PEOPLE EARN LESS MONEY

The total carry-home money of people in the U. S. was down 2 per cent in February from the December peak. It looks like the March and April figures will be still lower. Most signs point to slightly lower incomes during most of 1949.

Farm income was down the most and wages and salaries next. Income from interest, dividends, and rentals was up.

The lower farm incomes were caused by lower farm prices. Wages and salaries were down because fewer people were employed and many with jobs were working fewer hours a week.

Employment picked up in April on farms and in the building industry. But more layoffs were announced by several industries.

Spending is down more than incomes. Some people are saving more. Some are paying installments on goods, cars, and houses already bought.
Apple and pear crops are likely to be bigger this year than the small crops of 1948. At least, that is how it looked in early April. Late frosts, however, may reduce the crop in important areas.

APPLE EXPORTS DROP

U. S. leading exporter: The United States is still the leading exporter of apples in the world. But since the end of the war our apple exports have varied between 22 and 47 per cent of the 1935 to '39 prewar average. There is a good chance that recovery in Europe and a lifting of trade restrictions will revive apple exports in years to come.

Our peacetime apple exports in the past 20 years have varied from a high of 13 per cent of the U. S. crop in 1930 to a low of 2.4 per cent in 1946 and 1948. The United Kingdom was our most important foreign customer for apples until last year. Others that take large quantities are: Philippine Islands, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela, and China. France and Germany took many of our apples before the war.
PEAR CROPS THIS YEAR

PEAR EXPORTS DOWN TOO

Way below prewar: Exports of pears from the United States in 1947 were 1,902,000 bushels. In 1948, exports were down to 375,000 bushels. The main reason was because the governments of Canada, Britain, and Sweden stopped pear imports. Most of the 1948 shipments went to South America and Cuba.

Before the war: U. S. pear exports reached a high of 6,569,000 bushels in 1938. From 1929 to 1938, they averaged 4,962,200 bushels. We may get back most of this prewar market when Europe is back on her feet economically, and if there is more freedom in international trade.

MORE EARLY STRAWBERRIES

Early strawberry crop up 6 per cent: A crop of 5,638,000 crates of berries is estimated for this year in the Southern states and California. This would be 6 per cent more than in those areas last year, but almost exactly the same as the 1938-47 average.

In the late spring states, of which Washington and Oregon are a part, strawberry acreage is about the same as last year, but 9 per cent above the 10-year average.

Lower Support for Beans, Peas

That dry-bean support will be 80 per cent of parity was recently announced for the 1949 crop. To growers in Washington it will mean about $7.10 a 100-pound bag for No. 1 or No. 2 Great Northern, or Small Red beans. Loans at the full support price will be available for beans and peas meeting storage requirements.

Bean prices have been near support levels most of this winter. Exports have been small and the carry-over will be large. The 1949 crop of dry beans is pretty sure to sell at about the support price unless the crop should turn out to be quite short.

Dry Peas 60 Per Cent of Parity

The 60 per cent of parity recently announced for dry peas will be about $3.10 in this state for No. 2 or better.
Lots of Chickens, Turkeys

Heavy supplies of chickens and broilers will sell at lower prices. That's the way it looks now for this summer and fall. Broiler production is up 50 per cent and farm chick buying is over 30 per cent more than last year.

Farmers in the nation had 32 per cent more chicks and young chickens on hand April 1 than a year earlier and 11 per cent more than the 10-year average. Chick hatchings in January, February, and March were 37 per cent larger than U. S. hatchings in those months last year. April 1 bookings of chicks for May delivery were 44 per cent larger than a year earlier. The February 1 intentions survey said that farmers would buy 7 per cent more chickens than last year. It now looks like there will be even more.

More Turkeys Too

It looks like late turkeys are a big gamble this year.

Turkey hatchings double: Reports from turkey hatcheries during February and March show that they hatched more than twice as many poults those months as they did last year. On April 1 they had 47 per cent more eggs in incubators than they did a year earlier.

Supplies of other poultry and meat will be considerably larger this fall than a year earlier.

Demand is likely to be weaker than last year. The amount of money people can afford to spend for meat is dropping. Also, storage operators probably won't want to take many turkeys unless they are pretty cheap. The storage trade is working on a conservative basis because of falling price levels. Naturally, no one wants to store something that is likely to be cheaper when he takes it out of storage.

CALIFORNIA POTATO ACREAGE DOWN

Early potato acreage in California is $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent less than last year, according to the April 1 estimate. But the crop is later than usual and may compete severely with early Washington potatoes.
Farm Land Values Turn Down

Farm land values drop 7 per cent in Washington: This drop in farm real estate values took place between last November and this March.

U. S. down 1 per cent. The biggest land value drops were in the West. From the Great Plains east, gains and losses were pretty evenly divided. It is the first drop in average U. S. land values in 10 years.

Peak probably past: We expect farm prices and farm incomes to go down some more. This will bring land prices down too. But we do not expect them to drop as much as after World War I for two reasons:

1. After World War II, land values went up only 58 per cent as much as net land returns compared with 88 per cent after World War I.
2. We don't expect a price drop quite as severe as the one following World War I.

HOG PRICES IN SEASONAL DROP

Spring price increases: Top hogs on the Spokane market went up from $21.50 a hundred pounds in early February to $23.75 in late March. By late April the price was again down around $21.50. This is about the way hog prices usually go up and down at that time of the year. Market supplies of hogs go down in late winter because it is between the two pig crops. But by April the fall pigs are coming to market in volume.

Still lower hog prices are to be expected in May as more fall pigs come to market. July and August nearly always bring high hog prices, and that, too, is expected for this year. But heavier marketings of sows, less consumer demand, and much lower lard prices will keep them from getting near last summer's highs.

Hog prices next fall and winter probably will be the lowest in several years when this spring’s big pig crop comes to market.

It has been announced that hog prices will be supported at 90 per cent of parity through March, 1950. The low this spring is $16.25 a hundred pounds in May. The summer high will be $18.50 in September. These support prices are for Good and Choice barrow and gilt hogs, Chicago basis. The support price in Washington probably will be $1 to $2 higher.
Crop prospects continue favorable over most of the nation.

Pastures the nation over on April 1 were the third best in 20 years.

Wheat—a near-record crop in 1949. That’s the way it looks now.

Feed grain stocks on April 1 were the largest on record for that date. They were especially high compared to the number of animals to be fed.

Farm wage rates have started to ease downward in some areas. That’s the first time since 1939.