FARM PRICES LOWER

The index of prices received by the Nation's farmers declined 2% during the month ended October 15, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The mid-October index is 230% of the 1910-14 average, or 5% below a year earlier. Lower prices received by farmers for hogs, cotton, corn, apples, and cattle were primarily responsible for the decrease; higher prices for wholesale milk, tomatoes, tobacco, strawberries, and wheat were only partially offsetting. Both the all-crop index and the livestock and livestock products index were below a month earlier and a year ago, with the crop index showing the sharpest decline.

The mid-October parity index (which reflects prices paid for commodities, plus interest, taxes, and wage rates) is 280, or 1 point higher than both the revised index for September and the index for October 1954. Higher prices for consumer goods and a larger than usual rise in farm wage rates accounted for the increase.

As a result of lower farm product prices and a higher parity index, the parity ratio declined 2% during the month ended October 15. The index is placed at 82, which is 6% below a year earlier and the lowest ratio since November 1940.

GRAIN STOCKS

Total stocks of wheat in the United States are estimated, as of October 1, at an all-time high of 1,740 million bu., or nearly 4% greater than the previous record holdings a year earlier, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. The wheat stocks are nearly double the 1955 production, as a result of the peak carry-over of old-crop wheat on July 1 this year. National stocks of each of the four major feed grains - corn, oats, barley, and grain sorghums - also were at all-time high levels on October 1, reflecting record carry-overs of old-crop corn, oats, and sorghum grain, the 1955 peak production of oats, and the near-record barley crop.

In Texas, stocks of wheat are placed at 124,473,000 bu., or only 2% below the record holdings for that date reached in 1954. Stocks of the major feed grains in all storage positions in the State are estimated at 69,561,000 bu., compared with 47,994,000 bu. on October 1 last year.

LIVESTOCK

Receipts of cattle at Fort Worth on Monday, October 31, are estimated at 4,800, compared with 6,179 a week earlier and 6,152 on the corresponding day last year, according to the AMS. Trading was slow, and prices were weak to 50¢ per cwt. lower than in the previous week. Choice beef steers brought $19.50 to $21.50; Commercial and Good heifers, $13 to $17; most Utility cows, $9.50 to $10.50; and Good stocker steers, $15.50 to $18 per cwt.

The calf supply totaled only 1,100, or about 37% below the previous Monday and only one-half as large as on the comparable day in 1954. Trading was very slow, with both slaughter and stocker offerings unevenly weak to 50¢ below last week's low prices. Commercial and Good slaughter calves sold at $12 to $15.50, and Good stocker steer calves brought $16 to $18.
Monday's hog marketings are estimated at 800, or 137 fewer than a week earlier but 290 more than at the same time last year. Early sales of butcher hogs were 50¢ per cwt. higher than on last Friday's market, while later sales were steady to 25¢ lower. Prices for sows were steady with those in the latter part of last week. Early sales of U. S. No. 1 and No. 2 Grades of 200- to 230-lb. slaughter hogs brought $15.25, while later sales of most lots of No. 1 to No. 3 Grades of 200- to 250-lb. butchers cleared at $11.50.

Sheep and lamb receipts totaled 2,500, or about 450 more than a week earlier but slightly below a year ago. Prices of slaughter and feeder lambs were weak to 50¢ lower than in the preceding week, while those for slaughter ewes were strong to 50¢ higher. Good and Choice wooled slaughter lambs sold at $17 to $17.50.

POULTRY

During the week ended Friday, October 28, the principal Texas broiler markets generally were weak. Trading was moderate in south Texas, moderate to heavy in east Texas, and normal in the Waco-Corsicana area. Closing prices were mostly 2¢ to 3.5¢ per lb. lower than in the previous week, with the following prices quoted: South and east Texas, 19¢ to 20¢, mostly 19¢; Waco, 19¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 20¢. During the corresponding week in 1954, closing prices were 20¢ per lb. in all areas.

On Monday of this week, broiler markets were firm in south Texas, unsettled in east Texas, and steady to firm in the Waco-Corsicana area. Trading was moderate to normal, with the following prices quoted: South Texas, 20¢ to 22¢ per lb.; east Texas and Waco, 19¢ to 21¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 20¢.

According to the AMS, broiler chick placements on Texas farms were 1,705,000 during the week ended October 22. This is about the same as placements in the preceding week and 22% above those for the corresponding period in 1954.

RICE EXPORTS DECLINE

U. S. rice exports in the August 1954 to July 1955 marketing season were 9,618,000 bags (in terms of milled rice), reflecting a decline of 37% from the preceding season, reports the Foreign Agricultural Service. The decrease is primarily the result of a sharp reduction in the volume of rice sent to Japan and Cuba - the principal importers of U. S. rice. Declines also were reported in exports to Korea, Canada, Venezuela, Colombia, and the Netherlands West Indies.

CCC PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAM

The investment of the Commodity Credit Corporation in price support commodities as of August 31, 1955, totaled $7,116,855,000, according to the USDA. Of this amount, loans outstanding were $1,337,113,000 and the cost of inventories was $5,779,712,000. On the comparable date last year, the CCC investment was $6,153,291,000, of which loans outstanding amounted to $2,208,522,000 and inventories were $3,944,769,000.

PEANUT SUPPLIES

Supplies of peanuts in the Nation on September 30 totaled 353 million lbs. of equivalent farmers' stock peanuts (uncleaned and unshelled), compared with 320 million lbs. on the corresponding date in 1954, reports the AMS. This is the second highest September 30 supply of peanuts since comparable records were started in 1938, being exceeded only by the supply of 361 million lbs. on September 30, 1953.

J. Z. Rowe
Agricultural Economist