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The Outlook Changes

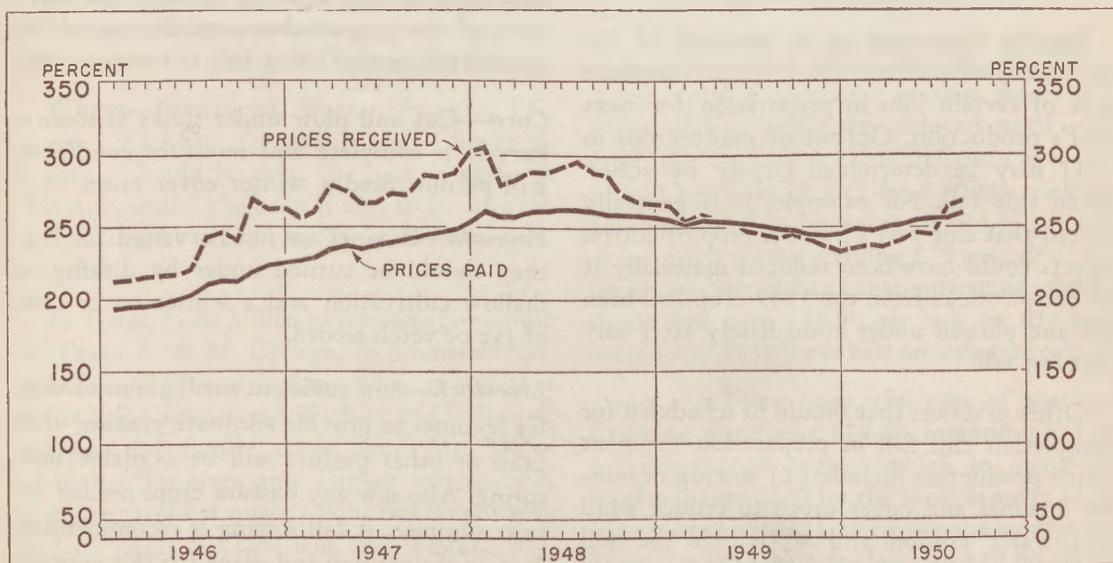
In contrast to the situation which existed a few months ago when farmers were planning to reduce acreage of many crops in line with government control measures and were looking for new crops to plant on "take-out" acres, they are now planning relatively high acreages of cash crops, such as wheat, cotton, and rice.

Wheat farmers already have been asked to plant an acreage equal to the 1950 allotment, and increased cotton production certainly will be desirable in 1951. The outlook for peanuts, flaxseed, and rice with respect to acreage controls has not been indicated by United States Department of Agriculture officials, but further reductions in acreage certainly are less likely than a few months ago.

Complete removal of acreage controls, however, is not probable. The supply of agricul-

tural commodities except cotton and wool is adequate to meet anticipated civilian and military demands—barring all-out war. Wheat production in 1950, although below the average of the past several years, was sufficiently high to permit normal consumption and exports during the coming year and to leave an estimated carry-over next July 1 of 450,000,000 bushels. Feed grain supplies are at record levels and should be adequate to meet anticipated needs, even with increased livestock production.

Output of meat is increasing, and dairy and poultry products are ample to meet present needs. The supply of fats and oils is more than adequate, unless demand increases greatly. Nevertheless, the fear of mounting surpluses and of more restrictive production controls has diminished.



*Prices Received and Prices Paid by Farmers, United States—1946-August 1950
(1910-14 = 100)*

The chart on page 1 shows prices paid and prices received by farmers since 1946. The downward trend in both prices received and prices paid during 1948 and 1949 was reversed early in 1950, and the over-all price trend was generally upward during the first 8 months of this year. The sharp price rise indicated during June and July was the result of a seasonal reduction in supplies and an abnormally high demand created by the upsurge in business activity and consumer buying immediately following the Korean crisis.

While some seasonal decline may be expected during the remaining months of 1950, the anticipated high level of nonfarm employment and wages virtually assures a strong demand for food and other farm products. Thus, price declines are likely to be relatively minor and, in fact, if inflationary forces in the economy prevail, the upward trend may be resumed following the seasonal decline anticipated during the fourth quarter of this year.

The upward trend in costs of farming and ranching, reflected in the generally higher prices paid by farmers and ranchers, probably will continue; thus, efficiency in operation and increased output per unit will remain important factors in determining profits.

Plan Now for 1951

Equally important to an appraisal of the economic outlook for 1951 is the performance now of certain jobs in preparation for next year's production. Output of many crops in 1951 may be determined largely by action taken this fall. For example, it is generally agreed that this year's bumper crop of cotton insects could have been reduced materially if *all* cotton stalks from the 1949 crop had been cut and plowed under immediately after harvest last fall.

Other practices that should be scheduled for completion this fall in preparation for next year's production include (1) sowing of winter legumes and cover crops to reduce wind and water erosion and to enrich the soil through the addition of organic matter and (2) seeding of pasture crops for winter and spring grazing.

The jobs to be done this fall vary with the location of the farm and the crops or livestock produced. Therefore, local sources of information, such as county agricultural agents, should be consulted for suggestions. However, the following have wide application throughout the Southwest and are advocated by most agricultural colleges:

Cotton—Cut and plow under all stalks immediately after harvest to destroy the food and overwintering quarters of cotton insects and to return organic matter to the soil. Burning of stalks should be avoided because it not only destroys valuable organic matter and plant food but also destroys much of the humus in the soil under the area burned.

After plowing under the stalks, a winter cover crop of small grains, clovers, vetch, or peas should be sown to hold the soil in place during heavy rains and to provide additional organic matter and plant food for plowing under next spring.

Sorghums—In areas where wind erosion is not a factor, stubble and other crop residue can be plowed under and a winter cover crop sown, as with cotton. If soil blowing is a danger in the area, the stubble should be cut high at the time of harvest and left standing until the following spring. Disking in order to leave most of the crop residue partially out of the ground can be used effectively in some sections.

Corn—Cut and plow under stalks as soon as harvest is complete and moisture conditions will permit. Seed a winter cover crop.

Peanuts—If vines are not harvested for hay, they should be turned under by disking or shallow cultivation and a winter cover crop of rye or vetch seeded.

Livestock—Sow sufficient small grains or winter legumes to provide adequate grazing until grass or other pasture will be available next spring. Also sow any pasture crops needed for next summer, if fall sowing is recommended. Store sufficient hay and silage for this winter's needs and a reserve for an unusually severe winter or an extended drought next spring.

Plant Only Hardy Alfalfa

Oklahoma Approved Origin alfalfa seed is recommended for Oklahoma farmers by C. L. Canode, Oklahoma A. & M. College agronomist.

Other varieties, such as Hairy Peruvian, Argentine, African, Indian, and some of the western Commons that are produced under mild climatic conditions, will not withstand Oklahoma winters; and Mr. Canode points out that seedings made with these strains usually winter-kill or are severely damaged, thus requiring reseeding the following year.

"Farmers buying alfalfa seed tagged with an Oklahoma Approved Origin tag can be assured that they are getting seed produced from hardy parent stocks of Oklahoma Common alfalfa," according to Mr. Canode.

Similar precautions in obtaining alfalfa seed should be taken by Texas farmers in the north and northwest sections of the State. In other areas of Texas and in New Mexico, Common varieties are recommended. In all sections, locally grown seed usually are best adapted.

Small Grain Varieties

Oklahoma A. & M. College recommends the following small grain varieties for seeding this fall:

Wheat—Comanche, Westar, Pawnee, Triumph, Wichita, Tenmarq, and Cheyenne. Planting should be done the first 2 weeks in October, unless the crop is also to be utilized for pasture, in which case September is recommended.

In Texas, E. A. Miller, extension agronomist of Texas A. & M. College, recommends Comanche and Westar varieties when production is for baker's flour and Wichita and Triumph varieties for family trade flour. Mr. Miller adds that Tenmarq and Turkey varieties also produce excellent quality flour but do not give as high yields as Comanche and Westar.

Seed of the new Quanah wheat variety, which is also recommended for the Rolling

Plains and north and central areas of Texas, is available in limited quantities.

Oats—Wintok, Tennex, and Forkedeer in the north and northwest; Wintok, Tennex, Forkedeer, Stanton Strain 1, and Traveler in the south and southwest; and Stanton Strain 1 and Traveler in the east and southeast sections.

Barley—Ward and Tenkow.

Agronomists at Oklahoma A. & M. stress the importance of preparing a firm, well-pulverized seedbed for small grains and of planting oats and barley from September 15 to October 15, with earlier seeding advisable if the crops are to be utilized for pasture.

Machine Stripping Versus Hand Snapping

Which is more profitable, machine stripping or hand snapping? This question is asked frequently by cotton farmers on the Texas High Plains.

While most of the available evidence favors machine stripping, the answer depends upon many factors, including the cost and availability of hand labor and condition of the crop. However, some indication of relative costs of the two methods can be obtained from data on actual farm operations during the 1948 season.

A summary of these data by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station shows that when all harvesting was delayed until after frost, the costs of machine stripping averaged \$12.32 per bale on dry-land cotton yielding 100 pounds of lint per acre and \$4.31 per bale on irrigated cotton yielding 375 pounds of lint per acre. Costs of hand snapping under similar conditions were \$45.00 per bale on dry-land cotton and \$40.00 per bale on irrigated cotton.

On a per-day basis, the cost of machine stripping was about \$39.00, including \$15.00 for labor (two men)—which in many instances is furnished by the farm family, \$7.50 for use of tractor, \$1.25 for repairs to stripper, \$1.00 for repairs on trailer, and \$14.00 allowance for depreciation and interest on investment in stripper and trailer. An average of

16 acres was harvested per 7½-hour day in dry-land cotton and 13 acres in irrigated cotton.

Using these costs and 1948 prices, the cash return above harvesting and ginning expenses on dry-land cotton was \$89.74 per bale with machine stripping after frost and \$80.03 with hand snapping twice over, once before and once after frost. On irrigated cotton the figures were \$98.72 for the machine stripped and \$86.16 for the hand snapped. When hand snapping was delayed until after frost, the returns were \$67.09 per bale on dry-land and \$72.10 on irrigated. In the case of machine stripping the cash returns pertain only to stormproof cotton varieties and include an allowance for a reduced grade of cotton.

Protein Supplement for Hogs

Corn or sorghum grain, alone, fed to hogs produces slow and costly gains but, when supplemented with protein and minerals, is highly profitable feed under present price relationships. E. M. Regenbrecht, extension swine husbandman of Texas A. & M. College, urges farmers to balance home-grown grains fed to hogs by feeding a good protein supplement and providing adequate pasture. Such a practice will pay off with faster gains and with lower feed requirements per 100 pounds of pork produced.

Anthrax Outbreak

An outbreak of Anthrax disease has occurred in several sections of east and northeast Texas, causing widespread concern throughout these areas and adjoining states.

According to the Department of Agriculture, the disease is highly infectious, affects all classes of livestock, and may be transmitted to humans. In acute forms of the disease death usually results within 12 to 24 hours. Anthrax is caused by an organism, the spores of which may live in the soil for years, and may be spread by dogs, coyotes, birds, and insects.

The disease can be controlled by vaccination and a strict program of isolating the infected areas. The Department urges stockmen to contact local veterinarians or state livestock inspectors immediately if Anthrax is suspected in the death of any animal and under no conditions move the carcass until instructions have been received for its disposal. Spores of the disease cling to the hair, hide, and flesh of the dead animal and moving it tends to spread the disease further.

Stockmen are warned to watch their herds carefully for signs of Anthrax and to cooperate fully with state sanitation boards and veterinarians in bringing this potentially dangerous disease under control.

Farm Electrification

A recent report by the Edison Electric Institute indicates that farms of the South are rapidly becoming electrified. Texas ranks first, with 93 percent of farms and ranches having electricity; and Louisiana stands second, with 89.2 percent.

Publications

Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Baton Rouge:

Louisiana Corn, Agricultural Extension Publication 1042, by R. A. Wasson and A. G. Killgore.

Control Livestock Pests, Agricultural Extension Publication 1052, by Rudolph G. Strong and C. E. Smith.

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, College Station:

Cabbage Variety Trials in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 1949-50, Progress Report 1257, by C. A. Burleson and others.

Effects of Fertilizers and Seeding on the Establishment of Grazed Firebreaks, Progress Report 1247, by T. H. Silker and others.

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