The index of prices received by U. S. farmers as of February 15, at 230% of the 1910-11 average, was 2% below that a month earlier but 3% above the same date in 1956, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. On the other hand, the parity index (which reflects prices paid for commodities and services, plus interest, taxes, and wage rates) rose nearly 1% from the mid-January level to an all-time high of 29%. As a result of the lower farm product prices, the parity ratio on February 15 declined to 80% - the same as the post-World War II low point first established in November 1955.

Cash receipts from farm marketings in the District states (Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) during 1956 amounted to $3,183,161,000, or 2% below the year-earlier level. Receipts from crops were 1% lower, while those from livestock and livestock products were 1% higher. A 6% decline in cash receipts in Texas more than offset increases in each of the other District states, which ranged from 3% in Louisiana to 10% in New Mexico.

On February 19 the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced a cotton export program for Commodity Credit Corporation stocks of upland cotton to be shipped after August 15, 1957. Under the program, sales will be made periodically on a competitive basis as under the current export program. The cotton products export program also will be continued through the 1957-58 marketing year.

On February 21 the USDA recommended the adoption, subject to grower approval, of a proposed marketing agreement and order for the handling of tomatoes grown in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Tomato producers in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy Counties will vote in a referendum to determine whether they favor the proposed marketing agreement and order program. Two-thirds of the tomato growers, by number or volume of production, voting in the referendum must favor issuance of the order before it can be made effective.

The USDA announced on February 25 that price support on 1957-crop peanuts will be available by means of nonrecourse warehouse storage loans to grower associations and nonrecourse farm storage loans to producers at a minimum national average level of $221.40 per ton, which is 82% of the January 15 parity price. Support on 1956-crop peanuts averaged $227.04 per ton, or 86% of the parity level on August 1 last year.
LIVESTOCK

Cattle marketings at Fort Worth on Monday, March 4, totaled an estimated 2,800, compared with 1,500 a week earlier and 2,100 on the corresponding date in 1956, according to the AMS. As a result of the larger supplies of fed slaughter steers, prices were 25¢ to 50¢ per cwt. lower than a week ago. Trading on stocker and feeder cattle was less active than on the preceding Monday's market, and prices held mostly steady. Most Standard to Low-Good fed slaughter steers brought $16 to $18; most canner and cutter cows sold at $9.50 to $11.75; and Good stocker and feeder yearling steers weighing around 525 to 675 lbs. cleared at $18 to $19.

Calf receipts, at an estimated 1,000, were 600 above the week-earlier level and 1,000 more than at the same time last year. Trading on slaughter calves was rather uneven, and prices ranged from steady to 50¢ lower than a week ago. Good slaughter calves were quoted at $18 to $19.50, and Good and Choice 350- to 500-lb, stocker steer calves brought $19 to $21.

Monday's hog supply is placed at 1,200, or 9% greater than a week earlier but 8% below the comparable date last year. Trading was slow in getting under way, and prices were steady to 25¢ lower than in the latter part of the past week. No. 2 and No. 3 Grades of 190- to 250-lb. butchers sold at $17 and $17.25.

Sheep and lamb offerings, at an estimated 4,100, were more than double the week-earlier supply and were about a fourth larger than on the corresponding date in 1956. Lambs comprised more than 95% of the total supply. Trading was slow in getting started as a result of lower bids; prices of slaughter lambs were steady to weak as compared with those in the latter part of the past week. Good and Choice 85- to 95-lb. No. 1 and fall-shorn slaughter lambs brought $18.50 and $19.

POULTRY

The major Texas commercial broiler markets were generally firm during the week ended Friday, March 1, according to the State Department of Agriculture. Closing prices - which were mostly 1¢ per lb. higher than a week earlier - were 20¢ in south Texas, east Texas, and Waco and 21¢ to 21.5¢ at the Corsicana F.O.B. plant. During the comparable period last year, closing prices were: South Texas, 22¢; east Texas and Waco, 21¢ to 22¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 23¢ to 24¢.

On Monday of this week, broiler markets were fully steady in south Texas and steady to firm in the other areas. The following prices were quoted: South Texas, 20¢ to 21¢, mostly 20¢; east Texas, 20¢ to 21¢; Waco, 20.5¢; and the Corsicana F.O.B. plant, 21.5¢.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Week ended February 23, 1957</th>
<th>Percentage change from Previous week</th>
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<td>2,188,000</td>
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J. Z. Rowe
Agricultural Economist