COTTON

The demand for cotton at this season of the year is not measuring up to what was expected some months ago. There is, of course, a fairly good demand for specific grades. Most merchants are buying only for present commitments, and domestic mills are buying for prompt delivery, showing relatively little interest in purchases for deferred delivery. Export interest continues very slow. The net effect of these conditions has been to weaken the spot cotton market considerably.

Middling 15/16-inch cotton fell below 38 cents per pound in the Dallas market last week for the first time since May; it brought over 40 cents in early August. However, spot cotton prices are still 3 to 4 cents per pound higher than a year ago.

There was a pickup in domestic mill consumption of cotton during August. Average daily consumption rose to 37,200 bales - the highest since February.

Gin yard prices for cottonseed in Texas last week ranged from $65 to $78 per ton, averaging $71.20, compared with $67 one year ago, according to PMA.

GRAINS

Most changes in grain prices on the Fort Worth market last week were downward, with corn prices falling sharply. No. 2 yellow corn closed at $2.01-1/2 per bushel, off 6-1/4 cents for the week. No. 2 white corn at $2.67 per bushel was off 14 cents. Oats declined about 2 cents per bushel.

No. 1 hard wheat, which had been gaining since early July, lost 1 cent, and closed out the week at $2.66-1/2 per bushel, top price. Prices of barley and sorghum grain held steady.

Grain sorghum harvest has started in the northern High Plains of Texas and is well along in the southern High Plains. Fair to good yields are being made on irrigated acreages, but yields are very light on most of the dry-land acreage, with much of the crop being grazed or cut for hay.

The Texas rice market is very active, demand is good. Prices at Houston last Friday ranged up to $5.87 per cwt., or $9.51 per barrel, this being for No. 1 Bluebonnet.

LIVESTOCK

Because of rains in scattered parts of Texas and the weakness that developed in livestock prices the previous week, livestock market receipts in Fort Worth last week were down considerably. Prices of most cattle firmed, while cows and calves sold considerably higher. Cows gained about $1, some even more. Slaughter calves gained $1, while stocker cattle and calves rose in some instances as much as $2.

Butcher hogs advanced in a trade marked by a narrow price range, and closed 25 to 50 cents higher.

Slaughter lambs closed steady to weak, while slaughter ewes were strong to 50 cents higher. Stocker and feeder lambs sold unchanged.

Receipts of goats on the San Antonio market were less than half those of the previous week, and prices were a little stronger, some sales 50 cents or more higher.
In the week ended September 13, slaughter of cattle in Fort Worth, Dallas, and San Antonio combined totaled over 18,000 head, compared with 12,500 in the corresponding week last year. Slaughter of calves and sheep totaled 12,500 and 25,700, respectively, both double the rate of slaughter a year earlier.

WOOL AND MOHAIR

Original bag 12 months wool was purchased in Texas last week at grease prices ranging from 61-1/2 to 63-1/2 cents per pound - about $1.60, clean basis, delivered to Boston. Fall wool brought from $1.22 to $1.25, clean basis, delivered. Several lots of mohair sold at 85 to 96-1/2 cents. Prices for kid mohair ranged from $1.10 to $1.21-1/2.

Average weekly consumption of apparel wools by domestic mills in June was 6.8 million pounds vs. 8.5 million in June 1951, according to figures just released.

POULTRY

Texas broiler and fryer markets weakened from 1 to 2 cents late last week, reports the Texas Department of Agriculture. Only fair demand resulted in many processors ceasing operations the latter part of the week. Offerings of light weights were adequate for needs, but supplies of heavier birds continued short. Closing prices for the week: south Texas mostly 32 cents; east Texas and Waco area mostly 30 cents. Placement of broiler chicks on Texas farms continues at a rate substantially above a year ago. Placements in the week ended September 13 totaled 961,000 - up 21 percent.

Texas turkey growers are raising 3,703,000 birds this year, or 15 percent more than last year. In fact, turkey production is up in practically every part of the country - 13 percent for the Nation as a whole.

Texas egg markets were about steady during the week ended September 13. Demand continued good for top qualities. Grade US AA large 60 cents per dozen; A large 55-60; A medium 55-68; B large 48-49.

MISCELLANEOUS

In a report last week on "The Balance Sheet of Agriculture - 1952", the USDA stated that agricultural assets in the Nation, valued at current prices, rose during 1951 to a new record but says that this is mainly because of higher prices. The higher prices, combined with increases in quantities of livestock, machinery, and motor vehicles, raised the value of the physical assets of agriculture about 10 percent. If price increases were omitted, the increase would be only 2 or 3 percent.

A US Department of Agriculture official in a speech at Spokane, Washington, last week said that rising costs of production are forcing farmers deeper and deeper into debt. Farmers' net income has been at record or near-record levels for the past 10 years, but the problem of rising production costs is putting a strain on the whole farm credit system. Farmers are going to lenders for short-term money in greater numbers than ever before. Some of them are having difficulty paying off their short-term loans and are doing more long-term borrowing to pay off these short-term obligations. Any slump in farm commodity prices, he said, "would go mighty hard with a lot of farmers."

Farm employment in the west south central states - Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas - in the week of August 21-30 was 7 percent less than a year earlier and 20 percent less than the August average for 1945-49.

The 1952 crop of sweet clover seed in Texas at 6.1 million pounds is 44 percent less than the 1951 production, according to the BAE. This short crop is largely due to smaller acreage, although yields per acre are down 10 percent.

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