

The state's **cattle** inventory on January 1 was 2,131,000 head, 8 per cent more than were on hand a year earlier. Last year was the fifth successive year of increase. The increase came in beef animals with dairy cow numbers unchanged and dairy heifers showing a drop. Cows and calves and yearling steers made the big increase in the beef category with bulls and heifers making only a nominal increase. Due to the large supply of feed grains and forage in the early winter months, more stock was held back for feeding or for delayed marketing.

Stock sheep increased again for the sixth successive year with most of the increase in ewes. On January 1 there were 546,000 head of sheep on North Dakota farms. Sheep and lambs on feed January 1, are not included with stock sheep. On January 1 this year there were 122,000 being fattened for market, the largest number being fed since 1946.

Hogs were placed at 439,000 head, 25 per cent more than were on hand a year earlier and the largest number since 1952. In early December producers indicated that they would have 91,000 sows for spring farrowing. If these intentions are carried out it would mean about 6 per cent fewer farrowings than in the spring of 1955.

The combined **horse and mule** population stood at 79,000 head, a drop of 11,000 head from a year ago and the smallest number since early pioneer days.

Chickens on farms were put at 3,783,000 compared with 3,979,000 a year earlier. There were fewer pullets on hand January 1 this year but more hens. Turkeys on hand amounted to 34,000, of which 22,000 were breeder hens.

The **total value** of the livestock and poultry inventory on hand the first of this year, excluding sheep on feed, was \$214,229,000 compared with \$229,368,000 a year earlier.

COOLED EGGS CAN STILL HATCH

Continuing an interesting cold exposure study of chick embryos in 1955, poultrymen at this experiment station found that when incubated eggs are exposed to a temperature of 50 to 55 degrees fahrenheit, the embryos have been able to withstand such exposure through the 12th day of incubation for 19 hours and still hatch. Increasingly longer exposures reduced the age limit at which completely lethal effects were obtained.

CHICKEN NUMBERS LOWERED

North Dakota farmers raised 15 per cent fewer chickens in 1955, the mid-summer estimate being 6,010,000—smallest number since 1937. This compares with 7,070,000 last year and a peak of 12,251,000 in 1943. Chicken numbers soared during World War II years, when red meat was rationed. Thus North Dakota's chicken flocks went from 7 million in 1940 to 8 million in 1941, 11½ million in 1942, 12¼ million in 1943, down to 10½ million in 1944, 10½ million again in 1945, less than 9½ in 1946, 8¼ in 1947 and 6¼ in 1948. The state has raised from something over six million to slightly over seven million birds each year since war demand ended, with the low point this year. Probably the 1954 price—when average price per pound of chickens sold by North Dakota farmers dropped 18¢ in 1953 to 12¢ in 1954—had much to do with decreased interest in feathered meat raising this year. Biggest gross income from chickens was \$10,019,000 in 1943, dropping to \$3,254,000 in 1954. This is for meat alone, not income from eggs.

Milk cows on North Dakota farms in the summer of 1955 numbered 370,000 head, down three per cent from the previous year, and 23 per cent below the 10-year average. The decrease was general in 11 of 12 north central states, while Wisconsin was the exception, increasing one per cent in dairy cow numbers over last year.