TEXAS 1951 CROP SUMMARY

Texas crop production in 1951 is valued at slightly more than $1.3 billion by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. An increase of $88 million - less than 1% - from the 1950 value was largely the result of sharply increased cotton production at a somewhat lower price, although considerably higher prices for smaller hay and forage crops contributed.

As compared with 1950, Texas farmers in 1951 produced more rice, cotton lint, cottonseed, broomcorn, sorghum sirup, peaches, pears, and watermelons but less of all other important crops. There were sharp reductions for corn, oats, barley, rye, flaxseed, grain sorghum, cowpeas, peanuts, and sweet potatoes, and a wheat production moderately lower than the poor 1950 crop.

Texas farmers harvested crops from 24.7 million acres in 1951, which is about 2% more than in 1950 but 11%, or nearly 3 million acres, below the 1940-49 average. Abandonment of small grains and truck crops was extremely heavy and smaller acreages were planted to corn, sorghums, annual legumes, sweet and Irish potatoes, and flaxseed, but a 5 million acre increase in cotton acreage together with smaller increases for rice, hay, and broomcorn brought the 1951 harvested acreage slightly above that of 1950.

The 1951 Texas cotton crop - lint and seed - is valued at $868 million, compared with $657 million for the 1950 crop. The sorghum grain crop is valued at $90 million - down $57 million. Because of lower prices, the larger rice crop is valued at about $60 million, compared with $53 million for the previous crop. All truck crops for processing are valued at $3.1 million, or more than a million above 1950 as a result of higher prices.

While prices of cotton, cottonseed, rice, and peanuts averaged lower in 1951 than in 1950, prices of most other crops averaged higher. The most significant price advances are reported for feed grains, wheat, hay, potatoes, broomcorn, citrus fruits, and commercial vegetables.

COMMODITY MARKETS

Farm commodity prices in local Southwest cash markets during the Holiday period generally may be characterized as steady although there were a number of exceptions. Middling 15/16-inch cotton in the Dallas market rose to 42 cents per pound on December 27 but closed at the end of the month at 41.40, or about the same as 2 weeks ago.

Wheat prices on the Fort Worth market closed out 1951 at $2.77 1/2 for No. 1 hard, or about 2 cents below the level at the beginning of the Holiday period. No. 2 white oats at $1.21 per bushel were up about 2 cents, although under the level of mid-December.

Corn prices in the closing days of 1951 were unsettled. No. 2 yellow corn on the Fort Worth market reached $2.29 1/4 on December 31, which was about 6 cents above 10 days earlier but 4 cents below the peak reached on December 10. No. 2 white corn closed at $2.50 1/2 per bushel - 6 cents below 10 days earlier but 17 cents below the December 10 peak.

No. 2 yellow milo closed out 1951 in Fort Worth at $3.10 per cwt., compared with the December high of $3.15.

Prices of all grains on the Fort Worth market at the end of 1951 were above a year earlier. Wheat was up 14 cents, barley 4 cents, oats 6 cents, yellow corn 41 cents, and white corn 25 cents per bushel. Sorghum grain was up 53 cents per cwt.
Livestock prices on the Fort Worth market advanced from 25 cents to $1.00 during the Holiday week, partly as a result of reduced marketings. Good and Choice fed steers and heifers sold mainly from $30.00-35.00 with a few up to $35.25. Commercial and Good slaughter calves brought $24.00-31.00; Choice $32.00-33.00. Butcher hogs reached $19.25 on Wednesday — the first time they have been above $19.00 since early November. Marketings of sheep and lambs were very light and prices paid probably do not accurately reflect demand conditions.

Poultry prices generally made little net change during the Holiday period although as compared with 10 days earlier, price quotations on the Fort Worth produce market at year's end show Top Grade fryers up 2 cents, turkey hens off 2 cents, and most other classes unchanged.

Cottonseed prices in Texas were a little higher during the last week in December after having declined for several weeks. The average for the week was $75.30 per ton, compared with $74.40 for the previous week and $105.90 a year ago.

Southwestern wool and mohair markets were dormant during the Holiday period, while prices in Boston held firm.

MISCELLANEOUS

Damage to commercial vegetables in South Texas from the cold spell of mid-December appears to have been light, according to reports. Some young cabbage and radishes in the Coastal Bend were hurt. Preparation for planting of spring crop vegetables has been active in the Lower Valley.

The USDA has issued proposed amendments to the poultry grading and inspection program. The major proposals are: (1) Prohibit grade labeling of individual carcasses of dressed poultry (only feathers and blood removed) after December 1952, and (2) Eliminate authority of the administrator of PMA to permit dressed poultry produced in a non-official plant to be brought into an official plant for canning.

The farm scrap collection drive announced September 11 by the Secretary of Agriculture yielded 528,000 tons of scrap metal by year's end, according to reports to the USDA. This figure is based largely on collections made from October 15 to mid-November. In several states the campaign was extended for another month and in many states it is expected that the drive will continue to bring scrap metal in at an above-normal rate for many months to come.

Meat production in commercial plants in the U.S. in the first 11 months of 1951 was less than 1% below production for the same period in 1950. Pork production was up 11%, while production of other species was down: beef 7%, veal 14%, and mutton and lamb 14%.

On a live weight basis commercial slaughter of cattle in Texas in the first 11 months of 1951 was up 3%, calf slaughter down 15%, hog slaughter up 16%, and sheep and lamb slaughter up 1%. Cattle, calves, and sheep and lambs slaughtered in Texas in 1951 averaged lighter per head than in 1950, hogs averaged 1 pound heavier.

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