



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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FARM PRICES DECLINE

The index of prices received by the Nation's farmers on August 15 was 233% of the 1910-14 average, or 2% (4 points) lower than a month earlier and 6% below that on August 15, 1954, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. Lower prices for hogs, peaches, beef cattle, tomatoes, corn, and wheat were the principal factors accounting for the decline during the month and were offset only partially by higher prices for eggs, milk, cotton, and strawberries. The livestock and livestock products index held steady at 237, while the crop index declined 4% to 228.

The parity index was 279 on August 15, reflecting a decrease of 1% (2 points) from both a month earlier and a year ago. Prices paid for living expenses and production items declined, with food, feed, and feeder livestock showing the largest decreases.

As a result of offsetting declines in both prices received for farm products and prices paid by farmers for goods and services, the parity ratio on August 15 remained unchanged at 84 but was 5 points lower than on the comparable date in 1954.

In Texas the August 15 index of prices received by farmers and ranchers was 257% of the 1910-14 average - unchanged from a month earlier but 13 points lower than at mid-August last year. Declines in the prices of most crops and a few livestock items were offset by increases in cotton, peanut, cattle, poultry, and egg prices. The livestock and livestock products index was 268%, or 2 points higher than at mid-July but 6 points lower than a year ago. The crop index, at 249%, was 2 points lower than in the previous month and 17 points below that at mid-August in 1954.

CCC INTEREST RATE INCREASED

On August 29 the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced an increase of 1/2 of 1% per annum in the rate of interest payable to lending agencies which are financing CCC price support loans. Lending agencies - principally country banks - which have funds invested in CCC commodity loans or in certificates of interest evidencing loans on 1955-crop cotton as of September 1, 1955, or which invest funds in such loans or certificates on 1955-crop cotton after that date will receive 2 1/4% per annum, as compared with 1 3/4% per annum for 1954-crop loans. No change was made in the service fees paid to lending agencies. The rate of interest charged to farmers remains at the present rate of 3 1/2% per annum.

WORLD MEAT TRADE

A sharp increase in the quantity of meat moving from exporting countries was the dominant feature of the international meat trade in 1954, reports the Foreign Agricultural Service. Over 5,000,000,000 lbs. of meat (carcass weight) were exported from the 44 countries for which data are available, compared with 4,600,000,000 lbs. in 1953 and 4,100,000,000 lbs. in 1952. During 1954 the largest exporting countries (in order of size of meat exports) were Denmark, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia, Uruguay, the Netherlands, Ireland, France, Canada, the United States, and Poland.

As usual, the United Kingdom imported the largest amount of meat during 1954, accounting for almost 70% of the total imports of the 44 countries. The United States was the second largest meat importer, obtaining 412,000,000 lbs. from foreign sources. Russia was third, with imports of 185,000,000 lbs., followed by West Germany, France, Sweden, Belgium, and Italy.

L I V E S T O C K

Cattle supplies at Fort Worth for the week ended Thursday, September 1, are estimated at 13,350, or about 4% more than in the previous week but 27% fewer than during the corresponding period last year, reports the AMS. Prices of most classes were unevenly steady to 50¢ per cwt. lower than a week earlier. Good beef steers brought \$18.50 to \$20.50; Commercial cows, \$10.75 to \$11.50; and Medium and Good stocker steer yearlings, \$14 to \$18.50.

Marketings of calves - placed at 3,100 - were about 9% smaller than in the previous week and were only about one-half as large as those for the same week in 1954. Prices were 50¢ to \$1 per cwt. lower than a week earlier, with Commercial and Good slaughter calves selling at \$13 to \$17 and Medium and Good stocker and feeder steer calves bringing \$14 to \$18.

Hog receipts are estimated at 2,600, or about 200 fewer than a week earlier but 900 more than in the comparable week last year. Trading was active, as small slaughterers competed with packers for the offerings. Prices of butcher hogs were 50¢ to 75¢ per cwt. higher than on the previous Friday's market, while those for sows were steady. Mixed U. S. No. 1 to No. 3 Grades of 190- to 250-lb. butcher hogs brought \$16.50 to \$17.25.

Supplies of sheep and lambs amounted to 5,800, or 1,900 more than the preceding week's small receipts but 1,050 fewer than a year ago. Spring lambs and old ewes comprised approximately 90% of the marketings; Choice slaughter lambs were scarce. Trading was active, and demand was good for all slaughter classes. Prices for slaughter spring lambs were strong to mostly 50¢ per cwt. higher than in the latter part of the previous week, while those for other slaughter classes and feeders generally were steady. Good and Choice 75- to 90-lb. slaughter spring lambs were quoted at \$18.50 to \$19.50 per cwt.

The Fort Worth stockyards were closed for trading on Monday, September 5.

P O U L T R Y

The principal Texas broiler markets remained generally steady during the week ended Friday, September 2, reports the Texas Department of Agriculture. Trading was normal to heavy; and closing prices, at 27¢ per lb., were unchanged in all areas except the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, which showed a decline of 1¢ from a week earlier. During the corresponding week in 1954, closing prices were 24¢ per lb. in all areas. On Monday of this week, Texas broiler markets were closed for the Labor Day holiday.

During the week ended August 27, broiler chick placements on Texas farms totaled 1,595,000, according to the AMS. This is 4% below placements in the previous week but 27% above those for the corresponding period in 1954.

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