

PART VI

Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Livestock and poultry farming are secondary activities in Douglas County when compared with the raising of field and tree crops. In 1954, animals, poultry and their products contributed only five percent of the dollar value of all farm products sold. Farmers received \$866,200 from the sales of animals, poultry and their products in 1954. Cattle raising is the most important part of the livestock industry. During 1954, cattle and calf sales totaled \$558,448.

Livestock Trends

Livestock and poultry farming have experienced marked changes since 1925. Major trends include a downward trend in cattle numbers since the peak of 1944. Beef cattle numbers have declined and trended up again since that time. Milk cattle numbers declined almost continuously following 1939 except for a slight rise during the World War II years. Hog numbers went through a cycle similar to that of beef cattle. Sheep numbers declined greatly, going from 2,904 head

Total Value of Douglas County Livestock: \$2,378,820

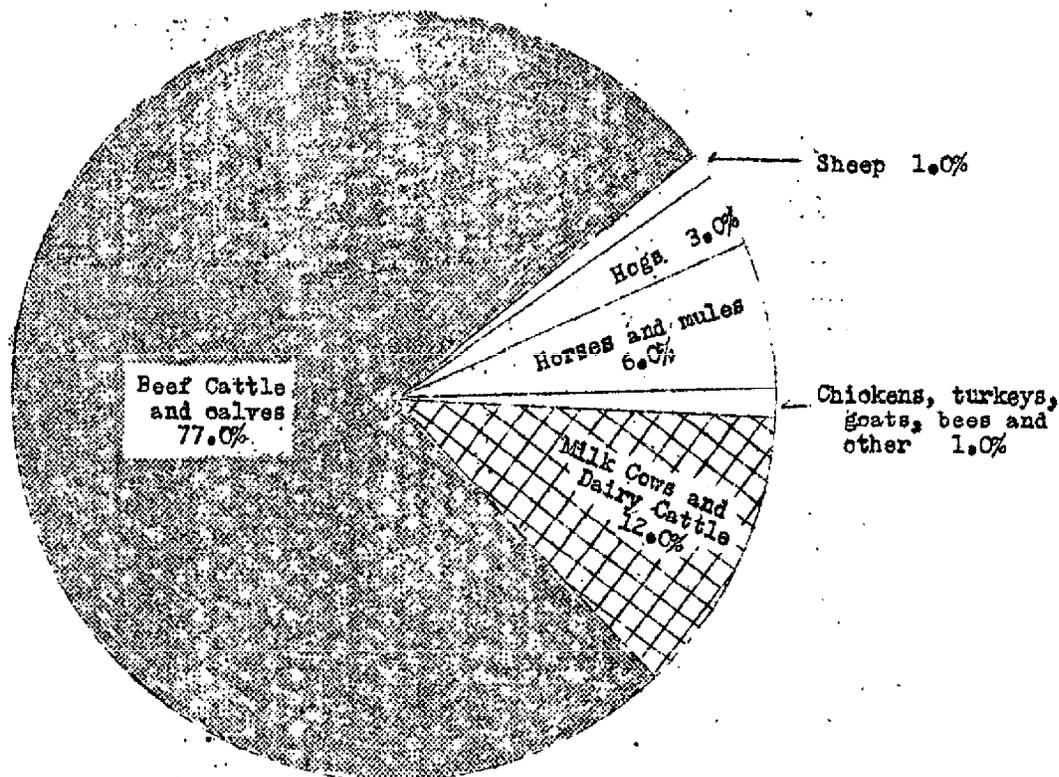


Figure 9.- Value of Livestock on Farms
Douglas County, 1954
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

in 1939 to as low as 164 head in 1949. Sheep numbers are now increasing again with 1,800 head reported in 1954. Horses and mules have declined, decreasing to one-fifth of their 1939 numbers. Poultry raising has also decreased from war-time peaks.

The total value of livestock approximated \$2,378,820 in 1954. Beef cattle and calves accounted for the greatest share with \$1,848,000 or over three-fourths of the total value. Dairy cattle are second and horses are third in total value.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

Beef cattle raising is the major type of livestock farming. Total cattle population reached a peak of 23,400 head in 1944. Beef cattle numbers reached a high of 20,000 head at that time. In the period since 1939, the highest dairy cattle numbers were 4,100 head in 1939. Numbers of dairy cattle declined steadily to 1,100 head in 1952. Beef cattle numbers declined between 1944 and 1950 reaching a low in 1950. By 1956 they had increased about one-fourth over the 1950 total with almost 17,000 head reported. Beef cattle now outnumber dairy cattle almost 17 to one. The number of farms with cattle and calves and also those with milk cows are declining. About three-tenths of the farm places

Table 24.- Cattle on Farms
Douglas County, 1939-1956

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	15,100	11,000	4,100
1940	15,400	11,600	3,800
1941	16,800	13,500	3,300
1942	19,200	15,800	3,400
1943	21,600	17,700	3,900
1944	23,400	20,000	3,400
1945	21,100	18,300	2,800
1946	21,100	18,200	2,800
1947	19,600	17,600	2,000
1948	17,300	15,400	1,900
1949	16,300	14,600	1,700
1950	15,400	13,800	1,600
1951	16,000	14,700	1,300
1952	17,000	15,900	1,100
1953	17,000	15,900	1,100
1954	16,500	15,400	1,100
1955	16,500	15,400	1,100
1956	18,000	16,900	1,100
1957	17,000	15,900	1,100

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

kept milk cows in 1954. A total of about 6,460 cattle and calves were sold from 277 farms in the county to buyers of live animals in 1954 with these sales returning \$558,450 to Douglas County ranchers. Large cattle herds are typical of northern Douglas County in the Foster Creek and Leahy districts.

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Dairy farming is of minor importance in Douglas County. Whole milk production is the most important part of commercial dairy farming. In 1949 there were 39 farms producing whole milk and production totaled 494,000 pounds. By 1954 there were only 10 farms and production was down to 329,000 pounds. Returns to dairymen decreased from \$19,450 to \$13,100 in the same period. Many small dairy farms have abandoned commercial milk production with dairying in the area principally for local consumption. Cream production has also dropped over the years. The number of farms producing cream declined from 102 in 1945 to 67 in 1954. Production fell from 29,700 pounds of butterfat in 1949 to 21,500 pounds during 1954 and value of same decreased from \$17,760 to \$11,425 in 1950.

Hogs

Hog numbers have ranged from 1,700 to about 4,000 head per year in recent years. Peak numbers came during World War II, followed by a decline in the late 1940's. The number of farms with hogs was about the same in both 1949 and 1954, but on the average farms are keeping larger herds. In contrast to earlier decades, very few farms feed hogs and do butchering for farm preparation of pork products such as bacon and ham. During 1954, 92 farms sold 1,721 head of hogs alive for \$66,360. Hogs have been third most important source of livestock income in recent years, although far behind the cattle and milk. A considerable number of farm places still keep one or two hogs for farm butchering.

Table 25.- Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules
Douglas County, 1939-1954

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	3,166	2,904	4,959
1944	4,181	1,108	3,524
1949	1,786	164	1,735
1954	2,077	1,818	1,040

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Sheep

Common to most eastern Washington counties, there has been a decline in sheep numbers in Douglas County since 1939. However, the Census of 1954 showed an increase for the first time since 1939. The low point was 164 head in 1949. By 1954 there were about eleven times as many, or 1,818 sheep reported in the county. Number of farms keeping sheep almost doubled between 1949 and 1954. A few farms only feed sheep or raise them for farm slaughter and the average flock size is 40 to 50 sheep. Small farm flocks are most common replacing large range flocks typical of pioneer times. During 1954 only 13 farms sold sheep, receiving a total of \$7,200 from buyers.

Horses and Mules

Horses and mules for farm work and transportation have decreased in the last 30 years as tractors and vehicles were put into use. The Census enumerated

only 4,959 horses and mules in Douglas County in 1939 as compared to over 19,000 in 1920. The largest numbers disappeared from the farm during the 1920's and 1930's. Rapid mechanization of wheat farming replaced thousands of draft horses and mules. With a large area of open ranges and use of horses in cattle ranching and recreation the horse is still quite important in the county but there were only 26 farms using horses or mules for work power in 1954.

Poultry Farming

Poultry farming is the second most important segment of the livestock industry. The number of birds reached a high of about 124,000 during the early 1940's. There was a rapid decline in the immediate post-war period followed by a slower decline since 1949. The Census enumerated 42,900 birds in 1954, essentially the same number as in 1939. A total of 265 farms reported selling poultry and eggs during 1954 and marketings were \$204,000 compared to \$206,000 by 350 farms in 1949. Both the number of chickens and eggs sold increased over the 1949 totals. However, chickens brought less total revenue than in 1949.

Production and sale of eggs is the most important part of the industry. During 1954 a total of 239 farms sold 34,100 dozens of eggs and gross return to producers was \$111,500. The sale of chickens for fresh market is second and included about \$11,100 worth of meat chickens during 1954. About two-thirds of the chicken sales and income came from broilers. Three farms reported raising broilers in 1954.

Turkey numbers reached 7,500 birds in 1944 during the strong market years of World War II. Although there was a decline after the war, numbers were back up to 5,200 birds in 1954. Many farm places have begun to keep small flocks in recent years. Light breeds far outnumber the heavy breeds. Income from turkeys, geese and ducks totaled \$18,000 during 1954 which was less than two-thirds of the 1949 total.

Table 26.- Chickens, Egg Production, Turkeys
Douglas County, 1939-1954

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	43,066	314,120	1,141
1944	123,714	476,397	7,506
1949	49,008	253,366	4,109
1954	42,871	334,400	5,234

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Bee Keeping and Honey

Bee keeping is a minor industry in the orchard districts. Bees are highly important as pollinizers in fruit orchards. This industry has increased in recent years. In 1950 there were only six farms keeping bees and total hives numbered less than 20 according to the Census of Agriculture. By 1957, according to Washington State Department of Agriculture and inspection records, there were over 25 farms with bees and there were over 1,500 hives in production. About 45,000 pounds valued at \$9,000 were produced.