

Agricultural Changes Elsewhere Affect North Dakota Agriculture

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AGRICULTURAL changes of major long-time importance to North Dakota sometimes take place a long ways off from this grain and livestock producing state. In the years 1928 to 1932 inclusive, the annual average harvest of lint cotton in the cotton producing states was from 48,541,000 acres. In the five years 1938-1942 the average harvest of lint cotton was from only 23,350,000 acres. In other words the cotton states turned away from cotton to the extent of 17,191,000 acres annually. That is an acreage equal to slightly more than twice the acreage of wheat which North Dakota harvested in 1943. There can be no question that in this turning away from cotton there has been some substitute of another cash crop such as peanuts. But at the same time there has been a greater diversity and a greater degree of self-sufficiency in the cotton growing south. These cotton states will not turn to wheat, but they will harvest more acres of cow peas, lespedeza, and other forage crops, to provide food for their increasing herds and flocks. For example let us take a look at some comparable acreages of valuable forage crops. As an average of the period 1937-1941, a typical southern state (Georgia) produced 740,000 acres of velvet beans. As an average of the period 1930 to 1939 that figures rose to 1,071,000 acres. As an average of the period 1927-1931 the same state produced 141,000 acres of cow peas and raised that figure to 516,000 acres for the period 1930-1939, and jumped it again to 648,000 acres in 1942.

A count of the milk cows in each of the southern cotton growing states shows substantial increases in 1941 as compared to 1932 in all states raising cotton except Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri. In the same period of comparable figures there was a decline in the number of milk cows in North Dakota. By 1941 we had not yet recovered from the effect of the 1934-1936 drought. North Dakota, of course, will be affected by this change and the trends in the agricultural south no more than other states producing butter, cheese, and meats. In our planning we should keep in mind that those parts of this nation which have hitherto been considered rather backward agriculturally, are rapidly rising to the fore. All of this will have its profound influence upon our ultimate market outlet.