



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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## COTTON

Spot cotton prices have been moving up for the past 2 weeks. On Monday, April 26, Middling 15/16-inch cotton in the 10 spot markets averaged 34.44¢ per pound, which is a new high for the season and compares with a support rate, 10-market basis, of 33.99¢.

The advance in cotton prices is reflected also in prices being offered for loan equities. Prices in Texas last week ranged mostly from \$1 to \$5 per bale, with the bulk of trading in equities at \$2 to \$3 per bale.

Recent advances in cotton prices appear to be related to a number of factors, including some increase in export activity, the Indo-China situation, and uncertain crop prospects in parts of the Southwest.

Mill consumption of cotton per working day in March was the lowest for any March since 1949 and the second lowest March average since 1940. From the start of the cotton season, August 1, to April 3, domestic consumption of cotton totaled 5,951,000 bales. Mill consumption last season through March 28 totaled 6,284,000 bales.

## LIVESTOCK

Most classes of slaughter cattle gained 50¢ per cwt. on the Fort Worth market last week. Hog prices were steady to 50¢ above the previous week's close. Slaughter lamb prices lost around \$1, reflecting a weakening demand in Eastern markets. Prices of feeder lambs held steady.

On Monday of this week, Good and Choice slaughter steers and yearlings on the Fort Worth market drew \$20 to \$23, Utility and Commercial \$14 to \$18, Cutter grade \$13 down, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Commercial cows were scarce at \$13.50 to \$14. Stocker and feeder steers and yearlings of Medium and Good grade brought \$15 to \$20.

Good and Choice slaughter calves sold from \$19 to \$22, Utility and Commercial \$13 to \$18. Medium and Good stocker steer calves moved from \$15 to \$20.

Choice 190-260-pound hogs brought \$27.75 and \$28, reflecting a loss of 50¢ from last week. Choice 160-185 pounds cleared from \$26.50 to \$27.50.

Spring lambs and shorn slaughter lambs sold mostly \$1 lower than last week's close; feeder lambs were 50¢ to \$1 lower. Good and Choice spring lambs sold from \$20 to \$23. Good and Choice shorn slaughter lambs were reported from \$19 to \$20. Medium and Good shorn stocker and feeder lambs moved from \$12 to \$17.50.

## WOOL

The U. S. Department of Agriculture announced last week representative loan rates for shorn and pulled wool for the 1954 marketing year. The rates are based on the national average support price of 53.2¢ per pound of wool, grease basis, which is 1.1¢ higher than the minimum price announced on December 9, 1953.

While most loans will be made on grease wool, the prices quoted are on clean wool per pound, Boston basis.

For original bag and Texas wool, 64s and finer, 12-months, Good French Combing and Staple, the loan rate is \$1.67 per pound, 4¢ above the 1953 loan rate. For Average to Good French Combing, the loan rate is \$1.61 per pound, or 6¢ higher than last year.

Original bag, Good French Combing and Staple, 12-months Texas wools sold last week from \$1.70 to \$1.77 per pound, clean basis, according to the USDA.

Mohair sold in Texas last week at 77½¢ for Adult and \$1.65 for Kid mohair.

Average weekly domestic consumption of apparel wools, on a scoured basis, during February was 4.9 million pounds, which compares with 7.4 million pounds in February 1953.

#### POULTRY

Texas broiler markets held mostly steady last week, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Markets closed generally at 24¢ per pound for broilers or fryers weighing 2½ to 3 pounds.

With broiler prices holding at or below the "break-even" point for many broiler producers, the placement of broiler chicks on Texas farms has dropped below the year-ago level, after having shown year-to-year gains for several months. During the week ended April 17 there were 1,519,000 chicks placed on Texas farms, or 8% below placements in the corresponding week last year.

The number of chicks hatched in commercial hatcheries in Texas during March totaled 14,850,000, up 23% from a year earlier.

#### FARM INCOME

Cash receipts from farm marketings in the U. S. for the first quarter of 1954 totaled approximately \$6.6 billion, down 3% from last year, the USDA reports. The total volume of marketings was about the same as a year ago, but prices averaged slightly lower.

Cash receipts from farm marketings, by states, are reported for the first 2 months of 1954. For the five states of this District, the report shows Louisiana with almost \$50 million, up \$4 million; Oklahoma \$61 million, down \$3 million; Texas \$285 million, up \$15 million; New Mexico \$26 million, down \$2 million; and Arizona \$77 million, down \$32 million from the first 2 months of 1953. It should be emphasized, however, that farm income data for the first 2 months of the year do not necessarily indicate a trend, because variations in carry-over of crops for sale after January 1 can affect greatly the volume of sales in the early months of one year as compared with the previous year.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

The USDA announced last week that the rate of compensation payable to lending agencies which are financing Commodity Credit Corporation price support loans on grain and commodities similarly handled is being reduced, effective with the 1954 programs. This reduction is in line with the current trend in interest rates on short-term government and commercial borrowings, says the announcement. Lending agencies, mainly country banks, which finance and also service CCC price support loans on grain and commodities similarly handled, will receive an interest rate of 1 3/4% per annum for the use of their funds while invested, and a fee of ½% per annum for services. This will make an over-all rate of compensation to such lending agencies of 2¼% per year, as compared with 3% per year now in effect on 1953-crop loans.

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