



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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COTTON

Spot cotton prices are holding steady at close to loan values. Day-to-day fluctuations have been within a very narrow range this month.

Cotton ginned in Texas through September 15 amounted to 961,000 bales, compared with 1,164,000 bales last year, according to the Bureau of the Census. In Oklahoma the total was 9,800 bales, compared with 15,200 bales last year.

Ginnings in Arizona through September 15 totaled 51,000 bales versus 38,000 bales a year ago. The total for New Mexico was slightly below 1,000 bales, compared with 3,400 last year. Louisiana ginnings are reported at 141,000 bales, compared with 295,000 to the same date in 1952.

Cotton ginned in the United States through September 15 totaled 2.9 million bales compared with 3.4 million bales to the corresponding date last year. This season's ginnings were equivalent to about 20 percent of the estimated 1953 crop, as against 23 percent in the same period a year ago.

Reports continue to indicate that producers are withholding a large percent of current ginnings off the market. Loan interest appears to be increasing. Merchant and shipper demand is fairly good. The larger merchants have been buying for stock, but prices offered, generally, have been unattractive to most producers and local merchants. Domestic and export inquiries were numerous last week, but prices offered were too low to attract more than a small volume of sales. Domestic purchases have been very small in comparison with previous years.

Crop conditions have been very good in most sections of the Eleventh District for the past week or more. A few sections, not including irrigated cotton, report more than a bale to the acre.

Dry-land cotton in the Lubbock area has deteriorated, however, and bolls have been opening prematurely. The PMA quotes private sources as saying that the loss in the Lubbock area is around 150,000 bales. Plants have been suffering from blight and wilt and have been shedding the top bolls.

Wagon-lot prices of cottonseed at the gins in Texas last week averaged \$51.60 per ton, according to PMA. This compares with \$52.40 the previous week and \$71.20 a year ago. Prices in Texas range from \$30.00 per ton in some of the Coastal counties to \$56.00 per ton in the northern Blacklands.

LIVESTOCK

Receipts of cattle at most markets last week were very heavy. It is said that the threat of more droughty conditions and the approaching time for the first killing frost have been factors contributing to the large movement to market. There were also large receipts of hogs, sheep, and lambs at major markets last week. Packing plants are operating at full capacity in trying to handle the tremendous movement of livestock to market. Reports suggest that the livestock markets would have been completely demoralized were it not that per capita consumption of meat is at an all-time recorded high.

The principal area of serious weakness in Fort Worth last week, however, was in the calf division, which is partly the result of a stagnant demand for stocker animals.

On Monday of this week calf prices strengthened. Good and Choice slaughter calves sold in Fort Worth at \$11.00 to \$14.00, with some fancy heavyweights up to \$14.50 and \$15.00. Good and Choice stocker steer calves sold mainly from \$12.00 to \$17.00, although one extra good load brought \$19.00.

Good and Choice fed steers and yearlings moved at \$17.00 to \$22.00, and Common and Medium offerings brought \$9.00 to \$15.50. Fat cows brought \$9.50 to \$12.00.

Butcher hogs gained 50 cents with a top price of \$26.00, although it is now the season of the year when some decline may be expected.

Good and Choice slaughter lambs sold at \$16.00 to \$17.00, while Cull, Common, and Medium kinds cashed at \$10.00 to \$15.00.

Spread between prices of higher and lower grade cattle has widened further since fed cattle prices turned upward in July, says the BAE. It is now unusually wide. Price prospects for coming months point to the possibility of about average profits from cattle feeding in 1953-54. This is encouraging to many feeders who lost money last year.

POULTRY AND EGGS

Broiler markets in Texas last week gained 1 cent. Closing prices: south Texas, 27 cents; east Texas, 28 cents; Waco, 27 cents; Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 28 cents.

There were 1,134,000 broiler chicks placed on Texas farms in the week ended September 19, which is 16 percent more than in the corresponding week a year ago.

Turkey hens were quoted on the Fort Worth produce market last week at 32 cents to 34 cents per pound.

Heavy hens sold at 22 cents to 24 cents, while roosters were quoted at 12 cents to 14 cents.

Graded and candled eggs brought \$13.00 to \$15.00 per case.

MISCELLANEOUS

USDA has announced changes in the CCC program for financing and servicing price support loans. In view of the heavy crops to be financed through such loans this fall, the program is intended to achieve maximum investment of private funds in CCC crop loans, thus relieving the U. S. Treasury as much as possible of a financial burden which would have to be taken care of through public borrowing. Revisions do not involve any change in the rate of interest (4%) to be paid by producers.

Lending agencies, mainly country banks, which finance and also service CCC private support loans are receiving an interest rate of 2-1/2 percent per annum for the use of their funds while invested and, in addition, will receive a fee up to 1/2 percent per annum for services, depending on the nature of the services performed. In the case of grain and similar commodities handled, the rate will be 1/2 percent per annum.

Lending agencies which disburse cotton loans and retain their funds in the program by accepting certificates of interest but which forward the individual notes to CCC for custody and servicing, will receive 2-1/2 percent interest on the certificates and a fee of 8 cents per bale to cover costs of disbursing and scheduling loans.

Rice markets were more active during the week ended September 21. Weather in Texas and Louisiana generally has been ideal for harvesting. Sales of rice were light during the week as most of it was going into storage.

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