

PART IV

The Pattern of Agriculture

Farms: Number and Size

Numbers of farms are decreasing and farm sizes are increasing in Klickitat County. From a high of 1,262 farms in 1925, the number declined to 796 farms in 1954. Improvements in farm machinery have enabled farmers in the grain areas such as Horse Heaven Hills to increase their land holdings. The average size per farm in Klickitat County in 1920 was 448 acres compared with the 1954 average of 1,185 acres and Klickitat County ranks third among Washington counties in average size of farms. Successful grain and livestock farmers have been purchasing and leasing smaller farms for consolidation into larger units which can be tilled and harvested efficiently by farm equipment. The state average per farm is 270 acres. Total land in farms has consistently been increasing since 1900. In 1954 the total area in farm land was 943,068 acres compared with 562,331 in 1920.

The 1954 Census showed a total of 217 farms which averaged 1,000 acres or more per unit. These farms contained 84 percent of the total land in farms. Of the large farms, 38 averaged 5,000 acres or more per farm and contained 43 percent of the total land in farms in the county. However, a great proportion of the land in large farms consists of pastured woodlands and range land used primarily for the grazing of livestock.

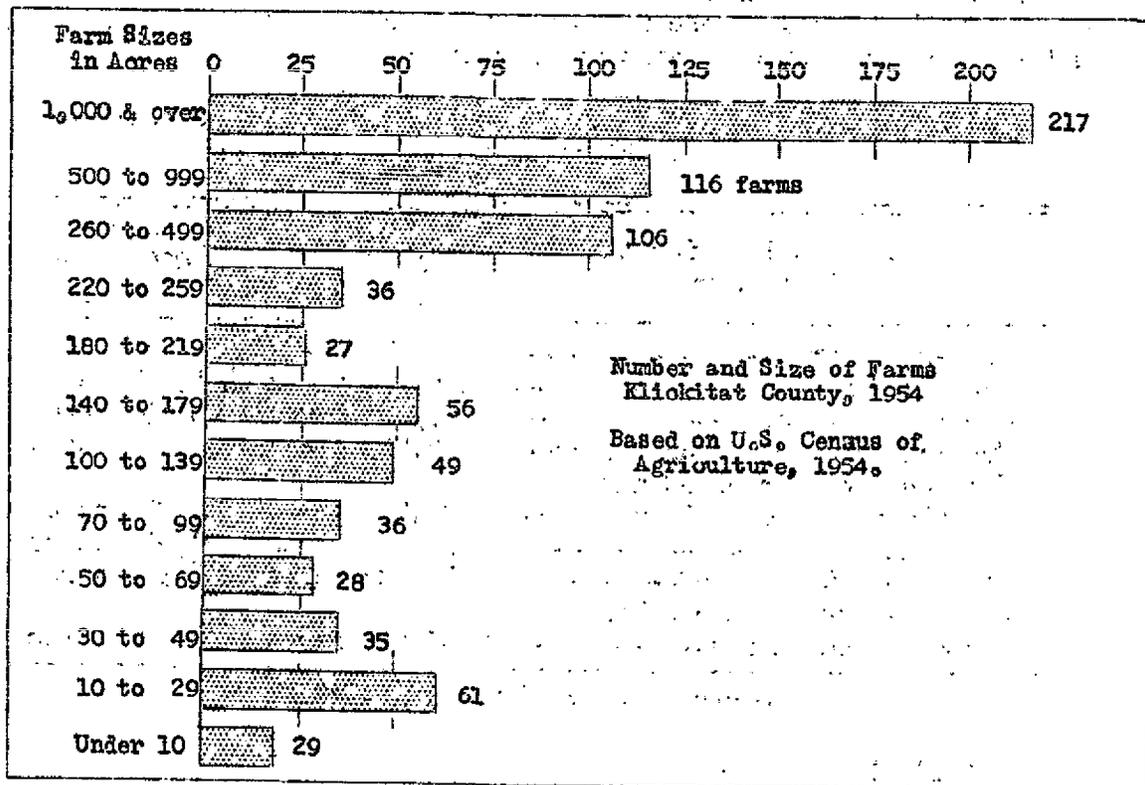


Figure 7.- Number and Size of Klickitat County Farms, 1954.

Table 9.- Farms, Number and Average Size, Land in Farms
Klickitat County, 1900-1954

Census Year	Total Farms in County	Total County area in farms (acres)	Average size of farms in the county (acres)	Percent of County area in farms
1900	1,080	404,947	375.0	33.1
1910	1,641 ^{1/}	530,291	323.2	43.3
1920	1,177	562,331	477.8	45.9
1925	1,262	694,970	550.7	56.8
1930	1,074	651,395	606.5	53.2
1940	1,113	733,365	658.9	59.9
1945	972	749,706	771.3	61.3
1950	907	904,154	996.9	73.9
1955	796	943,068	1,184.8	77.1

^{1/} Part of Klickitat County was taken to form Benton County in 1905.

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

Klickitat is a county of large farms. In 1954 fifty-five percent of the farms contained 260 acres or more. These farms controlled 84 percent of the total land in farms. Small grains, hay and livestock are the major enterprises on the large farms. The remaining forty-five percent of the farms in Klickitat County consisted of smaller units containing from less than ten acres to not more than 259 acres. These farms produced tree fruits, nuts, grapes, poultry and a limited amount of grains and livestock.

Table 10.- Large Farms: Number and General Land Use
Klickitat County, 1954

Land Utilization on Large Farms	Farms 1,000 to 4,999 acres	Farms 5,000 acres and over
Number of farms-----	179 farms	38 farms
Land in farms-----	384,308 acres	404,821 acres
Cropland harvested-----	57,288 acres	25,132 acres
Cropland used only for pasture--	8,503 acres	8,640 acres
Cropland not harvested and not pastured (idle, fallow land)--	30,799 acres	16,279 acres
Woodland pastured-----	119,227 acres	131,956 acres
Woodland not pastured-----	10,833 acres	6,964 acres
Other pasture (not cropland and not woodland)-----	151,520 acres	218,036 acres

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

Types of Farms

Field-crop farms raising cash grains such as wheat are the most common special type farms in Klickitat County. These units account for 21 percent of

the total number of farms. Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry are another important type, making up about 20 percent. General, dairy, fruit and nut, and poultry farms make up the remaining distinguishable types. About 35 percent of the units are miscellaneous or unclassified farms because of the varied sources of their incomes.

Table 11.- Types of Farms, Klickitat County, 1954

Type of Farms	Number of Farms	Percent of all farms in the county
Total farms in county.....	762	
Field-crop farms.....	160	
Cash-grain.....	160	21.0
Other field-crop.....	0	
Vegetable farms.....	5	.7
Fruit-and-nut farms.....	31	4.1
Dairy farms.....	35	4.6
Poultry farms.....	10	1.3
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry	150	19.7
General farms.....	108	
Primarily crop.....	62	8.1
Primarily livestock.....	7	.9
Crop and livestock.....	39	5.1
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms.....	263	34.5

Source: U. S. Census, AgricultureFarm Values

Total farm value has been increasing in Klickitat County since 1900 with the exception of the depression years when farm property became very low in value. From \$4,361,340 in 1900 farm property increased to \$27,094,248 in 1954. Values per farm and per acre also have been increasing since the early settlement days. The average value per farm and per acre value in 1954 were \$34,038

Table 12.- Value of Farm Property
Klickitat County, 1900-1954

Year	Total All Farm Property in County	County Average Values	
		Per Farm (dollars)	Per Acre (dollars)
1900	\$ 4,361,340	\$ 4,000	\$10.77
1910	16,430,994	10,000	31.00
1920	20,367,277	14,462	30.27
1930	12,657,139	11,785	19.43
1940	8,805,923	7,912	12.01
1950	21,578,437	23,791	24.20
1954	27,094,248	34,038	32.74

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

and \$32.74, respectively. The general rise in land prices, farm improvements and additions of farm land, machinery and buildings have all added to farm values during the last 20 years. This increase in value of farm property is common in many of the other counties of the state as well as the United States in general.

Farmland Utilization

Rangeland of the semi-arid eastern region in Klickitat County amounts to over two-fifths of all the farm land in use. Woodland, about half of which is pastured, accounts for over one-third of all farmland used. Farm woodlands make up most of western Klickitat County. About 15 percent of land in farms is used as cropland for grains, hay, pastures and fruit. Grain farming in a dry climate results in about 52,000 acres of land lying idle as summer fallow each crop year. In terms of land use the raising of livestock, dryland grain farming and woodland management are the major types of operations.

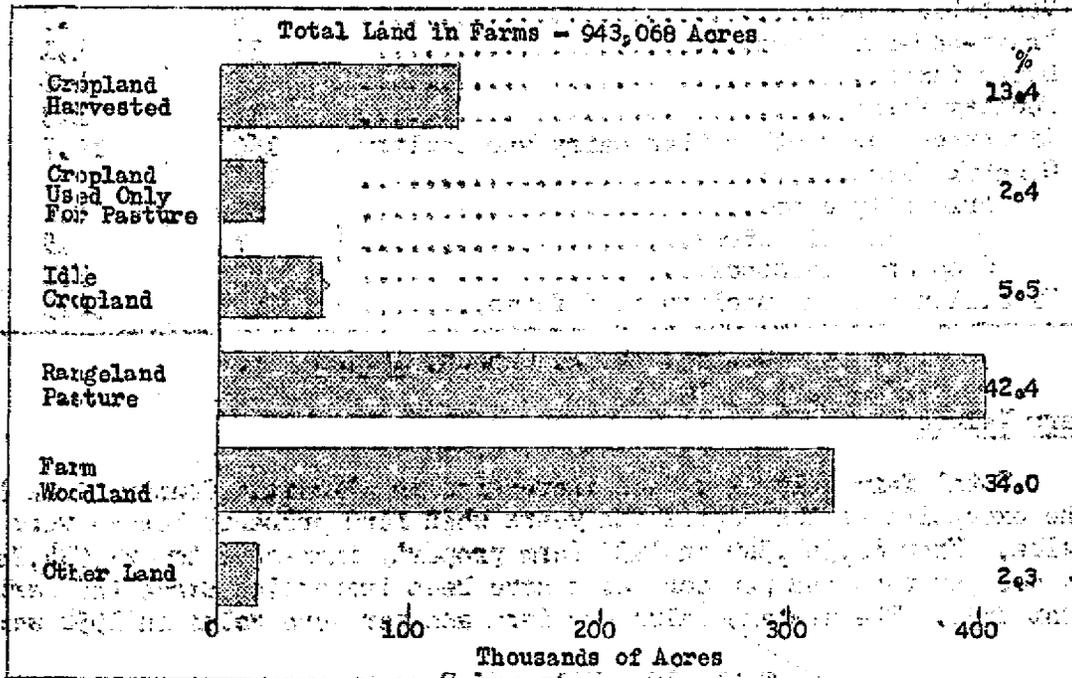


Figure 8.- Utilization of Farmland in Klickitat County, 1954

Farm Ownership and Tenure

Well over half of all farms in Klickitat County are operated by full owners. In recent years, however, more farms are being operated by part owners, tenants and managers. This trend is related to the expansion of larger wheat and livestock farms. The largest form of tenancy is wheat crop sharing. Farm tenancy gained from 7 percent to 9 percent of all farms during the period 1949 to 1954. The part-ownership method of operation has been gaining in recent years, particularly in the wheat growing region of eastern Klickitat County. Under part-ownership, land or parts of a farm are rented on a share or cash fee basis to a neighboring farmer. Many elderly people rent portions of their farms under this practice.

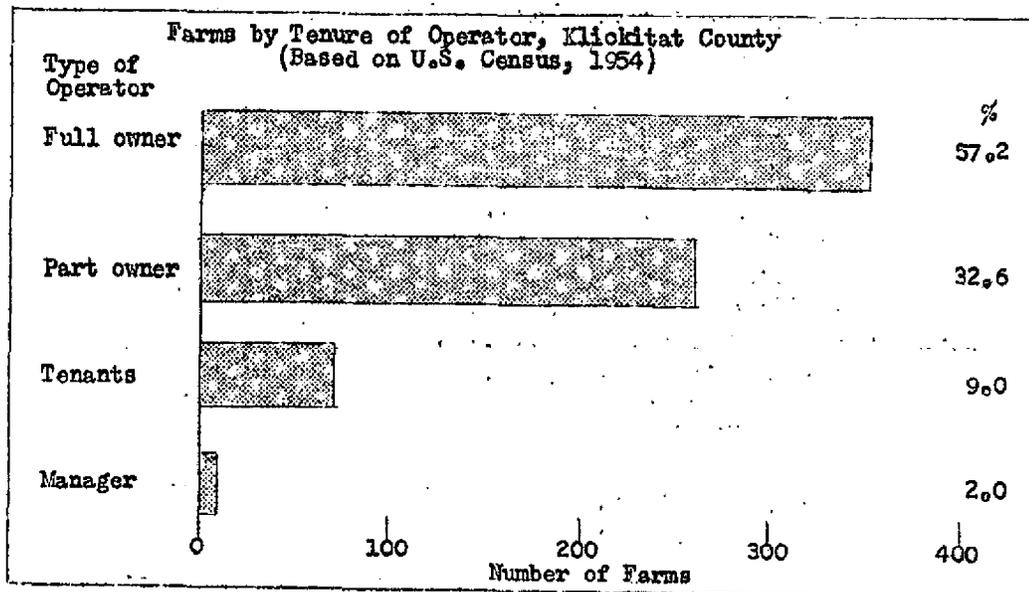


Figure 9.- Farms by Tenure of Operator, Klickitat County, 1954

Farm Residence and Operation

Over 95 percent of farms have residences on them. Out of 796 farms only 41 were unoccupied by a resident farmer in 1954. These farms were in remote areas or large wheat farms with the owner or operator living in a nearby city or village.

About half of all Klickitat County farmers work off their farms seasonally or regularly for wages in other industries. Over 30 percent work out for wages more than 100 days per year. Farmers in these groups supplement their farm income with seasonal work in lumbering, forestry, construction and in fruit and wheat harvesting crews of other farmers. Part-time farming is not as common in this county as over the state in general.

Farm Facilities

Klickitat County agriculture is well mechanized but farm homes are below state averages in use of conveniences, telephones and electricity. Over 85 percent of all farms are equipped with tractors and 60 percent have motor trucks. The area ranks high in use of hay balers and grain combines. Large wheat farms in the Horse Heaven plateau are highly mechanized.

Irrigation and Facilities

Irrigated agriculture has increased in recent years. Since 1950, 53 farmers have added irrigation facilities. Most new irrigation consists of pump and sprinkler systems using ground water, of surface ponds and streams. These are individual privately owned farm systems. Irrigated acreage rose from 10,306 acres in 1950 to 13,375 acres in 1954. In recent years more irrigation water has been applied to pastures. Irrigated pasture increased approximately 1,100 from 1950 to 1955. Irrigation of crops such as alfalfa, grain and fruit has gained and is the largest use of water applied by sprinklers and ditches.

Table 13.- Irrigated Farms: Number and Acreage
Klickitat County, 1950 and 1954

Item	1950	1954
Number of irrigated farms.....	175	223
Land irrigated.....	10,306 acres	13,375 acres
Irrigated land in farms according to use:		
Farms irrigating crops.....	158	186
Farms irrigating pasture.....	140	154
Acres of crops irrigated.....	6,914	8,971
Acres of pasture irrigated.....	3,212	4,404

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

Table 14.- Klickitat County's Rank Compared With
Other Washington Counties

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity	Year
<u>General</u>			
Land area.....	14	1,223,680 acres	1954
Number of farms.....	25	796 farms	1954
Land in farms--percent.....	6	77.1 percent	1954
Average size of farms.....	3	1,185 acres	1954
Cropland harvested.....	11	126,412 acres	1954
Rural farm population.....	24	3,671 persons	1950
Total county population.....	31	12,600 persons	1955
<u>Cash farm income</u>			
Value of all farm products sold...	23	7,597,621 dollars	1954
Value of livestock sold.....	18	2,453,177 dollars	1954
Value of crops sold.....	18	4,776,938 dollars	1954
<u>Livestock on farms</u>			
All cattle and calves.....	14	33,600	1954
Milk cows.....	24	2,170 head	1954
Hogs.....	15	2,852 head	1954
Chickens.....	26	31,220 birds	1954
Horses and mules.....	13	1,122 head	1954
Sheep and lambs.....	6	14,802 head	1954
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>			
Value of dairy products sold.....	25	363,463 dollars	1954
Whole milk sold.....	25	7,801,000 pounds	1954
Value of poultry products sold....	17	265,658 dollars	1954
Chickens sold.....	22	36,497 birds	1954
Eggs sold.....	22	301,916 dozen	1954
<u>Important crops harvested</u>			
Wheat.....	12	58,400 acres	1954
Barley.....	12	13,700 acres	1954
Alfalfa.....	4	46,800 acres	1954
Tree fruits.....	9	1,176 acres	1954

Sources: U. S. Census, Agriculture
U. S. Census, Population
U.S.D.A., Agricultural Estimates Divn.
Washington State Census Board