

Keeping up on The **FARM** **OUTLOOK**

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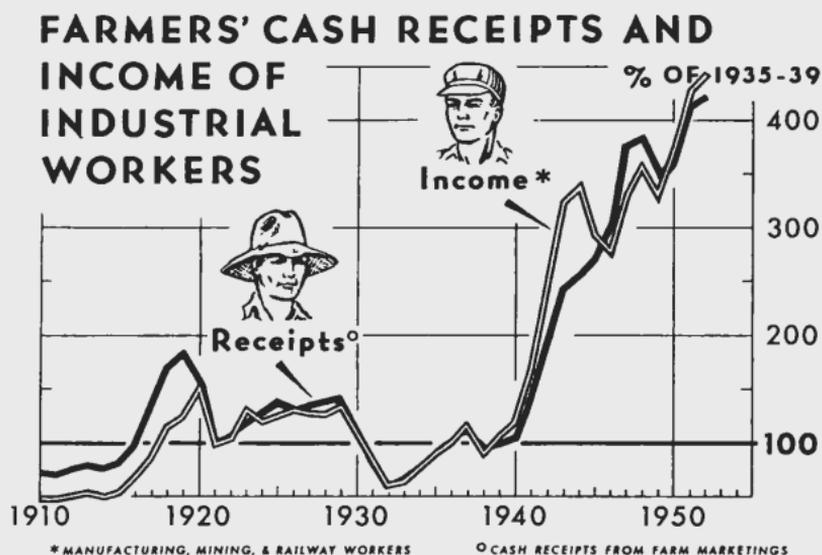
**Institute of Agricultural Sciences
STATE COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON**

Pullman

Washington

Farmers' cash receipts did not keep pace with income of industrial workers in 1952. Cash receipts from farm marketings were up a little more than 1 per cent from the previous year. Receipts from live-stock and products were 5 per cent less than in 1951 while crop receipts were up 12 per cent.

Cash receipts in 1953 are expected to be about equal to those of 1952. Income of industrial workers is expected to increase slightly.



Washington Early Potato Outlook Poor

Much lower early potato prices are expected for Washington farmers this year. No surveys are made of Washington farmers' intentions to plant early potatoes, but we expect an acreage increase after last year's high prices. Washington acreage for both early and late potatoes is expected to be increased approximately 8 per cent, with much of that increase in the east central irrigated areas.

Acreage increases for the United States early commercial potato areas are indicated. The winter potato acreage is up 35 per cent, with production up 30 per cent. Early spring acreage is up 18 per cent and late spring acreage up 16 per cent above last year. Early summer acreage is expected to be up 18 per cent. This will give a total United States early commercial acreage of 254,850 acres as com-

pared with 216,750 last year, an average increase of 18 per cent. With average yields, an early potato crop about equal to the one harvested in 1949 is expected.

January 1 late potato storage holdings are 21 per cent above last year's. This heavy carryover added to the probable United States early production indicates that the market may be saturated by the time our early potatoes come on the market.

Late potato acreage will be up from last year. A Bureau of Agricultural Economics survey indicated that growers planned to increase their late and intermediate potato acreage by 4 per cent. The western states were also up 4 per cent. Results from a more complete survey will be announced March 19 and will appear in our next issue.

Cattle Numbers Hit New High

Cattle numbers reached a new record of 93.7 million head on January 1 of this year. This is 6 million head, or 7 per cent, above January 1 of last year. This increase in numbers was due to a record high calf crop last year and the smallest slaughter of cattle and calves since 1943 except for last year.

Beef cow numbers reached an all-time high of 22.5 million head— up 9 per cent from last year. Number of cattle kept primarily for milk production was the highest since 1927.

Slightly stronger fed cattle prices are now foreseen. The recent price drop was far more than anyone expected. This was due to extremely heavy marketing of cattle and calves. January cattle slaughter was 50 per cent greater than a year ago and many of these lacked finish. But cattle marketings are being reduced from those high levels and prices should strengthen. A shorter supply of hogs will help strengthen grade cattle prices. Consumer demand will remain strong.

A strengthening of stocker and feeder prices is also expected. Stocker and feeder prices dropped with the recent break in fed cattle prices. Demand should pick up soon.

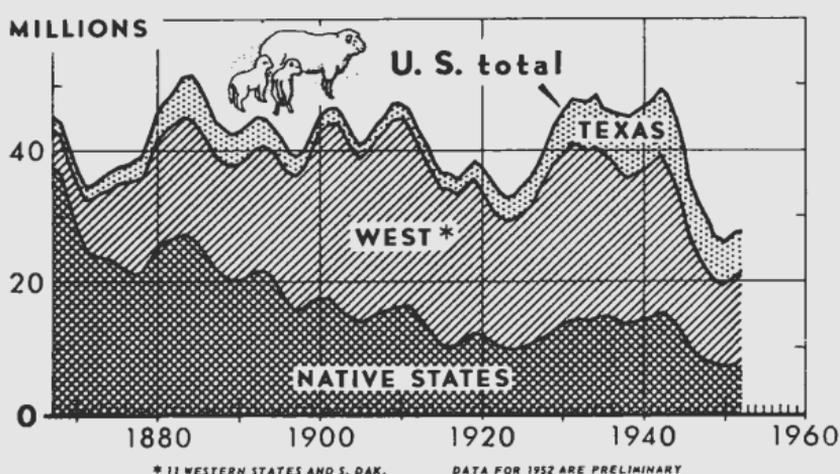
Northwest Wheat Prices To Rise Slightly

Pacific Northwest wheat prices are expected to strengthen slightly in the coming months. January 1 stocks were 88.2 million bushels, third largest on record. Disappearance for July to December was 64.8 million bushels, 13.5 million less than last year but more than each of the four preceding years. Exports of wheat as grain were around 37 million bushels, second largest on record. January wheat inspections for out-shipment were 10 per cent above a year earlier.

Amounts under price support are expected to be slightly above last year. By January 31, slightly over 50 million bushels of wheat are expected to be placed under loan in Washington, Oregon, and northern Idaho. Farmers had until January 31 to place their wheat under support. About 50 million bushels of the 1951 crop were placed under loan.

Spring wheat a good bet. Price supports will be about the same as this year's. If the 1953 crop is fairly large and the carryover large, acreage allotments are possible for the crop harvested in 1954. Any acreage allotment will be based on the acreage of wheat grown in earlier years.

STOCK SHEEP AND LAMBS ON FARMS JAN. 1



Sheep Numbers Down

Stock sheep numbers on January 1 were 27.9 million head, 1 per cent below a year earlier and 6 per cent above the record low reached January 1, 1950. Stock sheep numbers in the 13 western states decreased 3 per cent during 1952. Numbers were down 4 per cent in Oregon and 1 per cent each in Idaho and Washington.

Ewe lamb numbers were down 21 per cent. Breeding ewes 1 year old and over increased 4 per cent during 1952, reflecting the high number of ewe lambs held for breeding last year.

Stronger slaughter sheep and lamb prices are likely in the coming months. Slaughter has been heavy but is likely to ease soon. Any price rise isn't expected to be large since stocks of mutton and lamb on January 31 were about 60 per cent larger than a year earlier and nearly 33 per cent above average.

Sheep and lambs on feed January 1 were 7 per cent below a year earlier. This was the lowest since 1922 with the exception of 1950 and 1951.

Early Onion Prices Lower

Slightly lower early summer onion prices are expected next year, assuming normal yields. Early spring onion acreage is up 20 per cent and late spring up 19 per cent above last year. A 5 per cent increase in early summer acreage is indicated.

Onion prices shouldn't be down much from last year, though, unless yields are much higher than in the past. January 1 late onion stocks were 12 per cent less than a year earlier and just sufficient to meet needs until early spring onions come on.

Turkey Price Outlook

About the Same

Turkey prices about equal to last year's are expected for the 1953 crop if the growers raise the number which they indicated on January 1. A Bureau of Agricultural Economics survey showed that the nation's turkey growers intended to raise 8 per cent fewer turkeys than last year. This means about 54 million birds as compared with 59 million in 1952.

Washington growers plan to raise 12 per cent fewer turkeys and growers in all western states 15 per cent fewer than last year.

United States turkey production in pounds will be only 5 to 6 per cent less than last year, however. Growers plan to raise 23 per cent fewer light breed turkeys and only 3 per cent fewer of the heavy breeds. This means about 43 million of the heavy breed and 11 million light breed birds. If these intentions are correct, we can expect slightly better prices for our light breed turkeys and about the same or slightly lower prices for our heavy breeds. Competition from broilers and cheaper beef will be strong.

A reduction of 5 to 6 per cent in pounds is about equal to the 48½ million pounds (frozen and ready-to-cook) of the 1952 crop purchased by the government. These government purchases were made in order to help stabilize last year's turkey prices.

Actual turkey production may differ from the grower intentions. Any difference depends largely on prices of feed, supplies and prices of hatching eggs and poults, profitability of other farm enterprises, availability of credit, and sale of turkeys remaining in growers' hands.

Little increase in turkey prices is expected in the coming months. Although there is a moderate supply of heavy young toms, cold storage holdings of turkeys are at an all-time high and red meat supplies are large. Feed prices may strengthen slightly. This could make for an even lower turkey-feed ratio during the hatching period.

Unprofitable results from last year's turkey crop and a poor turkey-feed ratio during the hatching season may cause growers to raise fewer turkeys than they intended. Should this happen, we could expect slightly better prices than appear likely now.

What's New . . . What's Ahead

Hay prices are expected to weaken further unless we should have a severe and late spring. If you have excess hay and intend to buy stockers later, it appears a good bet to buy them now and use that excess hay until the grass is ready.

Electricity per farm doubled between 1941 and 1951. Total United States farm consumption of electricity was almost 10 times that of 1935.

The Bureau of Reclamation estimates that irrigation water will be available to 2,000 farms this year in the Columbia Basin Project. About half of these farms will be in crop production. This means about 70,000 acres—nearly 2½ times that of 1952.

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