FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

On December 14, the Secretary of Agriculture announced that Government-owned wheat, corn, rice, and dry beans would be made available immediately to U. S. charitable agencies for foreign relief purposes and also to eligible domestic outlets. The Secretary stated that, "These donations will continue to be made in a manner to be of maximum assistance to the hungry people of the world, to persons who need them and would not otherwise get them or get enough of them. The distribution will continue to be made through the U. S. welfare agencies, 18 of which are currently distributing food in 67 countries abroad. The foods will continue to be distributed overseas with full recognition of their American origin, identified as 'gifts of the people of the United States'."

The action adds wheat and corn to the commodities being made available to nonprofit school lunch programs and such other eligible outlets in this country as welfare agencies. Rice and dry beans already are being distributed to these outlets.

FEED GRAIN DONATION PROGRAM

On December 19, the Secretary of Agriculture announced a feed grain donation program that will be made available in specifically designated major disaster areas to assist farm families who need help. The program - which is designed to give relief to farm families whose means have been destroyed by major natural disasters, such as floods and hurricanes - will be handled through state agencies in much the same manner as the donation program for surplus food products for welfare purposes.

Barley, corn, grain sorghums, and oats owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation will be furnished free to state agencies for distribution to established farmers who do not have the money and cannot obtain credit to purchase sufficient feed for maintenance of their livestock. Except for work stock, the livestock and livestock products will be used only for food by the recipient families and will not be marketed.

The feed grain donation program is a separate operation from the emergency feed program which allows for the sale of CCC-owned feed grains at reduced prices to farmers and ranchers in disaster areas.

CCC INTEREST RATE AGAIN INCREASED

On December 23, the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced that, effective January 1, 1956, the interest rate payable to lending agencies financing CCC price support loans on 1955 crops and 1954 resale loans again would be increased 1/4 of 1% to a rate of 2 3/4% per annum. On November 22, the USDA had announced an increase, effective December 1, 1955, giving lending agencies a rate of 2 1/2% per annum for interest. The rate of interest charged farmers obtaining price support loans on their commodities will remain 3 1/2% per annum.

FARMER'S TAX GUIDE

The Farmers' Tax Guide - a 64-page booklet issued by the Internal Revenue Service - is designed to explain income tax regulations applicable specifically to farmers and to answer questions concerning the more difficult income tax problems peculiar to them. The booklet describes in detail the steps to be taken in filing a farm income tax return and discusses such matters as the following.
* Social Security taxes
* Farm inventories
* Depreciation
* Capital gains and losses
* Soil and water conservation payments
* Treatment of refunds from farm cooperative marketing and purchasing associations

Copies of the booklet are available, without charge, at the district offices of the Internal Revenue Service and from county agricultural agents.

**LIVESTOCK**

During the week ended Thursday, December 22, receipts of all classes of livestock at Fort Worth were very small, according to the Agricultural Marketing Service. Prices of beef steers and heifers were unevenly steady to $1 per cwt. higher than in the latter part of the preceding week, and those for stocker and feeder cattle were generally about steady. Commercial and Good beef steers brought 13 to 18; most beef cows, $10.50 to $11.50; and Medium and Good stocker and feeder steers, $13 to $17.

Trading was fairly active on most classes of slaughter calves, and prices generally were about 50¢ per cwt. higher than a week earlier. In most cases, Commercial and Good slaughter calves brought $13 to $17. The market for stocker and feeder calves was steady to strong, with Medium and Good steer calves selling at $14 to $18.

On Thursday of the past week, prices of butcher hogs were 25¢ per cwt. less than a week earlier, and those for sows were 50¢ lower. Most No. 1 and No. 2 Grades and a few No. 3 Grade 200- to 240-lb. butcher hogs cleared at $11.75.

The past week's supply of sheep and lambs was the lightest of the year. Demand was good, and trading was fairly active. All slaughter classes of lambs sold fully steady as compared with the latter part of the preceding week, with Good and Choice shorn slaughter lambs bringing $16.50 to $17.50 per cwt.

No report was received for the Fort Worth livestock market for Monday, December 26.

**POULTRY**

During the week ended December 17, broiler chick placements on Texas farms totaled 1,797,000, reports the AMS. These placements were about the same as in the preceding week but were 42% below those during the comparable period in 1954.

The number of chicks produced by commercial hatcheries in the United States during November is estimated at 109,467,000, which is the largest of record for the month, reports the AMS. This compares with the output of 86,522,000 chicks in November 1954 and the 5-year (1949-53) average of 81,752,000. The demand for chicks—especially for broilers—is strong, and a record or near-record December hatch is in prospect. Of the chicks hatched during November, 94,786,000 were for broilers and 14,681,000 were for other purposes.

In Texas the number of chicks produced by commercial hatcheries in November totaled 7,663,000—up 27% from the same month last year. Broiler chicks accounted for 90% of the November output in both 1954 and 1955.

J. Z. Rowe
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