COTTON

Details of the loan program for 1955-crop upland and extra-long staple cotton recently have been announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Middling 7/8" upland cotton will be supported at a minimum price of 31.7¢ per lb. In Texas and New Mexico, the support price for American-Egyptian cotton, basis Grade 1, 1 3/8" staple length, is 55.4¢ per lb., net weight.

Cotton crop prospects are very promising in most sections of Texas, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. Moisture generally is adequate, except in parts of south and west Texas. Rain is needed in the dry-land areas of the Lower Valley and the Coastal Bend; irrigated cotton in New Mexico and Arizona has been retarded by cool weather.

Spot cotton prices were slightly lower in the Southwest during the week ended Friday, June 3, than during the preceding week. On Monday of this week, Middling 15/16" staple was quoted in the Dallas market at 33.05¢ per lb. - the lowest in a month.

WHEAT PRICE SUPPORT RATES

The minimum price support rate for 1955-crop No. 2 Hard Red winter wheat at Galveston, Texas, has been set at $2.50 per bu. (with storage paid), compared with $2.55 per bu. last year, according to the USDA. Premiums and discounts are used to determine the support price for individual lots of wheat which vary in grade and quality from the wheat for which the minimum support price was announced.

Officials of the USDA have stated that a schedule of discounts for varieties of wheat which are undesirable for milling and baking purposes is being considered for the 1956 wheat price support program. If a practical schedule can be developed, an announcement will be made in advance of wheat seeding this fall.

LIVESTOCK

Receipts of cattle and calves at Fort Worth on Monday, June 6, are estimated at 6,100, compared with 6,973 a week earlier and 6,658 on the corresponding day last year, reports the AMS. Trading was fairly active, and prices generally were steady with last week's close. Yearling steers and heifers comprised the major part of the cattle supplies. Good and Choice slaughter steers and heifers were quoted at $18 to $21.50. The small supply of Commercial cows sold mostly at $13 to $13.50.

Good stocker steer yearlings cleared at $18 to $21, and Medium and Good stocker heifers were $13 to $17. Most slaughter calves brought $2, with a few quoted at $20, 50 and $21; Good stocker steer calves sold at $18 to $21. Monday's hog supplies were about 200 more than a week earlier. Choice 1 and 2 Grade 190- to 210-lb. butcher hogs were mostly $19.50, or the highest price since last December. Sheep receipts, estimated at slightly over 10,000, were about 1,000 above the previous Monday's supplies but were approximately 7,000 below a year ago. Shorn lambs and yearlings accounted for about 60% of the offerings, and prices for these classes were generally 50¢ to $1 per cwt. higher than in the preceding week. Good and Choice 75- to 95-lb. slaughter spring lambs were quoted at $22 to $23, and Good and Choice 85- to 100-lb. shorn slaughter lambs and yearlings were $15.50 to $17.

Commercial red meat production in the United States in April is estimated at 1,936,000,000 lbs. - 11% less than a month earlier but 6% more than a year ago, according to the USDA. Production of beef, pork, mutton, and lamb was above that in April 1954, but the output of veal was less.
In Texas, commercial meat production during April is estimated at 98,797,000 lbs., or 16% more than in the same month last year. There was an increase in the number of all types of meat animals slaughtered as compared with a year earlier.

POULTRY

On Monday, June 6, the south Texas broiler market was unsettled, with supplies irregular for a fair demand. In east Texas and the Waco-Corsicana area, broiler markets were steady, with supplies adequate to plentiful. Monday's prices were as follows: South Texas, 27¢ to 29¢; east Texas, 26¢ to 27¢, mostly 27¢; Waco, 27¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 28¢ per lb.

Placements of broiler chicks on Texas farms totaled 1,760,000 during the week ended May 28, according to the AMS. This is 4% below the 1,831,000 chicks placed in the previous week but 31% above those in the comparable week a year ago.

FARM PRICES

The index of prices received by U.S. farmers in mid-May was 1% below that of a month earlier and 4% below a year ago, reports the USDA. The index of prices paid by farmers also declined 1% from mid-April. As a result, the parity ratio remained unchanged at 87 but was 3% below a year earlier.

The index of prices received by Texas farmers and ranchers on May 15, 1955, was 260% of the 1910-14 average - down 7 points from the previous month and 12 points less than a year ago, according to the AMS. Lower prices for livestock and livestock products accounted for the decline from a month earlier, since there was no change in the index of prices received for all crops.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sales of surplus agricultural commodities abroad for foreign currencies totaled $289,500,000 as of May 24. The major part of the sales have been wheat, cotton, and tobacco; smaller amounts of feed grains, rice, dairy products, and vegetable oils have been exported.

Consumer income (after taxes) has increased to record levels since last fall and is expected to rise further, reports the USDA. Consumers continue to spend a fourth of their income for food; with higher incomes, retail food sales in the first quarter of this year were about 6% above those in January-March 1954. Because of larger supplies, food prices during the same period were a little lower than a year earlier and grower prices in January-April of this year averaged 5% below those in the same months in 1954.

The President recently signed a bill repealing the provision in the Agricultural Act of 1954 which requires farmers to comply with acreage allotments on all basic crops in order to receive cost-sharing benefits for approved conservation practices.

According to a recent announcement, the USDA expects to acquire about 10,000,000 bu. of flaxseed when 1954-crop loan and purchase agreement stocks are taken over under the price support program. This compares with about 17,000,000 bu. acquired from the 1953 crop. The take-over period for 1954-crop flaxseed stocks under price support began May 1, 1955.

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