



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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C O T T O N

Spot cotton prices have fluctuated within a narrow range during the past week. The market appears to have anticipated the October cotton production estimate and showed little reaction to the announcement. On Tuesday, October 13, Middling 15/16-inch cotton in the leading spot markets averaged 34.42¢ per pound, or about the same as a week earlier.

The October 1 report on cotton production, released last week by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, places the U. S. crop at 12,511,000 bales, which reflects an increase of 679,000 bales over the September estimate. All sections of the cotton belt contributed to this increase, with Texas, Oklahoma, the Central states, and Georgia accounting for most of it. The current estimate of the 1954 crop compares with 16,465,000 bales harvested last year and the 1943-52 average of 12,448,000 bales.

The indicated yield per acre in the United States is 311 pounds on the estimated 19,285,000 acres to be harvested this year. The indicated yield per acre compares favorably with the record-high yield of 324 pounds harvested last year.

Each of the states in the Eleventh Federal Reserve District, except Arizona, reported increases in cotton production prospects on October 1, as compared with a month earlier; the Arizona figure was unchanged. Here are the October production estimates and changes from September figures, (all figures in bales): Louisiana 530,000, up 35,000; Oklahoma 260,000, up 30,000; Texas 3,575,000, up 200,000; New Mexico 255,000, up 20,000; and Arizona 730,000.

The USDA reports that in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Coastal Bend, and other extreme southern counties of Texas, cotton generally matured ahead of the drought, and record or near-record high yields per acre were obtained. In northern Louisiana, southeastern Oklahoma, northeast Texas, the Blacklands, and the Low Rolling Plains, yields were reduced sharply by continued hot, dry weather.

In most areas, farmers are offering their cotton freely for sale in the market. CCC loan entries have remained small in relation to the volume of ginnings. Net loan entries reported in the week ended October 1 totaled 48,400 bales; this brought total entries for the 1954 crop to 208,500 bales.

Cottonseed prices continued last week to move downward slowly. Prices paid to producers at the gins in Texas averaged \$58.60 per ton, down 50¢ from the previous week but still more than \$6 above a year earlier.

L I V E S T O C K

Recent rains over much of the Southwest have helped to bring out grass. This has brought some relief from the short feed situation which had been forcing many cattle to market. The general improvement caused a slackening in livestock marketing in the Southwest and a resulting increase in prices of many classes. Some slaughter classes of cattle gained as much as \$2 per cwt., while similar gains were reported for stockers and feeders. Slaughter lamb prices were strong to 50¢ higher, and feeder lambs and slaughter ewes gained 50¢. Hog prices, on the other hand, eased further, reaching the lowest point of the year.

On Monday, October 11, prices of livestock held about steady with last week's closing prices, according to reports of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Commercial and Good beef steers and yearlings cleared from \$15 to \$22, Choice to \$23; Canner and Cutter cows, \$6 to \$9.50; Medium and Good stocker and feeder steers,

\$13 to \$19; Good and Choice slaughter calves, \$15 to \$20; Utility and Commercial, \$10 to \$14.50; Medium and Good stocker steer calves, \$14 to \$19; Choice 190- to 240-pound butcher hogs, \$19.75 and \$20; Good and Choice slaughter lambs, \$17 to \$18.50; Medium and Good stocker and feeder lambs, \$11 to \$16.25.

Figures on livestock slaughter in the U. S., excluding farm slaughter, for the first 8 months of 1954 show that beef production in the January-August period this year was 8% above a year earlier. Veal production was up 12% and mutton and lamb production was up 4% but pork production was down 6%.

W O O L A N D M O H A I R

The USDA reports that some fall wool was sold in Texas last week at $51\frac{1}{2}\phi$ to 59ϕ , in the grease, F.O.B. This wool was estimated to cost from \$1.38 to \$1.40 per pound, clean basis, delivered to Boston. Eight-months wool was sold at $57\frac{1}{2}\phi$ to 60ϕ , in the grease, or an estimated \$1.50 to \$1.53, delivered. Some 12-months wools were sold at \$1.60 to \$1.65 per pound, clean basis.

Sales of mohair in Texas last week included a car at $66\frac{1}{2}\phi$ for Adult and $\$1.01\frac{1}{2}\phi$ for Kid mohair. Another car was purchased at 63ϕ and 98ϕ , respectively.

P O U L T R Y A N D E G G S

Reports of the Texas Department of Agriculture show that broiler markets in the State last week were very weak. Offerings were generally heavy, and prices were mostly 20ϕ to 21ϕ per pound for birds weighing $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 pounds. A year ago, broiler growers in the State were receiving 29ϕ per pound.

The relatively low prices now being received by farmers for broilers result primarily from overproduction. For many months the placement of broiler chicks on farms has been running well ahead of a year ago. In the week ended October 2, for example, there were 1,370,000 chicks placed on Texas farms, which is 15% above placements in the corresponding week a year ago.

There are few, if any, broiler growers who can produce broilers at a profit under present price conditions. A U. S. Department of Agriculture official had this situation in mind last week when he advised broiler growers to "take a vacation." He said that it would probably cost a farmer less money to take a vacation than to raise another batch of broilers right now.

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

The mid-September Index of Prices Received by Texas Farmers and Ranchers, as prepared by Agricultural Marketing Service, was 262 (1910-14 = 100), down 8 points from mid-August and the same as in September a year ago. Prices for most items declined from August to September; small grains, hay, and wholesale milk were the principle exceptions.

Recent rains over the principle peanut growing sections of the Southwest are said to have been too late to benefit the peanut crop, except in those fields which had sufficient moisture throughout the growing season to maintain the crop in fair condition. Price of farmers' stock peanuts in the week ended October 6 ranged mostly between \$247 and \$267 per ton.

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