



AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

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TEXAS CROP OUTPUT HIGHEST SINCE 1949

Texas crop production in 1961 is the highest in 11 years and 4% greater than in 1960, according to the Statistical Reporting Service. Larger outturns of cotton, corn, small grains, peanuts, and hay offset smaller production of sorghum grain and rice. At 139% of the 1946-55 average, the Texas crop production index for 1961 is second only to the all-time high reached in 1949, when record cotton and wheat crops were harvested in the State.

The combined value of the principal Texas crops in 1961 amounts to \$1.6 billion, reflecting a 15% gain over the year-earlier level. Higher prices for cotton and sorghum grain are primarily responsible for the increase. The value of cotton lint and seed accounts for 55% of the 1961 total value; sorghum grain comprises 14%; and wheat accounts for 10%.

DAIRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE NAMED

At the request of leaders in the dairy industry, Secretary of Agriculture Freeman recently named a National Stabilization Advisory Committee on Dairy Products. The Committee - composed of members from all milk-producing areas - met in Washington, D. C., on December 18-19.

The Dairy Committee will consider problems in the production, processing, and distribution of milk and milk products. In addition, the Committee will study possible courses of action to improve industry operations for better supply management and price stabilization.

SPRING SIGNUP FOR GRAIN PROGRAMS

The U. S. Department of Agriculture recently announced that, under the 1962 feed grain and wheat stabilization programs, the signup period for 1962-crop corn and grain sorghum and for spring-planted 1962-crop wheat and barley will begin February 5, 1962, and continue through March 30. Fall-seeded wheat and barley acreage was signed up under the two programs during a signup period which ended December 1.

IMPORTED MEATS TO BE MARKED

Beginning March 1, 1962, U. S. consumers of federally graded meat will be able to tell whether the meat they buy is of foreign origin. The USDA recently announced an amendment to Federal meat grading regulations which will require that all imported meats be marked. The original proposal called for the amendment to go into effect on January 1, 1962, but the effective date was delayed until March 1, in order to permit handlers of imported meats to obtain suitable marking equipment.

POULT HATCH LARGER

During the first 11 months of 1961, the Nation's commercial hatcheries produced 109.4 million turkey poults, representing a 21% gain over the corresponding period last year, according to the SRS. Of the total, 32.5 million were heavy white breeds (up 42%); 65.1 million were other heavy breeds (up 15%); and 11.8 million were light breeds (up 4%). However, the total number of all poults hatched in November 1961 was 23% below the same month last year, and the number of turkey eggs in incubators on December 1 indicates that the hatch for the current month will be somewhat below that in December 1960.

L I V E S T O C K

Following the worst cold wave of the current season, fair weather during the week ended Thursday, December 21, resulted in increased livestock marketings at Fort Worth, reports the Agricultural Marketing Service. Cattle offerings were an estimated 4,500, or 300 more than in the preceding week but 2,000 fewer than in the corresponding period of 1960. Demand for all classes was good, and trading was fairly active through midweek but was slow on Thursday; closing prices for slaughter steers were steady with those on the previous Thursday. High-Standard and Good 855- to 1,195-lb. slaughter steers brought \$24 to \$24.75 per cwt., and Utility and Commercial cows sold at \$15.25 to \$18. Trading on stockers and feeders was moderately active, and prices were mainly steady, with Good and Choice 500- to 700-lb. stocker steers quoted at \$22.60 to \$26.50.

Calf receipts totaled approximately 700, compared with 600 in the previous week and 1,400 a year ago. Slaughter calves brought mostly steady prices. Good killing calves brought \$23.50 to \$25.25, and Good and Choice 250- to 500-lb. stocker steer calves cleared at \$23.50 to \$27.50.

At an estimated 1,400, hog marketings were 300 more than in the preceding week but 400 fewer than during the corresponding period last year. Prices were generally 25¢ lower than on the previous Thursday, with the majority of the U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 195- to 265-lb. barrows and gilts quoted at \$16.50 to \$17.25.

Sheep and lamb supplies are placed at 8,600, compared with 3,700 a week earlier and 3,500 a year ago. Demand was broad for most classes, and quotations were fully steady as compared with the previous Thursday's close. The bulk of the Good and Choice 66- to 125-lb. woolled and shorn slaughter lambs with No. 1 through No. 3 pelts brought \$15 to \$16.

P O U L T R Y

During the week ended Friday, December 22, the Texas commercial broiler markets opened unsettled, reports the State Department of Agriculture. Markets in both south and east Texas became about steady at midweek and closed with a firm undertone. The trading volume was light, as most of the buying interest was centered on items for the Christmas holiday. Closing quotations were 15.5¢ per lb. in south Texas and 14.2¢ to 15.6¢ in east Texas. During the corresponding period in 1960, the weighted average price in east Texas was 15.2¢; no quotation was available for south Texas.

Because of the Christmas holiday, no report was issued for Monday, December 25.

	Area	Week ended December 16, 1961	Percent change from	
			Previous week	Comparable week, 1960
BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS	Texas.....	1,954,000	3	-10
	Louisiana..	438,000	11	11
	22 states..	32,341,000	1	2