

Chino Milk Basin Past, Present, and Future

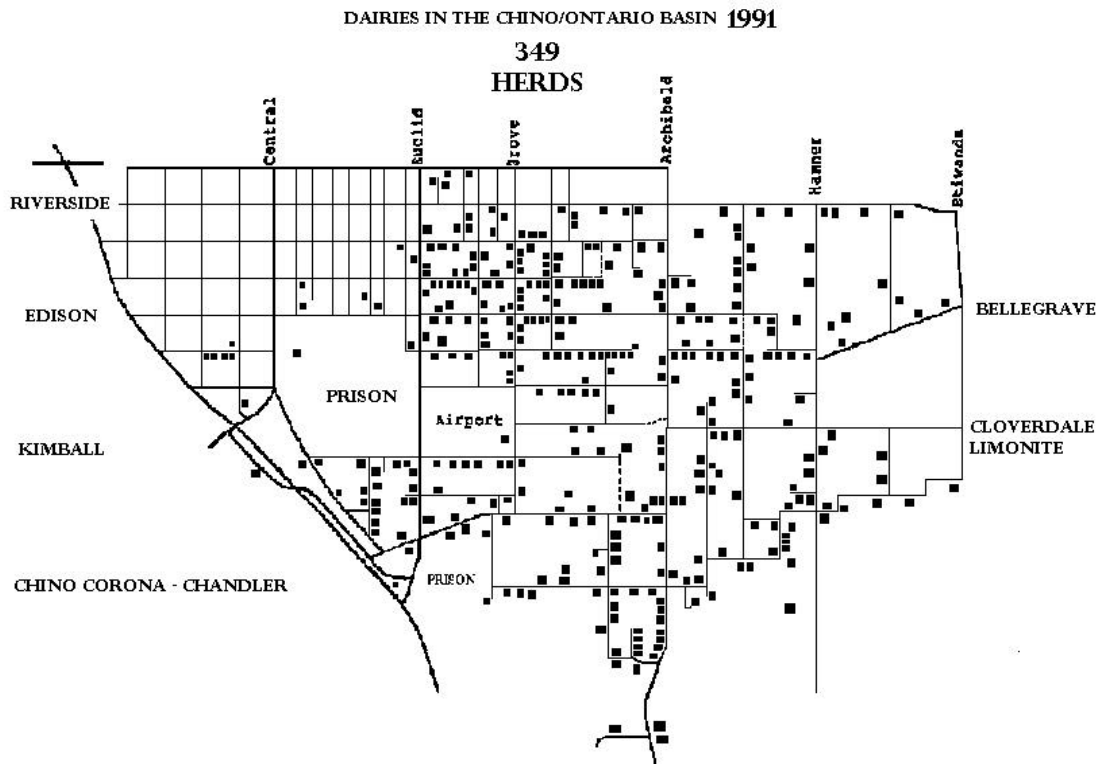
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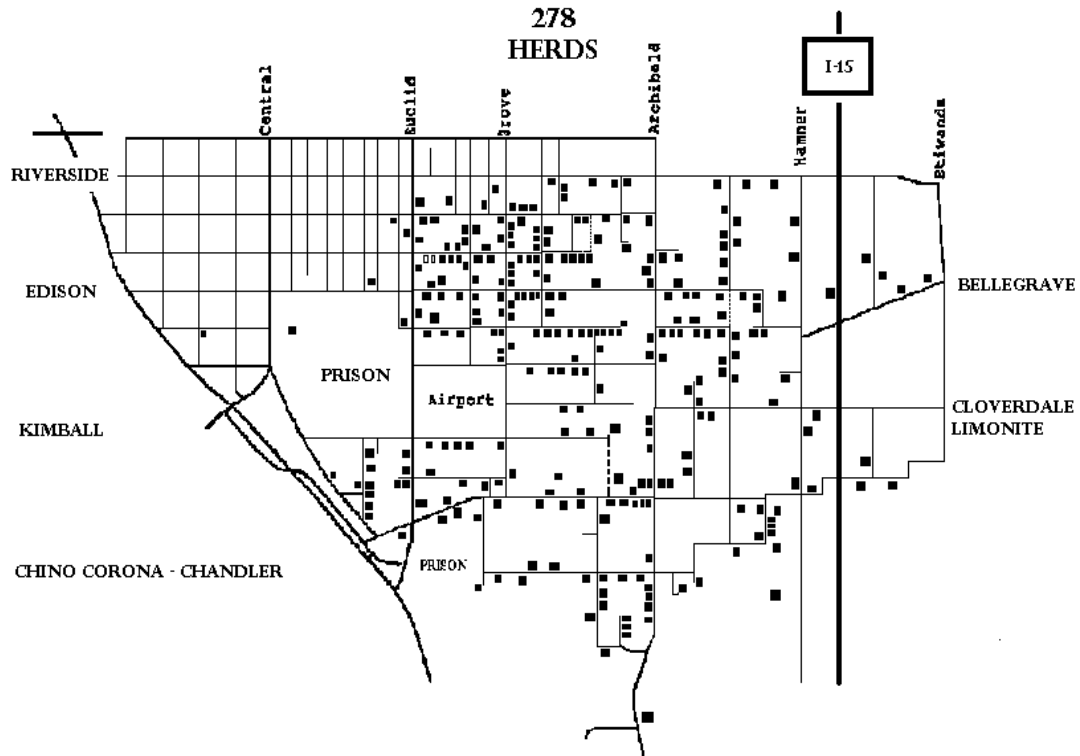
Nyles G. Peterson - Area Dairy Advisor

In 1930, the Chino valley contained 117 dairies and 7,600 cows. These were mostly farm-dairy operations, with maximum use being made of homegrown hay, pasture, ensilage, and grains. Herds were small--ranging from 15 to 25 cows-- with family members supplying practically all the labor.

By 1950, the number of cows had doubled, but the dairy numbers had declined to 99. Between 1950 and 1970 many dairies sold their cows, base, and quota because of the favorable prices resulting from the statewide marketing pool. Others increased herd size for maximum use of their facilities and equipment. The number of dairy cows in both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties increased substantially. Much of this increase resulted from the relocation of dairies from the Los Angeles and Orange County metropolitan areas. As dairying became more specialized, the average herd size increased.

We've seen a lot of changes in the valley over the years. In December 1991, Abraham and I plotted each herd in the valley. There were 349 herds. Each small box on the maps below represents a dairy. On March 9, 2001, we again plotted every herd. On this second count there were 278 herds, to include one dairy goatherd and a herd of milking water buffalo. I thought it would be interesting to show these two maps. They graphically depict the change that has taken place in herd numbers in the last ten years.





The number of herds in the Chino basin will continue to decrease, but no one knows the actual time frame. In spite of increase pressures to reduce flies and odors, and protect soil and water from pollutions, the Chino basin is still a good place to dairy. It is situated on the junction of several major freeways and is close to a major population base. The options for a place to locate 278 large herds are going to be hard to find at present. We'll watch it develop together.

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On another note, I hope you've visited the San Bernardino Cooperative Extension website. The address is <http://cesanbernardino.ucdavis.edu/> The site contains a calendar for CE activities in the county. It also contains newsletters for both Abraham and me. We try to publish a new electronic newsletter at least quarterly. I'd appreciate any comments you might have on topics you'd like to see discussed. We try to keep them timely and informative.

The current article in my newsletter is an article by Dr. John Kirk on Foot and Mouth disease. This is one of the "old time" diseases that your veterinarian has studied but probably never seen an actual case. The paper contains color pictures of animals with the disease and provides a great deal of useful information. I think you will find it interesting and informative.