



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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C O T T O N

Spot cotton prices declined slightly last week after having reached a new high for the season in the previous week. On Monday, May 24, Middling 15/16-inch cotton on the 10 spot markets averaged 34.30¢ per pound, compared with the peak of 34.54¢ 2 weeks ago. These prices may be compared with the support price for this grade and staple length, 10-market average basis, of 33.99¢.

There has been increased sales activity in major cotton markets during the past several weeks. The USDA reports that sales in the 10 markets last week totaled 104,100 bales, compared with 58,600 bales a year earlier. The larger volume of sales is due principally to an increased demand from foreign countries, says the Department. Export demand has been mostly for Strict Low Middling and better grades one inch and longer.

Consumption of cotton by domestic mills in the 4-week period ended May 1 was 660,000 bales, the lowest monthly volume in almost 4 years, according to the Bureau of the Census. During the August-April period this season, domestic mills consumed about 6.6 million bales, compared with 7.2 million in the corresponding period last season and 7.1 million 2 seasons ago.

L I V E S T O C K

The most noteworthy change in livestock prices on the Fort Worth market last week was in the sheep and lamb division. Reflecting the weakness in dressed lamb prices in Eastern markets, slaughter lambs declined \$1 to \$3 per cwt. Sheep prices lost about 50¢. Shorn fat lambs grading Good to Choice closed last week at \$17 to \$18.

Hog prices in Fort Worth climbed back to \$28 early last week but later lost ground and closed at about \$27, top price.

Receipts of cattle and calves at major markets increased last week. However, prices of better classes held steady or gained about 50¢. Good and Choice fed steers and yearlings brought \$20 to \$25, Common and Medium grades sold at \$13 to \$19. Good and Choice slaughter calves reported at \$18 to \$23.25. Demand for replacement cattle was strong and Good and Choice stocker steer calves sold from \$18 to \$22.

Medium and Good slaughter goats sold on the San Antonio market last week at \$6.50 to \$7.50, with Cull and Common at \$5 to \$6. Good 45-pound slaughter kids sold up to \$5 per head, while the bulk ranged from \$3.75 to \$4.75 per head.

Prospects for 1954 feed crops are generally favorable, says the USDA. Larger acreages of oats, barley, and sorghum grains than in 1953 are in prospect. Moreover, stocks of feed grains on hand are considerably larger than a year ago.

P O U L T R Y

Texas broiler markets opened firm, grew steady, and closed steady to quiet last week, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Closing prices were 1¢ to 2¢ above a week earlier. The farm price in most areas was 24¢ to 25¢ for broilers or fryers weighing 2½ to 3 pounds. A Corsicana processing plant paid 26¢, delivered to plant.

Placement of broiler chicks on Texas farms continues under the depressing influence of comparatively low broiler prices. The AMS office in Austin reports that in the week ended May 15 there were 1,373,000 broiler chicks placed on Texas farms, which is 9% less than in the corresponding week a year ago.

Turkey production in 1954 is certain to exceed the 1953 output, says the USDA in its report on The Poultry and Egg Situation, and may equal or even surpass the 1952 record crop of 43 million heavy breed turkeys and 18 million of the light breeds.

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

In its analysis of the general economic situation as it relates to the demand for farm commodities, the USDA says that domestic demand for food was strong in the first quarter of 1954 despite some decline in economic activity. Consumer incomes after taxes were maintained at record levels, and consumers spent about 26% of their income for food, the same percentage as in 1953. The recent improvement in business conditions suggests that the demand for food will not change much in the second quarter.

Foreign takings of U.S. farm products in the current marketing year have totaled about the same as in the corresponding period a year earlier, with gains for tobacco and fats and oils but smaller exports of wheat. Exports of cotton currently are running larger than a year earlier and are expected to total well above the 3 million bales exported in the 1952-53 marketing year.

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