

PART V

CROPS

Major Crops

Although Lewis County is not among the leading Washington counties in terms of the acreage of cropland harvested, it is important in several of the crops grown in the state. Lewis County cropland is mainly devoted to the raising of hay. Nearly two-thirds of the county's hay acreage is in clover-timothy and Lewis County in recent years has ranked second in the state in clover-timothy acreage. Grass silage is another important hay crop grown in the county. Lewis is also among the leading oat growing counties of Washington. Wheat and barley follow oats in number of acres in the county although it is not an important area for these crops as far as the state is concerned. Green peas, sweet corn and broccoli are the leading vegetables of Lewis County while strawberries dominate the berry acreages. Field seed crops, namely red clover and tall fescue, and tree fruits, grapes and nuts complete the list of crops in Lewis County. Along with Clark and Cowlitz, Lewis is an important filbert producing county.

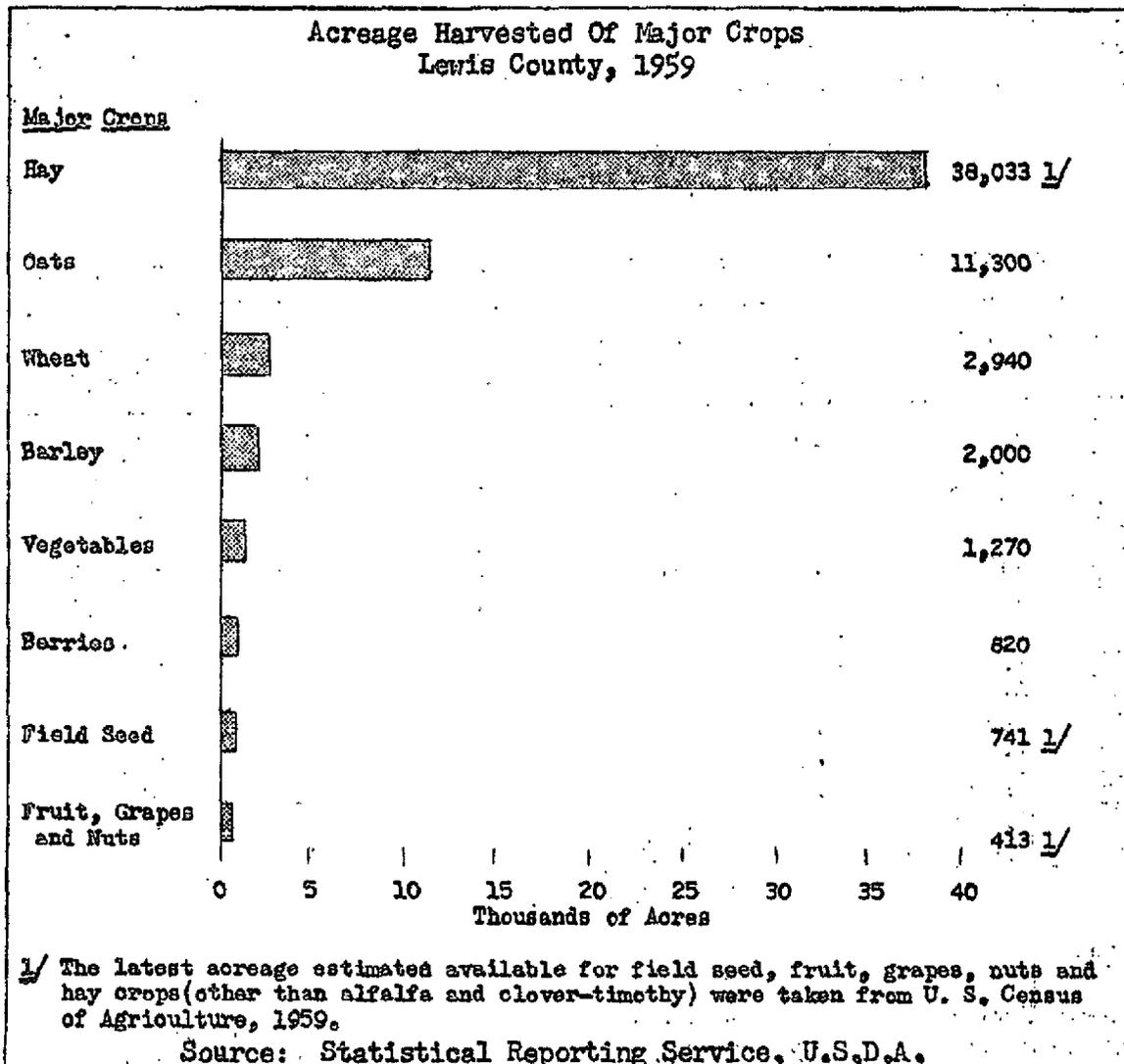


Figure 12. Acreage Harvested of Major Crops, Lewis County, 1959.

Crop Trends

The crop history of any farming region reflects to a large degree the economic changes occurring in the locality. Even a quick glance at the crop statistics of the county over the last few decades reveals a number of changes in the emphasis Lewis County farmers have given to leading crops. These trends show the influence of new market outlets such as food processing plants and also improved rail and truck transportation. Mechanization of agriculture and the resulting decline of horses which consumed large quantities of hay and grain also affected crop trends. Other changes have resulted from farmers' experimentations with various new crops and types of farming as well as from technological changes and discoveries in agricultural science.

The leading hay crops of the county have greatly increased in acreage and production since 1949. Small grains, however, have generally decreased in acreage during the 1949 to 1962 period. Lewis County vegetables have decreased as far as acreage harvested is concerned with the exception of green peas and broccoli. Of the county's berry crop, the only significant change has been the increase in the strawberry acreage from 450 acres in 1950 to 630 in 1962, an increase of 40 percent. Decreases are apparent in field seeds, fruits, grapes and nuts. For the county, all land in harvested crops has decreased since World War II from a figure of 75,811 acres in 1944 to the latest census figure of 57,492 acres in 1959.

Table 14. Alfalfa Hay and Clover-Timothy Hay
Acreage, Yield and Production
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	Alfalfa Hay			Clover-Timothy Hay		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Tons Per Acre)	Production (Tons)	Harvested Acres	Yield (Tons Per Acre)	Production (Tons)
1949	1,500	2.5	3,800	15,100	1.6	24,200
1950	1,500	2.3	3,500	15,000	1.4	21,000
1951	1,550	2.5	3,900	14,100	1.5	21,200
1952	1,660	3.0	5,000	13,300	1.7	22,600
1953	1,920	2.5	4,800	14,600	1.8	26,300
1954	2,000	2.3	4,600	18,300	2.0	36,600
1955	2,250	1.4	3,100	20,800	2.0	41,400
1956	1,660	2.0	3,320	18,300	1.6	29,300
1957	1,700	2.8	4,760	22,300	1.9	42,200
1958	1,400	2.6	3,640	25,000	2.2	54,000
1959	1,300	2.5	3,250	25,000	2.0	50,000
1960	1,400	2.2	3,100	27,400	1.8	50,000
1961	1,600	2.7	4,350	26,500	1.9	50,400
1962	1,200	2.3	2,760	27,700	1.6	45,600

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

Hay Crops

Lewis County is a major producer of clover-timothy hay and was second among Washington counties in 1962 with 27,700 acres. Over one-half of the county's farms in 1959 reported growing this type of hay for feed for their own livestock

or for sale. Clover-timothy hay is used as late fall, winter and early spring feed. Rich in protein and mineral, it is often used for silage. The hay is either stored loose in barns or is baled. Timothy-clover is also important in pasture use. Clover-timothy hay is grown on farms throughout the Chehalis-Cowlitz Prairies from Centralia to Toledo and eastward on the Cowlitz River bottomlands to the vicinity of Randle. The acreage in Lewis County was 15,100 in 1949 and increased to 27,700 acres in 1962. The upward trend is related to increases in cattle and a more general practice of growing clover to build up soil fertility under soil conservation programs.

Silage cut from clover, alfalfa and grass mixtures is becoming increasingly important in Lewis County as it is particularly well adapted as feed for dairy cows. The county acreage for grass silage increased from 873 acres in 1959 to 3,006 acres in 1954 and to 4,199 acres in 1959. It is grown throughout the farming areas of Lewis County. The remaining types of hay grown in Lewis County have all declined in acreage during the period from 1949 to 1959.

Table 15. Hay Crop Acreages in Lewis County: 1949, 1954 and 1959.

Hay Crops	Acreages		
	1949	1954	1959
Clover-timothy hay <u>1/</u>	15,100	18,300	25,000
Grass silage made from grasses, alfalfa, clover or small grains	873	3,006	4,199
Vetch or peas alone or mixed with oats or other grains cut for hay plus other hay cut	6,646	5,117	3,901
Oats, wheat, barley, rye or other small grains cut for hay	7,048	2,980	1,919
Wild hay cut	4,941	2,833	1,714
Alfalfa hay <u>1/</u>	1,500	2,000	1,300
TOTAL	36,108	34,236	38,033

1/ Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Small Grains (Oats, Barley, Wheat and Rye) and Field Corn

In 1962, Lewis County was tied for second place in oat acreage among the 39 Washington counties. The acreage of oat grain harvested in 1962 was 11,100 acres which produced 654,900 bushels. Acreages have been on a downward trend since the high of 17,100 acres in 1952. Yields have varied from year to year. For example, yields per acre in 1961 were 31.5 bushels compared with 59.0 bushels in the following year. The importance of oats in Lewis County is related to both the cattle and poultry feed markets. Oat production in the county has resulted in an increase in the number of local grain combines. In 1959, there were 348 grain combines in the county compared with 329 in 1954 and 142 in 1950.

Barley was the second most important grain crop in Lewis County in terms of acreage and production in 1962. A total of 1,800 acres were grown which produced 74,700 bushels. About 83 percent of the crop was spring barley. The county barley acreage hit a high of 4,700 acres in 1957, only to be reduced to 800 in 1960.

Since 1960, however, the acreage trend has been upward. The increased use of barley as feed and in poultry rations has maintained the acreage in Lewis County.

Table 16. Oats and Barley: Acreage, Yield and Production
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	Oats			Barley		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Harvested acres	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1949	14,200	39.0	553,800	1,460	35.0	51,100
1950	13,500	37.0	499,500	1,520	39.0	59,280
1951	16,200	36.5	591,300	1,440	37.0	53,280
1952	17,100	47.0	804,500	1,260	35.0	44,100
1953	15,400	44.0	677,600	1,460	34.0	49,640
1954	16,500	36.0	594,000	1,760	32.0	56,300
1955	16,500	58.5	965,200	1,950	38.0	74,100
1956	12,900	52.0	670,800	3,300	55.0	181,500
1957	13,000	50.0	650,000	4,700	30.0	141,000
1958	13,400	47.0	629,800	2,100	36.4	76,500
1959	11,300	42.5	480,200	2,000	36.6	73,200
1960	10,200	32.0	326,400	880	32.2	28,300
1961	12,800	31.5	403,200	1,700	26.0	44,200
1962	11,100	59.0	654,900	1,800	41.5	74,700

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

In 1962, only 1,470 acres of wheat were harvested in Lewis County but it ranked second in this crop among the western Washington counties. Since the high of 4,510 in 1949, the wheat acreage trend has been generally downward. The 1962 crop was divided almost equally between winter (770 acres) and spring (700 acres) wheat. Recent winter wheat yields, however, have been much better than those for spring wheat but in total, yields are only fair in Lewis County. A wet climate at harvest time makes wheat less satisfactory than some other crops. Rye has always been a very minor crop in Lewis County. From a high of 370 acres in 1952, it dwindled to a mere 50 acres in 1962. Field corn also has occupied a very minor role in the county. In 1962, only 50 acres were harvested which represented a high for the county.

Table 17. Wheat and Rye: Acreage, Yield and Production
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	All Wheat			Rye		
	Harvested acres	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Harvested acres	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1949	4,510	24.8	111,900	230	16.1	3,700
1950	1,560	36.8	57,370	160	10.0	1,600
1951	2,530	24.4	61,750	120	24.6	2,950
1952	3,070	27.2	83,390	370	12.2	4,500
1953	3,300	33.9	112,000	190	14.2	2,700
1954	3,380	25.6	86,430	130	21.5	2,800
1955	3,310	34.4	113,720	150	15.3	2,300
1956	2,480	37.5	92,920	none	none	none
1957	2,720	34.3	93,230	90	28.0	2,520
1958	2,730	32.3	88,120	70	32.0	2,240
1959	2,940	35.0	102,920	90	20.0	1,800
1960	2,160	32.0	69,140	60	29.0	1,740
1961	1,520	28.3	42,970	130	32.0	4,160
1962	1,470	38.9	57,120	50	35.0	1,750

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

Table 18. Winter Wheat and Spring Wheat
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	Winter Wheat			Spring Wheat		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Bushels per acre)	Production (Bushels)	Harvested Acres	Yield (Bushels per acre)	Production (Bushels)
1949	2,810	25.0	70,250	1,700	24.5	41,650
1950	1,030	31.0	31,930	530	48.0	25,400
1951	1,230	26.0	31,980	1,300	22.9	29,770
1952	1,560	37.0	57,720	1,510	17.0	25,670
1953	2,300	35.0	80,500	1,000	31.5	31,500
1954	1,930	26.0	50,180	1,450	25.0	36,250
1955	1,970	38.0	74,860	1,340	29.0	38,860
1956	1,480	29.0	42,920	1,000	50.0	50,000
1957	1,590	43.0	68,370	1,130	22.0	24,860
1958	1,490	40.0	59,600	1,240	23.0	28,520
1959	1,460	34.0	49,640	1,480	36.0	53,280
1960	1,160	41.5	48,140	1,000	21.0	21,000
1961	980	32.0	31,360	540	21.5	11,610
1962	770	46.0	35,420	700	31.0	21,700

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

Table 19. Field Corn: Acreage, Yield and Production
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	Field Corn		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Bu. per Acre)	Production (Bushels)
1949	none	none	none
1950	none	none	none
1951	10	27.0	270
1952	20	30.0	600
1953	30	29.0	870
1954	40	34.0	1,360
1955	40	49.5	1,980
1956	40	50.0	2,000
1957	40	50.5	2,020
1958	none	none	none
1959	none	none	none
1960	none	none	none
1961	50	80.0	4,000
1962	50	81.0	2,430

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

Vegetables

Vegetable acreage has averaged around 1,200 acres in Lewis County during the period 1954-1962. In 1959, about 2.2 percent of the harvested cropland was in vegetables although there were no farms specializing in vegetable production. A high of 1,370 acres was reached in 1956 and in 1962 the figure was 1,170. Green peas was the most important vegetable crop in the county in 1962, representing 68 percent of the harvested vegetable acreage that year. Sweet corn was second in acreage with 230 acres the same year. Broccoli, grown on 110 acres, was third. Lewis was the second ranking broccoli county with 16 percent of the state's acreage in 1962. Minor crops of cucumbers and snap beans completed the list of vegetables in the county in 1962. Prior to 1959, small acreages of lettuce and tomatoes were grown but none have been reported since then.

Table 20. All Vegetables, Green Peas and Sweet Corn
Acreage and Production
Lewis County, 1954-1962

Crop Year	All Vegetables		Green Peas		Sweet Corn	
	Harvested Acres	Production (Tons)	Harvested Acres	Production (Tons)	Harvested Acres	Production (Tons)
1954	995	3,070	450	900	300	1,200
1955	920	2,165	500	600	100	340
1956	1,370	3,415	940	2,000	80	240
1957	1,345	3,190	1,000	2,000	60	200
1958	1,370	3,020	1,000	1,500	70	280
1959	1,270	3,110	800	1,200	230	1,150
1960	1,260	2,920	800	1,120	300	1,350
1961	1,150	2,780	700	1,100	320	1,300
1962	1,170	2,540	800	1,400	230	650

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

Vegetables are grown for both the fresh market and for processing with the latter receiving the major share of the crops. The crop goes to local processors in Centralia and Chehalis as well as to those outside the county.

Table 21. Vegetable Crops; Broccoli, Cucumbers and Snap Beans
Acreage and Production
Lewis County, 1954-1962

Year	Broccoli		Cucumbers		Snap Beans	
	Acres	Prod. (Tons)	Acres	Prod. (Tons)	Acres	Prod. (Tons)
1954	none	none	125	500	100	300
1955	100	300	100	450	100	300
1956	130	270	100	410	100	350
1957	100	200	70	300	100	400
1958	150	550	60	270	80	360
1959	170	510	40	110	20	80
1960	110	270	30	100	20	80
1961	110	290	10	40	10	50
1962	110	370	20	80	10	40

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

Berries

In 1962, Lewis was the sixth ranking Washington county in value of berry production. Berries were harvested from around 700 acres during that year. Strawberries accounted for over 90 percent of the berry acreage in the county in 1962. From 450 acres in 1950, strawberries reached a peak in 1957 of 980 acres and has since then ranged between 600 to 700 acres. In 1959, Lewis County ranked twenty-seventh among all United States counties both in terms of acreage and production of strawberries. Yields have increased in recent years so production has been on an upward trend. Several varieties of strawberries are grown, with the Northwest variety predominating. Other varieties include Columbia, Puget Beauty and Marshall. Strawberry acreages are mainly concentrated in the Centralia-Chehalis area with scattered acreages near Mossyrock.

Table 22. Berry Crops: Strawberries, Red Raspberries,
Black Raspberries and Blueberries
Lewis County, 1950-1962

Year	Strawberries		Red Raspberries		Black Raspberries		Blueberries	
	Acres	000 Lbs.	Acres	000 Lbs.	Acres	000 Lbs.	Acres	000 Lbs.
1950	450	1,500	110	410	5	5	5	10
1951	600	1,500	165	640	5	8	10	30
1952	750	3,250	135	580	5	20	20	45
1953	750	3,200	120	630	5	5	25	55
1954	700	3,000	90	515	5	10	30	70
1955	750	2,700	100	550	5	10	30	60
1956	500	900	35	50	—	—	35	90
1957	980	5,600	80	575	10	41	40	135
1958	950	4,720	70	340	10	30	45	170
1959	710	3,200	65	255	10	25	35	195
1960	700	2,960	45	250	10	30	35	230
1961	650	4,080	35	140	10	9	30	222
1962	630	4,347	35	144	*	*	30	231

* Less than 10 acres grown but county figure not available.

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

Lewis County harvested red raspberries from 35 acres in 1962. The red raspberry acreage has declined since the early 1950's and at present is a minor crop in the county. In 1962, about 70 percent of the acreage was of the Willamette variety while the remaining 30 percent represented the Canby type. Red raspberries are grown mainly in the area between Winlock and Mossyrock. The harvested acreages of Lewis County's blueberries has ranged between 50 to 45 acres since 1954. From only 5 acres in 1950, it reached a high of 45 acres in 1958. Yields have steadily increased so that production has been on an upward trend in spite of acreage differences from year to year. Black raspberries are grown on Lewis County farms but has remained a very minor crop with annual acreages under 10. The same situation is true for the county's blackberry crop.

Field Seed

In 1959, Lewis was the number one ranking red clover seed county in the state with 726 harvested acres grown on 45 farms. The production figure was 82,855 pounds during that year. The only other field seed crop reported by the Census of 1959 was fescue. Fescue seed was taken from some 15 acres which produced 2,500 pounds. The acreage declined greatly from 258 acres in 1954 to 15 acres in 1959. Red clover seed acreage, on the other hand, increased 24 percent during the same period.

Table 23. Red Clover Seed and Fescue Seed
Lewis County, 1949-1959

Year	Red Clover Seed		Fescue Seed	
	Acres	Lbs. Produced	Acres	Lbs. Produced
1949	1,773	171,296	121	29,175
1954	587	66,660	258	49,000
1959	726	82,855	15	2,500

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Fruit, Grapes and Nuts

In recent years there has been less interest in tree fruits in Lewis County. Without exception, the number of fruit trees in the county has been reduced greatly from 1950 to 1959. The number of farms reporting fruit trees (more than 5 acres) in 1950 was 2,539 compared to only 227 (more than 20 fruit trees and grape vines) in 1959. Apples led all fruits in the county in 1959 with only 3,567 trees of bearing age. Prunes, pears, cherries and peaches were grown on even a lesser scale. Grape vines of bearing age decreased from a high of 2,510 in 1954 to only 270 in 1959. Fruit and grape production, therefore, is a very minor part of Lewis County's agricultural economy.

Table 24. Number of Fruit Trees and Grape Vines of Bearing Age
Lewis County, 1920-1959

Year	Apples	Plums & Prunes	Pears	Cherries	Peaches	Grape
1920	79,815	21,969	10,915	9,030	1,080	403
1930	50,796	15,069	9,326	29,886	669	892
1940	33,730	12,560	7,712	13,288	389	2,141
1950	23,465	7,701	4,721	9,256	4,425	2,510
1959	3,567	1,223	804	684	329	270

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Table 25. Fruit and Grape Production
Lewis County, 1919-1959

Year	Apples (bushels)	Plums & Prunes (bushels)	Pears (bushels)	Cherries (bushels)	Peaches (bushels)	Grape (pounds)
1919	112,516	16,673	6,849	3,321	393	3,597
1929	64,301	16,092	11,910	8,280	312	12,518
1939	87,217	5,714	19,588	12,787	355	13,085
1949	16,451	5,167	4,640	5,814	1,338	17,501
1959	2,883	750	1,440	369	102	1,345

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

In 1959, Lewis County was second in the state in filbert nut growing with 12,314 trees which produced 97,823 pounds of nuts. Filbert culture has decreased sharply in recent years because of increased competition from abroad as well as damages from winter freezes during the 1950-1955 period.

Table 26. Nuts: Trees of All Ages and Production
Lewis County, 1940-1959

Year	Filberts	
	Trees of All Ages	Production (pounds)
1940	17,977	48,160
1945	30,259	125,618
1950	22,436	117,000
1954	15,302	83,442
1959	12,314	97,823

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Nursery Plants and Flowers

Lewis County has a nursery, shrub and flowering plant industry which was worth over \$30,000 in sales in 1959. Ten years earlier the same industry was worth \$113,000. Flowers and flowering plants are the most valuable items. Fourteen farms reported growing cut flowers, potted plants, florist greens and bedding plants with total sales worth nearly \$25,000 in 1959. Nurseries and greenhouses are mainly located in the Chehalis-Centralia districts.

Potatoes, Mint and Hops

In recent years, potatoes have remained relatively unimportant among the crops of Lewis County. Only 200 acres were harvested in the county in 1962. This is in contrast to the annual harvest of over 2,000 acres in the early 1920's.

Other crops which have lost prominence in Lewis County are hops and mint. In earlier years, hops were one of the most valuable crops in Lewis County. In 1929, there were two hop farms with a total of 170 acres which produced 194,000 pounds. In 1949, one hop farm was reported by the Census which harvested 33,500 pounds from 24 acres. Hops declined because of loss of markets following 1917. Other factors in reducing hop acreage were the problems of controlling disease, wet weather during picking seasons and producing good quality hops. Hop growing shifted to the Yakima Valley. At present, no hop yards remain in Lewis County.

Peppermint and spearmint farming was introduced during the early 1940's. Expansion of this crop was not great and production decreased after 1949. In 1949, there were five growers who harvested a total of 2,828 pounds of oil with a sales value of \$11,314. By 1955, the growing of mint was virtually abandoned.

Table 27. Potatoes: Acreage, Yield and Production
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	Potatoes		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Tons Per Acre)	Production (Tons)
1949	45	5.0	225
1950	30	5.0	150
1951	10	5.0	50
1952	20	4.0	80
1953	15	4.0	60
1954	25	6.8	170
1955	25	7.2	180
1956	25	7.2	180
1957	20	7.5	150
1958	60	8.0	480
1959	30	4.7	140
1960	40	6.3	250
1961	40	5.0	200
1962	20	5.0	100

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