



An economic survey of Beaverhead and Madison counties, Montana
by Dudley E Young

A THESIS Submitted to the Graduate Committee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science in Agricultural Economics

Montana State University

© Copyright by Dudley E Young (1937)

Abstract:

no abstract found in this volume

AN ECONOMIC SURVEY OF BEAVERHEAD AND MADISON COUNTIES,
MONTANA


by

Dudley E. Young

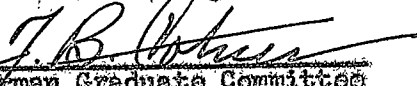
A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee in
partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
in Agricultural Economics at
Montana State College

Approved:


In Charge of Major Work


Chairman Examining Committee


Chairman Graduate Committee

Bozeman, Montana
June, 1937

N378

Y85

cop. 2

~~Stock~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
I. Introduction	4
Purpose.....	4
Objectives.....	4
Sources.....	4
Districts.....	5
Climate.....	7
Population.....	9
Resources.....	9
Range.....	9
Water.....	12
Minerals.....	13
Types of ranches.....	14
Community organization.....	14
II. Discussion of resources and uses made of them.....	16
Grazing and farm lands.....	16
Grazing and feed capacities.....	21
Calculations by counties.....	21
Calculations by Minor Civil Divisions.....	22
Livestock numbers.....	26
Management practices.....	27
Lease cost of range land.....	27
Age of stock sold.....	30
Wintering period.....	31
Value of ranches.....	31

Ag 25 '37 z.

Section	Page
Land ownership.....	32
Markets.....	36
Public service.....	37
Type of roads.....	37
Retail stores.....	37
Schools.....	39
Railways.....	39
Taxation.....	39
Mortgage debt.....	42
Concentration of ownership.....	43
III. Adjustments and Conclusions.....	49
Major problems.....	49
Overstocking.....	49
Grazing districts.....	51
Seasonal range.....	52
Cause of overstocking.....	52
Basis of permits to graze.....	53
Balance between range and feed resources.....	54
Tendency to develop economic unit.....	54
Gross income.....	57
Maintenance of public services.....	58
Tenancy and part ownership.....	58
IV. Summary.....	59
V. Appendix.....	60

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present an economic and social analysis of Beaverhead and Madison counties, Montana, with special reference to agriculture. The objectives are to point out: (1) Desirable adjustments in ranch organization and management which will increase and stabilize incomes in the long run; and (2) Changes which might be advisable in policies of administration of public lands and their beneficial uses from the standpoint of the community and society as a whole.

The principal sources of material used in this report are: (1) Report of Economic Survey, Beaverhead and Madison counties, submitted by H. E. Schwan of the United States Forest Service, February, 1936, co-authors were M. H. Saunderson, of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, Neil W. Johnson, of the United States Department of Agriculture, and others; (2) a revision of Schwan's study, dated December, 1936, which presents some additional material; (3) data from a range management survey conducted by the Montana Experiment Station during the summer and fall of 1936; (4) various data from the census; (5) reports of weather stations in the area; (6) data on livestock numbers from revised estimates made in a study of livestock numbers by the Montana Experiment Station; (7) and data on shipments of cattle from an analysis of livestock shipments which is being made by the Experiment Station and whose source is brand inspectors' reports.

This study was made as an analysis of the Minor Civil Divisions by which the census data are taken. It will be seen from figure 1 that the boundaries of these divisions are, in almost every case, mountain ranges which form the natural

boundaries of the areas. When one first visits these counties one's impression is of a very mountainous terrain. The valleys are isolated from each other by high ranges. The altitude of these valleys varies from about 4,500 feet in the lowest part of the Jefferson Valley, the northern part of Madison County, to 6,200 feet at Wisdom in the northern part of Beaverhead County. The larger streams do not have continuous valleys but flow through a succession of nearly flat valleys and precipitous canyons. The Minor Civil Divisions, four in Beaverhead County and five in Madison County, are listed by name as follows:

(1) Wisdom: This district is the Big Hole Basin and the surrounding National Forest. It is a high valley with a short growing season. High winds are not a serious problem because the ranges by which the valley is surrounded break their force. Temperatures are moderate during the summer and extreme cold does not occur for long periods in the winter, although the winters are long and the snowfall heavy.

(2) Armstead: The district is similar to Wisdom in the length and severity of its winters. Several creeks flow from this region, of which Horse Prairie and Medicine Ledge are the most important.

(3) Lima: This valley in the southern part of Beaverhead County is largely made up of the drainage basin of the Red Rock River above Armstead. It is one of the higher valleys and in it severe winds are more frequent than in the other parts of the county.

(4) Dillon: This district is the drainage basin of the Beaverhead River from Armstead to the Madison County line in the east. This is one of the lower valleys and the winters here are milder than elsewhere in the county. Snowfall is lighter and severe winds are not so frequent as in the southern part of the county.

