



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS

Number 168

Wednesday, March 18, 1953

L I V E S T O C K

Receipts of cattle and calves continue to exceed those for comparable periods a year ago but for the week ended March 13 were substantially less than the previous week at Fort Worth. The 12 major markets received about as many cattle and calves as during the previous week and fully one-fourth more than during the comparable week a year earlier. Receipts of both hogs and sheep were lower than a year ago at Fort Worth.

Cattle prices were steady to 50 cents per cwt. lower for the week, hogs were mostly 25 cents lower, milk-fed lambs 50 cents higher, and shorn slaughter lambs 50 cents lower.

Closing prices per cwt. on the Fort Worth livestock market on Monday, March 16: Good and Choice slaughter steers \$19 to \$22, Utility cows \$14 to \$15, Good and Choice slaughter calves \$19 to \$22, Good and Choice butcher hogs \$21.50, milk-fed lambs mostly at \$23, and Utility to Choice wooled slaughter lambs \$20 to \$22. Very few stocker and feeder cattle were on the market. Prices quoted generally were steady to slightly weaker.

A sheep disease known as blue-tongue has been identified in California by USDA specialists. It is reported that the symptoms are almost identical to those observed among flocks in California, Texas, and Utah under the name "sore muzzle." Blue-tongue is a virus disease spread by biting insects. The affected animals become stiff and lame, and mortality has been sufficiently high to cause serious economic losses. There is no evidence that the disease can be spread by contact.

The 1953 U.S. early lamb crop is estimated to be about 2 percent larger than a year ago. In Texas, the number of breeding ewes on January 1 this year was down 7 percent, pointing to a smaller early lamb crop.

According to the March 1 report of the BAE, the condition of ranges and pastures in the western range states was 1 point lower than February 1 and 2 points below a year ago. In Texas, there was a 3-point improvement during February, with conditions slightly better than on March 1, 1952. The condition of cattle in the entire area was slightly improved over a month earlier but slightly less favorable than a year ago. These conditions also applied to Texas. The condition of sheep was slightly improved in Texas but was unchanged for the entire western area. This report was issued prior to the drought-breaking rains which fell in west Texas the week of March 9.

W O O L A N D M O H A I R

Price changes in the Boston wool market were very minor during the past week. A fair weight of 12-months Texas wool in original bags was sold in the state around \$1.75 per pound, clean basis. A fair weight of Choice 8-months wool was contracted in Texas at 65 cents per pound, grease basis. A few small lots of early shorn lamb wool were sold at a clean price, delivered Boston, at around \$1.60 per pound.

There was interest in kid mohair but practically no stocks available. Contracting in Texas was reported practically at a standstill.

C O T T O N

Cotton prices advanced moderately last week, and on Friday, Middling 15/16-inch staple was quoted on the Dallas market at 33.25 cents per pound, up 30 points from the previous Friday and the highest since early December 1952. The market

weakened somewhat Monday of this week, and Middling 15/16-inch staple at Dallas closed at 33.14 cents per pound.

Inquiries from both domestic and foreign sources were less numerous last week, and buying was confined largely to cotton for prompt and near-by shipment. Sales of cotton textiles for third quarter delivery have not been large, and mills were reported to be delaying their purchases of raw cotton.

CCC loan entries passed the 2,000,000-bale mark during early March. Through the week ended March 6, 2,006,200 bales had been placed in the loan this season. Total repayments were 115,800 bales, leaving loans outstanding on 1,890,400 bales. A year ago there were CCC loans outstanding on 425,500 bales of 1951-crop cotton.

Cotton exports from the U.S. in the first half of the current season were about 1.8 million bales, compared with 3.5 million bales during the same period last season.

Cotton crop prospects were improved last week, as additional rains fell in most sections. In the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 95 percent of the acreage was planted, with some cotton up to a height of 6 inches. It is reported that a large acreage will have to be replanted, especially in Hidalgo County. About one-half of the acreage is planted in the Corpus Christi area.

P O U L T R Y

Texas broiler markets remained steady and firm last week, with prices unchanged to 1 cent higher. Supplies were short, particularly in south Texas. A few processors were reported buying birds in east Texas and Arkansas.

Closing prices for broilers on Monday, March 16: south Texas 30 cents per pound, east Texas 29 cents per pound, and the Waco-Corsicana area 29 to 30 cents per pound.

The BAE reported 1,392,000 broiler chicks placed on Texas farms for the week ended March 7, a decline of 2 percent from the previous week and 12 percent from the comparable week a year ago.

G R A I N S

Price changes in the grain markets were relatively small during the past week except for grain sorghums, which declined 10 cents per cwt. A record 455.8 million bushels of 1952-crop wheat have been placed under the CCC loan program.

Closing prices per bushel on the Fort Worth Grain and Cotton Exchange on Monday, March 16: No. 1 hard wheat \$2.65-3/4; No. 2 white oats \$1.04; No. 2 yellow corn \$1.86-1/2; and No. 2 yellow grain sorghums \$3.15 per cwt.

Rice growers have begun seeding in Louisiana, and preparations for further plantings are expected to proceed rapidly as soon as weather permits.

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

Cash receipts from farm marketings during the month of January 1953 were \$149,075,000 in Texas, \$53,824,000 in Arizona, \$46,653,000 in Oklahoma, \$33,979,000 in Louisiana, and \$11,601,000 in New Mexico. Compared with a year ago, this was a 14-percent decline in Texas, 4 percent in Arizona, 1 percent in Louisiana, 39 percent in New Mexico, and 9 percent increase in Oklahoma.

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