Food and Farm Economy of
Clark County, Washington

Compiled for
Clark County — Community Choices

by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center
January 25, 2008

Clark County, Washington:
345,000 residents (6% of Washington) earned $12.6 billion of income in 2005.

Highlights from U.S. Agriculture Census (2002)

Farms and ranches
- 1,596 farms and ranches (4% of Washington’s)
- Bruce Prenguber’s research shows there may be only 200 farms as of 2007 [Globalwise]
- 70,000 acres in farms and ranches
- 38,000 acres of cropland (0.5% of state cropland)
- 23,000 acres of this land is harvested (0.5% of state’s harvested acreage)
- Average size 44 acres (10% of Washington average — Globalwise estimates 20 acres)
- Average value of land and buildings $422,000 (68% of state average)
- 1,264 (80%) farms are less than 50 acres
- 17 farms (1%) are 500 acres or more

Cash receipts
- Total farm sales $54 million
- Sales rose 13% from 1997 to 2002
- Total crop sales $28 million
- $18.7 million of these crop sales (66% of crop sales, and one third of all commodity sales), are nursery and greenhouse crops
- $5.8 million of crop sales (20%) are fruit sales
- Total sales of livestock and livestock products $26 million
- This includes $9.5 million of milk
- 58% of the farms (931) sell less than $2,500 of farm products (sales in this size category fell from $874,000 to $643,000 over the period 1997 to 2002)
- 81% of farms (1,291) sell less than $10,000 per year, accounting for only 4% of county farm sales (sales fell from $3.2 million to $2.4 million from 1997 to 2002)
- 6% of farms (94) sell more than $100,000 (sales rose from $38 million to $46 million from 1997 to 2002). Note these larger farms account for 85% of farm sales.
• 1,073 farms (67%) reported a net loss in 2002 (compares to 59% rate for Washington), even after subsidies are taken into account
• 29 farms collect $205,000 of federal subsidies
• 290 farms sell $769,000 of food directly to consumers
• That is to say, the number of farms selling direct to consumers fell 16% from 1997 to 2002, while sales volume fell 6%
• 21 farms sell $25,000 of organically certified foods

Livestock
• 16,000 cattle and calves on 693 farms and ranches (6% of state’s farms; 1.5% of state’s cattle and calves)
• The number of Clark County farms raising cattle fell 30% from 1997 to 2002, while the number of cattle fell 34%, and the value of cattle sales declined 14% to $4.7 million.
• Half of the cattle inventory is held by 672 ranches holding less than 100 animals each
• Small ranches holding 100 head or less are 97% of the ranches raising cattle
• 6 farms raise 30% of the county’s cattle on ranches with more than 500 head
• 4,543 of county cattle (28%) are beef cattle
• 3,669 milk cows (23% of cattle in county)
• Value of milk sales fell 33% from 1997 to 2002, to $9.5 million
• 8,690 cattle sold
• Although the number of hogs and pigs sold increased from 806 to 1705, sales receipts fell from $91,000 to $71,000
• 48 farms held an inventory of 700 hogs and pigs at the end of 2002. Nearly one-third of all hogs and pigs were raised on operations with less than 25 animals. Three operations raised between 100 and 500 hogs or pigs each.
• While the number of farms raising hogs fell slightly from 1997 to 2002 (from 54 to 48), inventory increased from 375 to 699 (86% rise).
• 83 farms raise 2,000 sheep and lambs (3% of Washington)
• 210 farms raise poultry, including 4.4 million broilers sold (13% of state’s)
• 540 farms raise 3,433 horses

Crops
• 14 farms raise corn for forage (707 acres raise 14,000 tons)
• 17 farms raise grains or edible beans, selling $184,000 worth
• 4 farms raise wheat (30,000 bushels on 450 acres)
• 12 farms raise oats (300 acres produce 18,000 bushels)
• 3 farms raises barley (325 acres raise 27,000 bushels)
• One farm raises edible dry beans
• 8 farms produce potatoes (acreage and production not reported by USDA)
• 1,012 farms raise 71,000 tons of forage crops

Vegetables
• 46 farms have 624 acres in vegetable production ($974,000 in sales)
• Seven acres of these vegetables are sold for processing
• Eight farms raise 401 acres of green peas
• 61 acres of sweet corn grown on 26 farms
• Pumpkins are raised on 10 farms (56 acres)
• Eighteen acres of cucumbers raised on 14 farms
Farm & Food Economy of Northern Washington — Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center

- 23 farms raise 15 acres of tomatoes
- Fourteen farms raise 10 acres of snap beans
- Twelve acres of squash produced on 11 farms
- Other vegetables raised commercially include asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, herbs, lettuce, onions, and peppers

Tree Fruits
- 89 farms have 278 acres of orchard [Globalwise data shows far fewer than this]
- This is only half the land that was devoted to orchards five years before (1997)
- 78 acres of grapes are raised on 31 farms
- 56 acres of pears are planted on 40 farms
- 62 farms raise 42 acres of apples
- 13 farms raise 41 acres of peaches
- 38 farms raise 9 acres of sweet cherries, and 14 farms raise four acres of tart cherries
- Eleven farms raise 41 acres of hazelnuts
- Five acres of plums are raised on 21 farms
- Other fruits produced commercially include apricots, kiwi, and persimmons

Berries
- 74 farms produce 1,389 acres of berries
- 33 farms raise 852 acres of raspberries
- 371 acres of strawberries are raised on 23 farms
- 34 farms raise 149 acres of blueberries
- 12 acres of blackberries are raised on eleven county farms
- Other berries raised in Clark County include boysenberries, cranberries, and loganberries
- Fruit and nut sales increased 40% from $4.2 million in 1997 to $5.8 million in 2002

Other, including woody crops
- 140 farms raise greenhouse and nursery crops (total sales of $18.7 million)
- 46 farms sell $1.3 million of Christmas trees

Note: many farmers report that USDA data on fruit and vegetable production may understate local production

Clark County Highlights:
Ranks 2nd in Washington for broiler chicken inventory (662,000)
Ranks 3rd in state for sheep & goat sales ($253,000)
Ranks 4th in Washington for acres of berries grown (1,389)
Ranks 4th in state for Christmas tree acreage (1,057)
Ranks 6th in state in sales of Christmas trees ($1.3 million)
Ranks 6th in Washington for poultry sales ($7 million)
Ranks 8th in state for horse sales ($562,000)
Ranks 9th in state for nursery crop sales ($18.7 million)
Ranks 10th in Washington for corn for silage (707 acres)
Ranks 10th in state for number of horses (3,433)
Farm Production Balance [Bureau of Economic Analysis]

The county’s farms have sold $58.3 million of crops and livestock each year, on average, since 1995 (11 years). However, it has required $58.8 million to produce these commodities, for an average loss of $400,000 each year. This is a total production loss of $4.7 million since 1995. [Data in this section are in 2005 dollars.]

On average, $300,000 of federal subsidies have been extended to county farmers each year since 1995. Clearly, these do not fully compensate farmers for production losses.

Farm families also earned $8.6 million in farm-related income (cash rents for land, custom work for neighbors, etc.) in 2005. However, this type of income has fallen from its peak of $20 million per year in 1986. Average farm-related income since 1995 is $11 million per year.

Overall, the county’s farmers earned $23 million less from farm production in 2005 than they had earned in 1969 (in 2005 dollars). This decline of net income is 40% of current sales.

Cash receipts for livestock fell 50% over the period 1969 to 2005, declining from $65 million to $32 million. Cash income for crops fell 30% since 1969, from $34 million to $10 million.

Of the $59 million spent for production expenses, an estimated $30 million is spent on inputs sourced outside of the county.

Consumers
The county’s consumers buy $807 million of food each year. At least $700 million of this is sourced outside the county.

73,000 (21%) of the county’s residents earn an income lower than 185 percent of the poverty rate. At this level or below, families qualify for free and reduced school lunches.

The average household in Clark County lost $21,000 in net worth in the year 2005 alone, primarily because it assumed new mortgage debt. This is a total decline of $2.7 billion in net worth for all county households.

Summary of Clark County Farm & Food Economy
Producers spend $400,000 more each year to produce crops and livestock than they earn in sales. In the course of farming at a loss, farmers spend $30 buying farm inputs that are sourced outside the county. Meanwhile, Clark County consumers buy $700 million of food produced outside the county. This amounts to an overall flow of $730 million away from the county each year — over twelve times the value of all agricultural products now produced in Clark County.
Clark County: markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>millions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$ 97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>51.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>162.8</td>
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City of Vancouver: markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$ 43.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>35.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>22.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>72.4</td>
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Clark County (not including City of Vancouver): markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$ 54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>28.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>90.4</td>
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Washington State: markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$1,742.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>1,417.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>336.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>910.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>2,905.1</td>
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City of Portland, Oregon: markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>millions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$ 171.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>139.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>286.2</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Portland/Salem Metropolitan Area: markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Value (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$664.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>540.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>128.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>347.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>1,108.2</td>
</tr>
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Oregon State: markets for food eaten at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Value (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</td>
<td>$1,023.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>832.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals and bakery products</td>
<td>197.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>534.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Other,” incl. sweets, fats, &amp; oils</td>
<td>1,705.8</td>
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Energy markets

Clark County: markets for energy and utilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Value (millions)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline and motor oil</td>
<td>$277.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>123.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel oil and other fuels</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and other public services</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key data sources:

Bureau of Economic Analysis data on farm production balance
http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/county/reis/

Food consumption estimates from Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey
http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm

U.S. Census of Agriculture
http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/

USDA/Economic Research Service food consumption data:
http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/

USDA/Economic Research Service farm income data:
http://ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/finfidmu.htm

For more information:

To see results from Finding Food in Farm Country studies in other counties of Minnesota, Iowa, California, Hawaii: http://www.crcworks.org/fffc.pdf.

To read the original Finding Food in Farm Country study from Southeast Minnesota (written for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation): http://www.crcworks.org/ff.pdf.

To view a PowerPoint presented by Ken Meter at a plenary appearance to the Community Food Security Coalition in October 2006: http://www.crcworks.org/crcppts/cfsc06.pdf.

To link to further analysis of farm and food economies in the U.S.: http://www.crcworks.org/rural.html.

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