PART VI

LIVESTOCK, DAIRYING AND POULTRY

General Importance

Although Whitman County is better known for field crops, the livestock industry also is important. According to the Census of Agriculture, there were 144 county farms which specialized in livestock, dairying or poultry in 1959. Over 1,240 farms in the county, however, had livestock on hand during the year.

Census of Agriculture data indicate that in 1959 about 14 percent of all farm products sold, in terms of cash returns to Whitman County farmers, was derived from livestock and livestock products. The value of all animals and livestock products marketed was $7,398,484. Livestock and livestock products, other than poultry and dairy, accounted for over 91 percent of this sales value. In 1959, Whitman ranked twelfth among the 39 counties of Washington in farm sales of all livestock and livestock products.

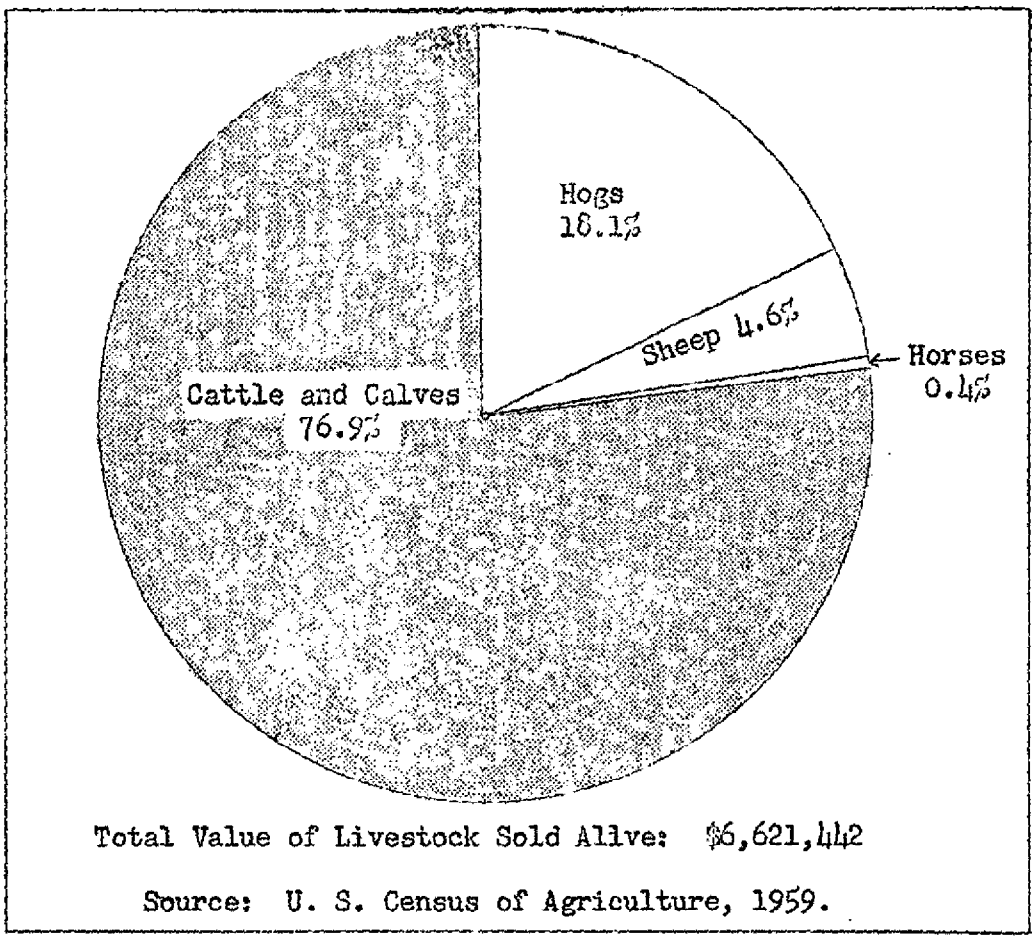

Figure 11. Value of Livestock Sold Alive
Whitman County, 1959

Livestock Trends

Significant changes have occurred in livestock farming in Whitman County since 1940. The value of livestock and animal products sold off farms increased from $2,311,766 in 1940 to $7,398,484 in 1959. There were net gains in beef cattle and turkeys from 1940 to 1959. Dairy cattle and chicken numbers trended downward after 1940. Hog, sheep and horse numbers declined after 1940 but between 1954 and 1959 the trend was reversed slightly. Changes also occurred in the county's production of dairy and poultry products. Although there has been no drastic change in farm sales of whole milk over the years, the amount of cream sold has been reduced considerably. Egg sales off the farms dropped between 1949 and 1954 but increased to surpass the 1949 figure in 1959.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy

Beef cattle production is the most important livestock farming activity in Whitman County. The general trend in the county beef cattle numbers has been upward in the last quarter century. In 1939, there were about 27,800 head compared with 47,200 head in 1963. Beef cattle represented over 94 percent of the total county cattle population in 1963.

Table 23. Livestock Numbers on Farms
Whitman County, 1939-1963

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	42,800	27,800	15,000
1940	38,900	23,000	15,900
1941	44,500	29,300	15,200
1942	49,700	34,300	15,400
1943	51,800	36,100	15,700
1944	52,800	37,500	15,300
1945	48,700	36,600	12,100
1946	45,000	34,700	10,300
1947	44,000	34,400	8,600
1948	41,500	32,800	8,700
1949	42,700	34,000	8,700
1950	36,800	28,200	8,600
1951	39,000	31,400	7,600
1952	43,000	35,900	7,100
1953	48,200	41,800	6,400
1954	49,000	42,600	6,400
1955	50,800	44,200	6,600
1956	50,300	44,600	5,700
1957	50,700	46,000	4,700
1958	49,700	46,100	3,600
1959	51,200	47,600	3,600
1960	49,000	45,800	3,200
1961	49,000	45,800	3,200
1962	49,000	46,000	3,000
1963	50,000	47,200	2,800

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

Farm income from the sale of cattle and calves in Whitman County has increased greatly in recent years. In 1954, cattle and calves worth $2,704,984 were sold off 1,134 farms compared with $5,090,588 off 1,091 farms in 1959. In 1959, 28,536 head of cattle were sold which included 12,445 calves. Five years earlier, (1954) cattle and calves marketed from farms numbered 24,665 head and calves sold numbered 10,862.

Beef cattle are found in scattered numbers over most of the county. Numbers are largest in the western part of the county and on river bottomlands in all sections.

The number of dairy cattle in Whitman County has been gradually decreasing over the last two and one-half decades. In 1940, there were nearly 16,000 head compared with 2,800 in 1963. In 1963, the dairy cattle number represented about 6 percent of all cattle found in the county. Milk cows are largely found in the south-eastern part of the county around Colfax and Pullman.

Table 24. Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Whitman County, 1940-1959

Year	Any Milk or Cream Sold	Whole Milk Sold	Cream Sold
	Dollars	Pounds	Pounds of Butterfat
1940	No Data	6,407,267	817,582
1945	No Data	5,375,499	641,682
1950	$457,079	5,815,313	285,087
1954	$429,114	7,173,805	212,024
1959	$366,143	6,276,827	117,138

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Whole milk sold from Whitman County dairy farms amounted to 6,407,267 pounds in 1940, dropped to 5,375,499 pounds in 1945 and increased to 7,173,805 pounds in 1954. In 1959, sales totaled 6,276,827 pounds--about 2 percent below that of 1940. Cream sales, however, markedly decreased after 1940. Sales steadily dropped from 817,582 pounds of butterfat in 1940 to 117,138 pounds in 1959.

Hogs

Whitman has ranked first among Washington counties in hog numbers for many years. In 1920, the Census counted 31,014 hogs, pigs and sows in the county. Hog numbers decreased after the 1930's, reaching a low Census figure of 14,480 head in 1954. By 1959, however, numbers took an upward turn to 24,293 head which accounted for about 15 percent of the state hog population in that year. The general reduction in hog numbers was partly a result of the decrease in demand for the area's breeding hogs in other counties. The number of farms in the county having hogs in 1939 was 1,692 compared with 546 in 1959.

In 1959, 472 Whitman County farms reported selling 36,383 hogs and pigs alive for receipts of $1,200,639. This represented about a 100 percent increase in income from the farm sale of 15,162 hogs for $599,138 by 549 farms in 1954. Hogs are found on scattered farms over most of the county. They are most numerous on river bottomlands.

Table 25. Hogs
Whitman County, 1939-1959

Year	Number of Farms Reporting	Head
1939	1,692	27,461
1944	1,272	24,609
1949	798	18,696
1954	662	14,480
1959	546	24,293

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Sheep

The third most important livestock enterprise in Whitman County involves sheep. Sheep and lamb numbers in the county were well above 40,000 head before 1945. During the early 1950's, sheep numbers decreased to 27,838 head in 1954. Numbers, however, took an upward trend in the latter half of the 1950's, reaching 35,018 head by 1959. In 1959, Whitman ranked third among the counties of Washington in sheep numbers.

The number of farms in the county with sheep increased from 142 in 1949 to 224 in 1954 and 289 in 1959. In 1959, 153 farms reported flocks of less than 25 head while 126 farms indicated having flocks between 25 and 299. Only 10 farms reported owning 300 or more sheep.

In 1959, 270 Whitman County farms sold 23,176 head of sheep and lambs for a total of $301,288. Five years earlier in 1954, 23,880 head were marketed for $400,718 off 179 farms. More wool was shorn in 1959 than in 1954--297,499 pounds compared with 266,487 pounds in 1954.

Table 26. Sheep, Lambs and Wool Shorn
Whitman County, 1939-1959

Year	Sheep and Lambs		Wool Shorn	
	Number of Farms	Head	Number of Farms	Pounds of Wool
1939	260	46,519	213	410,295
1944	149	42,455	112	290,404
1949	142	32,952	118	120,978
1954	224	27,838	189	266,487
1959	289	35,018	265	297,499

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Horses and Mules

The number of horses and mules in Whitman County has declined greatly since 1920 as the need for work and draft animals decreased in the wake of farm mechanization. In 1920, the Census counted 37,284 horses in the county while mules added up to 3,443 head. In the 1959 Census, horses and mules totaled only 1,689 and the county ranked fifth in the state in number. They were found on 582 Whitman County farms in 1959. During the same year, 71 county farms reported selling 156 horses and mules for $28,927.

Table 27. Horses and Mules
Whitman County, 1939-1959

Year	Number of Farms Reporting	Head
1939	1,752	10,723
1944	1,232	4,719
1949	824	2,407
1954	660	1,676
1959	582	1,689

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Poultry Farming

Poultry farming in Whitman County has declined in recent years. Total farm receipts from the sale of poultry and poultry products in the county amounted to $288,924 in 1959 and $266,975 in 1954 compared with $501,015 in 1949. Farms specializing in poultry during the same period numbered 15 in 1949, 5 in 1954 and 15 in 1959. Among Washington counties, Whitman ranked sixteenth in the number of chickens sold and was fourteenth in eggs sold in 1959.

Table 28. Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys
Whitman County, 1939-1959

Year	Chickens 1/		Egg Production		Turkeys Raised (birds)
	Birds	Number of Farms	Number of Farms	Dozens of Eggs	
1939	153,891	2,258	2,179	1,164,166	5,188
1944	144,939	2,019	1,966	1,154,296	10,576
1949	94,978	1,528	908	564,897 2/	17,059
1954	87,619	1,334	712	496,940 2/	5,654
1959	66,967	891	442	568,239 2/	5,660

1/ 4 months and over. 2/ Eggs sold.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

The number of chickens in Whitman County has continued to decrease since 1939 In 1939, chickens four months and older on farms numbered 153,891 compared with 66,967 in 1959. There were 604 farms with flocks of under 50 birds and 268 farms with flocks of 50 to 399 birds in 1959. In the same year, farms with over 400 birds each numbered 19. Chickens are found on scattered farms throughout most of the county. There is some concentration of chickens around Pullman and Palouse.

Eggs sold off Whitman County farms in 1959 amounted to 568,239 dozen, a decrease of 14 percent below 1954 sales. Farms reported having sold eggs in 1959 numbered 442 compared with 712 in 1954. In 1959, 280 farms sold a total of 80,321 chickens compared with 47,135 by 427 farms in 1954. Broilers accounted for over one-half of the 1959 chicken sales.

In 1959, 23 farms in the county had on hand a total of 5,660 turkeys and turkey fryers. Five years earlier in 1954, the Census counted 43 farms with a slightly lower total of 5,654 birds. In 1959, 20 farms reported turkey and turkey fryer flocks of under 50 while there were only 3 farms with 50 or more birds each.