

Note: This is the first of a series of weekly reports on news of agriculture, which is designed as a brief digest of agricultural news of interest to the Southwest.

C O T T O N

Prices for Middling 15/16" cotton averaged 30.68 cents per pound in the ten spot markets on Thursday, December 29, which compares with 30.59 cents a week earlier and 32.25 cents a year ago.

Cotton consumption in U.S. mills through November this season amounted to 2,870,000 bales compared with 2,848,000 bales for the same period last season.

Cotton ginned in the U. S. to December 13 totaled 14,716,000 bales compared with 13,430,000 bales during the corresponding period in 1948. For the states of the Eleventh District, the figures for 1949 and 1948, respectively, were: Arizona, 398,000 and 250,000; Louisiana, 626,000 and 719,000; New Mexico, 225,000 and 216,000; Oklahoma, 539,000 and 351,000; and Texas, 5,224,000 and 3,005,000.

Exports for the season up through Tuesday, January 3, amounted to 1,812,000 bales compared with 1,202,000 bales last year.

Korea is reported ready to buy cotton. Czechoslovakia is said to be seeking to finance the purchase of 150,000,000 bales of American cotton. The RCA recently has authorized \$8,700,000 to Holland and \$30,000,000 to Italy for the purchase of new cotton in this country.

Cotton ginned in Texas through December 12 was low in grade but longer in staple length than that ginned for the corresponding period last year. The grade index was 94.7 (Middling White equals 100) and compares with 97.9 for the same period last year. The average staple length was 30.0 thirty-seconds, which compares with 29.8 thirty-seconds for the same period last year.

C O T T O N S E E D

The Department of Agriculture has announced that the effective date for terminating purchases of cottonseed of the 1949 crop under the current emergency purchase program has been extended by the CCC to February 15, 1950. State PMA chairmen are authorized to discontinue purchases prior to that date if it is found that the seed offered for purchase does not meet the standards originally required.

Cottonseed prices in Texas for wagon lot seed f.o.b. gins averaged \$43.90 per ton last week compared with \$43.60 per ton the previous week. The majority of seed being offered for sale at gins during the past two weeks has been through the PMA purchase program.

Cottonseed grades averaged 99.0 in Texas last week compared with 100.5 the previous week.

C O R N

The government last week ordered sharp cuts in next year's planting of

corn in order to prevent new surpluses. The reduction will amount to 11,000,000 acres, bringing the acreage 12.9 percent below the 1949 crop.

R I C E

The government has placed acreage allotments on rice for 1950, which necessitates a reduction of 13.7 percent below the 1,845,000 acres produced this year. No marketing quotas were thought necessary.

The Department of Agriculture has added the rice varieties known as R. N. and Kamrose to the varieties announced on September 12 as eligible for 1949 crop rice price supports. R. N. is produced in Texas and Kamrose is produced in Arkansas. The Department also announced the inclusion of Arizona in the area where price support on rice is available.

W H E A T

The acreage of wheat seeded or to be seeded in Texas for harvest in 1950 is estimated at 6,235,000 acres. Such an acreage would be 19 percent less than the record acreage seeded last year, but 21 percent greater than the 1938-47 average.

The acreage of winter wheat seeded for all purposes in the fall of 1949 in the U.S. is estimated at 53,023,000 acres, a reduction of 15 percent from the previous crop.

The winter wheat crop in Texas is making good progress, except in many parts of the Panhandle where additional moisture is needed.

F R U I T S A N D V E G E T A B L E S

Harvest of the grapefruit crop in the lower Rio Grande Valley has been active. Prices obtained are said to be attractive to producers.

The orange market has been rather weak, due largely to the abundance of oranges in other producing areas.

The principal vegetables being harvested in south Texas are cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce, peppers and spinach. Supplies of these are showing their normal seasonal increase.

P I G C R O P

The 1949 Texas pig crop totaled 2,362,000 head, or about 1 percent less than the number raised in 1948 and 11 percent less than the average for the previous 10 years. As compared with previous seasons, the spring pig crop was up 1 percent and the fall pig crop was down 3 percent.

The 1949 pig crop in the U. S. totaled 96.3 million head, an increase of 13 percent over last year.

E G G S

The USDA has announced a stop-gap egg price support program to bolster

egg prices in the Midwest. It will purchase dried eggs in January and February in order to return an average of 27 cents per dozen for ungraded eggs on the farm. The Department will buy from egg buyers who certify that they have paid producers the 25 cents per dozen average. Farmers who themselves deliver eggs to processing plants will be paid an average of 27 cents per dozen.

The USDA announced that the 50 cents support level for eggs will be 75 percent of the new parity. The program is designed to return to producers an annual average of 37 cents per dozen for their entire output of all eggs.

WOOL AND MOHAIR

The wool market was very quiet last week in Texas, and even Boston reported no sales in Texas wool.

The Texas unsold wool poundage, which was estimated at the end of November to be 17,000,000 pounds, was depleted by some 3,600,000 pounds by Christmas Eve and the buyers were still looking and buying. A representative of a Boston firm bought over one-half million pounds of 12 months wool at various San Angelo warehouses at prices ranging from 58 cents to 61 cents per pound.

At the end of November there was an estimated 2,500,000 pounds of mohair remaining unsold in Texas. By the end of the year, only a few scattered lots of mohair remained in the Texas hill country.

Contracting of the spring mohair clip began in Boston last week at prices of 55 cents per pound for adult and 7 cents per pound for kid.

The USDA announced that the 1949 wool price support program will be continued through March 31, 1950 in order to give producers an additional three months in which to decide whether to sell their wool into private channels or to the Department. The extension also provides for the support of the small amount of 1949 shorn wool marketed in the latter part of the marketing season as was provided for the main portion already disposed of.

Average weekly consumption of apparel wools, shorn and pulled on a scoured basis for September, 1949, was 7,222,000 pounds, which compares with a weekly average of 7,311,000 pounds in August, 1949. The weekly average consumption in September, 1948, was 9,042,000 pounds.

F E E D M A R K E T S

Feedstuff prices continued to decline during the week ended December 27, influenced principally by pre-inventory and slow holiday demand. Compared with the previous week, wheat mill feeds were down \$1.00 to \$1.50 per ton at the principal mill centers. Oilseed mills averaged 25 to 50 cents lower while corn by-product feeds were firm to slightly higher. Index of feedstuff prices dropped 2 points to 211.6 compared with 230.6 a year earlier. The feed grain price index was up slightly to 184.4 compared with 207.1 for the same period of 1948.

V A L U E O F T E X A S 1 9 4 9 C R O P S

The value of Texas farm crops in 1949 reached record high level of \$1,522,043,000, which was 5 percent above the former record reported in 1947

and about 32 percent above the 1948 value. This was the third consecutive year that the billion dollar mark was passed. The largest cotton production of record accounted for 95 percent of the increase in value over last year despite a slightly smaller price per pound. Substantially increased values with smaller unit prices also resulted from larger crop of wheat, oats, peanuts and sweet potatoes. Smaller production with prices lower than last year caused reduction in values of hay and forage crops, and all feed crops except oats.

The increase in value of crops is attributed almost entirely to larger quantity over-all production since unit prices received for all field crops and most commercial truck crops were below 1948.

PARITY PRICES

The BAE reported that the parity ratio - the ratio received by farmers to prices paid - fell below 100 during the month ended December 15 for the first time since November 1941. The parity ratio stood at 98, down 2 points from a month earlier.

The BAE pointed out that the index of prices received, and index of prices paid by farmers for this date, are based on the original parity formula which does not include wage rates for hired farm labor. Computations based on a new parity formula provided by the Agricultural Act of 1949, including wage rates for hired farm labor and the use of average prices for the past 10 years, will be issued during January.

The index of prices received by farmers fell to 236 on December 13, the lowest point in 1949. The decline was led by drops in poultry and eggs, meat animals, cotton, and truck crops.