NORTH DAKOTA FARM PRICES

By Perry V. Hemphill
Associate Agricultural Economist

The North Dakota All-Commodity Farm Price Index on August 15, 1949 was 236, which is a decrease of 7 points from that of a month earlier. This is the composite result of the monthly movement of the prices of all important North Dakota farm products. The index for grains was 11 points lower than the month before. The August 15 farm price of barley was higher than the month before, all other grains were lower. The North Dakota index for meat animals was 3 points lower than that of July 15, 1949. The farm price of veal calves, sheep and hogs were higher but the prices for beef cattle and lambs were lower. The North Dakota Farm index for dairy products was 7 points higher with gains in all dairy product prices for the month. The index for poultry and eggs was 2 points lower due to a further decline in the farm price for turkeys.

A view of price movements may be gained by comparing the North Dakota Farm prices for June 15, 1946, the last month under OPA, with the highest price received by North Dakota farmers since that date and then comparing that highest price with the August 15, 1949 prices. During that period the North Dakota All-Commodity Price Index went up 152 points and then declined 119 points. In other words, as an average, 78% of the gains made following the lifting of OPA controls had been lost by August 15, 1949. An examination of the major commodity groups which made up this All-Commodity Price Index shows the following: Grains have lost 93% of the gain made after OPA, meat animals have lost 44% of the gains, dairy products have lost 68% of the gains, and poultry and eggs have lost 69% of the gains.

The above analysis hides to some extent the price movements of individual North Dakota farm commodities. With respect to price changes that have been made by these commodities since the lifting of OPA controls they may be divided into three groups; those that have lost all of the gains made following the lifting of OPA controls, those that have lost more than half of the gains and those that have lost less than half of the gains. The commodities which have lost all of the gains made following the lifting of OPA controls are oats, barley, corn, rye, and chickens. The second group, that is, the group of commodities which lost more than half of the gains made after OPA include flaxseed, wheat, turkeys, butterfat, butter, hogs, alfalfa seed, and wholesale milk. The third group of commodities, those that have lost less than half of the gains made after OPA, include lambs, beef cattle, milk cows, veal calves, and retail milk. In no case has a North Dakota commodity retained all of the gain made following the lifting of OPA controls.

It may be of interest to list the 18 of the 24 North Dakota farm commodities that have broken all time high price records since the lifting of OPA controls. The commodities which broke all time records in 1947 were rye, flaxseed, hogs, butter, and butterfat. The fol-

lowing broke all time records in 1948: Wheat, corn, oats, barley, beef cattle, veal calves, lambs, retail milk, chickens, turkeys, and milk cows. Wholesale milk broke the all time record January 15, 1949 and the farm price of alfalfa seed was at an all time record price on May 15, 1949.

Average Prices Received By North Dakota Farmers
August 15, 1949, With Comparisons

United States Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Agricultural Estimates

Leonard W. Orvold
Agricultural Statistician

C. J. Heltemes
Agricultural Statistician in Charge

Commodity	Unit	Current Prices August 15, 1949			Comparative Average Prices	
		Average Price	Parity Price	Price[1] Relatives	One Mo. Ago 7-15-49	One Yr. Ago 8-15-48
All Spring Wheat	bu.	1.90	2.15	224	1.82	1.96
Durum	bu.	1.89	.....	.....	.....	.....
Other spring	bu.	1.90	.....	.....	.....	.....
Corn	bu.	.96	1.56	167	1.25	1.91
Oats	bu.	.44	.97	125	.58	.69
Barley	bu.	.93	1.50	173	.96	1.14
Rye	bu.	1.06	1.75	177	1.20	1.46
Flaxseed	bu.	3.47	4.11	203	3.59	5.74
Beef cattle	cwt.	19.00	13.20	424	20.00	23.70
Veal calves	cwt.	22.40	16.40	373	22.40	25.90
Sheep	cwt.	8.90	.....	197	9.33	10.20
Lambs	cwt.	20.30	14.30	361	22.80	24.80
Hogs	cwt.	18.00	17.70	265	19.30	26.90
Wholesale milk	cwt.	3.65	3.89	176	3.71	4.99
Retail milk	qt.	.164	.....	260	.182	.190
Butter	lb.	.63	.....	267	.562	.667
Butterfat	lb.	.62	.639	244	.589	.811
Chickens (live)	lb.	.205	.277	207	.243	.325
Turkeys (live)	lb.	.350	.350	280	.347	.432
Eggs	doz.	.365	.522	177	.453	.492
Loose hay	ton	10.20	.....	161	20.40	22.40
Milk cows	head	180.00	.....	.....	178.00	197.00
Wool	lb.	.43	.455	251	.473	.491
Potatoes	bu.	1.60	1.78	252	1.55	1.57
Alfalfa seed	bu.	24.00	.....	202	25.90	19.30
Sweet clover seed	bu.	7.20	.....	162	7.38	7.57

[1]Relation of current prices of each commodity to the average price of each commodity during the base period, August 1909 to July 1914.

Economic Trends Affecting Agriculture

Year	Wholesale Price Index of all Commodities[1] (1910-14—100) U. S.	Index of Prices Received by Farmers[2] (1910-14—100) N. Dak.	U. S.	Prices Paid by Farmers[3] (1910-14—100) U. S.	Cost of Living Index[1] (1935-39—100) U. S.
1935	117	101	109	130	98
1936	118	111	114	128	99
1937	126	126	122	134	103
1938	115	88	97	127	101
1939	113	80	95	125	99
1940	115	86	100	126	100
1941	127	102	124	133	105
1942	144	129	159	151	117
1943	151	162	192	164	124
1944	152	174	195	170	126
1945	154	184	202	172	128
1946	177	224	233	193	139
1947	222	308	278	231	159
1948	241	292	287	249	171
1949:					
Jan.	234	259	268	248	171
Feb.	231	251	258	245	169
Mar.	231	253	261	246	170
Apr.	229	253	260	246	170
May	227	242	256	245	170
June	225	239	252	245	.....
July	.....	243	249	244	.....
Aug.	.....	236	245	243	.....

[1]Bureau of Labor Statistics.
[2]United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.
[3]Agricultural Prices, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

INTRODUCING JOHN BURNHAM

New Experiment Station Editor

John Burnham, appointed Experiment Station Editor, became editor of Experiment Station publications on August 1, 1949. Beginning with this issue, Vol. XII, No. 1—September-October, 1949, Mr. Burnham will edit the Bimonthly Bulletin. The Bimonthly will continue to report what the Experiment Station is doing, where it is carrying on its work and the results of the observations and experiments of the staff. Mr. Burnham expects to give special attention to producing well balanced issues representative of the research work going on and to increasing the readability and timeliness of the articles. He comes to his new assignment with a fine background of newspaper experience and of publicity on agricultural affairs.

—H. L. Walster, Director

FEDERAL GRASSHOPPER FIELDMAN

William R. Forsyth, field supervisor of the Federal Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, has been assigned to North Dakota to work on grasshopper control in co-operation with the NDAC extension service and other agencies. He is stationed in Mandan. He will work with state personnel in meeting the serious grasshopper problems anticipated in 1950. Forsyth is a graduate of Montana State College and began his grasshopper control work with the federal bureau 10 years ago.