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AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS

FARM MORTGAGES

Taking the United States as a whole there has been a considerable increase in the last fifteen years in the number of mortgaged farms. In 1910 mortgage debts were reported on 31.0 percent of all farms operated by owners, and in 1925 the percentage had increased to 36.1.

Some agricultural economists point to this increased mortgage indebtedness as a sign of economic distress, even as an evidence of agricultural decay. Perhaps it is. Certainly those who bought farms at the inflated prices which prevailed in 1919 are groaning under the mortgage load. It is likely that some farmers, to meet emergency bills such as sickness or hospital bills or fire losses in the lean years since 1921, have had to place mortgages on their farms. There is probably no question but that some of the increase in farm mortgages reflects the depression which followed deflation in 1920. However, it is not so certain that increased farm indebtedness is a sign of decay, any more than that North Carolina's increased public debt is a sign of decay. But when mortgages are placed on farms to secure money to buy automobiles or to make non-productive investments they are often an evil.

Changes Are Sectional

The fact that mortgage increases or decreases are sectional suggests that they may reflect no more than changes in farm practices or changes in methods of financing. Between 1910 and 1925 the percentage of mortgaged farms increased quite generally in the West North Central states, the South Atlantic states, the South Central states, the Mountain states, and the Pacific states. On the other hand they decreased generally in the New England states, the Middle Atlantic states, and the East North Central states. It appears, then, that the number of mortgaged farms is decreasing in the older agricultural regions of the United States where there is a pronounced urban movement and many abandoned farms. There is an increased number of mortgaged farms in the regions which are still in the process of development such as the South and Far West. The area which has the greatest proportion of mortgaged farms is of course the wheat belt and the western edge of the corn belt. It was this region which witnessed the greatest inflation in farm real estate prices in 1919-20. It is this region which engages in large-scale farming with huge investments in machinery and livestock, and it is good business to use the farm as collateral for raising capital. It is this region which is witnessing the introduction of the "wheat combine" and hence a change to larger-sized farms.

Not Necessarily Bad

The Southern states show a relatively low percentage of mortgage indebtedness. What increase there has been is probably due in large part to improvement of the buildings, improvement of the livestock, and the expense involved in changing to a more diversified agriculture. It may be due in part to a change in methods of financing, personal notes and crop liens giving way to mortgages; in fact any kind of indebtedness is less feared than formerly. This easy attitude toward debt is not altogether desirable, but perhaps it is no worse than the parsimony and self-denial which characterized the passing generation.

The table which appears elsewhere in this issue ranks the states according to the percentage of farms, operated by owners, which are mortgaged. The range is from 12.1 percent in West Virginia to 63.8 percent in North Dakota. North Carolina's percentage is 19.3, only two states showing relatively less mortgage indebtedness. The facts are interesting but not necessarily significant.—Paul W. Wager.

PROMOTING AGRICULTURE

Promise of the dawn of a new era in western North Carolina, "The Land of the Sky," has been offered through the generosity of a group of wealthy New Yorkers who believe that the mountains of this region, long noted for their beauty, can be made to yield profitable crops.

These New Yorkers have just contributed \$100,000 in cash to be used as a fund to assist western North Carolina farmers in their efforts to improve agricultural conditions in a section of the country famous chiefly because of its picturesqueness and because of its popularity as a playground for the nation.

A total of \$250,000 is to be invested by a group of New York men and women who have unlimited faith in the mountains and in the hardy men who dwell among them. One hundred thousand dollars of this sum already has been made available to farmers in this section. It has been turned over to the Farmers' Federation, a co-operative organization of farmers engaged in intensive agriculture and in systematic marketing of their produce. The remainder of the \$250,000 will be available long before this initial sum has been expended.

Five-Year Program

This \$100,000 is to be used to establish agricultural industries, such as canneries, creameries, poultry plants, etc., among the Blue Ridge Mountains, and through which mountain farmers can prepare their products for market in an attractive way. The total fund of \$250,000 is to be used over a period of five years, under the supervision of the Farmers' Federation. It will be administered by a board of trustees, who will co-operate with progressive, industrious mountaineers in the establishment of modern canneries, poultry fattening plants, egg gathering stations, woodworking plants, cream stations, and similar enterprises.

In addition, specially trained workers will be placed in the field to maintain close personal contact with farmers who wish to avail themselves of the opportunities offered. These workers will teach farmers how to increase the fertility of their soil, how to grow larger and better crops, and how to market their products more scientifically.

James G. K. McClure, Jr., president of the Farmers' Federation, visited New York recently for the purpose of laying this plan before wealthy men and women who are familiar with the problems of the farmer in the mountainous section of North Carolina.—Lexington Dispatch.

MARKET FOR FEEDSTUFFS

The first annual meeting of the Mecklenburg Farmers Federation revealed to its members and to the public generally the fact that this new organization has gotten off to a fine start. The public has been astonished to know that the organization has done a business of approximately \$125,000 during the eight months it has been in operation, handling, as one item, an average of more than 10 carloads of feedstuffs per month, in addition to the handling of fertilizer, seed and other products, and ginning 1,500 bales of cotton.

The Farmers Federation is paying a dividend of six percent to its stockholders and to the same stockholders a trade dividend of five percent upon the amount of business transacted with the Federation during the eight months it has been in business. More important than these dividends and no less important than the saving effected by the farmers through their aggregate purchases through the Federation, is the fact that the Federation purchased more than 7,000 bushels of corn and hundreds of bushels of barley, wheat, and oats from the farmers of the county, grinding it and mixing it with cottonseed meal and other ingredients and selling it in the form of ideal dairy and hog feeds.

Never before have the farmers of Mecklenburg county been assured of a market at standard prices for any amount of corn and small grains which they might produce. Mecklenburg Farmers Federation has officially stated that it would purchase any amount of corn, barley, oats, or wheat offered. This is a long step forward. It opens a new field of opportunity for the farmers of this section, some of whom would prefer to grow grain to growing cotton and a considerable proportion of whom would prefer to cut their cotton acreage if they could turn to another crop for which just as ready a market would be available. One need not be a prophet

SOWING AND REAPING

Experience is the harvest of life, and every harvest is the result of sowing. The experience which young people most crave is that of success in some service for which they are naturally fitted. And they wish it at once—immediately. Youth wishes to touch a magic button and command success without apprenticeship. But nothing ripens that is not first planted and the very desires, the impatience, the dreams, the ambitions of youth, are by way of a planting which shall come to fruition—sometimes after these desires are abandoned and forgotten. For the sown seed goes on growing whether we remember it or not. The wisdom of life is to keep on planting.—Dearborn Independent.

to predict that the quantity of corn and small grains offered to this organization will increase very rapidly.

North Carolina is importing ground and mixed feeds today at the rate of 90,000 tons a year. It were time our people, and particularly the farmers who consume this enormous quantity of feed stuff and who should be growing it even if they do not grind and mix it themselves, were waking up. Here has been a big opportunity and the start that has been made by the Farmers Federation inspires confidence that this big opportunity is going to be met in a big way.—Adapted from Charlotte Observer.

FARM COLONY IN CRAVEN

The arrival in Craven county of six families of Hungarians to engage in intensified agriculture on small farms may start a movement of growing significance. If the farmers are pleased with conditions and if they make the success they should on the rich lands of that section, others will follow. They have the reputation of being peculiarly expert farmers of thrifty ways.

Slowly but surely the negro labor is leaving the Eastern North Carolina farms. Agricultural acreage is diminishing steadily. Farm after farm is going back into forest, in itself not a bad thing but economically serious in its immediate results. Man-power for something like the acreage already being tilled must be obtained to compensate for the loss of the old labor supply. Interstate immigration is the only solution, now that national laws cut down the quotas from abroad.

But, like it or not, it has been shown that it takes the vaunted "melting pot" many years to fuse its contents. Immigrants in this country congregate naturally. Whether in the city or in the country, they must have the touch of associations they understand. They demand the right to continue in the first generations of a new life their familiar language and to an extent their peculiar customs. The farm colony satisfies this need. In spite of some successful experiments, it yet remains to be seen whether it can so operate as to keep its members prosperous and contented while encouraging them to become identified with the population as a whole.—Concord Times.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

Tabulations prepared by the National Electric Light Association show that 1,650,000 new customers were added to the lines of the operating companies in this country during the year, bringing the total number of customers now served up to 21,625,000. Of this total, 17,770,000 are household users. The rapid rate at which these electric light and power facilities have been made available throughout the country is shown by the comparison that 25 years ago there were only 600,000 customers.

Due to the vast network of power lines that now extend over the United States smaller communities are now being given the same opportunities for industrial expansion as were before enjoyed only by the large centers of population.

At present, service for both light and power has been extended to every community in the country of 5,000 popula-

tion and over, 97 percent of all places of more than 1,000 population, 40 percent of all communities of 250, and 20 percent of all other communities.

The extension of inter-connection has also had its effect on the progress of farm electrification. The same facilities that are being offered to the smaller centers of population are also made available to a steadily increasing number of farms and farm homes. A total of 350,000 farms now have electric service. Experimental projects are being carried on at this time by a number of different agencies in 28 states in the concerted endeavor to bring to light additional methods of applying electricity to agriculture and raising the efficiency standards of the American farmer. Operating companies are cooperating with these agencies and with the farmers in improving service to the farmer and enabling him to employ the most modern methods.—Public Service.

COMMUNITY HATCHERY

Brevard's Community Hatchery is starting its third year of successful service to the poultry raisers of Transylvania county. The value of the equipment and building of this community concern is estimated at more than \$5,000, and is owned debt free, by the 70 stockholders comprised entirely of Transylvania citizens.

Over 50,000 baby chicks were hatched for the people of this and adjoining counties during the last year, and even better results are expected this year. The building and equipment are thoroughly modern in every respect and enlargements are made to the plant from time to time as needed. J. A. Glazener, of the agriculture department of the Brevard high school, is manager of the business.

As a recognition of the success of the Brevard Community Hatchery, a page story of the local hatchery plant, along with pictures, was carried in a recent issue of the official Buckeye publication for 1927.—Asheville Citizen.

GAINS IN POULTRY

The first cooperative carlot shipment of poultry sent from North Carolina

had its origin at Franklin, Macon county, April 25, 1923. It contained 9,967 pounds, slightly more than a half car. The first cooperative carlot shipment from Piedmont North Carolina originated at Rutherfordton, April 18, 1924, and contained 19,397 pounds. A few days later, April 26, 1924, the first cooperative carlot movement of poultry from Eastern North Carolina was shipped from Washington, Beaufort county. This shipment contained 20,624 pounds.

During the eleven months July 1, 1926, to June 4, 1927, live poultry handled cooperatively in North Carolina amounted to 2,804,480 pounds and yielded the producers \$689,636. The gain to the farmers due to cooperative marketing is estimated at \$150,000.—Adapted from a report of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.

WHO CAN BEAT IT?

Sheriff George W. Goodwin of Chowan county has been brought into the spotlight by facts revealed concerning his collection of 1926 taxes.

The tax books charged him with the collection of \$149,924.12, and he has collected all except \$261.63, this latter sum representing insolvents. In other words his collections represent over 99.8 percent of the charge.

But his record becomes the more praiseworthy when it is revealed that he discovered and collected the tax on over \$161,000 of taxables not on the tax books. Sheriff Goodwin is paid a salary of \$2,800 a year and each year since he has been in office the tax on his discoveries has been nearly sufficient to pay his entire salary.—Based on item in News and Observer.

N. C. STRAWBERRIES

North Carolina led the entire United States in the shipment of carlots of strawberries during 1927, according to figures compiled in the general offices of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad here. The compilation showed North Carolina's shipments totalled 2,202 cars. Arkansas, according to the same source of information, ran a close second with 2,041 cars.—Kinston Free Press.

MORTGAGED FARMS, 1910 AND 1925

Expressed as a Percentage of Farms Operated by Owners

The following table shows what percentage of the farms operated by owners were encumbered by mortgage in 1910 and in 1925. The states are ranked according to the percentage of mortgaged farms in 1925.

In 1910 mortgage debts were reported on 31.0 percent of all farms operated by owners; in 1925 mortgage debts were reported on 36.1 percent. On the latter date an increased percentage of mortgaged farms is shown in all of the West North Central states except Missouri; in all the South Atlantic states except Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia; in all the South Central states; in all the Mountain states; and in all the Pacific states. Reduced percentages are shown in all the New England states except Connecticut; in all the Middle Atlantic states; and in all the East North Central states except Wisconsin.

West Virginia has the smallest percentage of mortgaged farms, 12.1 percent; North Dakota has the highest percentage, 63.8 percent.

Paul W. Wager

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Rank	State	Percent of farms mortgaged 1910	Percent of farms mortgaged 1925	Rank	State	Percent of farms mortgaged 1910	Percent of farms mortgaged 1925
1	West Virginia	12.6	12.1	25	New York	43.9	38.7
2	Virginia	16.0	18.9	26	Massachusetts	40.9	39.7
3	North Carolina	18.5	19.3	27	Arizona	42.9	40.1
4	Florida	14.8	19.4	28	New Jersey	49.6	41.2
5	Kentucky	19.6	19.8	29	Connecticut	43.2	43.2
6	Tennessee	16.9	20.7	30	Vermont	46.9	43.6
7	Pennsylvania	31.1	23.7	31	Michigan	48.2	43.7
7	New Hampshire	25.6	23.7	32	Missouri	46.3	44.1
9	Maine	26.6	24.9	33	Utah	22.9	44.3
10	South Carolina	24.0	25.9	34	Oregon	33.7	45.7
11	Ohio	23.9	26.4	34	Washington	34.1	45.7
12	New Mexico	5.4	26.5	36	California	40.5	46.3
13	Delaware	37.2	26.8	37	Kansas	44.8	46.5
14	Georgia	19.0	27.2	38	Oklahoma	43.5	48.3
15	Louisiana	19.0	27.5	39	Wyoming	19.7	48.5
16	Rhode Island	29.6	29.0	40	Minnesota	46.3	48.6
17	Maryland	36.5	29.9	41	Colorado	26.4	53.1
17	Alabama	26.9	29.9	42	Montana	21.1	54.6
19	Arkansas	21.4	32.9	43	Idaho	33.4	54.7
20	Mississippi	32.9	33.1	44	Iowa	51.8	55.6
21	Nevada	16.7	33.6	45	Wisconsin	51.4	55.9
22	Texas	33.3	33.9	46	Nebraska	39.4	56.5
23	Illinois	39.2	35.5	47	South Dakota	38.2	62.4
24	Indiana	38.8	36.4	48	North Dakota	60.9	63.8