

Cattle

Beef production in the United States started to flourish around the mid-19th century with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Cattle were propagated to utilize profitably the vast prairies and plains of the Western Frontier. The famous trail drives of those days brought the cattle herds to the new rail heads on the Great Plains, and the railroads transported the cattle to the slaughter houses in the industrial Midwest and East.

The increasing availability of beef in the cities whetted the appetites of both the blue- and white-collar populations. Since then the appetite for beef has continued to increase to the present historic highs in both production and consumption.

Considerable variety is practiced among cattle-producing operations in the United States. In 1974, cattle were produced on all census-classified types of farms; however, 82 percent of the cattle and calves sold were from livestock farms and dairy farms.

Most of the cattle produced from grazing operations on livestock farms and ranches are sold to farms and feedlots for further feeding. The cattle feeding industry, those fattening cattle on grain and concentrates and selling them for slaughter, is highly concentrated in specialized grain-producing areas. Sales of cattle from dairy farms consist primarily of bull calves, dairy cows, and heifers culled from the milking herd (table 8).

The number of farms with cattle has been declining during the past six censuses, from 1940 to 1974. Between 1969 and 1974, the percentage of all farms with cattle increased by 2 percent (table 9).

Some of this increase in the ratio of farms with cattle to total farms resulted from a change in the percentage of cattle enterprises on farms with a value of sales less than \$2,500. Another contributory element was the change in farm definition which eliminated places with gross sales of less than \$1,000 from the total farms. In 1969, approximately 54 percent of these farms reported cattle on hand compared with 68 percent in 1974 (table 10).

Table 8. Cattle and Calves—Inventory and Sales: 1974

	All farms	Farms with sales of \$2,500 and over		
		Total	Livestock farms, except dairy, poultry, and animal specialty	Dairy farms
Farms.....number..	2,314,013	1,695,047	493,816	196,057
Farms with cattle.....number..	1,503,244	1,079,603	432,410	195,168
Cattle and calves.....1,000 number..	113,175	104,292	59,426	17,211
Cows.....1,000 number..	51,912	47,415	24,060	9,937
Heifers and heifer calves.....1,000 number..	61,263	24,227	12,944	5,271
Steers, steer calves, bulls and bull calves.....1,000 number..				
Cattle and calves sold.....farms..	1,437,101	1,071,913	446,650	195,843
1,000 number..	70,029	67,253	49,676	5,908
\$1,000..	(NA)	18,300,842	14,904,619	965,067
Cattle sold.....farms..	(NA)	869,485	377,614	167,777
1,000 number..	(NA)	49,843	40,032	2,629
Fattened for slaughter.....farms..	(NA)	210,725	111,407	18,167
1,000 number..	(NA)	26,070	23,916	325
Calves sold.....farms..	(NA)	621,988	234,187	154,484
1,000 number..	(NA)	17,410	9,644	3,279
Expenditures for purchase of livestock and poultry.....\$1,000..	9,954,580	9,800,115	7,251,085	438,104

¹Farms deriving 50 percent or more of their total value of sales from livestock and livestock products as classified in industry group 021, but less than 50 percent from products of any single industry, according to the standard industrial classification, 1972.
²Farms primarily engaged in the production of cows' milk and other dairy products and in raising dairy heifer replacements as classified in industry 0241, according to the standard industrial classification, 1972.

The decline in the number of small cattle operations remained a principal factor in the decrease of farms with cattle. In 1974, farms with less than 10 cattle decreased by nearly 39 percent from 1969. Discontinued cattle enterprises of less than 20 head accounted for 29 percent of the decrease in farms with cattle between 1974 and 1969. The number of farms increased in each herd-size group with more than 100 head. These farms accounted for 64 percent of all cattle (tables 11 and 12).

The decline of farms in the cattle industry is also reflected in the decreasing number of farms with cow herds. Farms with sales of \$2,500 or more with cows on the place decreased in number by almost 8 percent between 1974 and 1969. This decrease occurred on farms with less than 50 cows (table 13).

Table 9. Farms With Cattle: 1940 to 1974

	Total farms (millions)	Farms with cattle (millions)	Percent of total
1974.....	2.3	1.5	65.2
1969.....	2.7	1.7	63.0
1964.....	3.2	2.3	71.9
1959.....	3.7	2.7	73.0
1954.....	4.8	3.7	77.1
1950.....	5.4	4.1	75.9
1940.....	6.1	4.8	78.7

Table 10. Farms With Cattle: 1974 and 1969

	Total farms (1,000)	Farms with cattle (1,000)	Percent of total
All farms.....1974..	2,314	1,503	65.0
.....1969..	2,730	1,719	63.0
Farms with sales of \$2,500 and over....1974..	1,695	1,080	63.7
.....1969..	1,734	1,178	67.9
Farms with sales under \$2,500.....1974..	617	422	68.4
.....1969..	994	540	54.3

Table 11. Cattle and Calves—Inventory by Number Per Farm: 1974 and 1969

All Farms	1974		1969		Cattle and calves			
	Farms (1,000)	Percent	Farms (1,000)	Percent	1974		1969	
					Number (1,000)	Percent	Number (1,000)	Percent
All Farms.....	1,503.2	100.0	1,719.4	100.0	113,175	100.0	106,381	100.0
Cattle and calves per farm:								
1 to 9.....	203.7	13.6	333.4	19.4	1,050	0.9	1,637	1.5
10 to 19.....	252.7	16.8	311.0	18.1	3,538	3.1	4,346	4.1
20 to 99.....	781.2	52.0	848.6	49.3	36,278	32.1	39,021	36.7
100 to 199.....	167.5	11.1	145.6	8.5	22,285	19.7	19,404	18.2
200 to 499.....	75.5	5.0	62.6	3.6	21,663	19.1	18,040	17.0
500 to 999.....	15.4	1.0	12.2	.7	10,157	9.0	8,066	7.6
1,000 to 2,499.....	5.6	.4	4.6	.3	8,032	7.1	6,484	6.1
2,500 and over.....	1.6	.1	1.4	.1	10,172	9.0	9,383	8.8