



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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## C O T T O N

Spot cotton prices continue to hold near loan values. On Monday, April 19, Middling 15/16-inch cotton on the 10 spot markets averaged 34.08¢ per pound, which compares with the loan value, basis 10-market average, at 33.99¢.

There is still some movement of 1953-crop cotton under the CCC loan program. During the week ended April 9, loan entries totaled 8,600 bales. Total repayments for the season through that date were 738,100 bales, leaving loans outstanding on more than 6 million bales of 1953-crop cotton.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture describes the cotton picture in the Southwest last week as follows: Spot prices moved in a narrow channel; reported sales decreased; producer offerings of free cotton and equities were light; merchant demand was slow and selective; inquiries were not very numerous.

## L I V E S T O C K

Reports from the Fort Worth livestock market last week indicate that cattle trade was influenced by weather conditions. Recent rains over the Southwest caused a decline in market receipts which was accompanied by price advances of 50¢ to \$2. The sheep and lamb trade was characterized by its usual post-Easter dullness, while hog prices held firm at levels above those at Corn Belt markets.

On Monday, April 19, Good and Choice slaughter steers on the Fort Worth market drew \$20 to \$23, Utility and Commercial \$14 to \$18.50, and Cutter grade \$13 down, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Most Commercial cows drew \$13.50 to \$14. Stocker and feeder yearlings of Medium and Good grade brought \$16 to \$20.

Good and Choice slaughter calves drew \$19 to \$22, Utility and Commercial \$13 to \$18, Culls \$12 down. Medium and Good stocker steer calves moved from \$16 to \$20.

Choice 200- to 240-pound butcher hogs sold up to \$28.50, a new high since September 1948. A few lots of Choice 260 to 300 pounds cashed from \$27 to \$27.50. Choice 160 to 185 pounds ranged from \$26 to \$27.75.

Spring lambs sold steady to 50¢ higher Monday, while shorn slaughter lambs were up 50¢ to \$1. Good and Choice spring lambs cleared from \$23 to \$25.50. Good and Choice shorn slaughter lambs cashed from \$20 to \$22. Medium and Good shorn stocker and feeder lambs moved from \$15 to \$20.

The number of cattle on feed for market in the 11 Corn Belt states on April 1 was 1% less than a year earlier, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This fact, plus information available on several important states outside the Corn Belt, indicates that the number of cattle on feed April 1 for the country as a whole was down 2 to 3% from April 1, 1953, compared with a year-to-year decrease of 9% reported last January 1.

The Secretary of Agriculture announced last week that if favorable conditions with respect to foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico continue and no more outbreaks occur, he will declare Mexico free of the disease as of December 31, 1954. On that date the U. S.-Mexican border will be open to imports of livestock and livestock products.

## W O O L   A N D   M O H A I R

Spot 1954 original bag 12-months Texas wool, Average to Good French Combing length, sold last week at \$1.69 per pound, clean basis, while Good French Combing and staple wool sold for future delivery at around \$1.74, according to the USDA. Texas sales included also some Average to Short French Combing 12-months wool at 68¢, greasy basis.

Texas mohair sold last week mostly at 75¢ for Adult and \$1.65 for Kid mohair.

Wool prices are likely to continue relatively stable over the next few months at levels about the same as or slightly below a year earlier, says the USDA in its April issue of The Wool Situation. Prices for most fine and half-blood wools probably will remain above loan rates during the next few months, while those of 3/8 blood and lower wools are likely to continue at or slightly below.

## P O U L T R Y

The Texas Department of Agriculture reports that local broiler markets opened mostly steady last week but in some areas weakened as the week passed. On Monday, April 19, broilers or fryers weighing 2 1/2 to 3 pounds brought mostly 23¢ to 24¢ per pound.

Placement of broiler chicks on Texas farms continues to run above a year ago. Placements in the week ended April 10 totaled 1,531,000 chicks, up 6% from the corresponding week last year.

The final USDA report on poultry production last year shows that Texas farmers sold 65,264,000 broilers at an average price of 27.6¢ per pound, which brought a gross income of \$52,237,000. Production in 1952 totaled 60,994,000 broilers, which brought 28.9¢ per pound and a gross income of \$49,356,000.

Gross income from sale of broilers in other states of this District in 1953: Louisiana, \$9,167,000; Oklahoma, \$5,372,000; and Arizona, \$556,000.

Texas farmers last year sold 3,282,000 turkeys, which brought an average price of 30.2¢ per pound and a gross income of \$17,339,000; each of these figures is slightly below the comparable figure for 1952.

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

New crop Texas U. S. No. 1 A Irish potatoes sold in Dallas on Monday of this week at \$2.40 to \$2.60 per 50-pound sack, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Texas grown U. S. No. 1 B brought \$2.40 to \$2.50.

The USDA report on farm labor, issued last week, shows the following average farm wage rates in Texas as of April 1: Per day with house, \$5.10; per day without board or room, \$5.70; per hour with house, 61¢; per hour without board or room, 70¢. Although some rates differ from averages reported a year ago, the index of farm wage rates in Texas on April 1 was the same as a year earlier.

Wholesale and retail prices for milk and dairy products declined April 1, with the reduction in support levels for manufacturing milk and butterfat, reports the USDA. The lower retail price will result in some increase in consumption per person, and with the gain in population, total consumption this year should rise at least 2 billion pounds, whole milk equivalent. Although prices to farmers for milk will be well below average compared with feed concentrate prices, production of milk continues high and will likely reach a new record in 1954.

W. M. Pritchett  
Agricultural Economist