CATTLE AND CALVES ON FEED

The number of cattle and calves on feed for market in the United States on January 1, 1958, totaled an estimated 5.9 million, points out the Agricultural Marketing Service. The number was 3% below that of a year ago but 6% above the 1952-56 average for January 1.

In the cattle-feeding states of the Eleventh Federal Reserve District (Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), the number of cattle and calves on feed as of January 1 is placed at 371,000, reflecting declines of 22% from a year earlier and 6% from the 1952-56 average.

GRAIN AND HAY STOCKS

Stocks of feed grains on the Nation's farms as of January 1, 1958, were about an eighth larger than a year ago and were more than a fifth above the 1947-56 average, reports the AMS. Supplies of corn were up 5% from the 1957 level; oat stocks were 21% larger; barley holdings were 29% greater; and sorghum grain supplies were more than triple the year-earlier figure. Wheat stocks were slightly smaller than those of a year ago and were the lowest since 1941.

U. S. farmers began 1958 with the largest hay stocks ever held at this point of the winter feeding season. Hay production during 1957 was a record high, and pastures over the Nation during the growing months averaged the best in several years, according to the AMS. Range areas report the largest winter feed and forage supplies since 1942-43, and cattle and sheep are in the best condition since 1943.

CITRUS PROSPECTS

Based on January 1 conditions, the 1957-58 orange crop (including tangerines) in the United States is estimated at 112.3 million boxes, or 18% less than both the forecast of a month ago and the year-earlier output and 8% below the 10-year (1946-55) average, according to the AMS. Most of the decline from a month ago is a result of the December 12-13 freeze in Florida. This year's grapefruit crop is expected to total 40.8 million boxes, reflecting declines of 9% from a year ago and 12% from the 10-year average.

In Arizona, Louisiana, and Texas (the major orange-producing states of the Eleventh District), the 1957-58 orange crop is placed at 3,790,000 boxes, or 26% above production in the preceding season and 6% more than the 1946-55 average. Grapefruit output in Arizona and Texas (the principal grapefruit-producing states of the District) is estimated at 6,500,000 boxes, which is 31% greater than in the 1956-57 season but is 39% less than the 1946-55 average.

FARM LABOR

The number of persons employed on U. S. farms continued its rather sharp downward trend during 1957, states the AMS. For the tenth consecutive year, the average farm employment showed a decrease from that in the preceding year. The average for 1957, at approximately 7.6 million workers, was almost 3% below that in 1956 and was 26% under the figure 10 years ago. Family labor experienced a sharper decline than hired workers during the past decade. Mechanization and changes in farm technology have played a major role in the downward trend in farm workers. Total crop and livestock production has been increased during the past several years even with the smaller number of workers.
POULTRY

During the week ended Friday, January 17, the principal Texas commercial broiler markets were steady to firm, and trading was light to moderate, according to the State Department of Agriculture. Closing prices were generally 2¢ per lb. higher than a week earlier, with the following prices quoted: South Texas, 22¢ to 23¢; east Texas, 20¢ to 21¢; and Waco, 20½¢. During the corresponding period in 1957, closing prices were 18¢ per lb. in all the areas.

The east Texas broiler market was steady to firm on Monday of this week, and prices were 20½¢ to 21¢, mostly 21¢, per lb. The other Texas commercial broiler markets were closed in observance of a state holiday.

Livestock marketings at Fort Worth on Monday, January 20, were comparatively small, probably as a result of inclement weather during the past week, according to the AMS. Cattle receipts are placed at 1,600, compared with 1,800 a week earlier and 3,000 on the corresponding date in 1957. Prices of slaughter cattle were mostly steady to 25¢ per cwt. higher than at the preceding week's close. The major portion of the Good 800- to 1,100-lb. slaughter steers brought $23.50 to $25 per cwt.; Utility cows, $16 to $17; and Medium and Good 550- to 750-lb. stocker and feeder steers, $19 to $24.50.

The calf run totaled about 600, compared with 700 on the previous Monday's market and 800 a year ago. Prices of slaughter calves were generally strong. Most Good slaughter calves cleared at $24.50 to $26, and Good and Choice stocker and feeder steer calves brought $24.50 to $27.50 per cwt.

Monday's hog receipts totaled only 400, or 100 fewer than a week ago and less than half of the year-earlier figure. After a late start, butcher hogs sold at prices which were steady to 25¢ per cwt. higher than in the latter part of the previous week. Mixed U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 200-to 250-lb. barrows and gilts were quoted at $20.25 and $20.50.

Sheep and lamb offerings were approximately 1,400, reflecting declines of 30% from a week ago and 59% from the comparable date last year. Prices of slaughter lambs were steady to weak, while those of slaughter yearlings were steady to generally 25¢ per cwt. higher than in the latter part of the past week. Utility, Good, and Choice shorn slaughter lambs with average weights of 85 to 95 lbs. sold at $23 to $23.75.

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