

## SNAKE RIVER-UTAH VALLEY AREA

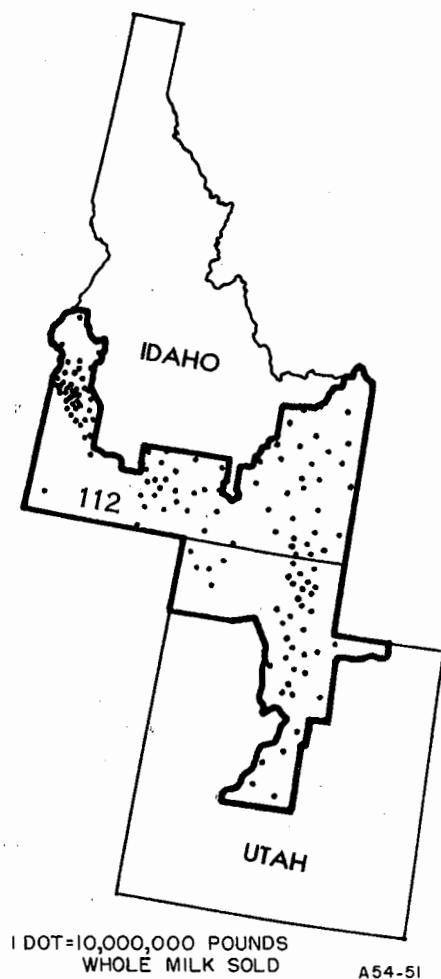


Figure 21.

THE SNAKE RIVER-UTAH VALLEY AREA  
(Economic Subregion 112)

This intermountain subregion, with its mixture of intensive and extensive farming, brings together several areas of irrigated agriculture in the high valleys of southern Idaho and northern Utah and places where dryland farming is necessary. Farms in the irrigated valleys are relatively small, partly because of the method of developing the area and partly because large productions are obtained from irrigated crops and this supplies a good workload for the family. The nonirrigated lands have larger farms and a more extensive type of farming.

Most of the soils are waterlaid and show considerable variation within short distances in texture, depth, and drainage.<sup>7</sup> Usually

the better, more productive soils are used for cultivated crops; the poorer soils are used for pastures. Practically all cropland and much pastureland is rather level, and, with the exception of a few farms in Morgan County and the Ogden Valley, both cropland and pastureland can be irrigated.

The average farm contains 345 acres. This includes 77 acres of harvested cropland with 26 acres of cropland reported as idle. Dairy farms are not so large as most other farms of the area. Although they constitute one-fourth of the number of farms, they occupy only 6 percent of the land in farms and control 9 percent of the total cropland.

Part-time, residential, and abnormal farms comprise one-fifth of the farms reported in the 1954 Census. Nearly 30 percent of the commercial farms produce field and cash crops. Another 25 percent are dairy farms. Nearly all farms are irrigated and most dairy farm concentrations are around the urban centers. Between 40 and 50 percent of the commercial farms in Summit and Wasatch Counties, east and southeast of Salt Lake City, are dairy farms.

The same proportion holds for Gem County, Idaho, while in Ada County, 54 percent are dairy farms. Approximately 21 percent of the dairy farms of the area are in these 4 counties.

Dairying throughout this area is carried on under various conditions. One is the high mountain valleys, as represented by Summit County, in which dairying competes largely with other types of livestock for the available forage. Cash crops are either limited or nonexistent. In most cases, beef cattle are the main competition for the feed with sheep being less competitive.

At the lower elevations dairying under some situations is only one of several important enterprises. On some occasions, wet bottomland or relatively unproductive soils suitable only for grazing are utilized, with the necessary winter feeds being in competition with cash crops such as sugar beets, potatoes, and canning vegetables. In nearly all situations dairying is associated with irrigated farms. Throughout most of this area some dryland crops, primarily wheat, are grown. Dairy cattle, however, are not important on these farms except as the same operator may have both dry-farm and irrigated farmland.<sup>8</sup>

The number of milk cows in the area has increased from 224,297 in 1949 to 250,363 in 1954. The number of dairy farms, was also increased by 476 or 6 percent and the average number of cows per herd has increased from 12 to 15. The range in the size of herd follows the pattern of other areas. Very few of the farms in Economic Class I have fewer than 30 milk cows. At the other extreme, very few of Class V or VI have more than 20 cows.

These dairy farms receive more than two-thirds of their income from the sale of dairy products and around one-seventh from sales of crops (Table 69). The proportion varies little from the largest to the smallest—the two extremes in size being the most highly specialized. No one economic class differs much from the average in its income from other livestock or crops. This holds also for the specified expenses (Table 70). Total feed purchases were low. The proportion of feed bought to total expenses showed greater variation than any other item. The largest farmers bought the smallest quantity of feed in proportion to all expenses; farmers of Economic Class VI bought the most.

<sup>7</sup> "Farm Management Study of farms with dairy enterprises in the Ogden Area, Utah." Geo. T. Blanch, Dee A. Broadbent, Bulletin 308. Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Logan, Utah.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from G. T. Blanch, Head of Department of Agricultural Economics, Utah State College, Logan, Utah, Oct. 15, 1956.