

MONTANA

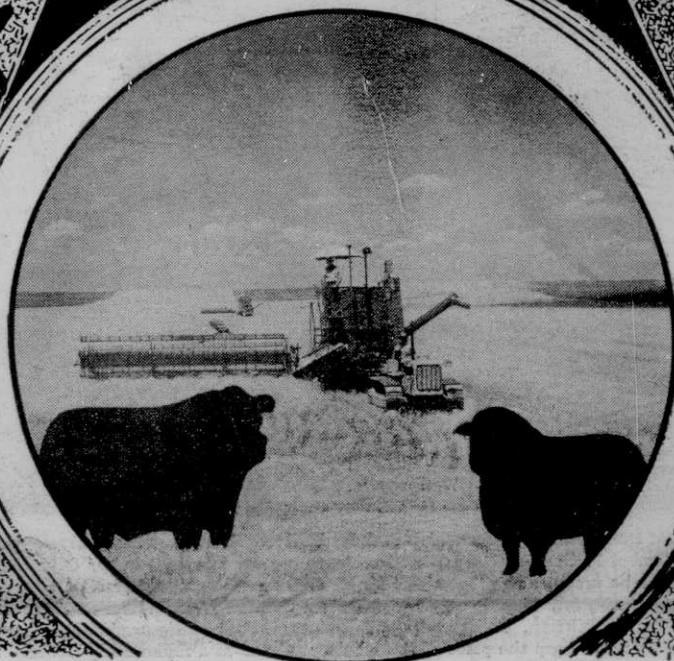
Farmer-Stockman

November 1, 1953

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF MONTANA

MONT.
WYO.

More Livestock
in the
Wheat Farm
Picture?



By MONT H. SAUNDERSON

BECAUSE Montana is a great stock ranching state with an immense and productive range resource, one might assume that most of the livestock production of the state comes from the stock ranches.

However, as was shown in the Aug. 1, 1953, issue of this column, about half of the beef cattle numbers of Montana are to be found on the diversified farms of the state. And, though the larger part of the sheep numbers of Montana are in the range bands of the stock ranches, farm flock sheep enterprises now yield approximately a third of the lambs and wool marketed from the state. Moreover, this percentage is increasing.

Even though this picture of the importance of Montana farm livestock is impressive, a substantial number of Montana farms have no livestock enterprise. Principally, these are the cash grain farms, the wheat farms and others of the Montana plains country without much irrigation.

Do such farms have possibilities for diversifying with livestock and should they so diversify? Now, with the wheat acreage allotments again in the picture, many Montana grain farm owners and operators are studying their livestock diversification opportunities. And, in studying such opportunities, they are seeking the answers to questions such as these:

What is the national and the western market outlook for beef cattle, lambs and wool? What are the necessary facilities—feed crops, pasture acreages, equipment, labor, water, etc.—for adding a livestock enterprise to the farming operations? How do I decide which livestock enterprise is best suited to my own operation? What are the special advantages and problems of this particular kind of livestock?

Let's see if we can come up with some of the answers to these questions. In writing briefly on this subject, I'll have to phrase the answers in general terms, and that has limitations, of course. But these answers will help you arrive at your own specific answers, for your own particular situation.

- *What are possibilities of diversifying with livestock?*
- *What is market outlook for livestock and products?*
- *What facilities are required to add livestock enterprise?*
- *Which type of livestock enterprise will be most suitable?*

On the question of the market outlook, both for cattle and for lambs, we can be certain of these things: Our national population is growing rapidly, and the west coast population is growing considerably faster than the national average growth. More livestock are going to be grown in the western states, and most of the increased production will come from the diversified farms of the west, rather than from the stock ranches. (I'll not attempt to give the reasons for this, but it's unquestionably true.)

Beef and lamb consumption has been increasing and will continue to increase in the western states and especially in the Pacific Coast states. California (Please turn to page 20)

COVERS MONTANA AND NORTHERN WYOMING