



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS

Number 274

Wednesday, March 30, 1955

## L I V E S T O C K

Lamb prices at Fort Worth during the week ended Friday, March 25, were the highest since last spring, reflecting the increased consumer demand for lamb at the Easter season. Milk-fat lambs brought \$26 per cwt. - \$2 higher than a week earlier - as local packers and order buyers for the eastern seaboard and other parts of the country bid for the available supplies. Cattle and calf receipts at Fort Worth were smaller than a week earlier as a result of storms and rains throughout the Southwest. Prices were \$1 or more per cwt. higher than those received during the previous week. Hog supplies also were lower than a week earlier; the week's top price for butcher hogs was \$18 per cwt.

Receipts of cattle and calves at Fort Worth on Monday, March 28, were estimated to be more than twice as large as the small supply on Monday of last week and were 21% above those on the comparable date a year ago, according to the Agricultural Marketing Service. Most of the cattle receipts were yearlings. Good and Choice beef steers sold at \$19 to \$23.50 per cwt., with Utility and Commercial grades bringing \$13 to \$18. Prices for most beef cows ranged from \$12 to \$13. Medium and Good stocker and feeder cattle were \$15 to \$21 per cwt., with a few Choice yearlings quoted at \$21.50 to \$22. Practically all classes and grades of calves brought steady prices. Good and Choice slaughter calves ranged from \$18 to \$21, and Medium and Good stocker and feeder steer calves were \$15 to \$21. Receipts of hogs at Fort Worth on Monday were 200 head more than on the same day a week earlier. Trading was active, with butcher hogs selling at 50¢ to 75¢ per cwt. higher than on Friday of last week. Choice 190- to 240-lb. butcher hogs brought \$18 and \$18.25. Sheep and lamb supplies were the largest since May 1950. Trading was slow and uneven, with Good and Choice spring lambs quoted at \$23.50 to \$25.

## P O U L T R Y

During the week ended Friday, March 25, price peaks were reached in Texas broiler markets which were the highest since the latter part of 1952, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Closing prices for the week, at mostly 2¢ per lb. higher than the previous week's close, were: South Texas, 31¢; east Texas, 32¢; Waco, 32¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 33¢ per lb.

Trading in Texas broiler markets was moderate to normal on Monday, March 28, with the following prices received: South Texas, 31¢ to 32¢ per lb.; east Texas and Waco, 32¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 33¢.

Broiler chick placements on Texas farms totaled 1,527,000 during the week ended March 19, according to the AMS. This is 2% above placements in the previous week but 10% below those during the corresponding week a year earlier.

Output from Texas commercial hatcheries in February was 20% lower than during the same month a year earlier, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The total number of chicks hatched was estimated at 8,250,000, compared with 10,300,000 during the comparable month a year ago and the 1943-52 February average of 8,919,000 chicks.

## W O O L   A N D   M O H A I R

Several cars of spot 12-month wool were sold in Texas at clean prices ranging from \$1.50 to \$1.58 per lb. during the week ended Friday, March 25, according to the AMS. About 8 to 10 cars of Texas mohair were sold during the week at

top prices of 66.5¢ per lb. for adult and \$1.06½ for kid mohair. Shearing of goats in the State was delayed by cold, stormy weather.

Secretary of Agriculture Benson announced on March 18 that he had entered into an agreement with the American Sheep Producers Council providing for advertising, promotional, and related market development activities under the 1954 National Wool Act. The agreement is subject to approval of sheep and wool producers voting in a referendum to be held this summer, and in order for it to become effective, a favorable vote is required from producers who account for at least two-thirds of the number of sheep or production of wool. Payments not to exceed 1¢ per lb. of wool would be provided for use in the promotional activities designed to enlarge or improve the market for domestically produced wool and lambs. These payments would be deducted from any incentive payments growers would receive from the wool they marketed.

#### C O T T O N

Trading in southwestern cotton markets continued slow, and prices remained fairly steady throughout the week ended Friday, March 25. According to reports, producers are placing a moderate volume of cotton under loan.

Cold weather delayed cotton planting in south-central Texas counties during the week. In the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the Coastal Bend of Texas, a large acreage of cotton is up to a stand. Preliminary reports indicate that some young cotton in the upper coastal area of Texas was damaged by the freeze during the past week end.

Middling 15/16" staple on the Dallas market on Monday, March 28, was 32.65¢ per lb. - an average of 10 points below a week earlier and 1.45¢ per lb. lower than on the comparable date in 1954.

Cotton ginned in Oklahoma and Texas during the 1954-55 season averaged higher in grade but shorter in staple length than that ginned in the previous season, according to the USDA.

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

On March 16, the USDA reduced price supports for 1955-crop soybeans, flaxseed, and cottonseed in order to discourage excessive production of these crops. This year's crop of soybeans will be supported at 70% of parity, or a national average of \$2.04 per bu., compared with 80% of parity, or \$2.22 per bu., in 1954. Flaxseed and cottonseed will be supported at 65% of parity, compared with 70% during the past year. The national average support price for flaxseed will be \$2.91 per bu. compared with \$3.14 per bu. in 1954, and that for cottonseed, \$46 per ton compared with \$54 per ton for the previous year's crop. As in the past, price supports on soybeans and cottonseed will be through loans and purchase agreements. In the case of cottonseed, the price support program will be through loans on farm-stored cottonseed and purchases from producers and participating processors. Loans on farm-stored cottonseed will average \$46 per ton; the purchase price for cottonseed bought from producers will average \$42 per ton.

The USDA announced on March 11 that the national average support price for 1955-crop dry edible beans will be \$6.36 per cwt. - 70% of the February 15 parity price of \$9.08 per cwt.

J. Z. Rowe  
Agricultural Economist