

Vegetable Processing in Whatcom County

Why did it disappear?

Dave Green

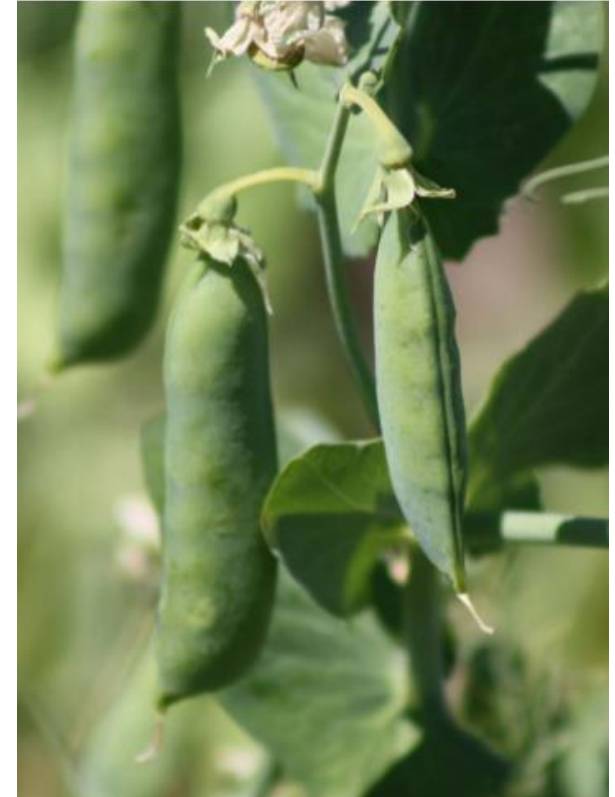
Dave Green - President, CEO, Skagit Valley Malting Inc.

- Food Processing Industry Veteran
 - 19 yrs Frozen Vegetable Industry
 - 16 yrs Seafood
 - Consulting
 - 3 Startups, 1 Relaunch
 - 3+ yrs Grain/Malting



Mid '70's Pacific Northwest produced over 50% of the nations green peas

- Whatcom County was a major contributor
- 8,000 acres in Green Peas at it's peak
- 4 Processing Plants



Processor Locations:

- Everson
- Lynden
- Ferndale
- Bellingham

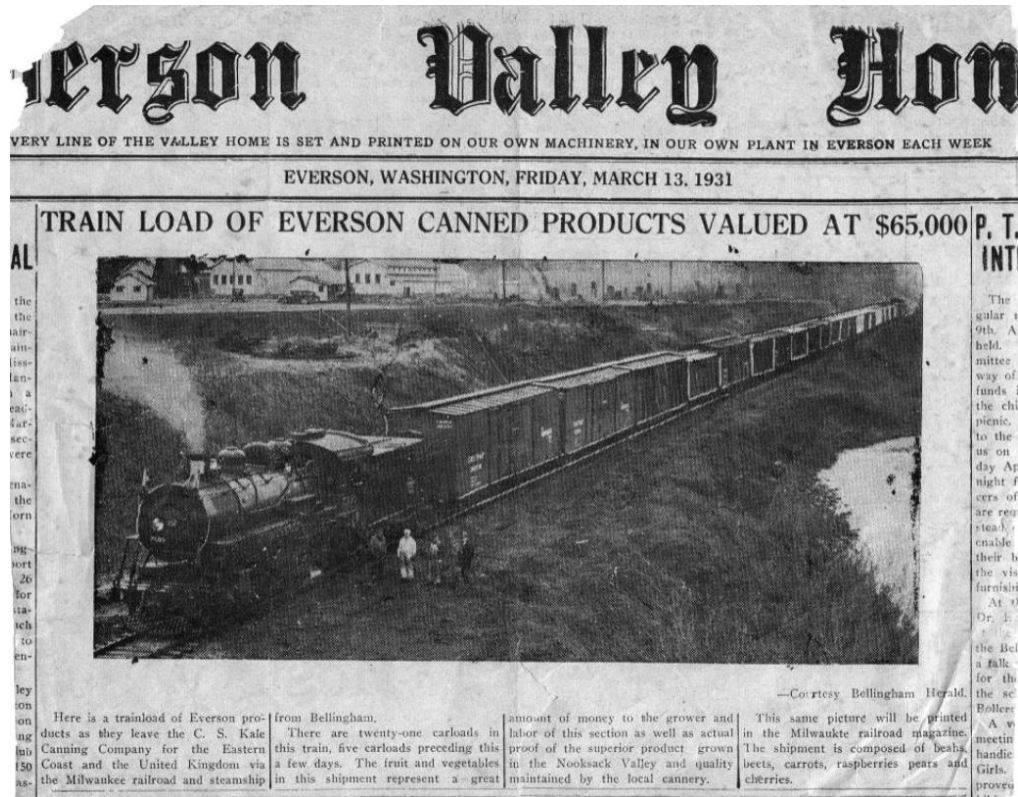
Primary Products:

Peas
Beans
Corn
Carrots
Cauliflower
Sugar Snap Peas

Everson

- 1909 C.S. Kale Canning Co.
- 1972 Everson Canning
 - Owned by San Juan Island Cannery & Gibbs McCormic, Ca

C.S. Kale Canning Co. Everson, WA



- Train Load of products
- 21 Rail Cars in this train
- East Coast and the United Kingdom
- Beans, Beets, Carrots, Raspberries, Pears & Cherries
- Valued at \$65,000
- Over \$1M in today's dollars

March 13, 1931, Everson Valley Home

Lynden

- 1940's Lynden Berry Growers/Western Farmers Association
- 1967 Lynden Berry Growers Moved to Bellingham
- 1972 Seabrook Foods took over Lynden processing line
- 1982 Cascade Frozen Foods bought Seabrook line renamed Agriland
- 1983 Shuksan Frozen Foods bought Agriland
- 1986 Shuksan shut down

Ferndale

- 1963 Kelley Farquhar
- 197? Dalgety Foods
- 1984 J.R. Simplot
- 1989 J.R. Simplot closed Ferndale, moved to Quincy, WA

Bellingham

- 1953 Bellingham Cold Storage built a Pea Line and leased it to Stokely Van Kamp
- 1976 Nooksack Farms Leased old Stokely Pea Line
- 1980 Nooksack Farms discontinues lease and merges with Bellingham Frozen Foods

Bellingham Frozen Foods

- 1967 Lynden Berry Growers moves to Bellingham Cold Storage
- 1973 Bellingham Frozen Foods formed
- 1974 Merger: Bellingham Frozen Foods, San Juan Packers, & Everson Canning
- 1980 Bellingham Frozen Foods assumed Nooksack Farms production
- 1990 Dean Foods acquired Bellingham Frozen Foods
- 1994 Name changed to Dean Foods Vegetable Co.
- 1997 Dean Foods Vegetable Co. closed Bellingham Plant

Vegetable Processors

- **Everson (canning) 1909-1972**

- C.S. Kale Canning Co.
- Everson Canning

- **Lynden 1960's- 1986**

- Western Farmers Association
- Lynden Berry Growers
- Seabrook
- Agriland
- Shuksan Frozen Foods

- **Ferndale 1945-1989**

- Kelley Farquhar
- Dalgety Foods
- JR Simplot

- **Bellingham 1963-1979**

- Stokely Van Kamp
- Nooksack Farms

- **Bellingham 1966-1997**

- Lynden Berry Growers
- Bellingham Frozen Foods
- Dean Foods Vegetable Co.

Farming

- All Crops grown on contract
- Growers negotiated prices collectively
- Processors determined varieties to be grown and sold the seed
- Processors dictated planting times
- Processors managed the harvest
- Growers paid progress payment in the fall and final payment Year End
- Sliding scale based on quality (specifications)

Pea Harvest



Swather – creates windrows



Pea Viner 1960-1980's FMC Model LV

Pea Harvest



Pod Stripper 1980's FMC Model PSC 125

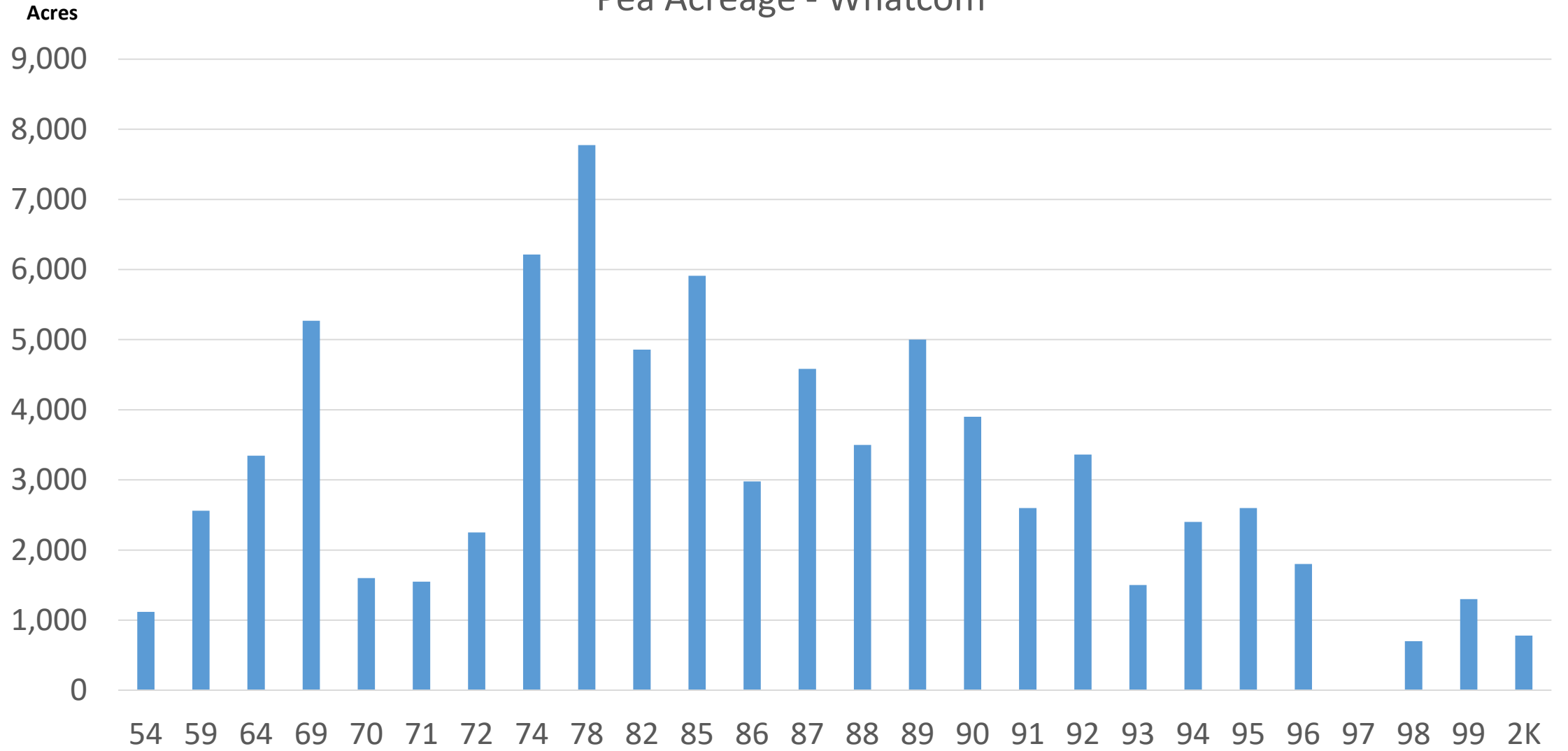
Green Peas - Why Whatcom County?

- Coastal Climate – warm dry days, cool nights, no draught stress, no irrigation required
- Great rotation crop, nitrogen fixer, breaks disease cycles
- Easy crop to farm, no specialized equipment
- Slow growing, high yielding, high quality

Peas: A Big Deal

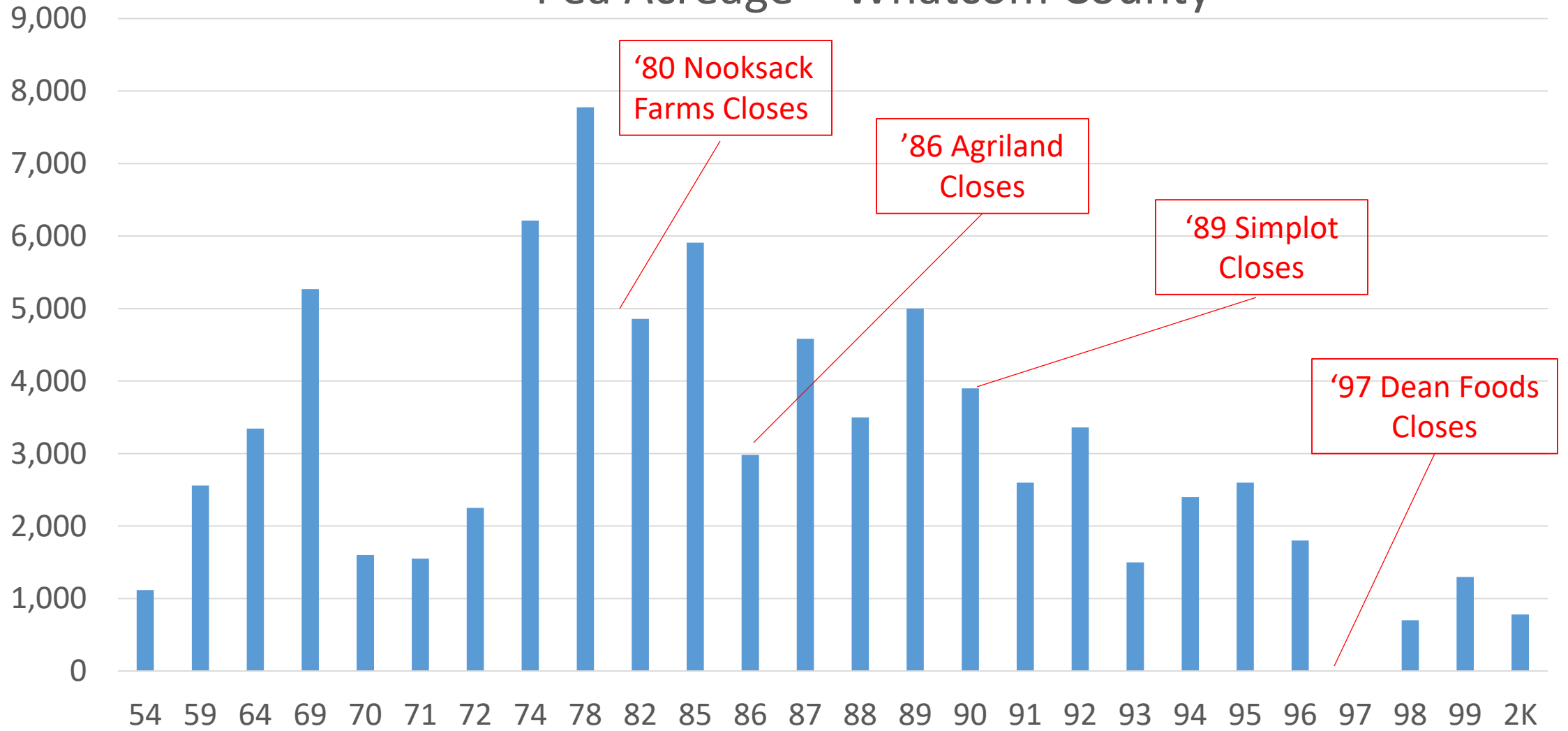
- 1976 nearly Half the nations peas were grown in Western Washington
 - Whatcom, Skagit, & Snohomish County
- 8,000 acres in Whatcom County at its peak
- 200-500 workers at peak in each plant
- 1979 Bellingham VoTec trained 160 viner drivers in operations and safety

Pea Acreage - Whatcom



*USDA Census

Pea Acreage – Whatcom County



Why did the Processors Leave?

- Raw Product Costs
 - Land rents high, pressure from higher value crops, Urbanization
- Waste Water Disposal
 - Changes in Regulatory Requirements
- Freight Costs
 - \$0.05 per pound additional freight to get to consumer
- Over supply
 - Excess Production Capacity
 - Change in consumer preference

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