

Erin Pierce  
County Level Census Assignment

James Lemon's *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* is a fascinating view of all things agricultural in 18th century Pennsylvania. While Lemon presents some facts, figures and the attitudes of rural Pennsylvanian livestock growers, his topics and observations lend themselves well to more extensive exploration. As Lemon illustrated the extensive farming trends in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that allowed farmers to simply get by; later census data might disclose if 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural trends changed on a temporal scale to increase production or if they remained rooted in traditional extensive use.

While his work supports a wheat dominated Pennsylvania, Lemon does describe the abundance of livestock in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. He plainly states that "almost all farmers raised livestock" (160), and this proves to hold true with later census data. Looking at the calculated value of livestock per county in 1850 (Appendix B), it can be observed that each county indeed fosters cattle. In his book Lemon presents a few key reasons for the large discrepancies across the state.

Livestock care seemed to be an area of intense concern for Europeans and other foreigners while they were in America, but caring for creatures more than necessary seemed wasteful and pointless to American farmers. Lemon mentions how this lack of interest in livestock leads to weak bloodlines and sometimes sickly cattle, thus there could be large value differences from cow to cow. Lemon does point out that Americans had a turn of heart with a changing economy and "increased concern for breeding became apparent toward the end of the century" (160).