



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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## F A R M R E A L E S T A T E V A L U E S

A report on Current Developments in the Farm Real Estate Market issued last week by the U. S. Department of Agriculture indicates that farm real estate values in July were below the March level in more than half the states. However, declines were generally small; the values in only two states dropped as much as 4 percent.

Compared with a year earlier, figures this July were down 5 percent or more in most of the Mountain states and in Iowa, Kentucky, and Texas. Values were 2 percent or more above a year earlier in several of the East Coast states.

Types of buyers and sellers of farm property have not changed much during the past 2 years, says the report. Active farmers bought 65 percent of all farms sold in 1951 and 1952. Nonfarmers have made about 31 percent of all purchases during the past 2 years, a slightly larger proportion than during the 1946-49 period. The proportion of all farms that were purchased as additions to existing farms has increased steadily during the past 3 years.

Sales data on the financing of farm purchases during the winter and early spring of 1952-53 show that a slightly higher portion was credit-financed and that down payments averaged a little less than during the comparable period a year earlier.

The dollar value of farm land in Texas in July was 10 percent below a year earlier, while values in New Mexico dropped 9 percent. These sharp declines reflect not only the downturns in farm commodity prices and incomes but also the effects of the drought.

Farm land values in Oklahoma and Arizona fell 5 percent and 3 percent, respectively, during the 12 months ended in July. Louisiana reported a 1-percent increase over July 1952, although values have been on a downward trend since last November.

An index of estimated value per acre of farm real estate, with improvements, has been computed for the Eleventh Federal Reserve District. This index in July 1953 was 124.3 (1947-49 = 100), which compares with a peak of 138.2 a year earlier and 126.3 2 years ago.

## C O T T O N

Spot cotton prices are holding about steady. Trading in most markets is very slow. Meanwhile, farmers are holding on to most of their cotton as it is ginned.

Wagon-lot prices of cottonseed at the gins in Texas last week averaged \$55.10 per ton, compared with \$55.60 per ton the previous week, according to PMA. During the corresponding week last year the average price was \$72.92 per ton.

## L I V E S T O C K

Meat production in the U. S. continues to rise. Production under Federal Inspection for the week ended August 29 was 341 million pounds, up 4 percent from the previous week and 9 percent above a year ago. Cattle slaughter was 378,000 head, compared with 287,000 for the same week last year.

While cattle marketing and slaughter on a national level is reaching new highs, marketings in the Southwest are dropping off. This reflects largely the

fact that marketings earlier in the year were extremely heavy due to the drought. During the week ended August 29, the Fort Worth livestock market received 17,700 cattle and 4,900 calves. Year-earlier figures were 20,300 and 8,400, respectively.

A PMA report shows that slaughter steers and yearlings dropped 50 cents to \$1.00 on the Fort Worth market last week, as prices were influenced by severe price declines in other parts of the country where unseasonably high temperatures were reported. Cows were mostly 50 cents off; calves also declined 50 cents to \$1.00 in Fort Worth. Hog prices were irregular. Slaughter lamb prices fell as much as \$2.00.

The USDA announced last week that CCC corn and cottonseed meal will be made available to feed mixers and distributors at prices that will enable them to sell mixed feed to eligible farmers and ranchers in designated drought-disaster areas at reduced prices.

An active market, with prices strong to 50 cents higher, featured trading on the San Antonio goat market last week. Shorn Angoras brought as high as \$6.50 per cwt., while kids moved at \$4.25 per head.

#### W O O L

The wool auctions at Sydney, Australia, were reported at par to 5 percent above the June close, as sales resumed on Monday, August 31. However, by midweek, prices were off to near the June close.

Staple and Good French Combing 12-months Texas wool was sold in the local market at an estimated clean price of \$1.82 per pound, according to PMA. There were also large sales made at prices ranging from 74 cents to 76½ cents in the grease; the estimated clean price of these wools delivered to Boston was around \$1.80.

Prospective mohair buyers in Texas have raised slightly their bids on mohair, with prices quoted up to 77 cents per pound. However, the market remains quiet.

The CCC has announced that on September 1 the agency had almost 31 million pounds of shorn wool under loan as of August 31. This wool was acquired under the 1953-54 price support program.

#### P O U L T R Y

Broiler markets in Texas opened steady last week. Later in the week, however, trading weakened until prices were down 1 cent. Broilers and fryers weighing from 2 1/2 to 3 pounds brought mostly 27 cents, compared with 32 cents to 35 cents a year ago. Broiler chick placements on Texas farms dropped to 1.1 million during the week ended August 29, but this was still 12 percent above the comparable week a year ago.

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

Sweet potatoes sold on the Farmers' Market in Dallas last Friday at \$2.75 to \$3.00 per bushel, mostly \$3.00. Some No. 2s brought \$1.25 to \$2.00, mostly \$1.50. Prices for tomatoes ranged from \$3.00 to \$5.00 per bushel. Yellow onions were quoted at \$1.50 to \$1.75 per bushel.

Rice markets in Texas continue weak, and prices are averaging slightly lower than a year ago.

U. S. farmers received about \$17.7 billion from marketings in the first 8 months of 1953, or 6 percent less than a year ago. Average prices were down about 10 percent, but volume was a little larger. Receipts from sales of livestock and livestock products were \$11 billion, down 7 percent. Sales of meat animals were down 13 percent in value. Receipts from poultry and eggs, on the other hand, were up 11 percent. Crop receipts from January through August totaled \$6.7 billion, up 4 percent.