



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS

Number 167

Wednesday, March 11, 1953

RAIN !!!

One of the heaviest general rains in more than 2 years covered west Texas Sunday night and Monday of this week. The steady downpour that brought as much as 4.68 inches of rain to San Angelo virtually blanketed the region that has been hardest hit by the prolonged drought. Showers and rains earlier in the winter had brought relief to the eastern half of Texas, and scattered light rain or snow has fallen periodically in the Plains and northwestern sections of the state. But prior to this week's storm, much of the Low Rolling Plains and the Edwards Plateau country had received virtually no moisture. Reports Tuesday morning told of stock tanks being refilled and of a growing optimism among farmers and ranchers.

LIVESTOCK

The outbreak of "X disease" in north central and northwest Texas continues to take a heavy toll, with large numbers of cattle marketed on a "salvaged basis." Federal meat inspectors have been approving the meat for consumption except that all of the vital organs must be removed, which lowers the value of the carcass considerably. The disease is relatively new, but it has been fairly well established that it results from cattle eating certain petroleum products. The current outbreak is reported to have been traced to a certain feed, and the feed company is offering to reimburse stockmen for legitimate losses incurred through the use of their feed.

Cattle prices continue to show weakness as the movement to market remains fairly heavy. Price losses during the past week amounted to around 50 cents to \$1 per cwt. Hog prices continue steady to strong, and lambs were unchanged to 50 cents higher.

Prices per cwt. on the Fort Worth market on Monday, March 9: Good and Choice slaughter steers \$18 to \$22, a few at \$22.50; Good to Choice slaughter calves \$18 to \$22; light supply of stockers and feeders at \$15 to \$21; Good and Choice spring lambs \$23; Good and Choice wooled slaughter lambs \$21 to \$22; and Good to Choice butcher hogs \$21.75.

Reports from Corn Belt-states indicate that the movement of feeder cattle into feed lots in that area during February was about one-half as large as a year ago. Losses suffered by feeders on their operations this winter are reported to be the main factor in the decline. Feeder cattle prices are fully \$10 per cwt. under a year ago, but feed-lot operators appear to be reluctant to buy, even at the reduced prices.

WOOL AND MOHAIR

Wool prices showed little change during the past week. Some 12-months Texas wool, grading good, French combing sold at \$1.75 per pound, clean basis, while average to good French combing wool brought \$1.70, clean basis.

Some contracting of mohair was done in Texas last week at 96-1/2 cents for adult and \$1.21-1/2 for kid mohair.

Mohair production in the United States totaled 12,116,000 pounds in 1952, according to the BAE. This is 6 percent smaller than the 1951 clip and 34 percent below the 10-year (1941-50) average. Arizona and New Mexico showed an increase in mohair production over 1951. Production in Texas at 11,561,000 pounds is the lowest for this state since 1926. Cash receipts from mohair produced in 1952 in the United States are reported at \$11,660,000, 23 percent below 1951.

G R A I N S

Grain prices remained generally unchanged last week except for a slight decline in wheat on Monday of this week, resulting from reports of additional moisture in the Southwest.

Closing prices per bushel on the Fort Worth Grain and Cotton Exchange on Monday, March 9: No. 1 hard wheat \$2.64-1/4; No. 2 white oats \$1.02-3/4; No. 2 yellow corn \$1.85-1/4; and No. 2 yellow grain sorghums \$3.22 per cwt.

The general rains early this week brought only light rainfall to major wheat producing areas of the Southwest. Amarillo reported .06 inches, while Wichita Falls received .48 inches and Lubbock .62 inches. However, scattered reports indicate that except for the Amarillo area, where some acreage has been lost due to blowing, the crop is in better condition than a year ago.

The south Texas flax crop is reported to be making very good progress, with the planting of spring-crop flax active in west central Texas. Some early corn in the Lower Rio Grande Valley is about knee-high, and planting is active in south central counties of the state.

C O T T O N

The cotton market was relatively inactive during the past week, with domestic and export demand continuing on a hand-to-mouth basis but in sufficient volume to support a moderate seasonal increase in prices. More than 1,900,000 bales of 1952-crop cotton have been placed in the loan this season, but repayments during the last week of February were more than 20,000 bales, the largest volume for any week this season. As of February 27, loans were outstanding on 1,866,000 bales.

Middling 15/16-inch staple was quoted on the Dallas market on Monday, March 9, at 33.00 cents per pound, up 5 points from the previous Tuesday.

Planting of this year's cotton crop is nearing completion in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, following light to moderate rains the first week in March. Planting was active in the Coastal Bend section prior to the rains early this week and will continue as soon as fields dry.

P O U L T R Y

Texas broiler markets were generally steady, and prices were firm last week. Supplies have been about adequate to meet a fair to good demand. On Monday of this week the south Texas market was strong to 1 cent higher, with prices for 2-1/2 to 3 pound weights quoted at 30 cents. Other markets were quoted at 28 to 29 cents, mostly 28 cents.

Commercial broiler placements on Texas farms during the week ended February 28 totaled 1,426,000. This was 8 percent more than a week earlier but 14 percent fewer than a year ago. The total chick placements in all reporting broiler areas in the U.S. were 6 percent more than a week ago but 9 percent fewer than a year earlier.

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