

Weekly Review for MINNESOTA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

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University Farm, St. Paul 8, November 24, 1944

LARGEST CROPS IN U.S. HISTORY SEEN. This year's crops are expected to be the largest ever harvested, even topping the record output of two years ago, according to the latest Department of Agriculture crop report. Favorable October weather has raised prospective yields of corn, sorghums, soybeans, cotton, potatoes, and sweet potatoes.

The corn estimate has been raised 61 million bushels to a 3,258 million total, four per cent above any previous year.

Sorghums for grain will total nearly 160 million bushels, compared with the previous record of 112 million bushels. Grain production may total about 157.5 million tons, 2½ million above the record set in 1942.

Soybean production has been raised to 194 million bushels, only 2 million bushels below last year's record.

The forecast for potatoes has been raised more than 7 million bushels to a total of 388 million bushels and sweet potatoes are estimated at 76 million, an increase of nearly 3 million bushels.

FARM EMPLOYMENT. The number of persons working on farms the first of November is estimated at 10,690,000 or practically the same as on the same date last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported recently. While the number of unpaid family workers, including farm operators, increased from 8,064,000 on November 1 last year to 8,168,000 on the first of this month, the number of hired workers declined from 2,634,000 to 2,522,000, a drop of about 4 per cent between the two dates. Unpaid family workers thus represented 76.4 per cent of total farm employment. This is the largest percentage of record for that month except for 1934, in which year severe drought conditions curtailed crop production and reduced the need for hired labor. The greater reliance on family workers this year is due primarily to high wage rates and the difficulty in obtaining hired workers, especially of the type that farmers consider competent.

FREIGHT TRAFFIC. Class I railroads handled 2.5 per cent less freight in September than in the same month of 1943 but hauled 3 per cent more revenue ton-miles of freight in the first nine months of 1944 than in the same period last year. The 9-month total in 1944 was 20 per cent greater than the 1942 volume for those months and was 233 per cent greater than the 1939 traffic.

LIVING COSTS. The September 15 index was 126.5 per cent of the 1935-39 base, a 2.1 per cent increase in a year. Food costs were lower but clothing and home furnishings prices were higher.

LEND-LEASE FOODS. September deliveries of farm products totaled 541,872,551 pounds, of which 58 per cent went to Great Britain, 35 per cent to Russia, and 7 per cent to Greece, West Africa, Netherlands, Poland, Yugoslavia, and French possessions. The food included 35 per cent meat products, 28 per cent poultry and dairy products, 5 per cent fats and oils, 8 per cent fruits and vegetables, 11 per cent grain products and 13 per cent of all others.

(Over)

HOGS. The pig crop in 1943 reached the extremely high level of 122 million head. In 1944 the pig crop was reduced to about 88 million head, but was still the third largest on record. Present indications point to a 1945 pig crop of approximately the same size as in 1944. Pig crops in pre-war years, prior to the extreme droughts of 1934 and 1936, averaged about 78 million head annually.

Because of the time lag between the farrowing of pigs and the marketing of finished hogs, hog slaughter was larger in 1944 than in 1943. Approximately 95 million hogs were slaughtered in 1943, with about 97 million expected to be slaughtered in 1944. There will be about 20 per cent less slaughter in 1945 than in 1944.

BEEF CATTLE. The number of cattle and calves on farms and ranches at the beginning of 1944 probably reached a peak in the cattle numbers cycle. Numbers are expected to be slightly lower on January 1, 1945, than a year earlier, and probably will decline for several years. Accompanying this decline, at least during the next 2 or 3 years, slaughter will continue at a high level as breeding stock is reduced. Total slaughter of cattle and calves in 1944 is now indicated at close to 34 million head, a new record.

EGGS. Farm egg production in 1945 may decline 8 to 12 per cent below 1944 output because the number of layers on farms January 1, 1945, is expected to be 7 to 10 per cent below January 1, 1944, numbers. During 1944, egg production on farms reached a new record of 4.7 billion dozen, 4 per cent above the previous record of 1943 and 55 per cent above the 1935-39 average production. Despite the expected decline in production more eggs probably will be available for civilians in 1945 than in 1944, when the per capita consumption reached a record, now indicated at 347 eggs. This may result because of significant declines in lend-lease requirements for dried eggs.

TURKEYS. Turkeys raised in 1944 were a record 35.7 million head, equivalent to about one-half billion pounds dressed weight. An increase in production in 1945 is probable because of high returns during 1943 and 1944 and generally abundant feed supplies. Even with lowered military takings, prices received by producers may not be much different in 1945 than in 1944. Civilian demand for turkey was not fully satisfied in 1943 and 1944, partly because of large military purchases. Turkey consumption prior to the war was on the upturn and this trend probably will continue.