Prices received by the Nation’s farmers declined 3 percent during the month ended December 15, 1952, according to the USDA. Declines in prices received by farmers for cattle, cotton, eggs, hogs, and milk were largely responsible for the decline in the index to 269 percent of the 1910-14 average. Prices paid by farmers, at 281 percent of the 1910-14 average, were unchanged from November. The parity ratio (the relationship of prices received to prices paid) dropped to 96 in mid-December, the lowest since April 1950.

Livestock

Receipts of cattle and calves at major markets continue to exceed those of comparable periods a year ago, reflecting the larger number of cattle on farms and ranches. Receipts of hogs and sheep in recent weeks have been generally smaller than a year ago.

Prices have declined on slaughter cattle and risen moderately on stocker cows and steers. Most traders had anticipated a narrowing of the margin between fed cattle and feeder cattle, and it now appears that such a price movement is underway. Last week, slaughter steers and heifers on the Fort Worth market declined around $1 per cwt., while high-grade stockers and feeders were around 50 cents per cwt. higher. Most classes of stocker and feeder cattle and calves were in short supply. Prices for slaughter lambs were steady last week but declined around $1 per cwt. on Monday of this week. Prices of feeder lambs were strong to slightly higher.

Prices per cwt. on the Fort Worth livestock market on Monday of this week:

- Good, short-fed yearling steers $19.50 to $22.50,
- Choice up to $25; cows $17 to $19,
- with a load of young stocker cows at $18.50;
- Medium and Good stocker yearlings $15 to $22;
- Good and Choice slaughter calves $20 to $25;
- Choice stocker calves $23;
- Good and Choice slaughter lambs $18.50 to $20.50;
- Medium and Good feeder lambs $15 to $17;
- and Good to Choice hogs $19.25 to $19.50.

According to the USDA, meat production in commercial plants in the U.S. during the first 11 months of 1952 was 5 percent higher than during the same period in 1951. Increases were recorded for mutton, lamb, veal, and beef; pork production was 1 percent lower.

Cotton

Cotton prices fluctuated within a narrow range last week, and on Monday of this week the Dallas market quoted Middling 15/16-inch cotton at 32.10 cents per pound - up 30 points from the previous Monday. The USDA reported that the average price received by farmers for cotton in mid-December was the lowest in 1-1/2 years. In Texas this mid-December price was 29 cents per pound, compared with 38.70 cents a year ago.

Trading in the cotton market was limited in volume during the holidays, and reported sales were substantially below the volume of earlier weeks. Domestic mills continue to purchase on a hand-to-mouth basis, and export demand has been relatively slow. CCC loan entries reported in the week ended December 26 totaled 109,600 bales, bringing the total for the season to 912,200 bales, compared with 835,000 bales a year earlier.
An announcement Monday of this week by the Brazilian Government that it may sell about 1,000,000 bales of government held cotton on the world market at prevailing prices added further to the pessimistic outlook for cotton exports from this country. This cotton was obtained through the Brazilian Government's price support program.

The parity price for upland cotton, as announced by the USDA, was 34.10 cents per pound as of December 15. This was slightly lower than in November but the same as in December 1951.

Harvest of the 1952 cotton crop is virtually complete, with the South Plains of Texas harvesting more than a million bales for the fifth consecutive year. Through last week, 1,235,000 bales had been ginned, with indications that the total would reach 1,300,000; this would be second only to the 1949 crop of 1,644,000.

Rain in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas during the past week have improved prospects for cotton planting in that section in 1953.

GRAINS

Grain prices declined in trading on Monday of this week. Brokers and market analysts were at a loss to explain the weakness in prices but felt that the international news, particularly the statement by Mr. Churchill that the danger of another world war has receded, was sufficient to touch off declines in an already weakened market.

Net declines in grain prices from a week ago were generally limited to 3 cents per bushel except for grain sorghums, which were 10 cents per cwt. below the previous Monday and the lowest since early last July.

Closing prices per bushel on the Fort Worth Grain and Cotton Exchange on Monday, January 5: wheat, No. 1 hard $2.64-1/2; oats, No. 2 white $1.07-1/2; corn, No. 2 yellow $1.88; and grain sorghums, No. 2 yellow $3.23 per cwt.

WOOL

Wool prices held steady to slightly stronger during the month of December, according to the Production and Marketing Administration. Good 12-months Texas wool in original bags sold during the month for $1.70 to $1.72 per pound, clean basis. Late in the month a considerable volume of wool sold in Texas at from 34 cents to 66-1/2 cents per pound, grease basis. It is reported that most of the 12-months wool in Texas has been sold.

POULTRY

Texas broiler markets were reported steady on Monday of this week, with prices generally unchanged from a week earlier. Demand was said to be improving and supplies were adequate. Reported prices per pound on Monday of this week: south Texas 28 cents; east Texas 28 cents on weights between 2-1/2 to 3 pounds, 26 to 29 cents on heavier birds; Waco-Corsicana 28 cents, with one load selling at 26 cents.

Placement of broiler chicks on Texas farms during the week ended December 27 were estimated at 1,062,000 chicks - 18 percent fewer than the previous week and 17 percent fewer than in the corresponding week of 1951. This was the smallest number of chick placements since the week of October 4, 1952.

Turkey growers meeting in Dallas this week express considerable concern over the expanding production of turkeys that is indicated for 1953. It is reported that the record 1952 output exceeded the demand for turkey meat at prices profitable to most producers. The trade association recommended to its members that production in 1953 be reduced at least 20 percent.

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