



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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## PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1954

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has released a report on farmers' planting intentions this year. The report is based on farmers' plans as of March 1, and at that time their acreage plans were somewhat uncertain because they had not then received their farm allotments for corn and in many cases for cotton. Furthermore, the extent of abandonment of winter wheat acreage was not known, and this will affect materially the acreages of some crops planted.

However, on the basis of information available to them on March 1 and conditions as they then existed, farmers indicated that a relatively large total acreage of spring-planted crops is in prospect in the United States. For the 16 crops covered in this report (cotton not included) a total of 282 $\frac{1}{4}$  million acres is indicated, up 11 million from 1953. Acreages of most individual crops are expected to be higher except for a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -million acre decline in spring wheat and an 11% decline for Irish potatoes.

Farmers in the five states of this District - Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas - indicated that their acreage of oats for harvest this year will be almost 3.5 million acres, compared with 2.8 million in 1953. Each of the states except Arizona report substantial increases.

Farmers in District states plan a slight increase in corn acreage; increases in Louisiana and Texas will more than offset a decline in Oklahoma. Little change is indicated for Arizona and New Mexico.

Louisiana and Texas rice growers indicated on March 1 that they intended to plant 1,239,000 acres of rice, or about 5% more than in 1953.

Acreage of all hay in District states in 1954 is placed at 3,875,000 acres, compared with 3,739,000 harvested last year. Each of the states, except Arizona, indicate increases; Arizona reports no change.

The largest increase in crop acreage in District states will be in sorghums. Farmers indicated March 1 that they intended to plant 11.5 million acres, compared with 8.8 million in 1953. A large increase in sorghum acreage was expected because of the restrictions on acreage of cotton. Texas farmers plan an increase of 38% in sorghum acreage this year to bring the State's total to almost 9 million acres.

## C O T T O N

Spot cotton prices in the past week have fluctuated within narrow ranges. However, prices offered for loan equities declined slightly, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Prices quoted for loan equities ranged mostly from \$2 to \$5 per bale.

Through March 12, farmers had repaid CCC loans on about 417,000 bales of 1953-crop cotton, leaving 6.3 million bales under loan.

A Bureau of Census report on cotton ginnings for the 1953-54 season shows that upland cotton ginned in Texas amounted to 4,230,967 bales, and American-Egyptian cotton totaled 24,757 bales, which brings the season's total ginnings in the State to 4,255,724 bales. Total ginnings for the United States amounted to 16,324,248 bales, including 64,474 bales of American-Egyptian cotton.

## L I V E S T O C K

Livestock prices on the Fort Worth market held relatively steady last week. The only class to show weakness was shorn old-crop lambs, which suffered price declines of 50¢ to \$1, following several weeks of steadily rising prices.

On Monday of this week, Good and Choice beef steers and yearlings sold at \$18 to \$22, one lot \$22.50; Utility and Commercial, \$13 to \$17. A few Commercial cows brought \$12.50 to \$13.50, most Utility \$11 to \$11.50.

Medium and Good stocker and feeder steer yearlings turned from \$13 to \$19. Stocker cows sold mostly from \$11 to \$13.

Good and Choice slaughter calves drew \$17 to \$19.50; Utility and Commercial \$12 to \$16.

Choice 190- to 260-pound butcher hogs brought \$26.50 and \$26.75. Choice 160 to 185 pounds turned from \$25 to \$26.25.

Good and Choice spring lambs cashed at \$24 to \$25.50. Cull and Utility springers were reported from \$16 to \$23.50. Good and Choice shorn slaughter lambs sold from \$20 to \$21.50.

## P O U L T R Y

Commercial broiler prices are very weak and irregular. A Texas Department of Agriculture report covering Monday's sales in local markets shows broilers or fryers weighing 2½ to 3 pounds bring 20¢ to 23¢.

Production of chicks for farm flock replacements in Texas in February was 9% below a year earlier; broiler chicks hatched totaled about the same as a year ago, according to the AMS office in Austin.

The USDA says, in its report on The Poultry and Egg Situation, that with egg production in the U. S. in the next few months likely to be above 1953, prices are likely to continue below a year earlier. Nevertheless, farmers probably will raise more pullets for laying flock replacement than last year, because the present returns from egg production are favorable, particularly in comparison with many alternatives.

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

The USDA announced last week that the price support level for 1954-crop rice will be not less than \$4.92 per cwt. This is 90% of the rice parity price as of February 15. This minimum support will be revised upward if the August 1 parity price is higher. The national average support price for 1953-crop rice was \$4.84 per cwt.

The Department of Agriculture has also announced that 1954-crop corn will be supported at a national average of not less than \$1.62 per bushel. The rate will be revised upward later if necessary to reflect any increase in parity as of August 1. Support will be at 90% of parity in the commercial corn-producing areas and 75% of parity in other areas. Corn was supported last year at a national average of \$1.60 per bushel.

AMS reports that there were bids for mohair in Texas last week at 66½¢ for Adult and \$1.01½ for Kid, and that some sales were made at these prices.

A USDA report on exports of shelled peanuts from the United States last year places the total at slightly more than 23 million pounds. Of this total, France bought 15.1 million; Norway bought 4.7 million; Belgium and Luxembourg received 2.3 million; and the remainder was shipped in small quantities throughout the world.

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