"Food and fiber for survival" was the motto of the early pioneer in Polk County. Basically that motto holds true today, however today we expect from life more than mere survival. We expect our food producers to raise not only enough for himself but enough to feed some other forty people. While we no longer have the barter system direct, yet indirectly we barter our surplus foods for commodities that we can use.

Wheat was the most important crop to the pioneer, he produced it in surplus from the virgin lands of the county and it found a ready market when shipping facilities were available. The wheat crop, perhaps more than any other commodity, spurred the railroad builders, such as James J. Hill and others into a race to get the wheat shipping business. The chief competition for the wheat shipments was between the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads in Polk County. Poor drainage and grasshopper invasions were the major handicaps to the growing of wheat and other crops. Luckily the grasshopper invasions were far between in years, the 1878-79 invasions being the most devastating. Local outbreak of grasshoppers occurred during the drier years but flights of the migratory and lesser migratory locust occurred only in recent times during the dry years of the middle thirties. The chief menace to the wheat crop however was Black Stem Rust.

The Avery (Espe) tractor replaced eight horses before World War I. This first stage of mechanized harvesting did not eliminate men but speeded up work. Later larger binders with "power take-offs" reduced man labor requirements.