

Farming in Orange a \$7.6 million business in '61; report shows gross income up by 8.6 per cent

Farm income in Orange County increased 8.6 per cent during 1961 over the previous year.

This is brought out in the annual report of County Agricultural Agent Don S. Matheson as delivered to the county commissioners this week. Total gross cash farm income for the year was estimated at \$7,647,000—up \$600,000 from 1960.

The agent's report also called attention to lower broiler and egg prices which put several broiler producers out of business and brought a \$45,000 decrease in income from this source. The 1960 total for broilers and eggs was \$1,525,000, as compared to \$1,480,000 last year.

Tobacco grown in Orange during '61 sold for \$3,250,000, based on an average yield of 1,650 pounds an acre and \$.64 a pound. The report also showed beef cattle on the increase (\$388,000 income) and milk and livestock production up.

Following is the text of the farming report by Mr. Matheson:

1. Income

In 1955 a group of leading farm men and women met with the Extension Agents and made a five year plan to increase farm income by one million dollars by 1960. Gross income records of crops and livestock were kept each year, and in spite of a 20% reduction in tobacco acreage in 1957, the gross farm income for 1960 was raised one and one-half million dollars. This year the Extension Advisory Board set another five year goal of an additional two million dollars in gross farm income. We hope to meet this new goal of nine million dollars by 1966.

2. Tobacco

The tobacco crop grossed \$3,250,000 based on 3,080 acres harvested producing an average of 1,650 pounds per acre and selling for 64 cents a pound. This is \$250,000 more than last year. Our aim has been to increase poundage per acre of high quality tobacco. Several educational meetings, a tour of the Oxford Experiment Station, and exhibits at Durham, visits to individual farms, news articles and letters were methods used. Thirty-five farm ponds have been built during the year, one-third of them

being used to irrigate tobacco. Assistance now is being given to tobacco farmers who wish to locate additional acreage to lease under the recently amended law.

3. Dairy

Dairy farmers continued to increase production, and marketing 32,500,000 pounds of milk for \$1,873,000. With the additional sale of cull cows, breeding stock and veals, the total gross sales exceeded two million dollars. Because of a surplus of grade A milk appearing on the markets from time to time during the year the price to the farmers was slightly lower than last year; however, the total gross was in excess of 1960.

Efficiency in production was stressed. Milking machine clinics, DHIA workshop, feeding meetings and tours were held with good attendance. Our DHIA average production was 10,517 pounds per cow, which was the highest for the state of any county having more than six herds on test. Clarence Symes, one of our testers, won 2nd place in the state testers competition, and Bobby Nichols won 2nd place in the State Efficiency Contest. One proven bull was

sold to American Breeders Service for artificial breeding purposes. Many new silos were constructed, and mechanized silage handling systems have been installed on many farms. County and District 4-H Dairy Shows were held.

4. Poultry

Unprecedented low broiler prices (10-12c per pound) put every independent broiler grower out of business. One large producer lost his home through mortgage foreclosure. Commercial egg flocks were increased by 20,000 birds. However, lower egg and broiler prices resulted in a decrease of gross income from \$1,525,000 in 1960 to \$1,482,000 in 1961.

The Poultry Committee of the Extension Advisory Board has strongly urged that further expansion of poultry and egg producing facilities be limited to adjustments on individual farms for the sake of efficiency.

In November, the 26 members of the Orange County Poultry and Egg Producers Association voted unanimously in favor of a "Program of production controls, at the producer's level, with negotiable quotas, to be set up and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

through its office of Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service, using the past history of the farm over a reasonable number of years to establish the farm quota". Signed copies of this action was mailed to Representatives Kornegay and Coolley, and to Senators Ervin and Jordan.

Colony cage systems are becoming more popular. Over 30,000 birds are now housed by six producers in this type of construction.

5. Beef Cattle

Beef cattle are increasing at a fast pace in Orange County and we believe that the increase is on a sound practical basis. Most of the increase is in the cow and calf program. However, some farmers are feeding out steers very profitably. The gross income increased from \$327,000 in 1960 to \$388,955 in 1961.

Most of the beef cattle work has been devoted to management. Demonstrations in Man-

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