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Outlook for '51

Virtually unrestricted production, increased taxes, higher prices, rising costs, and greater net incomes are in prospect for the Nation's farmers in 1951. This was the conclusion of the government experts and representatives of state agricultural colleges meeting in Washington the first week of November.

Demand Will Be High

The reasons for this rather favorable demand outlook for 1951 are an expected high level of domestic demand, increased military purchases, and strong export markets. Stimulated by the defense program, business activity is expected to remain at a high level, providing jobs for all and some increase in wages and profits. Thus, consumers will buy beef, milk, fresh vegetables, fruit, and other farm products at about the same rate as, or higher than, in 1950.

In addition, more food, cotton, and wool will be required to meet the demands of our fighting forces, and substantial quantities of farm products will be needed to satisfy the requirements of the export trade and of various foreign aid programs of the United States.

Costs Up, Too

Partly offsetting the prospect of higher prices for farm products, costs of farming and ranching, also, are expected to be higher, as certain industrial goods are diverted to defense needs, labor and transportation costs increase, and some general upward movement of all prices becomes apparent. Machinery and labor costs are likely to increase most, although fertilizers, insecticides, feed, and seed will also share in the generally higher price tags.

Selected Commodities

Cotton Production of 16,000,000 bales of cotton in 1951 has been asked by the Department of Agriculture, a goal which —with average yields—will require about 29,000,000 acres of cotton, the largest acreage since 1936.

The Southwest's share of these national goals — Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas—is about 14,500,000 acres and 8,000,000 bales, virtually the same as was planted and harvested in 1949.

Neither acreage allotments nor marketing quotas will be in effect, but prices will be supported, probably at 90 percent of parity —the same as during the past 2 years.

Supplies of fertilizer and insecticides are expected to be adequate, although somewhat higher in price. Local shortages are probable, and farmers are urged to order well in advance of the time they will need these materials. Labor will also be higher in price and less plentiful than in 1950.

Wheat Acreage allotments for this year's wheat crop total nearly 73,000,000 acres, which, with normal yields, will produce 1,150,000,000 bushels. Domestic demand and export requirements are not expected to exceed greatly those of the current season. Thus, a crop of this size would provide a carry-over on July 1, 1952, of about 600,000,000 bushels—the second highest of record. Such reserves should be ample unless export or foreign aid requirements increase sharply.

Prices will be supported at not less than $1.99 per bushel and probably will be 10 cents or more above this preliminary figure. Farmers exceeding their acreage allotments will not be eligible for government loans or purchase agreements.

Feed grains The Department of Agriculture is expected to ask farmers to step-up production of corn in 1951. Demand for all feed grains is expected to increase in view of the anticipated expansion in livestock production, and slightly higher prices probably will prevail.

Meat animals Prices of beef cattle, hogs, and lambs are expected to continue at or near present levels. Higher consumer incomes will tend to increase the demand for meat, but supplies are expected to be somewhat higher in 1951 than in 1950. The long-range outlook for all livestock production is for generally favorable feeding margins and profitable operations during the next several years.

Dairy products Prices received by farmers for dairy products are expected to be higher in 1951 than in 1950, and net income from dairying probably will be up slightly.

Poultry and eggs In view of anticipated continued high production, egg prices may be somewhat lower than during 1950. Prices of poultry meat, including broilers and turkeys, are likely to remain relatively strong, although sharp, temporary declines may occur because of excessive marketings.

Toxaphene and BHC for Ticks

Ticks on livestock can be controlled by use of toxaphene or benzene hexachloride, according to D. E. Howell, entomologist at Oklahoma A. & M. College.

If toxaphene is used, a ½-percent mixture is satisfactory. A 15/1,000 of 1 percent solution of benzene hexachloride is recommended. One-half percent DDT can be used with BHC, but Mr. Howell points out that toxaphene usually is more satisfactory.

Use of these materials is not recommended for dairy cattle, since there is danger of contaminating the milk. However, a spray made up of 5 pounds of derris in 100 gallons of water can be used safely. This should be applied at weekly intervals.

When applying these sprays, it is important that the animals be covered thoroughly and completely. It takes about 24 hours for the insecticides to kill the ticks, and with toxaphene or BHC, control is effective for 2 or 3 weeks.

A dairy cow that produces less than 200 pounds of butterfat a year seldom makes a profit for her owner, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Cattle Grubs Expensive Parasites

Cattle grubs rob southwestern cattlemen of more than $20,000,000 annually, according to Texas A. & M. College estimates. Fortunately, this is one loss that can be controlled by cattlemen and dairymen if proper steps are taken at this time of year.

According to J. A. Deer, assistant extension entomologist of Texas A. & M. College, the cattle grub has a rather complicated life cycle. The heel fly, which is the adult of the cattle grub, emerges in the early spring and lays its eggs on the hair about the dew claws of cattle. The eggs hatch in a short time and the young grubs enter the skin of the animal and tunnel through the connective tissues of the animal's body until they reach the gullet. After spending some time in the gullet, the grubs move again through the animal tissues up to the back of the animal, and here they cut a hole through the skin and form a cyst.

The grubs usually arrive at this stage of their life cycle in the fall—from September to December—and this is the only time that effective control measures can be used. The recommended insecticide is rotenone.

For small herds the application of a 5-percent dust is usually the most practical. The back of the animal should be scrubbed with

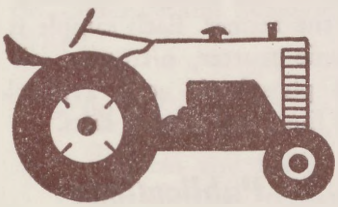
a stiff brush, and powder should be dusted over the animal's back and rubbed in thoroughly.

For large herds dipping or spraying is the most practical method, and the dip or spray should contain 7½ pounds of 5-percent rotenone per hundred gallons of water. The spray should be applied with at least 200-pound pressure and with the spray nozzle held about 4 inches above the animal's back. Approximately 1 gallon of spray is required per animal.

Regardless of the method of application or type of material, the treatment should be repeated 3 times at 3-week intervals.

Housing Farm Machinery Pays

Proper housing may reduce the rate of depreciation on farm machinery as much as 37 percent, and expenditures equal to 20 percent of the value of the machinery can be spent profitably for storage space, according to Louisiana State University.



The loss incurred through more rapid depreciation when farm machinery is exposed to the weather varies a great deal, depending upon the climate of the area and upon the type of machine. Deterioration is much more rapid in areas with relatively high humidity or heavy rainfall. However, in all areas continued exposure to sun, rain, and other weather conditions reduces materially the life of farm machinery. Wooden parts of the machines rot much faster, and breakdown of paints and oxidization of metal parts are accelerated when the implements are not protected from the weather.

Precision-built machines, such as combines, automatic hay balers, and tractors, get out of adjustment and deteriorate much more rapidly than such tools as disk harrows, 1-way plows, and hay rakes. Moreover, the increased investment per unit in these larger machines warrants special attention to their care.

More Beef From Rice Pastures

Many rice growers in Texas and Louisiana are increasing their income from beef cattle by seeding rice fields to improved grasses and clovers following harvest of the rice crop. It is a common practice in the Rice Belt to leave the fields in pasture 2 or 3 years before reseeding to rice.

Some growers give little or no attention to the land during the years it is pastured, merely letting native grasses, rushes, and woody plants reseed themselves and take over the fields following the rice harvest. Beef production from such pasture is usually low, as cattle put on gains slowly when pastured on these unpalatable, coarse plants. Annual gains may be as low as 47 pounds of beef per acre, while gains on improved pastures may exceed 180 pounds.

Tests during the past 3 years at the Rice-Pasture Experiment Station indicate that rice land can be converted rapidly at a low cost into improved pastures. Work is being continued on this project in an effort to determine more productive grasses and legumes and improved methods of pasture management, in order to increase still further returns from the land between rice crops. Pending further experimentation, rice growers can profit by following suggestions based on the first 3 years of these tests.

The preliminary report by specialists in charge of the experiments points out that among the grasses Dallis grass, Bermuda grass, and Kentucky 31 or Alta fescue show the most promise. It is suggested that Dallis grass be seeded at the rate of 7 pounds per acre between September 15 and November 15 or during March, April, or May. Kentucky 31 and Alta fescue should be seeded at the rate of 10 pounds per acre between October 15 and December 15. Of the clovers tested, the

Louisiana white clover, Persian clover, and large hop clover have given the best results. A mixture containing all three of the clovers can be seeded at the rate of 3 to 5 pounds per acre from October 15 to December 15.

The clovers provide pasture during the late winter and early spring, while Dallis grass dominates the pasture from early June to January. In the tests Dallis grass remained green all winter and provided a little grazing, although some supplemental feed was necessary from January to March.

Another mixture of grasses and clovers shows promise of furnishing abundant winter grazing. It has not been tested extensively, however, and growers should try it on a small scale to determine its adaptability to the conditions of their respective farms. This mixture consists of Kentucky 31 or Alta fescue seeded at the rate of 10 pounds per acre and Louisiana white clover or a mixture of Louisiana white clover, Persian, and hop clover seeded at the rate of 3 to 5 pounds per acre. Recommended planting dates are October 15 to December 15.

All of the pasture mixtures were seeded successfully by broadcasting on prepared seedbeds, broadcasting in standing rice after the last draining, and broadcasting in rice stubble after combining.

Results of these tests also indicate that from 60 to 120 pounds of phosphoric acid (300 to 600 pounds of 20-percent superphosphate) per acre are needed on the Beaumont soils at the time of seeding to insure stands of clover. Probably all of the soils in the Rice Belt will benefit from fertilization, but the kinds and amounts applied should be based upon an analysis of the soil.

Soil Tested for a Dollar

Texas farmers and ranchers now can have their soils analyzed by Texas A. & M. College for a nominal charge of $1 per sample.

Thus, the facilities of a scientific soil laboratory are well within the reach of every farmer in the State. The convenience and low cost of the service should encourage those who are interested in improving crop yields to make an inventory of the soil resources on their farms. Such an inventory is essential in determining the most profitable kinds and amounts of fertilizer to be used.

The first step in obtaining this service is to visit the county agricultural agent's office and get instructions for taking the soil sample. It is important that these directions be followed in order that the sample be representative of the field. If the sample is not representative, recommendations based on its analysis will be of little value when applied to the entire field.

After the soil sample has been taken, Form ST-2—also obtained from the county agent—should be filled out for each sample. This form is a convenient means of giving the crop history of the field, type of rotation used, and other data that will assist the specialist in making recommendations to the farmer. Both the sample and Form ST-2 should then be mailed to the Soil Testing Laboratory, Agricultural Extension Service, College Station, Texas. It usually requires at least 2 and sometimes 3 or 4 weeks to process and analyze the sample and mail a report back to the farmer. Each sample is analyzed for organic matter, nitrogen, soil reaction, available phosphoric acid, available potash, available lime, and soluble salts.

Publications

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, College Station:

The Price of Texas Farm and Ranch Lands, 1920-1945, Bulletin No. 688, by Joe R. Motheral and others.

Beef Cattle Investigations in Texas, 1888-1950, Bulletin No. 724.

Fattening Steers in the El Paso Valley, 1949-50, Progress Report 1266, by A. A. Melton and others.

Yield and Adaptation of Certain Forage Species in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Progress Report 1269, by E. M. Trew, Jr.

Copies of these bulletins may be secured by request to the publishers.