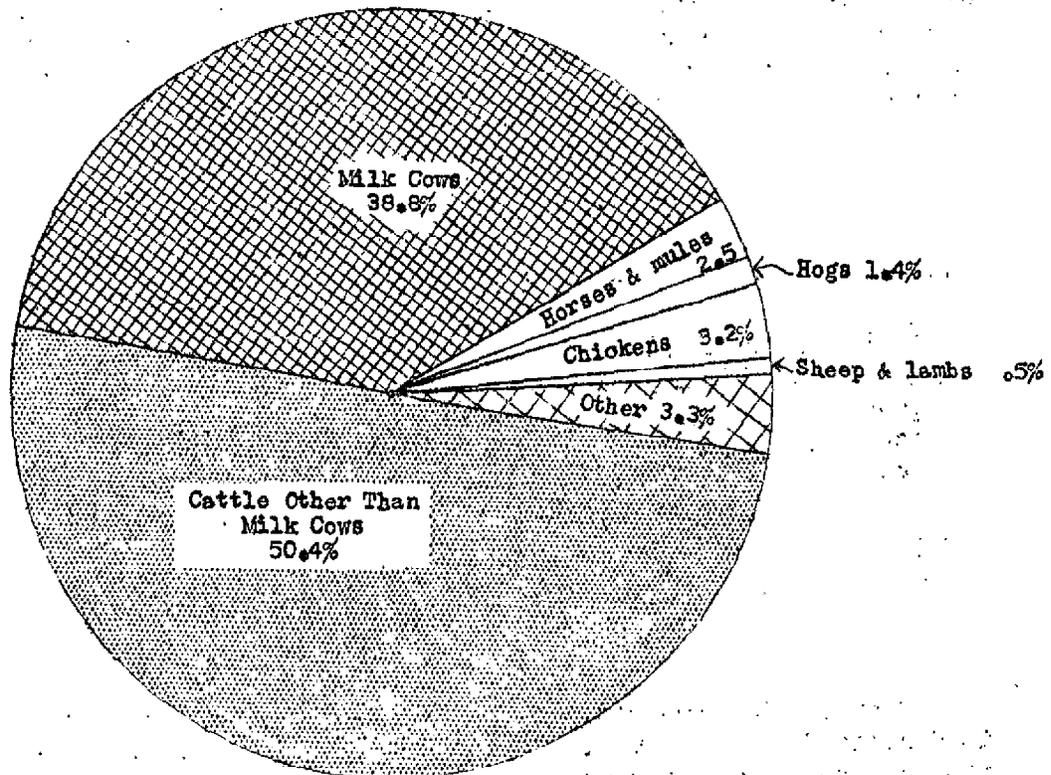


Figure 10.- Value of Livestock on Farms  
Cowlitz County, 1950  
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

Livestock Trends

Measured by number and type of animals, livestock raising has changed considerably since 1920. The value of livestock has become greater and general increases have been made in beef cattle and sheep. Since peak years in the early 1940's during World War II, there have been numerical decreases in dairy cows, hogs, horses, chickens and turkeys. The cattle population increased and decreased in two cycles since 1939. A peak of 19,400 head was reached in 1945 from a low of 15,300 head in 1939. At the low point of another down-trend there were 13,900 head in 1949 followed by another uptrend which reached 19,000 by 1956. One important trend is a decrease of dairy cattle accompanied by an increase of beef breeds.

Cattle: Dairy and Beef Farming

Dairy and beef cattle are major sources of farm income in Cowlitz County. Cattle are kept on 1,225 farms--over four-fifths of all farms in the county. In the last Census of values, cattle made up 89 percent of the value of all livestock. Dairy cattle reached a peak of 15,100 head in 1946 primarily because fluid milk markets in the lower Columbia and Puget Sound areas were at a high-demand point. With high meat prices during World War II and the Korean conflict, livestockmen increased beef herds.

High levels of employment since 1941 caused many part-time farmers to abandon small dairy herds for beef stock which require less handling labor than dairy stock. Cowlitz has continued to have a favorable position in dairying because of its location near Portland, but interest has focused more on beef raising in recent years. Hardy beef cattle are well adapted to the uplands and are popular on the upper-valley farms of the Lewis, Kalama, Toutle and Coweman Rivers.

Table 26.- Dairy Products Sold From Farms  
Cowlitz County, 1939-1954

Year	Whole Milk Sold From Farms		Cream Sold From Farms		Butter Sold From Farms	
	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)
1939	22,662,720	\$ 432,800	354,500	\$17,725	9,628	\$2,400
1944	30,808,640	955,060	230,200	18,420	2,570	1,670
1949	21,755,280	1,018,870	57,860	35,700	1/	--
1954	27,735,810	1,155,600	74,300	43,090	--	--

1/ After 1945 farm-churned butter became small and was no longer enumerated by the Census.

Source: U.S. Censuses of Agriculture, 1939-1954.

Nearly 200 farms were producing whole milk and cream on a commercial basis in Cowlitz County in 1954. Less whole milk and cream was produced than during the peak years of World War II but cash returns were greater and 1954 sales were of higher money value than in any previous census year. Prices paid to farmers went up from \$2.00 per hundredweight in 1939 to over \$4.50 in 1954.

Cream production is less but also greater in value. Dairymen increased the production of their herds through dairy herd improvement programs and better dairy husbandry. Recent trends have seen more specialization in grade A milk and fresh cream for the fluid dairy product markets in the greater Vancouver-Portland area. There has been virtual abandonment of commercial farm butter churning, once an important item in rural dairy industry.

Table 27.- Livestock Numbers on Farms  
Cowlitz County, 1939-1956.

Year	January 1 Numbers on Farms		
	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	15,300	2,900	12,400
1940	15,600	3,300	12,300
1941	15,800	2,800	13,000
1942	16,700	2,700	14,000
1943	18,200	4,200	14,000
1944	19,000	4,500	14,500
1945	19,400	4,500	14,900
1946	17,600	2,500	15,100
1947	16,000	3,500	12,500
1948	15,500	4,000	11,500
1949	14,500	4,500	10,000
1950	13,900	4,100	9,800
1951	14,000	4,800	9,200
1952	14,600	6,000	8,600
1953	16,800	7,400	9,400
1954	17,700	8,200	9,500
1955	18,200	8,600	9,600
1956	19,000	9,100	9,900

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

### Hogs

Raising hogs for home use and for market declined 48 percent between 1944 and 1954. Only about 800 hogs were on Cowlitz County farms in 1954 and only about 500 head were sold. Farms raising hogs dropped from about 125 to 60 in the 1949-1954 period. Hogs and pigs are mainly kept as a sideline, averaging two to three head on many small farms. Hogs as a sideline of dairy farming using skim milk for feed have become less important. Nearly all dairy farms today ship whole milk and do little farm separating of milk, having no surplus skim milk for hog consumption. Home butchering, a common practice prior to 1939, has been abandoned in the rural districts. High feed costs also have discouraged new producers from starting hog raising on a commercial scale.

### Sheep

Sheep have increased from 1,017 head to 1,085 between 1939 and 1954. This is in contrast to a decreasing trend throughout the state. In 1939 there were 42 farm places keeping sheep, and by 1954 there were 41. Sheep and lambs

are mainly in small farm flocks of under 100 head. They are commonly kept by upland and mountain valley farms as a sideline on general and diversified farms. The Cowlitz and Lewis River Valleys have a majority of the flocks. In 1954 about 1,000 head of sheep and lambs were sold from a total of 20 farms. There were 24 farms shearing sheep in 1954, producing 4,900 pounds of wool which brought \$2,450 in the Portland market.

Table 28. - Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules  
Cowlitz County, 1939-1954.

Census Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	1,498	1,017	1,489
1944	1,547	966	1,585
1949	1,036	546	895
1954	828	1,085	614

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

### Horses and Mules

Horses and mules for farmwork and transportation have decreased in the last 30 years, being replaced by tractors, trucks and other machines. There were 2,370 horses and mules in Cowlitz County in 1920 but the 1954 Census reported only 614 head. Heavy work or draft horses have become uncommon. Only 86 farm places were dependent on horses for farm work power by 1954. Horses are kept by 320 farms, saddle horses being the most common type. Only about 20 farm places normally have horses for sale. Horses tend to be more common in the hilly and upper valley areas where they are used for riding, logging and work power on small farms.

### Goats, Rabbits and Fur Animals

A minority of Cowlitz County farmers raise goats, rabbits and fur animals as a sideline or specialty. Goat keeping has increased since 1949. In 1954 there were 327 head of dairy type goats kept on 65 farm places, which placed Cowlitz twelfth among the 39 Washington counties. The most recent census on domestic rabbits and fur bearing animals was in 1950. This placed the county twelfth in farms raising rabbits and eleventh in fur farms. In recent years there have been eight farms raising mink and Chinchilla. Small animal industries were bringing cash returns of about \$16,500 a year to Cowlitz County agriculture in 1950.

### Bees and Honey

The last agricultural census of bee-keeping in Washington in 1950 showed Cowlitz County ranking sixteenth in number of bee hives. Farm places keeping bees numbered only 94 indicating that most honey production is on a home-use basis. Only 12 farms marketed honey and beeswax according to the last census. In 1950 bee keepers were selling a total of less than \$1,500 worth of products per year. Commercial bee keepers--those with 25 hives or more--are largely located in the Longview-Kelso area.

Poultry Farming: Chickens, Eggs and Turkeys

Poultry farming is second to dairying and livestock sales in importance. Sales of eggs, broilers, other meat chickens, turkeys and other poultry returned an estimated \$257,000 to Cowlitz County farmers in 1954. Most poultry raising is on a small-scale basis. About 300 farms are commercial producers of poultry products, but only 35 are listed as farms specializing entirely in poultry. It is a sideline on many farms and a popular type of part-time farming by industrial workers along the lower Columbia. Both chicken and turkey production has dropped off since peak years in the 1940's. Costs of feeding, lower prices and marketing competition are factors causing decline.

Table 29.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys  
Cowlitz County, 1939-1954.

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	63,348	615,692	6,887
1944	89,348	838,254	21,852
1949	46,465	381,289 <sup>1/</sup>	4,553
1954	49,991	364,433 <sup>1/</sup>	5,975

<sup>1/</sup> Includes eggs sold only, not entire production.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Commercial egg production is the most valuable part of the poultry industry. About 364,400 dozen were marketed in 1954 by 256 producers but this was far below the peak of 838,000 dozen enumerated in the war year of 1944.

Broilers (fryer chickens), turkeys, ducks and geese are minor specialties. Broiler production was on a sizable scale on 2 farms in 1954 and 57,000 birds marketed from farms in the county. Turkey production has decreased nearly by four times since the peak of 1944. Only 12 farms were keeping turkeys for breeding stock in 1954. Ducks and geese are much less important than in 1944 and 1949.

Total Value of Poultry and Poultry Products Sold  
in 1954 - \$257,038

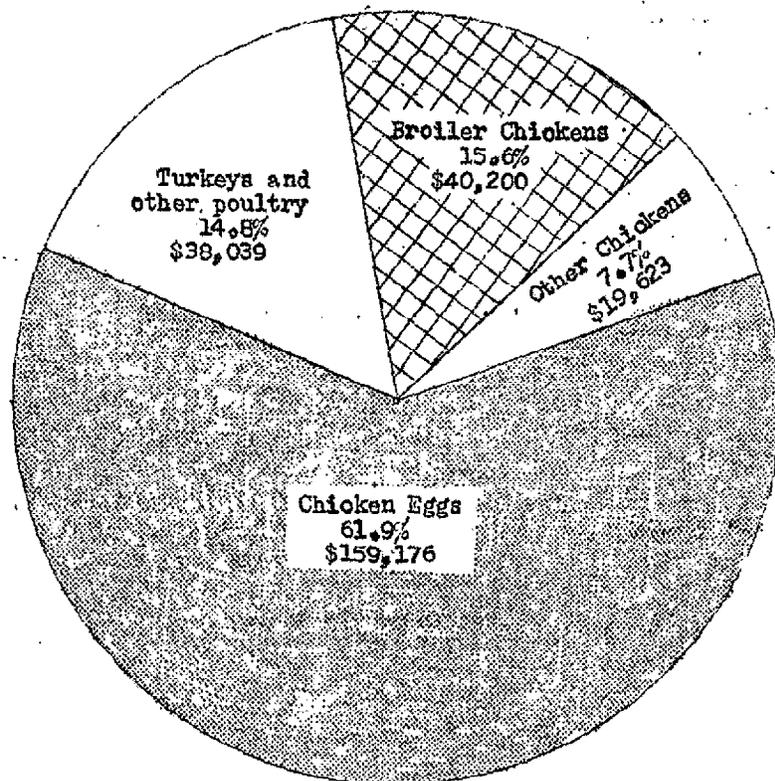


Figure 11.- Divisions of Cowlitz County Poultry Industry  
By Products Sold in 1954.  
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)