Crop production in the United States reached an all-time high in 1958 and was 11% greater than any of the three former best production years of 1948, 1956, and 1957, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. High per acre yields were mainly responsible for the record output since harvested acreage was the third lowest in over 20 years; planted acreage was the smallest in 40 years. The 1958 all-crop production index for 59 major crops is placed at 118% of the 1947-49 average. The production index for feed grains is 134; food grains, 117; oilseed crops, 181; and sugar crops, 124.

Cotton and Rice Marketing Quotas Approved
Growers approved marketing quotas for the 1959 crops of both upland and extra-long staple cotton and of rice in three separate referendums held on December 15, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Preliminary returns indicate that marketing quotas for upland cotton were approved by 92.3% of the producers voting; extra-long staple cotton, 88.5%; and rice, 87%. Approval of at least two-thirds of the growers voting in each of the referendums is required for marketing quotas to be placed in effect.

Edible Fats, Oils, and Oilseeds
The total national supply of edible fats, oils, and oilseeds in the 1958-59 marketing year (which began October 1) is an all-time high and is approximately 15% above the year-earlier figure, points out the AMS. Farm prices for these commodities probably will average near support levels but are expected to be below a year ago. Since supplies far exceed domestic requirements, foreign markets continue to be important outlets for food fats. Indications are that exports in the current season may be somewhat larger than the 2.6 billion lbs. shipped abroad in the 1957-58 season.

Milk Output Declines Slightly
U. S. milk production in 1958 is estimated to be slightly below the record 126.4 billion lbs. produced in 1957, according to the AMS. The decrease, after 5 years of increase, occurred even though (1) feed supplies were large, (2) pastures were good, and (3) milk-feed price relationships were favorable. The major factor in the decline was the sharp rise in prices of meat animals which increased the culling rate in dairy herds and probably induced a more rapid exodus of farmers out of dairying.

According to the AMS, some increase in milk output in the Nation is likely in 1959. The number of milk cows probably will not decrease as sharply as in 1958; and production per cow is expected to reach an all-time high, unless pasture and feed conditions are substantially below average.

World Rice Output Up
The 1958-59 (August-July) world rice crop is expected to be far greater than any previous harvest, reports the Foreign Agricultural Service. The outturn is estimated at 471 billion lbs. of rough rice as compared with 425 billion lbs. in 1957-58 and the previous record of 440 billion lbs. in 1956-57. The world acre-age in rice is at an all-time high level, but yields are not expected to be as high as in the 1956-57 season.
POULTRY

The major Texas commercial broiler markets were weak during the light trading period ended Friday, December 19, points out the State Department of Agriculture. Closing prices were 2¢ per lb. lower than a week ago, with the following prices quoted: South Texas, 15¢, and east Texas, 14¢ to 141⁄2¢. In the latter area, 67% of the sales were at undetermined prices. During the comparable week in 1957, closing prices were 16¢ in south Texas and 15¢ to 17¢, mostly 16¢, in east Texas.

On Monday, December 22, broiler markets were weak in south Texas and slightly weaker to about steady in east Texas. Prices were: South Texas, 14¢ to 15¢, and east Texas, 14¢. In east Texas, 41% of the sales were at undetermined prices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Week ended December 13, 1958</th>
<th>Percentage increase from previous comparable week, 1957</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas.....</td>
<td>2,211,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana..</td>
<td>506,000</td>
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<td>29,427,000</td>
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</table>

LIVESTOCK

The pre-Christmas receipts of cattle and calves at Fort Worth were small on Monday, December 22, states the AMS. The cattle supply totaled about 1,400, reflecting declines of 30% from a week ago and 12% from the comparable date in 1957. Closing prices of slaughter steers were about steady with those of the previous week. Trading on stocker and feeder cattle was moderately active, and prices were generally steady. Good 900- to 1,150-lb. slaughter steers were quoted at $26 to $27 per cwt.; Utility cows, $18.50 to $19.50; and Medium and Good 550- to 700-lb. stocker and feeder steers, $24 to $28.

The calf run is placed at 200, compared with 300 on the preceding Monday and 400 a year earlier. Prices of slaughter calves were generally steady. Good slaughter calves cleared at $27.50 to $29, and Medium and Good stocker and feeder steer calves brought $26 to $32.

Monday's hog supply was approximately 700 head, or about the same as a week ago but 100 fewer than on the corresponding date last year. Trading was very slow because of higher asking prices. Most butchers sold at prices which were 25¢ higher than in the latter part of the past week. Mixed U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 195- to 245-lb. barrows and gilts brought $18.75 to $19.25.

Sheep and lamb marketings totaled about 1,700, or 70% more than on the previous Monday but 6% below the year-earlier level. Most sales of slaughter lambs were fully steady with those in the latter part of the past week. Good and Choice 95- to 100-lb. shorn slaughter lambs with No. 1 and fall-shorn pelts sold mostly at $18.

J. Z. Rowe
Agricultural Economist