

PUGET SOUND-COASTAL AREA

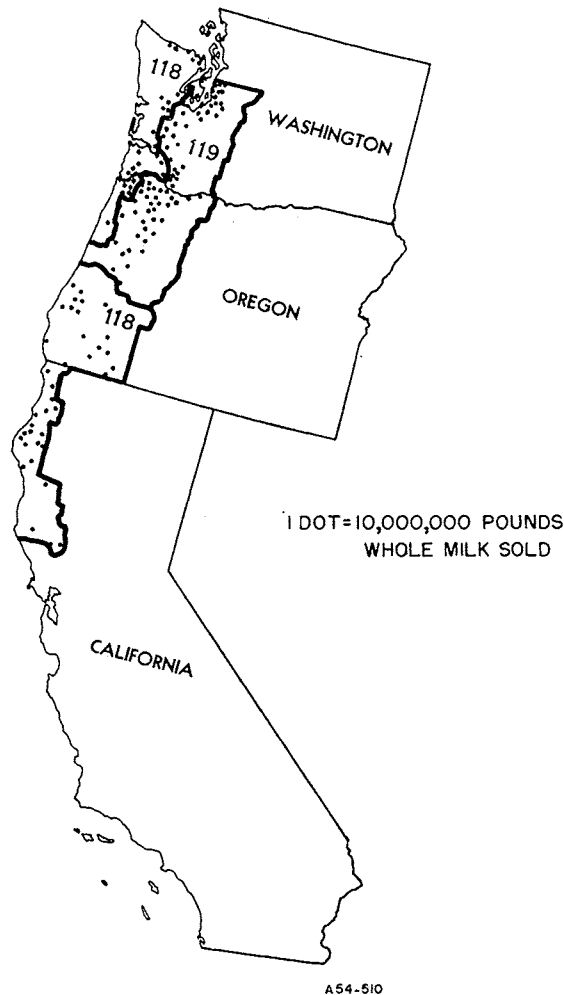


Figure 24

THE PUGET SOUND-COASTAL AREA
(Economic Subregions 118 and 119)

Most of the agricultural production of this area is on the alluvial plains between the mountains and the ocean, and in the river and mountain valleys. The whole area may be characterized as rolling to mountainous. The plow lands are on the less rolling areas and the pasture lands spread to and into the more rugged parts. The western third of Washington and Oregon are included and Economic Subregion 118 extends down the coast of northwestern California to Sonoma and Napa Counties. Practically the whole of the two economic subregions is conditioned climatologically by the Pacific Ocean. Summers are not so hot or the winters so cold as in areas to the east. The cool climate with a long growing season (160 to 240 days) and plentiful rainfall produce good grass growth and a generally good environment for dairying, even though the rainfall is not evenly distributed throughout the summer.

Both economic subregions show considerable diversification and the proportion of the several types of farms is different in different

parts of the elongated area. In Washington, poultry farms are second in number to dairy farms. These are followed by fruit and general farms. In the Oregon part the number of fruit-and-nut farms exceeds any other type. Dairy, general, other livestock, and cash-crop farms follow in the order listed, while in northwestern California the number of general farms practically equals that of the dairy farms with fruit-and-nut farms third. In every part of the two economic subregions the number of noncommercial farms exceeds the total of all others.

Most of the milk sales are of whole milk. The milk equivalent of cream sales is only 6.4 percent in the Washington part. This proportion drops to 5.2 percent in Oregon, and in northwestern California the quantity sold drops to around 4.3 percent.

The quantity of whole milk used in manufacturing dairy products is greatest in the California part where 78 percent¹¹ of the milk sold is so used in comparison with 38 percent for all of California. This part of the area is fairly isolated from fluid-milk markets. It is mainly forest land with some open spaces available for crops and grazing near the mouths of rivers along the coast. The soil here is fertile and grazing conditions are excellent. Dairying has been an established enterprise for decades but because of its inaccessibility to fluid milk markets the milk has gone into such products as cheese, butter, and powdered milk.

The Willamette Valley in western Oregon fairly well characterizes Economic Subregions 118 and 119 within that State. It is somewhat similar to the San Joaquin Valley, except that it has more rainfall as well as more irrigated pasture land. It is more a specialized dairy area and is fairly commercialized. Bulk handling of milk is now the accepted practice throughout this part of the two economic subregions.

Outlets for fluid milk are better in this part than in northwestern California so that less of the whole milk is used in manufactured products. The figures for the State show that 60 percent of the milk sold as whole milk and cream was used in manufactured dairy products, in 1954. That part of the State included in Economic Subregions 118 and 119 sold 94.8 percent of all milk as whole milk and 67 percent of this was used in manufactured products. Butter sales account for two-fifths of the amount, while the sale of cheese accounts for three-fifths.

The part of the two subregions that supplies the Puget Sound metropolitan area with dairy products includes 14 counties lying north of the south tier of counties in Washington.¹² In 1950 this area represented 14 percent of the farmland of the State and 50 percent of all farms, 28 percent of the value of all farm products, and 68 percent of all dairy products were sold from it. The metropolitan district takes the total production of the area except in the flush season.

The northern counties originally developed as a dairy manufacturing territory. The manufacture of butter, cheese, and milk powder were the chief outlets for milk. With the increase in urban population, and especially since bulk handling developed, most of the production now goes to help supply the fluid-milk market of Seattle and other nearby cities.

Not so much of the milk in this part is used in manufactured dairy products as in the other two parts. Nearly 50 percent of the whole milk and cream sold from farms in the State in 1954, was used in manufactured dairy products. In the Washington part of this area 93.6 percent of the milk was sold as whole milk and 55.2 percent of this quantity was used in manufactured products. The sales of cream for the two entire economic subregions was 3.8 percent of all milk sales.

¹¹ See *Manufactured Dairy Products, Milk Production, Utilization and Prices*. Special Publication No. 256, California Department of Agriculture, Sacramento, Calif.

¹² The county of Kittitas east of the Cascades also supplies the equivalent of 31 million pounds of milk to the urban district.