1958 Conservation Reserve

Over 4 million acres of the Nation's cropland were offered for contracts under the 1958 Conservation Reserve Program of the Soil Bank through the close of this year's signup on April 15, reports the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The acreage is in addition to about 6.5 million acres placed in the program during 1956 and 1957. Annual payments account for $35 million, and payments for conservation practices comprise $36.5 million of the total payments obligated for the 1958 program.

In the Eleventh District states (Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), 1,036,040 acres, or a fourth of the national total, have been placed in the 1958 Conservation Reserve Program. In these states, annual payments are estimated at $9,281,441, and conservation payments total $7,716,206.

Cotton Loan Program

The USDA recently announced premiums and discounts for eligible qualities of upland cotton under the 1958 Cotton Price Support Program. Minimum loan rates for eligible qualities of extra-long staple (American-Egyptian, Sealand, and Sea Island) cotton will be announced later.

The USDA also announced that the Commodity Credit Corporation will make price support loans on 1958-crop upland cotton available to eligible producers in the early harvesting areas prior to August 1, 1958, at the announced minimum of 30.75¢ per lb., gross weight, basis Middling 7/8" cotton at average locations. The rate for 1958-crop Middling 1" cotton will be 3.85¢ per lb. above that for Middling 7/0". If the support price on August 1 is higher than the announced rates, the difference will be paid to the grower upon his application. If application is not made for the difference and if the loan is not repaid, the difference will be paid upon maturity of the loans. All other provisions for loans prior to August 1 will be the same as for loans made after that date.

Farm Employment Up Sharply

The number of persons at work on the Nation's farms during the week of April 20, at approximately 7.4 million, was up 20% from the previous month but was 1% below the corresponding date in 1957, according to the Agricultural Marketing Service. The increase from a month earlier compares with the average 16% seasonal gain from March.

Farm operators and unpaid members of their families accounted for 78% of the total farm workers, and hired workers made up the remainder. Several areas in the United States report that the supply of farm labor during the week of April 20 was more adequate in relation to demand than it has been at this time in several years.

Meat Animals

Farm production of meat animals in the Nation during 1957 totaled 47.2 billion lbs., live weight, or 2% below the 1956 output and 5% less than the 1955 record, reports the AMS. Production of cattle and calves accounted for 57% of the total; hogs, 40%; and sheep and lambs, 3%.
Gross income (cash receipts plus value of home consumption) from meat animals amounted to $9.6 billion in 1957, which is 13% higher than in the preceding year. The gain in gross income was due to higher prices for each species, as marketings of each were smaller. Cash receipts from farm marketings of meat animals in 1957 are placed at $9.4 billion.

**LIVESTOCK**

The cattle run at Fort Worth on Monday, May 12, was the largest since last October, according to the AMS. The supply totaled about 3,900, compared with 2,800 a week earlier and 2,700 on the corresponding date in 1957. Prices of slaughter steers were uneven, while those of stockers and feeders were generally steady with prices in the latter part of the preceding week. Good 800- to 1,000-lb. slaughter steers brought $25.50 to $27.50 per cwt.; the bulk of the Commercial cows, $20.50 to $21; and Medium and Good 500- to 700-lb. stocker and feeder steers, $21 to $27.

Calf receipts are estimated at 800, or 100 more than on the previous Monday's market and double the year-earlier figure. Prices of slaughter calves were steady to 50¢ lower than a week ago. Good grades of slaughter calves sold mainly at $27 to $27.50, and stocker and feeder steer calves cleared at $27 to $30.

Monday's hog supply is placed at around 1,100, which is slightly smaller than a week ago but is substantially above the level on the comparable date last year. Prices of barrows and gilts were mostly 50¢ higher than in the latter part of the preceding week. Most No. 2 and No. 3 Grades of 200- to 255-lb. butchers were quoted at $21.50 to $22.

Sheep and lamb offerings totaled approximately 16,000, or 7% fewer than on the previous Monday's market but 28% more than a year ago. Trading was a little slow and uneven; however, prices were mostly steady for all classes. Good and Choice 75- to 90-lb. slaughter spring lambs brought $21.50 to $22.50.

**POULTRY**

The Texas commercial broiler markets were steady throughout the major part of the week ended Friday, May 9, points out the State Department of Agriculture. Closing prices in south Texas were mostly 1¢ per lb. higher than a week earlier, while those in east Texas and Waco were unchanged. Closing prices were generally 21¢ in south Texas and 20¢ in east Texas and Waco. During the corresponding period in 1957, closing prices were 19¢ to 20¢ in east Texas and $19.50¢ in Waco. (There were too few sales in south Texas to report.)

On Monday, May 12, broiler markets were unsettled in south Texas, about steady in east Texas, and steady in Waco. The following prices were quoted: South Texas, 20¢ to 21¢, with the bulk at 21¢; east Texas, 19¢ to 20¢, mostly 20¢; and Waco, 20¢.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS</th>
<th>Week ended May 3, 1958</th>
<th>Percentage increase from Previous week, Comparable week, 1957</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2,723,000</td>
<td>2 34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>513,000</td>
<td>9 44</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 states</td>
<td>33,447,000</td>
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J. Z. Rowe
Agricultural Economist