

PART VII

Farm Marketing and Level of Living

Location and Facilities for Marketing

Most farms in Cowlitz County are favorably located with respect to roads and transportation facilities to local and distant markets. Both of the major marketing areas of the Pacific Northwest are just a few hours away by truck and rail. The nearest metropolitan market area is Portland, Oregon, only 48 miles south of Kelso. The Puget Sound metropolitan area is also available as a market with Tacoma 109 miles and Seattle 140 miles to the north of Kelso. Locally, farm products can be marketed to processors, distributors and consumers in Longview, Kelso, Kalama, Woodland and Castle Rock.

Transportation facilities between Cowlitz County farms and markets are good. The county has a total of 506 miles of roads of which 126 miles are in hard surfaces and 380 miles are graveled. Cowlitz County has the highest rural population per mile of road in the state with 43.5 persons per mile in rural areas. U.S. Highway 99 runs through the western portion of the county from north to south. This highway has recently been straightened and widened and now provides a superior means of trucking farm products to markets in these directions.

Rail transportation facilities are also excellent. The Northern Pacific, Great Northern and the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroads provide service between Seattle and Portland and eastern Washington and mid-western markets. In addition, the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific provides rail service over a branchline to Longview. From Portland the Union Pacific provides direct rail service to eastern Oregon and mid-western and eastern seaboard markets, while the Southern Pacific provides rail service to California markets.

Water transportation facilities are available either from Longview or Portland. The broad Columbia River permits ocean-going vessels to move upriver to either of these ports. Thus, world-wide markets are available to Cowlitz County farmers and processors of farm products via water transportation.

Marketing to Processors and Distributors

Most important of the cash markets for agricultural products of Cowlitz County are receiving stations of freezing plants, canneries and milk processing plants located in the western part of the county. These act as collection points for processing plants located in other counties in western Washington and the Portland, Oregon area.

Whole milk is purchased in large quantities by two dairy plants in Longview and Woodland. These plants manufacture ice cream and ice cream products, butter and cottage cheese as well as process milk for fluid consumption. Five licensed milk vendors operate in Cowlitz County. Two of these are in Longview and one each in Kelso, Castle Rock and Woodland. Important quantities of whole milk are trucked to three large Portland jobbers for distribution in the Portland market. Large quantities of lower grade milk are moved to a national manufacturer of cheese at Chehalis.

Two large Community Sales Yards are located in Kelso and Woodland. Both fed cattle and breeding stock are bought and sold through these sales yards. In addition, there are three state-inspected livestock slaughter plants located in the county. These provide a processing market for livestock and livestock products, along with wholesale and retail meat outlets in the cities and towns of the county. A growing market for livestock is found in the preparation and freezing of meats for frozen food storage lockers. There are a number of firms in Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview and Woodland that rent locker space and prepare meats for frozen storage by consumers.

Marketing of poultry and eggs is carried out mainly through established outlets. A large portion of the chickens, turkeys and eggs produced are shipped to Winlock and Centralia for grading, processing and packaging at the Washington Egg and Poultry Cooperative plants. Some eggs and poultry are shipped to Vancouver, Washington for processing for the Portland market.

Crops are marketed mainly through processors, produce distributors and wholesalers, both in the county and in the counties immediately north and south of Cowlitz County. Most hay and grain crops are marketed locally among farmers and to the two plants in Longview and Kelso engaged in milling of dairy and poultry feeds. There is a berry growers barreling plant located at Kalama for processing of these crops. However, most fruits and vegetable crops are marketed to processing plants located at Vancouver, Chehalis, Winlock and Centralia in neighboring Clark and Lewis Counties.

Income, Value of Products Sold

Data from the United States Census of Agriculture indicate that income from the sale of all farm products ranged between \$2,827,106 for 1949 and \$2,694,404 for 1954. The census also shows that sales vary considerably between farms. Cowlitz County had 368 farms classed as commercial farms in 1954. This was 28 percent of the total of 1,303 farms in the county. Of these 368 commercial farms, 70 reported sales of \$10,000 to \$25,000 and over, while another 228 reported sales over \$1,200 but less than \$10,000.

Livestock and poultry accounted for 70.8 percent of the farm income in 1954. Dairying predominated with 44.5 percent of the farm revenue from agriculture. Also a very considerable portion of the 16.8 percent credited to livestock was from the sale of dairy cattle and calves not only for slaughter but for breeding purposes as well. Poultry contributed 9.5 percent of the farm income in 1954. Only 16.5 percent of the income came from the sale of crops as such but it should be remembered that in a livestock and dairy county the crops actually are largely marketed as livestock and dairy products.

Table 31 indicates the breakdown of income from the marketing of livestock and livestock products by Cowlitz County farmers. Whole milk is by far the most important single source of income, sales amounting to \$1,155,622 in 1954. Cattle were second and eggs third with sales of \$319,079 and \$159,176, respectively.

Commercial crops are quite diversified in Cowlitz County. Horticultural specialties were the most important with sales of \$205,396 in 1954. Most of the income from these was received from production of flower and vegetable

Total Value of Farm Products Sold in 1954: \$2,694,404

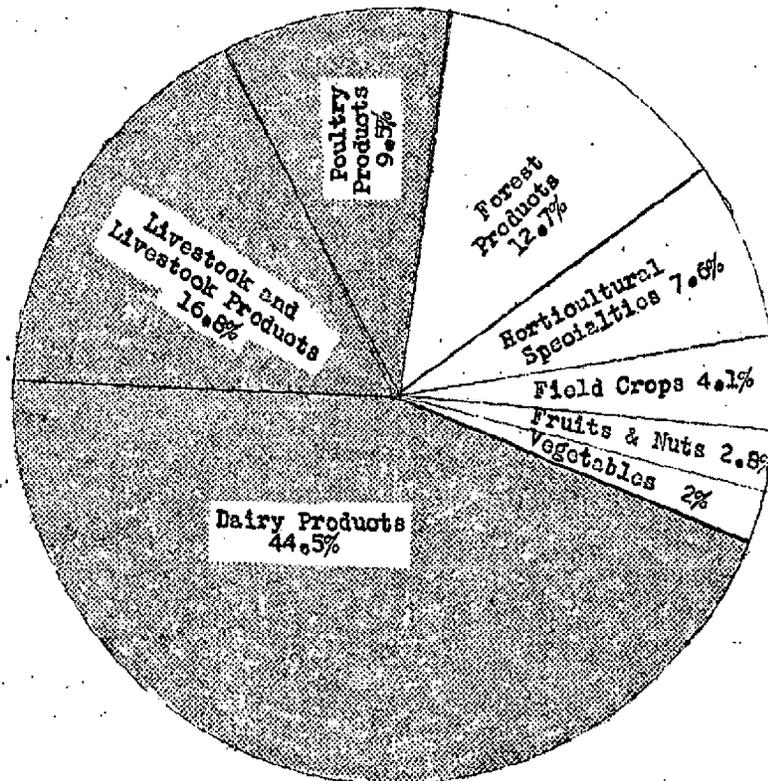


Figure 12.- Sources of Cash Income, Cowlitz County Farms, 1954.
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954.

seeds and plants in greenhouses. Field crops such as hay, mint for oil, and potatoes were the second most important source of income from crops with sales amounting to \$109,885.

Marketing Farm Woodlot Products

Cowlitz County ranked fifth among the counties of the state in 1954 in the marketing of forest products by farmers with a total of \$341,405. Table 30

Table 30.- Forest Products on Farms
Cowlitz County, 1954.

Type of Product	Farms Reporting	Quantity
Firewood and fuelwood cut -----	418	3,666 cords
Fence posts cut -----	126	14,279 posts
Sawlogs and veneer logs cut -----	171	10,088 M bd. ft.
Pulpwood cut -----	88	7,541 cords
Value of firewood, fence posts, logs, pulpwood and other forest products sold -----	202	\$341,405

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1955.

indicates the various types of forest products which Cowlitz County farmers are harvesting from farm woodlots today. These products are principally from second-growth stands of timber passed up when the area was originally logged commercially 40 to 60 years earlier. Over the years much of this timber has reached commercial size and the growing need for materials by pulp and paper and lumber mills makes the farm timber crop more and more important commercially. Many farmers are now taking advantage of this factor and devoting time, energy and money to caring for their farm woodlot as an important additional source of income from the farm.

Good transportation and the nearness of mills have placed Cowlitz County farmers in a fortunate position to market farm forest products. A total of 41 firms which manufacture lumber and lumber products were in the county in 1955. These firms located in or near Kalama (5), Kelso (3), Castle Rock (3), Longview (14) and Woodland (15) manufactured railroad ties, shingles, rough and finished lumber and furniture to provide a continuing and practically year-round market.

Table 31.- Livestock and Livestock Products Marketed
Cowlitz County, 1954
(Based on U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954)

Class of Livestock Products Sold	Quantity Marketed	Amount Received By Farmers
<u>Dairy Products</u>		
Whole milk-----	27,735,813 lbs.	\$1,155,622
Butterfat-----	74,308 lbs.	43,092
Total all dairy products		\$1,198,714
<u>Poultry and poultry products</u>		
Chickens-----	78,310 birds	\$ 59,823
Eggs-----	364,433 dozen	159,176
Turkeys, ducks, geese-----		38,039
Total all poultry & poultry products		\$ 257,038
<u>Animals sold alive</u>		
Cattle-----	3,086 head	\$ 319,079
Calves-----	3,505 head	99,787
Hogs and pigs-----	535 head	15,317
Sheep and lambs-----	1,002 head	12,704
Horses and mules-----	35 head	2,950
Total all animals sold alive		\$ 449,837
<u>Other livestock and livestock products sold</u> -----		\$ 2,438
Total amount received for livestock and livestock products-----		\$1,908,027

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Table 32.- Crops Marketed From Cowlitz County Farms, 1954.

Type of Crop Sold	Amount Received By Farmers (Dollars)	Percent All Crops Sold
Horticultural Specialties (flower and vegetable seeds, bulbs, cut flowers, greens, etc.)	\$205,396	46.2
Field Crops (hay, grass seed, mint, small grains, potatoes, etc.)	109,885	24.7
Fruits and Berries (strawberries, raspberries, cherries, etc.)	74,812	16.8
Vegetables (carrots, cabbage, sweet corn, etc.)	<u>54,879</u>	<u>12.3</u>
Total amount received by farmers for cash crops	\$444,972	100.0

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.Agricultural Income Compared to Other Income Sources

The total income received from agriculture was less than one-half of one percent of the total income from all forms of enterprise during the period 1950 to 1952. Income from manufacturing and trade were the two largest sources of income to residents of the county with 45.9 and 12.6 percent, respectively. However, during the period indicated total income for the county has shown increases and it is likely that agricultural income may have shared in these gains to some extent. According to the 1954 Census of Agriculture, Cowlitz County ranked twenty-ninth among Washington counties in total value of farm products sold.

Table 33.- Types and Sources of Income 1950-1952, Cowlitz County 1/

Type and Source of Income	Income In Dollars By Years			Percentage of County Income by Years		
	1950	1951	1952	1950	1951	1952
Agriculture 2/	*	*	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$ 3,787,000	\$ 6,512,000	\$ 6,233,000	4.6	6.8	6.5
Government	4,344,000	5,060,000	5,664,000	5.2	5.3	5.9
Manufacturing	35,872,000	44,106,000	44,198,000	43.2	46.2	45.9
Service	6,165,000	7,202,000	7,718,000	7.4	7.6	8.0
Transportation and Utilities	5,285,000	6,372,000	6,208,000	6.4	6.7	6.4
Trade	10,679,000	11,954,000	12,183,000	12.9	12.5	12.6
Miscellaneous	2,751,000	1,464,000	1,028,000	3.3	1.5	1.1
Property Income	6,181,000	6,552,000	6,776,000	7.5	6.9	7.0
Other Income	7,888,000	6,166,000	6,387,000	9.5	6.5	6.6
Total	\$82,952,000	\$95,388,000	\$96,395,000	100.0	100.0	100.0

1/ John A. Guthrie and Stanley E. Boyle, County Income Payments in Washington, 1950-1952. Pullman, Wash. Washington State College, Bulletin No. 26.

2/ Agriculture was below 1% of county income and is not itemized as to value.

Specified Farm Expenditures

Farmers reported expenditures related to their farming operations in the 1954 Census of Agriculture. Cowlitz County farmers spent \$1,193,219 in 1954 for the specified items shown in Table 34. By far the largest expenditure was for feed for poultry and livestock. The total expenditure of \$793,603 placed Cowlitz County seventeenth among counties of the state in expenses. Average expenditures for feed for the 1,203 farms reporting was \$659.69. A total of 283 farms reported hired labor expenses in total of \$211,510, an average of \$747.38 per farm. Providing supplies and services to farmers is important in the commercial activities of Kelso, Longview, Castle Rock, Kalama and Woodland.

Table 34.- Specified Farm Expenditures in 1954, Cowlitz County

Type of Expenditure	Number of Farms Reporting	Expenditure of All Farms	Average Per Farm
Machine hire.....	492	\$ 62,145	\$126.31
Hired labor.....	283	211,510	747.38
Feed for livestock and poultry	1,203	793,603	659.69
Gasoline, petroleum fuel & oil	748	109,970	147.02
Commercial fertilizer.....	156	15,526	99.53
Lime and liming materials.....	15	465	31.00
	Total expended	\$1,193,219	

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Level of Living on Cowlitz County Farms

Usually farm people have not enjoyed as high a level of living as city people. Lower farm incomes, on the average, and the isolated location of farms make such conveniences as electricity, telephones and hot and cold running water less readily available to farm families than to urban families. This has been the general situation for most American farm families.

In this state and in Cowlitz County, however, farm families enjoy a higher standard than the national farm family average with respect to conveniences customarily used to judge levels of living. A comparison of the level of living of farm families for Cowlitz County, the State of Washington and for the United States is shown in Table 35. The index shown there is based on the existence of electricity, telephones, automobiles, etc., and the average value of products sold on each of the farms. An index of 100 would be equal to the average index of all counties in the United States in 1945. The percentages refer to the number of homes equipped with the various conveniences listed in the table.

The United States farm-family level-of-living index was 122 in 1950 compared with 100 in 1945. The State of Washington was above the national average in 1950 with an index of 154, ranking eleventh among the 48 states. Cowlitz County in 1950 had an index of 130 which was 24 points below that for the State of Washington, but 8 points above the United States average. Cowlitz County tied with Skamania County for twenty-first place among counties of the state.

Median income per family at \$2,760 was \$380 above the median for the state and over 76 percent higher than the median income for farm families in the

United States. Furthermore, Cowlitz County farm families exceeded both state and national averages in the use of electricity, electric washing machines, mechanical refrigerators and hot and cold water plumbing. On the other hand, fewer homes had home freezers and central heating plants than did both state and national averages in 1950.

Table 35.- Indices of Level of Living of Cowlitz County Farm Families, 1950 Compared with State and National Averages

Index Items	Percentage of total farm families with listed index items		
	United States	Washington	Cowlitz County
Farm Family Level-of-living	122	154	130
Median Income per Family	\$1,567	\$2,380	\$2,760
Electricity	78.3%	92.5%	92.7%
Electric Hot Water Heater	17.4%	49.1%	37.8%
Electric Washing Machine	58.7%	85.4%	86.6%
Home Freezers	12.1%	14.5%	5.7%
Mech. Refrigerators	62.7%	77.4%	91.2%
Telephone	38.2%	57.5%	47.5%
Hot and Cold Water Plumbing	23.8%	70.4%	75.3%
Central Heating	18.1%	17.8%	10.6%
Houses with More than One Person per Room	22.3%	15.7%	17.3%
Automobiles	63.0%	77.6%	69.8%
Travel 10 Miles or More to Trading Center	21.4%	20.5%	23.2%

Source: Walter L. Slocum and Carol L. Stone, The Farm People of Washington at Mid-Century.

As history and statistics presented in these pages have shown, Cowlitz County agriculture is a record of progress by its industrious people. In slightly over a century those who chose to pioneer on the land and make the soil productive in crops and livestock, have made farming an important industry. Its numerous dairy, poultry and general farms add much to the economic well-being of the lower Columbia River region. Many part-time farms provide a secure and wholesome way of life for those who gain a large part of their livelihood in logging and lumbering. Each farm stands as a family achievement and a living monument to the spirit of enterprise, progress and faith which brought many and varied agriculturists to this river valley region of southwestern Washington.