CROP PRODUCTION
Total U.S. crop production in 1956 equaled the previous record and was achieved on the smallest harvested acreage in 20 years, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. Average yields per harvested acre set new over-all records, with only a few crops falling below average. The index of all crop production reached 106% of the 1947-49 average - the same as the previous records in both 1948 and 1955. The yield per acre index, at 123, compares with the previous high of 119 attained last year.

In contrast to the Nation, the 1956 production of all major crops except wheat in the District states - Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas - was below the year-earlier output. Production of the principal crops and percentage changes from 1955 are: Cotton, 5,596,000 bales (-8%); corn, 51,995,000 bushels (-33%); oats, 36,527,000 bushels (-10%); winter wheat, 96,908,000 bushels (+133%); rice, 22,700,000 bags (-23%); sorghum grain, 130,289,000 bushels (-21%); hay, 14,264,000 tons (-31%); and peanuts, 147,500,000 pounds (-61%).

WORLD AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT
A rise in output of both crops and livestock to record levels in 1956-57 is enabling world agricultural production to keep pace with the expanding population, reports the U.S. Department of Agriculture. World production of crops and livestock in the current season is placed at 120% of the 1935-39 average, compared with 118% in 1955-56. On a per capita basis, production is holding steady at 97% of the pre-war level for the third consecutive year.

In its annual report, World Agricultural Situation, 1956-57, the USDA says the following are the outstanding features of the global agricultural production this season.

1. Record crops of rice, corn, sugar, and tobacco.
2. Generally high European production despite last winter's freeze.
3. A 10% increase in total Soviet crop production resulting from favorable weather in newly developed areas east of the Volga and Urals.

LIVESTOCK
Livestock marketings at Fort Worth during the week ended Wednesday, December 19, were sharply lower than a week earlier but were above the comparable period in 1955, reports the AMS. The cattle supply, at an estimated 5,300, compares with 8,600 a week earlier and 14,400 a year ago. Trading was slow on slaughter steers and heifers but was active on other classes. Prices of slaughter steers and heifers were 50¢ to $1 per cwt. lower than a week earlier, while those for cows were fully steady to strong. The bulk of the Good slaughter steers brought $16 to $18; most canner and cutter cows, $7 to $9.50; and the major portion of the Medium and Good stocker and lightweight feeder steers, $13 to $16.50.

Calf receipts are placed at 1,400, or 1,000 fewer than in the previous week but 400 more than during the corresponding period in 1955. Trading was moderately active, and closing prices were mostly steady to strong. Standard and Good slaughter calves sold at $11 to $11.50, and the bulk of the Medium and Good stocker steer calves cleared at $12 to $15.
Hog marketings totaled an estimated 2,500 - down a third from the preceding week but two-thirds more than a year earlier. Closing prices were about steady with the highest prices quoted in the previous week. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 190- to 270-lb. barrows and gilts sold mainly at $17.25 per cwt.

The sheep and lamb supply for the week ended December 19, at 5,300, was less than half the preceding week's receipts but was almost double the year-earlier level. Shorn slaughter lambs comprised the bulk of the supply and sold at prices which were 50¢ to $1 per cwt. higher than in the previous week. Good and Choice shorn and wooled slaughter lambs brought $16.50 to $17.50.

MEAT PRODUCTION

Red meat production in commercial slaughter plants in the United States totaled 22,034 million lbs. during January-October this year, which is 7% above the output in the corresponding months of 1955, reports the AMS. During the 10-month period, production of both beef and pork was 7% larger than during the same period last year; the output of veal was 3% greater; while the outturn of lamb and mutton was 1% lower. The number of animals slaughtered during the first 10 months of this year was larger for each of the species than during the corresponding period in 1955.

POULTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Week ended December 15, 1956</th>
<th>Percentage change from Previous week, 1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1,841,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>268,000</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 states</td>
<td>21,880,000</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commercial hatcheries in the United States produced 1,990,711,000 chicks during January-November 1956, or 15% above the output in the corresponding months last year, according to the AMS. Broiler chicks accounted for two-thirds of the total outturn.

In Texas, commercial hatchery production during the first 11 months this year is placed at 113,014,000 chicks, reflecting a 21% increase from the comparable period in 1955. The outturn of broiler chicks (which accounted for 76% of the total hatch) was 19% higher, and production of nonbroiler chicks was 26% greater.

WORLD COTTON STOCKS INCREASE

World stocks of cotton on July 31, 1956, were the largest since 1946, according to a recent report of the Foreign Agricultural Service. The stocks, at an estimated 241 million bales, exceeded the year-earlier level by 1.5 million bales. World cotton stocks have risen each year from the post-World War II low of 11.8 million bales in 1951.

J. Z. Rowe
Agricultural Economist