

# Livestock, Poultry Net \$5 Million in Area

## Enterprizes Bring In 30 Per Cent of Agricultural Income

(Editor's note: How is agriculture doing in Jackson county? What is its future? How does it stack up as compared to the past? What are the major items of income? The following is one of a series of six articles, prepared by the Mail Tribune in cooperation with the county agricultural extension office and others, in an attempt to answer these questions.)

Between 30 and 35 per cent of the annual agricultural income in Jackson county comes from livestock and poultry enterprises.

Last year, income from these totaled \$5,901,010. Of this, \$2,651,000 came from dairy enterprises; \$2,042,050 from beef cattle; \$268,260 from sheep, \$76,600 from swine; \$101,400 from miscellaneous livestock (including rabbits, goats and bees); and \$727,700 from poultry.

In the last 35 years, the local livestock and poultry picture has experienced as much overall change as most phases of agriculture, and more than some. Market variations and improved management have been instrumental in bringing about these changes. This can be well illustrated by the case of the dairy industry.

### First Purebred Cattle

The late W. C. Myer, whose great-grandson, John Billings, now resides in Ashland, drove the first purebred cattle, a herd of Jerseys, to Jackson county in the 1860's. He imported the animals from Jersey island, off the coast of England, and from the east coast of the United States. By 1920, there were about 3,765 producing cows here.

Until about 15 years ago, Jerseys and Guernseys were the dominant breeds of dairy cattle. Milk from these cows was high in butterfat content. Butterfat was in great demand for such products as butter, ice cream and cheese. Cheese factories were in full operation at Eagle Point, Central Point, Medford and Ashland, and some butterfat was shipped to California markets.

Then, with the advent of butter substitutes and popularity of low-fat foods, consumer demand for butterfat products decreased. Several local creameries closed down completely. Dairymen shifted their attention to Holsteins, which produce more fluid milk and less butterfat. Holsteins are still the dominant breed here.

**Strong Market**  
The market for Jackson county milk is considered strong, especially in Eugene and Roseburg, where about 120,000 pounds are being shipped daily. Ten years ago, no milk was being shipped out of the county. This might seem strange in view

of the fact that there are now about 9,500 producing cows here, as compared with about 13,000 in 1946 and 18,586 in 1935.

Although there are fewer cows now, individual production is higher. Earle Jossy, county agriculture agent, lists the following reasons for the current production increase:

1. Dairymen are using feeding methods designed to obtain higher milk production.  
2. The Dairy Herd Improvement association has helped determine which cows are not producing profitably and should be culled from the herd by the owner.

**Production Records**  
3. Dairymen are making use of cost and production records in a more efficient manner than ever before.

4. Artificial breeding is being used to good advantage to produce high quality cattle.

Beef cattle, totaling about 19,000, far outnumber dairy cattle here. Yet, gross returns from beef cattle are lower than returns from the same number of dairy cattle. This is because the dairyman sells much more labor with his products.

Farms which will support less than 100 cattle will come nearer supporting a family if dairy cattle are kept. Farms with room for 100 or more cattle will make satisfactory returns with beef.

One-year-old calves represent most of the beef sales in this area. Cattlemen have found selling young animals is more economical than paying long-term feed costs.

**Shift in 10 Years**  
Jossy pointed out there has been a shift in the last 10 years in methods of selling beef animals. Local cattlemen previously sold many of their animals to representatives of large companies who would travel to individual cattle ranches. In the last 10 years, however, they have made more use of cattle auctions in Medford and Phoenix.

Most cattle shipped from Jackson county are transported by truck, though a few are shipped by rail. Rail shipments of cattle have significantly decreased in the last 25 years. Jossy says this is because trucking is more convenient and rates are lower in

many cases. When cattle are shipped by rail, they must be transported by truck from the train to their destination. Truck shipments from the point of origin to the destination cuts out this need for additional handling.

Marketing is considered the number one problem facing the beef industry today. The retail value of meat consumed nationally showed a decrease in 1955 and 1956, and bears a lower relation to consumer's income than it did several years ago. Thus, the beef cattle sub-committee of the county agricultural council (as well as the beef industry throughout the nation) is encouraging stronger advertising and promotion campaigns in order to increase consumer purchases of beef.

**Cross-Breeding**  
Most of the beef cattle here were developed by cross-breeding short horn dairy cows with Herefords. Eventually, this resulted in development of good Hereford cattle. Jossy says Jackson county 4-H club members have done much to improve beef steer quality in the last 15 years through effects of county and state fair competition.

In 1920, there were an estimated 10,278 beef cattle in the county. In 1946, there were an estimated 10,000. During the last 10 years, this figure has almost doubled.

Sheep came to western Oregon in the last 30 years and this enterprise locally has shown somewhat of a decline recently. In 1920, there were an estimated 20,267 sheep; in 1946, there were about 9,000; and in 1956, there were about 7,000.

Sheep are grown here mostly for meat and Jossy says wool sales are regarded as a bonus. Small farm flocks are recommended now, largely because they are able to utilize feed which might otherwise be wasted or marketed inefficiently.

Producers of sheep list their major problems as marketing, parasites and disease, and predators and dogs. Residents of Jackson county eat comparatively little lamb. This necessitates shipment of lambs to San Francisco or other markets. High freight rates make shipment of less than a truckload of lambs unprofitable.

Stomach worms, liver fluke and white muscle are regarded as the most serious sheep diseases, although growers who follow recommended disease control procedures have not suffered great losses. Sheep growers are not alone in seeking better dog and predatory animal control. They are now urging higher bounties or hiring of additional professional trappers to control the coyotes.

**Swine Growing**  
Jackson county has never been a major swine growing area, according to Jossy. "Swine rank first in market instability," Jossy said, "and the swine market is subject to sudden, drastic changes."

In 1920, there were 11,827 swine being raised here; in 1946 there were 5,300; and by 1956, there were only about 2,700.

Swine need lots of grain or similar feed, Jossy said. Production of grain is currently limited here and growers must import it. Consequently, high shipping costs make swine growing impractical unless waste products can be used for feed.

Miscellaneous livestock are regarded as relatively unimportant in this area, Jossy commented. There are about 5,000 rabbits in the county now. Rabbit production was conducted on a larger scale at one time, but they require expensive feed and returns are not sufficient to warrant expanded production.

The future in goat raising also seems limited. There are about 1,100 goats here now, compared with about 2,000 in 1946 and none in 1920. The goat committee of the county agricultural council stated, "The market for goat milk is not good in Jackson county. Growing angoras for production of mohair has not proved to be very successful. Therefore, the committee recommends growing of goats be confined for the most part to use in clearing brush or furnishing milk for the family on small farms."

**Bee Production**  
Bee production is a small but fairly important industry, Jossy noted. There is a large number of beekeepers in the county, including about five or six major ones, who rent their bees for pollination purposes to farmers here and in various other areas. Records since 1920 indicate beekeeping is on an upswing. In 1920, there were about 1,168 hives; in 1946 there were 3,700 and in 1956 there were 6,000. Bees are raised here both as pollinizers and honey producers.

The poultry picture in Jackson county is not a bright one. Present markets are poor for eggs, broilers and hatching flocks. The poultry committee of the agricultural council said, "The one bright spot in local poultry conditions exists in the expansion of turkey breeder hens. How long this condition will exist is doubtful. . . . Turkeys raised for market locally are in competition with birds shipped in to the state and only a slight market drop can prove disastrous as the profit margin per pound is slight."

There were about 220,000 laying hens and broilers in the county last year, compared with 160,000 in 1946; 123,964 in 1925; and 72,232 in 1920. There were 23,000 turkeys here in 1956, compared with 42,817 in 1930;

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and 60,000 in 1920.

Jossy says outstanding needs of the livestock and poultry industries include more irrigated land and more cultivated land, greater efficiency in management, greater use of records, and selection of fast growing animals which make efficient use of feed.

Another problem facing livestock and poultry growers, as well as other farmers, is that of obtaining a block of land large enough to maintain an efficient operation. Jossy noted that so much land has been divided and sub-divided in recent years that there is relatively little left in

large enough farms for good use.

Not the least of problems facing livestock growers is that of disease. Agricultural council committees have made this observation of the situation: "With cattle being transported longer distances and living becoming more complex, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep cattle isolated from varying and sometimes disastrous bovine ailments. . . . Among the controls now used, testing and vaccination are among the most important."

Some of the common animal diseases local ranchers are

troubled with are brucellosis, leptospirosis, anaplasmosis, shipping fever, blackleg, malignant

edema and redwater. Vaccination or spray programs can control most of these diseases

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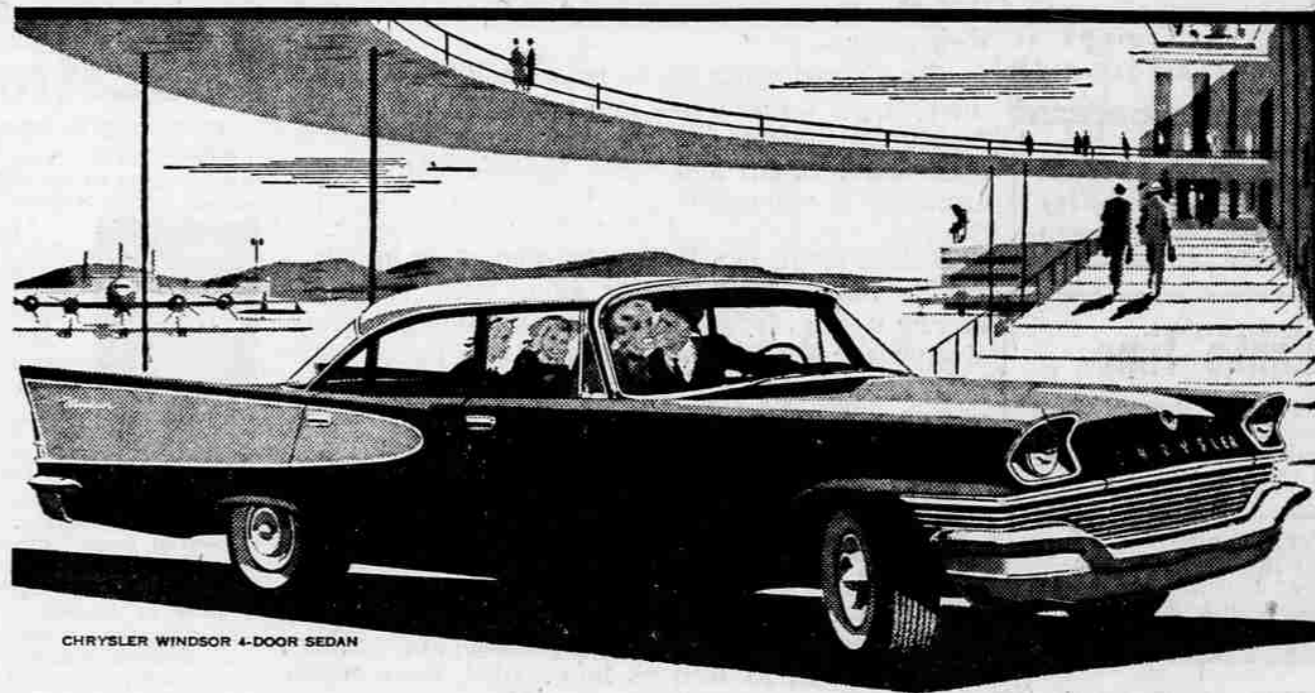
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