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Letter No. 2233

October 10, 1985

U.S. COTTON TEAM VISITS U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union is harvesting an average size cotton crop this year...not as large as in 1980 but larger than last year. According to a U.S. team that recently spent 2 weeks in the Soviet Union touring that country's major cotton growing regions, the Soviet crop is expected to be about 12-1/2 million bales. Team leader, U.S. Department of Agriculture cotton specialist Leon Mears reported that 15-20 pct. of the crop had been harvested by the end of September under generally favorable conditions. Mears also pointed out that weather through November will be critical, however, in determining final quality and quantity of the crop.

TIMBER CONTRACT BUY OUTS RECEIVED

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service has received applications to buy out contracts for more than nine billion board feet of federal timber. The applications were filed in accordance with the Federal Timber Contract Payment Modification Act of 1984. In effect, this Act was made necessary because the demand for lumber dropped off and it was no longer profitable for many companies to comply with the terms of the contracts they had with the USDA Forest Service to cut timber on federal land. Now, with applications on file, a sales program can proceed.

MEAT PRODUCTION TO DROP FROM '85 RECORD LEVELS

More poultry but less red meat, that's the forecast for 1986 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Overall the total amount of red meat and poultry will decline about 2 pct., however an anticipated 4 pct. rise in poultry production will partially offset a 5 pct. decline in red meat. Consequently, the larger supplies of relatively lower priced poultry products may hold down price increases for red meat.

MEAT PRICES ON A ROLLER COASTER

Consumers can expect to pay 2 to 3 pct. less for beef this year compared to last year but next year may climb back to 1984 levels, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture economist Karen Parham. On the other hand, pork prices will remain about the same this year as they were last...but are expected to rise 3 to 5 pct. next year. Broiler prices are averaging nearly 50 pct. below a year ago and are expected to stay at that level next year. (Parham's telephone number is 202-786-1830.)

EXPORT ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

U.S. exporters will be able to sell up to 1-1/2 million tons of wheat to Morocco under the latest export enhancement action. Sales would include a Commodity Credit Corporation bonus of wheat from CCC stocks.

MILK COW NUMBERS ARE DOWN IN POLAND Fewer milk cows in Poland will mean a decline in milk production in that country in 1985 and 1986, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Polish farmers were discouraged with the low milk prices and are cutting back on cow numbers. In 1985, milk output is expected to fall 3 pct. The drop would have been even more severe because cow numbers dropped 4 pct., but good pastures and fodder crops resulted in higher milk yields per cow.

SOUTH AFRICA NOW EXPORTING NOT IMPORTING CORN Surprisingly South Africa will be a competitor for world corn sales during the 1985/86 marketing year. A U.S. Department of Agriculture report says that larger-than-expected South African corn production and lower domestic consumption is putting South Africa into an exporting mode. Exportable supplies could be as high as 2.6 million tons. Corn production in South Africa fell to about 4.2 million tons in 1984 and 1985 because of the severe drought that hit that country. The higher than expected level of production has allowed South Africa to resume its long-term grain agreement with Taiwan and to make sales to both Taiwan and Japan.

SPAIN COMPETES WITH EC FOR BARLEY SALES Spain is now in direct competition with the European Community for barley sales to the Mediterranean Basin and the Middle East. According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report, Spain produced a record 1984 barley crop and a near-record 1985 crop. This depressed domestic prices, putting pressure on the Spanish government to export the surplus. To do so, the government had to subsidize barley to the tune of \$55-65 per ton to compete successfully on the international market. Spain expects exports to reach the 1 million mark through the subsidization program.

NUTS TO THE SOVIET UNION Almonds are coming to the rescue for U.S. export sales. The latest U.S. Department of Agriculture horticultural products report shows that export earnings from horticultural products reached \$229 million during August, and that's up 29 pct. from a year ago. The surge in export value was due almost entirely to almond sales to the Soviet Union and Western Europe, especially West Germany.

NATIONAL FOREST PAYMENTS MADE Forty states and Puerto Rico will share in payments totaling \$154 million from the national forest receipts collected in fiscal year 1985 that ended Sept. 30, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report. The \$154 million is the amount of interim payments, and the final payments could total \$205 million. The interim payments represent 75 pct. of the estimated total amount each state receives as its share of funds collected during the year from the sale and use of a wide variety of national forest products and services.

LEMON LEAVES AND PEELS MAY BE CULPRITS Citrus leaves and peels are used to flavor Asian cuisine, and when those products come from outside the country, they could be bringing in citrus diseases that could devastate the U.S. citrus industry. Consequently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is tightening procedures to find illegally imported citrus leaves and peel. The tighter procedures will be looking specifically for frozen boiled lemon leaves, dried lime leaves, dried orange peel, and assorted spices.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

CITRUS CANKER UPDATE...Bill Helms, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, reports on the new citrus canker outbreak and efforts underway to keep this disease in check. Vic Powell interviews. (486)

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY OUTLOOK...Record meat and poultry supplies are pushing prices lower for both producers and consumers. USDA economist Leland Southard tells why. Vic Powell interviews. (487)

U.S./CANADA TRADE POLICIES...Kathryn Ting, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, talks about Canada's farm policies and their affect on U.S.trade. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (488)

IMPACT OF DOLLAR ON U.S. EXPORTS...USDA economist Hal Goolsby looks at how recent fluctuations in the dollar value are influencing U.S. exports. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (489)

TOXICOLOGY HOTLINE FOR ANIMAL POISONINGS...Harold Trammel, University of Illinois, tells how animal owners can get help for animal poisonings from a new toxicology hotline. Gary Beaumont interviews. (490)

FEWER VEGGIES
THIS FALL

Grocery stores may have fewer fresh vegetables this fall. According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture, report the prospective acreage for harvest of broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, sweet corn, lettuce and tomatoes during Oct., Nov. and Dec. is estimated to be down 7 pct. compared to the same period last year. The report also says the acreage planted to honeydew melons during the fall quarter is estimated to be 6 pct. less than last year. (For more statistical info, call 202-447-3843.)

AGRICULTURE LINKS
BIG WITH OTHER
ECONOMIES

A new report on "Agriculture's Links with the U.S. and World Economies" is out and describes the linkages between farming and industries that supply, manufacture and distribute farm products. The entire complex accounts for nearly 20 pct. of the nation's gross national product. (Copies of the report cost \$1.50 and are available from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.)

CEM TESTING
RULES AMENDED

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has amended its rules for testing for contagious equine metritis (CEM), a venereal disease of horses that affects fertility and breeding. CEM is known to exist in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Japan. The rule changes are spelled out in the Oct. 4 Federal Register.

DEREGULATION
REPORT ISSUED

A new study released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture covers a five-year period of rail deregulation in Kansas and examines the impact of rail deregulation on the grain marketing system and prices paid to Kansas farmers for wheat. (Copies of the study are available from the Office of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone 202-447-6235.)

OFF MIKE

Johnnie Hood (WPTF/So. Farm Net, Raleigh, NC), president, National Farm Broadcasters Association, will be traveling with the U.S. Feed Grain Council entourage to China, Hong Kong and Japan as NAFB's rep with the group. He leaves Oct. 26 and returns Nov. 9 just in time to catch his breath before the NAFB meeting in Kansas City, Nov. 14-17 ... Which also serves as a reminder that we've received our NAFB meeting registration materials, filled them out and sent them back in. Personally I had to stay in another hotel once rather than the Crown Center. It was nice, but inconvenient...which explains the quick turnaround ... Another intrepid traveler, Herb Planbeck, is back in Des Moines, IA, after three weeks traveling mostly in Siberia and Mongolia. We talked with Herb, and he told us the trip was almost like a homecoming of sorts. Thirty years ago he was a member of the first U.S. delegation to visit behind what was then called the Iron Curtain. Herb said some of his travel this time was by Yak and other exotic means of moving from point "A" to point "B" ... There are contests and there are contests. One of the latest (and most intriguing) was the Sow Milking Contest held at the Brown County Fair in Minnesota. Don Wick (KLGR, Redwood Falls, MN) and Bob Crabtree (KNUJ, New Ulm, MN) went one-on-one at a 16 baby bottle life-sized plywood sow, and Don came away as "Minnesota's state grand champion sow milker." Wow!! On a somewhat different level, Don also borrowed a Holstein from Mike Dahmes, Redwood Country ADA Chairman, and entered the Redwood Country Fair Open Class Dairy Show. You guessed it, he took the Grand Championship. We're impressed!! ... Don Shore, manager, KNOX, Grand Forks, ND, is looking for a farm broadcaster to replace Gary Enright. His telephone number is 701-775-4611. Gary will be operating his speakers' bureau for the time being.

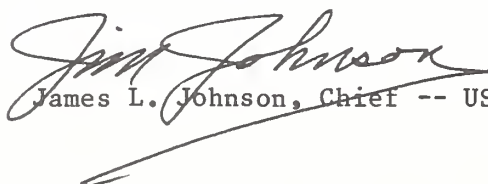
FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA □1480...(Weekly 13:30 Documentary). The Grizzly bear is part of the American heritage, and its great strength and power are frightful characteristics. On this edition of Agriculture USA, George Holmes discusses how you can camp safely in Grizzly country.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT □1469...(Weekly reel of news features). USDA news highlights; Farm financial crisis update; Non-violent predator control; Impact of rail deregulation; Root force.

CONSUMER TIME □962...(Weekly reel of five 2-1/2-3 min features). A white Christmas?; Halloween safety; Safe Halloween costumes; Picking the best investment; Working rural women.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Mon, Oct. 21, Catfish report; Tues, Oct. 22, Weekly weather/crop outlook, Foreign ag trade report and Eggs, chickens and turkeys report; Thurs, Oct. 25, Cattle on feed report, Meat production report, World ag supply/demand, and World cocoa production. Dial the USDA Radio News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.



James L. Johnson, Chief -- USDA Radio and Television Division