MARKETS

Cotton prices have been holding relatively stable during the past 3 weeks. On Tuesday, January 2, Medium 15/16-inch cotton averaged 43.43 cents per pound in the 10 designated spot markets, vs. 43.28 cents a week earlier and 43.29 cents 2 weeks ago.

Grain prices on the Fort Worth Grain and Cotton Exchange made only minor changes during the holiday week. Tuesday's top price for No. 1 hard wheat was $2.63 per bushel, or 1-1/4 cents under a week earlier. No. 2 barley at $1.70 per bushel was off 1 cent. No. 2 white oats sold for $1.15-3/4 per bushel, off fractionally.

On the other hand, No. 2 yellow corn sold Tuesday for $1.90-3/4 per bushel, up 3 cents from a week earlier. No. 2 white corn at $2.27-3/4 per bushel was up 2-1/2 cents. No. 2 yellow milo brought $2.59 per cwt., up 1 cent. Prices of all grains noted above are the same as last week.

Egg prices on the Dallas wholesale market broke sharply late in December and are now holding steady. Canned No. 1 mixed large eggs are bringing 45 cents per dozen, compared with the peak of 61 cents in early December. No. 1 mixed medium eggs are bringing 37 cents per dozen, down 20 cents from the December high. No. 1 infertile eggs at 55 cents per dozen are off 8 cents. Wholesale poultry prices have made few noteworthy changes during the past month.

Cattle prices on the Fort Worth market reached new record highs this week. On Tuesday, January 2, slaughter steers and calves sold for a top price of $32.50 per cwt., while heifers and cows brought $31.50 and $24.00, respectively. Feeder and stocker steers rose to $32.00 per cwt.

Good and Choice wooled lambs sold Tuesday at prices ranging up to $32.00 per cwt., while adult and feeder lambs brought $29.00. Feeder lambs moved at $29.50.

Good 12-months Texas wools were contracted last week at $1.11 per pound, while Texas mohair was contracted at prices ranging up to $1.35 for adult and $1.65 per pound for kid mohair.

TEXAS CROP SUMMARY -- 1950

Much smaller crops of wheat and cotton in Texas for 1950 contributed heavily to an aggregate production of all field crops somewhat below the unusually large harvest in 1949, according to the annual report of the BAE. Production of oats, barley, peanuts, flaxseed, potatoes, and sweet potatoes also fell below 1949 levels. Reductions for these crops were only partially offset by record sorghum grain and rice crops and increased production of corn.

A total of 25 million acres of all crops harvested in the State in 1950 fell more than 5 million acres below that for 1949 and to the lowest level in more than 25 years of record. Heavy abandonment of wheat accounted for 3-1/3 million acres of the decline, while acreage allotments contributed to a reduction of almost 4 million acres of cotton. Acreage controls also caused smaller reductions for rice and peanuts, while low support prices discouraged planting of flax and potatoes at 1949 levels. Only partially offsetting these decreases were increases of almost 3 million acres of sorghums and about a half million acres of cotton.

The 1950 Texas corn crop of 65.7 million bushels was 13 percent above the 1949 crop. The 1950 wheat crop of 22.7 million bushels was the lowest since 1936. The 118.8 million bushel sorghum grain crop established a new production record. The 2.9 million bale cotton harvest was less than half that of 1949. The 11.5 million bag rice crop slightly exceeded that of 1949. Peanut production, estimated...
at 331 million pounds, was off slightly from a year earlier. Flaxseed production at 1.3 million bushels was off a third. The 2.8 million bushel Irish potato crop was down 25 percent. An estimated 35 million pounds of pecans were harvested -- 6 million pounds above 1949. Peach and pear production were at low levels.

The 343 thousand acres of commercial vegetables harvested in Texas for fresh market and for processing in 1950 were 4 thousand acres above 1949. Growing conditions and developments in 1950 were generally unsatisfactory, and below average yields were realized for a number of crops.

The value of Texas farm crops in 1950 is placed at $1,234 million, or 22 percent below the record high value of $1,571 million placed on 1949 production, according to the BAE. This is the fourth consecutive year that farm crops in Texas have exceeded $1 billion in value. Despite increased prices, the greatly reduced production of cotton and wheat was responsible for a reduction of $400 million in total valuation of crops. Values smaller than for 1949 were computed also for other winter grains, for all hay, and for most of the commercial vegetable crops.

The record-large sorghum grain crop was valued at $155 million, or $54 million above 1949, and the sorghum forage crop was valued at $42 million, up $6 million. The value of the corn crop was up $17 million, rice $16 million, and cottonseed and peanuts, $2 million and $1 million, respectively.

The reduction in value of crops in Texas in 1950 is attributed almost entirely to smaller over-all quantity production since unit prices for almost all of the field crops and more than half of the truck crops were above 1949.

MISCELLANEOUS

The 1950 Texas pig crop totaled almost 2.5 million head, or about 1 percent more than in 1949. The fall crop of 1.2 million head was up 8 percent, while little change was reported for the spring crop. The 1950 pig crop in Louisiana is estimated at 1.1 million head -- 5 percent under the 1949 crop. Oklahoma reported 1.4 million head -- up 4 percent.

Certain meats and meat-food products are now permitted entry into the U.S. from Mexico. The Secretary of Agriculture has issued an amendment to section 27.2b of Federal Meat Inspection Regulations which adds Mexico to the list of counties from which certain meats, including canned and cooked meats, may be imported into the U.S. The amendment, however, does not have any effect on the present restrictions that prohibit entry of fresh, chilled, or frozen meats from Mexico.

The USDA is continuing the program to encourage both new domestic uses and exportation of honey. The program was to have expired December 31. Payments of 4.5 cents per pound will continue to be made to packers who sell honey into diversion outlets at market price less amount of payment.

W. M. Pritchett
Agricultural Economist