

Arizona Agriculture in 1951

Now It Is the State's
Most Important Industry

By Raymond E. Seltzer

\$379,000,000 is a lot of money, but that amount represents the cash farm income received by Arizona farmers during 1951. This is more than double the state's agricultural income in 1946, just five years ago, when Arizona farmers took in \$160,000,000.

During the past year, Arizona's agricultural income increased by \$106,000,000. Cotton accounted for \$77,000,000 of this increase.

Three products — cotton, beef cattle, and vegetable crops — accounted for 82 percent of the state's total income during 1951.

WATER

However, the satisfaction over the record income was dampened somewhat by the realization that our agricultural economy during the year

was maintained to a large extent by over-pumping of dwindling underground water reserves. Water tables continued to fall, with the drop ranging from 6 to 7 feet in most sections of the state and 8 to 9 feet in the more critical areas.

Surface water supplies were low as the year opened and continued low during the summer. With the exception of the San Carlos Project, most reservoirs gained stored water as rains came during the fall months. Winter rains have further added to the supply of stored water and storage is now at the highest level since 1941.

Over two-thirds of Arizona's irrigation water is pumped, and in an attempt to control the over-pumping of our underground water supplies, a new underground water code is being developed.

COTTON

Over half the irrigated acreage in the state was planted to cotton in 1951, 557,000 acres. While growing and harvesting conditions were far from ideal, yields of Upland cotton were estimated at 753 pounds per acre and production was expected to equal 840,000 bales. More recent estimates propose a somewhat lower figure, about 800,000 bales.

About 22,000 acres of American-Egyptian cotton were planted. Yields are estimated at 435 pounds, and production at 20,000 bales.

Prices were generally good, averaging near \$0.40 per pound for Upland cotton and the War Munitions Board purchasing the entire American-Egyptian crop at \$1.04 per pound base price.

Labor was again a serious problem. Scarcity of hand pickers and a generally poor job of hand picking led to greatly increased use of mechanical cotton pickers. Nearly 900 of these machines were in operation in the state, and it is estimated that 40 percent of the crop will be mechanically picked. Costs of production for 1952 are estimated at about \$175 per acre for Upland cotton, yielding 1½ bales.

BEEF CATTLE

Early in the season the operations of the office of Price Stabilization injected an element of uncertainty into the cattle feeding picture that threat-



Became "Big Business"

ened to result in a marked curtailment of feeding operations. The price rollback program and proposed slaughter quotas would have made operation very difficult for the majority of Arizona cattlemen.

However, by late summer the price rollback program had been abandoned and slaughter quotas outlawed, and as a result there developed a very active demand for all types of feeder cattle. Fall inshipments were large, twice 1950 and three and one-half times 1949, and feeder cattle prices were high. As the season progressed there developed an acute local shortage of feed, especially hay.

TRUCK CROPS

Arizona truck crop production continued to expand. Approximately 50,000 cars of vegetables were shipped from the state during the year. Lettuce accounted for 25,000 cars; cantaloups, 12,000 cars; carrots, 6,000; watermelons, 2,900; cabbage, 1,900; broccoli, 925; cauliflower, 700; celery, 500; and miscellaneous vegetables about 100 cars.

ALFALFA

Production of alfalfa hay was lower this year than last. Prices jumped spectacularly from \$25 to \$30 per ton in June to about \$45 per ton in December. A locally short hay supply and increased feeding demand were responsible for the price rise. Cost of production for 1952 is estimated at \$23 to \$24 per ton.

Alfalfa seed producers were showing increased interest in producing seed varieties adapted to northern growth.

FEED GRAINS

Acreage of feed grains was sharply reduced during the year, a direct result of the increased cotton acreage. Barley dropped from 198,000 acres in 1950 to 141,000 in 1951, and grain sorghums from 103,000 in 1950 to 41,000 in 1951. Grain prices advanced this fall as feeders bought up the existing supplies.

Cash Income from Arizona Farm & Ranch Production (In Millions of Dollars)

COMMODITY	1951	1950	Percent Change 1950-1951	Average 1941-1950
Cotton lint and cottonseed	\$195.0	\$118.0	+65	\$ 44.5
Cattle and calves	62.0	54.0	+15	35.9
Lettuce and other vegetable crops ^a	54.0	42.0	+29	34.1
Dairy products	13.5	12.0	+ 8	8.5
Commercial feed grains ^b	8.0	11.0	-27	6.0
Alfalfa and other hay ^b	15.0	9.0	+67	7.5
Sheep, lambs and wool	6.0	5.0	+20	4.1
Eggs, chickens and turkeys ^b	6.0	5.0	+20	4.0
Seed crops	4.0 ^c	4.0	0	3.8
Citrus fruit ^a	4.0	3.0	+33	4.0
Miscellaneous crops	8.0 ^d	7.0	+14	7.4
Miscellaneous livestock and livestock products	1.8	1.3	+38	1.9
Federal government payments	1.7	1.7	0	1.8
Total cash income	\$379.0	\$273.0	+39	\$163.5

^aYear ended August 31. Value citrus fruit "on the tree."

^bRepresents cash sales only. In addition, in 1951, hay fed by Arizona producers had an estimated value of 7 million dollars; grains fed, 2 million dollars; and dairy, poultry, and other products consumed by producers, 2 million dollars.

^cAlfalfa seed, 2.7 million dollars; sugar beet seed, 540 thousand dollars; also Bermuda grass and vegetable seeds.

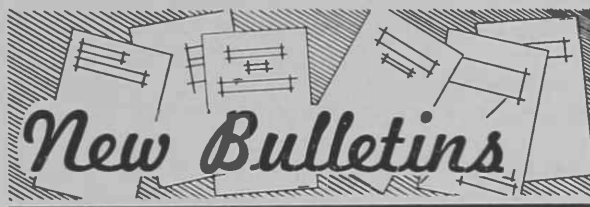
^dIncludes white potatoes, 2.4 million dollars; grapes, 1.3 million dollars; wheat 1.2 million dollars; castor beans, 900 thousand dollars; and flaxseed, 500 thousand dollars.

DAIRY

The trend toward increased production of Grade A milk, evidenced during the last five years, leveled off in 1951. During the year certain dairies were unable to secure adequate local

supplies of Grade A milk, and some milk was brought in from California to fill this demand.

—Raymond E. Seltzer is Acting Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics.



Ask your County Agricultural Agent for a copy of any of these new bulletins or circulars. They are free to Arizona farmers and stockmen.

Experiment Station

Gen. Bul. 237, "Irrigation Ditch Management on Arizona Irrigated Farms."

Gen. Bul. 238, "American-Egyptian Cotton—An Economic Analysis."

Gen. Bul. 239, "The Use of Salt as a Regulator of Supplemental

Feed Intake and Its Effect on the Health of Range Livestock."

Gen. Bul. 240, "Soil Organic Matter."

Gen. Bul. 241, "Comparing Foundation and Family Matings as a Means of Increasing Size in Eggs."

Gen. Bul. 242, "Arizona Agriculture 1952."

Extension Service

Halogeton, A Stock - Poisoning Weed. Circular 197.

Cotton Insect Control. Circular 179 Revised (1952 Recommendations).

Fruit Insect Control Hints, 1952. Circular 148 Revised.