



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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COTTON

Spot cotton prices are holding about steady as trade activity slackens prior to the holiday period. The USDA reported that domestic mill buying last week was less active than in previous weeks and that sales for export decreased in volume.

The movement of cotton into the CCC loan program has continued at a rapid pace. Entries in the week ended December 10 totaled 156,500 bales, which is off from the season's weekly high of 201,400 bales in the preceding week but is one of the highest weekly totals thus far this season. Loan entries through December 10 this season totaled 1,521,800 bales.

Agricultural Marketing Service reports that mechanical harvesting of cotton on the Texas High Plains made good progress until interrupted about a week ago by severe cold weather. A light snow fell in west Texas and Oklahoma, and fairly good rains were reported in other sections.

Preliminary returns show quotas approved by 92% of the 340,808 cotton growers voting in the Upland referendum and by 92.7% of the 1,186 growers voting on extra-long staple quotas for 1955. In the last referendum on cotton quotas the comparable percentages of growers favoring quotas were 94% and 89.3%, respectively.

Cottonseed prices in wagon lots at the gins in Texas last week averaged \$58.30 per ton, compared with \$58.50 per ton the previous week, according to AMS. In Oklahoma, the average gin yard price was \$57.60 per ton, which was about \$1.10 per ton higher than in the previous week.

GRAINS

The U. S. Department of Agriculture in its first statistical review of winter wheat crop prospects says that conditions as of December 1 indicate a 1955 crop 14% smaller than that harvested this year. The crop is indicated at 679.1 million bushels, compared with 790.7 million bushels in 1954. The estimate of the 1955 crop is about one-fourth less than the crop harvested in 1953, the last year in which wheat was grown free of government controls.

The decline in wheat production in the current crop is due chiefly to government acreage controls but also to weather and other causes. Land planted to winter wheat for the current crop is estimated at 43.4 million acres, about 6% less than in 1954. However, the Department says that about one-sixth of the seeded winter wheat acreage will not be harvested for grain. Some of the acreage will be taken out of wheat to comply with acreage allotments, some has been destroyed by weather and disease, and some will be used for pasture.

Average yield per seeded acre of winter wheat in the U. S. is indicated at 15.6 bushels, down 1.6 bushels from the previous crop and slightly below average.

The Department of Agriculture points out in its report that its current forecast of winter wheat production is based on the assumption that weather conditions for the rest of the crop season will be normal. However, unfavorable weather conditions between now and harvest time next spring may reduce production from the current forecast.

The Department reports that some of the land taken out of wheat this year was planted to rye. U. S. rye plantings totaled 5,052,000 acres, one-fourth more than the 1954 total and the largest in more than a decade. Rye acreage in 1954 was well above that of 1953, and the 1955 acreage estimate exceeds that of 1953 by more than 50%.

Winter wheat production this season in Texas is indicated at 21,540,000 bushels, which compares with more than 30 million bushels harvested last season and is less than half the average of the previous 10 years.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture announced last week that 1955 crops of oats, barley, rye, and grain sorghums will be supported at 70% of parity. The national averages for 1955, with comparable 1954 average support rates in parentheses: oats, 61¢ per bushel (75¢); barley, 94¢ per bushel (\$1.15); rye, \$1.18 per bushel (\$1.43); and grain sorghums, \$1.78 per cwt. (\$2.28).

F A R M I N C O M E

U. S. farmers received about \$27.2 billion from marketings in the first 11 months of this year, 4% less than in the same period in 1953, the USDA reports in the December issue of The Farm Income Situation. Prices of all farm products averaged 3% lower than last year. Cash receipts from livestock and livestock products were about \$15.3 billion, or 3% below a year ago. Crop receipts in the 11-month period totaled approximately \$11.9 billion, 6% below the corresponding period in 1953; substantial declines occurred in receipts from cotton, wheat, and truck crops.

Figures on cash receipts from farm marketings by individual states are available through October. Totals for the five states of this Federal Reserve District and percentage changes from a year earlier are as follows: Arizona, \$241 million, -12%; Louisiana, \$265 million, -6%; New Mexico, \$232 million, about unchanged; Oklahoma, \$463 million, -2%; and Texas, \$1,438 million, +1%.

For the five states as a group, cash receipts from farm marketings in the first 10 months of 1954 were only 2% below those of the corresponding months of 1953, despite the drought and acreage control programs. Recent upward revisions in estimates of cotton production in District states and relatively heavy marketings of livestock in November and December suggest that cash receipts from farm marketings in the states of this District for 1954 as a whole may not differ significantly from those of 1953.

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

The Governor of Texas has proclaimed January 21 as "Arbor Day" in the State. Observance of this day is scheduled for the purpose of calling to the attention of the public the importance of forestry to the economy of the State and to encourage the planting of trees for the growth of forest products, as well as for landscaping. Many farmers in the State find tree farming a profitable enterprise, and farm management specialists encourage greater use of this means of supplementing the farm family income.

A study of farm employment reported by the USDA shows that the average length of farm work day for hired workers in Texas on December 1 was 8.6 hours, which is the same as a year earlier. There has been some tendency in the past few years for the average length of farm work day for hired workers to be shortened, but there has been little net change during the past year.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR