



# AGRICULTURAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

## FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS

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### TELEPHONE CABLE IMPROVES RURAL SERVICE

The Rural Electrification Administration recently reported that advances in the use of electronic equipment with buried telephone cable in rural areas permit 20 conversations on two pair of wires, in contrast to the former system of one conversation on one pair of wires. Buried cable, which has been used for some time in cities, is now being used in rural areas. This type of cable not only provides improved service to rural residents but also avoids the threat of storm damage to lines.

### ONE-DAY TEST FOR HOG CHOLERA

A new, relatively inexpensive, and easily performed 1-day test for hog cholera has been developed by specialists at the National Animal Disease Laboratory at Ames, Iowa. The U. S. Department of Agriculture says that the new test may be very beneficial in hog cholera research and eradication programs. Previously, the most reliable single test for hog cholera has been an inoculation test that is expensive and requires several weeks for completion.

### WORLD MILK PRODUCTION

World milk production in 1963 is expected to total 606 billion lbs., or about 2% less than in the preceding year, according to preliminary estimates for 35 countries that usually produce approximately 85% of the world's milk supply. Output in Western Europe, the major producing area, probably will be down less than 1%, despite lower output in more than one-half of the reporting countries. The Foreign Agricultural Service says that the principal factors responsible for the decreased world milk production are (1) the generally unfavorable weather conditions, (2) a decline in the number of dairy cows, and (3) the high cost of feed.

### DOMESTIC FOOD DONATIONS

USDA food donations for domestic use totaled 403.2 million lbs. in the first quarter of the 1964 fiscal year (which ends June 30, 1964), representing a 4% decrease from the corresponding period a year earlier. Although a larger quantity of donated foods was distributed to schools and institutions, the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service states that less food was needed for the reduced case load of needy families in the July-September 1963 period than a year ago. The total number of recipients in the Nation during September is placed at 5.2 million, compared with 6.1 million a year earlier.

The following are the numbers of persons in family units receiving USDA-donated commodities during September 1963 in the states of the Eleventh Federal Reserve District: Arizona, 70,159; Louisiana, 119,153; New Mexico, 82,187; Oklahoma, 284,250; and Texas, 147,583.

### REPORT ON THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

In reviewing the report of the Soil Conservation Service for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1963, Secretary of Agriculture Freeman announced that the USDA's service to urban and suburban residents on soil and water problems, outdoor recreation, and resource conservation increased during the past fiscal year. Assistance to rural landowners in soil conservation districts continued at about the same rate,

and work in watershed projects and other Rural Areas Development activities increased. The SCS assisted more than 1 million landowners and operators in planning and applying soil and water conservation practices during the year.

### L I V E S T O C K

The Fort Worth cattle run for the week ended Thursday, December 19, is placed at 3,300, representing decreases of 18% from the preceding week and 11% from the comparable period of 1962, according to the Agricultural Marketing Service. Trading on slaughter steers and heifers was slow, and prices were generally steady with a week ago. Good 905- to 1,135-lb. slaughter steers cleared at \$18.50 to \$20 per cwt., and Utility and Commercial cows brought \$12 to \$14. Closing quotations for Good and Choice feeder steers and heifers were 50¢ to \$2 per cwt. lower than in the previous week, with Good 500- to 700-lb. steers quoted at \$19 to \$21 per cwt.

Calf receipts totaled approximately 1,500, which is 100 fewer than a week earlier but 200 more than a year ago. Prices for slaughter calves were steady to weak. Good grades of killing calves weighing up to 550 lbs. sold at \$20 to \$21.50 per cwt., and prices for stocker steer calves weighing under 500 lbs. ranged from \$19.50 to \$23.

The hog supply of about 1,200 was one-third above the preceding week but about one-fourth below the year-earlier figure. Thursday prices for barrows and gilts were steady to 25¢ per cwt. lower than the previous week's close. The majority of the U. S. No. 1 through No. 3 Grades of 190- to 250-lb. butchers cleared at \$14 to \$14.50 per cwt.

A total of 6,100 sheep and lambs was received at Fort Worth during the week ended December 19, or about 11% more than both a week earlier and the corresponding period last year. Trading on all classes was active at the beginning of the week but was slower thereafter. Slaughter lambs sold at prices which were mostly 50¢ per cwt. lower than on the previous Thursday. The majority of the Good and Choice 79- to 83-lb. woolled slaughter lambs brought \$17 to mostly \$18 per cwt.

### P O U L T R Y

In the week ended Friday, December 20, commercial broiler markets opened steady in south Texas and slightly weaker in east Texas, reports the State Department of Agriculture. The market in east Texas continued its weakening trend throughout the trading period, while that in south Texas showed a slight price decline on Thursday but became steady again on Friday. At the market's close, the undertone in both areas was extremely unsettled as a result of the discontinuance of broilers for the school lunch program. Closing prices in south Texas were 12.5¢ to 13.5¢ per lb., and those in east Texas ranged from 11¢ to 12¢. In the corresponding period in 1962, closing quotations in south Texas were 11.5¢ to 12.5¢, and prices in east Texas were 11.8¢ to 13¢.

	Area	Week ended December 14, 1963	Percent change from	
			Previous week	Comparable week, 1962
BROILER CHICK PLACEMENTS				
	Texas.....	3,015,000	1	25
	Louisiana..	527,000	-7	11
	22 states..	38,993,000	1	11