



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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CROP AND LIVESTOCK OUTLOOK

The development of 1959 crops in the United States has been generally favorable but somewhat below the near-ideal level of last year, points out the Agricultural Marketing Service. Prospects for 1959 crops indicate a smaller total output than the 1958 record but larger than any other year. Based on July 1 conditions, the all-crop production index is 113 (1947-49 = 100), compared with 118 in 1958 and the previous peak of 106 reached in 1948, 1956, and 1957. The outturn of livestock and livestock products this year is at an all-time high.

FARM BORROWING AT RECORD

Higher operating costs plus the desire to operate more efficiently have combined to increase the capital and credit needs of farmers. This trend is reflected in sharply increased borrowings of farmers through 495 production credit associations, according to the Farm Credit Administration. The Nation's farmers borrowed nearly \$1.3 billion from their local credit cooperatives during the first half of 1959, which was about 21% more than in the comparable period last year. The loan volume of the production credit associations has almost doubled in the past 5 years and has risen 7½ times in the last 20 years. During 1958, farmers borrowed a record \$2.2 billion from the associations.

PEAK GRAIN STOCKS

Stocks of all feed grains, wheat, and soybeans in all storage positions in the United States as of July 1 were at record levels for that date, reports the AMS. Wheat stocks exceeded the previous peak in 1955 by 23%, and oat holdings were 6% above the 1956 record. As compared with the previous record levels of July 1, 1958, stocks of corn were up 5%; sorghum grain, 54%; barley, 15%; and soybeans, 46%. Holdings of both rye and flaxseed were sharply above the preceding year. Stocks of feed grains (corn, oats, barley, and sorghum grain) were more than one-tenth greater than the year-earlier levels.

CALF CROP LARGER

The 1959 national calf crop is expected to total 41.3 million head, which is 2% more than in 1958 and 7% above the 10-year (1948-57) average, points out the AMS. This is the first year-to-year gain since the record 42.6 million head in 1954. The expected 1959 calf crop expressed as a percentage of cows and heifers 2 years old and older on January 1 this year is 88%, compared with 87% in 1958 and 86% for the 10-year average. The current percentage was equaled in 1942 and 1953 but has never been surpassed in the 35 years of record.

The 1959 Texas calf crop is indicated at 4.1 million head, or 6% greater than in 1958. A crop of this size would be 5% above the 1948-57 average and the highest since the peak 4.2 million in 1954. The calving percentage is expected to be 88% - unchanged from the 1958 level but 5 points above the 10-year average.

LIVESTOCK

Cattle receipts at Fort Worth for the week ended Thursday, July 30, were the smallest since April, states the AMS. The 5,800 head were 1,000 below the week-earlier figure and 1,300 fewer than a year ago. Trading was slow on slaughter steers,

and prices were about in line with those in the latter part of the preceding week. Following the previous week's sharp declines, quotations on cows declined 50¢ per cwt. further. (In most years, cow prices show a "June break," but the decrease apparently was delayed until late July this year.) Good 800- to 1,100-lb. slaughter steers were quoted mainly at \$26 to \$27; Commercial cows, \$17 to \$17.50; and Medium and Good 500- to 650-lb. stocker and feeder steers, \$23 to \$28.

Calf marketings totaled 1,700, reflecting declines of 29% from a week ago and 45% from the comparable period in 1958. Trading continued active, and prices were generally steady with the week-earlier close. Good grades of killers sold at \$27 to \$28, and 350- to 475-lb. stocker and feeder steer calves brought mainly \$29 to \$32.

In contrast to the reduced supplies of other classes of livestock, the 3,000 hog receipts were up 100 from the preceding week and almost double the year-earlier figure. Thursday prices of barrows and gilts were steady to 50¢ higher than a week ago, with most mixed U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 190- to 235-lb. barrows and gilts quoted at \$13.75 to \$14.50.

A total of 5,500 sheep and lambs was marketed at Fort Worth during the week ended July 30, compared with 6,300 in the previous week and 5,300 a year ago. Spring slaughter lambs and yearlings sold at prices which were steady to strong as compared with the latter part of the preceding week; sales of slaughter ewes were \$1 to \$1.50 lower. Good and Choice 78- to 90-lb. spring slaughter lambs brought \$21 to \$21.75.

P O U L T R Y

During the week ended Friday, July 31, the Texas commercial broiler markets opened stronger and then remained steady at the improved price level through the close, reports the State Department of Agriculture. As compared with a week earlier, closing quotations were 1¢ per lb. higher in south Texas and unchanged to ½¢ higher in east Texas. Closing prices were 16¢ in south Texas and 15¢ in east Texas, with 54% of the sales in the latter area at undetermined prices. During the corresponding period in 1958, closing prices were: South Texas, 18¢; and east Texas, 17¢ to 18¢, mostly 17½¢.

The Texas commercial broiler markets were steady on Monday, August 3. Prices were generally unchanged from the preceding Friday's close, although 53% of the sales in east Texas were at undetermined levels.

	Area	Week ended July 25, 1959	Percentage change from	
			Previous week	Comparable week, 1958
BROILER CHICK				
PLACEMENTS	Texas.....	2,142,000	-1	-11
	Louisiana..	423,000	19	-7
	22 states..	32,671,000	-1	-2

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