

## SPECIAL DAIRY AREAS

We have seen that the more important dairy areas of the United States have developed from a background of physical conditions as well as economic forces and situations. This interplay of forces and conditions has resulted in areas that are fairly definitely delineated. Dairying has also developed well in some restricted areas, because of special market situations as well as natural forces.

Concentrations of population do not necessarily take place within areas of intensive food production. Rather the opposite is true, especially for certain food products of which the production of milk for fluid consumption is a conspicuous example. In the past, the perishability of milk restricted its production to locations that were relatively close to consuming centers. Even now, although improved methods of handling fluid milk have so increased its keeping qualities that it can be moved hundreds of miles and still arrive at the consuming centers in the best condition, this is not done in large volume for two reasons.

The first is the cost of transporting milk these longer distances. Milk must receive expedited service and this transportation is the highest in price. It is much cheaper per hundredweight to ship in the 20 or 25 pounds of grain and other concentrates usually required to produce 100 pounds of milk than it is to ship the 100 pounds of milk. In a few limited areas this margin is so wide that some dairymen prefer a location at the market. They buy all of their feed and spend full working time with the dairy herd.

A second reason is found in the regulations and restrictions set up by local health authorities whose primary function is to assure consumers the highest quality product. These regulations sometimes are greater deterrents to the shipment of fluid milk than are transportation and handling costs.

Because of varying economic forces and the administration of different health regulations these special dairy areas continue to develop and expand. Since each of the more outstanding special areas is different in some respects from every other, a brief discussion of each is in order.

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

There are eight smaller areas which have a large enough concentration of dairy farms or milk production to justify individual description. A considerable range in the proportion of dairy farms to all commercial farms is found in the different areas (Table 41).

The Ozark-Springfield area, Subregions 73 and 82, is more nearly like a major dairy-producing area than any of the others. Nearly one-half of the commercial farms are dairy farms and they fairly well blanket these two subregions. One-third of the commercial farms have beef cattle or hogs as the major enterprise and this makes it easier to add a few milk cows than when cash crops or poultry is the main source of income. The rolling topography with large acreages of pastureland encourages livestock farming.

Such areas as the Gulf Coastal, Subregion 58, the California Inner Valley, Subregion 116, and the Southern California area, Subregion 115, where half or more of the farms are classed as cash-crop farms will take up dairying more slowly than where livestock other than dairy predominates. Also, it costs more to change the cropping system and buildings, as well as the form of operating capital to suit dairy farming, than when the system already includes other livestock.

Another conspicuous difference among these subregions is the proportion of noncommercial farms. A noncommercial farm may be a part-time, residential, or abnormal farm, and the operator is not considered a genuine or full-time farm operator. It is frequently held that large numbers of noncommercial farms are found in areas having much industrial or commercial activity. Excess capital and energy in these areas find outlets in various farming ventures which give recreation and pleasure to the owners.

Table 41.—NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL FARMS BY TYPE, FOR SPECIAL DAIRY AREAS: 1954

Special dairy area	Subregions included	All farms (number)	Commercial farms		Percent distribution of commercial farms by type					
			Number	Percent of all farms	Cotton, cash-grain, other field-crop, fruit-and-nut, and vegetable	Dairy	Poultry	Other livestock	General	All other
Atlantic Coast.....	3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16	103, 812	75, 417	73	18	35	23	8	10	5
Nashville Basin.....	54	20, 528	19, 437	66	29	34	1	21	14	1
Gulf Coastal.....	58	36, 092	13, 369	37	48	20	6	15	7	4
Ozark-Springfield.....	73 and 82	95, 625	51, 088	53	7	45	9	31	7	1
Snake River-Utah Valley.....	112	44, 056	34, 472	78	34	25	4	16	22	0
Southern California.....	115	34, 537	23, 847	69	55	5	23	7	5	5
California Inner Valley.....	116	52, 447	42, 223	80	56	21	7	9	7	0
Puget Sound-Coastal.....	118 and 119	82, 169	40, 189	49	26	31	13	13	10	7