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economic information for stockmen
where to find it

BY W. P. ROBERTS JR.
Economic Information for Stockmen—Where to Find It

By William P. Roberts, Jr.

ECONOMIC INFORMATION and market news are highly important to a livestock producer. He constantly faces problems requiring him to be as familiar as possible with the factors influencing the prices he has to pay for his supplies and those he receives for his salable livestock.

State or federal government agencies as well as private concerns publish market news and outlook information via radio, television, magazines, newspapers, and special services. According to a recent survey made by the Agricultural Economics Department, the most widely used sources are the farm magazines. Radio is next in importance, followed by daily newspapers. While we found that over 96 percent of the ranchers surveyed took at least one of the four most popular farm magazines, few stockmen used government reports as such. Still, much information in government reports becomes available to the stockman through farm magazines and other sources.

Types of Reports

Livestock-Market Reports

Probably the most obvious and widely used type of economic information is price-and-sales data, that is, market reports. These have become more important in recent years as more and more stockmen have begun wearing two hats: the broad-brimmed Stetson of the range producer and the narrower but equally important hat of the livestock salesman.

This dual role has shifted the responsibility of salesmanship from the hands of a paid specialist into those of the producer. It is a heavy responsibility. The profits of a year's excellent management can suddenly disappear with a poor marketing decision. Livestock buyers keep abreast of all the information they possibly can obtain on factors affecting livestock
prices. They are experts in their field; many make more transactions in a year than a producer will make in a lifetime.

The needed economic information is available to buyers and sellers alike, and both can make full use of it. In central markets, buyers are present and actively bidding against each other. With the increase in the proportion of livestock sold in the country and with the resultant decentralization of the market, the only way to maintain competition is for both parties to find out what prices have been on sales of similar cattle. Market reports keep the seller informed of current prices.

Unfortunately the area where most of the sales occur, in the country, is not too well reported. In view of the volume of marketings of range cattle, livestock-sale reports reflect relatively little influence. This problem will receive attention in the Appendix, page 18.

### Outlook and Situation Reports

A very useful type of information is "outlook" information. Outlook concerns itself with forecasting the economic position of specific agricultural commodities or of agriculture as a whole. These trends can either be long-term or concern the current year. Most farm magazines have a section devoted to "outlook" information. Many government publications are concerned exclusively with estimating future supply and demand.

"Situation" reports deal with the present situation regarding planting, yields, livestock numbers, calf and lamb crops, feeding and feeds, and many other subjects including marketing, transportation, and foreign trade. These can be very useful to a stockman.

Although the livestock-market news may leave something to be desired, it, along with other economic information, is still the main tool the livestock producer has, to enable him to make production and marketing decisions.

### Sources of Reports

The following list of publications and reports contains information on outlook, trends in production and slaughtering, and market information. A brief description of what each report contains enables stockmen to see if it is of interest to them. In a compilation such as this, it is almost impossible to list every publication, especially those issued by private publishing firms.

This listing does not seek to evaluate any publication. It is intended as a guide from which you, the stockman, can make your choice. Farm and ranch organizations in Wyoming as well as national organizations also issue publications containing excellent information on livestock marketing and outlook. These were not included since their distribution is generally limited to members and...
Wyoming ranks second in U.S. sheep production

such publications are not available to the public.
Some manufacturers of agricultural implements, feeds, fertilizers, and related products publish good and useful material that can be obtained by requesting them. Also, auctions, terminal markets, and commission firms publish reports of their sales. You can obtain these by writing to the market in which you are interested.
The publications listed are concerned mainly with livestock. Many other reports are published that contain information on crops and other phases of agriculture. In this listing the only reports of this kind that are included are those released in Wyoming. Interested persons can obtain a complete listing of all reports by writing to the source of these livestock reports.
The first section lists, by source, reports and publications issued by the Wyoming Crop and Livestock Reporting Service and by various agencies of the U.S.D.A. They contain a wealth of useful material but, as was mentioned earlier, are not much used by livestockmen. They are not widely publicized or advertised, and this may be why they are not more widely used. Many people do not know of their existence. Anyone interested may write to the source indicated and ask to be placed on the mailing list or to be sent a sample copy. One would probably not want to take all of these reports. Five entries marked with a star (*) represent sources of particu-
lar interest to all livestock producers. Some individuals might want more specialized reports in their own fields.

The last section includes reports issued by private publishing and research agencies. Private reports vary greatly; they range from general agricultural magazines to specialized reports on livestock marketing and political developments affecting agriculture. The range of prices for these publications varies from nominal to expensive. Since prices are subject to change, no prices are given.

**Wyoming Crop and Livestock Reports**

The first reports selected are those of the joint federal and Wyoming state reporting service. As these reports are of special interest to Wyoming agricultural producers, both crop and livestock reports are included. These reports are as follows and may be obtained by writing to:

*Wyoming Cooperative Crop & Livestock Reporting Service*
*P. O. Box 815*
*Cheyenne, Wyoming*

**Crops, Livestock, and Weather.** Issued weekly from April to October. It contains a summary of weather conditions in the state, crop prospects, planting, yield, harvestings, and livestock and range conditions.

**Crop Production.** Monthly, reports crop and weather conditions and forecasts production for Wyoming. Also contains a summary of similar information for the United States.

**Prospective Plantings.** Issued annually, in March, this report gives indicated and actual plantings of major crops for the coming crop year. It contains information for Wyoming and a summary for the United States.

**Wyoming Annual Crop Summary.** This December release contains statistics on Wyoming's production and yield of the major crops for the year just ended. It also contains a summary of similar figures for the United States.

**Potato Stocks.** Annual report issued in February. It lists the potatoes on hand in Wyoming and the other states. These are compared to reports of previous years.

**Stocks of Grain.** Quarterly report issued in April, July, October, and January. It lists the stocks of major grains on hand both on and off Wyoming farms and other farms in the United States.

**Annual Livestock Report—January 1.** This report, issued each February, inventories the number and value of livestock and poultry as of the first of the year. Statistics cover Wyoming; a summary for the United States is also included.
*Wyoming Range and Livestock Report. Issued each month, this report gives the condition of the range and of range livestock for Wyoming and the 17 Western States. A historical comparison is also included.

Commercial Livestock Slaughter. Monthly, lists the number and poundage of the major classes of livestock slaughtered. It covers wholesale and retail slaughter but does not include farm and ranch slaughter.

Wool Production. A semi-annual report, issued in March and August, it includes sections on wool production, prices, and the wool situation in Wyoming and the United States. A short historical section is included.

Lamb Crop. Annual report, released in July, lists sheep and lamb numbers and lambing percentage for Wyoming and the United States. The historical background, including wool production figures, is also given.

Calf Crop. Released annually in August. It lists the present and past calf production in numbers and percentage of breeding-age cows including figures for Wyoming and the United States.

Pig Crop. This semi-annual report released in June and December covers actual and intended farrowings.

Cattle and Sheep on Feed and Feeding Situations. Quarterly report starting in January. It presents figures on farm production and income from meat animals as well as those for animals on feed. The number of ani-
mals on feed is given and compared with previous years. Also included are intended marketings and a brief review of the livestock and meat situation.

**Dairy Products Manufactured.** This report, released monthly, gives the production of butter, ice cream, and milk for Wyoming and the United States.

*Prices Received and Paid by Farmers and Ranchers.* This gives the monthly trend in prices received for the major agricultural commodities and the prices paid for the feed and other items used in production. It includes Wyoming figures and a summary for the United States.

**United States Department of Agriculture Reports**

The United States Department of Agriculture maintains research offices and reporting services throughout the nation as well as in the central offices in Washington, D.C. The research offices compile and publish materials pertaining to factors affecting supply and demand for livestock and crops. The reporting services gather and distribute information on actual market prices being paid. For this reason, there may be more than one office in a city issuing U.S.D.A. reports, as is seen in Denver, Colorado, and in Washington, D.C.

The reports and offices listed here are those which are of major interest to livestock men in this region and do not include many concerned with other regions. The Denver offices of issue cover the Rocky Mountain region; the West Coast publications are included to cover the western terminals and the wholesale meat trade. The Washington, D.C., offices issue reports of nationwide significance.

In many cases there is duplication, that is, more than one office will release similar reports if they are of interest in more than one region. Where the reports are of special interest, such as outlook and situation reports, they are so indicated. The reports are listed after each office of issue.

**Livestock Market Reports of the U. S. Department of Agriculture**

**U. S. Department of Agriculture**
**Agricultural Marketing Service**
**403 Livestock Exchange Building**
**Denver 16, Colorado**

*Denver Livestock Market.* Issued each Thursday and covers the weekly trade on the Denver market for cattle, hogs, and sheep. Also includes a summary of other markets.
*Range and Feedlot Sales. A weekly review issued each Friday, it covers direct sales and contracts from the range and feedlots in southern Wyoming, Colorado, western Nebraska, western Kansas, and northern New Mexico.

Special Stocker and Feeder Report. This is a special report released on Mondays during the fall when the volume of trading warrants. It usually starts in July or August and ends in October or November. This contains wire summaries of stocker and feeder trade at Denver and the Missouri River markets.

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Western Livestock Office
P. O. Box 1746
Denver, Colorado

Cattle on Pastures in the Blue Stem (Flint Hills) and Osage Sections of Kansas and Oklahoma. This report contains information concerning shipments of cattle into these grazing areas as of June first. It also gives information on pasture and livestock conditions and compares this year with previous years.

Western Range and Livestock. This gives condition of ranges, cattle, and sheep, by states, for the Western states. It is issued about the 10th of each month.

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Market News Branch
212 Livestock Exchange Building
Union Stockyard
Los Angeles 58, California

Combined Daily and Weekly Livestock Market Report. This report, issued on Thursday, covers that day's trading and reviews the previous trading on the Los Angeles market.

Daily Livestock Market Report for Los Angeles. Issued each Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Covers that day's trading on the Los Angeles market.

Los Angeles Area Wholesale-Meat-Trade Report. Issued each Tuesday and Thursday, this report covers the wholesale-meat trade in the Los Angeles area.
San Francisco Feedlot and Range-Sales Report and The Western Terminal Review. These two reports are issued each Friday on the same sheet. The "San Francisco Feedlot and Range Sales Report" is a review of these sales in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. It also contains a summary of the Denver and Spokane range-sales report. The "Western Terminal Review" reviews the week's livestock trading at seven western terminal markets and the meat trade at three Pacific Coast markets. The seven terminal markets are: North Portland, Los Angeles, Spokane, Stockton, South San Francisco, Ogden, and Denver. The three meat-trade areas are Los Angeles, San Francisco, and the Seattle-Portland-Tacoma area.

San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area Semiweekly Wholesale-Meat-Trade Report. Issued Tuesday and Thursday, this report covers the trade for this area and also includes a summary of the trading at the other major wholesale meat centers. These are Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and the Portland-Seattle-Tacoma area.

One of the major outlets for Wyoming feeder lambs—the feedlot
Western Early Lamb Report. This is a seasonal report issued from February to May. During this period it is issued each Monday. It contains a review of conditions, prices, and related data on the contract selling of sheep and lambs in California and other Western states.

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Crop Reporting Board  
Washington 25, D. C.

Agricultural Prices. A monthly report listing, by states, the prices received for principal crops and livestock products, index numbers of prices received and paid by farmers, and parity prices. Issued at the end of the month, this outlines the situation as of the fifteenth.

Calf Crop. This report is issued twice a year, in February and July. The February release lists the number of calves born the previous year, while the July release lists the number born and forecasts the expected number to be born in the current year.

Cattle and Calves on Feed. Issued quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Covers the leading 21 cattle-feeding states. It gives the total number on feed by states; by classes; by weight groups; and by length of time of feeding.

Commercial Livestock Slaughter and Meat Production. Issued at the end of each month. It gives the number and live weight of cattle, hogs, sheep, and lambs slaughtered in commercial plants by states, meat production by species, and lard production for the United States.

Early-Lamb Situation. Released in May, this report presents the situation in the 10 important early-lamb states—California, Arizona, Texas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.

Inspected Stocker and Feeder Shipments from Public Stockyards. This includes monthly data for cattle and calves, sheep and lambs, by market origin, and state of destination. Issued about the 22nd of each month in the Weekly Market News.

Lamb Crop. This report is issued in March and July. The early (March) report gives the situation for the 10 important early-lamb states—California, Oregon, Arizona, Texas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Idaho, and Washington, while the July report gives the number of lambs saved by states.

Lamb-Feeding Situation. Conditions as of November 1. Issued annually in November.
Beef feeding is a typical scene on Wyoming irrigated farms

*Livestock and Poultry Inventory January 1. Annual report listing the number, value, and classes of livestock and poultry by states at the beginning of each year.

Meat Animals—Farm Production, Disposition, and Income. Annual report released in April, presenting data for the previous year by states.

Mohair Production and Value of Sales. This February release presents the number of goats clipped and mohair production and value by states for the previous year.

Pig-Crop Report. Quarterly report issued during March, June, September, and December. All reports contain information on current inventory numbers and on number of sows farrowing. In addition, the June and December reports contain information on indicated farrowings and numbers for the coming quarter.

Sheep and Lambs on Feed January 1. Annual report listing the number on feed by states at the beginning of each year.

Stocker and Feeder Cattle and Sheep Received in Several Corn Belt States. This is a report issued about the 15th of each month giving data by states. Included in the Weekly Market News.
Total Livestock Slaughter, Meat and Lard Production. Released annually in May, this presents commercial and farm slaughter and meat production in the United States for the previous year.

*Weekly Market News—Livestock Division. This report gives a comprehensive weekly coverage of the major markets for livestock, meat, and wool. It also contains special features of interest to stockmen. As this condenses many of the other reports, it probably is the most complete single source of market news.

Wool Production and Value of Sales. Issued twice a year, in February and July. The February issue contains a summary of the previous year's production and sales while the July issue contains production information for the current year.

Outlook and Situation Reports of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Situation. This report is a printed monthly periodical containing brief reviews of current marketing and economic developments affecting farmers. A charge is made for this report, currently 50¢ per year. You can obtain a sample of this or any Outlook or Situation report by writing to the Marketing Information Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. Subscriptions to the Agricultural Situation are taken by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

Administrative Services Division (ML)
Agricultural Marketing Service
Washington 25, D. C.

The Demand-and-Price Situation. Reviews the factors that affect the domestic and foreign demand for farm products including output, employment, income and related factors, and commodity prices. This is followed by a brief review of farm income and discussion of general trends in demand, supply, and prices of major farm products. Issued about the 25th of each month.

The Farm-Income Situation. This report presents estimates of cash receipts from farm marketings, by commodity groups, and government payments; index numbers of cash receipts and of physical volume of farm marketings for several preceding months; and estimates, by states, of cash receipts from sales of crops and livestock. During the year, annual state estimates are included which show government payments to farmers, value of home consumption for crops and livestock, gross and net income of farm operators; cash receipts and home consumption by detailed commodities; and cash receipts from farm marketings by states, by major individual commodities. Issued five times a year.
The Marketing-and-Transportation Situation. This contains statistics on the U.S. average retail cost of a market basket of farm foods, the payment received by farmers for these products, and the spread between the retail cost and the farm value or payment to the farmer. Similar data are given for seven groups of products, for 45 individual food products, and for a group of cotton-clothing articles and house furnishings and the principal tobacco products. Special articles concerning marketing and transportation of farm products are included in each issue. Issued four times a year.

The National Food Situation. Contains statistics on per-capita consumption of major foods, nutrients available for civilian consumption, production of major food commodities, and retail food prices and total consumer price-index number. Reviews of supply, production, marketing retail prices, and consumption of major foods are included. Issued four times a year.

The Agricultural Outlook Digest. This is a two-page digest of current indications as to the outlook for production, farm employment, demand, exports, prices received by farmers, prices paid by farmers, and the outlook for various farm commodities. For the most part, it summarizes The Demand and Price Situation and the commodity-situation reports. Issued the same day as The Demand and Price Situation.

Statistical Summary. Prepared for ready-reference desk use, this report is a four-page roundup of current agricultural statistics. Issued each month as soon as possible after the release of the Crop Production report (usually about the 20th).

Commodity Situation Report. The following commodity-situation reports analyze the supply, demand, price, and outlook for each of the more important farm products for which adequate information is available. This information is provided as an aid in planning production and marketing. Tables and charts present current figures on acreage, yield, production, market movement, stocks, consumption, and prices with comparisons with other significant periods. From time to time the results of special studies relating to the respective commodities are included. Of particular interest to the livestock producer are:

The Livestock and Meat Situation, which is issued seven times a year;

The Wool Situation, which is issued four times a year;

The Feed Situation, which is issued six times a year.

In addition to these reports, there is a short-term regional outlook report for livestock issued from Denver, Colorado. This report, "The Western Livestock Round-up", has been a joint experimental report of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the agricultural colleges of the 11 Western states. It is now available to interested stockmen, who can obtain it through their county agent's office.
Private Reports, Magazines, and Newspapers

This section deals with the most familiar publications issued by private agencies or publishing companies. For this bulletin they have been divided into two main categories: (1) special reports and (2) livestock magazines and newspapers. The reports of the first group deal primarily with economic and political developments affecting agriculture but may cover many fields such as methods of production, feeding, and marketing. Those in the second group are more of the general-interest type. There are a great many newspaper and magazine-type publications in this general-interest field. Their primary function is not that of presenting economic information. If all these were presented here, the list would go on page after page. Hence only the ones published locally, or those published outside this region that contain articles pertaining to this region and that have a circulation of over 1,000,000 readers, are listed. Enough interest in these publications has been expressed to warrant listing them here. This is not meant as a criticism of the rest of those published outside the region and distributed in Wyoming.

Fitting a description to private publications is difficult. Often there is a great variation between issues; however, a general description of each is given.

The first section includes special reports and advisory services.

Doane Agricultural Digest
5144 Delmar Boulevard
St. Louis 8, Missouri

A bimonthly report of a more technical nature giving advice on production and marketing of agricultural products.

Kiplinger Agricultural Letter
1729 Fourth Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

A weekly release in letter form keeping abreast of current economic and political developments affecting agriculture.

Livestock and Grain Bulletin
Pickell and Sons
176 West Adams Street
Chicago 3, Illinois

A bimonthly report on happenings in the livestock and grain business.

Livestock Market Digest
P. O. Box 2040
Billings, Montana

A monthly magazine published by the National Livestock Auction Association. It carries articles concerning auction markets.
National Livestock Market Service  
139 North Clark Street  
Chicago 2, Illinois  
This weekly report contains articles reporting supply and demand. It also contains forecasts and summaries. Published by the Research Department of The National Livestock Producers Association.

Northern Plains Round-Up  
Box 774  
Alliance, Nebraska  
A weekly leaflet covering the terminal markets and the auctions in Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, Kansas, Iowa, and South Dakota. It also covers country sales that are available and includes a section on livestock wanted and for sale.

Washington Farmletter  
Farm Reports, Inc.  
1835 K Street, N.W.  
Washington 6, D. C.  
A weekly letter keeping the reader abreast of current economic and political developments related to agriculture.

Washington Farm Reporter  
National Agricultural Research, Inc.  
744 Jackson Place, N.W.  
Washington 6, D. C.  
A weekly report covering scientific, political, and economic developments in agriculture.

The next publications are those from outside this region.

Cappers Farmer  
121 West 8th Street  
Topeka, Kansas  
An illustrated monthly magazine of general agricultural interest.

The Farm Journal  
Washington Square  
Philadelphia 5, Pennsylvania  
Printed in four editions, Eastern, Central, Southern, and Western, this monthly illustrated magazine contains sections on production, marketing, and outlook information. It also contains a section for the homemaker.

Successful Farming  
1716 Locust Street  
Des Moines 3, Iowa
A monthly illustrated magazine containing articles on agricultural production, marketing and outlook. It also contains a section for the homemaker.

The publications in this next section are regional livestock magazines and newspapers.

*Denver Record Stockman*
1820 Curtiss Street
Denver 2, Colorado
This is a weekly newspaper summarizing the livestock market activity at Denver and other western markets. It also contains articles of other interest to stockmen.

*Montana Farmer Stockman Round-Up*
Montana Farmer Inc.
Great Falls, Montana
A bi-monthly release, this paper contains a coverage of the major livestock markets and articles of general agricultural interest.

*The Utah Farmer*
175 West South Temple
Salt Lake City 1, Utah
Published two times a month, this magazine contains articles of general agricultural interest and covers national market trends.

*Western Farm Life*
616 Washington, Box 299
Denver 1, Colorado
Published twice a month, this magazine contains Denver and other western market reports as well as articles of general agricultural and homemaking interest.

*Western Livestock*
414 Boston Building
828 Seventeenth Street
Denver 2, Colorado
A monthly publication of general agricultural interest to western stockmen.

*Western Livestock Reporter*
P. O. Box 2559
Billings, Montana
A weekly newspaper featuring articles of general interest to the stockman and summarizing official U. S. Department of Agriculture market reports.

*Wyoming Stockman Farmer*
110 East 17th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming
This paper is published the first of each month. It contains articles concerning marketing activities in Wyoming and the United States. Also contains articles of general agricultural interest.
The above list includes the more important reports containing economic information. There are shortcomings in some of these reports, but they are still useful. Previously it was mentioned that in the area of country sales reporting a considerable amount of information was lacking. Let us now take another look at this.

An Examination of Livestock-Sales Reporting

The official United States Department of Agriculture market news that we now receive has not kept pace with the widening market resulting from a pronounced change to direct selling in the country. The market-news service today resembles the service evolved in the 1920's. This was before the development of improved transportation and communication made possible the movement of the majority of the sales from the central markets to the country. With few exceptions, the meat of the market news consists of central markets sales, and only slight mention is made of auctions and direct sales. The reason is easily understood when you think of the difficulties of obtaining country-sales information. The great distances involved are a big deterrent in themselves. Moreover, to be complete, the report should include information on time of weighing, cutbacks, shrinkage, weight, grade, and other important factors of the sale. In addition, country-sales reports should be checked with both the buyer and the seller.

How serious the lack of reports of country sales is depends upon the answer to the question: "Are comparable grades of livestock sold in the country and at the central markets?" More livestock are sold at country points than at central markets. Figures show that less than two-fifths of Wyoming's cattle are sold by the producer through terminal markets. Thus the minority of sales receives the majority of attention in the market reports. If the livestock sold in the country are of a higher quality than those going to a central market, the reporting of central-market sales may serve to lower the price of the livestock sold in the country. If the higher quality animals are sold in the central market and are reported in regular market-news channels, this might inflate the price of the lower quality animals sold in the country. There are many opinions on this, but the majority believe that for feeder livestock, at least, the better quality animals are sold at country points.

No United States Department of Agriculture market reporters are stationed in Wyoming. The nearest reporters are stationed in Billings, Montana; Ogden, Utah; and Denver, Colorado. The reporter at Billings covers primarily the markets in Billings. However, he is assigned the task of also reporting country and other auction sales in southern Montana and northern Wyoming. This is quite a task for one man to do thoroughly. Until recently, the same situation existed for the Denver reporter. However, since the fall
of 1957 a reporter has been stationed in Denver with the express objective of reporting country sales. This man is assigned to cover northern Colorado, southern Wyoming, and western Nebraska. This is still quite a large territory to cover well. He is able, however, to obtain considerable information on country sales from the feedlots which receive livestock in these areas.

Selected References


