

PART VII

Location for Marketing

Pierce County enjoys one of the best geographic locations in the state for marketing agricultural products. It is approximately in the center of the western half of the state on the lower portion of Puget Sound. Thus, it is part of the largest market, populationwise, in the state. The county seat, Tacoma, was the third largest city in the state in 1955 with an estimated population of 156,000. Within a radius of 75 miles over 1,150,000 people make up a market of approximately half of the total population of the state.

Transportation

Transportation facilities for moving the agricultural products of the county to markets are excellent. Access to major transcontinental and coastwise railroads and highways make it possible for Pierce County products to move in all directions to major market areas.

Rail freight transportation is available through the services of six railroads: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific; Northern Pacific; Great Northern; Union Pacific; Southern Pacific; and Seattle, Portland and Spokane. Mainline routes are operated by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific to Tacoma and by the Northern Pacific through the Puyallup-Summer area. The other railroads have joint usage of these lines and branch lines throughout the county.

Highway facilities permit extensive use of motor trucks to move agricultural goods to fresh markets and to processing plants. With a total of 1,484 miles of roads Pierce County ranks twelfth among the counties of the state. It has 681 miles of this total in hard surfaced roads of concrete, brick, and paved and light treatment bituminous materials. An additional 607 miles are in graveled surfaces. Thus, 1,288 miles or about 87 percent of the total road mileage in the county provides excellent means for transporting agricultural products by truck.

Tacoma, the principal city of the county, is located just 30 miles south of Seattle, the largest city in the state, and 29 miles north of Olympia, the state capital, on U.S. highway 99. Another large metropolitan market, Portland, Oregon, is only 153 miles to the south and easily reached by truck in a few hours. A transcontinental highway, U.S. 410, permits shipping Pierce County products to the eastern parts of the state and on to Rocky Mountain and middle-western markets by truck.

Air freight service can be used to reach Pacific, Orient and Alaskan markets from the big Seattle-Tacoma air terminal at Bow Lake. Finally, ships sailing from the Port of Tacoma reach major seaports throughout the world.

Income, Value of Products Sold

United States Census of Agriculture data on the value of all farm products sold show that gross income ranged from \$10,642,351 in 1944 to \$12,135,819 in

1954, showing a rising trend during the past ten years. Sales vary considerably by farms according to Census figures for 1954. Of a total of 1,609 commercial farms there were 61 farms in 1954 with sales over \$25,000 and 245 farms sold between \$10,000 and \$25,000 worth of farm products. Slightly over one-third or 561 commercial farms had sales of products worth less than \$1,200 in 1954.

Livestock and livestock products made up 58.4 percent of the total value of farm products sold by Pierce County farmers in 1954. Of this total, poultry products such as chickens, broilers, eggs, and turkeys accounted for nearly half, with dairy products not far behind. Field crops made up nearly 42 percent of the total value of farm products sold, with fruits and berries and horticultural specialties the largest source of income.

Total Value of Farm Products Sold in 1954: \$12,135,819

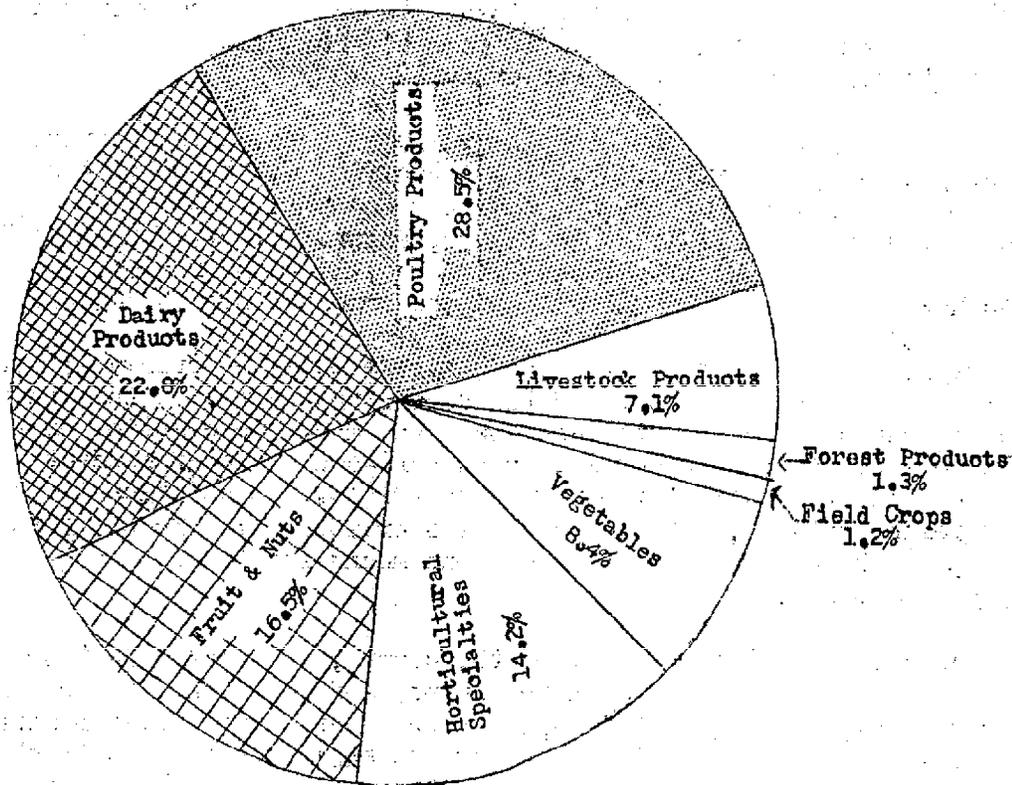


Figure 13.- Sources of Cash Income, Pierce County Farms, 1954.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture, 1954.

The county ranked fourth among counties of the state in value of livestock and livestock products sold and 17th in total value of crops sold. In value of poultry and poultry products sold it ranked third. It was second in sales of fryer chickens and third in eggs. The flower, nursery and greenhouse plant industry was second.

Marketing to Processors and Distributors

The major portion of Pierce County agricultural products is marketed to processors and distributors located in Tacoma, Sumner and Puyallup. Tacoma has three firms which process and produce potato chips, pickles, fruit pies, and cold pack fruits and vegetables for local and national markets. Sumner has two plants devoted to processing and freezing rhubarb and berries. Puyallup has a total of eight processors engaged in cold packing, freezing and canning of fruits, vegetables, berries and cider for market.

For the marketing of live animals there is a community livestock salesyard located in Puyallup and eight slaughter and packing plants located throughout the county.

Marketing of Livestock and Dairy Products

In 1954, Pierce County farmers marketed livestock and dairy products worth a total of \$7,089,260. The marketing of whole milk and cream by dairy farmers accounted for 39 percent of the total. In 1954, dairymen sold 62,171,164 pounds of whole milk and 104,886 pounds of cream to processors and distributors for \$2,766,224, the county ranking seventh in the state in production of dairy products.

Table 26.- Livestock and Livestock Products Marketed
Pierce County, 1954.

Class of Livestock Product Sold	Quantity Marketed	Amount Received By Farmers
<u>Dairy Products</u>		
Whole milk -----	62,171,164 lbs.	\$2,707,622
Butterfat -----	104,886 lbs.	58,602
Total all dairy products		\$2,766,224
<u>Poultry and poultry products</u>		
Chickens -----	1,302,341 birds	\$1,066,329
Eggs -----	5,511,159 dozen	2,229,815
Turkeys, ducks, geese ---		168,504
Total all poultry & poultry products		\$3,464,648
<u>Animals sold alive</u>		
Cattle -----	4,641 head	\$ 525,308
Calves -----	5,707 head	178,715
Hogs and pigs -----	4,641 head	143,971
Sheep and lambs -----	383 head	6,571
Horses and mules -----	55 head	4,793
Total all animals sold alive		\$ 854,358
<u>Other livestock and livestock products sold</u> -----		
		\$ 4,030
Total amount received for livestock and livestock products -----		\$7,089,260

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Thirteen plants are engaged in buying milk and cream for processing into milk and fluid milk products. Four of these also manufacture ice cream and ice cream products, while two produce cottage cheese and one each make cheese and butter. Seven plants are located in Tacoma. Of the remaining six, two are located in Orting and one each at Fort Lewis, Eatonville, Sumner and Puyallup. Dairy products are also marketed to retailers and to consumer homes through five jobbers and one producer-distributor. Three of these six firms are in Tacoma and one each in Puyallup, Gig Harbor and Lakeview. Pierce County milk producers have been enlarging their distribution of Grade "A" milk to supply the expanding market for class one milk used for fluid consumption in western Washington. County producers operate under the Federal Milk Order regulating the Puget Sound-Washington milk marketing area.

Marketing Poultry and Eggs

Pierce County farmers sold \$3,464,648 worth of poultry products in 1954. This was almost half of the total value of livestock and livestock products sold that year. The sale of eggs accounted for about 65 percent and chickens for over 30 percent. Farmers received \$2,229,815 for 5,511,159 dozen eggs and sold 1,302,341 chickens for \$1,066,329. Turkeys, ducks and geese worth \$168,504 were marketed also. The county ranked third in the state in value of these products.

A large portion of these products are marketed through the Washington Egg and Poultry Cooperative Association. The cooperative makes weekly and semi-weekly pickups of eggs and poultry and maintains a large feed mill in Tacoma to supply poultry feeds to farmers in Pierce and other western Washington counties.

Marketing Livestock and Livestock Products

Sales of live animals and live poultry in 1954 brought Pierce County farmers about \$850,000 according to the Census. These animals and products were largely processed by the eight livestock slaughter plants located throughout the county. Two of these eight plants are federally inspected and six are state inspected to insure to the public disease-free meats and meat products. A livestock salesyard in Puyallup provides a means of marketing live animals.

Marketing of Crops

According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture for 1954, Pierce County farmers marketed crops worth an estimated \$5,046,559 or 41.6 percent of the total value of products sold, ranking Pierce 17th among the counties of the state.

Fruits, berries and nuts, particularly raspberries, strawberries, loganberries, blueberries, etc., for which the county enjoys a nationwide reputation, provided the largest source of income, bringing \$2,004,363 or 39.7 percent of the total value of crops marketed. Pierce County ranked fifth among counties of the state in sale of these products.

Horticultural specialties such as flowers, bulbs, seeds, shrubs, etc., made up 34.2 percent of the total for crops with a value of \$1,726,256 in 1954. The Puyallup Valley is nationally known for the quality of flowers and bulbs

produced and is the scene of the annual Daffodil Festival each spring. In 1954 farmers sold \$888,644 worth of flowers and flowering plants, over \$400,000 worth of nursery products such as shrubs, trees and vines, and over \$400,000 worth of bulbs and vegetable plants and seeds, etc. Total sales of horticultural specialties placed Pierce second among counties of the state in this respect.

Table 27.- Crops Marketed From Pierce County Farms, 1954.

Type of Crop Sold	Amount Received By Farmers (Dollars)	Percent All Crops Sold
Fruits, Berries, Nuts (cherries, raspberries, blueberries, etc.)	\$2,004,363	39.7
Horticultural Specialties (bulbs, nursery products, etc.)	1,726,256	34.2
Vegetables (cucumbers, rhubarb, corn, peas, beans, etc.)	1,020,042	20.2
Field Crops (oats, barley, hay, etc.)	141,092	2.8
Forest Products (pulpwood, logs, poles, etc.)	<u>154,806</u>	<u>3.1</u>
Total amount received by farmers for cash crops	\$5,046,559	100.0

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Vegetables were the third largest source of income from crops at \$1,020,042 or slightly over one-fifth of the total income from crops. Pierce County vegetable production ranks sixth in the state. Bush and pole type snap beans, sweet corn and rhubarb were the most important types of vegetables grown making up over 23 percent of the acreage planted in vegetable field crops.

Marketing Farm Forest Products

Farm forest products are becoming more and more important to Pierce County farmers as a source of farm income. Though still a minor item in total farm products value, the forest crop is gaining in importance throughout western Washington. Total sales value in 1954 of \$154,806 of forest products from farms ranked Pierce County fourteenth among the counties of the state, and eleventh among the counties in western Washington. These products consisted of: 6,084 cords of fuelwood; 41,410 fence posts; 4,487,000 board feet of saw and veneer logs; and 699 cords of pulpwood. A growing pulp and paper industry on Puget Sound has created a market for small logs which farmers harvest from their woodlots and timber lands. A growing volume of Christmas trees are cut from the interior woodlands for the city market. Numerous farm boys harvest Cascara bark from the woodlands of the foothill zone. Exact figures on these minor forest products have never been enumerated, but conservative estimates are indicated in Table 28.

Table 28.- Forest Products on Farms, Pierce County, 1954.

Type of Product	Farms Reporting	Quantity
Firewood and fuelwood cut -----	679	6,084 cords
Fence posts cut -----	234	41,410 posts
Sawlogs and veneer logs cut -----	133	4,487 M bd. ft.
Pulpwood cut (fir, alder, maple etc.)	24	699 cords
Cascara bark * -----		10,000 lbs.
Fir seed cones * -----		5,000 lbs.
Christmas trees * -----		15,000 trees
Total value of firewood, fence posts, logs, lumber, pulpwood, piling, poles & other forest products sold	189	\$154,806

* No Census data on this item; figures represent estimates of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

Sources: U.S. Census, Agriculture.
Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

Agricultural Income Compared to Other Income Sources

Although Pierce County is an important agricultural county, net income from farm operations makes up less than one percent of the total income received by its residents. Income from wages, salaries, rents and profits in other non-agricultural occupations and industries were far in excess of agricultural net income as types and sources of income in 1952.

Table 29.- Types and Sources of Income 1950-1952, Pierce 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	\$ 3,385,000	\$ 3,121,000	\$ 3,229,000	0.8	0.7	0.7
Construction	25,864,000	29,473,000	28,918,000	5.8	6.3	6.0
Government	114,494,000	134,385,000	142,944,000	25.9	28.5	29.4
Manufacturing	71,286,000	77,228,000	78,976,000	16.1	16.4	16.2
Service	41,705,000	40,169,000	40,079,000	9.4	8.5	8.2
Transportation						
Communication and Utilities	28,782,000	31,588,000	33,710,000	6.5	6.7	6.9
Trade	66,615,000	71,690,000	72,029,000	15.0	15.2	14.8
Miscellaneous	14,320,000	13,741,000	14,012,000	3.2	2.9	2.9
Property						
Income	37,570,000	39,796,000	40,821,000	8.5	8.4	8.4
Other Income	38,910,000	30,259,000	31,777,000	8.8	6.4	6.5
Total	\$442,931,000	\$471,200,000	\$486,495,000	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.

Specified Farm Expenditures

In the 1954 Census of Agriculture farmers reported expenditures related to their farming operations. Pierce County farmers spent a total of \$8,043,505 for machine hire, labor, feed, gasoline, and other specified items. Feed and labor were the two major items of farm expense in 1954.

Table Specified Farm Expenditures in 1954, Pierce County

Type of Expenditure	Number of Farms Reporting	Expenditure of All Farms	Average Per Farm
Machine hire	1,331	\$ 186,875	\$ 140
Hired labor	1,259	2,147,820	1,704
Feed for livestock and poultry .	2,650	5,108,880	1,928
Gasoline, petroleum fuel & oil	2,100	396,690	189
Commercial fertilizer	947	194,435	205
Lime and liming materials	155	8,805	57
	Total expended	\$8,043,505	

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Specialization in dairying and poultry and the growing of berries, bulbs and commercial vegetables requires sizable expenditures for labor and feed. Hired labor costs averaged \$1,706 per farm on the 1,259 farms reporting this expense. The total of \$5,108,880 expended ranked Pierce County as third highest in the state on this item.

Farms hiring machinery had an average expenditure of \$140, which indicates that most Pierce County farmers own the machines needed to operate their farms. All of these costs were higher in 1954 than in 1949. Pierce County farms are an important market for these items and much city and town business comes from farm purchases of equipment and supplies of this nature.

Level of Living on Pierce County Farms

On the whole, farm people have not enjoyed as high a level of living as city people. Farm incomes are lower, on the average, than urban incomes. Because of the isolated location of many farms, such conveniences as electricity, hot and cold running water and telephones have not been as easily available to farm families. This is the general situation in American agriculture.

In Washington State and Pierce County, however, the farm population compares quite favorably with other population groups with respect to factors used to judge levels of living. Table 31 shows findings of a study of farm operator level-of-living for the State of Washington compared to national standards. This index is based on the prevalence of electricity, telephones, automobiles, etc., and the average value of products sold on each of the farms.

The standards of living on Pierce County farms are above average. The farm family level-of-living index for the United States was 122 in 1950, compared to 100 in 1945. The State of Washington was above the national average

Table 31.- Indices of Level of Living of Pierce County Farm Families, 1950 Compared with State and National Averages

Index Items	Percentage of total farm families with listed index items		
	United States	Washington	Pierce County
Farm Family Level-of-living	122	154	142
Median Income per Family	\$1,567	\$2,380	\$2,740
Electricity	78.3%	92.5%	92.5%
Electric Hot Water Heater	17.4%	49.1%	45.9%
Electric Washing Machine	58.7%	85.4%	85.5%
Home Freezers	12.1%	14.5%	13.6%
Mech. Refrigerators	62.7%	77.4%	78.8%
Telephone	38.2%	57.5%	62.4%
Hot and Cold Water Plumbing	23.8%	70.4%	78.1%
Central Heating	18.1%	17.8%	18.5%
Houses with More than One Person per Room	22.3%	15.7%	13.9%
Automobiles	63.0%	77.6%	71.1%
Travel 10 Miles or More to Trading Center	21.4%	20.5%	12.0%

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

in 1950 with an index of 154, ranking eleventh among the states. The farm family level-of-living index for Pierce County in 1950 was 142, slightly below the state, but considerably above the national average. The median income per farm family was above the state average, and far above the national median income. Pierce County farms exceeded the state and national averages in having such conveniences as electric washing machines, mechanical refrigerators, telephones, hot and cold water plumbing and central heating. Also, Pierce County farms, as an average, enjoyed better housing than is found in many American farming regions. As a whole the farms were less isolated and closer to trading centers than the average in all American counties.

As history and statistics presented in these pages have shown, Pierce County agriculture is a record of progress by its industrious people. In less than a century those who have chosen to live on the soil have made it an important American farming county. Its numerous dairy, poultry, berry, vegetable and flower farms add much to the economic well-being of the area. Each farm stands as a living monument to the spirit of enterprise and progress and religious faith of the many and varied agriculturists choosing their homes in Pierce County.