



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS

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COTTON ACREAGE RESERVE CHANGED

On February 15 the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced that the 1957 Soil Bank Acreage Reserve regulations for cotton have been changed to permit increased participation by farmers for acreage allotments for the crop. The regulations have been modified to permit the signing of all agreements offered by farmers within present maximum farm limitations for cotton, which are the larger of 10 acres or 30% of the farm acreage allotment. The change will permit the immediate resumption of signing Acreage Reserve agreements in cotton-producing counties which have exhausted their initial allotment of Acreage Reserve funds.

VEGETABLE GUIDES

The USDA recently issued acreage-marketing guides for 1957-crop summer and fall vegetables for fresh use, summer melons, sweet potatoes, and vegetables for processing. The guides recommend reductions of 3% in total acreage for fresh summer vegetables, 5% for fresh fall vegetables, 4% for summer melons, and 8% for vegetables for commercial processing. A 5% increase in acreage planted to sweet potatoes is recommended. According to the USDA, if production of vegetables in 1957 is in line with the guides and if marketings follow a normal seasonal pattern, supplies should be in balance with needs at a continuing high level of consumer demand.

The USDA has also announced guides for 1957-crop summer and fall Irish potatoes. An average cut of 5.5% in the total acreage of this crop has been recommended. Growers in the larger production areas are urged to reduce acreages from the 1956 level because of the relatively stable annual requirements for potatoes and the upward trend in average yield per acre.

LIVESTOCK

Cattle receipts were again below normal at Fort Worth on Monday, February 25, as additional rains during the past week end slowed movement to market, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. The supply, at an estimated 1,600, was a fourth below a week ago and less than half the year-earlier level. Demand for all classes of cattle was good, and prices for slaughter steers and heifers were strong to 50¢ per cwt. higher than in the previous week. Prices of stocker and feeder cattle were fully 50¢ higher as a result of further improvement in pasture prospects. Most Good 900- to 1,100-lb. slaughter steers brought \$18.50 to \$19; canner and cutter cows cleared at \$9 to \$12; and a small supply of Good 525- to 675-lb. stocker steers sold at \$18 to \$19.

Monday's calf receipts are placed at 500, which is 100 fewer than both a week earlier and on the corresponding date in 1956. Trading on slaughter calves was active as both large packers and independent butchers were in need of calf supplies. Good slaughter calves were quoted at \$18.50 to \$19.25, and Medium stocker steer calves sold at \$17 to \$18.50.

Hog supplies totaled an estimated 1,300, which is 44% more than both a week ago and a year earlier. Trading was slow in getting started, and prices of slaughter hogs were steady to mostly 25¢ lower than at the past week's close. U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 190- to 250-lb. butchers brought mostly \$17.75.

Sheep and lamb supplies were rather small. The receipts, at an estimated 2,300, were 200 more than on the previous Monday's market but 1,500 fewer than at the same time last year. Trading was active, and prices were strong to fully 25¢ higher than in the preceding week. Good and Choice 76- to 99-lb. slaughter lambs with No. 1 and fall-shorn pelts sold mainly at \$18.50 to \$19.

P O U L T R Y

The principal Texas commercial broiler markets opened weak and then held steady during the week ended Thursday, February 21, reports the State Department of Agriculture. Closing prices - which were .5¢ to 1¢ per lb. lower than a week earlier - were mostly 19¢ in all the areas. During the corresponding period in 1956, closing prices were 21¢ in south Texas and 20¢ in east Texas and Waco.

On Monday of this week, broiler markets were steady in south Texas and firm in east Texas and Waco. Prices were: South Texas, 19¢, with a few at 20¢; east Texas, 20¢, with a few at 19¢; and Waco, 20¢.

	Area	Week ended February 16, 1957	Percentage change from	
			Previous week	Comparable week, 1956
BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS				
	Texas.....	2,246,000	-8	21
	Louisiana..	344,000	4	-2
	22 states..	25,184,000	-3	6

B R O I L E R P R O D U C T I O N U P S H A R P L Y

Commercial broiler output in 22 important broiler-producing states of the Nation, which are covered by weekly chick placement reports, reached an all-time high in 1956, reports the AMS. The outturn is estimated at 1,193 million birds, or 24% higher than the 1955 production. Georgia was the top-ranking state in broiler output, with 223 million birds; Texas ranked second, with 100 million.

The average price received for broilers in the 22 states in 1956 was 19.4¢ per lb. live weight, compared with 25.1¢ in 1955. Because of the lower price, gross income from broiler sales, at an estimated \$735,105,000, was only 1% higher than a year earlier.

R E C O R D A G R I C U L T U R A L E X P O R T S

The value of U. S. agricultural exports during the first half of the current fiscal year (which began July 1, 1956) is estimated by the USDA at a record \$2.3 billion. The total compares with an export value of \$1.6 billion during the corresponding period of 1955-56. The value of exports rose 39%, and the quantity increased 45%. At the current rate, the quantity of exports this year is expected to surpass the previous record set in 1919.

Cotton exports experienced the greatest gain among the commodity groups during the first 6 months of the current fiscal year. Oilseeds and vegetable oils, fruits and vegetables, and livestock products also increased. Rice exports were at a record high, while tobacco exports were below a year earlier as a result of a decline in shipments to the United Kingdom.

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