

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

August 16, 1939.

MILK PRODUCTION, AUGUST 1, 1939

On August 1, for the first time in a year and a half, available records indicated that the first of the month milk production in the United States was less than on the corresponding date of the previous year. The rate of decline during July, while about average for that month, was considerably sharper than a year ago. Milk production per cow in herds kept by crop correspondents on August 1 averaged about 2 percent less than a year earlier. A recent survey indicates the number of milk cows on farms to be about a half of one percent above the number a year ago. Therefore, total milk production on August 1 appears to have been between 1 and 2 percent less than on August 1, 1938. Total milk production on August 1 this year, however, was the second highest for that date in the 15 years of record and, in terms of production per capita, was well above average.

In some important Northeastern dairy areas, principally southern New England, New York, New Jersey and the northeastern half of Pennsylvania, the production of milk was sharply curtailed by drought and poor pastures. For the first time since February 1, 1938, milk production per cow on the first of the month in the North Atlantic States was below the 10-year average for the date. Pastures have been so short in parts of the area that in some instances herds have been placed on practically a winter feeding basis with a corresponding increase in grain and concentrates. However, moderate improvement of pastures in this area appears in prospect as the result of late July and early August rains.

In the Southeastern States, dairy cows have responded to improvement in pastures during July and milk production per cow on August 1 was 3 percent above last year and more than 10 percent above the 1928-37 average for that date. In the Central groups of States, production per cow ranged from 6 to 8 percent above the 10-year average but was moderately below that on August 1 a year ago. In the Western group of States, production per cow continued well above average and was slightly above a year ago.

For the country as a whole, milk production per cow in herds kept by crop correspondents on August 1 averaged 15.10 pounds, compared with 15.40 pounds on August 1, 1938, and a 1928-37 average of 14.19 pounds for August 1. In these herds 76.7 percent of the cows were reported milked compared with 77.2 percent on August 1 a year ago, and a 10-year average of 74.8 percent for that date.

CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF MILK COWS

Farmers appear to be saving a record number of heifer calves for milk cows but the tendency to increase the number of milk cows which appeared to be rather general last fall, is less in evidence at the present time.

During 1938 the number of milk cows on farms in the United States, the number of heifer calves, and the number of yearling heifers being kept for milk cows each increased about a quarter of a million head. The increase in cows was about 1 percent and the increases in heifers and calves about 5 percent. In some States that were severely affected by drought in 1937 the upturn in milk cows did not start until the summer of 1938 but by the end of the year the tendency to increase dairy herds seemed to be rather general. It now appears that the increase in the number of milk cows during the 12 months ending June 1 this year was only about a half of one percent and the monthly records of cows slaughtered suggest that most of the increase (aside from normal seasonal changes) occurred in the fall of last year.

Successive June reports on the "number of this spring's heifer calves being saved for milk cows" indicate the number of such calves saved this year to be between 3 and 4 percent over the number saved last year. As the tendency to save

calves has continued since June, the total number of calves saved for milk cows during the present calendar year now seems likely to exceed even the unusually large numbers saved in 1932 and 1937.

Recent changes in the number of cows are too small to be measured with precision but, judging from the records for 150,000 farms, obtained in June with the assistance of rural mail carriers, and the changes made by the 50,000 farmers who reported in June both this year and last year, increases in the number of milk cows during the 12-month period were rather general in a broad strip extending from western North Dakota and eastern Montana to Oklahoma where numbers had been much reduced by the droughts of recent years. Net increases were also indicated in most sections of the Atlantic Coast States. Elsewhere changes were mostly small or irregular with decreases in milk cows predominating in some fairly large areas, particularly in some where there are considerable numbers of beef cattle. Changes in crop prospects and in pastures since June have no doubt caused some changes in these trends. Probably drought conditions have tended to somewhat restrict increases in herds in the western half of the country and in the northeast. On the other hand, the improvement in crop prospects would permit further increases in the central and eastern portions of the Corn Belt.

Some of the factors that appear to account for the various changes in dairy herds appear to be the following:

1. Prices received by farmers for wholesale milk and butterfat have been much less favorable to producers in 1939 than in 1938.

2. The prices of milk cows and other cattle and particularly the prices obtained for aged cows sold for slaughter have been unusually high in comparison with the low price of feed. Just before the dry weather of last May began to affect prices the average price of milk cows in the United States was higher in comparison with the average price of hay and also higher in comparison with the average price of feed grains than on the same dates in any of the previous 30 years. Considering prices of both hay and grain, the price of milk cows during the past 12 months has probably averaged higher in comparison with feed costs than in any similar period since the Civil War. This has, therefore, been an exceptionally favorable time for farmers to dispose of aged cows and raise heifers for replacements.

3. The price of beef cattle is now relatively high as compared with prices of dairy <sup>only</sup> products. This may be causing some dual purpose cows, formerly milked, to be used for raising beef calves, thus reversing the shift that occurred in 1938.

It is obvious that the large and perhaps record-high number of heifer calves saved for milk cows this year, the record or near-record number of yearling heifers being raised for milk cows and the probability that the number of beef cows is beginning to increase combine to make it easier for farmers to increase their milking herds during the next few years if they should desire to do so. These changes may not, however, cause any material increase in milk cows or milk production unless conditions become more favorable for dairying than they have been in recent months.

#### DAIRY PASTURES, AUGUST 1, 1939

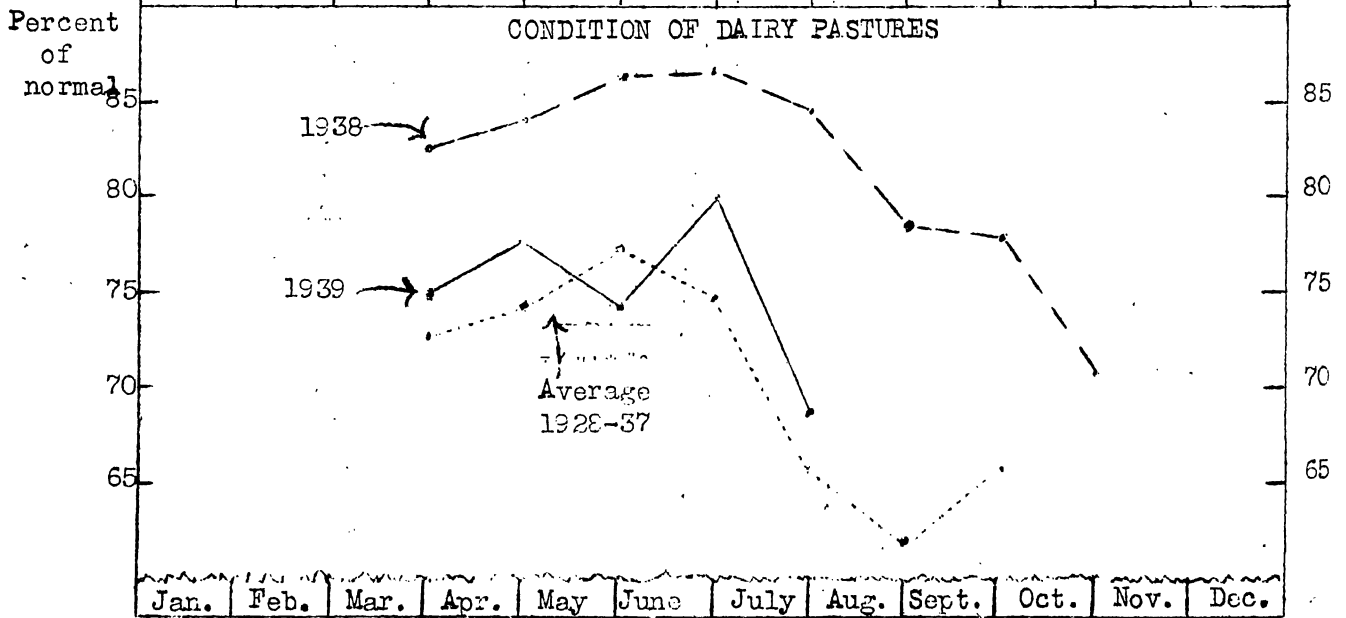
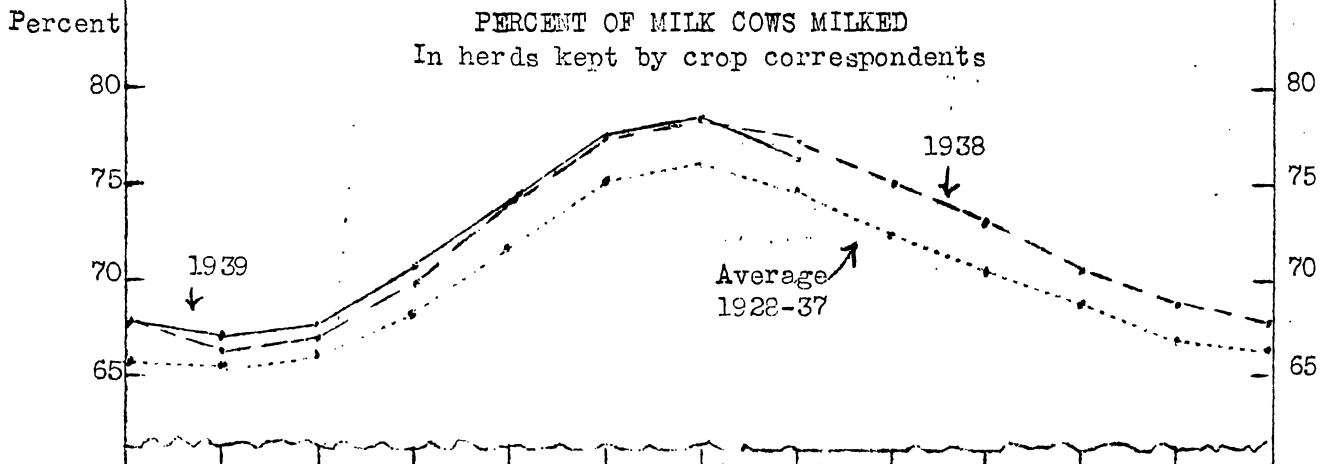
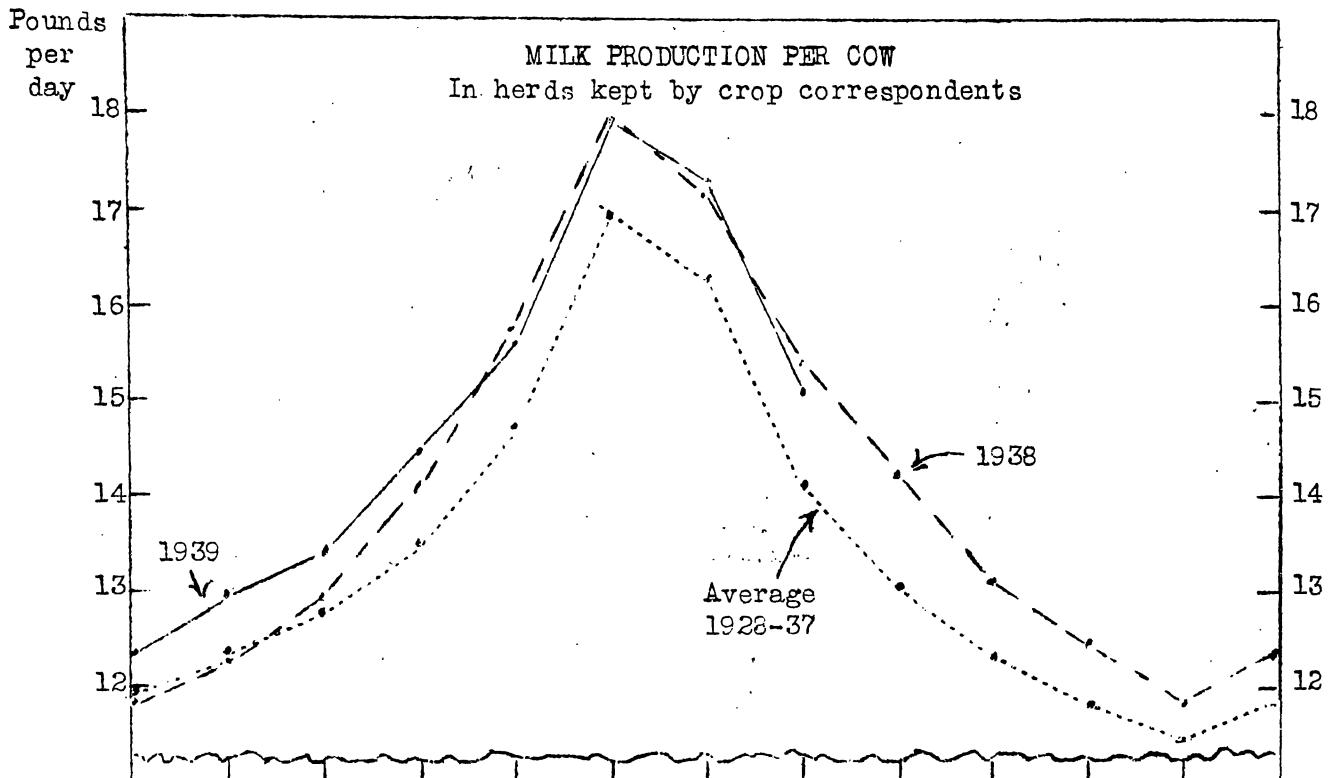
The condition of dairy pastures on August 1 was sharply lower than a month earlier, reflecting declines in important milk producing States of the Northeastern and upper Great Lakes regions. However, with the central and eastern Corn Belt States reporting pastures good to excellent and with considerable improvement in the Southeast, the condition of dairy pastures in the country as a whole, although well below pre-drought averages, was better than the August 1 average for recent years. Rains in late July and early August appear to have taken the edge off the drought in many of the more important dairy sections, and some improvement has probably occurred.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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 CROP REPORTING BOARD  
 WASHINGTON, D.C.

State	MILK PRODUCED PER MILK COW IN HERDS KEPT BY				MILK COWS ON
	CROP REPORTERS <sup>1/</sup>				FARMS <sup>2/</sup>
	: August 1 :(Avg.) 1928-37:	: August 1 1937	: August 1 1938	: August 1 1939	: Number June 1939 as :percent of June 1938
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Percent
N.Eng.	15.77	16.70	16.27	16.56	102.3
N.Y.	17.5	18.5	17.7	16.6	101.5
N.J.	18.6	19.0	19.3	18.9	101
Pa.	17.0	17.7	18.4	17.3	101
N.Atl.	16.98	17.89	17.75	17.00	101.5
Ohio	16.1	17.1	17.8	17.6	100
Ind.	15.0	15.5	17.0	16.7	101
Ill.	14.4	15.4	16.1	16.2	99
Mich.	17.4	18.1	18.5	19.0	100
Wis.	17.2	17.6	18.7	17.7	100.5
E.N.Cent.	16.29	16.99	17.82	17.40	100.1
Minn.	15.1	15.9	16.9	15.9	100
Iowa	14.3	14.5	15.6	15.8	100
Mo.	10.9	11.8	12.2	12.1	97
N.Dak.	14.7	16.3	16.6	15.0	102
S.Dak.	12.8	12.7	12.6	13.0	102
Nebr.	14.0	14.8	14.6	14.9	103
Kans.	13.1	12.8	14.2	13.8	102
W.N.Cent.	13.67	14.12	14.83	14.48	100.4
Md.	15.2	16.1	15.4	16.9	101
Va.	13.2	14.4	14.4	13.3	104
W.Va.	13.9	14.5	14.9	15.2	102
N.C.	12.3	12.9	13.2	13.9	102
S.C.	10.8	11.5	11.0	11.5	101
S.Atl.	11.91	12.68	12.89	13.23	101.8
Ky.	13.0	13.6	14.8	14.5	99
Tenn.	11.8	11.9	13.4	12.7	100
Miss.	8.5	8.1	8.4	8.1	99
Ark.	9.7	10.9	10.3	10.0	100
Okla.	11.0	11.7	13.1	12.6	102
Tex.	9.8	10.3	10.9	10.4	98
S.Cent.	10.25	10.67	11.24	11.09	99.7
Mont.	14.9	16.9	18.7	18.7	102
Idaho	18.9	20.2	19.2	20.3	99
Wyo.	15.0	17.3	15.7	15.5	97
Colo.	14.6	15.3	17.3	15.7	100
Wash.	19.4	20.5	20.0	21.0	101
Oreg.	17.8	19.4	18.4	18.1	99
Calif.	18.2	18.6	19.4	19.0	101
West	16.59	18.23	18.19	18.40	100.7
U.S.	14.19	14.85	15.40	15.10	100.5

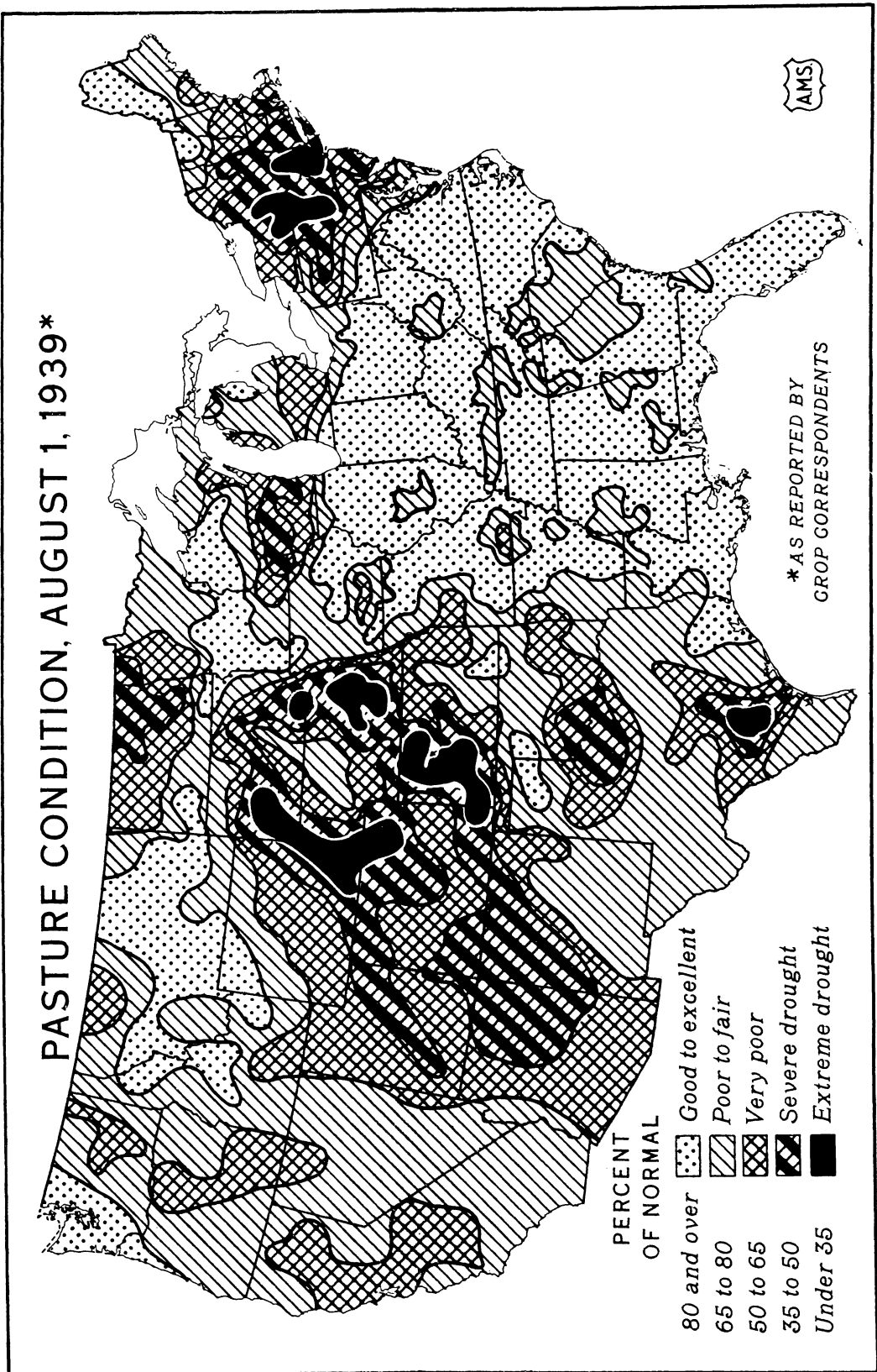
<sup>1/</sup> Averages obtained by dividing the reported daily milk production of herds kept by reporters by the total number of milk cows (in milk or dry) in these herds. The regional averages shown were based in part on records from less important dairy States not shown separately, as follows: South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

<sup>2/</sup> Based on reports for about 150,000 herds collected largely through cooperation with the Rural Mail Carriers.



Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.

# PASTURE CONDITION, AUGUST 1, 1939\*



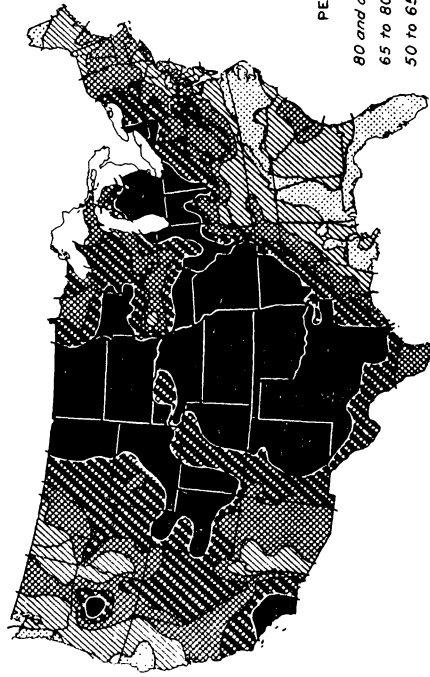
- PERCENT OF NORMAL
- 80 and over Good to excellent
  - 65 to 80 Poor to fair
  - 50 to 65 Very poor
  - 35 to 50 Severe drought
  - Under 35 Extreme drought

\*AS REPORTED BY  
CROP CORRESPONDENTS

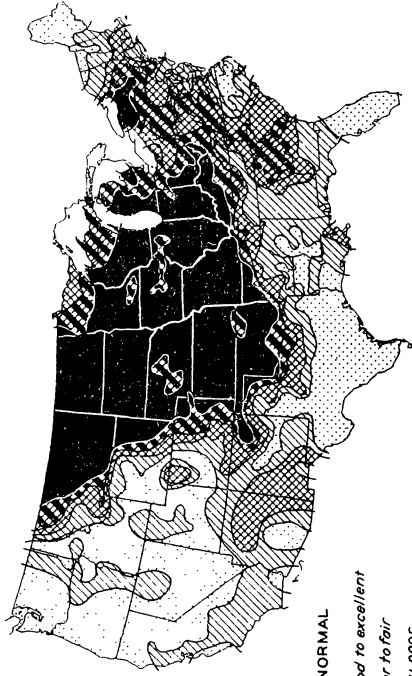


# PASTURE CONDITION \*

AUGUST 1, 1934



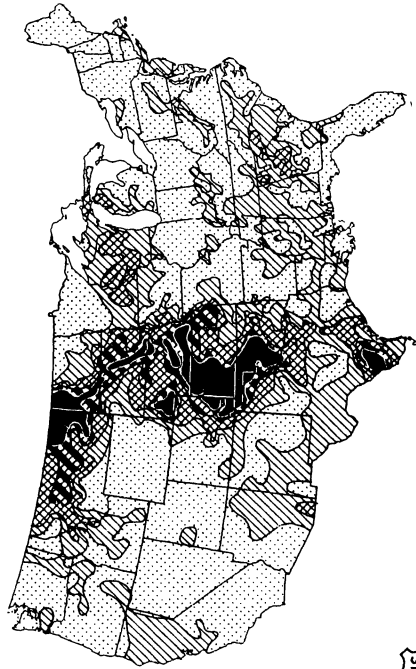
AUGUST 1, 1936\*



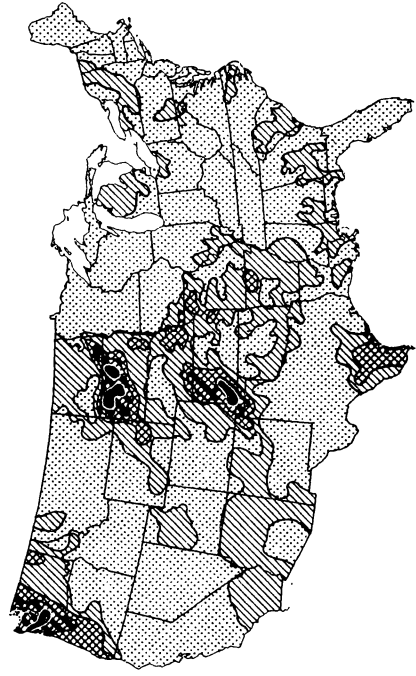
## PERCENT OF NORMAL

- 80 and over: Good to excellent
- 65 to 80: Poor to fair
- 50 to 65: Very poor
- 35 to 50: Severe drought
- Under 35: Extreme drought

AUGUST 1, 1937\*



AUGUST 1, 1938\*



\* AS REPORTED BY CROP CORRESPONDENTS

