Prior to World War II, a major portion of the cattle marketed for beef in the United States was slaughtered off native grass or pasture without being fed for any length of time. This changed rapidly after 1945, and by 1963 approximately 57 percent of the cattle slaughtered were marketed out of feedlots.

## STOCKER-FEEDER CATTLE PRICES

By Thomas M. Stubblefield

Development of the large single enterprise commercial feedlots in Arizona, California, Colorado and Texas accompanied the increase in the slaughter of fed cattle. Feeders in these states found it profitable to feed the crossbreed type cattle called “Okies” which are produced in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. This brought about a pattern of stocker-feeder movements that appeared illogical. Stocker-feeder cattle moved from the southern states to the feedlots in the western states, while stocker-feeder cattle produced in the western states moved to the Corn Belt for feeding.

### Analysis of Markets

The Department of Agricultural Economics at The University of Arizona analyzed the prices received at Los Angeles and Stockton, Calif.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Billings, Mont.; Ogden, Utah; Denver, Col.; Omaha, Nebr.; Kansas City, Mo.; and Amarillo, Ft. Worth, and San Antonio, Texas, for eight categories of stocker-feeder cattle to determine if the pricing pattern explained the movement of stocker-feeder cattle. The method of analysis used indicated which of the average prices received at the respective markets was significantly different (statistically). Some of the average prices were not significantly different, and in such cases they are considered equal.

The study covered the period 1957 to 1961. Results of this analysis show that those markets nearest to the Corn Belt paid the highest prices, on the average, for Choice and Good grade feeder steers and steer calves. The supply of these grades and weights of stocker-feeder cattle in the 11 western states was greater than needed to meet demands of the feeders in these states.

### Prefer Small Carcass

Choice 500-700 pound stocker-feeder steers and steer calves sold for the highest average price at Omaha. The second highest

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Tucson Mountain Park was made a part of the Sahuaro National Monument. The south half has been retained by Pima County, and is the home of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and Old Tucson.  

“Much of the county’s part has been purchased from the U. S. Department of the Interior, one section each year. In 1929 there was little wild life present, but with the establishment of the area as a state game refuge, and 10 years of protection, mule deer and javelina became plentiful, and a small band of mountain sheep inhabited some of the higher peaks.

“One day while the county park committee was holding a meeting on the north end of the long low mountain near the present site of the Desert Museum, Dr. E. E. Mathewson took the chair and made a motion that this mountain be called Brown Mountain. I said you had better wait until I am gone; however, there was a second by Al Condon, secretary of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, carried and recorded by the secretary, Dr. T. D. Mallery.

“At the time of establishment of Tucson Mountain Park, the human population of the area did not exceed 30,000, but at the present the metropolitan area has close to 350,000. It therefore occupies a very important place in the chain of recreational areas serving this center of population. The land at present prices would be worth many millions of dollars.

“Thanks is due The University of Arizona for my having the opportunity to serve Pima County for many years in the establishment and supervision of Tucson Mountain Park during the earlier years of its existence. I am still a member of the county advisory park committee.”

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May-June  

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Japanese Quail Used as Research Poultry

By R. D. Hendershott and B. L. Reid

The Poultry Science Department of The University of Arizona has established a colony of Coturnix Coturnix japonica, or Japanese quail, now housed at the University’s Poultry Research Center. The original hatching eggs were obtained from the University of California at Davis through the courtesy of Dr. W. O. Wilson, head of the Poultry Science Department there.

As early as the 12th century, the Coturnix quail were domesticated in Japan and developed as song birds. By 1910, Coturnix quail were being used for meat and egg production in Japan. During World War II, the varieties of song quail disappeared entirely and the domesticated quail virtually disappeared because their feed sources were incorporated into the war effort.

Eggs Are a Delicacy

Japanese Coturnix production is presently flourishing and considerable amounts of the Coturnix eggs and meat are consumed in Japan. It is even possible to purchase small cartons of quail eggs in that country, and they are considered a highly prized gift from one person to another, since eggs are regarded as a delicacy.

Attempts to establish these quail as a game bird in the United States during 1955 to 1957 failed. The failure to develop this prolific species for game purposes has been attributed to their migratory nature and the fact that the pen-reared birds are unable to survive in the wild.

The value of Coturnix quail as an experimental animal has increased in recent years. Much work has been conducted in avian physiology with Coturnix, and the University of California has conducted research in genetics, effect of lighting, and hormone interrelationships with quail.

The authors are members of the Department of Poultry Science, Dr. Reid being head of that department.

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markets were widely scattered geographically— Ft. Worth, Kansas City, Denver and Ogden. The higher price at Ogden, Denver and Ft. Worth is due to local preference for small carcasses and local feeding of heifers to meet this preference. Kansas City’s location near the Corn Belt accounts for its price position.

Prices received for Good 500-700 pound stocker-feeder heifers also indicate the preference in certain areas for lighter-weight carcasses, i.e., Denver, Amarillo, Ft. Worth and San Antonio. In the case of San Antonio, part of the cattle that qualify for this category of stocker-feeder cattle also qualify as slaughter calves. This resulted in San Antonio having the highest average price.

The prices paid for Good and Choice 250-500 pound stocker-feeder heifer calves reflects the preference for a smaller carcass in the Ogden, Omaha and Kansas City areas and demand for replacement heifers in these, as well as the Billings and Amarillo, marketing areas.

Phoenix Inconsistent

Los Angeles, Omaha, Kansas City and San Antonio had the highest average prices for Medium 500-1,000 pound stocker-feeder steers. Phoenix, Ogden and Billings had the lowest average price. However, Phoenix’s position is inconsistent with the fact that large numbers of this category of stocker-feeder cattle are brought into the state for feeding. Apparently, there was not enough of this kind of cattle offered for sale to make it economical for the feeders to sort them into uniform lots (approximately same weight and age) of 50 head or more.

Billings had the highest average price for Medium steer and heifer calves. This can be explained by the demand for thin-fleshed stocker calves to stock ranges and wheat pastures in winter wheat areas. Otherwise, the higher priced markets were in California and Arizona.

Results of these analyses are consistent with the movement patterns of stocker-feeder cattle. The Corn Belt is the major market for Good and Choice grade stocker-feeder steers and calves. The higher prices for stocker-feeder heifers were paid in areas where there was a demand for stocker heifers and where smaller carcasses are desired. The major area for feeding Medium grade stocker-feeder cattle is the southwestern United States.

San Antonio Unique

The San Antonio area was unique in that it was the highest priced market for Good grade stocker-feeder heifers. Also, it was one of the highest priced markets for Medium grade stocker-feeder steers. These prices reflect the relative demand for lower quality beef and slaughter calves in that market, and use of these categories of stocker-feeder cattle for feeding in the south Texas area.