



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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## COTTON

Middling 15/16-inch cotton in the ten spot markets on Monday, January 4, averaged 32.85 cents per pound, which is a few points above pre-Holiday levels but still slightly below loan values. The comparable price on the Dallas market Monday was 32.60 cents, which compares with 32.10 cents 2 weeks earlier and 32.15 cents a month ago.

CCC loan entries reported in the week ended December 18 were 296,200 bales. Notes covering 84,800 bales had been returned to lending agencies for correction, leaving net loan receipts for the season through December 18 at 5,159,800 bales. Net loans, less repayments, on 1953-crop cotton totaled 5,120,400 bales.

## COMMERCIAL VEGETABLES

The value of commercial vegetables for fresh market produced in Texas during 1953 was 12 percent less than the 1952 value but 26 percent more than the 3-year (1949-51) average, according to the USDA. The total for 1953 was \$58,606,000 (excluding commercial potatoes and strawberries).

In addition to crops for fresh market sales, the value of vegetables for processing totaled \$2,130,000 in 1953.

Acres in production of commercial vegetables in Texas was up considerably in 1953, but prices averaged lower than in 1952 and there was heavy economic abandonment of beets, cabbage, and onions.

The value of commercial vegetables, strawberries, and early commercial Irish potatoes grown in Louisiana in 1953 totaled \$13,004,000, or 13 percent more than in 1952. A large boost in strawberry production accounted for much of the increase.

For the United States the production of 28 principal vegetables for fresh market in the 1953 season was a record 10.1 million tons, 6 percent larger than in the 1952 season. Production of 11 vegetables for commercial processing totaled 6.55 million tons, down 2 percent from 1952 and 9 percent below the 1951 record.

## GRAINS

The Secretary of Agriculture has announced that there will be no rice marketing quotas or acreage allotments in 1954. The supply of rice is below the quantity which would require marketing quotas under present laws. Moreover, this action was taken in view of an expected continuation of the heavy export demand which has prevailed during the past 2 years. Exports have been running about 50 percent of estimated production in the United States.

Texas and Louisiana rice markets have been holding relatively steady, with trading seasonally light. At mid-December, Texas farmers received an average of \$5.80 per cwt. for rice sold. Rice prices nationally averaged \$5.34 per cwt., or 100 percent of parity.

Texas farmers have seeded 4,731,000 acres of winter wheat for harvest in 1954. This is 13 percent less than the acreage seeded for harvest in 1953. About 5 percent of the acreage seeded for the current season is in excess of individual allotments and has been designated for pasture and cover.

Condition of the winter wheat crop in Texas is the best since the very favorable 1947-crop season and indicates a yield of 11 bushels per planted acre, or a total of 52,041,000 bushels.



## L I V E S T O C K

Present indications point to a 52.0 million head spring pig crop in 1954, reports the USDA. Such a crop would be 4 percent larger than last spring.

The 1953 pig crop totaled 82.1 million head, a decrease of 10 percent from 1952. The spring pig crop was down 11 percent and the fall crop down 9 percent.

Numbers of pigs saved in most southwestern states last year showed rather sharp declines from 1952. The 1953 pig crop in Oklahoma was down 34 percent; in Louisiana and Texas, down 29 percent; in New Mexico, down 14 percent; and in Arizona, down 6 percent.

During and after World War II it appeared that hog raising in the Southwest might expand into one of the major farm enterprises. However, there has been a sharp curtailment in hog production in this region in the past couple of years. In fact, the number of pigs saved in 1953 was less than half the 1942-51 annual average.

A very significant report on meat prices was released by the USDA during the Christmas Holiday period. It says that declining prices for cattle in 1952 and 1953 were not caused primarily by widening marketing margins. The primary cause for the decline of cattle prices, says the report, was the increased cattle slaughter which took place in 1952 and 1953 as cattle numbers leveled off after soaring to new peaks. Prices of lower grade cattle dropped the most, during the autumn, in 1952 and again in 1953. How the percentage of the farm-to-market price spread increases as the price of beef decreases is shown by an example cited in the report. For beef at retail selling at 80 cents a pound with a 20-cent farm-to-retail price spread, the margin would be 25 percent of the price, but it would be 33 1/3 percent for beef selling at 60 cents a pound with the same 20-cent price spread. A copy of the full report is available on request to the Press Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

On Monday, January 4, Good and Choice slaughter steers and yearlings sold in Fort Worth at \$17.50 to \$21.00, very few to \$22.00. Commercial cows were scarce at \$12.00 and better, Utility mostly \$10.00 to \$11.50. Medium and Good stockers and feeders sold from \$13.00 to \$17.00.

The Fort Worth market reports Good and Choice killers sold mainly from \$16.00 to \$20.00. Medium and Good stocker steer calves turned \$13.00 to \$18.00.

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

Aggregate value of the principal Texas crops of 1953 is estimated by the USDA at \$1,253 million, or 3 percent less than in 1952. The total volume of crops produced in the state was fully 10 percent more than in 1952, but this increase was more than offset by lower prices for most crops.

The Texas Department of Agriculture reports that commercial broiler prices in Texas on Monday of this week averaged mostly 25 cents to 27 cents per pound. Meanwhile, placement of broiler chicks on Texas farms continues well above year-earlier levels.

The Index of Prices Received by Farmers in the US at mid-December was 252 percent (1910-14 = 100). This figure is 3 points above the November index and represents a reversal of the downward trend that has prevailed for about the past 2 years. Prices of most important commodities, except eggs and hogs, were lower on December 15 than a year earlier.

The USDA stated last week that while operations under the 1954 wool price support program do not begin until April, both shorn and pulled wool produced in the January-March period of 1954 will be eligible for support under the 1954 program.

Agricultural exports from the US in the July-October period of 1953 were valued 4 percent above those of a year earlier, although the October figure showed a 9 percent year-to-year loss.

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