

The 1957 Crop Season was Good on the Columbia Basin Project

Crop yields, with a few exceptions, were higher in 1957 than in previous years. However, prices received for farm products were down and costs of production were up. This situation further accentuated the cost-price squeeze being experienced by farmers everywhere. Prices were low for alfalfa hay and potatoes, both crops of major importance to Project farmers.

The gross returns from crops amounting to \$24,552,000 in 1957 was 10 percent greater than returns in 1956. Utilized were 3,158 farm units for crop production by 1,923 operators, whereas in 1956 there were 1,834 operators farming 2,784 farm units. About 16 percent more land was irrigated and 13 percent more units were cropped in 1957 than in 1956.

Including Class 6 and high land just over 203,000 acres were irrigated in 1957. Gross returns were \$120.89 per irrigated acre, 5 percent below 1956. Double cropping was practiced on 4,400 acres.

Generally the weather was favorable for the planting, growing and harvesting of crops. About 1,000 acres of kidney beans were plowed up because of blight and the land planted to other crops. Peas suffered some reduction in yield because of a few hot days in May. Peanuts were tried by 71 growers without success. Apparently the season was not long enough to mature and harvest this crop.

New seedings were reported for 3,860 acres. Alfalfa with 1,400 acres, wheat on 800, irrigated pasture on 650 acres, asparagus with 450 and orchard plantings with 300 acres accounted for 93 percent of the total.

Alfalfa hay growing on 53,891 acres occupied 27 percent of all Project irrigated land in 1957. Dry beans utilized 20 percent, the small grains 18 percent, peas 9 percent, potatoes 8 percent and sugar beets 5 percent of the irrigated land. Together these 6 crops accounted for 87 percent of the total acreage irrigated and 89 percent of the gross revenues.

Field corn continued its forward advance in both acreage and yields. Over 3,800 acres of field corn were reported, 1,000 more than in 1956 and acre yields increased 10 percent.

Truck crops continue to gain in importance. Produce from Project farms moved to markets for both processing and fresh consumption.

Not included in the annual crop report but of unusual interest is the increase in livestock feeding. In 1956-1957 over 34,000 head of cattle were finished in Project feed lots and numbers on feed in 1957-1958 are well above those of a year earlier. This enterprise provides an excellent market for Project grown grains, silage, cull potatoes, beet pulp and ground peas. West Coast markets readily absorb all meats produced. Animals grading choice are preferred although there is a limited market for prime beef.

TABLE 1 - The Acreage, Yield, Price Per Unit and Percent of Total Value of 42 Crops Grown on the Columbia Basin Project in 1957.

Crop	Approximate Acreage	Unit	Average Yield Per Acre	Average Price Per Unit	Percent of Total Value
Beans, dry & edible	40,361	Cwt.	21.5	\$ 5.45	19.3
Sugar Beets	10,528	Ton	25.2	13.80 ^{a/}	14.9
Alfalfa Hay	53,891	Ton	4.9	13.00	14.1
Wheat	28,939	Bu.	50	1.95	11.5
Potatoes, late	11,306	Cwt.	319.0	.77	11.3
Potatoes, early	5,772	Cwt.	345.0	.94	7.6
Peas for seed	17,372	Cwt.	26.6	4.00	7.5
Peas, green (processing)	1,993	Ton	2.5	100.00	2.0
Corn	3,813	Bu.	84	1.28	1.7
Onions, dry	643	Cwt.	380.2	1.25	1.2
Irrigated Pasture	6,685	A.U.M.	6.7	6.00	1.1
Barley	4,931	Bu.	49	.83	.8
Silage	1,626	Ton	16.6	7.00	.8
Grain Sorghums	1,374	Bu.	65	1.25	.5
Asparagus	375	Crate	131	2.40	.5
Corn, Sweet (processing)	674	Ton	7.5	22.00	.5
Alfalfa Seed	1,311	Cwt.	2.6	24.00	.3
Clover Seed	1,074	Cwt.	3.2	27.04	.4
Oats	2,022	Bu.	55	.58	.3
Spearmint	394	Lb.	68	3.00	.3
Watermelons	285	Ton	9.0	30.00	.3
Other Hay	1,645	Ton	2.3	10.00	.2
Peppermint	547	Lb.	35	3.00	.2
Corn, Sweet (Fresh Market)	235	Cwt.	78.1	2.35	.2
Grass Seeds	635	Cwt.	1.5	41.78	.2
Root & Vegetable Crops	555	Ton	15.8	4.12	.1
Nursery	17	M	-	-	.1
Family Gardens	147	-	-	150.00	.1
Rye	274	Bu.	25	1.12	Less than 0.1
Beans, (Processing)	36	Ton	1.4	163.73	" "
Beans (Fresh Market)	1	Bu.	267	1.95	" "
Cabbage	2	Ton	10.0	60.00	" "
Carrots	30	Ton	24.2	15.93	" "
Cucumbers	1	Bu.	83	2.40	" "
Lettuce	14	Crate	300	1.80	" "
Cantaloupes	14	Crate	237	2.70	" "
Squash	5	Cwt.	240.0	3.00	" "
Tomatoes (Fresh Market)	11	Lug	392	1.60	" "
Apples	23	Cwt.	151.3	3.10	" "
Apricots	2	Cwt.	75.0	5.00	" "
Strawberries	2	Cwt.	55.0	10.00	" "
Grapes	2	Cwt.	40.0	2.90	" "

^{a/} Includes an estimated \$4.05 per ton for factory and sugar program payments

Acres Irrigated - 203,097; Acres Cultivated - 206,256

Total Gross Value of Crops - \$24,552,155

Average Gross Value of Crops Per Irrigated Acre - \$120.89

Increase in Total Value 1956 to 1957 - 10 Percent

Increase in Irrigated Acreage 1956 to 1957 - 16 Percent

Increase in Number of Farm Units Cropped 1956 to 1957 - 13 Percent