

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 22, 1936

MILK PRODUCTION - DECEMBER 1, 1936

During November milk production per cow showed the sharpest decline that has occurred at that season in any of the past ten years. Milk production per cow was on an unusually high level in late September and October, but this record November drop brought it down nearly to average on December 1. During the summer drought of 1936 milk production per cow was below average in spite of rather heavy grain feeding, but it rose to near record levels this fall when rains revived pastures. With the shift from pasture to winter feed about completed in the northern dairy States, milk production had slumped sharply by December 1 particularly in the areas where grain supplies are short. On December 1 milk production per cow in herds kept by crop correspondents was about 3 percent higher than a year ago, and with about 2 percent fewer milk cows on farms total milk production in the United States on December 1 appears to have been about 1 percent above last year. This contrasts sharply with the situation on November 1 when total milk production was about 6 percent above that in 1935. With prospects for continued light feeding of milk cows in the drought area as a result of short grain supplies, total milk production during the next few months appears likely to be nearly as low as in 1934, unless butterfat prices improve sufficiently to encourage heavier feeding of grain.

Marked regional variations in the rate of grain feeding as influenced by pastures, availability of grain, and price relationships appear to have played an important role in the unusual trend of milk production this fall. With exceptionally poor pastures in the drought area and with butterfat prices generally favorable in relation to feed prices, the quantity of grain fed per milk cow during the late summer was unusually high in all sections of the country. With the shift of milk cows to fall and winter rations, farmers in the market milk areas have increased the amount of grain fed nearly as much as usual, but in the butterfat-producing sections a shortage of grain and a less favorable price spread between butterfat and grain than existed during the summer have discouraged farmers from increasing the grain fed to milk cows as much as they usually do.

In most of the North Atlantic region and as far West as Ohio, the quantity of grain fed per milk cow on December 1 was as heavy as in any recent year and milk production per cow has been maintained at record levels. On the North Pacific Coast, where pastures have been subnormal, grain feeding has also been exceptionally heavy but milk production per cow has not been abnormally high. In the area extending from Indiana west to Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri, the quantity of grain fed per milk cow on December 1 was less than in any recent year except 1934 and milk production per cow, although still close to the 9-year average December 1 production, was falling much more rapidly than usual. In the Dakotas, Wyoming, and Nebraska both grain feeding and milk production per cow on December 1 were practically down to the record low levels of 1934, while in Kansas wheat pastures have apparently maintained milk production in spite of light grain feeding. In the Southern and Mountain areas considerable variation between States has been apparent both as to rate of feeding and milk production. For the United States as a whole, milk cows in herds kept by crop correspondents were receiving an average of 3.41 pounds of grain per head on December 1 compared to 3.87 pounds on December 1 last year, 2.86 pounds on December 1, 1934 and 3.54 on the same date in 1933.

Milk production per cow in herds kept by crop correspondents on December 1 averaged 11.38 pounds for the United States as a whole, compared to 12.20 pounds on November 1, 11.05 pounds on December 1, 1935 and a 1925-33 average of 11.61 pounds. The proportion of milk cows being milked on December 1 continued the record high levels apparent this fall, but failed to maintain the wide spread above other years that existed last month. In the central regions the proportion of cows milked, although still high, dropped much more than usual during November. For the United States as a whole crop correspondents reported an average of 67.8 percent of the milk cows in their herds being milked on December 1 compared to 67.4 percent last year and 67.7 percent in 1931, the highest percent milked previously reported for December 1.

mjd

MILK PRODUCED PER MILK COW IN HERDS KEPT BY CROP REPORTERS 1/

	: December 1 :(Avg.) 1925-33 :	: December 1 1934 :	: December 1 1935 :	: December 1 1936
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
N. Eng.	14.30	13.28	14.30	13.97
N. Y.	14.2	14.5	14.2	15.6
N. J.	17.6	16.9	16.4	18.2
Pa.	15.0	14.7	14.0	14.9
N. Atl.	14.59	14.41	14.34	15.27
Ohio	13.4	13.0	12.3	13.2
Ind.	12.3	11.6	11.7	11.9
Ill.	12.1	12.2	11.8	12.9
Mich.	14.3	14.2	14.5	14.6
Wis.	13.2	12.3	12.2	13.3
E. N. Cent.	13.13	12.53	12.35	13.15
Minn.	13.1	11.3	12.1	12.7
Iowa	11.4	11.3	10.9	11.5
Mo.	8.5	8.7	7.2	8.5
N. Dak.	9.4	7.6	9.2	7.8
S. Dak.	9.1	7.2	9.1	7.4
Nebr.	10.8	11.1	11.3	10.1
Kans.	11.6	11.6	11.6	12.6
W. N. Cent.	10.80	10.21	10.32	10.54
Md.	13.7	13.6	12.9	13.0
Va.	10.3	9.2	9.7	10.4
W. Va.	9.9	8.6	9.2	10.0
N. C.	10.5	9.4	10.0	10.2
S. C.	9.2	8.9	9.5	10.4
S. Atl.	10.19	9.34	9.53	10.12
Ky.	10.1	8.8	9.4	10.2
Tenn.	8.9	7.6	8.4	7.8
Miss.	7.0	5.5	5.9	6.1
Ark.	7.8	6.3	7.1	6.0
Okla.	9.3	8.7	7.8	8.9
Tex.	8.2	6.7	9.0	8.5
S. Cent.	8.46	7.36	7.92	7.95
Mont.	10.5	10.2	10.3	10.8
Idaho	14.9	13.2	15.3	14.8
Wyo.	10.4	9.6	11.0	9.9
Colo.	11.4	10.4	11.5	11.5
Wash.	15.2	14.0	15.2	15.2
Oreg.	14.0	12.5	14.3	12.5
Calif.	15.0	17.5	16.4	15.5
West.	13.15	12.77	13.54	12.99
U. S.	11.61	10.89	11.05	11.38

1/ Averages obtained by dividing the reported daily milk production of herds kept by reporters by the total number of milk cows (in milk or dry) in these herds. The regional averages shown were based in part on records from less important dairy States not shown separately, as follows: South Atlantic, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, South Central, Alabama, Louisiana; Western, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada.