

CHAPTER VI
The Livestock Industry

I

Although the most noticeable change in the character of the Yakima Valley between 1880 and 1900 was the development of irrigation accompanied by the cultivation of the soil and the planting of orchards and crops, the livestock industry did not languish. In Yakima County the estimated value of all products which were consumed by live stock was \$1,547,649 in 1899. The value of the livestock which were in the county at the same time was \$1,675,306. The number of farm animals of all kinds showed a very considerable increase over what it had been in 1880, but the character of the industry had undergone a change.

In his report for 1887 the Governor of the Territory stated "that the general tenor of all letters received from stockmen is to the effect that the ranges are being rapidly curtailed by homestead pre-emption, and other entries of the public land, and by purchase of railroad land."² In his report of 1889 he stated that "Stockraising, though still a profit-

¹ Appendix I, Table I.

² Sample, "Report of the Governor," 1887, p 881. From two hundred fifty inquiries which were sent to cattlemen the governor received but thirty-six replies.

able industry, is relatively diminishing in importance. Large areas of what was formerly stock range have been converted into grain fields. "The stock grower with his herds is constantly being forced back for range to localities remote from the railroads where farming cannot yet be profitably carried on."³

The permanence of the cattle industry seemed assured, however, because above the levels of irrigation there was so much land which could be utilized for grazing purposes only. The figures which were quoted above are significant because they not only show that the livestock industry continued to thrive while other agricultural developments were taking place, but they also show that it was no longer the industry of first rank in the Yakima Valley.

In descriptions which were written about the winter of 1889-1890, one also finds evidence that there was at that time a decided change from the conditions which had existed a decade earlier. It was another rather severe winter and the losses of range cattle were quite heavy, but they were largely sustained by a few individuals. In March, 1890, the Herald reported that "Snipes and Allen, P.J. Flint, Baxter & Sharkey, and other large cattle raisers will lose (sic.) more than fifty per cent of their bands, while the loss of the Moxee company and many of those with a few hundred head who had plenty of feed will be comparatively light...the loss falls principally on a few, as the farmers with barn yard stock or

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Moore, "Report of the Governor," 1889, p. 531.

small herds of range cattle mainly had ample provision for caring for their stock... With the commencement of the winter the estimate of range cattle in the country was twenty-thousand. Roughly stated half of these are now dead, and two-thirds of the loss will fall on less than a dozen men." The losses of that winter convinced the largest cattle producer that his place was no longer in the Yakima valley, and it became quite common to have small herds which were allowed to graze on the range during the summer, but which could be brought into feeding pens during the winter.⁴

As the amount of cultivated land increased and the Yakima farmers began to produce a surplus of hay, the Yakima Valley became important as a feedingground for cattle which were to be fattened for the markets of Puget Sound. By 1892 they were being brought into the valley from Idaho and the Okanogan country because there were no longer enough being produced in the valley to supply the demand. In December, 1892, it was reported that one hundred carloads had been shipped into the valley for that purpose. In 1896 it was estimated that not less than 4,000 head had been driven into the county and fed during the winter, and the editor of the Herald was optimistic enough to predict that it was a business "destined" to overshadow all others.⁴ In 1897 the firm Frye & Bruhn of Seattle purchased 3,000 tons of alfalfa in the vicinity of Yakima to be fed to cattle during that winter and that was only one

⁴ Yakima Herald, January 9, 30, February 13, March 6, 1890.

of several of the firms which had engaged in the practice.

Probably the most significant change in cattle raising was the increasing interest which was shown in dairy cattle. There were at least two reasons for this; small herds were more suitable for the pattern of agriculture which was developing within the valley; and the growing cities of Puget Sound as well as the increasing population in the Valley promised to be good markets for dairy products. In 1879 there were in Yakima County about two thousand cattle which were classified as "dairy or milch cows." The editor of the Record stated in 1881 that to his knowledge there was only one dairy in all of Yakima County. It was the one which was owned by Smith Brothers in the Kittitas Valley. By 1889 the city of North Yakima had become large enough to use a considerable quantity of milk and cream, and in April of that year two notices appeared in the Herald, one advertising the Cold Springs Dairy of North Yakima, and the other the Antanum Dairy. In November of the same year H.B. Scudder imported several cars of Holsteins from Minnesota to furnish milk for the Yakima Dairy which he was operating. The Moxee company was noted for its herds of blooded stock which included Shorthorns and Jerseys, but it does not appear that that company was particularly interested in dairying until about the middle of the next decade ⁶

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Yakima Herald, December 15, 1892, June 11, 1896, October 7, 1897.

⁶Appendix I, Table I; Yakima Herald, April 4, 18, September 19, November 7, 1889; Yakima Record, December 24, 1881.

A few years after the completion of the railroad to Puget Sound outside capital became interested in developing the possibilities of the dairy industry. In August, 1892, the dairy firm of G.G. Wickson & Co. of San Francisco and Portland sent an agent to the Yakima Valley to investigate the possibilities of establishing a large dairy at North Yakima. He completed the arrangements for the plant and subscriptions to stock were opened about the first of December. The company proposed to purchase hogs which they would feed with the skimmed milk and buttermilk, and to erect a cold storage warehouse large enough to store two carloads of butter. It was hoped to secure a large number of relatively small subscriptions to stock in order that most of the farmers around Yakima would feel a vital interest in the undertaking. The price of milk was to be governed by the amount of butterfat which it contained. Before the end of the year, however, it was announced that the project had been abandoned in favor of a plan to establish several smaller plants in the Naches, Cowlitz and Ahtanum valleys. The Ahtanum plant was established very soon and began operations in June, 1893. A year later a creamery was finished at Yakima City and in April, 1895, one began operations in the Naches Valley. In December of that year the Moxee Company had one in operation. The cheese which was manufactured at the Yakima creameries seems to have enjoyed a particularly enviable reputation and was much in demand in the Seattle and Tacoma markets.

Several small creameries were established subsequent to

1895, but in February, 1899, it was announced by the Herald that all of the creameries in Yakima County except the one at Moxee had been consolidated into one firm owned by Miller Brothers, Cheal & McMaster of Tacoma. In August of the same year it was stated that the Hazelwood Creamery Company of Spokane had bought the plants of the North Yakima Creamery Company, the Creamery at the Abner Sinclair place on the Naches, the James Creamery on the Longmire place and the Frazier, the Stevens and the A. Miller outfits.⁷

These examples furnish evidence that there was a growing interest in the possibilities of dairying. Besides one finds that the number of dairy cattle in the valley doubled between 1890 and 1900 and at the latter date comprised almost four per cent of the total in the state. That was a gain of more than one per cent over the previous decade. The amount of milk produced increased from about four per cent of the state's total in 1889 to seven per cent in 1899, and the amount of butter that was made on farms increased from less than one per cent to almost three per cent, of the entire production of the state. One cannot say, however, that dairying was an industry of much importance in 1900. A chief obstacle to its development was the comparatively small number of high grade dairy stock.

7

Yakima Herald, August 25, September 8, December 1, 29, 1892, January 26, June 22, 1893, May 3, June 21, 1894, March 28, April 5, May 20, July 11, December 18, 1895, July 1, 1897, June 23, 1898, February 16, August 10, 1899.

⁷The North Yakima Creamery Company was the name of the firm which had been created by the consolidation which took place in February, 1899.

Criticizing the slow development of the industry, the editor of the Herald said in 1894 that the trouble in Yakima County was that there were not enough good cows to make the industry really pay. In 1897 the state dairy commissioner stated that although he noted some improvement in the quality of the dairy herds in Yakima County, the Kittitas County farmers were giving more attention to the grading of their stock. The development which took place between 1890 and 1900 seems to justify the claims, however, that dairying was being recognized as one of the future important industries of the valley.⁸

II

Sheep raising showed a much more remarkable gain between 1880 and 1900 than did any other division of the livestock industry. The number of sheep in the Yakima Valley in 1879 was just a few over five thousand; by 1889 it had increased to over sixteen thousand; and by 1899 to more than two hundred sixty-one

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Appendix I, Table 1: The census reports for butter and cheese included only the quantities which were made on farms. It was impossible to get the reports about these products from the report on manufacturers because such reports were made for states only. It is certain that the amount of cheese produced was much greater than the figures in the table show. In 1898 for example, the Herald reported that the James Creameries on the Wenas and Naches had shipped, 1,000 pounds of cheese during the week, and found it difficult to keep up with orders. A report of the Bureau of Statistics, Agriculture, and Immigration on Agricultural Resources (1901 p. 231), stated that in 1900 there were four creameries in Yakima County which had manufactured 194,606 pounds of butter, all of which was sold to the local market or within the State of Washington. That was about the same amount as was made on farms during the preceding year according to the census reports.

Yakima Herald, May 3, 1894.

thousands which were almost twenty-eight per cent of the total in the state. ^{At} the beginning of the period sheep roamed the range the year around as did the cattle, but by 1890 that practice had changed and they grazed on the mountain ranges during the summer months, but in the fall were brought back to the foothills where, during the winter months, they found food in the bunch grass which covered the hills and prairies. The winter grazing was supplemented, however, by the feeding of hay and some of the stockmen kept their flocks in barnyard shelters during the coldest weather. The dry climate of the Yakima Valley was conducive to sheep raising as it checked the spread of disease, and as a result those sheepmen who understood the business and used reasonable care had only small losses. It was not uncommon to have the flocks increase more ⁹ than ninety per cent during one season.

The most serious difficulty with which the sheepmen had to contend during this period was a controversy over the use of the range, first with the Northern Pacific Railroad Company and later with the government of the United States. In May, 1896, Judge Hanford issued an injunction to restrain sheepmen, cattlemen and horsemen from using the lands belonging to the Northern Pacific for grazing purposes. The railroad company claimed that it paid thousands of dollars in taxes on the land which the stockmen used; that it desired to save the range from utter ruin and that thereafter it would be necessary for the stockmen to lease or buy the land if they wished to use

it for grazing purposes. The sheepmen claimed that they came into the region under the implied promise that they were to have abundant, free range; that the advertisements which had been issued by the railroad company to stimulate immigration had emphasized the fact that there were immense grazing lands available; that since they were in the country and dependant upon the railroad to get their livestock transported to markets the company was taking advantage of the situation. They particularly objected to the lease form which provided that the lessee should do all of his shipping over the Northern Pacific Railroad.

The controversy led to the organization of the Yakima Wool Growers' Association which framed resolutions on July 15, 1897 declaring that the sheepmen obligated themselves not to rent any lands from the Northern Pacific unless the company promised they would keep other stock off the land, and this in written contract; that they would not pay any sum as rental which should exceed the amount of the annual taxes which were paid on the land by the railroad company, that they would prorate among the members of the association any costs which might be incurred because of litigation which might arise in a test case to prove how far the railroad company might go in compelling the sheepmen to pay a rental fee for its grazing lands; and that they would not

10

Some agreement must have been reached between the railroad company and the cattlemen and horsemen for in 1897 the sheepmen were complaining that it was unfair to force them to lease the lands from the railroad company and then have the cattlemen and horsemen use the land without restrictions.

enter into any contract with the railroad company without first submitting it to the president, vice president and secretary of the Wool Growers' Association. Those three officials were also given the power to employ any counsel which they might consider necessary to the interests of the association's members. The agreement was signed by twenty-nine sheepmen, but a week later it was reported that a few of those who had signed the resolutions had gone back on their agreement and entered into contracts with the Northern Pacific. Apparently some satisfactory agreement was ultimately reached, for there was no further reference made to the dispute either that year or the next, and in 1899 the dispute with the government was the paramount issue upon which stockmen focused their attention.

Early in 1899 it was rumored among the stockmen of the Yakima Valley that there was danger that the government would close the mountain forest reserves to stock grazing. In March, however, Dr. Cloes, the forestry superintendent of the Rainier Reserve received instructions which fixed definite boundaries against sheep grazing but stated that a limited number might enter the remainder of the reserve provided they encroached upon no reservoir supply or public resort. A few months later Secretary of the Interior Hitchcock cancelled the sixty-eight permits which had been issued. His action deprived about 260,000 sheep of their usual summer range and it roused the

11

Interstate Publishing Company, Illustrated History, 194;
Yakima Herald, May 21, 1896, April 1, July 1, 15, 22, 1897.

stockmen to protest. In September a meeting of the Yakima Wool Growers' Association was called to put forth a united effort to secure a modification of the ruling. It was suggested that a committee should be appointed to serve as a bureau of information in order to supply the state delegation in Congress with necessary data upon which to base legislation or executive action. A committee of five was appointed for that purpose and a letter was prepared to be presented to Congress soon after its regular session commenced. The letter pointed to the fact that a circular of June 30, 1897, from the Department of Interior had stated that the department would not interfere with the pasturing of sheep in the reserve if it could be shown that no injury resulted to the young trees or the water supply. The sheepmen argued

That in the counties of Klickitat, Yakima and Kittitas the lower range where sheeppare pastured in the winter months is semi-arid and therefore not suited to summer pasturage. It is then necessary to drive the sheep to the mountains on the east side of the Cascades, on the higher elevations where it is impossible for sheep to eat trees or destroy the water supply. Here the sheep have been pastured for twenty years, and their feet are golden in the way of improving and enriching the soil. There is no grazing or grass for obvious reasons where the trees and undergrowth are thick. It has been the constant effort of the sheepmen to prevent forest fires, and on the range reserve there were practically no fires last season.....

They recommended that treeless and agricultural areas should be excluded from the forest reserves; that the number of sheep on the reserve should be limited to the number constantly grazing there; and that each owner should be assigned a specified tract with a five-year permit to use it provided that he used every effort to prevent fires

12

and to report their causes.

The cattlemen also saw their grazing rights threatened by the action which the government had taken and in November, 1899, they organized the Yakima Husbandmen and Cattlegrowers' Association. Their first act was to declare that a determined effort would be made to have strict regulations adopted by the forest reserve administration to the end that the grass, the forest reserve administration, the timber and the water supply be conserved and that the farmers and cattlemen might be secured in their right of pasture privileges. Just what action was taken by this organization it is not possible to say, but the efforts of the sheepmen were rewarded when the Department of the Interior issued an order that permitted grazing on the eastern slope of the reserve, and authorized the granting of permits for 250,000 sheep to enter the reserve not earlier than July 1, and to remain not later than September 25. Cattle and horses in the same numbers had usually grazed on the reserve and were permitted to continue to do so with some restrictions.

13

The Yakima Wool Growers Association found other lines of activity in which it also took an interest. In the summer of 1898 it was agreed to try to induce the county commissioners to offer a bounty on coyotes, and that the association would then

12

it had become common to bring sheep from Oregon into the Yakima country during the summer grazing season. Interstate Publishing Company, Illustrated History, 193-194; Yakima Herald, January 19, September 28, 1899.

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Interstate Publishing Company, Illustrated History, 194 Yakima Herald, November 16, 1899.

pay the same price as was offered by the county for the scapps. At the same time a committee was appointed to appear before the board of equalization to endeavor to have the assessed valuation of sheep in Yakima county reduced. There the flocks had been assessed at \$2.50 per head while in Klickitat and Kittitas counties the valuation had been placed at only \$2.00. Like other groups of agriculturalists the stockmen had decided that the best way to attempt to solve their problems was to take
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 united action against them.

III

Considerable attention was given to the raising of horses in the Yakima Valley, not so much as a lucrative industry but to complement other agricultural pursuits, particularly farming. As the population of the valley increased the number of draft horses needed for farm work increased proportionately and since one finds very little reference to horses having been imported it appears that the farmers who were in the valley raised enough to supply the demand. Further evidence to support this belief is the fact that there were quite a number of stallions in the valley, most of which were of the draft horse type. Between 1889 and 1899 the number of horses in Yakima county more than trebled and amounted to 17,635 at the latter date. They comprised 6.62% of the total number in the state whereas a decade earlier the Yakima Valley had only 3.39% of

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Ibid., July 7, 1898.

the state's total.¹⁵

Any region which engaged in dairying usually raises hogs to utilize the by-products of the industry, so it is not surprising to find that the number of hogs in Yakima Valley increased from about 2,500 in 1889 to almost 6,500 in 1899. It is not a large enough figure to classify hog raising as very important by 1900, but the increase has a significant bearing upon the future possibilities of the industry. In 1889 H.H. Allen made the statement that in two years time he had sold \$1,400 worth of pork products from an original investment of \$150 in Berkshires, and that he had fifty hogs left. In the next decade there were a number of the farmers who engaged in the enterprise on a relatively large scale. In 1895 P.J. Flint had two hundred head, and it was reported that he intended to increase his stock hogs until he would be able to sell about four hundred head annually. At the same time the firm of Risk and Allen had one hundred head of graded Berkshires and Poland Chinas and they were preparing to market between three and four hundred head a year. Those men had formerly been among the large cattle producers in the county. The value of raising hogs for the purpose of utilizing the by-products of the dairy industry can be understood in terms of a report which stated that extensive tests showed that it required alone about 1,875 pounds of milk or 534 pounds of meal to produce 100 pounds of pork, but when the two products were fed to-

together, it required but 176 pounds of meals and 538 pounds¹⁶ of milk to produce the same results.

Before 1900 most of the poultry in the Yakima Valley consisted of common barnyard stock, and little attention was given to its improvement. In 1897 a Yakima baker told a Herald reporter that he could save money by purchasing eastern cold storage eggs at a price two or three cents per dozen higher than was charged for Yakima eggs. He claimed that the reason for this was that the farmers of Yakima had paid so little attention to their stock that constant inbreeding had resulted in poultry which produced eggs below the standard size. Since bakers used a liquid measure to determine the quantity of eggs to be used it took an average of a dozen Yakima eggs to be the equivalent of nine or ten eastern eggs. The number of both chickens and eggs showed a very good increase between 1800 and 1900 but the evidence does not indicate that there was a very large number of farmers who made a speciality of poultry raising.¹⁷

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Ibid.: Yakima Herald, February 21, 1889, May 3, 1894, February 14, 1895.

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Appendix I, Table v: The census figures show that in 1890 Yakima County had 3.16% of the chickens in the state, and produced 2.29% of the eggs; but in 1900 it had 3.28% of the chickens and produced 4.00% of the eggs. This would seem to indicate a definite improvement in the type of poultry which the county was raising. The author is inclined to believe, however, that there was an error in the census report, due probably to poor methods on the part of the farmers in keeping records of their poultry and eggs.

Yakima Herald, October 2, 1890., September 7, 1893, May 3, 1894, March 4, 1897.

IV

Generally speaking, there was a slow but steady movement throughout the entire period, 1880 to 1900, to improve the quality of the livestock in the Yakima valley. A leading rancher of the valley reported to the Census Bureau in 1880 that improvement in the quality of cattle had occurred to some extent by the importation of Shorthorn bulls and cows, but that the raising of graded live stock did not seem to pay. As long as the range system of cattle raising was used such a statement would continue to be quite true, for it was impossible to give care to the selection and breeding of an improved stock under that system. As soon as the cattlemen reduced the size of their herds, however, and inaugurated the practice of keeping them confined to small pastures, it was possible to give more attention to their improvement. The governor of the Territory stated in 1887 that he gathered from letters which he had received that cattle, horses, sheep and swine of superior breeds were in growing demand. He also said that the first settlers were too poor to invest much in a few expensive animals when it was so difficult to have them transported to the Territory, but since the communities had become richer the men of means were importing fine breeds of stock. The practice was soon to have results throughout the entire valley, for the improved cattle brought so much better prices that farmers who raised inferior stock found themselves unable to compete in the industry and either had to im-

prove their own herds or give up their interest in the cattle industry.

From the very beginning of its experiment in the valley the Moxee company had only highly bred livestock on its farm. Its horses included Percherons, Suffolk Punch and Clydesdales which had been purchased from the farm of J.P. Pope, the Minister of Agriculture for Canada. The cattle were registered and included Herefords, Durhams, Durham Short-horns, Jerseys, and Aberdeen Angus. The hogs were of Yorkshire and Poland China Stock.

From 1880 throughout the next two decades one finds in the newspapers numerous accounts, advertising stallions available for breeding purposes, and if one places a conservative estimate upon the truth of the statements regarding their qualities and pedigrees, it is safe to say that there were available a number of very good sires to improve the quality of the horses throughout the valley. On March 26, 1892, North Yakima had a stallion parade which attracted a great deal of attention throughout the valley. The editor of the Herald made the claim that "few sections of Washington are as well provided with imported and good blooded horses as Yakima." In 1903, of twenty-four men who were listed as breeders of high grade livestock in Washington, fourteen of them lived in the Yakima Valley.¹⁸

¹⁸ Barton, "North Yakima," 21; Bureau of Statistics, Agriculture and Immigration, Agricultural Resources, 1903, p 245; Census Office, Report of Agriculture, 1880, p 1091; Sample "Report of the Governor" 1887, pp. 881, 941; Yakima Herald,

By the beginning of the twentieth century it was evident that large scale stock raising in the Yakima Valley was at an end. The relative number of beef cattle had greatly declined whereas the number of dairy cattle had shown a considerable increase. In the sheep industry the trend was also toward smaller herds although it had not by 1900 reached the same degree of culmination that was realized in the cattle industry. Sheepmen were advised to limit their hands to about 2,000 head, and it was stated at various times that it would be very profitable for every farmer in the valley to have a small flock of sheep in connection with his other agricultural pursuits. A great deal of interest was shown by the end of the century in improving the quality of the livestock that was raised, and it was evident that although the chief agricultural interests of the valley were to center around the raising of fruit and farm crops, stock raising would remain a permanent part of the agricultural program of the Yakima Valley.

April 11, October 10, 1889, March 17, 31, 1892, May 4, 1893;
 Yakima Record, April 24, May 22, February 7, 28, 1880,
 March 31, 1883.