



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS

Number 486

Wednesday, April 22, 1959

FOOD FOR PEACE TALKS SCHEDULED

The Secretary of Agriculture has announced that cabinet representatives from five major wheat-exporting countries will confer on the Food for Peace proposal on May 5-6 in Washington, D. C. Taking part in the conference will be cabinet representatives from Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, and the United States. The Director General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will also participate.

According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the May conference advances further the Food for Peace plan outlined by the President in his message to Congress on January 29, 1959. At that time, the President said: "I am setting steps in motion to explore anew with other surplus-producing nations all practical means of utilizing the various agricultural surpluses of each in the interest of reinforcing peace and the well-being of friendly peoples throughout the world - in short, using food for peace."

PER CAPITA FIBER CONSUMPTION DOWN

Total fiber consumption per person in the United States during 1958 was 33.9 lbs., reflecting the second successive year per capita consumption has registered a 6% decline, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. The 1958 total was the lowest in 20 years, as was the 1958 per capita cotton consumption of 22.1 lbs. Wool consumption was at the lowest level since 1934, and the per capita consumption of man-made fibers was below the levels of the three preceding years. However, a substantial increase from the very low 1958 levels is in prospect for 1959, according to the AMS.

FARM LABOR

Warm weather over extensive central areas, coupled with a keen drive to accelerate spring plantings, sharply increased farm employment in the Nation during late March, states the AMS. The estimated 6.5 million workers during the week of March 22 was 3% above the year-earlier level. The number of hired workers was the largest March total since 1955 and was 10% greater than a year ago. The number of family workers was up 2% from the corresponding period in 1958.

In the states of the Eleventh Federal Reserve District (Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), the number of farm workers during the week of March 22 totaled 788,000, which was 7% above the year-earlier figure. The number of hired workers was up 20%, and the number of family workers was 2% larger.

SCREW WORM FIELD STUDIES ORGANIZED

The USDA recently announced that coordinated field studies of the screw-worm, a serious livestock pest, have been organized by Mexico and the United States. Personnel assigned by the USDA's Agricultural Research Service are working with Mexico and southwestern states to make a survey of the screwworm situation in northern Mexico and in Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

The purpose of the survey is to learn more about the habits of the screw-worm fly and to determine if the new method of combating the screwworm, which is now being used in southeastern states, can be applied in Mexico and the Southwest.

(The new method uses radioactive cobalt to make laboratory-reared screwworm flies sterile. When sterile male flies are dispersed in large numbers over infested areas, they mate with the native female flies, thereby preventing them from producing fertile eggs.)

L I V E S T O C K

Receipts of cattle and calves at Fort Worth during the week ended Thursday, April 16, were less than one-half the week-earlier level, when a special auction was held, according to the AMS. The cattle run totaled an estimated 3,900 head, compared with 4,200 during the corresponding period in 1958. Fairly active, strong dressed meat markets and general rains over Texas during the past 2 weeks were bullish influences in the live cattle market during the week ended April 16. Demand was broad for both slaughter and stocker cattle, and trading was active. Prices were steady to 50¢ per cwt. higher than in the latter part of the previous week, with the following prices quoted: Good and Choice 870- to 1,050-lb. slaughter steers, \$28 to \$31; most Utility and Commercial cows, \$19.50 to \$21.50; and Medium and Good yearling stocker steers weighing under 650 lbs., \$27 to \$31.50.

The calf supply is placed at 1,000, compared with 2,100 a week ago and 900 a year earlier. Slaughter calves sold at prices which were mainly 50¢ to \$1 higher than in the latter part of the preceding week. Most of the Good and Choice killing calves were quoted at \$29 to \$31, and the bulk of the Medium and Good stocker and feeder calves weighing under 550 lbs. brought \$28 to \$33.50.

Hog marketings of 3,800 were the largest in several months and were 73% above the corresponding period in 1958. Trading was active, and prices were mostly steady with those in the latter part of the preceding week. U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 190- to 240-lb. barrows and gilts cleared at \$16.50 to \$17.25.

Sheep and lamb offerings were 16,400 head, reflecting declines of 6% from a week earlier and 42% from a year ago. Prices were mostly steady with the preceding week's close. Good and Choice 75- to 90-lb. slaughter spring lambs sold at \$21 to \$23.

P O U L T R Y

During the week ended Friday, April 17, the Texas commercial broiler markets weakened in early trading, became steady on the generally 1¢ per lb. lower price level, and closed on a steady undertone, according to the State Department of Agriculture. Trading was fairly brisk following the decline, and the volume of slaughter was normal to heavy, despite the cool, wet weather. Closing prices were 16¢ in south Texas and 15¢ in east Texas, although 61% of the sales in the latter area were at undetermined prices. During the corresponding period in 1958, closing prices were: South Texas, 19¢, and east Texas, 18¢ to 19¢.

	Area	Week ended April 11, 1959	Percentage change from	
			Previous week	Comparable week, 1958
BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS				
	Texas.....	2,473,000	-3	-7
	Louisiana..	488,000	-13	18
	22 states..	36,298,000	-1	9

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