PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1953

National acreages of most spring-planted crops (except cotton) in 1953 will vary only slightly from those of 1952 if farmers carry out their intentions as indicated to the BAE on March 1. A very small increase is indicated for rice, oats, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and spring wheat; a substantial increase is forecast for grain sorghums and flaxseed. Small decreases are indicated for corn and peanuts.

In the Southwest, a substantial decline is indicated in the acreage of corn, while substantial increases are reported for oats, barley, sorghums, and moderate increases for sweet potatoes, potatoes, peanuts, and rice.

The BAE points out that these estimates of acreages are subject to considerable change, as weather conditions and other factors during the next 2 months will have considerable influence on the planting operations.

No official estimate of cotton acreage will be released until July 8.

LIVESTOCK

Receipts of cattle and calves at the major livestock markets last week were 10 to 15 percent larger than the comparable week a year ago. A substantial portion of the receipts in Fort Worth were diseased cattle consigned to slaughter. Receipts at Fort Worth on Monday of this week were nearly twice as large as a year ago but slightly below those of a week ago. The 12 markets, however, received nearly 20,000 head more than last Monday.

Prices ruled generally steady to strong on all classes of livestock, except hogs. Stocker demand has improved sharply and on most days exceeded the supply. A fairly heavy movement of milk-fed lambs is now under way, and prices are holding strong to $1 per cwt. higher than a week ago.

Prices per cwt. at the Fort Worth livestock market on Monday, March 23:

- Good and Choice fed steers and heifers $19.50 to $22, with two loads of yearlings at $22,50 and six loads at $23;
- Utility cows $14 to $15;
- Good and Choice slaughter calves $19 to $22.50;
- Medium and Good stocker steer yearlings $16 to $21, with one lot of Choice 324-pound calves $23;
- Choice and Prime milk-fed lambs $21, with Utility to Choice kinds $20 to $23;
- Choice and Prime shorn slaughter lambs $21; and Good to Choice butcher hogs $20.75 to $21.25.

Commenting on the recent report by the USDA that a sheep disease commonly called "sore muzzle" has been diagnosed as "blue tongue", Dr. W. T. Hardy, Superintendent of the Texas A. & M. Experiment Station at Sonora stated that the disease is not new to Texas. He also points out that it is not particularly serious but that control measures are being given careful study.

WOOL AND MOHAIR

There was increased activity in the wool market last week, with a larger volume of wool sold at generally steady prices. About five cars of Texas wool were reported sold in Boston. In Texas, average 12-months wool in original bags sold at an estimated clean price of $1.70 per pound. In New Mexico, some original bag wool sold at 65-1/2 cents per pound, grease basis, estimated to cost around $1.65, clean basis, delivered Boston. In the same area, bulk of the fine good French combing and staple wool sold at 68 and 70 cents per pound, grease basis, and estimated to cost from $1.62 to $1.85 per pound, clean basis.
Several cars of mohair were reported purchased in Texas last week at 91-1/2 cents for adult and $1.77 for kid mohair, delivered to the warehouse. Shearing of goats is now in full swing in Texas.

COTTON

Cotton prices declined rather steadily last week, with Middling 15/16-inch staple at Dallas declining from 33.14 cents per pound on Monday, March 16, to 32.35 on Monday of this week. Domestic demand was relatively dull, and reported sales were substantially lower than a week ago. Foreign inquiries were more numerous, but only a small volume was sold.

CCC loan entries during the week ended March 13 were 25,400 bales, compared with 36,600 bales in the previous week. Loans have now been reported on slightly more than 2,000,000 bales. CCC loan repayments during the second week of March were 26,700 bales - the largest volume for any week this season. Loans are now outstanding on a total of 1,889,000 bales of 1952-crop cotton.

Stocks of cotton at mills as of the end of February this year were 1,862,000 bales. A month earlier they were 1,733,000 and a year ago, 1,683,000. Stocks in public storage at the end of February totaled 6,910,000 bales, compared with 7,177,000 a month ago and 4,145,000 a year ago. At the end of February this year, about 28 percent of the public storage stocks were CCC-loan cotton.

On the basis of consumption during the August-February period this season, domestic consumption for the year is estimated at 9,325,000 bales, a slight increase over the 9,196,000 bales last season.

The cotton crop in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and in the Coastal Bend section is reported to be making good growth, with insect infestation light but with growers making plans for early season poisoning.

GRAINS

Price changes on the Fort Worth Grain and Cotton Exchange during the past week were relatively minor except for grain sorghums, which declined 12 cents per cwt., reaching the lowest level since November 1951.

Reports from the Wichita Falls-Vernon area of Texas continue to indicate excellent prospects for winter wheat production. Farther to the northwest, moisture conditions are much less favorable, and production will be highly dependent upon timely rains during the next 30 days.

Closing prices per bushel on the Fort Worth Grain and Cotton Exchange on Monday, March 23, were: No. 1 hard wheat $2.66-3/4, No. 2 white oats $1.03, No. 2 yellow corn $1.84-1/2, and No. 2 yellow sorghums $3.03 per cwt.

POULTRY

Texas farm prices for broilers on Monday, March 23, were: south Texas 29 cents per pound, east Texas 28 cents, and the Waco-Corsicana area 27 to 28 cents per pound. Prices in all areas were about 1 cent lower than a week ago.

The BAE reported 1,450,000 chicks placed on Texas farms during the week ended March 14. This was 4 percent more than the previous week but 14 percent fewer than a year ago. This was the twelfth consecutive week that chick placements have been lower than the comparable week a year ago.

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