TEXAS LOSSES FROM COTTON PESTS EMPHASIZE NEED FOR CONTROL MEASURES

Insect damage to cotton in Texas during 1945 caused an estimated reduction of 18 per cent, or about 500,000 bales, from full yields, according to a report of the United States Department of Agriculture. That reduction in yields compares with an average yield reduction from cotton pests of about 12 per cent annually during the ten-year period 1935-1944. At average prices for cotton during 1945, the reduction from full yields represented a loss to Texas farmers of $59,000,000 from cotton lint. In addition, it is estimated that 225,000 tons of cottonseed valued at $11,700,000 also were lost, to bring the total loss in farm income from cotton in Texas to more than $70,000,000.

In view of the pressing needs for food and feeds, the seriousness of this loss is emphasized by the fact that the cottonseed lost in 1945 because of insect damage would have provided approximately 59,250,000 pounds of oil, 177,000,000 pounds of cake and meal, 100,000,000 pounds of cottonseed hulls, and 2,250,000 pounds of linters.

Weather conditions this season throughout most of Texas have favored the activity of boll weevils and other insects, and there are indications that the number of these pests emerging from winter quarters will be above average in the next few weeks. Cotton growers should inspect their fields carefully at regular intervals and apply control measures at the first appearance of insects. Prompt action will tend to reduce greatly the damage being done currently to plants and also will tend to limit propagation and later infestation.

The Texas Extension Service recommends control measures that should be used. When the plant starts to produce squares it should be examined for flea hoppers. If these pests are found at the rate of 15 to 25 per hundred terminal buds, the field should be dusted with 10 to 15 pounds of finely ground sulphur per acre, and the dusting should be repeated at intervals of seven days as long as the hoppers are found in injurious numbers.

Inspection for boll weevils should begin when the cotton plants are squaring freely. If as many as 10 per cent of the squares are found punctured, it is recommended that the field be dusted with 4 to 6 pounds of calcium arsenate per acre and that the operation be repeated at five day intervals until the weevils are under control.

To determine the degree of bollworm infestation, the terminals or tops of the cotton plant should be inspected at about the time the corn silks begin to dry. If from 35 to 40 bollworm eggs are found per 100 terminals, or if young worms are found in small squares or on tender leaves, the plants should be dusted with eight to ten pounds per acre of calcium arsenate or lead arsenate. Applications should be repeated every five days as long as eggs and young worms are prevalent.

To control leaf worms, growers should apply calcium arsenate to the affected areas at the rate of five to seven pounds per acre at first signs of leaf ragging. Such treatment of infested spots may save one or more general applications. Local or general applications should be repeated as needed.

It is particularly important this year to make as effective and economical use of insecticides as possible. Careful use will not only prevent the loss of cotton and badly needed food and feed products, but will also aid in the conservation of scarce insecticides containing arsenic, lead, copper, and coke, the production of which has been sharply curtailed by recent disturbed industrial condi-
Proven methods of prevention and control of cotton pests have been developed by the experiment stations, and more detailed information is available locally from the Extension Service office in each county.

**FARM CREDIT**

Farm Production Loans Continue to Expand

Outstanding farm production loans held by insured commercial banks throughout the United States amounted to $1,009,600,000 at the beginning of this year, according to a report recently released by the Agricultural Commission of the American Bankers Association. This total excludes bank loans guaranteed by the Commodity Credit Corporation and bank loans secured by real estate. It represents an increase of approximately $100,000,000 over the January 1, 1945 total, and is double the volume of outstanding farm production loans held by banks in 1937.

In the five southwestern states lying wholly or partly within the Eleventh Federal Reserve District the outstanding production loans held by insured commercial banks at the first of the year totaled $161,500,000, of which $98,900,000 were held by banks in Texas. Comparable figures at the beginning of 1945 were $144,300,000 for the five states and $90,900,000 for Texas.

Banking Magazine Warns of Danger in Land Boom

The continuance of unusual activity in the Southwest farm real estate market is a matter of grave concern to persons interested in agricultural stability. Farm land prices in the Southwest area are advancing at the rate of approximately one per cent per month and are now approaching, and in some cases even surpassing, the record levels of 1920. Pointing out that bankers have a big responsibility in dealing with the present potentially dangerous situation, the Louisiana Banker, in an article in its May issue entitled “Inflationary Farm Land Prices,” recommends that banks should give special attention to the development of sound and helpful farm lending practices.

In the belief that they would be helpful to bankers in the development of sound real estate loan programs, this publication passed on to its readers the following suggestions made by the Agricultural Commission of the American Bankers Association regarding farm mortgage financing: “(1) Advise those who are likely to make one purchase of a farm in a lifetime, to go slow; (2) Discourage borrowing to speculate in farm lands; (3) Encourage farmers—and everybody—to buy United States Savings Bonds and to save in other ways to fight inflation now; (4) Help veterans by giving them practical information about the hazards inherent in excessive land prices.” To these suggestions the Louisiana Banker added the warning “Do what you can to influence your customers to keep in a safe financial position—and watch the trends.”

**FARM PRICES AND INCOME**

New Government Price Regulations

Flaxseed: The Office of Price Administration increased the ceiling price of flaxseed 25 cents a bushel, effective on May 17, to bring ceiling prices up to the requirements of parity.

Cantaloupes and honey ball melons: An increase of approximately 42 1/2 cents per standard crate (65 pounds) for cantaloupes and honey ball melons was announced on May 29 by the Office of Price Administration to become effective immediately. The action will result in retail price increases of about one cent per pound.

Farm machinery and equipment: The Office of Price Administration approved an increase of 10 per cent in manufacturers’ net realized price of farm equipment to compensate for the recent advances in costs of materials and labor. It was pointed out that this action would result in an average price increase of only about 3 per cent to farmers since most of the increase is to be absorbed by dealers.

**FARM MANAGEMENT**

Need for Research in Agriculture Stressed

In an address entitled “The Importance of Research in the Southwest,” delivered at the Second Southwest Chemurgic Clinic meeting in Oklahoma City, June 3-5, Dr. Waldo Burnett, Director of the Research Foundation of the University of Wichita, pointed out that
the heavy demand for farm products during the war raised agricultural production one-third above prewar capacity. The continuation of this demand during the reconversion period will allow agriculture time to make an orderly adjustment to peacetime conditions. In order to facilitate that adjustment, however, Dr. Burnett stated that a program of intensive research should be followed. Research leading to the development of improved cultural practices would lower production costs and permit farm products to sell at a lower price. This would tend to broaden the market for farm products and minimize the problem of disposing of the greatly expanded agricultural output.

Such a program should include emphasis upon plant breeding experiments; more complete utilization of by-products of farm crops and consequent reduction of waste; the improvement of seeds, feeds, and fertilizers; and increased mechanization of farm operations. The resulting improvement in the quality and standardization of farm products, according to Dr. Burnett, would aid in securing a broader and more diverse market for farm commodities.

The speaker also suggested that the development of local processing plants to prepare for market or use the agricultural products grown in the Southwest would benefit farmers and businessmen alike.

If we are to succeed in maintaining a well balanced and prosperous agriculture, Dr. Burnett stated, we need both pure and applied research, and "we need research workers who not only are well qualified but who have specific interests in the problems of the Southwest."

Production of Farm Machinery and Equipment Continues to Lag

During April, production of farm machinery and equipment, measured in dollar value of total products, remained virtually unchanged from March levels but reflected a decline of 12.6 per cent below levels of a year ago, according to a May release of the Civilian Production Administration. The production of tractors and planting, seeding, and fertilizing equipment declined during April, but in terms of total production that decline was approximately offset by an increased output of harvesting and other equipment.

The greatest decline, 20.5 per cent from March of this year and 33.7 per cent from April of last year, occurred in the production of wheel-type tractors. In terms of units produced, production of tractors declined to 11,825 in April, compared with 14,901 in March, 12,503 in February, and 22,342 in January. Other major declines were indicated in planting, seeding, and fertilizing equipment, which decreased 23.4 per cent in dollar value from total March production.

Despite the fact that total production of farm equipment is still substantially below that of the same month during 1945, an encouraging note included in the report was the increase from low March levels in the production of heavy types of farm machinery. The production of harvesters increased 18.9 per cent during April. The production of haying machines increased 57.8 per cent, and machines for preparing crops for market or use, 42.1 per cent. The April output of some lighter farm equipment items such as farm pumps, dairy farm machinery and equipment, and barn and barnyard equipment continued the moderate upward trend of the past few months.

The report predicted that over-all production of farm machinery and equipment will continue at a relatively slow rate in the next few months, due to the current coal shortage and the recent tie-up in railroad shipments, which resulted in continued reduction in deliveries of steel and component parts.

COMMODITY NOTES
Adequate Food Supplies Expected for 1946

Even after export commitments of meat, fats, grains, and dairy products for foreign relief are met, civilian consumption of food in 1946 may rise 10 to 12 per cent above the 1935-39 average, according to recent reports of the United States Department of Agriculture. It is estimated that a diet containing about 3,300 calories per person a day will be available this year, compared with an average requirement for the United States population of 2,800 calories. If this forecast is borne out by later developments, this year's food supplies for the people of the United States will be among the most plentiful in
more than a quarter of a century and only slightly below the all-time record of 1944.

According to this report, it is expected that the total supply of meat in 1946 will about equal the 22.9 billion pounds produced in 1945 and will fall about two billion pounds below the record of 24.7 billion pounds produced in 1944. Compared with 1945, pork production is expected to increase, while the output of beef, veal, and mutton probably will decline. For 1947 it is expected that the total supply of meat will be at least a billion pounds below that of 1946.

Feed Shortages Expected to Become More Acute

Recent reports of the United States Department of Agriculture indicate that livestock producers dependent upon commercial supplies of feed will be faced with an increasingly difficult procurement problem during the summer. The output of commercial mixed feeds this summer will be about 20 per cent smaller than in the summer of 1945 as a result of Government restrictions on the purchase and use of grain, grain products, and by-product feeds. The increase in marketings of some feed grains, such as corn, as a result of sharply increased price ceilings, will not be sufficient to offset the decline in output of important by-product feeds from wheat mills and brewers' and distillers' operations.

The report anticipates that the combination of small market supplies of feed concentrates, relatively small carry-over of old-crop grain, and the higher price of feed will result in a continuation of the downward trend in livestock production. The number of grain-fed cattle for market in the late summer and fall of 1946 is expected to be reduced from last year's level, while hogs will be marketed at lighter weights, and the fall pig crop will be sharply reduced. Broiler and turkey production is expected to decline, and it is likely that heavier than usual culling of laying flocks will take place.

Interim Loan Rate on Cotton Established

An interim cotton loan program for 1946 established upon a basic rate of 21.80 cents a pound for middling 15/16-inch gross weight cotton has been announced by the Department of Agriculture. This rate will be in effect until the regular loan program becomes effective on August 1. The newly announced interim rate of 21.80 cents compares with a rate of 21.09 cents in 1945. This action was taken to provide for loans on early harvested cotton, mostly from south Texas.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

2,4-D Solution Used to Eradicate Brush

Ranchers may find an economical method of solving the problem of eradicating brush from range lands if an experiment using 2,4-D solution in Jackson County proves successful. Brush foliage in heavily infested pasture which was sprayed with the solution "yellowed-up" in about two weeks after spraying, and an almost complete kill was indicated. However, it is too early to judge the success of the experiment as it will be necessary to wait until next spring to determine if the root system of the plant was completely killed.

Experiments conducted by the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering and the Bureau of Dairy Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture to determine the effect on animals grazing on pastures sprayed with 2,4-D show that the chemical is not injurious to livestock. The investigators cautioned, however, that since their conclusions cover only pure 2,4-D mixed with the spreader known as Carbowax, they cannot say that other mixtures are harmless.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Management of Soils in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, B. S. Prickett, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, College Station, Texas.

This publication contains suggestions for management of soils in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and discusses problems confronting the individual producer. Irrigation, fertilization, and cultivation of both light and heavy soils are discussed. The suggestions made are based on experiments at the Weslaco Experiment Station and on observation of practices of successful operators in the area.

Copies of this publication may be obtained by request to the publisher.