Farming

All farmers kept a small number of animals, such as pigs, sheep, cows, horses etc... Lots of these animals were useful on the farm. For instance, horses helped in the bog, pulling the cart, and pigs, cows and sheep were killed for meat.

Pigs would give birth twice a year. When the fire quenched at night in the house, they kept the pigs in the house to keep it warm.

My granny said that her and her brothers and sisters used to watch out the window in spring to see if a ewe was lambing. If a ewe was lambing they would tell their dad to go and pull the lamb or look at the ewe. A ewe would only ever have one lamb. She would be very lucky to have two. The farmer earned more money from the sheep's wool than the actual sheep itself. When a ewe died, the farmer would shear her and sell the wool. Each farmer would have approximately thirty sheep and one ram each. My granny always kept a lamb for themselves to eat. They killed their sheep when they were two years old.

Every farmer had a horse. They took them to towns, to fairs, they ploughed with them, they brought seaweed to the land, and brought turf
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from the boy, so they were very useful indeed. Farmers had great respect for horses because they did a lot of work.

When they used to be making hay on the farm during haymaking season, all the neighbours kids would come and hide in the hay, and great fun was had. My granny used to be worried because if the farmer put the fork in the hay and the kids were hiding inside, they would get hurt, but nowadays people are more worried of children getting ran over or hit by machinery etc., rather than merely getting prodded by a hay fork!!

Poor farmers had only two cows and more well off farmers had four. Women milked them by hand and made their own butter. Cows never had two calves. Granny would feed the cows hay and their own growing oats and barley. There was no silage at that time. There was no wellies either, just shoes.

Most Sundays families would kill a hen for dinner. They ate a goose for Christmas and Easter or even a party. No turkeys back then!

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