

Makes Review of War-Agriculture Lessons of 1917

Believes Federal Government Might Have Contributed More Toward Boom Control

Lessons from the role of American agriculture during the war years, 1917-18, should be uncovered by examination, an O. C. Siders...

Perhaps the best way to discuss the role of American agriculture in 1917-18 is from the standpoint of the major food problems that faced the United States Food Administration...

No problem was more acute than the shortage of wheat. As the Allies' own production diminished, their demands for foreign wheat constantly increased.

Furthermore, because of the reduction of British tonnage through submarine warfare, it was doubtful if Australia and Argentina could ship their quotas to the Allies.

Such a demand upon our wheat fields brought with it a rise in wheat prices. No. 1 Northern Spring wheat went to \$3.15 a bushel on May 11, 1917, an all-time high.

It might be assumed that, with wheat averaging nearly \$3, no further inducement would have been necessary to stimulate farmers to increase their acreage.

Only the President could set prices. To this end he appointed a committee of men widely differing in interests. They met in Washington August 30, 1917.

A difference in viewpoint between Congress and the Food Administration was noticeable. Congress provided a minimum for the 1918 crop.

The license system already referred to was put into effect, but a licensee could purchase wheat at prices higher than those fixed by the Government.

The Corporation established buying agencies at all important markets and stood ready to purchase all wheat offered at the established price.

Throughout the War, the Grain Corporation also undertook to see that an equitable distribution of wheat supplies was made to American mills, and to control the prices at which flour and other products were sold by the mills.

Another serious problem had to do with sugar. The drain upon Cuban and American stocks was reflected in its market price.

With the 1917-18 crop under control, it was necessary to take care of the next year's crop.

But the wholesale price of sugar in the United States has been established at 9 cents after an investigation had disclosed that any smaller price would not allow the Louisiana cane producers and the western beet raisers a fair return.

While the price of sugar was being fixed, it was also necessary to take care of the next year's crop. It was estimated that this would come to 1,600,000 tons and our requirement was 4,000,000 tons.

A Preview of the New Central Exchange Building

The above picture was made from the architect's drawing of the new Farmers Union Central Exchange building at South St. Paul, Minnesota.

The main instrument of price control over beef and pork was the regulation of markets through purchases by the food administration.

Probably in no other part of its work did the Food Administration have as much difficulty—and receive as much criticism—as here.

Consumption of much pork in hogs. The world was consuming its supply of fats much faster than it was producing them.

The administration ran into difficulties in enforcing this ratio, however, and early in September 1918, announced that the 13-bushel ratio based on prices of corn on the farm and not in Chicago.

Hog prices fluctuated as before. They reached \$19.75 in September 1918, but when reports of peace circulated in October dropped to \$16.75.

The other food problems and controls can be treated briefly. Other Problems of Profit Control. In regard to poultry and dairy products the Administration's problem was strictly one of profit control.

Cottonseed prices jumped to \$36.51 a ton by August 1917, an increase of 150 percent above the pre-war level.

Many other foodstuffs were regulated by the Food Administration. The methods used were generally either one or more of the type used to control the foods already mentioned.

Criticisms and Complaints. In 1920, in a privately printed report of the Food Administration, Mr. Hoover charged that the Allies, as soon as the war was won, flatly broke their agreements with us in connection with their food purchases here.

It seems obvious that the activities of the Food Administration and of the Department of Agriculture should have been merged into those of the Department of Agriculture so that the Federal Government might have contributed toward a more orderly liquidation of the war boom.



The above picture was made from the architect's drawing of the new Farmers Union Central Exchange building at South St. Paul, Minnesota.

Millions Tribute to High Costing Power Utilities

Electric Overcharges Hold Back Development of Kansas Rural Power Lines

Twelve or thirteen million dollars, about the return on the present market of about 17 million bushels of wheat, would be saved to Kansas consumers of electricity if the price rate were under the T. V. A. competitive yardstick.

This power could be generated with gas, oil, or coal produced in the state of Kansas, advises Congressman Rankin.

From this record it seems apparent that the price of wheat was held during the period of war at a level somewhat below what it would have been on a free market.

Although the price of wheat was set below the current market, winter wheat seedlings, increased from approximately 38,000,000 acres in the fall of 1918 to 51,000,000 in the fall of 1919.

These increases were doubtless stimulated to some extent by the activities of the Department of Agriculture to induce farmers to grow more wheat.

Advances in 1919 carried the average price to \$19.30 in August of that year, from which a general decline carried prices back to below the \$9 level by December 1920.

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McPREESON JUNIORS DEVELOP WORKING LIVESTOCK PLANS

(Continued from page 1) County Livestock Association met at the Morning Star school house.

A motion was made and seconded for Rhyndar Fosberg to buy the livestock for the Juniors, after which the directors met to approve the applications signed by the Loan committee.

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A Reverse Socialism

The opposition tells us, continues Mr. Rankin, that it is socialism for the government to develop the Nation's water power or for the municipalities or cooperative power associations to own and operate their distribution systems.

It is the same old argument that was used 150 years ago to try to prevent George Washington and Benjamin Franklin from establishing the post office department.

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