

AGRICULTURE

Cattle Ranching

Since the early settlement of Meadows Valley cattle ranching has been a part of its rich cultural fabric. The grasses of the valley floor make a supreme place for grazing herds. Cal White of Meadows brought the first cattle in the valley when he arrived in 1878. On September 26, 1937, Meadows Valley made history when an unprecedented 108 Union Pacific Railroad cars with 2700 head of two-year old steers were shipped to Ovid, Colorado for market. Today cattle are exclusively shipped out by cattle trucks.

A variety of livestock inhabiting Valley family farms included sheep, hogs, goats, chickens, and of course milk cows. These provided food



Loading cattle into railroad cattle stockcars

The Circle C Ranch was once the largest family-owned ranch in the state of Idaho and was created when Charles Campbell and his brother William came to Meadows Valley in 1879. In 1944 the June issue of National Geographic pictured the Circle C Ranch making their cattle shipment from the stockyards that were located near the P&IN Railway depot. That year they shipped 125 stockcar loads. In 1957 they shipped 4,500 head of cattle to market. The Circle C Ranch, Inc. was sold in 1972 parts of which are still operated as a cattle ranch under different ownership, and other parts became housing developments.

for the family and could also be a source of income. There were small dairies, one of which existed into the 1950's.



Cattle drive



Train of cattle



Working cattle at Circle C Ranch

Crops

Grass and alfalfa hay, pasture grass, and varieties of clover were some of the crops grown in the valley. Wheat, oats, and barley were planted in spring or fall and harvested in mid or late summer. Today, grass and alfalfa hay are raised by a few ranchers who feed their livestock throughout the winter.



Grain harvest



Harvesting potatoes

From 1928-1938 the San Diego Fruit & Produce Company grew peas on the east side of the valley, planting 500 acres the first year. The company chose Meadows Valley because a better quality of pea could be grown at this higher elevation. In 1929 an ice house 60'x120' was constructed close to the railroad tracks. The building had the capacity to hold 2500 tons of ice for the pea crop. Seed potatoes were also planted.

Strawberry fields grew successfully in the southeast part of the valley. The strawberries were picked and shipped by rail in the cool of the night to Weiser where they were then packed and shipped in ice boxcars to Boise and Portland, Oregon.



Loading harvested Ice into Icehouse

EIK

In the late 19th century the elk population diminished as large groups of trappers and miners moved into the area.



Feeding elk

On February 24, 1915, 50 head of elk from Yellowstone National Park arrived in New Meadows. By January 1, 1919, 200 head of elk had been shipped into the state and placed on game preserves. No elk hunting was allowed in this part of Idaho until about 1935.



Elk arrive by train