

# Cattle, Swine, Sheep, Turkey Numbers on North Dakota Farms Increase in Number

By C. J. Heltemes<sup>1</sup>, L. W. Orvold<sup>2</sup> and B. B. Barr<sup>3</sup>

Livestock numbers in North Dakota during the past year made their sharpest gain since the mid-forties. On January 1, 1956, cattle numbers were at an all time high of 2,131,000 head. Stock sheep were the highest since 1946 and hogs the highest since 1952. Horses continue to disappear from farms. There were fewer chickens on farms than a year ago but more turkeys. Combining the different species into an all livestock and poultry index on the basis of their economic importance, shows that the present inventory is 120 per cent of the 1935-39 average. A year earlier the index stood at 112 per cent. The record high for the index was 143 per cent on January 1, 1944. While cattle numbers were not as high at that time all other species were much greater, especially hogs.

## NORTH DAKOTA LIVESTOCK ON FARMS, JANUARY 1, 1956, WITH COMPARISONS

Year	Horses and Mules	All Cattle	Milk <sup>1</sup> Cows <sup>2</sup>	Stock Sheep <sup>3</sup>	Hogs	Chickens	Turkeys
<b>Number on Farms, January 1 (Thousand Head)</b>							
1946	241	1781	525	618	621	6108	84
1947	203	1656	488	519	484	5137	59
1948	179	1590	449	452	411	4738	32
1949	165	1526	427	380	444	4161	30
1950	154	1495	427	346	413	4404	32
1951	142	1480	414	360	401	4161	30
1952	122	1598	406	410	441	4244	34
1953	107	1726	410	435	331	3862	35
1954	96	1916	414	448	295	3939	34
1955	90	1973	410	479	351	3979	32
1956	79	2131	410	546	439	3783	34
<b>Farm Value Per Head, January 1 (Dollars)</b>							
1946	25.00	74.70	104.00	9.90	30.70	1.12	5.00
1947	30.00	97.80	135.00	13.80	45.60	1.28	5.60
1948	36.00	126.00	173.00	15.20	57.80	1.27	5.90
1949	38.00	143.00	197.00	16.10	48.80	1.49	7.70
1950	34.00	132.00	190.00	15.90	34.00	1.18	5.90
1951	36.00	176.00	237.00	25.70	40.50	1.20	5.70
1952	43.00	203.00	279.00	29.20	38.20	1.25	5.80
1953	44.00	138.00	204.00	17.10	32.60	1.05	5.00
1954	48.00	102.00	163.00	13.90	48.30	1.10	5.30
1955	53.00	102.00	154.00	14.10	37.80	.80	4.60
1956	64.00	89.00	139.00	12.70	20.10	.95	4.75
<b>Total Farm Value, January 1 (Thousand Dollars)</b>							
1946	6,039	133,041	54,600	6,118	19,065	6,841	420
1947	6,099	161,957	65,880	7,162	22,070	6,575	330
1948	6,448	200,340	77,677	6,870	23,756	6,017	189
1949	6,276	218,218	84,119	6,118	21,667	6,200	231
1950	5,243	197,340	81,130	5,501	14,042	5,197	189
1951	5,115	260,480	98,118	9,252	16,240	4,933	171
1952	5,249	324,394	113,274	11,972	16,846	5,305	197
1953	4,714	238,188	83,640	7,438	10,791	4,055	175
1954	4,605	195,432	67,482	6,227	14,248	4,333	180
1955	4,770	201,246	63,140	6,754	13,268	3,183	147
1956	5,056	189,659	56,990	6,934	8,824	3,594	162

<sup>1</sup>Included in All Cattle. <sup>2</sup>Cows and heifers 2 years old and over kept for milk.

<sup>3</sup>Sheep and lambs on feed not included.

<sup>1</sup>Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

<sup>2</sup>Agricultural Statistician.

<sup>3</sup>Agricultural Statistician.

The state's **cattle** inventory on January 1 was 2,131,000 head, 8 per cent more than were on hand a year earlier. Last year was the fifth successive year of increase. The increase came in beef animals with dairy cow numbers unchanged and dairy heifers showing a drop. Cows and calves and yearling steers made the big increase in the beef category with bulls and heifers making only a nominal increase. Due to the large supply of feed grains and forage in the early winter months, more stock was held back for feeding or for delayed marketing.

**Stock sheep** increased again for the sixth successive year with most of the increase in ewes. On January 1 there were 546,000 head of sheep on North Dakota farms. Sheep and lambs on feed January 1, are not included with stock sheep. On January 1 this year there were 122,000 being fattened for market, the largest number being fed since 1946.

**Hogs** were placed at 439,000 head, 25 per cent more than were on hand a year earlier and the largest number since 1952. In early December producers indicated that they would have 91,000 sows for spring farrowing. If these intentions are carried out it would mean about 6 per cent fewer farrowings than in the spring of 1955.

The combined **horse and mule** population stood at 79,000 head, a drop of 11,000 head from a year ago and the smallest number since early pioneer days.

Chickens on farms were put at 3,783,000 compared with 3,979,000 a year earlier. There were fewer pullets on hand January 1 this year but more hens. Turkeys on hand amounted to 34,000, of which 22,000 were breeder hens.

The **total value** of the livestock and poultry inventory on hand the first of this year, excluding sheep on feed, was \$214,229,000 compared with \$229,368,000 a year earlier.

---

### COOLED EGGS CAN STILL HATCH

Continuing an interesting cold exposure study of chick embryos in 1955, poultrymen at this experiment station found that when incubated eggs are exposed to a temperature of 50 to 55 degrees fahrenheit, the embryos have been able to withstand such exposure through the 12th day of incubation for 19 hours and still hatch. Increasingly longer exposures reduced the age limit at which completely lethal effects were obtained.

---

### CHICKEN NUMBERS LOWERED

North Dakota farmers raised 15 per cent fewer chickens in 1955, the mid-summer estimate being 6,010,000—smallest number since 1937. This compares with 7,070,000 last year and a peak of 12,251,000 in 1943. Chicken numbers soared during World War II years, when red meat was rationed. Thus North Dakota's chicken flocks went from 7 million in 1940 to 8 million in 1941, 11½ million in 1942, 12¼ million in 1943, down to 10½ million in 1944, 10½ million again in 1945, less than 9½ in 1946, 8¼ in 1947 and 6¼ in 1948. The state has raised from something over six million to slightly over seven million birds each year since war demand ended, with the low point this year. Probably the 1954 price—when average price per pound of chickens sold by North Dakota farmers dropped 18¢ in 1953 to 12¢ in 1954—had much to do with decreased interest in feathered meat raising this year. Biggest gross income from chickens was \$10,019,000 in 1943, dropping to \$3,254,000 in 1954. This is for meat alone, not income from eggs.

---

Milk cows on North Dakota farms in the summer of 1955 numbered 370,000 head, down three per cent from the previous year, and 23 per cent below the 10-year average. The decrease was general in 11 of 12 north central states, while Wisconsin was the exception, increasing one per cent in dairy cow numbers over last year.