

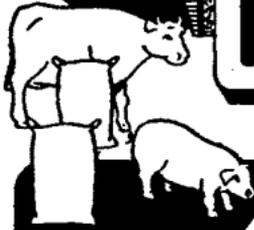
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# OUTLOOK

## Livestock and Feed

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Livestock producers will find ways of converting the present huge feed supplies into livestock products; but the real concern of the farmer is the buying power of consumers. Will people continue to have incomes large enough and regular enough to take livestock and other food products at a price that will permit continued large production?

The wage earners of America are the large buyers of American farm products. Factory workers, miners, mill employees, and office workers—the millions of American people who live on the wages they get from week to week—are the steady consumers. If employment continues regularly they will continue to buy. If employment falls off—through lack of markets, shortage of materials, labor unrest, or for any reason—they will cut down their buying.

Consumers want farm products and farmers want to supply them. Both sides profit by good business conditions.

# LOOKING AHEAD



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
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# Feed Supplies To Be Large

IT IS the yield per acre, not the number of acres, that is increasing corn production. Increased use of hybrid seed, greater use of commercial fertilizers, and improvements in corn-growing and corn-harvesting machinery have all helped to increase production. Spread of the corn borer may retard progress somewhat; how much we do not know. Soil erosion damage caused by too-intensive cropping may restrict the acreage; but the great value of corn as a crop will induce farmers, and scientists back of them, to find ways to meet these hazards and still produce corn.

## Corn Acreage

This increased yield per acre of corn has made record crops possible with fewer acres than were planted 20 years ago. Between 1920 and 1930 corn acreage in the United States was about 100 million annually. Recent corn acreages have been: 1944, 94 million; 1945, 88; 1946, 88; 1947, 84; and 1948, 85.

The American farmer needs to adjust himself to the fact that from now on big feed supplies are likely to be the rule and not the exception. Before 1942, there was only one year in history (1920) when a crop of 3 billion bushels of corn was harvested in the United States. But beginning with 1942, there was only one year (1947) when the crop was less than 3 billion.

Other feeds supplement the corn supply, but corn is by far the biggest single feed crop. The 1948 crops—corn, 3½ billion bushels; oats, 1½ billion; barley, ½ billion—while bigger than usual are in about the usual proportion to each other.

Some grain sorghum is raised as a grain feed, and some wheat may be fed if wheat production continues at its present rate. But corn is the crop to watch, whether it is being fed on the farm or sold to others for feed.

## 1949 Prospects

Not all the feed that was produced in 1948 can be fed in the feeding year of 1948-49. (See table) Any year there should be a substantial carry-over, but the carry-over from the 1948 crop will be larger than usual. If a normal or above normal crop is harvested in 1949, it will take considerable increase in livestock numbers to use it all.

## Protein Supplies

The big 1948 crop of soybeans, cottonseed, and flax will result in generous supplies of oil-meal—6.4 million tons this year as compared to 6.2 million in 1947, 5.8 million in each of 1945 and 1946. Animal protein supplies will be about the same as for the past two years and less than for the three years before that.

When the number of livestock to be fed is taken into account, it appears that the quantity of total protein feeds per animal unit will be about the same as for 1947—considerably more than for other recent years.

# LIVESTOCK

## Hogs • •

The pattern for 1949 hog production seems rather obvious. With the big corn supply to work with, most producers will raise all the 1949 spring pigs they can and follow up with a large fall pig production. The spring pigs will reach the market in the fall and winter of 1949-50, with many producers attempting to get their hogs sold before the main run.

Early pigs will have more advantage than in recent years. Pigs farrowed in March, kept well and thrifty and pushed along fast, should be in good market condition by October or earlier, when meat supplies may still be short.

## Hog Numbers

Both farmers and consumers are wondering how fast hog numbers will increase. In 1948 about 82 million pigs were saved in the United States from both spring and fall crops. This compares with 84 million in 1947, 83 million in 1946, and 86 million in each of 1944 and 1945. The changes in hog numbers are not usually extreme.

But at the outbreak of the war, with huge corn reserves on hand and strong demand for meat, there was a rapid increase in pig numbers. In 1941 there was about a normal crop of pigs—85 million. But in 1942 the numbers shot up to 105 million, and in 1943 to the record-breaking total of 121 million.

So hog numbers could conceivably jump again in 1949 and 1950. It is not likely, however, that they will. Much of the 1948 corn that will be carried over through 1949 will be under seal and will only be obtainable at support prices.

## Hog Weights

Market weights of hogs should be watched this season. Average weights of hogs marketed in the last few years have been 20 to 30 pounds heavier than before the war. The postwar demand for meat has made it profitable to continue raising heavier animals. From January through April, 1948, the average weight of all hogs slaughtered under Federal inspection was about 20 pounds heavier than prewar. With limited numbers of hogs and liberal feed supplies, there will be a tendency to feed to heavy weights, and discounts may be expected. As the feeding season progresses, close attention should be given to market reports and prospective price discounts.

United States Feed Grain Supply—Year Beginning October

Item	Av. 1937-41	1946	1947	1948
Millions of Tons				
Production of corn, oats, barley, sorghum .....	99.3	124.3	96.1	135.1
Other grains and by-products fed .....	20.2	24.3	25.6	23.5
Total available .....	119.5	148.6	121.7	158.6
Total fed .....	105.6	124.6	115.6	124.5
Feed grains for seed, human food, industry, and export.....	11.8	19.4	13.5	18.5
Left over for following year	2.1	4.6	.....	15.3
Shortage .....	.....	.....	7.4	.....

## Beef • •

The cattle feeder of 1948-49 is confronted with this situation: ample corn supplies, fewer hogs, a prospective good market, but high priced feeders.

Hogs normally consume about half the corn produced in Minnesota. This year they can't do it—there is more corn, and there are fewer hogs. The 1948 spring pig crop in Minnesota was 3.9 million pigs, compared with 4.2 million a year earlier.

On the corn side: Minnesota is producing a crop of 264 million bushels this year, compared with a ten-year average (1937-46) of 201 million. Obviously, more than the usual quantity of corn will be available for feeding livestock other than hogs, for sale, or for carry-over.

### How To Feed

When corn is cheap compared to the price of feeder cattle, it is assumed that feeding can be done on a much narrower spread than usual. Also, it is usually felt that calves can be fed on a smaller spread than heavier cattle because there is less beginning weight and a smaller investment per head. If the feeder is uncertain about the stability of business conditions, he may prefer heavier cattle so that he can turn them sooner; but he should buy on a basis that will allow him at least a small spread when he sells.

The man who feeds calves will need to figure on a longer feeding period, hence there will be more risk from possible changes in business conditions. If cattle are fed on this basis, they should be sold early enough to avoid the heavy run of hogs that may be expected in the late fall of 1949.

### Cattle Numbers

The beef cattle breeder is interested in the changes in cattle numbers and in the composition of the United States cattle herd. Changes in cattle numbers of recent years are shown below.

Cattle Numbers, January 1—United States

	All cattle	Cattle other than milk	
		Million head	Milk cows
1942	76	50	26
1943	81	54	27
1944	85	57	28
1945	86	58	28
1946	82	56	26
1947	81	55	26
1948	78	53	25

In the summer of 1948 it was estimated that the beef cattle herds contained a larger proportion of cows in relation to other cattle than at any time on record. The herds are in improved condition for production.

Minnesota beef breeders who have not culled their herds severely may well consider doing so. Shifting to a young herd of good animals, even though fewer than desirable, may be a good move.

## Sheep • •

Sheep numbers continue to decline in the United States, but world sheep numbers are now on the increase. Changes in sheep numbers of recent years are shown below.

Sheep Numbers, January 1

	United States		World
	Million head		
1931-35	53		706
1944	51		732
1945	46		705
1946	42		688
1947	38		689
1948	35		711

There are indications that some flock owners are holding back ewe lambs to rebuild their flocks.

The wool situation has improved. After remaining close to support levels for nearly two years, wool prices received by farmers improved substantially in the summer of 1948. In 1949 prices are expected to average higher than the support level of about 42 cents, chiefly because of premiums for the finer qualities of wool.

From the standpoint of the lamb feeder, the small numbers of sheep will mean a continued scarcity of feeder lambs. With ample feed supplies, however, gains can be put on at a moderate cost this year.

The outlook for the Minnesota flock owner appears to be favorable. The breeder who now has a flock should find a ready outlet, at good prices, for his wool and lambs. The man who has equipment and fencing, but no sheep at present, may find it to his advantage to pick up some ewes if he can get them at a moderate price. A small farm flock fits in well on many farms and may be desirable for the farmer who is equipped to handle one.

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