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DEMAND FOR FARM COMMODITIES REMAINS HIGH, PRICES DECLINE

The demand for farm commodities, supported by a generally favorable economic situation, remains relatively high, although farm prices have declined somewhat in response to large production this year, according to the November issue of *The Demand and Price Situation* of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Total industrial production, which has an important relationship to the demand for farm products, set a new peacetime record in October, surpassing the previous peacetime high reached in February of this year. Early indications of over-all production in November suggested that the high October rate was being maintained. Total employment in October, although declining seasonally, was substantially greater than a year earlier. Personal incomes in September were 4 percent larger than a year earlier. Slight increases in the income of nonagricultural groups were accompanied by a less than usual seasonal increase in agricultural income.

The general level of wholesale prices, which began to decline in September, continued downward through October and November but remained above comparable months of 1947. The decline reflected lower prices for farm products and foods. The general level of prices received by farmers continued to decline for the fourth consecutive month and at mid-November had fallen 2 percent below the level of the previous month and 12 percent below the January peak. Prices paid by farmers averaged slightly lower on November 15 as food, clothing, and feed prices continued to decline. The parity ratio was down to 110, the lowest level since October 1942.

Agricultural exports in the third quarter of 1948 were substantially above those of the second quarter, although 9 percent below those of the same quarter of 1947. Most of the increase over the second quarter was due to larger exports of grain and grain products and unmanufactured tobacco. Exports of cotton and of foods other than grains were smaller.

Cash farm receipts in November and for the first 11 months of the year continued slightly above comparable periods last year. Higher production expenses have tended to offset the increase in receipts, so that net income probably will be lower than in 1947, the first drop in 10 years.

Prices received by farmers for cattle dropped slightly, and those for lambs were about steady from mid-October to mid-November. The prices received for hogs were down about \$3 per hundred pounds. Prices received by farmers for hogs have declined earlier and faster this year than usual, due partly to heavy marketings this fall.

Prices of dairy products have firmed somewhat since the sharp decline which occurred between September and October but are still below the record levels of June and July. Prices of at least some of the major dairy items may increase from recent levels before a significant seasonal increase in output occurs in the next few months, according to *The Demand and Price Situation*.

The farm price of eggs during September and October was slightly lower than a year earlier, but the mid-November farm price of 58.3 cents per dozen was 3.6 cents above October and 4.9 cents higher than a year earlier. Production of eggs during the last several

months has exceeded that of corresponding months of 1947, despite a decrease in total number of laying hens. The higher prices during the last several months resulted partly from the support purchase program, which absorbed an amount about equaling or exceeding the increase in production over 1947.

With marketings of chickens somewhat smaller than a year ago, farm and retail prices continued high through mid-November, while turkey prices remained at record levels.

The demand for fats and oils has not kept pace with increased production during the last several months, and wholesale prices for these products in November, although slightly higher than a month earlier, were 17 percent below the 12-month average (October 1947-September 1948). However, since both export and domestic demands for fats and oils continue strong, prices in early 1949 are likely to average at least as high as in November, says *The Demand and Price Situation*.

Corn prices have declined much more than seasonally this fall, reflecting record production. At mid-November the average price received by farmers was \$1.21 per bushel, the lowest reached in nearly two years and 23 cents per bushel below the national average loan rate. Because of the decline in prices of corn and other grains, the mid-November index of prices received for feed grains as a group was 42 percent lower than a year earlier and nearly 50 percent below the record reached last January. Feed prices are expected to continue much lower than a year earlier, at least through this winter and spring.

Cash wheat prices in late November were as much as 10 cents above the loan levels on some of the larger markets, in contrast to 18 cents below the loan price in early August. However, even at the higher price level, selling by growers has not developed on a large scale. Domestic consumption and exports of wheat are likely to remain at relatively high levels next year.

The cotton demand and price situation has remained about unchanged since early in the season. Demand is only moderate, with buy-

ing of cotton by domestic mills and for export largely confined to immediate needs. Prices of cotton in mid-November remained at about three-fourths of a cent a pound above loan levels. Since August 9, the spot market average price of Middling 15/16-inch has fluctuated within the narrow range of 30.69 and 31.78 cents per pound.

SOIL CONSERVATION PRACTICES DEMONSTRATED

Methods of installing approved soil conservation practices were illustrated at a recent Save-A-Farm demonstration in McLennan County. More than 20,000 farmers, businessmen, and others interested in agriculture attended the event, which was sponsored by the McLennan County Soil Conservation District and other agricultural groups and businessmen in Waco. The farm used was selected because it needed every type of soil conservation improvement and the owner-operator was willing and able to maintain the improvements that were planned. During the day almost every type of operation was demonstrated, frequently with several different kinds of equipment.

This demonstration, somewhat spectacular in nature, illustrated practices that can become a part of the operations of most central Texas farmers. While it would be impossible for an individual farmer to make so many changes and improvements in one day, by careful planning he could include them in a longer range program of farm operations and make use of farm labor and machinery during slack seasons over a period of four or five years. In this way, he could increase the earning capacity of his farm without the necessity of large cash outlays. Some custom work might be needed, and in some instances water conservation practices, such as the building of terraces and waterways, could best be accomplished by simultaneous installation on the entire farm and perhaps even on adjacent farms. Most of the work, however, could be accomplished by the farmer in cooperation with his neighbors.

The increased return to farmers and to the community from the installation of improve-

ments and improved practices has been demonstrated on many Texas farms. In some instances, cotton yields have been doubled by the simple practice of placing a legume, such as Hubam clover, in the crop rotation. Sodded waterways have provided pasture and, thus, more income from livestock. Use of cover crops has improved soil fertility and increased crop yields.

FARM MANAGEMENT

Methods for Control of Cattle Grubs Suggested

Cattle with grubs are discounted from one-half to one and one-half cents per pound on the market, resulting in a loss of almost \$4 per animal, according to C. A. King, associate extension entomologist of Texas A. & M. College. There is an additional loss due to the fact that these grubby cattle require about 15 percent more feed.

Cattle grubs can be controlled by using the proper dust, spray, or dip. If the first method is used, the backs of the animals should be dusted thoroughly with a mixture of one part 5 percent rotenone and two parts tripoli earth or talc. The dust should be rubbed into the hair with the finger tips. For a spray, it is recommended that seven and one-half pounds of 5 percent rotenone be mixed in 100 gallons of water and the mixture sprayed on the backs of the animals, using a pressure of at least 250 pounds. A dip made by mixing one pound of 5 percent rotenone and 10 pounds of wettable sulphur in 100 gallons of water effectively controls both grubs and lice. Two dips from 17 to 21 days apart are required to destroy grubs. The early winter is a good time to treat cattle for grubs, because this is the time of year the grubs mature and fall off the animal.

Milk Cooling System Needed Also in Winter

Prompt cooling of milk and cream is recognized as being essential to successful dairying, but the necessity of using the cooling tank in the winter months is frequently overlooked. H. C. Olson, Oklahoma A. & M. College dairy specialist, points out that cool weather will not substitute for the cooling tank. Milk cools faster when the cans are

placed in water than when held in air at the same temperature. Use of the cooling tank also helps prevent freezing. Mr. Olson reminds dairymen that there are frequent intermittent periods of warm weather during the winter, and it is particularly important that the cooling system be used at such times.

FARM PRICES

Farm-Stored Dry Beans Eligible for Full Support Price

Farm-stored, as well as warehouse-stored, 1948-crop dry edible beans will be eligible for Commodity Credit Corporation loans at the full support price, the Department of Agriculture recently announced. Under amended requirements, beans packed in suitable 100-pound bags and grading U. S. No. 2 or better will be eligible for CCC loans at the full support level if properly stored.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Mechanized Harvesting of Peanuts Accomplished

Mechanized harvesting and curing of peanuts were accomplished this year by the agricultural engineers of the Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station. The engineers used special combines to pick and sack freshly-dug peanuts in one operation. The nuts were then cured by placing them in a converted tobacco barn and multi-purpose curing house and forcing warm air through the storage area. These accomplishments indicate that all major obstacles blocking complete mechanization have been eliminated in principle and that practical machines designed to handle eight to ten acres per day may soon be available. This method of harvesting, in addition to insuring a better quality of peanuts, should mean a saving to the peanut farmer of at least three-fourths of present harvesting labor costs, according to reports from the Experiment Station.

Turkey Egg Production Stimulated by Use of Artificial Illumination

Artificial illumination has been used for many years to stimulate egg production in flocks of chickens, and experimental work

now indicates that satisfactory results can be obtained in use of the same methods to stimulate turkey egg production. Results of studies at the Oklahoma A. & M. Experiment Station show that two 15-watt bulbs in a 16- by 20-foot room stimulate egg production satisfactorily when located near the center of the room and used all night. Two 7½-watt lights give equal results when placed above the perches. Although hatchability and fertility are reduced when egg production is stimulated in this way, the use of lights apparently has no influence on toms in regard to fertility. Lighting of less intensity, such as produced by kerosene lanterns and small light bulbs, did not produce favorable results.

Pecan Harvest, New Style

A system of harvesting pecans which has been developed recently includes the mechanical pecan tree shaker, some camouflage nets, a scoop, and a cleaning machine, according to J. F. Rosborough, extension horticulturist of Texas A. & M. College. By the hand-picking method, a man, his wife, and a couple of children could gather only about 250 pounds of nuts a day, but by the new method they can harvest over a ton a day. In harvesting by this method, the farmer spreads the camouflage nets around the tree trunk. The mechanical shaker shakes the nuts to the ground. With a person working at each corner of the net, the pecans are easily piled up, ready for scooping into a pick-up bed or other large container. They are hauled off to the cleaner for removal of weeds and small twigs, after which they are ready to be sacked.

The camouflage nets can be bought at army surplus stores. They come in three sizes, but the 24- by 48-foot net with quarter-inch mesh works the best, says Mr. Rosborough.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease Vaccine Output Increased

The United States Department of Agriculture recently announced that increases in facilities have enabled the Mexican - United

States Commission for the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico to increase the output of the protective vaccine used in the campaign to more than a million doses a month. The present general plan, designed to compress the disease into a smaller and smaller area, is to vaccinate susceptible animals, beginning in areas adjacent to the northern and southern quarantine lines and working toward the center of the infected zone. Vaccination makes animals resistant to attacks of the disease for a period of at least six months. The progress now being made in eradication of this disease is heartening to cattlemen north of the border who have been fearful of the spread of the disease to their livestock.

PUBLICATIONS

Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, Stillwater, Oklahoma:

Oklahoma Farmers' Experiences With Cotton Strippers, Bulletin No. B-324, by John D. Campbell.

Oat Variety and Cultural Tests in Oklahoma, 1925-1947, Technical Bulletin No. T-33, by A. M. Schlehuber and others.

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, College Station, Texas:

Control of Cotton Root Rot by Sweetclover in Rotation, Bulletin 699, by E. W. Lyle and others.

The Control of Transit and Storage Decays in Texas Lemons, Bulletin 701, by G. H. Godfrey and A. L. Ryall.

Economics of Cotton Harvesting, Texas High Plains, 1947 Season, Progress Report 1134, by M. N. Williamson and Ralph H. Rogers.

Trend of Taxes on Farm and Ranch Real Estate in Texas, 1890-1946, Bulletin No. 702, by L. P. Gabbard and Robert C. Cherry.

Mechanized Production of Cotton in Texas, Bulletin No. 704, by H. P. Smith and D. L. Jones.

Copies of these publications may be secured by request to their respective publishers.