

ment functions taking the second and third largest amounts. Good reasoning tells us that very little road work can be accomplished on this small amount of money.

There is a very definite trend toward disorganization of townships in western North Dakota and many believe that this trend should be given further impetus. Several counties are now performing the road functions for the townships and are equipped to provide a better service at a lower cost. In one county, after careful study, it was estimated that if townships were disorganized and the schools organized on a county unit basis, it would reduce the necessary tax levies by \$45,000 per year.

Summary

There is an increasing amount of rural land reverting to the counties

of North Dakota through tax deed action. Consequently, there is considerable talk about taxes being too high. Taxes are high only in relation to the ability of individuals to pay taxes or in relation to the services rendered by local governmental units. If the rural people after weighing taxes against this criteria concluded that taxes are still too high, they should ascertain the possibilities for reducing the cost of governmental functions. The reduction will probably have to come through curtailment of the services rendered, or by a reorganization of local government to obtain increased efficiency, or by reducing the number of governing units. The nature of this reorganization or the services (roads, schools, townships, and so forth) which may be curtailed is a question for the people of the respective counties to decide.

North Dakota Farm Prices

By W. L. ETTESVOLD, Assistant Agricultural Economist
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FARM prices in North Dakota dropped an average of 5 percent from January 15 to February 15. Prices of the 14 major commodities at 84 percent of pre-war were 11 percent below prices a year ago. The major declines in prices occurred in wheat, flax, rye and eggs, with a decrease of 1 cent per bushel for oats, 1 cent per pound for butterfat, and 10 cents per hundred-weight for hogs. Sheep and lambs both had small increases during the month. The decline in butterfat and eggs that occurred from January to February was the usual seasonal decline that occurs in these two products. Hog prices had advanced \$1.70 per hundredweight from December

to January so the decline of 10 cents on February 15 was a minor change.

Domestic demand for farm products in general seems to be on the upgrade. This is reflected in the index of farm prices in the United States which were 6 and 5 points above the average for 1940 in January and February, respectively. Continued increase in defense expenditures should tend to hold the demand for farm products at least at the present levels. Prices of products and services farmers buy have risen slightly and are likely to continue to rise although probably not at a greater rate than farm prices.

AVERAGE PRICES RECEIVED BY NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS
February 15, 1941, With Comparisons.¹

Commodity	Average Prices				Price Relatives ²		
	Feb. 1941 ²	Jan. 1941	Feb. 1940	Average 1910-14	Feb. 1941	Jan. 1941	Feb. 1940
Wheat, bu. ....	.62	.68	.79	.86	72	79	92
Flax, bu.	1.45	1.48	1.81	1.71	85	87	106
Oats, bu. ....	.23	.24	.28	.35	66	69	80
Barley, bu. ....	.30	.30	.34	.54	56	56	63
Rye, bu. ....	.29	.32	.46	.60	48	53	77
Potatoes, bu. ....	.37	.37	.50	.64	58	58	78
Beef cattle, cwt.	7.50	7.50	6.40	4.63	160	160	137
Hogs, cwt.	6.50	6.60	4.20	6.77	96	97	62
Sheep, cwt.	3.95	3.50	3.65	4.51	88	78	81
Lambs, cwt.	8.30	8.20	7.40	5.65	147	145	131
Wool, lb. ....	.30	.30	.27	.16	188	188	169
Butterfat, lb. ....	.29	.30	.28	.26	112	115	108
Chickens, lb. ....	.10	.10	.093	.10	100	100	93
Eggs, doz. ....	.125	.16	.166	.21	60	76	79

¹ Average prices reported to Agricultural Marketing Service on the fifteenth of the month.

² Preliminary.

³ August 1909 — July 1914 = 100.

INDICES OF NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURE.¹

	February 1941	January 1941	February 1940
North Dakota Farm Price Index ²	84	89	95
U. S. Farm Price Index	103	104	101
U. S. Index of Prices Paid by Farmers	123	123	122
Purchasing Power of North Dakota Farm Products ³	68	72	78

¹ August 1909 — July 1914 = 100.

² Calculated by weighted aggregative method on the basis of the 14 commodities.

³ Ratio of prices received to prices paid.

Notes

Premier, Merit and Vesta Wheats

The Department of Cereal Technology has completed milling and baking tests on a large number of variety samples from the 1940 crop. On the basis of these tests it is shown that the rust resistant new varieties Premier and Merit, promising from field behavior, have not

measured up satisfactorily in certain quality characters. The variety Vesta has given more favorable results in milling and baking. As to the release of these wheats the recommendation of the Wheat Research Committee of the Experiment Station is not to release them at present but to continue tests with them through the 1941 crop year.