

PART VI

LIVESTOCK, DAIRYING AND POULTRY

General Importance

Since the earliest farm settlements, livestock and their products have played an important part of Grays Harbor County's agricultural economy. The dairy, beef cattle and poultry industry has developed to where it constitutes the primary farming activity of the county. This condition was a natural outcome of an area which is better adapted to livestock and livestock products than to the growing of large scale commercial crops.

Census of Agriculture data indicate that in 1959 about 74 percent of all farm products sold, in terms of cash returns to Grays Harbor County farmers, was derived from livestock and livestock products. The value of all animals and their products marketed was \$2,639,777. Dairy products alone made up nearly 46 percent of the county's commercial farm sales. Grays Harbor ranked eleventh in 1959 among Washington counties in number of milk cows and thirteenth in value of dairy products sold.

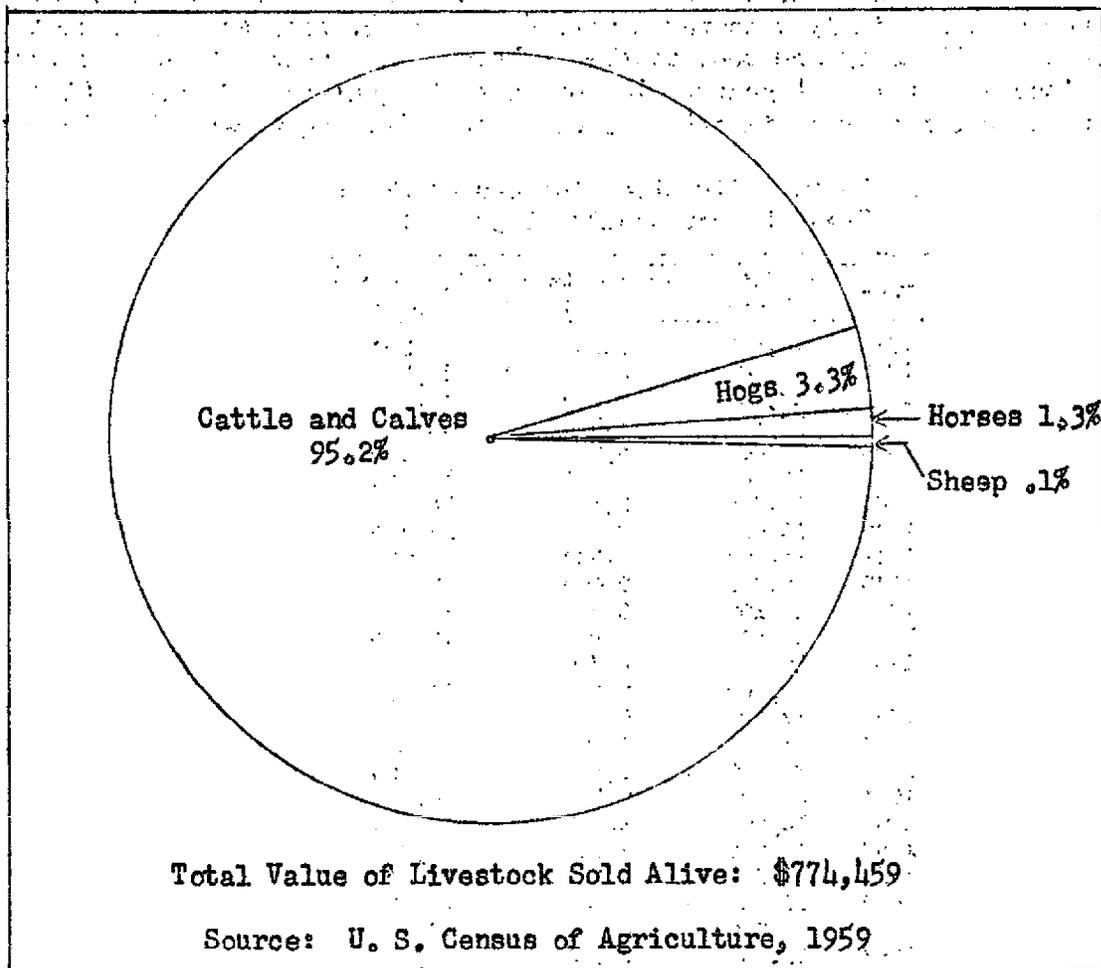


Figure 12. Value of Livestock Sold Alive
Grays Harbor County, 1959

Livestock Trends

Significant changes have occurred in the livestock farming of Grays Harbor County since 1940. The value of livestock and animal products sold increased from \$826,808 in 1940 to \$2,639,777 in 1959. There has been net gains in cattle from 1940 to 1959 but at the same time hogs, sheep, horses, mules, chickens and turkeys have dropped in numbers. Important changes have also occurred in the county's production of dairy and poultry products. In recent years, the amount of whole milk sold off the farms decreased slightly between 1954 and 1959 but more sharp in reduction has been the amount of farm cream sold during the decade from 1949 to 1959. Trend in egg sales by farmers, on the other hand, has been upward since 1949.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

Cattle, including both dairy and beef animals, are the most valuable items in Grays Harbor County agriculture. Dairy farms have continued to dominate the livestock enterprise. During World War II and after 1950 when off-farm employment was good, many part-time farmers abandoned dairying in favor of raising beef cattle which requires less investment and labor. According to the Census of Agriculture in 1959, 750 farms in Grays Harbor County reported having cattle and calves or about 34 percent below the figure of 1,133 farms in 1954. Farms with milk cows numbered 487 in 1959 compared with 831 in 1954, representing a decline of 41 percent. Both dairy and beef cattle numbers in the county have, however, been on an increase in recent years. Improvements in quality and more efficient husbandry practices have been important factors contributing toward this increase.

Table 24. Livestock Numbers on Farms
Grays Harbor County, 1939-1962

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	15,800	3,300	12,500
1940	16,100	3,600	12,500
1941	17,700	3,800	13,900
1942	17,800	3,500	14,300
1943	19,000	4,500	14,500
1944	19,500	4,000	15,500
1945	19,400	3,400	16,000
1946	16,600	2,000	14,600
1947	16,000	2,500	13,500
1948	16,000	3,000	13,000
1949	16,100	3,500	12,600
1950	16,400	3,900	12,500
1951	16,200	4,300	11,900
1952	16,500	5,000	11,500
1953	17,800	5,600	12,200
1954	18,700	6,100	12,600
1955	20,500	6,400	14,100
1956	20,000	5,700	14,300
1957	16,500	3,000	13,500
1958	16,500	3,300	13,200
1959	17,500	4,100	13,400
1960	18,900	4,900	14,000
1961	19,300	4,600	14,700
1962	21,000	6,100	14,900

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

The 1962 number of cattle in Grays Harbor County was nearly double that of 1920. The Census of 1920 enumerated 10,907 head as compared with the estimated figure of 21,000 in 1962. All cattle numbers ranged between 15,800 and 19,500 head during the period from 1939 to 1954. Cattle increased in numbers before and during World War II but declined in the immediate post-war period. By 1955, however, a high of 20,500 head was reached, only to drop to around 16,500 head in 1957 and 1958. Since 1958, there has been a gradual increase in both beef and dairy cattle. About 71 percent of the 1962 total number was dairy cattle.

Since 1920, the sale of whole milk from Grays Harbor County dairy farms has greatly increased while the selling of cream and farm butter has markedly decreased. Good market conditions during World War II gave a strong impetus to dairy products. Whole milk sales from farms declined for a short period after World War II but has increased to annual sales of over 40,000,000 pounds since 1949. Cream sold off the farm, however, has continued to drop since 1940. Farms reporting sales of whole milk declined over 50 percent--from 383 in 1949 to 191 in 1959. Farms which sold cream numbered 119 in 1949 and in 1959 was 85. Dairy specialty farms which numbered 277 in 1950 dropped to 136 in 1959. Increasing costs in recent years have resulted in a trend toward fewer but larger, more efficient dairy operations. Grays Harbor County dairy cattle numbers have been maintained above 14,000 head since 1960, reaching 14,900 in 1962.

Table 25. Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Grays Harbor County, 1949-1959

Year	Any Milk or Cream Sold	Whole Milk Sold	Butterfat in Cream Sold
	Dollars	Pounds	Pounds
1949	1,607,694	34,718,180	94,452
1954	1,643,812	42,477,160	74,184
1959	1,637,308	40,276,389	44,980

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

The majority of the cattle population is located in the Chehalis River Valley in the vicinity of Elma and Oakville and in the Wynoochee Valley north of Montesano. Both beef and dairy cattle also are found in scattered locations in the central part of the county north of Aberdeen.

Poultry Farming

Grays Harbor County's poultry industry declined in the years following World War II. Sales of poultry and poultry products from Grays Harbor County farms decreased 31 percent from \$329,434 in 1945 to \$227,251 in 1959. Farms which sold chickens and/or eggs totaled 827 in 1954 compared with 176 in 1959. The number of farms specializing in poultry also has decreased in number. Census of Agriculture data show a drop from 56 to 35 poultry farms during the decade beginning in 1950. Small farm flocks are becoming a thing of the past. The current trend is toward large commercial flocks on specialized poultry farms. Among Washington counties, Grays Harbor ranked fifteenth in the number of chickens sold and was twentieth in eggs sold for 1959.

The number of chickens four months and older on farms in Grays Harbor in 1959 was 46,809, a decrease of about 50 percent from the high of 94,448 in 1944. The trend in chicken numbers since 1944 has been steadily downward. Poultrymen utilize both light-weight and heavy-weight breeds. The White Leghorn is favored for egg production, whereas, such breeds as Rhode Island Reds, New Hampshire and others are popular as meat production stock. Most of Grays Harbor County's chickens are found on farms in the Chehalis River Valley between Montesano and Oakville.

Table 26. Chickens, Eggs and Turkeys
Grays Harbor County, 1939-1959

Year	Chickens ^{1/} (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	84,733	730,526	5,346
1944	94,448	889,590	5,945
1949	49,186	299,823 ^{2/}	8,279
1954	48,715	337,400 ^{2/}	116
1959	46,809	420,002 ^{2/}	58

^{1/} Four months and older. ^{2/} Eggs sold.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Eggs sold off Grays Harbor County farms in 1959 amounted to 420,002 dozen or an increase of 40 percent above the 1949 sales. In 1959, 138 farms reported having sold eggs compared with 379 in 1949. The present trend in egg production is toward more specialized operations with larger commercial flocks.

In the past, poultry meat was a by-product of egg production. Now it has become an important farm product on its own right. In 1959, 98,000 broilers were sold off 3 Grays Harbor County farms. Other chickens sold numbered 18,962 and were reported by 72 farms.

Grays Harbor County's turkey production is insignificant. Only 58 birds were reported in 1959 by 9 farms. Turkey numbers have steadily declined since a high of 8,279 birds recorded by the Census of Agriculture in 1949.

Hogs

Hogs have decreased in Grays Harbor County since 1920. The 1920 Census enumerated 3,074 hogs on Grays Harbor County farms. Hog numbers increased slightly during World War II but since then dropped over threefold. In 1959, hogs numbered only 524 on 117 farms in the county. Prior to 1940, it was common for a farmer to keep one or two feeder pigs for slaughter and farm household use. This practice is less in recent years as more farm families purchase meat at retail stores.

In Grays Harbor County, over 70 percent of the hogs are found in the Chehalis River Valley east of Montesano. They are also found in the area northwest of Montesano and in the vicinity of McCleary.

Table 27. Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules
Grays Harbor County, 1939-1959

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	1,581	623	1,359
1944	1,693	605	1,179
1949	746	406	763
1954	710	538	401
1959	524	348	367

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Horses and Mules

The number of horses and mules in Grays Harbor County has also declined considerably since 1920 as the need for work and draft animals on farms and logging operations decreased with the coming of the machine age. In 1920, there were about 1,850 horses on farms and in 1959 there were only 367. Most of the present horses are used solely for recreational purposes.

Sheep

Sheep raising is a minor part of Grays Harbor County livestock farming. Sheep are kept on woodland pastures, sloping brush land and other marginal land common in this area. The trend in sheep numbers has been downward in the county since 1939 although a short period of increase was experienced around 1954. By 1959, only 348 sheep were recorded by the Census on 39 farms in the county. Only 2 farms reported flocks of over 25 head. About 70 sheep and lambs worth \$910 were sold alive in 1959 by 20 Grays Harbor County farmers while 1,852 pounds of wool were shorn from 249 sheep on 31 farms.

Table 28. Number of Farms, Land in Farms and Value of Livestock and Crops Sold Off Farms, Washington Counties - 1959

County	Number of Farms	All Land in Farms (acres)	Value of all Crops Sold Off Farms (dollars)	Value of all Livestock and their Products Sold Off Farms (dollars)
Adams	786	1,076,960	21,055,532	3,547,300
Asotin	325	364,405	2,589,582	1,179,464
Benton	1,281	562,809	12,912,165	3,958,996
Chelan	1,636	215,646	16,877,563	660,083
Clallam	724	68,739	706,055	2,858,512
Clark	2,778	188,479	3,020,725	8,222,499
Columbia	333	359,134	9,778,027	1,148,786
Cowlitz	1,014	80,176	1,022,291	2,808,884
Douglas	935	1,012,561	12,985,276	1,067,743
Ferry	283	298,247	396,384	931,057
Franklin	742	590,027	10,305,160	3,596,711
Garfield	274	344,094	6,871,789	898,109
Grant	1,497	1,075,642	26,083,038	12,555,694
<u>GRAYS HARBOR</u>	896	99,529	924,067	2,639,777
Island	493	38,702	515,863	1,909,572
Jefferson	266	35,123	212,568	758,107
King	2,952	114,719	6,240,212	14,298,190
Kitsap	906	29,776	437,819	1,374,547
Kittitas	905	580,035	2,961,833	10,945,370
Klickitat	741	960,614	3,859,102	3,083,797
Lewis	2,230	255,012	1,893,636	7,935,581
Lincoln	959	1,422,981	21,035,259	3,253,383
Mason	328	35,518	202,594	728,250
Okanogan	1,762	2,048,406	10,681,584	5,723,537
Pacific	499	53,348	819,224	1,086,617
Pend Oreille	366	124,239	265,001	1,222,488
Pierce	2,535	153,363	4,928,685	10,850,000
San Juan	209	45,707	91,694	595,403
Skagit	1,740	141,770	6,722,958	9,167,984
Skamania	177	20,177	283,595	259,736
Snohomish	2,919	148,604	2,788,695	12,899,240
Spokane	2,990	822,008	15,091,158	8,403,816
Stevens	1,608	803,776	3,836,457	5,676,015
Thurston	1,220	142,170	1,952,408	5,836,930
Wahkiakum	302	26,299	174,415	1,052,642
Walla Walla	981	822,729	19,957,499	4,228,801
Whatcom	3,151	185,045	3,943,630	17,706,625
Whitman	1,824	1,485,709	43,632,434	7,398,484
Yakima	6,010	1,884,694	75,760,207	32,919,536
State Total	51,577	18,716,972	353,816,184	215,388,266

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