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Weekly Review for MINNESOTA

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

University Farm, St. Paul 8, August 28, 1944

SUPERPHOSPHATE OUTLOOK DARKENED. Production of superphosphate fertilizers will be adversely affected by industrial shortages of sulfuric acid caused by increased demands of the army for ordnance requirements and of the petroleum administration for war, according to the War Production Board. In view of this reduction of sulfuric acid supplies for industry, the War Food Administration has been notified by WPB that its requirements for 10,000,000 tons of superphosphate fertilizers for the fertilizer year July 1, 1944, to June 30, 1945, will not be fully met. According to the current rate of fertilizer production, approximately 8,000,000 tons of superphosphate fertilizers will be available to American farmers for this period. This compares with 6,800,000 tons available in the 1943-44 fertilizer year.

PETROLEUM STOCKPILE DOWN 32%. The nation's stockpile of essential civilian petroleum products has been reduced 32 per cent since August, 1941, petroleum administration for war reveals. With present seasonal demands exceeding refinery production, the nation's stocks will continue to decline.

TRUCK APPLICATIONS AGAIN ACCEPTED. The Office of Defense Transportation has resumed the acceptance of applications for the purchase of new light motor trucks for essential civilian use. The action is expected to dispose promptly of the small number of such vehicles remaining in the dealers' stock, ODT said. Acceptance of applications for these trucks (below 9,000 pounds gross vehicle weight) was discontinued last month because of the exhaustion of the essential civilian pool. On August 7 government exempt agencies relinquished their claims on the light units remaining and these units reverted to a common pool.

CATTLE SLAUGHTER. Total for 1944 is estimated at 32,000,000 head of cattle and calves, which would exceed the 1943 total by 4,000,000 head but would not be excessive in relation to the present number of cattle on farms and ranches. The slaughter estimate does not indicate a reduction in cattle numbers on farms at the end of the year. A seasonal increase in slaughter will coincide with the peak sales of cattle from the ranges thru October.

CATTLE ON FEED AT LOW LEVEL. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics reports that the number of cattle on feed for slaughter market in the 11 principal middlewestern cornbelt states on August 1 was 41 per cent fewer than a year ago, a reduction of 700 thousand head. This is the smallest number on feed on August 1 since 1937 and represents one of the sharpest reductions for any year in the cornbelt cattle-feeding history. It is estimated that feeders are planning to market probably 50 per cent fewer fed cattle between now and November 1, at a time when lower grade and unfattened cattle from the ranges may be at record levels. The reduction in numbers has been accentuated by a tendency of feeders to feed for a shorter period. The percentage reductions in number on feed August 1 compared to last year are as follows: Illinois, 34; Indiana, 45; Ohio, 63; Michigan, 65; Wisconsin, 20; Minnesota, 60; Iowa, 35; Missouri, 45; South Dakota, 50; Nebraska, 46; Kansas, 43.

WEA TO BUY MORE DRIED EGGS. For the month of September egg driers may offer dried whole eggs to the War Food Administration up to 100 per cent of their plant capacities for that month. Driers must certify that their offerings represent powder made from fresh shell eggs purchased on the current market, for drying, at prices commensurate with those paid by WFA in buying shell eggs for price support purposes.

Heavy production of eggs has made it necessary for WFA to buy large quantities, and in view of its commitment to support producer prices, it is seeking additional foreign outlets for eggs and egg products.

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POULTRY AND EGG PRODUCTION. Farm flocks laid 4,631,000,000 eggs in July, a record production for the month--2 per cent above July last year and 40 per cent above the 10-year (1933-42) average. Egg production was at peak levels in all parts of the country. The aggregate production for the first 7 months of this year was 40,293,000,000 eggs--6 per cent more than was produced during the same period last year and 49 per cent above the 10-year average. The aggregate was the highest of all time in all parts of the country.

The rate of egg production per layer in July was 13.8 eggs, compared with 13.7 last year and 12.9 for the 10-year average. The rate during the first 7 months of this year was 99.9 eggs, compared with 98.1 last year and 90.7 the 10-year average for the period. A record high rate for July was set in the West North Central and Western States. In all other parts of the country the rate was from 1 to 2 per cent below the July rate of last year except in the North Atlantic States where the rate was 2 per cent above last year and about equal to the record rate of July, 1941.

There were 336,368,000 layers on farms during July, an increase of 1 per cent from last year and 32 per cent above the 10-year average. Farm flocks decreased by 23,980,000 birds from July 1 to August 1, compared with a decrease of 26,219,000 birds last year. The decrease in layers was 7 per cent of the number on hand July 1, compared with 8 per cent last year. With an increase in egg prices during July the heavy culling of layers which was carried on in June was greatly reduced in July. Culling was 43 per cent heavier in June than in June last year but was 12 per cent less in July than in July last year.

There were 295,810,000 pullets not yet of laying age on farms August 1 to be added to the laying flock this fall and winter, a decrease of 15 per cent from a year ago, but 17 per cent above the 5-year (1938-42) average number. Decreases from a year ago were 23 per cent in the West, 21 per cent in the South Central, 17 per cent in the South Atlantic and North Atlantic States, 13 per cent in the West North Central and 5 per cent in the East North Central States.