

ATLANTIC COASTAL AREA



DOT=10,000,000 POUNDS
WHOLE MILK SOLD

MAP NO. A54-505

Figure 17.

THE ATLANTIC COAST AREA
(Economic Subregions 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16)

In some respects this is not a special dairy area. Its milk production adds materially to the supply for the industrialized urban East, and its proximity to the Northeastern Dairy Region along with the variety of the output suggests some special treatment. Its location makes it assume the role of a transition area, where, because of its unlimited market for all farm products including milk, it can continue to increase production. Though milk production is a minor part of the food contribution to the industrial East from this region the sale of 5,233 million pounds of whole milk and cream from the 760,000 milk cows is a real contribution (Table 51). Approximately one-third of the commercial farms are dairy farms. These farms account for 86 percent of all milk cows, and 90 percent of total milk sales from the area. Less than 1 percent of all milk is sold as cream and 56 percent of this comes from the few cows on nondairy farms. More than half of this quantity is sold from Economic Subregion 16—the subregion that centers in Adams County in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Table 51.—MILK COWS AND MILK PRODUCTION, FOR THE ATLANTIC COAST AREA: 1954

Item	Number of farms	Milk cows (number)	Milk and cream sold		
			Total milk (pounds)	Whole milk (pounds)	Milk as cream (pounds, milk equivalent)
All commercial farms.....	75,417	760,066	5,232,694,847	5,195,587,473	37,107,374
Dairy farms.....	26,073	655,910	4,722,440,845	4,706,002,029	16,438,816
Percent dairy.....	34.6	86.3	90.2	90.6	44.3

The following brief statement without all the detailed production figures is planned to show the contribution this region makes to the general dairy picture. The whole area is essentially industrial and commercial with a population of 30 million people in 1950. Although one-fifth of the population of the nation was here at that time it has only one-eighteenth of the land of the country and approximately one-half of this land lies within design-

nated State metropolitan economic areas. It is the most densely populated area of the United States, having around 600 persons per square mile. Different forms of manufacturing are the chief occupation of the urban people.

The farms occupy slightly less than half of the land and use less than 3½ percent of the total labor force. Almost every form of intensely operated agricultural production which leads to a high degree of specialization is found here. Because of this the term "mixed farming" is most appropriate for its agriculture. More than half of the farms are classed as dairy or poultry farms. Vegetables, small fruits, tobacco, and other special crop and livestock types account for the remaining farms.

Its subregions vary considerably in the proportion of the different types of farms although every economic subregion produces practically every commodity found in this general region. Within each subregion are found small areas devoted almost exclusively to one special enterprise while a neighboring locality with apparently similar soil, topography, and market possibilities, is used for a completely different enterprise.

Five of the economic subregions, numbers 4, 11, 12, 13, and 16, have a larger proportion of dairy herds than any other type while poultry farms account for more of the farms in Subregions 3 and 5. Central New Jersey, Subregion 14, has about the same number of vegetable, poultry, and dairy farms. In practically every part of the area employees of industrial or commercial concerns live in rural communities and commute to work. This results in many part-time or residential farms whose owners produce some crop or livestock products for market. They ordinarily consume much more than they produce so that as long as they are employed these workers create markets for local produce. Noncommercial operators account for two-fifths of all farmers.

A statement of the development of agriculture in Connecticut may well characterize the area. Early records indicate that its citizens considered theirs a manufacturing State even before 1800, when nine-tenths of the population depended on agriculture for a living. Each form of manufacturing of that time was essentially a home enterprise. Gradually farmers who were more proficient in some activity began specializing in the production of that one commodity by hiring one or more helpers. These special commodities were then exchanged with neighbors whose developing specialties were along other lines.

As these home enterprises developed, factories were built on the farms or in the nearby villages and the help continued to be recruited from neighboring farms. This meant that early in the development of the State there were many part-time farmers or, as they may as well be called, part-time factory workers.

The advent of hard surfaced roads, and especially the coming of automobiles, resulted in a shift from the more general farming and crafts to activities that required special buildings and equipment, as well as trained workers, for more economical operation. A two-way movement of the population resulted. Many farm people continued to live in the country, but took part-time or full-time work in neighboring urban communities, while urban employees moved to the country and commuted to work. As a result of this kind of activity, more than one-third of all farmers were classed as part-time farmers 20 years ago.³ This situation has changed little. In 1954, almost 40 percent of all Connecticut farmers were noncommercial operators.

Cranberry growing is an important industry in Subregion 3, while tobacco production in the Connecticut River Valley of Subregion 4 is one of the high-income crops. The farmland around New York City is most valuable. It can pay out only by being used for the most intensive forms of production. Small acreages used for growing plants and flowers under glass, some potato growing, and a few poultry farms, illustrate the type of production adapted to this land.

³ Adapted from "Types of Farming and Type-of-Farming Areas in Connecticut," Bulletin 213. I. G. Davis, Connecticut State College, Storrs, Connecticut.