



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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## L I V E S T O C K   I N V E N T O R Y

Cattle numbers on the Nation's farms and ranches reached a peak of 96.9 million head on January 1, 1959, and were 4% larger than a year ago, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. Beef cow numbers increased 5%, and all other beef stock was up from the preceding year. On the other hand, numbers of milk cows declined 3% and were the smallest number since 1921. The hog inventory rose 12%, due mainly to the increase in the 1958 fall pig crop. Numbers of all sheep and lambs were 4% greater than at the beginning of January 1958, while the number of horses and mules was down 8%. Inventories of chickens and turkeys advanced 3% and 5%, respectively. The total inventory value of all livestock and poultry on U. S. farms and ranches on January 1, 1959, amounted to \$18.1 billion, reflecting a 29% gain over a year ago.

The table below shows the number of livestock on farms and ranches in the states of the Eleventh Federal Reserve District on January 1, 1959, and the year-earlier comparisons.

### LIVESTOCK ON FARMS AND RANCHES, JANUARY 1

Five Southwestern States

(In thousands)

Area	Cattle		Hogs		Sheep	
	1959	1958	1959	1958	1959	1958
Arizona.....	971	943	35	34	451	443
Louisiana.....	1,808	1,883	377	381	83	95
New Mexico.....	1,162	1,056	36	35	1,295	1,214
Oklahoma.....	3,313	2,958	458	347	281	248
Texas.....	8,510	7,736	1,226	908	5,355	4,891
Five states...	15,764	14,576	2,132	1,705	7,465	6,891

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The number of goats in Texas at the beginning of 1959 is estimated at 3.1 million head, or 8% above the year-earlier figure.

## C C C   L O A N   C O T T O N

More than 56% of the national 1958 cotton crop has been pledged to the Government loan program, reports the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The total is the largest proportion of loan entries for any crop of record. Commodity Credit Corporation loan entries totaled nearly 6.5 million bales through the first week of February 1959.

## L I V E S T O C K

Cattle marketings at Fort Worth on Monday, February 16, totaled an estimated 2,000 head, or about the same as both a week ago and a year earlier, points out the AMS. Trading on slaughter steers was slow, and prices were weak to 50¢ per cwt. lower than in the latter part of the preceding week. Trading on stocker and feeder cattle was active early in the day, and prices were fully steady; however, toward the close, trading was slow and prices were weak. Standard and low-Good 800- to 1,100-lb. slaughter steers were quoted at \$24.50 to \$26; most Utility cows, \$19 to \$19.50; and Medium and Good 550- to 650-lb. stocker and feeder steers, \$24 to \$28.

Calf receipts are placed at 600, which was 200 more than on the previous Monday but about the same as on the corresponding date in 1958. Most slaughter calves sold at fully steady prices, but some closing sales were weaker. Good slaughter calves brought \$27 to \$29, and Medium and Good stocker steer calves cleared at \$26 to \$33.

Monday's hog supply was 800, or about the same as a week earlier but approximately double the receipts of a year ago. Trading was slow, with most barrows and gilts selling at prices which were 25¢ lower than in the latter part of the past week. U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 195- to 235-lb. slaughter hogs brought \$16.50 to \$16.75.

Sheep and lamb offerings were around 3,300, reflecting a 48% decrease from a week ago but a 22% gain over the year-earlier level. Prices for slaughter lambs were steady to weak, and those for feeders were steady. Good and Choice fall-shorn slaughter lambs weighing around 110 lbs. brought \$17.

## P O U L T R Y

During the trading week ended Friday, February 13, the Texas commercial broiler markets strengthened in early trade and held the price advances fairly steady throughout the period, reports the State Department of Agriculture. As compared with a week earlier, closing prices were 2¢ per lb. higher in south Texas and around 1½¢ higher in east Texas. Closing prices were 18¢ in south Texas and 16¢ to 18¢ in east Texas, although in east Texas, 71% of the sales were at undetermined prices. During the corresponding week in 1958, closing prices were 21¢ to 22¢, mostly 22¢, in south Texas and 20¢ in east Texas.

On Monday, February 16, broiler markets were quiet in south Texas and unchanged in east Texas. Prices were 17¢ per lb. in south Texas and 17¢ to 18¢ in east Texas. (In the latter area, 74% of the sales were at undetermined prices.)

	Area	Week ended February 7, 1959	Percentage change from	
			Previous week	Comparable week, 1958
BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS				
	Texas.....	2,127,000	0	-7
	Louisiana..	396,000	-9	4
	22 states..	31,573,000	1	8

## F A R M E M P L O Y M E N T

The midwinter farm work load in the Nation was carried by the smallest number of workers on record, according to the AMS. Part of this decrease may have resulted from severe weather conditions. The total of about 5.3 million workers on farms during the week of January 18 represents a continuation of a gradual downtrend and was 1% below the comparable period in 1958. The number of family workers is estimated at nearly 4.4 million, or 2% fewer than a year ago. The number of hired workers, at 918,000, was up 4%.

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